

Toward a Dramaturgy of Feminist Spatial Curiosity:
Urban Performance Creation in Montreal

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A Thesis
In the Humanities Program
For the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Humanities – Fine Arts) at
Concordia University

February 2021

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CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

Toward a Dramaturgy of Feminist Spatial Curiosity: Urban Performance Creation in Montreal

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My doctoral research in urban performance engages both creative and academic research modalities to explore the performative interactions between performance and its city of situation, putting into practice a spectrum of historical and contemporary techniques for engaging critically and creatively with urban places. *Curiosité* is an urban theatre and performance dramaturgy oriented toward apprehending and representing—through curious modalities, narratives, and media—the histories, ambiguities, and differential material and social effects of ongoing capitalist processes on urban neighbourhoods. *Abattoir de l'est*, the first performance event issuing from *Curiosité*, is a parable situated in Montreal's deindustrializing and gentrifying east-end district of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. In the context(s) of this performance research, curiosity delineates an attitude of desire toward the local and the proximate, describing a complex, careful, and eccentric set of experiential and archival techniques (walking, collecting, and assemblage) for apprehending ever-changing urban places, and drawing from a repertoire of curiosity-related aesthetic forms and techniques, among them the curiosity cabinet, popular motion picture media, object theatre, and epic theatrical techniques of defamiliarization toward “as is” narratives and “common sense” discourses of place. A narrative exegesis to my performance research in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, *Toward a Dramaturgy of Feminist Spatial Curiosity: Urban Performance Creation in Montreal* responds to and through the following questions: *How can curiosity toward place inform urban performance research? What methods and media support a curious approach to performance creation?* Tracing the processes of composition for *Abattoir de l'est*, from scripting through to the siting of the performance event in the urban field, the exegesis asks after the artist's own siting in these ongoing capitalist processes, demonstrating curiosity as an epistemic stance and set of methods for urban performance creation that would hold onto the ambivalence of the city, while seeking also to embody curiosity in the text through reflective and reflexive returns to the archives and places of performance research. The exegesis includes the full script of *Abattoir de l'est*, with performances documented through multiple photographs.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Tiohtià:ke—the Kanien'kéha name for the place I refer to in this text as “Montreal”—is unceded Indigenous territory. A short form of Teionihiohtiá:kon, meaning “where the group divided/parted ways,” Tiohtià:ke has long been a site of encounter and exchange among many First Nations peoples.

Through the foundational and ongoing stewardship of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy—and the local communities of Kahnawà:ke and Kanehsatá:ke—the island continues as a gathering place for a diverse urban Indigenous community and other peoples.¹

With appreciation for their custodianship of Tiohtià:ke, and in acknowledgment of their special relations with this urban place, I recognize the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation, in whose traditional territory I now gather with others to walk, to learn, to listen, to understand, to repair, to love, and, of course, to play in the making and the sharing of performances.

¹ I draw this account of Indigenous Peoples, communities, and First Nations' presence in and stewardship of Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) from the Indigenous Directions Leadership Group at Concordia, and its excursus to the “Territorial Acknowledgement at Concordia University, Tiohtià:ke/Montréal” (2017) as prepared by Wahéhshon Shiann Whitebean, and edited by Dr. Karl Hele with input from Charles O'Connor. To read the entire territorial acknowledgement and learn more about why it was written this way, please visit www.concordia.ca/indigenous/resources/territorial-acknowledgement.html.

Acknowledgments

What follows will likely read like scrolling credits at the end of a movie, because there are so many people that have been involved in the labours (and love) of *Curiosité*, *Abattoir de l'est*, and this reflective exegesis. When I began my doctoral research way back in 2010, I could not have envisioned it as a nearly eleven-year process in which I would make so many fast and forever friends.

It would be remiss not to begin by thanking the audiences who attended our performances in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, the participants in *Curiosité*'s many walking events and research activities, and all those in the neighbourhood and beyond who provided support—in all its forms—for the creation and continuance of my performance research and doctoral studies. I especially want to thank Réjean Charbonneau and William Gaudry from the Atelier d'histoire Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, and Nathalie Lanthier and all of the educators and caregivers at Garderie Cafalaga.

I am ever grateful to *Curiosité*'s collaborators (or rather, co-conspirators): Mélanie Binette, Alain Bonder, Nicolas Germain-Marchand, Rae Maitland, Julie Tamiko Manning, and Julian Menezes. Their friendship, generosity, knowledge, feedback, and care throughout the making of *Abattoir de l'est*—and continuing on into the writing of the exegesis—made a challenging and durational process at the same time one of joy, discovery, and enchantment for me.

Alain Bonder deserves special mention, not only for his visual contributions, but for the love, emotional and physical support (theatre-making involves a lot of heavy lifting), and encouragement he has given me over the past ten years, as my partner in life, in artmaking, and, most recently, in thesis writing. I am especially grateful to him for taking on so much of the childcare for our toddler in the final months of writing, and for always trying to answer my unanswerable questions. I thank my kiddo Gaël for reminding me that one must take a pause in writing now and then to attend to curious beings and things, like “les ami.es,” Toot (our beloved feline companion), garbage trucks, dogs who play hockey, bluebirds, and cookies.

I must also thank Joëlle Bond and Mireille Mayrand-Fiset for fearlessly taking on the trickiest of translation processes, and Jacques Gallant and Jeff Hanson for their generosity and respective engineering and cabinetry expertise.

I recall with fondness—and a longing to repeat the encounter in this socially distanced moment—my interviews with artists Gilles Bissonnet, Catherine Lalonde Masseur, and Nicolas Rivard, who kindheartedly and carefully thought through so many questions with me. Merci tellement. And thank you to Naomi Iizuka for taking my late-night phone call to talk about her dazzling play *At the Vanishing Point*.

Kathleen Vaughan, my friend and supervisor at Concordia, must also be included as a co-conspirator throughout my doctoral research, as she helped to guide me through not only the institutional requirements of the degree, but through a critical and creative process that, in light of my wandering curiosity and proclivity for endless revision, was to the very end unwieldy,

unpredictable, and ever-changing. I must also, of course, thank her for digging me out from under the weight of my habitual moods on numerous occasions; for not merely tolerating but trusting my durational process more than I did; for providing me with both careful feedback and critical support on every draft; for riding her bike out to our east-end performances all the way from Pointe-St-Charles; and, for taking so many of the beautiful photographs which now form the visual archive of Curiocité's performances of *Abattoir de l'est*.

My committee members at Concordia, Andre Furlani and Mark Sussman, have been generous and encouraging interlocutors for my performance research, helping me to extend and revise my thinking and writing in ever more curious and compelling ways. As members of my examining committee, Cynthia Hammond and Dorita Hannah provided valuable feedback, allowing me to consider in more depth future iterations of Curiocité. And I must also mention a few other folks I met through Concordia who have provided ongoing support, friendship, and inspiration, including the late Sharon Fitch, Marcie Frank, Bina Freiwald, Shauna Janssen, Darragh Languay, Allison Reiko Loader, Erin Manning, MJ Thompson, and members of my ever-curious and courageous HUMA cohort Natalie Doonan, Annie Katsura Rollins, Florencia Marchetti, Taien Ng-Chan, and Margaret Westby.

I thank my parents Ernie and Kathie Donehower and sister Christina Donehower for more than I can ever list here, Janet Hawkins and Dave Wormser for their support in every dimension, Mélanie Binette and Julian Menezes (encore) for asking me tough questions and always being good neighbours, Lori Delorme for helping me figure out how to organize the messiest ideas in writing, Ève Katinoglou for attending so many events—and bringing food—and Viviane Renaud for her curiosity and careful assistance with census data, among other things. Lastly, to my dear and brilliant friends Shelley Liebembuk and Erica Mitchell, whose thinking oriented me whenever I was lost, and who laboured over this text alongside me as interlocutors and editors: I hope that this project reads as a love letter to you both. You have been a part of my ways of being-in-the-world every day since I met you.

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Figure 64. Digital collage of objects in *La Tuerie* [The Killing], created by the author. Sketches by Alain Bonder.

Figure 65. Left: Sacks of sugar piled high inside St. Lawrence Sugar Refinery. From [Photograph of sugar sacks piled high inside of St. Lawrence Sugar Refinery], 1950, Archives de l'Atelier d'histoire Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (INDU QHM-340), Montreal, QC, Canada. Courtesy of l'Atelier d'histoire Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Right : A worker hauls sacks of sugar. From [Photograph of a worker hauling bags of sugar inside St. Lawrence Sugar], 1950, Archives de l'Atelier d'histoire Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, Montreal, QC, Canada (INDU QHM-336). Courtesy of l'Atelier d'histoire Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

Figure 66. The Rag-and-Bone Man is the latest attraction at Dominion Amusement Park. Still from video by Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

Figure 67. The Rag-and-Bone Man reaches the banks of the St. Lawrence River with the Foundling strapped to his back. Still from video by Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

Figure 68. The Foundling returns to life. Still from video by Annie Katsura Rollins. Printed with permission.

Figure 69. Flames engulf the Rag-and-Bone Man and the actor. Still from video by Annie Katsura Rollins. Printed with permission.

Figure 70. The Ad-Man and Ad-Ladies extol the miracle of sugar, refined. Still from video by Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

Figure 71. Madame X absconds with a crystalized Rag-and-Bone Man. Still from video by Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

Figure 72. Romance whispers one word to Monsieur. Still from video by Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

Figure 73. The Garage Rozon transformed into the Garage de la culture for *L'Urbaine Urbanité I*. From [Photograph of Garage de la culture during *L'Urbaine Urbanité I*], by P. Crépô, 2002, Private collection of the artist. Copyright 2002 by Pierre Crépô. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 74. La Belle Gare Valois restaurant, transformed. From [Photograph of the transformed Belle Gare Valois restaurant during *L'Urbaine Urbanité I*], by P. Crépô, 2002, Private collection of the artist. Copyright 2002 by Pierre Crépô. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 75. The 2002 demolition of Garage de la culture/Rozon Garage, as represented in Gilles Bissonnet's mural *Tout n'est pas de l'art*. In 2003, Bissonnet installed the mural on the site of the former Garage de la culture/Rozon Garage during *L'Urbaine Urbanité II*. From *Tout n'est pas de l'art* [Digital photograph with text], by G. Bissonnet, 2003, Private collection of the artist. Copyright 2003 by Gilles Bissonnet. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 76. The Place Valois in 2008, as framed by newspaper photographer Robert Mailloux. From *Les projets immobiliers se multiplient à proximité des rues Ontario et Sainte-Catherine Est, dans le quartier Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (HoMa pour les branchés)* [Photograph], by R. Mailloux, 2008, *La Presse* (<https://images.lpcdn.ca/924x615/200805/10/84031-projets-immobiliers-multiplient-proximite-rues.jpg>). Copyright 2008 by Robert Mailloux and *La Presse*. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 77. The beer garden at the Place Valois, with crowd control fencing. September 1, 2019. Personal photograph.

Figure 78. The entryway of the École Baril, after the demolition of the surrounding structure in May 2015. Personal photograph.

Figure 79. La Québécoise, repurposed by the pawn shop. September 1, 2019. Personal photograph.

Prompt Book I: Moi, J'suis Damien



Figure 1. Mélanie Binette (right), Rae Maitland (centre), and Nicolas Germain-Marchand (in shadow) perform Curiocté's *Abattoir de l'est* at Parc Hochelaga in Montreal, Quebec, June 30, 2013. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Printed with permission.

June 30, 2013, 6:45 p.m., the corner of Rue Aylwin and Rue Ontario in Montreal. A woman in business casual dress—a blazer, blouse, and tailored jeans—leads a curious procession of people and things along Rue Ontario toward Parc Hochelaga. At first glance, you might mistake her for a real estate agent. Under her right arm, a file folder box, a clear window on the side revealing its contents of small objects, paper cut-outs, pocket lights; in her left hand, a black pleather portfolio filled with crisp white pages. She pauses now and then to guide two other women as they push a large, black cabinet on a jury-rigged dolly along the cement sidewalk of Rue Aylwin, toward Rue Ontario. Aside from the chalk drawings scrawled across the front of the cabinet, the strange objects visible through its porthole windows in the front and open back, and the metal crank that juts from its side, it appears to be an entertainment centre of some kind, something you might have in your own home to house your television set and books and CDs. The wheels grate, stick, on the cracks between slabs of pavement. A man follows them, carrying a heavy plywood box filled with a recreational vehicle battery pack, scraps of rusty metal, a meat grinder, and long metal bar lined with LED lights. After him, another man and another plywood box containing a large cement block, aluminium cans, and topped with a three-foot strip of foam core upon which is mounted a mixed plastic foil and paper cut-out panorama of Rue Ontario. Together, they amble slowly, stopping, starting, helping to dislodge the cabinet when it sticks in a crack, or to block traffic as the group crosses the street. A warm summer evening, around dinnertime, the group draws the attention of others on the street, bemused onlookers, some of whom offer to assist in their progress.



Figure 2. Street poster for *Abattoir de l'est*, June 30, 2013 at Parc Hochelaga on the *Babillard Culturel* [Cultural Billboard] near the Place Simon-Valois. Photo credit: Alain Bonder. Printed with permission.

Parc Hochelaga at 7 p.m. on June 30, 2013 is full of kids enjoying the last hour of outdoor time and daylight before they are expected home for dinner. The procession—Mélanie Binette, Rae Maitland, myself, Alain Bonder, and Nicolas Germain-Marchand—heads to the white chalet

in the centre of the park. My hope is that, in case of rain, the chalet might shelter us and our electrical equipment.

Alain and Nicolas, carrying the heaviest equipment, set down their plywood boxes and begin the process of securing the cabinet to the chalet with tent stakes and nylon rope so that it won't tip during our performance. I focus on the lighting equipment, running wires from the LED light strip in the cabinet, and the architect's lamp hanging over it, out to the battery pack. I use the bottom of my shirt to remove a small halogen light bulb from a tiny box in my backpack, careful not to smudge oil from my hands onto the glass (which might cause the bulb to smoke, or even explode, when illuminated). I insert the bulb into a painted aluminium soup can, plug it in and position it behind the cabinet, and test the dimmer. The warm yellow light rises and falls across the back of the cabinet. I test the remaining lights, and the parts of the cabinet illuminate and go dark, flashing on and off, as the sun sets. Mélanie and Rae remove props and "set pieces"—objects by which we will make each of our six dioramas—from different boxes, and begin to construct what in performance will be Hudon Cotton, the *abattoirs de l'est* [Eastern abattoirs], a back alley, a kitchen, a riverbank, and a junk pile, represented respectively by a cotton spindle and a counter bell, a stainless steel manual meat grinder, a cut-out silhouette of a clothesline, a doily and a miniature *tarte au sucre* [sugar pie], a concrete block, and scraps of iron and plastic and aluminium cans.

A group of teen boys enter the park. We notice them, and they notice us as they head over to the picnic tables at the far end of the park, facing the cabinet.

A few minutes later, a police car zooms into the pedestrian entrance to the park and a patrolman jumps out.

I don't have a permit for tonight's performance.

Are they here to shut us down? Look like you belong here.

This was advice I'd gotten from others who work in public spaces, and without permits. I begin to prepare my oral defence for the officer, and gesture to Mélanie for language assistance, should need be.

The officer rushes past me and toward one of the boys who just entered the park. I am too far away to hear their conversation, but watch as the officer grips the boy by the elbow, and "escorts" him toward the patrol car. The doors slam. The car reverses. They disappear. It happens very quietly, with all of us looking on.

The municipal library and local pool neighbour Parc Hochelaga, and during the day there are always kids here; in the summer, there are sprinklers, and several pétanque courts.

Two little girls approach us. They play here often, and want to know just what it is we are up to.

“Are you shooting a film?” one of them asks.

“No,” Mélanie explains, “this is a theatre show.” When they look perplexed, she adds, “and you are invited. It starts at 9 p.m., and it’s free!”

They continue to spectate, moving to the back of the Curiosité cabinet to see what Nicolas is up to back there. He is manually rewinding the canvas scroll, wound around a banner-and-crank system. The painted images that the performers will use to narrate *Abattoir de l’est* scroll by in reverse order—the barrel in St. Lawrence Sugar, the flames at Dominion Amusement Park, the riverbank, Alain’s re-interpretation of German expressionist Emil Nolde’s lithograph *Man in Top Hat* (1911).

I am staring at the images as they fly by when a garish orange glow erupts from behind the *Man in Top Hat*.

“*Câlisse.*”

Translated literally as “chalice”—one in a litany of Quebecois swear words drawn from Catholic liturgy—*câlisse* is equivalent to “fuck” or “shit.”

The crank comes to a stop.

Behind the cabinet, Nicolas, aware of his audience, mutters a “*câliline*,” a child-friendly variation of *câlisse* best translated as “darn.”

I poke my head behind the cabinet and see Nicolas pointing up into the eaves of the chalet, and Rae looking past his index finger, one hand on her hip, the other shielding her eyes from four high-intensity fluorescent floodlights.

This is a problem. We are planning to do shadow puppetry, and the light spill from the chalet will make a mess of that. Nicolas notes that we should have done a site visit at dusk, because we would have known about the lights.

Alain, Nicolas, and I gather together for a tête-a-tête, a familiar formation for us: *How will we fix this?*

We contemplate moving the cabinet, but decide instead to see how we might block the light. Alain races to our apartment, and returns soon after with a maroon tablecloth. It will do.

We create a makeshift curtain rail with a piece of yellow nylon rope, tying it between the archways of the chalet, and draping the tablecloth over top. We fiddle some more with our own lighting equipment. Nicolas tests the shadow image, with the makeshift curtain in place, moving his hand in front of the halogen light. Alain adjusts the curtain from behind, until I am satisfied that the image produced on the other side of the canvas screen is crisp enough.

A kid on a wobble board zooms up, but stops short in front of us, staring. He slowly pushes on, heading around the chalet to watch us from a more discrete position.

We close the cabinet doors. We don't want to give too much away. Kathleen Vaughan, my supervisor at Concordia University, arrives on her bicycle, and with a camera to document the set up and performance.



Figure 3. Waiting for the sun to go down at Parc Hochelaga, June 30, 2013. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Printed with permission.

8:45 p.m. The kids have started to reappear, some with older siblings in tow who have been cajoled into chaperoning. The kid on the wobble-board is circling us again. And now those we've invited arrive and gather on the grass before the cabinet—friends, neighbours, roommates. And then, those we don't know arrive—moms or caretakers with toddlers, a woman with a snoring newborn, shoppers at the local fruit and veg store who'd encountered

our posted flyers, the rickshaw tourism peloton Vélopusse who'd seen our lights from the street and wondered what was happening.

I test the sound equipment for this performance, a small and rather finicky Bluetooth speaker positioned behind a concrete "rock" in the riverbank diorama, which I operate remotely by iPod. I ask the actors to check over their props, the lights, and other technical elements, and to let me know when they are ready.

9:00 p.m. The sun is down now, and a group of 30 or so people are gathered on the lawn in front of the cabinet. There are more children than we anticipated. I'd thought of this project as providing nighttime entertainment for adults in a public space, which, during the day, is used primarily by children. This mixed audience is unexpected, but then again, Mélanie reminds me, we did have a pig on the flyer. Nicolas jokes that he might change a few of the script's *câlisses* to *câlignes* to account for the age of our audience.

I start the music with the iPod, a looping hurdy-gurdy song that sets us off.

Rae sketches the contours of a map of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and the *Centre-Sud* [South Central neighbourhood] onto the outside of the cabinet theatre, painted in black chalk paint. The terrain covered by the story, a long, horizontal line scraping across the plywood of the cabinet: Rue Ontario. Above it, the mountain, and below, the shoreline.

I stand to the side of the cabinet, and raise an arm and my voice:

Bienvenue, et merci de nous joindre ce soir! I ask the gathered audience to assemble in front of the cabinet so that they can better see the show. *Approchez-vous, approchez-vous!* The kids and our friends scoot forward.

The teens at the far end of the park refuse the invitation and stay put, yelling something that our audiences, Nicolas, Mélanie, and Alain understand, but that Rae and I do not. They laugh at their own joke.

My introduction is brief. *On présente ce soir le conte urbain Abattoir de l'est, une courte histoire de la rue Ontario. And—uh—bon spectacle!*

A smattering of applause from the fidgeting children in the front row.

I nod to Monsieur (Nicolas Germain-Marchand) who nods to Science (Mélanie Binette) who nods to Romance (Rae Maitland). We take a communal breath and—

Nous sommes—

—We are

Nous sommes—

—We are

Nous sommes—

—We are

Curiosité

Curieuses et curieux—

—Curious

Et vous? Qui êtes vous?

And you? Who are you?

The kid who'd been circling us on the wobble board earlier in the evening is now in the front row. He responds without hesitation, hand raised:

Moi, j'suis Damien.



Figure 4. "Nous sommes—Curiosité," Parc Hochelaga, June 30, 2013. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Printed with permission.

Introduction

Toward a Dramaturgy of Feminist Spatial Curiosity: Urban Performance Creation in Montreal explores the performative interactions between performance and its city of situation, putting into practice a spectrum of historical and contemporary dramaturgical techniques for engaging critically and creatively with urban places. These techniques include performative interventions into and animation of specific sites, as well as discursive interventions and the use of narrative and representational strategies that reference the city as an idealized scene. My doctoral research engages both creative and academic research modalities and seeks to contribute to the interdisciplinary fields of research-creation (performance-as-research), urban theatre and performance studies, and creative urban methodologies.

Itinerary

This introductory chapter is divided into seven sections:

- A. Summary of Curiosité and Research Questions** (pp. 11–16) summarizes Curiosité, identifies the research questions, and defines research-creation in the Canadian context.
- B. Hochelaga-Maisonneuve: An Overview of Industrialization, Deindustrialization, and Urban Renewal** (pp. 17–30) provides a historical overview of the neighbourhood of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve in Montreal, the place of my performance research-creation.
- C. Curiosity as Methodological Approach to Performance Creation in Deindustrializing Urban Neighbourhoods** (pp. 32–49) traces the emergence of Curiosité to my past and ongoing artistic engagements with deindustrializing urban neighbourhoods, describes curiosity as a methodology for performance research, and reviews scholarship related to curiosity as a material practice and cultural performance.
- D. Place as Locus: Methodology of the Creative-Analytic Exegesis** (pp. 50–62) identifies feminist geography and aesthetics as key theoretical frameworks informing my approach to place in Curiosité and the exegesis, elaborates on the exegesis as a form for the written thesis, and further outlines the methods and genres of critical and creative writing used to compose this text.
- E. Itinerary of the Exegesis** (pp. 62–64) provides an overview of each chapter at a glance.

- F. **“Et nous? Nous sommes . . . ”: Personal Geography, Cast, and Chronology for Curiocité** (pp. 65–75) traces a region of my personal geography as it inflects my work with Curiocité, and introduces key collaborators, places, and performance events in Curiocité.

A. Summary of Curiosité and Research Questions

Research through creative practice as conducted in academic contexts is known variously as practice-as-research (Allegue et al., 2009; Barrett & Bolt, 2010; Sullivan, 2010; Nelson, 2013), practice-led research (Gray, 1996; Smith & Dean, 2009a; Haseman & Mafe, 2009; Millward, 2013), performance as research (Riley & Hunter, 2009), performance research (Kershaw & Nicholson, 2011), performative research (Haseman, 2006, 2010), and research-creation (Chapman & Sawchuck, 2012), often depending on the geographical location of the inquiry.² Theatre and performance research practices in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australasia, and the United States often fall under the abbreviation PaR, in reference to practice-as-research and performance as research, though PaR may include all of the above formulations as well as others (Spatz, 2010).³ Most discussions of PaR emphasize the primacy of artistic practice to the research and the multi-modal aspect of the inquiry. UK-based theatre and intermedial performance scholar and researcher Robin Nelson (2013) describes PaR as a “multimode research inquiry” that “involves a research project in which practice is a key method of inquiry and where, in respect of the arts, a practice (creative writing, dance, musical score/performance, theatre/performance, visual exhibition, film or other cultural practice) is submitted as substantial evidence of a research inquiry” (pp. 8–9). In their introduction to *Practice-led Research and Research-led Practices in the Creative Arts*, Hazel Smith and R.T. Dean (2009b) contend that within practice-led research, research might refer to

basic research carried out independent of creative work (though it may be subsequently applied to it); research conducted in the process of shaping an artwork; or research which is the documentation, theorisation and contextualisation of an artwork—and the process of making it—by its creator. (p. 3)

Within the Canadian context, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) calls the combination of creative and academic research practices “research-creation.”

²UK-based artist-researcher Carole Gray (1996) first defined practice-led research in a visual arts context as “research which is initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioners; and secondly, that the research strategy is carried out through practice, using predominantly methodologies and specific methods familiar to us as practitioners in visual arts” (p. 3).

³ As the reader will note, I refer to Curiosité as research-creation, performance research, and dramaturgical method in the body of the exegesis, as the former identifies the academic context for the project, and as latter nomenclature centres theatre and performance and communicates the methods and modalities of the project to those working outside of the institutional discourses of a PaR or research-creation paradigm.

According to the most recent SSHRC guidelines, research-creation “combines creative and academic research practices and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation. The creation process is situated within the research activity and produces critically informed work in a variety of media (art forms)” (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), 2019, Research-creation section).

The research-creation component of my doctoral research includes:

- 1) *Curiosité*, an urban theatre and performance dramaturgy⁴ for the creation and dissemination of place-based stories that engages curiosity as a theoretical, practical, and theatrical approach,
- 2) *Abattoir de l'est*, the first performance event issuing from *Curiosité*, a parable situated in Montreal’s east-end district Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and along one of its primary routes, Rue Ontario, and
- 3) This creative analytical exegesis, based on my reflections on the creation of *Curiosité* and performance of *Abattoir de l'est*, on interviews conducted with my *Curiosité* collaborators, and on further inquiry and interviews with artists engaged in similar methods, modalities, and sites of performance creation.

For Australian performance researchers Brad Haseman and Daniel Mafe (2009), the value and contribution to knowledge of a practice-led research project is its contribution to artistic scholarship through the critique of artistic practice.⁵ Artist-researchers are expected to develop a deeper understanding of the practical, ethical, and critical implications and normative assumptions of their techniques, and to disseminate the knowledges emerging from this practice-led research so as to benefit others engaged or implicated in the field. Responding to

⁴ I use urban theatre to designate the performance space (or cabinet), while also recalling the term’s origins in the ancient Greek *theatron*—a place of seeing. Urban theatre suggests to me both the “place” of the stage—its situation in the city—and a place for seeing the city represented. By dramaturgy, I mean a methodological approach for performance creation comprised of a set of compositional practices and their embodied epistemologies. For further discussion of the expanded field of dramaturgy as it applies to my work with *Curiosité*, see pp. 177–179, this exegesis.

⁵ Practice, in this context, refers to “the knowledge, tacit or otherwise, of how something is done within the context of a professional and cultural framework, a contingent activity that makes or establishes meaning or significance, although not through the application of thought alone. Practice needs to be understood in its wider sense as *all* the activity an artist/creative practitioner undertakes. Practitioners think, read, and write as well as look, listen, and make” (Haseman & Mafe, 2009, p. 214).

the expectations of research-creation with respect to methodology and the critique of methods, this exegesis is guided by the following research questions:

How can curiosity toward place inform urban performance research? What methods and media support a curious approach to performance creation?

As sociologist Saara Liinamaa (2014) observes, urban art practices—conceived as neutral, ahistorical, and unsituated—can fold rather neatly into neoliberal urbanism and its dominant spatial ideals—among them, the Creative City ideal (p. 537). The creative city, American urban planner Richard Florida’s economic argument for cultural development within urbanism, has shaped urban development policy in many Canadian cities over the last decade, including the city of Montreal.⁶ Florida celebrates the role of artists, gays [sic], and creative industry professionals in producing the creative city, citing the economic success of cities populated by a “bobo” creative class, which produces the cultural capital, local identity, and the cosmopolitan ‘flare’ of the city—the “three Ts” of “technology, tolerance, talent” (Florida, 2002, 2003, p. 10)—so attractive to investors and tourism. The relationship between artists engaged in creative urban methodologies and neoliberal urban economies which promote arts and culture as “drivers” is slippery, Liinamaa argues, particularly when the artist is framed as “urban researcher” in depressed neighbourhoods: “the artist can become a backdoor to promoting the ends of new urban economies of flexibility and cultural commodification while often giving the appearance of acting in the interest of urban betterment, neighbourhoods and communities” (p. 540). As artists and scholars alike recognize the “uneasy intersections between art’s capacity for essential urban commentary and intervention and art at the service of gentrification and social stratification,” the question of how artists might resist conscription into—or position their work as a counterpoint to—the project(s) of neoliberal urbanism further orients my discussion of urban performance methodology (Liinamaa, p. 537).

I address my research questions as they might be taken up by others concerned with the political implications and impacts of their respective practices on the shape of cities yet to

⁶ A ten-year “cultural development policy” for Montreal entitled *Montréal, cultural metropolis: A cultural development policy for Ville de Montréal 2005–2015* espouses a rhetoric that identifies culture industries and creative professionals as the “engines” of economic growth: “Culture is the cornerstone of Montréal’s identity, history, and social cohesion. This policy intends to take Montréal a step further and make culture one of the main engines of its development, economic vitality and future prosperity” (Direction du développement culturel et des bibliothèques & Service du développement culturel, de la qualité du milieu de vie et de la diversité ethnoculturelle, 2005, p. 2).

come, including those artist-researchers creating place-based or site-specific theatre and performances in found space, or those with broader interests in creative urban methodologies.⁷ I hope to make visible and tangible for the reader a theatrical scaffold through which to pursue, materialize, and communicate their own curiosity toward the place(s) that matter to them. The exegesis foregrounds the performative interaction of performance and place through dual emphasis on the sociospatial and material contexts in and through which *Curiosité* was conducted and developed, and an elaboration of curiosity as an epistemic stance, material practice, and performance culture guiding this urban performance dramaturgy.

Given this objective of extending and expanding the contexts for *Curiosité* as an urban performance dramaturgy, methods constitute a key element of the research question. I understand the methods I took up to create *Abattoir de l'est* as embodying the epistemologies of performance and curiosity, drawing this understanding of the “embedded epistemologies of practice” from the conceptualization of methods in practice-led research by Brad Haseman (2010). Haseman (2010) and Haseman and Mafe (2009) assert that principles, practices, knowledges (explicit and tacit), and theories underwrite methods of artistic production.⁸ I understand performance in and through *Curiosité* as both a critical and creative practice that inquires into hegemonic representations of the city, and a modality of knowledge production that might open new ways of engaging with the urban, particularly deindustrializing and gentrifying neighbourhoods. This framing relies upon Foucault’s (1977/1980) articulation of the interrelations between knowledge, power, discourse, and critique, and postmodern critiques of positivism from within feminist theory (Haraway, 1988; Butler, 2001), performance studies (de

⁷ My research and reflective exegesis participates in a growing body of scholarship relation dedicated to the development of creative urban methodologies, including engaged urbanism (Campkin & Duijzings, 2016), performative urbanism (Wolfrum & Brandis, 2015; Janssen, 2018), performance design (Hannah & Harsløf, 2008), and expanded scenography (McKinney & Palmer, 2017; Hann, 2019). Campkin and Duijzings (2016) describe engaged urbanism as a “hands-on urbanism that is sensitive to local contexts and employs collaborative, interactive and participatory methods that work to secure the interests of vulnerable categories of people—who suffer dislocation, eviction, loss of community and housing as a consequence of war, destruction of livelihoods and habitat and processes of segregation, gentrification, and ghettoization” (pp. 3–4). Engaged urbanism suggests a more activist orientation and emphasis on problem-solving than I propose with *Curiosité*, even as I share concern for—and in my research-creation methodology seek to attend to—the issues of social and spatial inequality in the city, as outlined above. I do not propose *Curiosité* as a substitute or stand-in for political activism.

⁸ These underlying principles of practice, what Haseman (2010), in his outline of the performative research paradigm, describes as the “embedded epistemologies” of practice, might consist of tacit knowledges (p. 147). Donald Schön (1983) describes tacit knowledges as the rote habits “that have grown up around the repetitive experiences of a specialized practice,” but they might (and should, if they are to be considered research-creation methods) also consist in more explicit understandings (p. 61).

Certeau, 1980/2011; Conquergood, 2002), qualitative research (Rogers, 2012), and research-creation (Nelson, 2013; Busch, 2009; Haseman, 2006) that articulate different conditions and frameworks of knowing.



Figure 5. A semantic field for curiosity and its related terms, mapped across the Centre-Sud segment of Rue Ontario, as it appears in several superimposed historical maps. Digital collage by the author, March 2012.

B. Hochelaga-Maisonneuve: An Overview of Industrialization, Deindustrialization, and Urban Renewal

Shaped by my past, lived experiences of industrial and deindustrializing places (see pp. 65–70, this introduction), and by an ethics of care and a critical (historical and political) consciousness toward place that attends to these experiences, my methodology for place-based performance research is oriented toward apprehending and representing through curious modalities the histories, ambiguities, and differential material and social effects of ongoing capitalist processes on urban neighbourhoods. In the introduction to their anthology *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places* (2017), editors and historians Steven High, Lachlan MacKinnon, and Andrew Perchard identify the cultural ambivalence toward the processes of industrialization and its “end” in North American cities, where the environmental and health benefits resulting from a cessation of heavy industry cohabits uneasily with local experiences of unemployment and poverty engendered by industrial decentralization and capital divestment. In addressing the uneven effects of both industrialization and deindustrialization on the working class, factory towns, and industrial inner-city neighbourhoods, High et al. further yoke deindustrialization and gentrification together as two phases of an ongoing capitalist process that produces harm. They describe the compounding effects of globalization on industrial inner-city neighbourhoods as effecting a “double-erasure”:

The postindustrial transformation of large cities has . . . resulted in a double erasure of working people: first the factories closed, and then they were demolished or converted into high-end condominiums or art galleries. Residents in hard-hit working-class neighbourhoods adjoining the old factory districts have thus been blighted or residentially displaced as areas gentrify. (p. 6)

This generalized account of the paradoxes, erasures, continuities between, and consequences of industrialization, de-industrialization, and urban renewal/gentrification resonates with how I have come to understand these processes and their specific material and social effects in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve through my project and in the course of writing this exegesis. Below, I sketch a historical overview of the neighbourhood, in part providing historical context for Curiocté, and particularizing how I understand these processes to have materialized—and dematerialized—in my place of performance research, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. This partial

overview draws upon contextual research undertaken prior to creating *Abattoir de l'est*, which I took up to better understand these historical and sociospatial processes in the neighbourhood, as well as upon secondary sources I consulted after the fact in order to further that understanding and prepare this reflective exegesis for the reader.

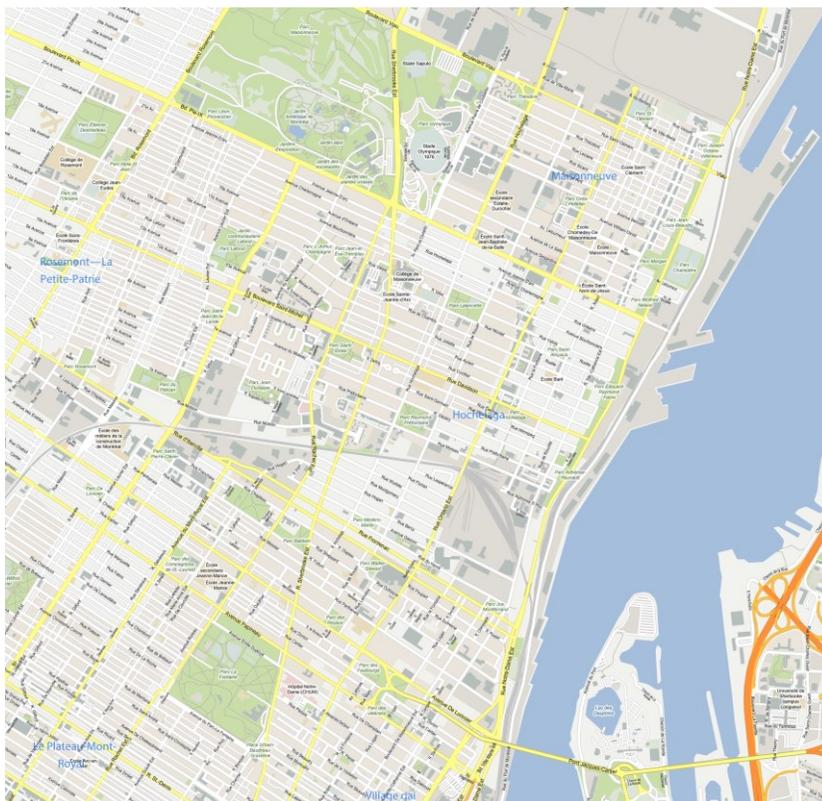


Figure 6. Hochelaga-Maisonneuve is bordered by railroad tracks running parallel to Rue Moreau (Canadian Pacific) and Rue Vimont (Canadian National) to the west and east, respectively; by Rue Sherbrooke to the north; and, to the south, by the St. Lawrence River, Rue Notre-Dame, and the Port of Montreal. Adapted from *Vector map of Montreal (center) (gmap city map theme) (Adobe Illustrator format) [Map]*, by ScalableMaps & OpenStreetMap Contributors, n.d., ScalableMaps.com. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors. Adapted with permission.

Named after a First Nations settlement (Hochelaga) and a French military officer and “founder” of Montreal (Maisonneuve), the district of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve is situated to the east of downtown Montreal, forming part of the larger borough of Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.⁹ Hochelaga-Maisonneuve remains relatively isolated from the rest of the city of

⁹ Hochelaga was French colonial navigator and cartographer Jacques Cartier’s misnomer for the Haudenosaunee village he encountered on the island—likely situated near the foot of the mountain in what is currently the downtown core—in 1535. He later applied the misnomer—a colonial distortion of a Haudenosaunee word—to

Montreal by industrial and postindustrial features of its built environment, including two highways, two railways, an industrial sector to the north (l'Assomption) and a deindustrializing zone to the east (Dickson) (Géronimi, 2006, p. 48).

Like many of the artists I interviewed in the course of my research for this exegesis, and like the recently arrived urban middle-class who have flocked to the district, my partner Alain Bonder and I were initially drawn to Hochelaga-Maisonneuve for its relative affordability. An artist and artist-student with lower-middle-class joint incomes, we came from Shaughnessy Village, a small neighbourhood southwest of downtown Montreal and adjacent to Concordia University, where we were each renting separate apartments. When we decided to move in together, we looked for a neighbourhood that was both a quick metro ride and reasonable walk to the downtown campus. Alain and I—and since 2019, our son, Gaël—live in a one-bedroom apartment (a condominium) which functions as our studio, home office, and in a pinch, rehearsal room. Our building, constructed in 1910, is situated on Rue Aylwin, near the Promenade Ontario, a mixed residential and commercial shopping street that extends from Rue Davidson to Boulevard Pie IX, and where we pass much of our daily life and run our errands.¹⁰

While its population numbers and household income levels had been rising for over a decade, in 2012, as I was beginning research for *Curiosité*, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve yet held onto its reputation within Montreal as a “rough” postindustrial neighbourhood where urban poverty was both acute and visible.¹¹ Reading through the 2011 census data, I gathered that the

the island now known as Montreal. For more on the toponym Hochelaga and the Haudenosaunee words from which it is thought to derive, see footnotes 75 and 255, this exegesis. The toponym “Hochelaga-Maisonneuve” dates to 1966, when a provincial government social mediation program used it to describe the territory shared by the neighbourhoods of Hochelaga and Maisonneuve as an ensemble (Camus, 1993 as cited in Bréville, 2011, p. 114). At that time, it did not exist as a unified zone. Bréville (2011) notes the many electoral and census districts cutting through both Hochelaga and Maisonneuve in the mid twentieth century, suggesting that official zoning did not appear to correspond with how residents perceived the bounds of these neighbourhoods (p. 115). Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve—the regrouping of municipalities Mercier-Est, Mercier Ouest, and Hochelaga-Maisonneuve—occurred in 2002 (Warren et al., 2017).

¹⁰ I discuss the Promenade Ontario in more depth in Chapter 1.

¹¹ Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique (National Institute of Scientific Research) researchers Vachon and Hamel (2017) point to several significant demographic shifts in the neighbourhood between 1991 and 2012, among them: an increase in the percentage of persons aged 20–34 (from 31% to 35%) between 1991 and 2011 (p. 2); an increase in average household income between 1995 and 2012 (p. 12). Since 1996, the nadir of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve’s population at fewer than 50,000 residents, the population had risen progressively, with the most significant surge in population rate occurring between 1996 and 2001 (Vachon & Hamel, 2017, p. 8). While the population of Maisonneuve (the eastern section of the district) rose steadily between 2001 and 2016, including a surge between 2006 and 2016, Hochelaga experienced a small population decline between 2001 and 2011 (Vachon & Hamel, p. 8). The 2016 census data—the latest data available for analysis as of August 2020—indicate a spike in

district showed overrepresentation (in comparison to the rest of Montreal) in statistical indicators of poverty, including: low education levels (22.4% compared to 18.9% for the island of Montreal), low-income households (33.8% to 24.6%), low income seniors (42.1% to 21.2%), single-parent households (48.8% to 32.9%), and renter households that dedicate 30% or more of their income to housing (41.1% to 40.5%) (Centraide of Greater Montreal, 2013).¹² The vast majority (78%) of Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's residents at the time identified French as their first language, though the borough's bilingual and multilingual (non-official language) populations had been rising since 2006 (Montréal en statistiques, Division de la planification urbaine, & Direction de l'urbanisme, 2014a, p. 17). Immigrants represented a lower percentage of the population in the district than in the city as a whole (18.8 to 33.2%), and the same was true of the population identifying as a visible minority (17.6% to 30.3%) (Montréal en statistiques, Division de la planification urbaine, Direction de l'urbanisme, & Service de la mise en valeur du territoire, 2014, pp. 48–49).¹³ According to the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) for the federal electoral district of Hochelaga, a smaller geographic area that includes Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, at least 0.6% of residents identified as Indigenous peoples, including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, compared to a similar rate for the city of Montreal (Statistics Canada, 2013a, 2013b).¹⁴

population growth of 3.5% in the district since 2011, compared with a 2.9% increase for the island of Montreal (Stopa, 2017).

¹² Highlighting data from the most recent 2016 census, Warren et al. (2017) note that Hochelaga-Maisonneuve was the second-poorest neighbourhood in Montreal, with 23% constituting low income households, and 35% living below the poverty line. In Hochelaga, the western half of the neighbourhood where I reside, 50% of the population were living below the poverty line in 2016.

¹³ Note that the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) replaced the long form census that year and had a higher non-response rate than the subsequent 2016 long form census. Moreover, the figures cited here are population estimates, rather than counts. 2016 census data indicate demographic shifts since the 2011 NHS, including increases in both the immigrant population (23%, with the largest proportions having emigrated from Algeria, France, and Haiti), and in the population self-identifying as a visible minority (22%) (Montréal en statistiques & Service du développement économique, 2018a, p. 19, p. 21). By comparison, across the island of Montreal in 2016, immigrants made up 34% of the population, and 34% of the population self-identified as a visible minority (Montréal en statistiques & Service du développement économique, 2018b, p. 24).

¹⁴ With respect to this NHS data and its inclusion here, it is important to note that 1) the language of the census uses the terms "Aboriginal" and "Indian" rather than Indigenous; 2) this data reflects estimates for Indigenous peoples living in private households only; 3) Statistics Canada collects census data based on respondents' identification by "Ethnic origin," "Aboriginal ancestry," "Aboriginal identity," and/or "Registered or Treaty" under the *Indian Act* of Canada; and 4) these population categories, criteria, and counts may conflict with sovereign Indigenous determinations of citizenship and identity. In 2011, the district of Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve did not include NHS data for Indigenous peoples in its own demographic report, possibly because the accuracy of the data is disputed. Additionally, the city of Montreal cited estimates for "Aboriginal ancestry" that year (Montréal en statistiques, Division de la planification urbaine, & Direction de l'urbanisme, 2014b, p. 25). 2011 NHS estimates for

Determined to dive beyond or behind these statistics, and cognizant of the limitations and problematics of census data categories and collection practices, I pursued specific histories of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, engaging with urban historians' writings, local historical archives, and cultural and government webpages dedicated to the neighbourhood's industrial past and heritage. Through this preliminary contextual research, I began to assemble a partial story of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's industrialization in the century after Canadian Confederation in 1867.

Industrialization

The historical narratives, photographs, and other remnants of a prosperous industrial past I recovered were striking, mediating my experiences of the neighbourhood in which I now lived. Throughout Montreal's industrial period (roughly 1885–1970), when the city had the largest urban population in Canada, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve was a booming Franco-Canadian workers' enclave, a hub for textile manufacturing, ship and train building, food, tanning, shoe, and tobacco industries (Bournival et al., 2007–2008). On my routine walks in the neighbourhood, I had encountered ghost signs on the brick facades of offices, condominiums, and vacated buildings, hand-painted traces of these former industries.

My research also revealed that prior to industrialization, the toponym Hochelaga defined a broader tract of land comprising what would become in the early twentieth century the distinct municipalities of Hochelaga and Maisonneuve. Hochelaga had been a predominantly Anglophone village in Côte Sainte-Marie (St. Mary's Ward). The demographics shifted in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, however, as Montreal's industrial economy boomed, the urban population doubled and spread to the suburbs, and the city's social structure became increasingly stratified, its geography further divided by differences in ethnicity, language, and class (Linteau, 2007/2013, p. 85). At this time, affluent Franco-Canadian merchants, whose villas

the federal electoral district of Hochelaga included 650 residents of "Aboriginal identity" (referred to in my text as Indigenous identity), meaning "persons who reported being an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who reported Registered or Treaty Indian status, that is registered under the *Indian Act* of Canada, and/or those who reported membership in a First Nation or Indian band" (Statistics Canada, 2013a). In 2016, the city of Montreal and district of Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve cited data related to "Aboriginal identity" when summarizing their demographic rates. The estimated number of people of Indigenous identity in Hochelaga nearly doubled in the 2016 census from the 2011 NHS: 1,075, or roughly 1% of local residents (Statistics Canada, 2017a). In that same year, the district of Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve estimated that those of Indigenous identity made up about 1% of local residents, or 1,345 people (Montréal en statistiques, & Service du développement économique, 2018a, p. 23).

dotted the ward, built factories along the new railways and the Chemin du Roy (King's Road), now known as Rue Notre-Dame (Bournival et al., 2007–2008). Franco-Canadian labourers and a number of Irish Catholics in turn migrated to find employment in the area's new mills and factories. By 1874, Victor Hudon Cotton Mills, the first large factory in Hochelaga and the neighbourhood's largest employer, was also the largest spinning mill in Canada (Bréville, 2011, p. 85).

In 1883, the same year it received municipality status, Hochelaga was annexed by the city of Montreal, due in part to its impoverished tax base (Benoît & Gratton, 1991, p. 124). Opposed to the annexation, Hochelaga's affluent merchants and property owners formed their own industry-friendly municipality from the eastern portion of Hochelaga called Maisonneuve. In an effort to attract large industry, Maisonneuve's founders granted tax exemptions to companies like St. Lawrence Sugar Refining Company and Montreal Terra Cotta Lumber, which established factories along the town's riverine shoreline. Maisonneuve soon became the nation's fifth largest industrialized city in 1885, popularly referred to as the "Pittsburgh of Canada" (Gauthier, 2003, p. 7).

By chance one spring afternoon in 2012, on the wall of the second floor of the municipal library, I encountered a bird's eye view of the planned promoter's city of Maisonneuve from 1914 (see Figure 7), depicting an industrialized shoreline, the street grid system, and in the upper hand corners, a selection of monumental public buildings, among them the library in which I was standing, formerly the *Hôtel de ville*, or city hall.



Figure 7. Illustrated view of the planned City of Maisonneuve [ca. 1914] by Eugène Haberer, including City Beautiful street grid system and a selection of its monumental public buildings, some of which were never constructed due to the town's bankruptcy and annexation to the city of Montreal. From *Cité de Maisonneuve, Canada* [Archival photograph of a painting], by E. Haberer, ca. 1914, Archives de la Ville de Montréal, Montreal, QC, Canada, Fonds Service des affaires institutionnelles (VM094-D98). Reprinted with permission.

As I later learned from secondary sources, sibling architects Oscar and Marius Dufresne had spearheaded the effort to create Maisonneuve as an ideal industrial city in the style of the American City Beautiful Movement,¹⁵ the Francophone bourgeoisie's riposte to Montreal's wealthy Anglophone enclaves of Westmount and the Golden Square Mile.¹⁶ Beginning in 1907, the town of Maisonneuve began construction on a series of public works projects, new factories and manufacturing plants, boulevards (Morgan and Pie-IX), and institutional buildings,

¹⁵ "City Beautiful" describes an American upper and middle-class reform movement which emerged at the turn of the nineteenth century seeking to improve overcrowded and impoverished cities through Beaux-Arts beautification efforts and the construction of monumental public buildings (Linteau, 1981/1985, p. 146; Wilson, 1989/2013, p. 64).

¹⁶ At this time, the west end was the financial centre of Montreal, as English and Anglo-Scottish elites (including the McGills and Molsons) involved in extensive trade with the British Empire settled in the Golden Square Mile and Westmount, and labourers (primarily Irish immigrants) settled in the southwest nearer the heavy industry of the Lachine Canal.

including the Bain Morgan (Morgan Public Baths), the Hôtel de Ville, the Letourneaux fire station, and the Marché Maisonneuve (Maisonneuve Market) (Benoît & Gratton, 1991, p. 126). The cost of the numerous construction projects combined with the economic recession at the start of World War I landed the town in massive debt: in 1918, Maisonneuve declared bankruptcy and was soon annexed, like its neighbour Hochelaga, to the city of Montreal (Benoît & Gratton, 1991, p. 126).

The start of World War II in 1939 rekindled the manufacturing and construction industries in Montreal, which had slowed throughout the Great Depression (1929–1939), as Hochelaga-Maisonneuve’s factories—like Canadian Vickers Limited (an aircraft and ship building company) and the Canadian Pacific Railway Angus shops—converted to wartime production (Linteau, 2007/2013, p. 136).¹⁷ Historians have referred to the period after the war (1945–1960) as the “Golden Age” of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve: a period in which veterans returned to the borough to work in its factories, public works projects resumed, and new homes were constructed to house workers and their families (Bournival et al., 2007–2008). Still concentrated along the Lachine Canal and in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, at this time Montreal’s manufacturing and construction industries expanded, as the service economy grew, producing a new class of urban white-collar workers, and a new Franco-Quebecois middle class (Linteau, 2007/2013, p. 140).

Postwar Quebec Nationalisms, Class Divisions, and Urban Modernization in Montreal

The sociospatial discourses I was encountering in my daily life and in contemporary media discourse related to Hochelaga-Maisonneuve in 2012 and 2013 oriented my contextual research toward significant sociospatial contexts and contests in the neighbourhood in the decades after this Golden Age of industry. As I gathered from secondary literature, the emergence in the 1960s of liberal and socialist discourses of Franco-Quebecois nationalism shaped the particular processes of deindustrialization and postwar modernization in the neighbourhood, and inflected popular activism against capital divestment and redevelopment.

¹⁷ Despite the economic prosperity of wartime Montreal as a whole, relations between Franco- and Anglo-Montrealers were strained, both over Canada’s involvement in a war and over the growing political power of the Francophone east end, whose populist city councillors were urging progressive social reforms. In 1944, the policy for electing city councillors changed to benefit of business and property owners, particularly Anglo-Montrealers, as it disenfranchised the Franco-Canadian working classes (Linteau, 2007/2013, pp. 136–138).

Deindustrialization hit Hochelaga and Maisonneuve earlier than other industrial neighbourhoods in Montreal. The first of many factory closures, Dominion Textile (formerly Hudon Cotton) shuttered its workshops in the district in 1953.¹⁸ In the 1960s, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's other major industrial shops began slowing production, among them Versatile Vickers, the Angus Shops, and Bombardier (Sénécal, 1995, para. 3). Oriented toward the modernization of Quebec society and culture, the Quiet Revolution gathered around Franco-Quebecois grievances related to two centuries of Anglo cultural and socioeconomic dominance in Quebec, and the Catholic Church's conservative and patriarchal influence on life and culture (Linteau, 2007/2013, p. 165).¹⁹ According to geographer Jason Burke (2009), the Quiet Revolution's elaboration of "economic grievances, spatial inequalities and language injustices" resonated with the new Francophone bourgeoisie as well as with the majority working class, Francophone and Catholic population, especially those inhabiting east-end Montreal, where deindustrialization further amplified class and language divisions (p. 338).

As historian Paul-André Linteau (2007/2013) observes, corporations, banks, and manufacturing industries took note of the rise of Franco-Quebecois nationalisms in Montreal, evidenced by the growth of radical trade unionism among Francophone wage-labourers, the gains made by the provincial separatist (and socialist-leaning) Parti Québécois,²⁰ and the escalation of Anglo-Franco tensions that climaxed with the October Crisis in Montreal in 1970.²¹ Wary that these movements and events would lead to economic reforms and increased

¹⁸ Local historian André Cousineau (2017) offers a more in-depth history of the development and subsequent mergers of Hudon Cotton into Dominion Textile.

¹⁹ The political and social discourses of the Quiet Revolution have reverberated in electoral politics and social movements in Montreal and in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve since the 1960s. Community organizations in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve voiced support for the Parti Québécois and Québec sovereignty in both the 1980 and 1995 referenda, opposing the position of the local business owners association (Société des hommes d'affaires de l'est) (Bréville, 2011, p. 65). The support for leftist and socialist political parties in the district remains solid, even as the political allegiance to the provincial Parti Québécois—which has aligned itself more with a liberal capitalist agenda since the mid-1990s—has waned (for more on the emergence of neoliberalism in Quebec, see Gattinger & Saint-Pierre, 2010).

²⁰ In 1976, the Parti Québécois, led by René Lévesque, won the provincial election and invested in social and cultural programs which extended medical, education, and other public services, and instituted a number of language laws designed to reinforce the status of French (Linteau, 2007/2013, p. 164).

²¹ Following a series of bombings in Westmount during the 1960s, the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ), often described as a terrorist and paramilitary group, kidnapped and killed Quebec labour minister Pierre Laporte in 1970. In response, and amidst growing federal, provincial, and municipal fears of total rebellion, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau declared the War Measures Act on October 16, 1970, sending the military into Montreal in what would be known as the October Crisis (Burke, 2009, p. 336). Bréville (2011) writes that following Laporte's death, police targeted several popular organizations in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve thought to be sympathetic to the FLQ (p. 65).

regulation, businesses dependent on the Canadian markets relocated to Toronto, which soon replaced Montreal as the financial centre of Canada. Investors followed suit, divesting from Montreal-based companies, including those located in its east-end (Linteau, 2007/2013, p. 173).

As I learned through Burke (2009), in the 1960s, factions within the nationalist movement in Montreal sought to tackle the socioeconomic problems related to ongoing Anglo imperialism and urban deindustrialization through different modernization strategies and techniques of violence. Burke contends that two dominant and conflicting visions of an ideal state in Quebec took shape on the basis of this class difference: the bourgeoisie argued for a “liberal capitalist state run by Francophones,” while the working classes advocated Quebec’s independence and a socialist state (p. 339). Burke locates this class schism at the centre of spatial contests and urban modernization discourse in Montreal, where the “end” of an ideal city could rationalize different forms and degrees of sociospatial violence: at one extreme, the overt terrorist violence of the Front de Libération du Québec (Quebec Liberation Front, or FLQ) and their strategic bombing of symbolic sites of Anglo power during the 1960s, and at the other, the large scale demolition of working-class neighbourhoods perpetrated by Francophone-led liberal capitalist provincial and municipal governments in the same period. These *grands projets*—or urban mega-projects—were at the centre of local spatial contests in deindustrializing Hochelaga-Maisonneuve throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Urban Modernization: Grands Projets

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Mayor Jean Drapeau (from 1960–1986) and his Parti Civique advanced a liberal-capitalist agenda and embarked on a series of *grands projets* aimed at showcasing Montreal as a cosmopolitan Franco-Canadian city that could compete on the world stage as “a global destination for tourists and investors” (Whitson, 2004, p. 1218–1219).²² Drapeau’s vision of cosmopolitan Montreal resonated in particular with the city’s Franco-Canadian business elite who stood to benefit financially from these urban revitalization projects. For the communities slated for renovation, however, as Montreal historian Valérie Poirier (2015) contends, the urban renewal projects worsened the city’s housing shortage and “exacerbated the social and environmental injustices” these communities were already facing due to deindustrialization (p. 69). In economically marginalized neighbourhoods, residents were

²² Among the many projects developed with this ideal as driving force were the Place des Arts, the metro system, expressways, Expo 67, and the Olympic Games (Poirier, 2015, p. 69).

less able to fight city expropriations of public or purchase of privately-owned land, which provided much of the ground needed for these large-scale construction projects.

Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, with its largely unilingual and impoverished Francophone population and increasing stock of abandoned factories and industrial lands, became a key site of urban reform.²³ As Poirier (2015) observes, many of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's local residents suspected the provincial Liberal government (which had spearheaded the autoroute plans) of deliberately punishing the district because of its population's broad-based support for leftist separatist political parties and organizations, and connections with the FLQ (p. 70).²⁴ In 1967, the Drapeau administration broke ground on the first of two major transit projects, including the creation of the north-south highway Lafontaine Autoroute (A-25), and, in 1970, the widening of Rue Notre-Dame to a four-lane boulevard connecting the east-west highway (A-720/20) to the Lafontaine Autoroute (Gauthier, 2003, p. 8).²⁵ To complete these transit ways, and amidst local protest, the city expropriated and demolished 2,020 homes and buildings, displacing a significant number of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's remaining residents and small businesses in an already depopulating district (Twigge-Molecey, 2013, p. 22).²⁶ In 1974, as a follow-up to the International and World Exposition in 1967 (Expo 67), Drapeau began construction on the Olympic Village in preparation for the 1976 Summer Olympiad. The city expropriated the land locals used for cross-country skiing and recreation to build the Olympic Stadium (Stade Olympique), and demolished residences and buildings around Rue Sherbrooke and Boulevard Pie-IX to create a thoroughfare leading to the Olympic Village.²⁷ Between 1971

²³ In the fall of 2012, I also visited the Centre d'histoire de Montréal [Montreal History Museum] exhibition *Quartier disparus* [Disappeared Neighbourhoods], which documented the expropriations and demolitions carried out between 1950 and 1970 in three downtown Montreal working-class neighbourhoods, including Goose Village, the Red Light district, and the Faubourg M'lasse [Molasses Quarter]. A web page archiving the exhibition is available here: <https://ville.montreal.qc.ca/memoiresdesmontrealais/quartiers-disparus>

²⁴ Bréville (2011) notes that after the death of Pierre Laporte during the October crisis of 1970, police targeted several popular organizations in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, asserting their suspected links to the FLQ (p. 65).

²⁵ As Poirier (2015) notes, the municipal, provincial and federal governments were all implicated in the planned autoroute expansion, with the Quebec government taking on the cost of the project (p. 69). Under the provincial Liberals, the expropriations and demolitions went ahead, but the project itself was delayed several years. With the election of the Parti Québécois in 1976, which had vehemently opposed the east-west autoroute, the project was downgraded to a boulevard (Poirier, 2015, p. 81). In 1985, the terrain vague along Boulevard Notre-Dame Est was transformed into linear park and bike path.

²⁶ A citizen committee, Coalition contre l'autoroute Est-Ouest (Coalition against the East-West Autoroute) was created to fight the project, combining community concerns about the demolitions as well as environmental pollution related to increased traffic (Bréville, 2011, p. 328).

²⁷ In the archives of the Olympiad, I came across a photo of Melvin Charney's *The Houses of Sherbrooke Street* (1976), and an example of artistic resistance to the liberal capitalist script for the city. Gabriel Szilazi's (1976)

and 1976 alone, the period in which these expropriations and demolitions were carried out, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's population decreased by 14,000 people, or nearly 20% (Bréville, 2011, p. 425).

Community Organizing: Confronting Deindustrialization and Economic Precarity

In the face of deindustrialization and municipal policies of urban renewal which directly displaced or neglected the urgent needs of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's vulnerable populations, residents formed more than 44 community organizations between 1969 and 1979 (Bréville, 2011, p. 328).²⁸ Their aims and initiatives varied, from providing services, such as daycares and food banks, to popular education initiatives, to local coalitions against the autoroute expansion, to organizations addressing unemployment, civil and renters' rights. In the 1970s and 1980s, residents also founded autonomous neighbourhood organizations, including a food co-op (Comptoir alimentaire d'Hochelaga-Maisonneuve), a day camp for children of families in need (Camp Éscale) and community housing groups to address the rental housing crisis and poor condition of many residential buildings and former industrial lots in the district (Bréville, 2011, pp. 288, 327).²⁹

As of summer 2020 (the time of writing), several of the community organizations dating to this period continue to operate in the neighbourhood. The Atelier d'histoire de Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve Historical Workshop), the neighbourhood's popular history organization founded in 1978, proved invaluable to me for

widely published photograph captures the façade of a Victorian rowhouse, which Charney recreated in plywood and installed along Sherbrooke Street prior to the 1976 summer Olympiad. The Minister of Cultural Affairs selected Melvin Charney's project *CORRIDART dans la rue*, conceived as six-kilometre, linear museum for Sherbrooke Street, including photographs, and audio-visual installations by selected artists. While the artists had been called upon to produce Montreal as a "world class" city, many artists instead used the opportunity to critique Mayor Drapeau's project, depicting, as Charney did in *The Houses of Sherbrooke Street*, the homes destroyed. Drapeau called the exposition "une pollution visuelle" [visual pollution] and demanded its removal (*Corridart démantelé*, 1976). The pieces were torn down a week after their mounting, and before the opening of the Olympic games in 1976. For more on *CORRIDART dans la rue*, see Charney, 1977 and Sloan, 2002.

²⁸ From historian Benoît Bréville's doctoral thesis (2011), I learned that these organizations, which replaced former Catholic charities, had formed around a complex political discourse, combining issues of class conflict, Quebec nationalism, and local grievances particular to the neighbourhood (pp. 279, 283). For a full list of these organizations, see Bréville, p. 328.

²⁹ Before 1981, when the Programme d'intervention dans les quartiers anciens (Intervention Program for Historic Neighbourhoods) designated the district as a historic neighbourhood, home and property owners in the district had little financial assistance nor incentive to renovate dilapidated structures, and many buildings—including rental properties—fell into further disrepair or caught fire (Bréville, 2011, p. 419). Bréville summarizes the criticisms these community groups lodged against the federal, provincial, and municipal governments' approaches to urban renewal. As the municipal, provincial, and federal governments liberalized, they increasingly left the problem of urban housing up to the private sector to solve.

sourcing local histories and photographs for both *Curiosité* and this exegesis. Other organizations have sustained my doctoral project in “behind-the-scenes” ways. Founded in 1976, the community family centre Carrefour familial d’Hochelaga (Hochelaga Family Meet-Up) provided me with childcare. The low-cost meals served by the community kitchen and restaurant Chic Resto Pop (founded in 1984) have sustained me and my family on a few occasions, allowing me to complete the text you have before you.

Postindustrial Sociospatial Ideals and *Mixité Sociale*

Since the era of Drapeau’s *grands projets*, Montreal has adopted preservation-oriented policies and intervention programs for the revitalization of historic neighbourhoods.³⁰ Property owners in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, however, only gained access to renovation subsidies in 1981, when the district was designated a historic neighbourhood. These subsidies enabled homeowners to complete necessary renovations and improve the quality of the housing stock. However, the program also spurred social displacements, as many landlords evicted tenants during remodels—a practice that continues today, colloquially referred to as “renovictions”—and prohibitively raised rents. Since I started the *Curiosité* project in 2012 to the time of writing, community housing and tenants’ rights organizations have maintained a high profile in the neighbourhood and in the media, addressing renovictions and the ongoing social and rental housing crisis impacting Hochelaga-Maisonneuve through consciousness-raising and direct action strategies, including sit-ins, demonstrations, petitioning, info booths, newsletters, pamphlets, blogs, and festive block parties and parades.

As I learned, the sociospatial ideal of *mixité sociale* [social mixing] has been at the heart of the district’s approach to addressing ongoing economic depression in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. *Mixité sociale* refers to an effort to attract middle-class residents to an impoverished and depopulating district (Blais, 2013), and in so doing, create an interclass (or mixed) residential neighbourhood with a wealthier tax base.³¹ As I noted earlier, census data

³⁰ Even during the epoch of Drapeau’s *grands projets*, the city’s urban planning programs had included subsidies for renovations in designated neighbourhoods. In 1960, for example, the city of Montreal stipulated that property owners in areas designated as urban renewal zones could receive public funding for renovations; despite many residents’ pleas at the time, and the disrepair of both residential and industrial buildings in the neighbourhood, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve never received such designation (Bréville, 2011, p. 413).

³¹ Urban sociologist Annick Germain and urban geographer Damaris Rose (2010) paraphrase urban developers’ framing of the social mix as a small dose of gentrification in the struggle against ghettoization (p. 22). For more on the *mixité sociale* discourse, its deployment and reception in Montreal, see Germain and Rose (2010).

and sociodemographic portraits of the neighbourhood index a relatively steady increase in residential population since 2001, owing both to intraurban migration and immigration. Since 2006, moreover, these population increases have correlated with an increase in average household income. Both demographers and local activists interpret these correlating demographic shifts as indexing *mixité sociale*, or, as critics define it, processes of gentrification—an influx of new, more affluent residents to areas traditionally occupied by lower-income groups (Smith-Brake, 2011, p. 21).

According to community housing and tenants' rights groups, residential real estate projects and commercial development of former industrial spaces have been the primary vectors for *mixité sociale*. These projects have enjoyed widespread support, including from local residents, condominium promoters and elected officials, who assert that condos and commercial projects improve the overall quality of life in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Others, however, view private sector driven *mixité sociale* as a displacement strategy, pointing to the uneven benefits of urban revitalization approaches which orbit around real estate, commercial and cultural development, and tourism. Critics, which include residents and activists, have argued that politicians have prioritized the interests of real estate developers, who profit most from new condominium construction projects, over and above the urgent needs of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's most precarious populations, including lower income individuals and families.³²

³² In 2014, the Comité de base pour l'action et l'information sur le logement social Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (Hochelaga-Maisonneuve Organizing Committee for Action and Information on Social Housing), or Comité BAILS-HM, a local tenant's rights and social housing advocacy organisation, reported that for nearly a decade, condominium construction projects had outnumbered by far new social and rental housing projects. (*Bails* translates to "lease" in French; thus the acronym also refers to the organization's mandate to protect tenant's rights.) According to statistics gathered by the Comité BAILS-HM (2014), as recently as 2009, 82% of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's population lived in rental properties. Despite the high demand, low vacancy rate, and large number of vacant, condemned, or dilapidated industrial buildings and residential housing units in the district, the proportion of construction projects dedicated to new rental housing in the district has decreased since 2005. (This reality is not exclusive to Hochelaga-Maisonneuve but is seen across the island of Montreal.) Among the 407 new housing units constructed between 2012 and 2013 in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, none were rental housing. Citing the urgent need for new rental housing and the decline of the condo market, the Comité BAILS-HM (2014) demanded a moratorium on new constructions. The Comité BAILS-HM made the case that these new dwelling and commercial spaces had adverse effects on the neighbourhood's more vulnerable incumbent residents, contributing to the housing shortage in the district, and in replacing older working-class and lower-income social spaces, displacing lower-income residents and small businesses. Pointing to the decline in the market for condominiums in the district since 2013, the Comité BAILS-HM (2014) concluded that harmonious *mixité sociale* was not the end result of these projects: the numbers suggested, rather, that more and more condo owners were looking to sell real estate than to reside in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and contribute to its tax base or shop in its local stores.

In my daily walks along the Promenade Ontario, I frequented one of the recently built urban development projects at the Place Valois. A convivial, high-traffic public square completed in 2005, the Place Valois is edged by an upscale restaurant and small food shops at street-level, and on the second and third levels, condominiums. As I elaborate in Chapter 3 (pp. 262–269), in the course of my performance research with *Curiosité*, I came to view the Place Valois as the locus of contestations over *mixité sociale* in the neighbourhood.

Postindustrial urban planning ideals and strategies pursued by the city and by the district in the last twenty years, and the critique of these ideals and strategies I encountered in community activist discourse, formed the core of my performance research with *Curiosité*. I had critically addressed urban planning ideals and strategies in previous performance projects undertaken in Griffintown, another deindustrializing and gentrifying neighbourhood of Montreal. These past experiences conditioned my experiences of and encounters with Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, while my positioning as a new local resident, directly implicated in *mixité sociale* and other sociospatial and material processes in the place of performance research, guided the development of *Curiosité* and its methods. In the next section of this introduction, I describe the convergence between these past performance projects, and the subsequent development of *Curiosité* as an urban performance dramaturgy in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

C. Curiosity as Methodological Approach to Performance Creation in Deindustrializing Urban Neighbourhoods

Curious Correspondences: From Griffintown to Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

In fall 2010, I entered Concordia University's doctoral program in the Humanities, and turned to site-specific performance as my primary area of interdisciplinary inquiry. Site-specific performance and its methods of research toward composition presented to me a means of engaging with the city in which I lived. In the context of this research-creation practice, I worked first on a number of projects in Griffintown, a post-industrial, primarily Anglophone neighbourhood in the southwest of the city with a vestigial resident population.³³ Griffintown has undergone extensive redevelopment and rapid gentrification over the last ten years. *New City Happening* (2011, with Shauna Janssen, Greg MacArthur, and Chad Dembski),³⁴ *darlingARCADE* (2012, with 2boys.tv and collaborating artists), and *Holes: Griffintown by Foot* (2012–2013), three Griffintown performance projects with which I was engaged, were all concerned in different ways with urban history, urban change, and gentrification.³⁵

Curiosity constituted the implicit methodology of my performance creation process in Griffintown—the methods through which I researched place,³⁶ composed scripts and stories, and brought my experience of place into theatrical representation for a public. In researching Griffintown for the purposes of making performance I walked the neighbourhood, collected

³³ Two of these site-specific projects I would create as part of Shauna Janssen's creative research platform *Urban Occupations Urbaines* in Griffintown (www.urbanoccupationsurbaines.org). The last, an epistolary one-woman "reportage" piece created in walking called *Holes: Griffintown by Foot*, was produced by Playwrights' Workshop Montreal (artistic director Emma Tibaldo and dramaturg Lois Brown), and performed for the first time in January 2013.

³⁴ I had used walking as an aesthetic method before. In this case, it was in response to urban development in Griffintown with the collective S.Q.U.A.T., as part of *Urban Occupations Urbaines* (curated by Shauna Janssen). In December of 2010, I had wandered an orbit around the city, borrowing items from well-wishers along the route to get me through a night in Griffintown's New City Gas Building. The walk from home to New City Gas had constituted the beginning of a performance practice that wanted to think about, map, and materialize through art practice the multiple meanings of Griffintown to its surrounding areas.

³⁵ For my first project, I created and performed "The Borrower," a walking and mapping persona, as part of *New City Happening* at New City Gas. The second event, *darlingARCADE*, was a collaboration with 2boys.tv and invited artists (myself included). In this Benjamin-influenced project combining flânerie with reverie, we were asked to take up the methods and conventions of 2boys' citywide project *boutiqueARCADE* (2009) to create phantasmagorical shoes and shoebox theatres for different sites in Griffintown. The *darlingARCADE*, an art installation modelled upon the shoe store, did not sell its wares. Rather, "customers" were invited to select a shoe to try on. A "clerk"-artist would then bring over a shoebox containing a scene from a site in Griffintown. For a discussion of the shoe and shoebox I created for this project, see Janssen, 2019, pp. 206–208.

³⁶ In the next section, I unpack my understanding of the term "place" as rooted in feminist geography and aesthetics.

news stories, and foraged in the archives for traces. Through these research modalities, I better understood the complex relations between Griffintown’s industrial past, the Griffintown narratives circulating in the media and in popular discourse, dominant discourses of urbanism (approaches to urban planning which privilege economic value and bourgeois interests), and the built environment through which I walked. Large real estate developers like Devimco and Prével Groupe, their condominium projects already underway, presented gentrification as a public good. The future “District Griffin” imagined and materialized in billboards and signage showcased primarily white, heterosexual couples peering down on the city from luxury condos. The developers’ plans for “revitalizing” Griffintown via condominium project seemed driven by an image of financial rather than social utopia.



Figure 8. Group Prével’s decorative fencing for the “District Griffin,” under construction in October 2012. Personal photograph.

Hochelaga-Maisonneuve as a Place of Performance Research

As I worked toward an understanding of the processes of deindustrialization and of the dominant discourses of urbanism and their materializations in Griffintown, I began to reflect on the correspondences between my Griffintown work and my experiences in the east end neighbourhood of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. In the years after I moved here in 2009, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve began to appear in the popular press in reference to its gentrifying present; arts

and culture writers reviewed the growing number of quaint restaurants and food shops, encouraging their readers (myself among them) to experience the new “HoMa,” as many have taken to calling the district (see Collette, 2012). Alternately, crime beat reporters wrote of conflicts between anti-gentrification activists and new business owners (see Tobar, 2013). In walking the neighbourhood and perusing news media and development discourse, I encountered the same aesthetic techniques that had accompanied the “revitalization” of Griffintown: the condo advertisements *à venir* [coming soon] plastered along entire rows of industrial buildings, the disappearance of the postwar, single-family houses, the gaping holes which followed, and the hastily constructed foundations of new condominiums. And, there were other “signs” of gentrification—a decrease in the number of *à louer* [for rent] signs, and an increase in scaffolding, renovations, and placards advertising condos *à vendre* [for sale]. All of these signs of rapid urban transformation compelled me to resituate my performance work closer to my own home in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. I wondered and worried over what was being destroyed in the hasty construction of the new, and what my role might be as an artist and resident in either contributing to or critiquing the displacements that were occurring in the name of urban revitalization.

Artistic engagement in postindustrial and deindustrializing urban neighbourhoods like Hochelaga-Maisonneuve is by now a widespread phenomenon.³⁷ Liinamaa (2014) contends that uncritical modes of urban art practice “risk championing an urban exotic with the artist as explorer enacting a contemporary urban primitivist fantasy” (p. 540). High et al. (2017) similarly worry over the uncritical voyeurism apparent in scholarship that delights in exploring urban places abandoned by capital—touting the “transgressive appeal of exploring ruined mills and factories”—without an accounting of the historical processes of ruination (p. 8).

Assumed as a universal passion or desire for novel sensation, curiosity—as an attitude toward or optic on a deindustrializing place—may appear doomed to produce “ruin porn” as its aesthetic object, to rehearse the familiar narrative of wandering artist seeking enchantment in and among imperial debris, or to mirror development and urban renewal discourses which

³⁷ Artistic interest in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve has been plentiful, especially in the last two decades, including among theatre-makers affiliated with or conducting research for postsecondary institutions. My research recovered two community and socially engaged theatre projects affiliated with the Université du Québec à Montréal (University of Quebec in Montreal) in the neighbourhood (see Martin, 2015 for information on UQAM professor Ney Wendell Cunha Oliveira’s socially engaged theatre project; see also Anne-Marie Grondin’s (2007) Master’s thesis on her own socially engaged theatre project).

would re-enchant ruined places as upscale living spaces. Yet, as a differential and situated standpoint or orientation toward place, and in its multiple—and less familiar—valences, curiosity offers a wide and critical range of aesthetic methods and media for encountering and responding to deindustrializing urban places beyond these treatments. With Rue Ontario at the centre of my thinking, daily routine, and performance practice, I began to develop and engage a set of situated methods linked with the epistemological standpoints, historical performances, and material cultures of curiosity.



Figure 9. “Du nouveau sur Ontario.ca,” a promotional podium that must have held flyers advertising “the new” on Rue Ontario, set up outside of the Joliette metro stop, March 2013. Photo credit: Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

Curiosity: Literature Review

As I conducted a literature review of the material forms and historical practices of curiosity toward the development of methods of place-based inquiry and strategies of theatrical representation, I developed a more nuanced understanding of curiosity's epistemological implications, its paradoxical valences and usages, as well as its early and ongoing entanglements with the project of Western imperialism. From this review, I began to revise my research-creation methods, seeking to articulate curiosity as a personal, creative, critical, and social way of apprehending and making knowledge of place, and as a theatrical approach to staging place. Below, I introduce key historical forms of curiosity as they inflected my performance methodology in *Curiosité*, and as they correlate with my reflections on curiosity in this exegesis. I go into more depth with respect to these forms in the chapters of the exegesis, outlining them here to establish the parameters of the project, and reveal some of the paths taken up.

Material Forms of Curiosity: Cabinets and Closets

The curiosity cabinet, emerging between feudalism and the age of Enlightenment, occupies the limen between science and art, epistemic and aesthetic object, domestic storehouse and intimate performance space. Historically, the cabinet has served as a receptacle for a variety of objects and hosted a range of performances. It has been a place for everything from the royal person, to secret conversations, “queer” behaviours, devotional books, wonders of art and nature, scientific instruments, exotic artefacts, toys, and pantry items (Bobker, 2007). In the seventeenth century, the word “cabinet” could refer to “a small private chamber, an executive council of state, . . . a room for the display of works of art . . . [and] a rich case subdivided for the reception of precious articles,” in particular, curiosities (Stafford, 2001, p. 7). Literary scholar Danielle Bobker (2007) suggests that while rooms became places for the reception of people (and thus places of conversation), cabinets and closets became places for things, things that mediated the relations between the self and the other, the individual and the social, the human and the divine. These contexts for private thought and self-fashioning through objects included the protestant prayer closet (as a place for self-inventory and biblical contemplation), the *studiolo* (as a place for study of classical learning, mediated by books), and the curiosity cabinet (as site for the collection and contemplation of wonders).

The curiosity cabinet's physical seclusion from the rest of the home—and its exclusivity—amplified both the cognitive importance and affective weight of its contents. Within the private domain of the collector, the task of representing, reflecting, and mediating the social status, authority, and emotional life of the private individual fell to objects—to things. Invested with the project of self-realization (or self-fashioning), the curiosity cabinet and its material collections took diverse, experimental, and occasionally radical forms.³⁸

Spatial Curiosity and the *Theatrum Mundi*

The curiosity cabinet shares historical and discursive terrain with early modern imperial mapping projects in the Americas, and with the rise of the perspectival staging in theatre.³⁹ While the early modern map rendered the future domains of empire legible to the distant Eurocentric (and often royal) viewer, the curiosity cabinet made foreign domains tactile, collectable, and available to a wider—though still restricted—social class. Wealthy male aristocrats, polymaths, and antiquarians amassed rarities from colonial empires in their cabinets, purchasing, trading, and displaying these objects among themselves. Culture writer and collector Patrick Mauriès (2011) argues that beyond their efforts to “define, discover, and possess the rare and unique,” the cult of curiosity and its curiosity cabinets were invested in a project of “bring[ing] all knowledge into a single space,” thus privatizing knowledge, and manifesting it in material form (p. 9).⁴⁰ The curiosity cabinet (and its related practices) produced

³⁸ Following Foucault (1988), one might understand the closet's related form of the curiosity cabinet as a “technology of the self,” a device which permitted “individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (p. 18).

³⁹ Art historian Giuliana Bruno (2019) adds to the list of cultural performances and material forms of curiosity, contending that the curiosity cabinet, the grand tour, *flânerie*, and the panorama emerge from—and seek to satisfy—the “spatial curiosity” that is the hallmark of European modernity, with its “fascination for views and the psycho-physical hunger for space that led the subject from vista to vista in an extended search for urban and environmental pleasure that could open mental maps” (From the Wall section, para. 3). In Chapter 1, I explore in more detail these correlations between walking, collecting, and motion picture forms as they developed within *Curiosité*.

⁴⁰ In *Of Other Spaces* and his discussion of Western heterotopias, which include, among others, the theatre, the museum, and the library, Foucault (1984/1986) argues that the ideological reason for the modern archive is the drive to contain all times in a place that is without time. Just as the map produces ahistorical space for de Certeau (1980/2011), so too with Foucault's archival spaces: “[T]he idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity. The museum and the library are heterotopias that are proper to western culture of the nineteenth century” (p. 26). The curious collection is an earlier organizational project of this type, a place that contains all places and all times.

and defined objects and contexts of Western knowledge, reproducing hierarchal and heterosexist patterns of sociability and exchange by limiting the circulation and performance of curiosity to the privileged few.

Also known as the *theatrum mundi* [the theatre of the world], the curiosity cabinet presented an analogical model of the world to the viewer, a world from which s/he was absent, but over which s/he gazed freely and enjoyed conceptual dominion. The *theatrum mundi* encouraged the viewer to imagine and reassemble the world through the private collection and within the private domain.⁴¹ Mauriès (2011) contends that early cabinets, as furnishings in aristocratic palaces and concurrent with colonization of the New World, served the ideological purpose of making sense of novelty and diversity that had previously been unaccounted for within Old World cosmology. The curiosity cabinet, in this view, upheld the absolute authority of the divine monarch—and by extension, his patrons—serving as an allegorical image of universal unity, symmetry, and correspondence that reinforced the status quo and the divine order of things (p. 34).

The *theatrum mundi* privileged particular ways of looking—namely, peeping in and looking across—yet it also encouraged manual manipulation of the world within the cabinet. As a series of nested compartments and interlocking boxes, the cabinet assumed an anticipatory drama similar to the royal patron’s approach to the courtly closet (see Bobker, 2007, pp. 17-18). The unlocked cabinet displayed its symmetrical organization to the curious viewer, encouraging lateral viewing—or cross-referencing—between objects of nature and objects of art. The viewer themselves was given the associative task of both “drawing distinctions, [and] of apportioning and accentuating secret affinities” between seemingly unrelated objects (Mauriès, 2011, p. 34). Working with and at the limits of the associative logic of the curiosity cabinet,

⁴¹*Theatrum mundi* also refers to a genre of multimedia mechanical theatrical spectacles popularized in the nineteenth century. Emerging in continental Europe in tandem with eighteenth century Enlightenment ideals, culture, and print media like newspapers, the *theatrum mundi* depicted recent and historical events and “spectacular demonstrations of landscapes and cityscapes” through a variety of media, scales, and special effects, among them automatic or manually operated panoramas, moving belts of figures, lighting and projection techniques, and marionettes or rod puppets (Jurkowski, 1996, p. 173; p. 179). The Curiocité theatre converges with the *theatrum mundi* in its featuring of a manual panorama (banner-and-crank) mechanism, and its use of simple projection techniques, though the historical genre seems to describe a more integrated spectacle of interlinked moving scenery, lighting effects, and (puppet) figures. For the curious reader, Jurkowski (1996) offers a more thorough discussion of historical development of *theatrum mundi* across Europe, as well as accounts of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century cabinets and spectacles (pp. 173-245).

collectors could construct personal and alternative orders, and conduct radical experiments in miniature world making, imagining the world in ways that diverged from absolutist authority, even if in practice they reinforced patriarchal social models of exchange.



Figure 10. Danish physician Ole Worm's massive walk-in collection of *artificialia* and *naturalia*, the *Museum Wormianum* (1588–1654). From *Museum Wormianum* [Engraved frontispiece to print book], by G. Wingendorp, 1655, Roy G. Neville Historical Chemical Library of the Science History Institute, Philadelphia, PA, USA (<https://digital.sciencehistory.org/works/rv042t91s/viewer/k643b219p>). Courtesy of Science History Institute. In the public domain.



Figure 11. The pilgrim, led on by allegorical Curiosity and Devotion. From *Peregrinus affectuose per terram sanctam et Jerusalem a Devotione et Curiositate conductus* [frontispiece of print book], by C. Hietling, 1713. Google Books (https://books.google.ca/books?id=hGCmvuXr4YgC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false). In the public domain.

Curiosity as Transgression

In charting curiosity in its variety, early modern authors identified several human species (or types) of curiosity, whether virtuous or wicked, among them the voyager, the pilgrim, the collector, and the gossip (Kenny, 2004, p. 9). These types, dominated by the same curious passion to know, performed curiosity through foreign travel, or in seeking out wondrous

objects or juicy news items to satisfy their respective curiosities and stock their personal repositories. Curiosity, then, could be characteristic of a person who suffered from transgressive inquisitiveness, an insatiable appetite for curious objects, wanderlust—the strong desire to rove, ramble, or wander—or all three.

Curiosity as a cultural performance encompassed an array of practices that strayed from normative codes of knowing and behaving, and, beginning with its early modern iterations developed a hierarchy of meanings, moral valuations, and gendered forms. The primary and privileged form of curiosity was subject-oriented and male, whereas the secondary and subjugated form was object-oriented and effeminate. The culture of curiosity, and its material culture form of the curiosity cabinet, are sited somewhere between those two poles.

Curiosity, in its human or subject-oriented usages at the time, was a “passion, desire, vice, or virtue”—in its morally virtuous sense, a careful “inquisitiveness or desire for knowledge,” (Kenny, 2004, p. 3), and in its negative sense, as literary scholar Barbara Benedict (2002) notes, a “transgressive desire to improve one’s place in the world” (p. 20). Curiosity described the inquisitive attitude and practices of the collector in and toward the world, as well as toward their desired objects. The curious collector could perform an untoward or transgressive curiosity that might unsettle received or naturalized knowledges, and challenge hierarchical social structures. Similarly, curiosity in its object sense, and as an object in constant circulation, was difficult to pin down. In its object-oriented meaning, curiosity hailed any object which was thought “rare, exotic, excellent, fine, elegant, delicate, beautiful, noteworthy, select, collectable, worth buying, small, hidden, or experimental” (Kenny, 2004, p. 3). As its early modern definition demonstrates, curiosity was polyvalent, referring to an extraordinary aesthetic object or natural specimen, a commodity fetish in an emergent capitalist economy (valued in direct relation to its perceived rarity), an epistemic object, and a wonder that produced an inquisitive attitude or awe in its beholder. The curious object produced performative effects upon the collector or viewer, and its signifying power extended beyond its rationalist utility and its assigned category within the cabinet. Its inclusion, rather, was merited by its interstitiality—as that which was between art and nature. The curiosity, as such, was an undisciplined object, one which cut across binary categories, continually performing and producing itself in novel relations to its neighbours, the perceiving subject, and the outside world.

Critical Curiosity

It is this model of curiosity as unrelenting inquisitiveness, virtuous vice, and queer desire for untoward and undisciplined objects which appears within Michel Foucault's (1980/1990) brief discourse on curiosity in "The Masked Philosopher."⁴² Foucault "dreams of a new age of curiosity" in which the "narrow, skimpy, quasi-monopolistic, insufficient" paradigms of knowledge production (i.e., those of positivism) are overwhelmed by the vice and virtue of curiosity: "[Curiosity] evokes the care one takes for what exists and could exist; a readiness to find strange and singular what surrounds us; a certain relentlessness to break up our familiarities and to regard otherwise the same things; a fervour to grasp what is happening and what passes; a casualness in regard to the traditional hierarchies of the important and the essential" (p. 328).

Foucault describes curiosity as a personal and political passion which entails a subjective reorientation—the embodiment of a novel standpoint with respect to the familiar, the important, the known. His curiosity is an implicit critique of power, and its capacity to draw boundaries and confer value, producing hierarchies of knowledge and subjectivity.⁴³ The "other" perspective of curiosity might redraw the boundaries established by power between the known and the unknown, destabilize the hierarchical relations of the serious and non-serious, the real and the theatrical, such that other modes of apprehension, other frameworks of value, and other realities become possible, tangible, speakable—and, as I will argue, grievable.⁴⁴ In my

⁴² "The Masked Philosopher" is a segment of an interview between Foucault and Christian Delacampagne published in the French daily *Le Monde* in 1980.

⁴³ While he leaves out specific mention of curiosity in "What is Critique?" (1978/2007), Foucault's definition is inherent in his conception of critique. Critique, he writes, is the "moral and political attitude, [and] way of thinking" that asks "how not to be governed *like that*, by that, in the name of those principles, with such and such an objective in mind and by means of such procedures, not like that, not for that, not by them" (p. 45). Feminist philosopher Judith Butler (2001) describes the relationship between critique, its objects, and frameworks of value in a way that clarifies the role that curiosity might play in critical practice. The objective of critical practice is not "fault-finding," or evaluative (good or bad) judgment, but to foreground the frameworks that confer value on particular "social conditions, practices, forms of knowledge, power, and discourse," as they refuse that value to others (para. 9). Critical engagement with hegemonic structures follows from a utopic desire for "alternative possibilities of ordering," or a desire for that which is refused value in a particular normative framework (para. 9). As I understand it, the other framework of value—curiosity—is immanent in the question of critique itself: "how not to be governed like that?" In short, critical consciousness and critical practice are entangled in the performance of curiosity.

⁴⁴In *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable* (2010), Judith Butler asserts that the "apprehension of grievability precedes and makes possible the apprehension of precarious life. Grievability precedes and makes possible the apprehension of the living being as living, exposed to non-life from the start" (p. 15). I extend her discussion of grievability to place; to grieve a place is the condition for apprehending its precarity, which Butler defines as "our radical substitutability and anonymity in relation both to certain socially facilitated modes of dying and death and to

reading of Foucault, which I conjoin with the historical material forms of curiosity glossed above, curiosity attends to the places which “surround us”; the everyday, the overlooked and inessential; that which is close by, proximate, and at hand.

The Performance of Curiosity and the “Arts of Urban Exploration”

As literary scholar Maria Zytaruk (2011) observes, early modern cabinets were sites of contestation between “the ancients and moderns, between traditional paradigms of an interlocking universe and rational orderings of nature, and between the knowledge contained in books and that obtained through direct experience with material objects” (pp. 2–3), holding the “capacity [. . .] to accommodate divergent readings of nature and to embody rival systems of knowledge” (p. 3). In its privileging of material—as opposed to textual or conceptual—knowledge, the curiosity cabinet manifests an argument for both “direct experience” and for materiality in the production of knowledge. This case for the materiality of knowledge production and direct experience embodied by the cabinet, combined with the conception of curiosity as a counter-hegemonic mode of knowledge production, intersects with the recent orientation in urban studies and cultural geography toward creative methodologies as strategies for reconfiguring how we know, experience, and produce the city (see Campkin & Duijzings, 2016; Wolfrum & Brandis, 2015; Pinder, 2005; and Liinimaa, 2014).

In addition to rehearsing key aspects of the discourse of curiosity, this critical interest in urban cultural practices and lived experience of the city draws inspiration from Marxist geographer Henri Lefebvre, as well as from the situationists and surrealists. In Lefebvre’s (1968/1996) account of postwar Paris, dominant urban planning approaches were fragmenting the city according to the demands of rationalist functionality, constructing prospects and places for consumption and exchange value rather than social encounter, investing in the “satisfaction” of individual rather than social needs, and redefining the “right” to the city as a “visiting right” or “return to traditional cities”—the rites of tourism and nostalgia (p. 158). Lefebvre argued that urbanism must shift methodologies away from abstraction and implementation of theoretical models designed to create new social relations and instead engage in “transduction”—the “incessant feedback between the conceptual framework” of a city and the

other socially conditioned modes of persisting and flourishing” (p. 14). Grievability attunes us to these “socially facilitated modes of dying and death,” and “socially conditioned modes of persisting and flourishing,” reckoning with the very frameworks of value that assign life and death (p. 14).

“empirical observation” of reality (p. 151). Urban planning needed to rethink the urban as *oeuvre* (as social practice rather than product), and reimagine “urban man”⁴⁵ as “polyvalent” and “polysensorial,”⁴⁶ conceiving of his [sic] “right[s] to the city” as comprising both anthropological needs and the “need for creative activity” (p. 147).⁴⁷

Urban studies scholar David Pinder (2005), after Lefebvre, describes the postmodern urban context of intervention for a genre of contemporary art practices he calls the “arts of urban exploration.” These cultural practices, inspired by the surrealists and situationists, target the regulation of street life and standardization of urban experience under late capitalism, aiming to illuminate alternative orders and to make “sensible” the forgotten and foreclosed through the aesthetic and the fictional. For Pinder, such practices offer us an experience of the good life in the good city, not unlike Lefebvre’s understanding of the city as *oeuvre*. This is an experience of the urban as “a sensuous realm that is imagined, lived, performed and contested” (p. 365).⁴⁸ The arts of urban exploration are less sense-making activities as sensing activities, Pinder asserts, producing both an outside to what the dominant order of late capitalist

⁴⁵ A note on gender in Lefebvre’s account of urban man: In “Right to the City,” and in the translated version which I read, Lefebvre ascribes masculine gender (mankind and man) to the urban dweller who suffers the alienating effects of the modern city. In “The Right to the Gendered City” (2005), urban geographer Tovi Fenster (2005) contends that Lefebvre’s account of rights to the city blurs the differential ways that power relations, including patriarchal power relations, “dictat[e] and [affect] the possibilities to realize the right to use and the right to participate in urban life” (p. 219). She writes: “Lefebvre’s right to the city clearly refers to the public—to the use of public spaces, those, which create ‘the oeuvre’—a creative product of and context for the everyday life of its inhabitants. However, the oeuvre—the ‘public’—is perceived by some feminist critiques as the white middle-upper class, heterosexual male domain. This sometimes means that women in cities, both of Western and non-Western cultures, simply cannot use public spaces such as streets and parks [. . .] They [women] belong to the ‘private’” (p. 220).

⁴⁶ Lefebvre (1968/1996) counters the image of industrial man and his “needs” as imagined by rationalist planning with the image of the new urban man: “There is still another way, that of urban society and the human as *oeuvre* in this society which would be an *oeuvre* and not a product. There is also the simultaneous overcoming of the old ‘social animal’ and man of the ancient city, the urban animal, towards a polyvalent, polysensorial, urban man capable of complex and transparent relations with the world (the environment and himself)” (pp. 148–149).

⁴⁷ Lefebvre (1968/1996) describes the social and creative needs of the urban inhabitant thusly: “The human being has the need to accumulate energies and to spend them, even waste them in play. He has a need to see, to hear, to touch, to taste, and the need to gather these perceptions in a ‘world’. To these anthropological needs which are socially elaborated . . . can be added specific needs which are not satisfied by those commercial and cultural infrastructures which are somewhat parsimoniously taken into account by planners. This refers to the need for creative activity, for the *oeuvre* (not only of products and consumable material goods), of the need for information, symbolism, the imaginary, and play. Through these specified needs lives and survives a fundamental desire of which play, sexuality, physical activities such as sport, creative activity, art and knowledge are particular expressions and moments, which can more or less overcome the fragmentary division of tasks” (p. 147).

⁴⁸ Implicit in Pinder’s (2005) assessment of the “arts of urban exploration” is a theory of aesthetic critique that differs from the Marxist critique of the postmodern city, which aims to make sense of the urban situation as an effect of late capitalist modes of production. Harvey (1992) provides the canonical account of Marxist postmodern geography.

urbanism deems valuable as experience, and something other than what a more “serious” Marxist critique makes knowable.

I do not wish to do without Marxist critique of the urban, but rather to join it with this other aesthetic practice of critique that appears in and through performance, and Foucault’s notion of critique. For Foucault (1978/2007), critique is a “moral and political attitude, a way of thinking,” emerging from the expansion of the arts of governmentalization in the modern era as a counter-discourse which asks “how not to be governed *like that*, by that, in the name of those principles, with such and such an objective in mind and by means of such procedures, not like that, not for that, not by them” (p. 44). In the context of late capitalism, where neoliberal discourses of austerity and economic imperatives drive policies of urban development, performance might ask how we can be governed “not so much” and “not like that,” and offer a real space and real time of compensation, as well as the “know-how” and “how-to” for performing, valuing, and experiencing the city otherwise.⁴⁹

Collecting and Archiving Place: Curious Approaches

As I worked to consider the question of how curiosity might articulate to methods of place-based inquiry, I considered methods and modalities for collecting and archiving within archaeology, and the forms that archaeologists engage to present such collections to others, whether within the field, or within the museum. I also considered more eclectic methods of collecting and archiving place, including Benjamin’s materialist archive of nineteenth-century Paris in the *Arcades Project* (1982/1999), and the archaeologically-inspired techniques carried out in the site-specific performance practices of Exeter, UK-based theatre makers Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks (2001).

Materialist Ragpicking. Scholar and director of the Brecht and Benjamin Archives in Berlin Erdmut Wizisla (2007) locates the etymology and organizational logic for the “archive” in “the Greek and Latin words for ‘town hall, ruling office,’ which, in turn, are derived from ‘beginning, origin, rule.’ Order, efficiency, completeness, and objectivity are the principles of

⁴⁹ To be clear, I do not take urban art practices to be inherently critical of dominant urban orders and orderings, nor do I assert that an “either/or” identification of art’s political and performative effects can account for the complex entanglements between urban arts and urbanisms. Like Liinimaa (2014), I agree that there exists a more complicated relationship between “art’s strategies of interrogating prevailing features of urban life” and “ambivalent formations of possibility—material, social, and political, and aesthetic—as well as peril, such as co-optation, social reproduction, and social engineering” that such strategies propose (p. 539). Liinimaa refers to this curious relationship between art and urbanism as ambivalent urbanism (see pp. 539–540).

archival work” (pp. 1–2). These orderly, objective archives are familiar to scientific enquiry, including disciplines oriented toward producing scientific knowledge of place. Collecting is a modality through which the scientific regime of archaeology generates and archives knowledge of place through its material traces and artefacts. Benjamin proposes a different archive, far less disciplined and orderly than the scientific collection—its contents and organization subject to the eccentricities of the collector. For Wzizla, Benjamin’s archives “reveal the passions of the collector. The remains heaped up in them are reserve funds or something like iron reserves, crucial to life, and which for that reason must be conserved. These are points at which topicality flashes up, places that preserve the idiosyncratic registrations of an author, subjective, full of gaps, unofficial” (pp. 1–2). Benjamin’s salvage practices privilege topicality, by which I mean that which “pertains to the topics of the day,” and that which can be seen to “contai[n] local or temporary allusions” (Oxford University Press, 2000). The remnants of the collected past which “flash up” into the present of the collector communicate with urgency and material immediacy their significance to the here and now.

While Benjamin adopts several collector personae within the *Arcades Project*, his dominant writerly persona is Baudelaire’s ragpicker.⁵⁰ The ragpicker is at once an archivist of urban waste, a poet of modern life, and the methodological figure of the materialist historian (see Wohlfarth, 1989; see also Schwarz, 2007).⁵¹ In “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” (1950/2007d), Benjamin outlines his critique of the bourgeois concept of progress and its claims on the past, tradition and continuity, he defines the task of the historian as reclaiming oppressed pasts toward revolutionary ends. In “On the Mimetic Faculty” (1955/2007a), Benjamin contends that the materialist historian “read[s] what was never written,” but which exists, dormant in things, in the materials cast aside (p. 336). In other words, the materialist historian “selects from amongst all that is disregarded and from the residues of history. At the

⁵⁰ In “The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire,” Benjamin (1969/2006) glosses a passage from Charles Baudelaire, wherein the metaphor of modern poet as scavenger of the city is made explicit:

‘Here we have a man whose job it is to gather the day’s refuse in the capital. Everything that the big city has thrown away, everything it has lost, everything it has scorned, everything it has crushed underfoot he catalogues and collects. He collates the annals of intemperance, the capharnaum of waste. He sorts things out and selects judiciously: he collects like a miser guarding a treasure, refuse which will assume the shape of useful or gratifying objects between the jaws of the goddess of Industry.’ This description is one extended metaphor for the poetic method, as Baudelaire practiced it. Ragpicker and poet: both are concerned with refuse. (p. 108)

⁵¹ Others include the flâneur, the detective, and the collector, all of which are both historical personae and methodological models for Benjamin as archivist within the *Arcades Project* (see Frisby, 1994, p. 82).

library, he is unconcerned with what has been accredited as precious and valuable, but rather drawn towards historical refuse” (Schwarz, 2007, p. 252). Through the recombination of these fragments, the materialist historian “gain[s] a new perspective on history” (Schwarz, p. 253). This new perspective on history is a view of the present as a transitional “state of emergency,” grasped in digging through the “scrapheap” of history to recover and illuminate the “revolutionary energies that appear in the ‘outmoded’” (Benjamin, 1929/2007c, pp. 181–182).

Archaeological Collecting and Archiving. Archaeological fieldwork involves the physical excavation of a site, and the collection of material culture from a specified context. Archaeology collects the empirical things found together (also referred to as inclusions), which the discipline understands as traces of the diverse and disparate natural and cultural practices which have occurred *in situ* (Pearson & Shanks, 2001, p. 52). From these collected physical traces of different temporalities, the archaeologist interprets the histories of the site, and represents them through the material collection and an accompanying, chronologically arranged narrative. Site-specific theatre practitioners and interdisciplinary researchers Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks (2001) explore the cross-disciplinary traffic between archaeology and theatre within their performance practice. They identify collecting—what Pearson calls “deep mapping”—as a key component within their devising process. As a method of site-specific performance research, deep mapping⁵² is used to generate a multilayered and multimedia archive—a mix of sources, materials, and points of view in, on, and of the site of research. This archive of site-related data is a resource through which the company collectively and collaboratively creates new performances. In many respects, Curioité’s archival practices are a “bridge” between archaeological and these more eccentric logics of collecting place.

Collage as Aesthetic Form of Curiosity

Foucault’s conception of curiosity and his valorisation of its irreverence toward the official echoes key concerns expressed by the modernist and post-war artistic avant-gardes.

⁵² The “deep map” and “deep mapping” span a range of interdisciplinary fields which urban cultural studies scholar Les Roberts (2016) refers to as the “spatial humanities,” disciplines concerned with “qualitative and humanistic forays into the representation and practice of space and place” (p. 1). In his introduction to a special issue of *Humanities* which surveys a broad range of deep mapping practices, Roberts insists that the field of deep mapping exists in and as a “coagulation of approaches and (inter)disciplinary interventions,” identified by its multiple iterations, rather than as a “set of defining characteristics” and “features” (p. 2). The deep map, as dramaturg Cathy Turner (2015) observes, was appropriated from William Least Heat-Moon’s (1991/1999) and Wallace Stegner’s *Wolf Willow: A History, a Story, and a Memory of the Last Plains Frontier* (2000/1955) (p. 185).

The techniques of collage (dada and surrealism) and defamiliarization and historicization (epic theatre) mobilize critical aesthetic forms of curiosity to inquire into hegemonic orders. Below, I take up the intersections of curiosity and collage techniques, as collage became a key method not only in *Curiocité* but also in the writing of the exegesis. These other aesthetic connections will be further explored within the chapters of the exegesis.

In its radical forms, collecting and collage might critique dominant ideologies through the production of alternative archives that contain “objects of knowledge” different from those produced by scientific institutions. This critical orientation to collecting persists in different theorizations and aesthetic iterations of collage practice, including within surrealism, dadaism, and assemblage art, as well as in Walter Benjamin’s discussion of the collector in the *Arcades Project* (1982/1999).⁵³ The collector as collagist repurposes commodities, mass media texts and images, such that collecting emerges both as a critique of bourgeois consumption (and its appetite for the new), and as a “tactic” for self-expression and meaning-making in the commodity-saturated environment of consumer capitalism (Banash, 2013, pp. 14–17). The fragments which compose collage, the commodities repurposed as “ready-mades,” and the waste of consumer capitalism take on new lives and meaning beyond (or in addition to) their exchange value, representing the self and the world of the artist and their audience through the material culture of their time. This understanding of the critical and creative dimension of collecting in collage informs my approach in *Curiocité*.

Curiosity as Critical-Aesthetic Epistemological Stance and Performance Methodology in Curiocité

In *Curiocité*, I imagined curiosity as an approach for finding value and making meaning, beyond what positivism acknowledges as real or true, and without care for what dominant, capitalist culture posits as valuable. In Foucault’s framing of curiosity as a “desire for something altogether different,” and as “care for what exists and could exist,” I saw a link between the personal desires and political concerns motivating my performance work and the particular stakes of urban transformation occurring in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

Curiosity, as it developed in the context of my project, became an attitude of desire

⁵³ In surrealist collage, the fragmentary and obsolete are recomposed to generate shocking images. Artist Anthony Auerbach (2007) traces Walter Benjamin’s “collector” personae in the *Arcades Project* to his engagements with literary surrealism and its collage techniques.

toward the local and the proximate and of irreverence toward the dominant, the universal, and the official.⁵⁴ As an embedded epistemology of practice, curiosity came to describe a complex, careful, and eccentric set of experiential and archival techniques for apprehending place. As I developed walking, collecting, assemblage and collage as curious place-based performance research methods, I also explored curiosity as a mode for theatricalizing and materializing my research into and along Rue Ontario for audiences. I experimented with a variety of aesthetic forms and techniques related to curiosity, taking up the domestic form of the curiosity cabinet as a space for the personal collection; banners-and-cranks, a variant of the moving panorama, a protocinematic medium mobilizing European modernity's spatial curiosity (Bruno, 2019); object theatre as a dramaturgical strategy for enchanting the material culture of Rue Ontario; and epic theatrical techniques (narrator-demonstrators, the parable, and historicization) as methods of "defamiliarization" relative to the "known," to "as is" narratives, and to "common sense" discourses of place. In the combination of techniques and approaches, I sought to compose a narrative and performance event that might spark the curiosity of others, feel both personally and socially meaningful, and appear as topical and urgent to the here and now of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, and to the places and times in which *Curiosité* would perform *Abattoir de l'est*.

⁵⁴ Feminist geographer Doreen Massey (2004) describes how the essentialist framing of the local as oppositional to the global is constructed by an elision between the "empirical global" and the "abstract universal" (p. 118). What is often implied by the global is rather the "abstract universal," and not the specificity of other local places to which this local relates. Within *Curiosité*, and in the exegesis, I seek to treat the local and global relationally as co-constituents of place, and to ground or localize the "abstract universals" against which place assumes a singular identity.

D. Place as Locus: Methodology of the Creative-Analytic Exegesis

In reflecting upon *Curiosité* in this exegesis, I work with feminist values, theoretical insights, and methods as they converge with the fields of critical cultural theory, cultural geography, performance studies, and art history. The feminist theoretical perspectives I engage position subjectivity, place, and knowledge in dynamic interrelation. Diverse feminisms, articulated in and to a wide array of disciplines, argue that the condition of knowledge is the relation of an embodied subject (the one who knows) and the social and material “real” space in which that subject is emplaced. Postmodern cultural geography and anthropology have likewise taken up the consideration of subjectivity in relation to space or place, drawing upon feminist insights, and upon Heidegger’s (*Being and Time*, 1927) and Merleau-Ponty’s (*Phenomenology of Perception*, 1945) phenomenological notion of “being-in-the-world,” which foregrounds the relationship between knowledge and embodied perception and the entanglement of subjectivity with the sensible world. “Being-in-the-world” is the condition of subjectivity and, by extension, of knowledge and expression.⁵⁵

Geographer Jon Anderson (2004) argues that subjectivity is not only historically but geographically produced: “the human condition is a profoundly spatial, or indeed *patial*, one, with identity both influencing and being influenced by its inhabited material places” (p. 255). These ecological constructions of subjectivity work against an entrenched Cartesian dualism which understands human consciousness in a “head” over “feet” model, where the mind is conceived not only apart from, but as master over the body and the material world (see Ingold, 2004, p. 318). The consequences of conduct informed by this way of thinking have been disastrous, producing all sorts of misery between humans and environments. Feminist and phenomenologically informed geography presents another subject—the emplaced subject, and another place—a hybrid of the social, historical, geological, and natural.⁵⁶ In this view, places are neither empty containers nor raw material resources to be worked upon by human action.

⁵⁵ As philosopher Edward Casey (2001) argues, place and self are “co-constitutive” (p. 686).

⁵⁶ In this iteration of *Curiosité* in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, and in the exegesis, I emphasize the social and historical constituents of place, even as I understand these to be intertwined and entangled with geological and natural histories and constituencies of place. In my concluding chapter (pp. 288–291), I have more to say about this centring of cultural histories of place, and how I sought to address the nature-culture binary through genre. I also wonder over the question of how the right to nature (and nature’s own rights) meets up with the sociocultural issues of the neighbourhood that I explore in this text, suggesting this as a future site of inquiry for *Curiosité*.

I draw my conceptualization of place within Curiocté from feminist artist, scholar, and curator Lucy Lippard's *The Lure of the Local* (1997), and from late feminist geographer Doreen Massey's "Places and their Pasts" (1995), "The Strangers beyond the Gates" (2004), and *For Space* (2005). For Lippard, place is the performative interaction of the "temporal and spatial, personal and political" (p. 7). She writes: "Place is latitudinal and longitudinal within the map of a person's life . . . A layered location replete with human histories and memories, place has width as well as depth. It is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, what will happen there" (p. 7). Place is closely associated if not conflated with the "local," oft taken as a synonym for parochial, unskilled, rural, static, or essentially unique or different, and positioned in opposition to the "global," taken as a synonym for the cosmopolitan and cultured, or as Massey (2004) observes, elided with the "abstract universal" (p. 118).

Lippard (1997) sketches a new relation between place and the local, where either term might also be used to describe a "globalized" place, and critically so. In Lippard's account, the local is neither an intrinsic quality of a place or a person, but rather an ethical relation between the human subject and a place—any place—that must continually be performed. In Lippard's account, becoming local is linked to desire: a desire for knowledge of, intimacy and familiarity with a particular place. Becoming local is a critical and political act through which the subject stages a commitment to "tak[e] responsibility to study the local knowledge that distinguishes every place from every other place" (p. 7). To understand and navigate the complexities of the places and communities you inhabit, Lippard argues that you must "lear[n] to look around where you live now," and consider "how human occupants are part of the environment and where we fit in personally" (p. 25).⁵⁷

Doreen Massey (1995, 2004, 2005) addresses the stakes for how we construct and write about place and the local, particularly as these terms are mobilized in place-based conflicts, including contests over real estate development and gentrification, immigration policy, heritage preservation, and the transformation of an industrial economy into a tourist economy. Massey (1995) argues that any local (any place) is constituted in relation to history, and that the

⁵⁷ Lippard suggests that "Research into social desire can set off a chain of personal reminiscences and ramifications, including lines and circles of thought about the interlinking of histories, unacknowledged class systems, racial, gender, and cultural divisions, and common grounds (not to mention the possibility of past lives)—all of which define our relationships to places and help to explain the lure of the local" (p. 25).

local must be conceived in relation to the multiple “pasts” of place. Place, she contends, is a “conjunction of many histories and many spaces,” rather than a container for a dominant history or past (p. 191). She cautions that if we do not attend to the hybridity that constitutes the local, we risk producing monocultural maps, readings, and writings of places. These “maps” become the conceptual frames which teach us how to read, to experience, and to understand place. Dominant histories (singular visions of the past of place) exclude difference and displace people, disqualifying them from an experience of belonging, and also disavowing their role in shaping and being shaped by the local. In *For Space* (2005), Massey argues that simplistic accounts of place and the local serve the interests of capital, erasing local knowledges and histories, and playing into the smoothing over of historical, topographical, and cultural difference that late capitalism sees as its ideal sociospatial conditions—the conditions for the flow of money and goods across national borders.

The stakes attributed to accounts of place, the local, and the city in feminist geography, and my sense of how dominant narratives and histories of place have circulated and contributed to displacements in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, suggested the importance of centring the representation of place in my performance practice and, subsequently, within this exegesis. In both, place is the “locus” of my own curiosity. By articulating the place of performance research through my own experience and position, as well as through “what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there” within the exegesis, I demonstrate place as materially, historically, and socially produced in relation with many presents, pasts, and places. Linked with postpositivist critical cultural theories of knowledge and to feminist geography, curiosity—as a way of conceptualizing and expressing place, and as an embedded epistemology of performance—might enable us to apprehend, represent, and intervene in our places of desire through more complex, careful, and inclusive theatrical gestures.

Methods of the Exegesis

To produce this exegesis, I relied upon feminist writing practices (Heddon, 2007, 2009; Brewster, 2009; Lippard, 1997) and creative analytical processes ethnography (Richardson, 2000; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). I also drew approaches from reflective practice in performance, translating the performance research methods in *Curiosité* (walking, collecting in the archives, and composing field notes) into reflective writing techniques to compose this text,

and engaging in performance reflection techniques, bridging them with qualitative methods for researching, representing, and reflecting upon the interactions of place and performance.

Feminist Writing Practices

I adopt a reflective narrative approach in the exegesis, guided by feminist writing practices. Feminist scholarship has long understood personal narratives and experiences as sites of valuable insight, and sought strategies for making such insights readily available to a wider audience. Writer Anne Brewster (2009) advocates “experiential and personally situated writing,” which takes up an expanded range of extra-academic genres, including “letters, memoirs, [and] anecdotes,” in the dual interests of speaking to a non-academic audience, and better evoking lived experiences (pp. 127–128). I share Brewster’s interest in the autobiographical and extra-academic for the same reasons, conjoining personal narratives with sociohistorical narratives of place in order to construct a situated vantage point, to create a place in and from which to see, think, and speak knowledge. It is an effort to think historically about the geographies which structure subjectivity, and to think geographically about the histories the subject produces—about the particular social and material conditions and topographical formations which are the “subjects” of historical narrative, and which give rise to particular narrative formations.

Creative Analytical Processes Ethnography

Practice-led researchers in the social sciences and fine arts have used ethnography to reflexively represent, understand, and explain their own lived experiences and embodied practices, and to relate those of others. My approach engages with several “genres” of ethnography, including critical performance ethnography (Conquergood, 2002; Hamera, 2011; Madison, 2011), interpretive autoethnography (Denzin, 2013), creative analytical processes (CAP) ethnography (Richardson, 2000; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005), descriptive ethnography (Katz, 2001, 2002), and visual and sensory ethnography (Pink, 2008, 2009). These genres of postpositivist ethnography share particular methodological criteria, even as they differ in their strategies of representing culture in the text. They emphasize researcher reflexivity and positionality, critical and/or activist orientation, dialogical and collaborative methods, and advocate, in one form or another, the use of “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) as a research and representation strategy which situates cultural practices within their contexts of

performance. Below, I explore some of the key principles of CAP ethnography that inform my approach to reflecting upon my own performance practice.

CAP ethnography is a methodology (and set of practices) for producing a reflexive, hybrid “species” of ethnographic writing, including “autoethnography, fiction, poetry, drama . . . writing stories,” and personal narratives, among others (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 962).⁵⁸ The composition and inclusion of autoethnographic or personal narrative as part of an ethnographic text that also includes historical writing, others’ stories, and different aesthetic forms, becomes a means of situating the personal and biographical in relation to the social and historical (p. 967). Meanwhile, the aesthetic within the ethnographic text “open[s] up the text and invite[s] interpretive responses,” “affect[s] [the reader] emotionally or intellectually,” or inspires the reader to write or act differently, in ways that visual and performing arts invite affective involvement and critical reflection in the viewer (p. 964). These claims for what CAP ethnography can and should do, 1) contextualize and historicize the individual; 2) provide context for cultural practices; and 3) engage the aesthetic to invite or prompt changes in social action—suggest its suitability for representing practitioner experiences, the contexts of performance (and performance research), and theatrical practices.

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice was originally designed by urban studies and education scholar Donald Schön (1983) as a technique for practice-based learning and knowledge transfer in professional learning settings. Schön holds that deliberate reflection on experience leads a practitioner to more valuable insight than experience alone. “Reflection-on-action,” as he describes this reflection on experience, can serve to bring to the “surface and criticize the tacit understandings that have grown up around the repetitive experiences of a specialized practice, and can make new sense of the situations of uncertainty or uniqueness which he [*sic*] may allow himself [*sic*] to experience” (p. 61).

Practice-led researchers Brad Haseman and Daniel Mafe (2009) propose interpolating aspects of reflective practice into arts-based research methodologies. As a research-creation methodology formalized in the academic setting, reflective practice nonetheless is rooted in existing methods used by artists for documenting performance, analysing its traces, and

⁵⁸ For a gloss of different writing techniques that form part of the CAP repertoire, see Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005, p. 974.

reflecting on, critiquing, and refining artistic methods. Haseman and Mafe argue that the methods of reflection-on-action might take many forms—particularly those already familiar to theatre practitioners—and be incorporated into multiple phases of an artistic process to “deepe[n] and document . . . emerging understandings of practice,” to identify major and minor events, and to track changes in thought, shifts in value, and alterations of method (p. 153). Reflection-on-action, from this perspective, might include standard practices in theatre and performance, such as workshops, post-mortems with collaborators, and writings that reflexively engage with either a work in progress or past event, with the intention of improving some aspect of process, “product,” or both.

To compose this exegesis, I used a combination of these methods of reflection-on-action, gathering data from ongoing methods of walking and field note-taking in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve; collecting additional archival materials, and engaging and analysing previously archived materials, field notes, and project documentation; and conducting semi-structured interviews with collaborators and local artists according to university and Tri-Council ethical protocols (further discussed below).

The Ongoingness of Method: Walking, Field Notes, Collecting and Collage Techniques as Reflection-on-Action Methods. I sought to produce this text using approaches 1) consonant with curiosity as an epistemic stance; 2) analogous to the methods through which I composed the performance *Abattoir de l’est*; and 3) aligned with feminist approaches to place, as outlined above. As such, I continued the methods of walking, composing and analysing field notes, collecting in the archives, and applying collage and assemblage techniques to produce this narrative.⁵⁹ I took up these place-based research and composition methods to make the reflective document feel as “rooted” in and responsive to the locales, locals, and presents of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve as were the performance events of *Abattoir de l’est*, even as this document circulates beyond its places and times of composition and performance.

Walking and Field Note-Taking. I continued my routine walking in the seven years

⁵⁹ These methods also form part of the repertoire of postpositivist ethnography, whose methods of data collection include walking, fieldwork (for example, participant observation in a performance process) and interviews toward the creation of a descriptive and interpretive account of culture, which most often takes the form of a written narrative.

(2013–present) after the performances of *Abattoir de l'est* in order to find my “points of departure,” and to select the “places” that would structure the chapter itinerary (Chapter 1: Rue Ontario; Chapter 2: the abattoirs de l'est; Chapter 3: the Place Simon-Valois). Walking along Rue Ontario, a site of commercial activity and urban revitalization efforts revealed further—and rapid—transformations in the built environment, as well as changes in circulation patterns along the street. I grasped these transformations in comparing the field notes, photographs, and documents from the Curiosité archive with these more recent compositions.

Collecting and Collage. In the course of producing the first Curiosité performance event *Abattoir de l'est*, I engaged with the archive on numerous occasions, sorting through the materials, categorizing them, interpreting them, and putting them to different ends. The archive remained an “active” site—a place of return, reassembly, and re-narrativization throughout the process of creating the exegesis. In returning to the archive, I had several objectives in mind. I hoped to deepen my own historical understandings of the different sites which frame each chapter, as well as those of the reader, and by extension, to find and make connections between the archived histories of place and the methods of the Curiosité project that remained implicit, tacit, or unrecognized in the making process. Secondly, I was interested in how the archive might be used to contextualize the Curiosité project, its processes, and events for the reader, rather than the audience member. In live performance, the audience which bears witness, the place of performance, and the time frames of the event localize, materialize, and temporalize meaning. By incorporating contextual details recovered from the archives into my descriptions of methods and performance events, I hope to attune the reader to the local references that appear within the play, and which might have been more obvious to those in attendance at the performance events.

Interview Methods. A portion of the data I analyzed in the composition of the exegesis came from semi-structured individual and group interviews with collaborators, and from their responses to written questionnaires, as well as interviews with artists making performances in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve or in the adjacent Centre-Sud neighbourhood. In the semi-structured interviews, I solicited practitioners’ accounts and reflections upon their professional and personal histories, and asked them to recount their experiences of the primary sites of research (Rue Ontario and Hochelaga-Maisonneuve) prior to, during, and after their participation in the project. I also asked interviewees to interpret the performance event, the

performance text, and the performance methods retroactively, and to translate the interpretive practices that occurred in and through performance processes into discursive form. As a follow-up to these in-person interviews, practitioners were sent a written questionnaire, which offered them another modality for reflecting upon and representing their experiences of *Curiosité* and *Abattoir de l'est*. These data collection methods align with current ethnographic interview methods for collecting experiential data on creative processes and sharing authority with collaborators in both critical performance studies (Madison, 2011; Hamera 2011; Denzin, 2001) and theatre and performance research (Dunn, 2010; Freeman, 2009; Gallagher et al., 2012).⁶⁰ (See Appendix for Certification of Ethical Acceptability Letters). While I have not quoted extensively from their interviews and questionnaires in the body of the exegesis, the prompt books, process stories, and contents of the chapters are oriented by my collaborators' differential reflections on the project, and enriched by their critical feedback on components of the in-process exegesis I shared with them.

Scholars in theatre, performance and dance research have taken up collaborative methods for reflecting on creative practice. Collaborative methods of reflective practice engaged within theatrical and performance research contexts aim to share authority with project collaborators, to illuminate the complex negotiations of social relations, knowledges, meaning, and memory which occur within theatrical collaboration. My approach resembles Poynor and Worth's method of collaborative writing about dance and theatre practices (Pitches et al., 2011) and Chang's (2013) method of partial collaborative autoethnography (p. 111). These methods aim to communicate across difference and distance, whether the divide is disciplinary, spatial, or social,⁶¹ and to engage participants as co-researchers, who contribute personal narratives and memories while also engaging critically and analytically with others' subjective accounts in which they might feature as "characters." Participants in these

⁶⁰ With the interpretive and performative turns, oral historians and performance ethnographers have directed more attention to the performative conditions of the interview, rather than only to its content. Denzin (2001) and Hamera (2011) approach interviews as dialogical performances shaped by the dynamics of power and presence of interviewer and interviewee, as well as by the narrative environments that condition the act of interview.

⁶¹ Poynor and Worth note: "among practitioners from different backgrounds common terms in an apparently shared language can be misleading, as they are interpreted and applied differently in different practices. As a movement practitioner it is possible to have a conversation with another colleague which gives the impression of common ground, only to find in the studio that there is little communication and few points of contact between the embodied practices. In movement, as in language, it is of course also possible to dialogue across difference" (Pitches et al., 2011, pp. 152–153).

collaborative processes have the opportunity not only to represent themselves through narratives of their personal, subjective experiences of a phenomenon, but also to see themselves represented and to respond to those representations.

Documenting Performance and Document Analysis. In addition to these different forms of interview, further data for analysis were drawn from project documents (field notes, versions of the script, journals, rehearsal reports, and emails), documentation of the different research and performance events (photographs, video, and sound recordings), the material archive of performance (props, puppets, the cabinet structure, and the banner-and-crank canvas), and additional research objects and materials collected during different phases of the creation of *Abattoir de l'est*.⁶² I understand these materials as traces of the performance event and its research processes, and as sites of memory and prompts for reflection on practice.

Ethnographic Methods of Data Analysis. Collecting and analysing multiple forms of data is common practice within ethnography, and finds support in Creswell (2012) and Pink (2009) as a strategy for highlighting different perspectives, for contextualizing and historicising the fieldwork that the researcher conducts, as well as for registering different kinds of information about an event or case that might not be captured within the written field note.⁶³ Sensory ethnography and visual anthropology (including ethnographic film) rely in particular on the reality effects of film and photographs as situated records and points of view.

Research-Creation Methods: Documenting Performance and Document Analysis. Many theatre practitioners working within research-creation or practice-led research also support the use of documentation for engaging practitioners in reflection on performance practices, and the analysis of multiple forms of documentation when it comes to translating the

⁶² I also include secondary data gathered from theoretical, historical and contextual research, conducted both as part of the creation for *Abattoir de l'est* and in retrospect, as such data helps me to better understand and situate my practice, illuminating the causal relations between the individual paths taken up within the project and the wider social, cultural, and material fields through which it is conducted.

⁶³ Pink (2009) theorizes a social and agential (rather than merely documentary) role for media technologies in ethnographic research and documentation. She argues that media technologies like the camera have become extensions of the researcher's embodiment in the field, mediators of relations between ethnographer and ethnographic subject, and agents in the "social, material, and sensory environment" or the place of research, rather than neutral "recorders" of events (p. 101). The analysis of the audiovisual products of ethnography must move beyond the descriptive and toward the recovery of the partial, subjective point of view, making manifest the role of the medium—as an extension of the ethnographer or filmmaker—in conditioning the events it is thought to "depict."

practices of the stage or rehearsal room to the page. Haseman (2010), in articulating the performative research paradigm, describes how different forms of documentation and project materials might be used as sites for post reflection (reflection-on-action), and writing toward the refinement and critique of practice (p. 154). Among most advocates of a multimedia approach to representing practice in the text, there is a shared insistence that documentation of performance (including video) must not stand in for the live event (Rye, 2003; Ledger et al., 2011).⁶⁴ Jonathan Pitches, working within practice-led research in the UK, argues that “subtle differences [are] produced by the various categories of documentation,” given the prioritization of particular senses within different media (Pitches et al., 2011, p. 143).⁶⁵

To compose the exegesis, I worked with documentary photographs of objects, sites, rehearsal and production processes, and performances, as well as with video.⁶⁶ Many if not most of these photographs and video were captured by others; each photographer’s own subjective choices, as well as the “eye” their particular apparatuses inserted, will have affected what was captured, and influenced what the reader (myself included) sees. I have chosen to integrate photographs and video stills into the exegesis, representing the places of performance research and the sited performances of *Abattoir de l’est* through a collage of differential points of view.

Structure and Genres of the Exegesis

The chapters ahead of you are arranged according to the narrative itinerary of *Abattoir de l’est*. As you proceed through the temporal structures of plot, and through its internal itinerary of fictional and real places, you will also pass through scenes of the performance creation process and performance events. I aim to provide a chronological account of the

⁶⁴ Ledger et al. (2011) argue that documentation “may be part of the creative and research process, represent or evidence practice, contextualise it, or provide additional insights, but documentation can never be the thing it documents nor, by implication replace it” (p. 164).

⁶⁵ As Rye (2003) notes, video produces “reality effects,” giving us a sense of the atmosphere, space, movement, and sound in the performance event. Yet, she also describes her frustrations with the flatness and fixed view of the camera as a documentary tool, which cannot convey or simulate the simultaneity, rhythm, and “geography” of performance events (p. 116).

⁶⁶ Two audience members videotaped the workshop performance held on September 14, 2015 at my request and with the permission of the Curioité collaborators; this documentation was to assist me in the writing of the exegesis. At the time, I was unaware that Canadian Actors’ Equity Association (CAEA), the union overseeing the production process for Curioité, forbade filming, even for personal or academic use. They have since stipulated to me that I cannot share videos of this workshop performance, even for scholarly use, but they have permitted me to share photographs. As a compromise between the CAEA rules and the demands of the exegesis, I have included stills from the video footage taken by Florencia Marchetti and Annie Katsura Rollins.

performance creation process, and, for the purposes of clarifying the steps of materializing *Curiosité* and the event *Abattoir de l'est*, I have divided the performance creation process into five sequential [dramaturgical] movements: 1) walking, collecting, and field-note taking as curiosity-driven modalities of research-for-creation; 2) the development of *Curiosité*'s theatrical apparatus for mediating these modalities; 3) the individual composition of the scripted narrative *Abattoir de l'est*; 4) the process of collective *mise-en-scène* for *Abattoir de l'est*; and 5) the siting of the performance event in found space.⁶⁷ Itineraries are included at the beginning of each chapter to guide the reader and provide at a glance the structure along which each chapter unfolds. An overview of each chapter's contents, the itineraries make explicit the correspondences between the different components of each chapter, and facilitate comparison between chapters, particularly as each proceeds somewhat differently.

For the sixth movement of performance research, the writing of this text, I have engaged an exegetical approach consonant with curiosity and enchantment as provisional hermeneutics. In contrast to a more progressive trajectory of argument, the exegesis proceeds through reflexive and reflective critical and creative gestures—through recursive movements that recover different insights or angles; through closer handling, careful inventory, and rearrangement of archival materials; and through the ongoing pursuit and elaboration of contexts in which the events and objects of research and performance are nested. The text builds through the layering, assemblage, and [re]constellation of fragments. This hermeneutic approach holds the capacities to represent the ongoingness, indeterminacy, and irreducibility of urban places, and to stage the relationality of the local, place, performance, and self in their inscription. Moreover, in its contextualizing moves, it embeds the events of research and performance in the local and facilitates both reflection on and revision of methodology. The exegesis should be read not as a conclusion to performance research with *Curiosité*, but rather as an opening onto its further and future iterations.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ It should be noted that the movements describe overlapping rather than progressive phases, and that some movements—such as the first—are ongoing. Additionally, a sixth movement might be added to the performance creation process, which would include the processes of composing the reflective exegesis you have before you.

⁶⁸ Art-as-research scholar Katy Macleod and art historian Lin Holdridge (2011) contend that in the written component of an arts-based PhD, “an artist who is in pursuit of further art research will not have produced an argument and drawn conclusions so much as provided a provocation to produce more art, contingent to the changed conditions s/he has effected through the PhD” (p. 353). The thesis becomes a provocation (or, in my terms, an opening) rather than the last word on either the artwork, its meanings, or its methodology.

Within the exegesis, I have identified and developed a set of narrative “genres” that together tell the story of the development of *Curiosité* and *Abattoir de l’est* in and through their conduct in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. These genres include:

1. Prompt book scenes: The balance of exegesis lies with the performance of research, rather than with the performances of *Abattoir de l’est* themselves, even as I have aimed to keep in view the dynamics and sociality of performance events through the prompt book scenes. Prompt book scenes are illustrated, annotated, and bilingual scenes of the performance script *Abattoir de l’est*. These scenes—organized by narrative chronology and placed between chapters of the exegesis—describe the different performance events of *Abattoir de l’est* in and through their sociospatial and material contexts. Moreover, they detail aspects of the *mise-en-scène* absent from most published playscripts, including expanded stage directions that indicate everything from the gestural vocabulary and blocking to directorial notes. The prompt book scenes (four in total) provide complete, interlaced versions of the script in both English and French for the purposes of comparison of the text. At no time, however, was the script performed in the manner of call-and-response French and English content, as might be suggested by the formatting. Because these prompt book scenes precede each chapter and include full English translation, you will notice that the chapter lengths exceed those of more conventional dissertations.
2. Field notes: Field notes are written accounts of my individual and collective walks along Rue Ontario in the course of conducting research with *Curiosité*. Collages of the present and the past, they document personal and social histories of different locations along Rue Ontario, combining present-tense narration and movement along the street with pauses in the journey, reveries that illuminate some of the historical layers of these sites recovered in the archive.
3. Process stories: Process stories detail the making processes of *Abattoir de l’est*, elaborating upon the methods taken up, their conduct within specific sociospatial and material contexts, and the collaborators’ roles in composing the performance event. These stories aim at demonstrating how the performance event was generated in and through different forms of engagement with the locales of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, and through collaboration with other artists. To compose

- these “present tense” stories, I rely upon collaborators’ accounts of these processes as described within interviews, as well as on my own memories and project documentation.
4. Creative correspondences: The equivalent of a practice review, these correspondences highlight the work of theatre and performance makers who engage with urban sites in the production of performance events. I have chosen to focus on artists who engage in like practices in and through proximate or related sites of intervention to my own, so as to situate *Curiocité* within a broader field of urban performance creation, and gesture to other materializations and forms that might be taken up within a performance research process concerned with place.

E. Itinerary of the Exegesis

Chapter 1. Along the Promenade Ontario: The Street and/as Spatial Curiosity considers the Promenade Ontario as a vernacular landscape and site of performance research in *Curiocité*, narrating the first and second movements of the performance creation process. In the first half of the chapter, I discuss the mobilization of spatial curiosity in and through walking and the composition of field notes—interconnected modalities of place-based research and dramaturgical methods—to inquire into, represent, and invite others to reflect upon everyday places, including city streets. Drawing upon feminist and ethnographic methods of walking and writing place, I argue that walking and field-note taking together support a curious approach to place within a performance creation process, constituting reflexive, social, multifaceted, and ongoing methods for researching and representing vernacular landscapes. In the second half of the chapter, I describe the process of transposing place-based research into modes of theatrical representation in *Curiocité*, locating in the moving panorama and popular street performance form banners-and-cranks the scenographic media for conveying my spatial curiosity toward the Promenade Ontario.

In Chapter 2. The Dramaturgy of *Curiocité*: A Theatre of Capitalism(s) in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve: The Abattoir, Exposed and Enchanted, I represent the third and fourth movements of the performance creation process—the scripting and collective *mise-en-scène* of *Abattoir de l’est*—expanding on the potentiality of curiosity as a dramaturgical methodology by taking the reader on a dramaturgical “tour” of the collection of contextual sources which

informed the parable. Illuminating the “common sense” political-economic discourse of neoliberalism in the city as a catalyst and key context orienting the dramaturgical process for *Abattoir de l’est*, I demonstrate the critical and political dimensions of my curiosity, reflecting upon the parable’s mediation of my comparative engagements with historical and contemporary forms of class violence in the city. Next in the itinerary, I guide the reader through the urban archives of Curiosité, from an exposé of the abattoirs de l’est, an industrial slaughterhouse in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve shuttered in 1978, to the media archives of its postindustrial successor the *Journal de Montréal*, a right-wing populist tabloid, with detours in between into the urban imaginary, cultural history, and critical theory. The sketch of neoliberalism’s sociospatial impacts in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and the assemblage of the industrial and postindustrial histories of the abattoirs de l’est open onto an exposé of the epic dramaturgy of urban ruination, an account of the dramaturgical structures and embodied dramaturgies through which my collaborators and I sought to mediate our encounters with and interpretations of these contexts and collections for an audience. The final section of the chapter takes the reader into the rehearsal room to explore the dramaturgy of enchantment and its reanimation of the dramaturgy of urban ruination, positioning enchantment as a defamiliarized epistemic stance toward the material culture of place embodied in object theatre, and as a disposition and hermeneutics orienting the process of collective mise-en-scène with ethical, methodological, and contextual implications.

In Chapter 3. From Found Space Dramaturgy to the Scenography of Correspondence: Siting *Abattoir de l’est* in the Place Valois, I narrativize the fifth movement of performance creation—the siting of the performance event in found space—as a process of transposing the dramaturgical to the scenographic. Working from the conception of “site” within site-specific and found space performance as a performative field and scenographic environment, this chapter collects a selection of the potential reciprocal relations between event and site as they emerged in and informed the siting process for the Place Valois. A commercial area and public square in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, the Place Valois has been shaped by the departure of industry, as well as by the displacements, pressures, and sociospatial ideals of urban renewal and gentrification. In summer 2013, the Place Valois appeared to me as a narrative context for the parable’s dual dramaturgies of urban ruination and enchantment, and as a complex scenographic environment into which the Curiosité cabinet theatre might intervene. In this chapter, I

represent for the reader the techniques of spatial dramaturgy, media analysis, archival and *in situ* research through which I “found” and forged these event-site relations, proceeding from my personal affinities for this local(e) toward a partial inventory of the dramaturgical, sociohistorical, and scenographic correspondences between parable and place. The chapter concludes by highlighting some of the complexities of siting performances in public space and in a gentrifying neighbourhood, reflecting upon the problematics of the permitting application process and on my encounters with audiences to reflexively examine Curiosité’s (and the artist’s) “siting” within the economies and geographies of local tourism in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

Demonstrating the ongoingness of methods carried into the sixth movement (the composition of the reflective exegesis) of performance creation, as well as ongoingness of self and place as “unfinished business” (Massey, 2005, p. 131), in the Coda, I return on foot to several of the places of performance research. In field notes, I refract these changed and changing urban places through the reflexive lens and labours of the exegesis, recovering different orientations, affects, insights, inclusions, affinities, and places of curiosity and enchantment. To conclude, I recast the chapters through the leitmotif of the city as contradiction, situating *Abattoir de l’est*, through curiosity and enchantment, ruination and potentiality, in relation to the ambivalent local processes of urbanization and urbanism with which it was engaged. Addressing correspondences between curiosity and mourning that I felt and found in continuing to walk, collect, and write in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, I reflect upon how curiosity as an embedded epistemology of performance creation, taken up in deindustrializing and gentrifying urban neighborhoods, might deepen not only an understanding of the urban, but recuperate devalued or refused parts of urban experience. I speculate as to how these insights and understandings, embodied knowledges, the recovery of novel sites and experiences of mourning, as well as my recognition of my own critical tendencies and optic on the city as catastrophe, drawn out through my own experiences of creating *Abattoir de l’est*, and in reflecting on that experience in writing, may open onto the next iteration of Curiosité, how the city might be embodied, narrativized, and materialized in the future so as to better hold on to ambivalence.

F. “*Et nous? Nous sommes . . .*”: Personal Geography, Cast, and Chronology for *Curiosité*

Between January 2012 and September 2015, I conducted a cycle of research events, public presentations, rehearsals, workshop performances, and public performances of *Abattoir de l'est*. The performances, staged through the *Curiosité* cabinet, tapped banners-and-crank—a genre of popular street performance that combines scrolling images with picture recitation—and incorporated aspects of shadow and object theatre as additional storytelling strategies. (These performance forms will be discussed in more detail throughout this text.) These performance events were created in collaboration with Montreal-based theatre practitioners Mélanie Binette, Nicolas Germain-Marchand, Rae Maitland, and Julie Tamiko Manning; visual artist Alain Bonder; composer-musician Julian Menezes; and translators Joëlle Bond and Mireille Mayrand-Fiset, as well as numerous participants in the project’s research events. *Abattoir de l'est* has been presented in English, French, and bilingual (English and French) versions.⁶⁹

Personal Geography: Situating the Artist-Researcher

In *The Lure of the Local* (1997), Lippard highlights the performative role that place plays in subjectivity, describing how personal geography or “lived experience grounded in nature, culture and history, form[s] our perceptions and conceptions of] landscape and place” (p. 5). A hybrid form of feminist autobiography and cultural geography, personal geography provides a method through which to situate the artist-researcher. In her elaboration of autotopography, feminist performance maker, walker, and scholar Deirdre Heddon (2007) similarly stresses the co-constitution of subjectivity and place, arguing that it is their relationality which constructs the authorial vantage point: “I write place according to who I am as much as where I am; in fact, where I am is also as much to do with who I am as anything else. But then who I am is

⁶⁹ A note on language: One of the more curious features of *Abattoir de l'est* is the existence of the text in English, French, and bilingual editions. My decision to perform *Abattoir de l'est* in French rather than in my first language (English), and thus to work with translators, reflects my awareness of the audiences who would see my work. The earliest English-language draft of the script, it should be noted, included a significant number of untranslated French phrases. This reflects the fact that I drew upon French-language archival documents in my research process, and chose to integrate this source material directly in my script, rather than through the prism of translation. I also wanted to work with both Anglophone and Francophone theatre communities, and to bring together on the same project those who very rarely have the opportunity to collaborate due (in part) to the division of both theatres and union contracts on the basis of language. I was interested in performing theatrical speech that more closely resembles the diversity of dialects and accents one hears “on the street,” and reflects how people in Montreal communicate with one another across linguistic differences.

predicated on where I am, since ‘I’ am always somewhere. I am plotted in and through place and I plot place. Place and self are deeply imbricated and implicated, and both are contingent, shifting, always becoming” (p. 42). The deindustrializing landscapes I have inhabited and through which I have created performances and artworks shape my standpoint, inflecting my encounters with the former industrial neighbourhood in which I now live and through which I conducted *Curiocité*. Conversely, my memories of the cities of Tacoma and Louisville are now mediated by my experiences in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

An immigrant to Canada, I grew up in Gig Harbor, Washington, the youngest member in a middle-class settler family of Western European ancestry. Gig Harbor is a rural community located on the Puget Sound, an inlet of the Pacific Ocean just across the Narrows Channel from the port city of Tacoma. Built around the western terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad, and located on a waterway that gave access to the Pacific Ocean, Tacoma became an industrial boomtown in the 1880s. My childhood memories are filled with images, odours, and echoes of industry and deindustrialization. Tacoma was a proximate other to Gig Harbor’s forested shoreline.

A hub for the commercial fishing, lumber, and shipbuilding industries in the Pacific Northwest, Tacoma was also the centre of industrial processing in Washington state from 1940 until the mid-1980s—and it reeked of the paper mill process, its thick air permeated by a sulphuric odour known locally as “Tacoma Aroma.” By the time my parents had moved to Gig Harbor in 1982, the economic recession and deindustrialization were transforming life and work in the Pacific Northwest, with shutdowns and layoffs in one sector rippling through others. Due to the recession, unemployment climbed to 13% in Washington State that same year with layoffs in airline, lumber, and construction industries (Hayes, 1982). A few times a week, my mom, a flight attendant and union representative for the American Association of Flight Attendants (AFA), commuted over the Narrows Bridge to the airport in the city of Sea-Tac (Seattle-Tacoma), making her way past Boeing Airfield, one of the largest employers in the area. Throughout the 1980s, as layoffs at Boeing peaked and the AFA went on strike, my parents worried over my mother’s job security.

By the 1990s, most of Tacoma’s industries had relocated, shut down, or been shut down by the Environmental Protection Agency. The city of Tacoma was seeking to transform its image and its older industries, and to attract new inhabitants so as to help it emerge from a

deepening economic recession. This meant dismantling and depolluting vast areas of the city and its tidelands that had been involved in industrial manufacture. While the paper mills remained, the plants modified the manufacturing process to limit the amount of sulphur gas released into the air, thus reducing the formerly ubiquitous odour. My own family hailed the shutdown of heavy polluters, the diminution of Tacoma Aroma, and the restoration of the tidelands as progress.

The geographies of industrialization, deindustrialization, and ecological restoration in Tacoma are entangled with local Indigenous and settler-colonial histories and relations. Both Gig Harbor and the city of Tacoma are situated in the Puget Sound watershed, the ancestral lands and waters of the Lushootseed (also referred to as the Puget Salish or Southern Coast Salish) peoples, including the Puyallup, Nisqually, Squaxin Island, and Suquamish Tribes (Thrush, 1997–1998). In a bid to realize Tacoma as a port city and to open the northwest to further white settlement, in the nineteenth century, federal and local governments pursued strategies to dispossess local Indigenous peoples of their lands, waters, and livelihoods.⁷⁰ Engaging in bad faith treaty negotiations, the federal government consolidated and relocated Indigenous peoples to reservations, allotted reservation lands to settlers and industry in subsequent years, and deployed military and militia violence against tribes and bands that resisted relocation or further dispossession (Harmon, 1998; Reddick & Collins, 2005). I am disturbed by what I know of the historical settler-colonial practices of land theft, treaty violation, and violence which preceded my family's arrival, and which continued to underwrite our inhabitation of these places in the ensuing years.

I am also reminded of the Lushootseed peoples' resiliency and ongoing stewardship of the places I have long called home. A child in the 1980s and early 1990s, I am now more aware of how the political mobilization of the Lushootseed peoples in the event of deindustrialization has shaped the watershed in which I grew up. My family's history in the south Sound begins just

⁷⁰ The partial discussion of the Lushootseed speaking peoples of the Puget Sound watershed that I include here is conditioned by my settler positioning and perspective, even as it draws upon local Indigenous sources, including Puyallup Tribal Language Program (n.d.), Puyallup Tribe Historic Preservation (2020), Nisqually Tribe (2020), Squaxin Island Tribe (2017), and Suquamish Tribe (2015). I also rely on scholarship by settler scholars Jovana Brown (1994), Coll-Peter Thrush (1997–1998, 2017), Alexandra Harmon (1998), and Amory Ballantine (2017) as well as on the land acknowledgment of the University of Washington Tacoma School of Education (2020). When cited in this document, the term "Indian" reflects how tribal governments in southern Puget Sound formally identify themselves, as well as the language used in legal cases.

under a decade after the Boldt Decision (1974), a US district court ruling that reaffirmed the treaty fishing rights of the Nisqually, Puyallup, Hoh, Makah, Muckleshoot, Quileute, and Skokomish tribes (Brown, 1994, p. 1).⁷¹ This reaffirmation of tribal rights bolstered further legal actions by the Puyallup, who sought to reclaim reservation and ancestral lands, including those now occupied by the Port of Tacoma and its surrounding infrastructure. In the years after the Boldt Decision, the Puyallup recovered reservation lands along the Puyallup River, and in 1990 they negotiated a significant land claim settlement with the Port of Tacoma, Washington state, the federal government, and private entities. This latter settlement included financial restitution for ceding a portion of the acreage occupied by the port, a partnership role for the Puyallup in ecological restoration efforts, funds to build a salmon fishery along the Puyallup River, and the rapid remediation of recovered lands (including waterways) damaged by years of industrial use (Ballantine, 2017, p. 60).⁷²

From Tacoma, I draw my sense of the ambivalence, unevenness, and ongoingness of the event of urban deindustrialization. Tacoma's deindustrialization describes neither a simple nor single trajectory of place and people—the “fall” of empire, for example—but rather a multilayered, multilateral and ongoing “clash” of trajectories (Massey, 2005, p. 158). My conflicted experiences of Tacoma's deindustrialization—and my own family's complicated positioning in relation to its particular politics and processes—have shaped my conception of, and curiosity toward, deindustrialization as an unfinished urban phenomenon. Moreover, my more recent encounters with settler-colonial and Indigenous histories and geographies of the

⁷¹ The tribes involved in *United States vs. Washington* (1974) had all signed treaties with the United States guaranteeing their rights to fish in their “usual and accustomed grounds and stations,” and beyond the bounds of reservation lands (Treaty of Medicine Creek, 1854, Article 3). These rights were increasingly threatened in the century after the treaties were signed, as “fish runs were decimated by dams, pollution, and industrial fishing” (Ballantine, 2017, p. 57). In the 1960s, state fishery and game wardens sought to address decreasing fish runs by limiting tribal fishing, even as sport fishing continued, and non-Indigenous commercial fisheries were permitted to operate as usual (Ballantine, pp. 57-58). Asserting their treaty rights in their fishing grounds, tribal activists built encampments and held “fish-ins.” State fishery and game wardens responded with violence, “regularly confiscat[ing] [Indigenous] fishing boats and gear, and arrest[ing] and jail[ing Indigenous people] for fishing, and physically assault[ing] men, women, and children who were fishing” (Brown, p. 2). Tribal activists pressured the federal government for a decade before it filed the legal action that resulted in the Boldt Decision (Brown, p. 2).

⁷² For more on *Puyallup Indian Tribe v. Port of Tacoma* (1983), the Puyallup Land Settlement (1990) and the geohistories of the Port of Tacoma, see Ballantine (2017).

Port of Tacoma remind me both of the limits of my perspective, and of the evolving nature of my understanding of the places to which I belong.

After graduating from McGill University in Montreal with a Bachelor of Arts (English-Cultural Studies) in 2005, I applied to and was selected for a nine-month internship in literary management and dramaturgy at Actors Theatre of Louisville, a large regional theatre in Louisville, Kentucky. During my internship, I joined the dramaturgical staff in conducting preliminary research to guide playwright Naomi Wallace's scripting of a new play about Rubbertown.⁷³ An industrialized neighbourhood in the north end of Louisville, Rubbertown derives its name from American Synthetic Rubber, Borden Chemical, DuPont Dow Elastomers, Noveon, Rohm and Haas, and Zeon Chemicals. The airborne byproducts of the defunct and current industries have produced environmental degradation and health problems for Rubbertown's residents. Rubbertown's animal inhabitants are the toxic stuff of legend: two-headed bunnies, elephantine cats, monstrous figures which produce Rubbertown in the local imagination as a place of gothic nightmares and industrial pollution. On my first day of research in the literary office at Actors Theatre, then literary director Merv Antonio produced a chunk of topsoil collected by a Rubbertown resident, and bounced it off his desk like a dime store superball—in one performative gesture, the environmental violence of industrial processes in Rubbertown materialized.

In that same internship, I began scouting a performance venue for a collaboration between Los Angeles-based playwright Alice Tuan and Philadelphia-based company New Paradise Laboratories run by Whit McLaughlin. This was my first foray into site-specific theatre, and proved central to how I would approach making performances outside of official venues in the years to come. *Batch! An American Bachelor/ette Party Spectacle!*, a play-cum-bachelor/ette party opened on March 21, 2007, staged at the Connexion, Louisville's largest gay and lesbian [sic] nightclub. The Connexion was situated at the edge of Butchertown, the overpass of the Martin Luther King Jr. Expressway that abuts its orange stucco facade framing a perspectival view of the neighbourhood. Butchertown takes its name from the many German immigrants engaged in the butchering trade who settled in East Louisville in the nineteenth century. During Louisville's industrial period (1870–1964), most meatpacking industries in Louisville were

⁷³ *The Hard Weather Boating Party*, the play that took shape from this place-based dramaturgical research, premiered at the theatre's annual new play festival in March, 2009.

situated within Butchertown. As the city de-industrialized, most of Butchertown's slaughterhouses closed, and it became a low-rent district, separated from the downtown core by the expressway in 1967. As assistant director for *Batch!*, I walked the stretch of West Main Street between the theatre and the Connexion several times a day, passing from the Las Vegas Strip-inspired *Fourth Street Live!* in the downtown toward Butchertown. Between these two destinations, I encountered abandoned storefronts, industrial architectural remains, ruined social housing projects, a newly installed gourmet food shop, and, the closer I got to Butchertown, fewer and fewer people.

In spring 2016, nearly a decade after my work with *Batch!*, I walked what had been my daily route and found that the once vibrant Connexion night club had closed permanently. The dilapidated buildings along West Main had been demolished, though their facades had been preserved, repurposed as upscale storefronts and residences. Real estate and commercial developers, meanwhile, were referring to Butchertown as "NuLu," or New Louisville, and its newest residents were campaigning to close its lone remaining slaughterhouse.

Collaborators

Below I present key collaborators, identify their respective roles in the production of *Abattoir de l'est* and *Curiosité*, and offer biographical snapshots based on their own characterization of their lives and practices in interviews.

Mélanie Binette: *Science*. Mélanie Binette grew up in Rosemont, a neighbourhood adjacent to Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, moving into the district where she has now resided for the past fifteen years to attend the Collège Maisonneuve. Artistic Director and site-specific performance maker with Théâtre Nulle Part (Theatre Nowhere), Mélanie's work engages with the poetic valences and collective memories of different sites in Montreal. At the time of joining the *Curiosité* project as a performer and collaborating researcher, Mélanie was a master's student at Concordia University, completing an individualized program in site-specific performance.

Nicolas Germain-Marchand: *Monsieur Mystère-Misère*. Nicolas Germain-Marchand is an *Union des artistes* [Artist Union] member and puppeteer who grew up in Montreal. He has performed and toured with several theatre companies, among them Théâtre de la Pire Espèce, a Montreal-based object theatre company, and the Théâtre de l'Oeil, which engages a variety of puppetry and object theatre techniques to tell stories for young and adult audiences. Nicolas joined the *Curiosité* project in late August of 2013, lending his expertise in object performance to the development of the project's *mise-en-scène*. As a teaching artist, he has visited many of the public schools in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, and regularly works with children and teenagers in schools throughout Montreal.

Rae Maitland: *Romance*. Rae Maitland is an artist and actor with an MFA in acting from York University in Toronto. She grew up in the Anglophone town of Wakefield, Quebec; at the time of joining *Curiosité* she was completing her BFA in Theatre at Concordia University in Montreal, and resided in the Notre-Dame-de-Grace neighbourhood in the northwest of the city. *Abattoir de l'est* marked her first French-language performance as an actor, and her first engagements with the neighbourhood of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

Julie Tamiko Manning: *Raisonneuse*. Julie Tamiko Manning is a Montreal-based actor (Canadian Actor's Equity Association member) and playwright, as well as artistic director of Meta-Chroma, a theatre company dedicated to bringing diverse artistic voices and representations to Montreal stages. Julie grew up in Farnham, Quebec, a small town in the Eastern Townships. At the time of joining *Curiosité*, Julie was working with collaborator Matt Miwa on *The Tashme Project*, a two-person verbatim performance documenting their interviews with Japanese and Japanese-Canadian family members and others imprisoned in internment camps in Canada during World War II. Julie is also a mentor for young women artists with Imago Theatre, a company that focusses on producing work for women and by women artists. While Julie now lives in the Villeray neighbourhood, she remembers living on Rue Ontario in the early 1990s, near Rue St-

Laurent, when the former industrial buildings—including the old Imperial Tobacco factory—were low-rent artist lofts and housed regular parties and gatherings.

Alain Bonder: Visuals. Alain Bonder is a visual artist who grew up between Montreal, Gatineau, and Ottawa in a bilingual (English and French) household, developing a graffiti practice in the late 1990s in Montreal's disused industrial spaces as a member of Kops Krew. In his visual art practice, he works with superimposition and layering of imagery, foregrounds the process of composition, and engages a collage aesthetic to invite the interpretive activity of the viewer. As my partner, Alain entered into—or rather, became entangled with—the Curiocité project in its earliest stages, and provided physical, intellectual, and emotional labour and feedback at every stage in its development. Alain is an avid walker and spends much of his daily life along Rue Ontario.

Julian Menezes: Music. Julian Menezes is a musician, composer, university instructor, and spiritual care therapist for the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal. He grew up in the Scarborough neighbourhood of Toronto, and moved to Montreal for his undergraduate studies, where we met and began our friendship and history of artistic collaboration. He later completed a master's degree in Religious Studies and Philosophy. Julian joined the Curiocité project soon after its inception, and met regularly with me to establish musical parameters and discuss—among other concerns—the moral philosophy of the narrative of *Abattoir de l'est*. He lived for many years (2002–2012) in an apartment at the corner of St-Denis and Rue Ontario, in the heart of the Quartier-Latin, and adjacent to the Université du Québec à Montréal and the Quartier des spectacles (described in more detail in Chapter 1). He now resides in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

Chronology for *Curiocité* and *Abattoir de l'est*

January 2012

Research commences for *Curiocité*, an urban performance dramaturgy in Montreal. Sketches, walks along Rue Ontario, gathering of archival materials.

April 13, 2012

Creative Presentation of Research-Creation at eXhibitions, the Humanities Annual Student Conference, held at the Belgo Building in downtown Montreal. The presentation of the *Curiocité* cabinet theatre maquette.

June 15, 2012

Walking Centre-Sud Research event, with Mélanie Binette (see Chapter 1, pp. 110–115)

August 2012

Writing of *Abattoir de l'est*, and assembly and casting of the *Curiocité* team. Completion of *Curiocité* Cabinet Theatre.

August 2012–March 2013

Private rehearsals, workshops of *Abattoir de l'est*, and translation of the play from English to French.

March 2013

Completion of banners-and-cranks mechanism.

May 11, 2013

The first public workshop performance of *Abattoir de l'est* was held at the PHI Centre in the context of an academic conference related to differential mobilities. It was presented in English, with three narrator-demonstrators: Nicolas Germain-Marchand, Rae Maitland, and Julie Tamiko Manning.

June 23, 2013

A closed-door (invited guests only) bilingual premiere of the play was held at my former studio in the Old Port of Montreal, and featured a full cast of four performers.

June 30, 2013 and July 20, 2013

The outdoor performances of *Abattoir de l'est* featured three performers (Mélanie Binette, Nicolas Germain-Marchand, and Rae Maitland), and were presented in French and for free. The first of the two performances was held after sunset in a municipal park (Parc Hochelaga), and the second in a parking lot behind the old public market Marché Maisonneuve, which now houses a community centre. (For the performance at Parc Hochelaga, see Prompt Book 1, pp. 1–8; For the performance at Marché Maisonneuve, see Prompt Book 2, pp. 76–83).

April 2014

Personal conversations with playwrights working in site-specific or site-responsive performance in the city, including with Naomi Iizuka about her play *At the Vanishing Point*, a play which

explores the impacts of deindustrialization on a Louisville, Kentucky neighbourhood. (See Chapter 2, pp. 212–216).

June 15, 2014

I hold a second closed-door, bilingual workshop performance—with all four narrator-demonstrators, and featuring live music by Julian Menezes—at Hexagram-Concordia (now known as Milieux).

March 2015

Interviews begin with collaborators and continue at intervals until September 2020.

August 20, 2015

Proposal for the exegesis defended; admitted to candidacy.

September 14, 2015

A public workshop performance of a new translation of *Abattoir de l'est* by Joëlle Bond was held at Galerie Alt Art & Design in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, with all four narrator-demonstrators, and live music by Julian Menezes.

October 2015–August 2016

I extend walking as a method toward the composition of the exegesis, gather additional secondary sources and archival materials related to the histories of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and Montreal, and make further visits to local history workshop *Atelier d'histoire de Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve*. I conduct interviews with other artists working along Rue Ontario, including Nicolas Rivard and Catherine Lalonde Masseur of the collective Peristyle Nomade (see Chapter 1, pp. 115–119).

September 2016–February 2019

I analyze data gathered from walks, archives, and interviews with collaborators and artists, as well as project documentation to compose chapters for the exegesis and complete several rounds of writing and revision.

February 2019–January 2020

I take maternity and parental leave, following the birth of my son Gaël in February 2019. While my walking and thinking continues along Rue Ontario, I take a pause in writing.

February 2020

Interview with local artist Gilles Bissonnet at Atomic Café, located within the Promenade Ontario.

March 2020–August 2020

As the COVID-19 pandemic hits Montreal, I finalize my chapters for the defense.

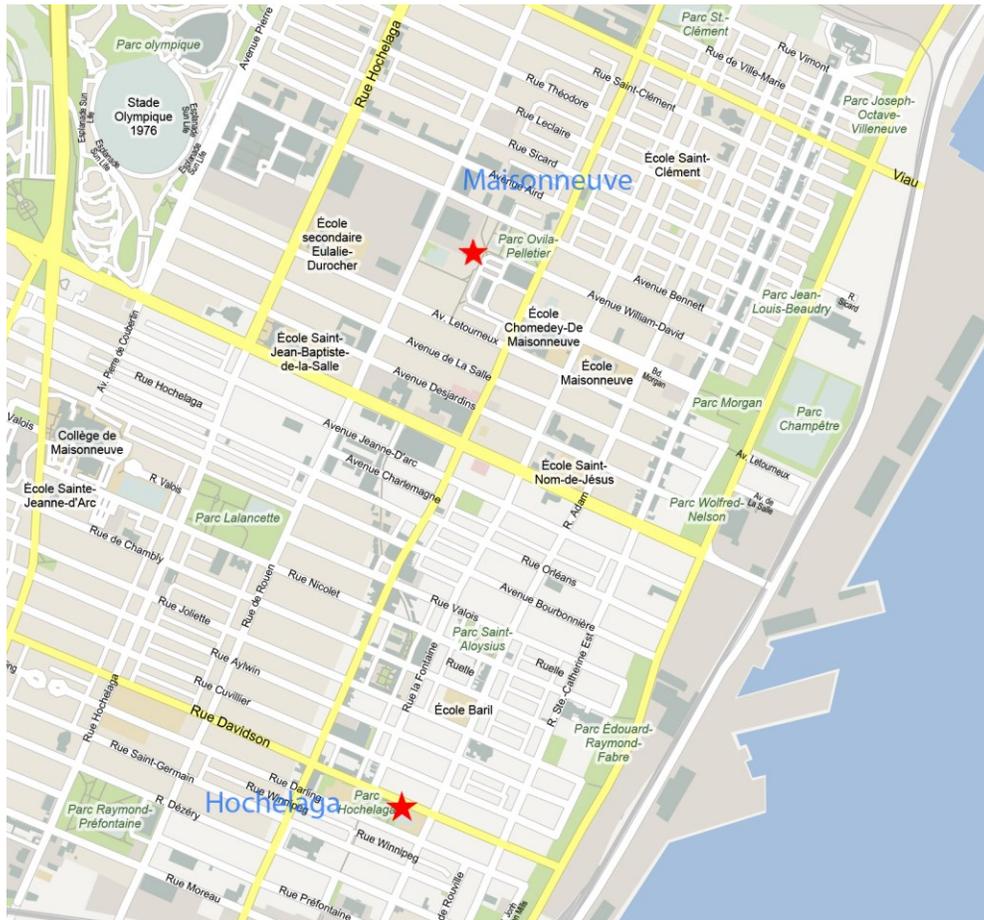


Figure 12. A map of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, with stars indicating the locations of the outdoor performances of *Abattoir de l'est* at Parc Hochelaga and in the parking lot behind Marché Maisonneuve. Adapted from *Vector map of Montreal (gmap regional map theme) (SVG format)* [Map], by ScalableMaps & OpenStreetMap Contributors, n.d., ScalableMaps.com. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors. Adapted with permission.

Prompt Book 2: City Scroll

Behind the old Marché Maisonneuve, July 20, 2013⁷⁴

We have a permit to perform tonight, behind the Marché Maisonneuve, for the second of our two outdoor performances in the summer of 2013. Erected in 1912 by the city of Maisonneuve, the Marché Maisonneuve counts among several of the district's monumental City Beautiful-inspired public buildings.



Figure 13. Nicolas Germain-Marchand, Mélanie Binette, Rae Maitland, and the author rehearsing near the Marché Maisonneuve prior to our performance on July 20, 2013. Photo credit: Alain Bonder. Printed with permission.

In the summer months, the area surrounding the former and new Marché Maisonneuve is used for a variety of public events, including outdoor line dancing, a farmer's market, and more. In the event of rain, our plan is to duck under the covered stalls of the old Marché, under which farmers used to sell fruit and vegetables. Tonight, we have been told we will need to limit our performance to the back of the Marché, as a film shoot is to occur in front of it.

⁷⁴ A note on photographs. Whenever possible, I have included photographs taken of the performance on July 20 at Marché Maisonneuve, although the archive from this performance is particularly sparse, and the quality of the photographs poor. To better illustrate scenes in this section of the Prompt Book, I have also included photographs of other performances.

Mélanie and Alain have pushed the cabinet from its parking spot, a former horse stable-turned-garage in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve that I have rented as a storage space on Avenue Bennett, near Rue Sainte-Catherine. Many of these stables are now for rent as parking and storage spaces in the neighbourhood, where residents once kept draught horses.

We converge on the Marché parking lot, and proceed to the grassy area between the lot, the Marché, the tented ice rink, and the public pool to set up and rehearse before the evening performance. Following our first experience with ambient illumination at Parc Hochelaga, Nicolas, Alain, and I map out the positioning of the security lights in the parking lot and those illuminating the pedestrian path, and choose a location, at a distance from both the lot and the pool with minimal light interference. We secure the cabinet to the ground with tent spikes, and to the fence behind us with rope.

As we are setting up, two men pass by, beers in paper bags. One points to the box in the cabinet representing a back alley in silhouette—cardboard cutouts of a telephone pole, washing line with clothing hung out to dry, and a toy bicycle. He addresses Rae and Nicolas. The scene reminds him of his childhood in Hochelaga, playing hockey in back alleys. Nicolas invites them to come back later for the show.

At dusk, the gnats and the mosquitos emerge from the grass. Alain and Mélanie rush out to get mosquito coils and citronella, hoping that these might deter the bugs during our performance. The swarm is so intense that I am having difficulty keeping my eyes open. The grass, so inviting that afternoon, is now a minefield. Each step awakens a new swarm. At 8:40 p.m., twenty minutes before the performance is to begin, I make the call to relocate to the cemented area near the ice rink. Alain and I cut the ropes securing the cabinet to the fence. Nicolas and Alain uproot the cabinet and tent spikes. Mélanie posts up flyers with arrows indicating our new location to potential audiences.

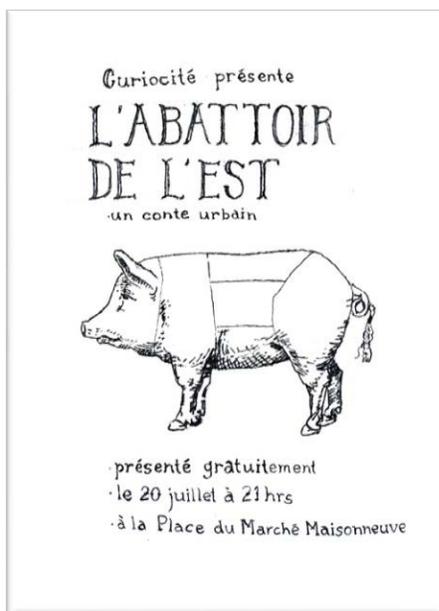


Figure 14. Left: A poster advertisement for the Marché Maisonneuve performance of *Abattoir de l'est*, created by Alain Bonder. Right: Nicolas Germain-Marchand and the author set up prior to the performance at Marché Maisonneuve. Photo credit: Alain Bonder. Printed with permission.

Moths are hovering around the Curioicité cabinet, attracted both to the security lights in our new location and to our lighting set-up. Nicolas grabs the cut cardboard silhouette of the Rag-and-Bone Man and walks him across the scroll, as I watch from the other side. An arm appears in shadow on the screen, on it a winged beetle by its silhouette, marching along opposite in direction to the Rag-and-Bone Man. The arm shakes, convulses. The beetle rolls off, lazily.

9:00 p.m. A number of friends and family members have managed to find us behind the Marché. I am operating the sound tonight, using an iPod connected via Bluetooth to a rather finicky wireless speaker. A hurdy-gurdy, emblematic of fairs and carnival rides, streams out from behind a concrete “rock” in the River diorama. As the actors appear from behind the Curioicité cabinet, I fade the music out.



Figure 15. Audiences gathered around the Curioicité cabinet during *Abattoir de l'est* at Marché Maisonneuve on July 20, 2013. Photo credit: Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

Mélanie Binette as Science, Rae Maitland as Romance, and Nicolas Germain-Marchand as Monsieur introduce themselves in French, not by name, but as members of a collective of storytellers known as Curiosité. They are here to tell us a story of Rue Ontario, a story as long as the street itself, that stretches from its fractured segments in Montreal East to its sudden end in the Quartier des spectacles to the west. This story, Science warns us, begins somewhere else, at the intersection of Rue Iberville and Avenue de Mont Royal, where the abattoirs de l'est once stood. Monsieur unlocks one of the two cabinet doors, preparing for a grand reveal. But Romance stalls, or is stuck on something else, refusing her part.

Romance:

Iberville et Mont-Royal . . . C'est pas les bureaux du Journal de Montréal, ça?

Iberville and Mont Royal . . . Isn't that the headquarters of the Journal de Montréal?

[Monsieur, finding this information of particular interest, looks to Science for illumination, clarification. Does this fact of coincidence matter to the story we will tell?]

Science:

Ce sont les bureaux du Journal de Montréal maintenant, mais, il fût un temps où c'était l'Abattoir de l'Est . . .

Now, of course, it is the *Journal de Montréal*, but it was—at one time—the Abattoir de l'est.

Monsieur:

Mais . . . maintenant, c'est un abattoir ET un journal?

And now, it's both of those things?

Science:

—ABATTOIR DE L'EST!!!!

Romance:

. . . or, blood, sugar, and water.

. . . ou le sang, le sucre et l'eau.

[Romance and Monsieur open the cabinet doors, revealing a painted title "Abattoir de l'est" and the silhouette of the Rag-and-Bone Man, both illuminated by the coffee can halogen light positioned behind cabinet. Monsieur dims the can light, and brings up the LED bar inside the cabinet. Science turns the crank again and reveals the outline of a pig.]

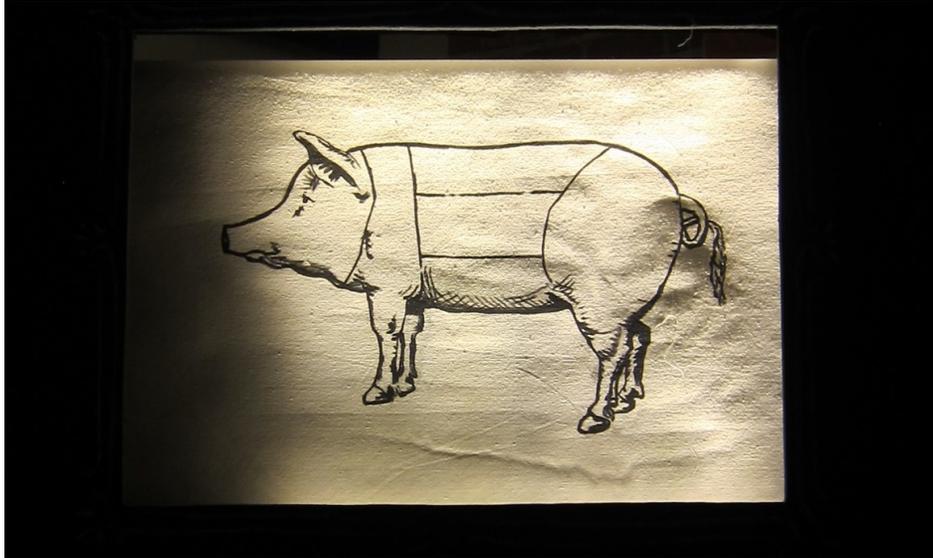


Figure 16. The outline of a sow, with cuts of meat delineated; the markings on this sow, however, also resemble a street map of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Edited by the author with permission.

Science:

Le jour où la truie s'est enfuie de l'Abattoir de l'Est, on se souvient que le Guenillou a vendu une bobine de fil et un mètre de dentelle.

On the day the pig escaped the *Abattoir de l'Est*, the Rag-and-Bone Man sold a spool of thread, and a yard of lace trim.

Romance:

On se souvient que Madame X a marché des kilomètres et des kilomètres de tristesse, toujours plus profonde et plus sombre.

Madame X walked through mile after mile of sadness, deep and obscure.

Raisonneuse:

On se souvient qu'une « p'tite perdue » a été trouvée.

A foundling was found.

Science:

Et que les berges du St-Laurent se sont teintées de rouge.

And the banks of the St-Lawrence turned red.

Romance:

Personne ne pouvait dire d'où tout ce sang avait coulé.

No one could say where the blood came from.

Monsieur:

Avait-il fait son chemin tout en bas de la côte depuis
l'Abattoir ?

Did it drip down the hill from the Abattoir?

Science:

Autrefois, c'était chose commune de voir des flaques de
sang se former derrière les boucheries. Mais depuis
l'ouverture de l'Abattoir en haut de la côte, les rues étaient
immaculées. Non, ça ne pouvait pas venir de l'Abattoir.

The sight of blood pooling in the streets behind butcher
shops had once been common. But with the opening of the
abattoir on the hill, the streets were cleaner. No, it didn't
come from up there.

Romance:

[indicating, with outstretched arms—heaven.]

Je dirais plutôt, moi, que ça venait d'en haut.

Perhaps it came from way up here.

[A recorded organ homily erupts into the night.]

Science:

Les scientifiques du dimanche ont suggéré qu'il s'agissait
de ce que les esprits de leur sorte appelaient *Karenia Brevis*
. . . une algue rouge sang, que les simples esprits
appelaient la marée rouge.

The scientifically minded suggested it was what scientific
minds call *Karenia Brevis*, a blood red algae, causing, what
unscientific minds call Red Tide.

Romance:

Une algue rouge sang.

Blood red algae.

Science:

C'était simplement scientifique.

It was scientific.

Romance:

Peu importe ce que c'était, peu importe ce qui en avait
été la cause, cela coïncida avec l'arrivée de quelqu'un.

Whatever it was, whatever its cause, it coincided with the
arrival of someone—

Science:

De quelqu'un qui est apparu sur les berges ensanglantées
du Saint-Laurent Est, quelqu'un . . .

Someone appeared along the bloody banks of the St-
Lawrence East, someone—

Romance:

Quelqu'un que nous appellerons plutôt, quelque chose . . .

or something we will call—

Monsieur:

Le tout, pour le bien de l'histoire . . .

for the sake of story—

Ensemble:

La trouvée.

The founding.

Science:

Mais cette histoire, comme toutes les bonnes histoires,
comme toutes les histoires qui valent la peine d'être
racontées, commence dans un bain de sang.

But this story,
like all epic stories,
must begin in bloodshed.

Romance:

Un massacre!

A massacre!

Science :

Alors voilà que tout commence avec une truie et un
abattoir . . . L'Abattoir de l'est.

And so it begins with a pig and an abattoir—
the Abattoir de l'est.

[I cue “Marching Time,” a haunting fugue strummed on guitar at a brisk walking pace, and accompanied by a whistling minstrel. Science cranks into a panorama of the City, from the top of Mount Royal to the Abattoir.]



Figure 17. Science (Mélanie Binette) operates the crank, and guides audiences through a vertical panorama of Montreal at the Galerie Alt Art & Design on September 14, 2015. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Edited by the author with permission.

As the scroll begins, the headlights of a police cruiser run across the crankie, briefly obscuring the image, and drawing my attention. I press my hand to the folder that contains my prompt book script, and our permit. The car rolls by, windows down, two silhouetted faces peering toward the crowd assembled around the cabinet. The silhouettes, the car continue past us, exiting the parking lot on the other side of the old Marché Maisonneuve.

Chapter I. Along the Promenade Ontario: The Street and/as Spatial Curiosity

Rue Ontario is a vernacular landscape, a busy transit route and shopping street in its passage through Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.⁷⁵ For urban historian and poet Dolores Hayden (1995) vernacular landscapes are a “storehouse for . . . social memories,” everyday places that hold diverse personal and collective meanings for those who inhabit and use them (p. 9). This chapter considers Rue Ontario as a vernacular landscape and site of performance research, describing the modalities of spatial curiosity—everyday walking, social strolling, field notes and photographs, and archival collection—through which I conducted this research.

I elaborate upon walking as a method of research-creation taken up to develop Curiosity as I worked to consider how curiosity might be mobilized in methods of site- or

⁷⁵ Throughout the exegesis, I use French-language generics to refer to the street (rue) and other places. This choice reflects how most residents of the neighbourhood and in Montreal refer to these locales, and indexes the shifts from English to French language in urban toponymy which occurred after the language reforms of the provincial Parti Québécois, including the passage of Bill 101 in 1977 which identified French as the “language of Government and the Law, as well as the normal and everyday language of work, instruction, communication, commerce and business” (Quebec, 1977). To comply with Bill 101, in the city of Montreal, the English generic “St.” on most street signs was changed to the French generic “rue.” On occasion, I’ve encountered bilingual versions of street signs, which include both “st.” and “rue,” or older, rusted signs in English only. My use of French-language toponymy and generics in the performance and in the exegesis indexes the predominance of settler-colonial practices of place-naming in the city, practices which commemorate colonial figures and histories, and which efface Indigenous place names, or distort them in translation into English or French. Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) remains unceded Indigenous territory (see p. iv and pp. 293-294, this exegesis, for more). Kanien’kéha (Mohawk) language advocates are seeking to restore and encourage usage of place names which reflect Indigenous—rather than settler-colonial—cultures and history in the city. In 2019, activists successfully campaigned to change rue Amherst, named after a British military officer who intentionally spread smallpox among Indigenous peoples during the Seven Years’ War, to rue Atateken. *Atateken* is a Kanien’kéha name meaning “fraternity,” or “a group of people or nations with shared values,” according to the director of the Kanehsatà:ke Language and Cultural Centre Hilda Nicolas, who also directed the Indigenous-led committee responsible for the renaming (as cited in Niosi, 2019). This local renaming is part of a larger movement led by Indigenous peoples to recognize and restore Indigenous place-names within Canada. Since 2016, the policies of the Geographical Names Board of Canada, a federal agency which governs toponymic practices across Canada, have been informed by the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* (2007), which “calls for Indigenous peoples to have the right to designate and retain their own names for communities, places, and geographical features” (Ross, 2017, p. 2). As I begin to grasp the complexities of place-naming that extend beyond the French-English duality, seek to attend to how ongoing practices of settler-colonialism orient me in the urban landscape, and to act with care for Indigenous cultures, histories, and knowledges of place, I recognize that I have more work to do, and that this work extends beyond the scope of this inquiry. However, as the reader will frequently encounter the settler-colonial toponyms and corruptions Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and Ontario in the exegesis, I provide possible etymologies for these names. Hochelaga is thought to derive from settler-colonial corruption of the Haudenosaunee words *osekare* [beaver path] or *osheaga* [big rapids, or alternatively, “people of the shaking hands,” in reference to French colonizers] (Commission de toponymie Québec, 2017; Rice, 2009, p. 12), while Maisonneuve commemorates French colonization in its reference to Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve. Ontario—which names the Canadian province, the Great Lake, and the street in Montreal—likely derives from the Haudenosaunee word *kanadario* [sparkling water] (see National Resources Canada, 2020).

place-based research and dramaturgy, and materialized in theatrical modes of staging place. I describe my findings with respect to both method and media form, reflecting upon 1) how walking supports a curious approach to place, constituting a reflexive, multifaceted, and ongoing method for researching and representing vernacular landscapes; 2) the value of field notes in archiving these walks and in furthering the development of Curiosité as an urban stage and urban performance dramaturgy; and 3) the capacities of banners-and-cranks as a scenographic medium for conveying my modalities of spatial curiosity.

Itinerary

- A. Site Tour of Rue Ontario** provides a topographical and historical overview of the street, with an emphasis on the Promenade Ontario, reflecting on this segment of the street as an everyday route and a site of research within Curiosité.
- B. Walking, Composing Field Notes and Photographs, and Social Strolls** is dedicated to the first of the five movements through which I developed Curiosité, and offers a methodological discussion of walking as a curiosity-driven modality of research-creation along Rue Ontario.
- C. The Dynamic Scenography of the Street: From Panorama to Bänkelsang and Banners-and-Cranks** traces the second movement of Curiosité: the development of a theatrical apparatus for conveying my modalities of spatial curiosity. I discuss the process of recovering media forms, and of transposing my performance research along Rue Ontario into the medium of banners-and-cranks.
- D. Summary, Reflections, and Bridge to the Next Chapter**

A. Site Tour of Rue Ontario

Beginnings and Endings

Water is part of the toponymy of Rue Ontario. In the 1840s, two businessmen (one from Kingston, Ontario, the other from Montreal) purchased a tract in the Faubourg Québec, a parcel of land spanning what are now the Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and Ville-Marie boroughs of Montreal. Through this land, they cut three parallel streets, each named after a different Great Lake: Erie, Huron, and Ontario (Service de l'urbanisme de la Ville de Montréal, 1995, p. 360). Today, Rue Ontario extends beyond its original footprint within the Faubourg Québec. From east to west, the street traverses the east-end neighbourhoods of Bellerive, Longue-Pointe, Viauville, Maisonneuve, Hochelaga, and Centre-Sud neighbourhoods of Sainte-Marie, the Village gai (Gay Village), and the Quartier des spectacles (QDS) (see Figure 18).



Figure 18. Rue Ontario in Overview. The red line traces the passage of Rue Ontario through the city. Adapted from Vector map of Montreal (gmap regional map theme) (SVG format) [Map], by ScalableMaps & OpenStreetMap Contributors, n.d., ScalableMaps.com. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors. Adapted with permission.

At its western terminus at Rue St-Urbain, Rue Ontario opens onto the open plaza of the Place des Festivals, part of the QDS, a one square kilometre entertainment district in Centre-ville (Downtown).⁷⁶ The QDS is composed of performance halls, the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art, bars, and outdoor public spaces, overlapping with the city's longstanding theatre and Red Light District.



Figure 19. The western end of Rue Ontario, looking onto the Place des Festivals in the Quartiers des spectacles. May 2012. Photo credit: Alain Bonder. Printed with permission.

After passing east through the Centre-Sud, Hochelaga, and Maisonneuve, Rue Ontario crosses the small neighbourhood of Viauville, ending in a cul-de-sac beside the condominiums of the converted Biscuiterie Viau (Viau Cookie Factory).⁷⁷ Beyond the cul-de-sac, the perpendicular passage of the Canadian National Railway, an improvised dump site, the Canadian Steel Foundries, and a Molson Canada operations plant disrupt the length and line of the street

⁷⁶ The QDS designation came in 2003, as key actors in the culture industries brought forward a plan to “position culture as a key development tool” for the city (*History and vision of the quartier des spectacles*, n.d.).

⁷⁷ A neighbourhood of Maisonneuve, Viauville was named after cookie manufacturer turned model town developer Charles Théodore Viau (1843–1898). Viau created “Viauville” from the property he owned in the Maisonneuve, imagining it as a model town:

Viau had more in mind than an ordinary subdivision . . . Displaying urban concerns then rare among francophone land developers, he required the purchasers of lots to put up stone-façaded houses of no more than two storeys, set back from the sidewalk. The lots along the riverfront he put aside for parkland. (Linteau, 1990)

(see Figure 20). Rue Ontario picks up again near the entrance to the Port of Montreal at Rue Dickson, continuing east in fragments before its terminus in the riverfront neighbourhood of Bellerive.



Figure 20. Urban grasses and Canadian National railcars beyond the cul-de-sac of rue Ontario. February 2012. Personal photograph.

Rue Ontario as Personal Geography: The Promenade Ontario

Beginning in August of 2009, my first month of residence in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, I began to establish routes and routines, coming to inhabit the neighbourhood by walking the streets near my home, including Rue Ontario. I pass most of my daily life in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and between Boulevard Viau to the east, and the Viaduct Moreau to the west (see Figure 21). This middling section of Rue Ontario, in which the Promenade Ontario is situated, is a mix of commercial and residential buildings. Here, I run my errands and do most of my shopping and socializing. I observed that my usual route, traced on the map, is a line that thickens daily with each passing—back-and-forth—along the Promenade Ontario. In walking the Promenade Ontario, I was developing personal connections, familiarity with the natural and built environment, and a sense of the rhythms of daily life.



Figure 21. Rue Ontario in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. The blue brackets indicate the arches of the Promenade Ontario, while the letters mark locations highlighted in this site tour: A: Marché Maisonneuve, B: Place Simon-Valois, and C: first shopping centre in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Adapted from *Vector map of Montreal (center) (gmap city map theme) (Adobe Illustrator format) [Map]*, by ScalableMaps & OpenStreetMap Contributors, n.d., ScalableMaps.com. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors. Adapted with permission.

It was this routine place, close to home, that preoccupied me as I began to develop the *Curiosité* project in January of 2012, and this everyday practice of walking that I took up to begin my research-creation project in performance—*Curiosité*. I continued to walk the Promenade as we began our public performances in the summer of 2013, and in the following years, as I took up the exegesis writing. Throughout the process of developing *Curiosité* and the exegesis, I engaged walking on the Promenade as a modality for tracking my experiences of local urban change, collecting photographs and objects along the way, and composing field notes after the fact as methods of documenting and reflecting upon these walks. Through these walks—and their documentation—I sensed patterns, stumbled over and into inconsistencies in the asphalt, witnessed the sharing of and contests over social space in the Place Simon-Valois, and felt changes in the rhythms and circulation of the Promenade.

Industrial History of Rue Ontario in Hochelaga and Maisonneuve

The histories of industrialization and deindustrialization grounded my walks in the neighbourhood. Bringing my historical knowledge and archival research into these encounters with the street, I located familiar markers of inner-city industrialization and deindustrialization along the Promenade. Cheque cashing and pawn shops, for instance, indexed the social needs created by deindustrialization, while empty storefronts and new upscale boutiques and gourmet food shops spoke to processes of gentrification. Below, I present some of the histories that inflected my experiences of the street in the context of Curiocité.

Throughout Montreal's industrial era (c. 1860–1960) and before the construction of the Ville-Marie Autoroute (1970–1987), now the primary east-west expressway at the south end of the city, Rue Ontario was the primary commercial artery in Montreal East, connecting the working-class neighbourhoods and industries of Hochelaga and Sainte-Marie to the downtown core in the west, and Maisonneuve and Longue-Pointe (Port of Montreal) to the east. At the advent of the industrial period, a newly emergent class of wage labourers—mainly Franco-Canadian migrants from the city's rural countryside and some Irish Catholic immigrants—settled the segment of Rue Ontario situated in Hochelaga. Workers lived and shopped along Ontario Street, and used the Ontario streetcar to commute to and from Hochelaga's factories and those located in the *Faubourg à m'lasse*, the vernacular toponym of an industrial neighbourhood in Sainte-Marie, so called after the molasses its factories produced. The wealthier, largely francophone bourgeoisie settled to the south of Rue Ontario, along Rues Adam and Lafontaine, and to the east of Boulevard Pie-IX. From the original village of Hochelaga, they formed the municipality of Maisonneuve in 1883, following Hochelaga's annexation to Montreal in the same year.



Figure 22. Today, the border between Sainte-Marie (to the west) and Hochelaga (to the east) is marked by the Viaduct Moreau, which provides passage for the Canadian Pacific Railway. Left: A view of the Moreau Viaduct taken from Rue Ontario, heading east. An intersection of past and present industrial architectures and processes, and the Paroisse de la Nativité-de-la-Sainte-Vierge-d'Hochelaga Catholic Church. February 2012. Personal photograph. Right: Workers repair the Moreau Viaduct and Tunnel along Ontario Street in the 1930s. The bell tower of the Église Nativité-de-la-Sainte-Vierge-d'Hochelaga is visible in the upper right-hand corner of the photograph. From [Photographic reportage of workers repairing the Moreau Viaduct and Tunnel], 193-, Archives de la Ville de Montréal, Montreal, QC, Canada, Photographies anciennes (VM94-Z190-1). CC BY-NC-SA 2.5.

In its passage through Maisonneuve, Rue Ontario is traversed by tree-lined boulevards Pie-IX and Morgan, both of which lead onto perspectival views of public institutions and public sculpture. In the first decades of the twentieth century, these Franco-Canadian businessmen, inspired by the City Beautiful movement in the United States, initiated the construction of a number of monumental public buildings along or near Rue Ontario, including the Marché Maisonneuve (see Figure 21, Marker A, above, and Figure 23, below), a town hall, and a public bath. They also constructed a number of banks: Banque de Montréal, Banque d'Hochelaga (Banque Nationale), and Bank of Toronto.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ As mentioned in the introduction, the cost of the numerous construction projects, combined with the economic recession at the start of World War I landed the town in massive debt: in 1918, Maisonneuve declared bankruptcy and was soon annexed, like Hochelaga, to the city of Montreal (Benoît & Gratton, 1991, p. 126).



Figure 23. Left: Nicolas Germain-Marchand and the author set up the Curiocité cabinet for performance at the former Marché Maisonneuve on July 20, 2013. Photo credit: Alain Bonder. Printed with permission. Right: Marché Maisonneuve, as viewed from Morgan Boulevard in 1916. From *Morgan Boulevard looking at market, Maisonneuve (Montreal), QC, 1916*, by William Notman & Son, 1916, McCord Museum, Montreal, CA, (VIEW-16185). CC-BY-NC-ND.

After World War II, and with the post-war economic boom in North American industrial cities, the population of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve continued to grow along its two main transit ways, Rue Ontario and Rue Sainte-Catherine. As early as the 1950s, however, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's manufacturing industries experienced the first ripple effects of deindustrialization. Workers in these industries were among the first to lose their jobs. Rates of employment and population figures in the district would continue to drop over the next forty years (Vachon & Hamel, 2017, p. 6).⁷⁹ With the decline in population, rise in unemployment, and loss of clientele, retailers along the districts' two main commercial streets Rue Ontario and Rue Sainte-Catherine, struggled to remain open.

⁷⁹In 1991, a Canadian census year, the rates of employment for men and women in Hochelaga and Maisonneuve (combined) fell significantly below those of the city of Montreal: for women, 36.7%, compared to 48.2%; for men, 51.6%, compared to 61.7% (Vachon & Hamel, 2017, p. 11).



Figure 24. Biscuiterie Oscar, once a popular franchise selling cookies and candies, now has two remaining stores, one of which has been operating within the Promenade Ontario since 1955. September 2018. Personal photograph.

Deindustrialization and Redevelopment Along the Promenade

At Rue Valois, the Promenade Luc-Larivée and Place Simon-Valois mark the former crossing of the Canadian National (CN) Railroad (see Figure 21, Marker B). The crossing itself demarcated the original north-south “division” and conjunction between the municipalities of Hochelaga and Maisonneuve, serving as a social and spatial marker of class identity (Cosette, 2013, p. 103). The Place Simon-Valois was inaugurated in 2005 as the front end of a municipal revitalization project, aimed at making the depopulated district attractive to newcomers through the addition of new restaurants, food purveyors, and mixed housing stock. It is a public space bordered by mixed residential-commercial buildings. Small businesses William Walter Saucissier, ArHoMA bakery, and the restaurant Valois occupy the ground floors, above which are condominiums. The Promenade Luc-Larivée, a stretch of the disused Canadian National Railway track which crosses the Place has been converted into a pedestrian walkway between the condos. Prior to the shutdown of the railway in 1990, the CN railway crossing was bordered by industrial buildings, as well as by the Garage Rozon and the La Belle Gare Valois restaurant. The restaurant and garage remained open until 2001, when they and the other railway buildings were first expropriated by the city, and then demolished in 2002.



Figure 25. Left: A social housing advocacy group, Comité base pour l'action et l'information sur le logement social Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (Comité BAILS-HM) holds an event at the Place Simon-Valois on October 18, 2017. Personal photograph. Right: The Belle Gare Valois restaurant, prior to its demolition in 2002. From [Photograph of the Belle Gare Valois restaurant], by P. Crépô, 2002, Private collection of the artist. Copyright 2002 by Pierre Crépô. Reprinted with permission.

The first shopping centre opened in 1973 at the corner of Rues Ontario and Aylwin. This new commercial outlet included a parking lot and a branch of a supermarket chain (see Figure 26 and Figure 21, Marker C). The Society of Eastern Businessmen, a business owners association, worried that more chains would attract their dwindling clientele and outprice them. Between 1976 and 1996, the total number of grocers along the street declined from 12 to 5, and a host of other retailers and financial institutions shuttered.⁸⁰ Meanwhile, pawn and thrift shops, cheque-cashing stores offering high interest pay-day loans, taverns and bars, and convenience stores took up residence along the street.

⁸⁰ Between 1976 (a decade into deindustrialization) and 1996 (the nadir of population between 1941 and 2016), the number of shoe stores along these streets declined from 23 to 12; automobile retailers from 23 to 11; jewelry stores from 14 to 4; grocery stores from 12 to 5; furniture stores from 20 to 12; fabric and thread stores from 14 to 1; and clothing stores from 63 to 18 (along rue Ontario alone, from 36 to 11) (Maltais, 2017, Annexe 1). In the same period, the number of convenience and tobacco stores (dépanneurs) increased from 13 to 20, taverns and bars from 7 to 19, health and social services from 28 to 35, and thrift stores and pawn shops from 1 to 18 (Maltais, 2017, Annexe 1).



Figure 26. The first shopping centre built in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve formerly included a supermarket. In September 2018, it hosts a dollar store, household goods retailer, pharmacy, and gym. Personal photograph.



Figure 27. A few of the pawnshops located within the Promenade Ontario on September 21, 2018. Personal photographs.

In 1981, the business owners association regrouped as the Société d'initiative de développement des activités commerciales Ontario [the Ontario Development Initiative and Commercial Activity Society] (or SIDAC Ontario) dedicating themselves to revitalizing the Promenade Ontario with the express intent of preventing it from becoming a strip mall.⁸¹ Two iron archways—one placed at Rue Dézery to the west, the other at boulevard Pie-IX to the east—delimited the boundaries of the Promenade Ontario (see Figure 21, blue brackets).



Figure 28. Left: The western archway of the Promenade Ontario in February 2012. Right: The eastern archway of the Promenade Ontario in September 2018 bearing a different marquee: Hochelaga. Personal photographs.

As Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's population grows, demographics shift, and average household incomes increase, retail and commercial activities along Rue Ontario are also changing: there are more restaurants, specialty food stores, and childcare facilities along the street than there were twenty years ago at the nadir of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's population.⁸²

The Promenade Ontario currently hosts both residential spaces and a range of interclass and intercultural social and commercial spaces, among them an evangelical church, a local

⁸¹ This attention to the preservation of streetscapes coincided with new urban preservation and restoration policies in the City of Montreal. Beginning in 1981, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve was designated as a redevelopment zone, and property owners and businesspeople could benefit from the subsidies of the Programme d'intervention dans les quartiers anciens [Intervention Program for Historical Neighbourhoods] (PIQA), which had been established in the preceding decades to "renovate and restore dilapidated streetscapes and housing in inner-city areas" (Côté & Lachapelle, 1989, as cited in Twigge-Molecey, 2013, p. 25).

⁸² According to urban researcher Alex Maltais (2017), the number of restaurants on the street has risen from 22 in 1976 to 27 in 1996, to 39 in 2016; the number of specialty food stores risen from 2 in 1976 to 5 in 1996 to 11 in 2016; childcare services have emerged as a new business, absent between 1976 and 1996, and counting 4 in 2016 (Annexe 1).

community services centre and health clinic (CLSC), toy stores, clothing stores, hair salons, shoe stores, grocers, fruit and vegetable sellers, bakeries, taverns and bars, chain stores and franchises, specialty food stores, and sit-down and take-out eateries featuring cuisines belonging to Quebecois, Caribbean, Asian, North African, Middle Eastern, Latin American, and Western European culinary traditions.



Figure 29. A franchise of the Asian fusion restaurant chain Just Noodles (left), and the Bar St-Vincent (right). March 2012. Personal photographs.

B. Walking, Composing Field Notes and Photographs, and Social Strolls

Walking as Research-for-Creation

Writing about the Canadian context and culture of research-creation, media scholars Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuck (2012) identify four typologies of research-creation: research-for-creation, research-from-creation, creative presentations of research, and creation-as-research. As with any form of research, research-for-creation:

involves an initial gathering together of material, ideas, concepts, collaborators, technologies, et cetera, in order to begin. This gathering is “research” in the same way that reading through recent journal articles, tracking down important references, or conducting interviews are key elements of producing various academic contributions to knowledge, conventional, research-creation, or otherwise. The gathering is research because it is directed towards a future “revealing,” enabled through an artistic perception of technology as a practice or craft. (p. 15)

In *Curiosité*, I engaged everyday walking as a research-for-creation method for collecting place-based knowledges. In what follows, I describe walking as a gathering and “trying out” directed towards a future “revealing” in and as performance. I outline key theorists and methodological precedents for my own methods of walking Rue Ontario in *Curiosité*, and identify how walking might be taken up within a performance research process to pursue curiosity toward place and to develop place-based knowledges. Feminist and ethnographic accounts of walking along everyday routes in routine ways, and their attention to the subjective, somatic and sensory aspects of walking inflect both my approach to walking along Rue Ontario, and my methods for documenting these walks. Through the development of *Curiosité* as an urban performance dramaturgy, I have come to understand everyday walking as a modality of spatial curiosity that attends with care to the familiar, the local, and the “internal hybridities of place” (Massey, 1995), and which apprehends transformations in place over time.

Walking as Method

In reflecting on walking as an artistic method, I recall situationist Guy Debord’s (1956/2006b) avant-garde insistence on walking as a transgressive breaking of routines, his “outrage” at the limited trajectory of the female university student, in whom I see my own

walking routines reflected, albeit some seventy years later.⁸³ The limited itinerary of the Parisian student (a repeated triangle between school, work, and piano teacher) constitutes a "modern poetry capable of provoking sharp emotional reactions (in this particular case, outrage at the fact that anyone's life can be so pathetically limited)" (pp. 62–63).⁸⁴ Yet, from a feminist perspective, I read this modern poetry of routine and repetition differently.⁸⁵

Feminist criticism, critical race studies, the differential mobilities paradigm, and recent writings in cultural anthropology and ethnography provide support for my use of everyday walking as a valuable method and as an epistemology—or way of knowing. Critics cite the gendered presumptions of proponents of the *flâneur*, the *dériviste*, and de Certeau's pedestrian, arguing that these walking personae emphasize the walker's detachment from and visual mastery over the environment, and occlude the walking body and the social and material conditions through which that body ambulates.⁸⁶ In contrast to "epic" and oppositional walking, feminist critics Deirdre Heddon and Cathy Turner (2012) theorize those artistic practices that claim everyday, routine spaces as vital and viable sites of pedestrian analysis and insight. In these art practices, walking embodies knowledges and makes possible aesthetic experiences excluded when the visual sense is privileged, the local is presumed to be restrictive or constraining, walking a "universal" (rather than situated) practice, and mobility the epitome of freedom (Heddon & Turner, p. 231; Rendell, 1998 as cited in Pearson, 2010, p. 21; Wilson, 1992).⁸⁷

Recent theorizations of walking practices within anthropology and ethnography also aim to account for situated, multi-sensorial, embodied walking, suggesting how walking might be engaged in a performance research process to develop personal, sensory, embodied, and emplaced knowledges. Anthropologists Timothy Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst (2008), Ingold (2010), Tim Edensor (2010), Sara Pink (2008, 2009), and Cheng Yi'En (2013) theorize walking in

⁸³ Debord's "pathetic" walker is gendered female, in contrast to the majority of the founding members of the Situationist International, whose members were men, and to a large extent, white men.

⁸⁴ Like Debord (1956/2006b), Walter Benjamin (1973/1997), Michel de Certeau (1980/1984), and theatre scholar Stanton Garner, Jr. (2002) theorize urban walking in opposition to hegemonic ways of practicing and knowing the city.

⁸⁵ Heddon and Turner (2012) also address this moment of Debord's outrage at a woman's limited itinerary, linked very much to her everyday social relations which Debord insisted the *dériviste* must "drop," as prompting their own inquiry into women's walking practices, the politics of scale, the local, and the familiar (pp. 231–232).

⁸⁶ For a particularly trenchant critique of the "artist as ethnographer," and its relationship to *flânerie*, see Foster (1996).

⁸⁷ The enforced mobility of a refugee, or a displaced person, cannot be romanticized as a form of liberation from social bonds.

ethnographic fieldwork in contrast to the disembodied view of *flânerie*.⁸⁸ While the *flâneur* prioritizes the visual experience of the city in his [*sic*] poetic or literary account, the walking ethnographer undertakes walking as a multi-sensory modality, wherein the urban is not only viewed, but perceived and felt in and through the body (and the feet). As a research modality, walking proposes the possibility of immersive, embodied ethnography, wherein the researcher becomes attuned to “different ways of sensing the city in its socio-material, spatial, and temporal registers” (Cheng, 2013, p. 213; see also Pink et al., 2010).

From my own experiences of using walking as a method of research-for-creation with *Curiosité*, I have come to understand walking as a multi-sensory research modality for engaging more carefully and consciously with the urban sensorium.⁸⁹ Through walking, the artist-researcher gathers in and through the body not only the seen, but also the felt, ephemeral and everchanging aspects of place as potential “material” for a future performance event. While artist-researcher’s visual sense may become more involved in some walks, as was often the case for me in walking along Rue Ontario, her other sensory faculties—taste, touch, smell, hearing—might also be centred.

Rhythmanalysis

According to cultural geographer Tim Edensor (2010), “everyday” walking practices produce in the walker a sense of “mobile belonging” linked to a mobile sense of place (p. 70). Edensor’s analysis of the relationship between routes, mundane routines (which include not only walking but driving and shopping), and rhythms draws upon Marxist geographer Henri Lefebvre’s linkage of spatiality and temporality in his method of “rhythmanalysis,” the study of the rhythms of particular places. Lefebvre (1992/2004) observes that “everywhere there is interaction between a place, a time, and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm (p. 15).” Lefebvre contends that places have rhythms and rhythms produce places: “rhythms imply a relation of a time to a space, a localized time, or if one prefers, a temporalized place. Rhythm is always linked to such and such a place, to its place, be that the heart, the fluttering of the

⁸⁸ Cheng (2013) describes walking as the “hidden” process in and through which fieldwork occurs—the “process of entering the field, ‘being-in’ the midst of data collection, and getting ready to depart from field sites” (pp. 212–213).

⁸⁹ I draw this term from Alan Nash’s (2006) review of the Canadian Centre for Architecture’s exhibition *Sense of the City / Sensations urbaines*, a collective exhibition that explored “how a range of our senses [. . .] can be engaged by the various phenomena of the urban ‘sensorium’” (p. 284).

eyelids, the movement of a street or the tempo of a waltz. This does not prevent it from being a time, which is to say an aspect of a movement or of a becoming” (p. 89).

For Edensor, rhythm is a key concept in understanding how everyday or quotidian places are produced through “daily tasks, pleasures and rhythmically apprehended routines [. . .] practices that are part of *commonplace* [emphasis added] spatiotemporal experience” (p. 70). Patterns of movement—the coming together of routinized actions in a place over a sustained period of time—“constitute the time-geographies within which people’s trajectories separate and cross in regular ways” and produce not only a sense of familiarity but a sense of place as consistent (p. 70). Habitual or routine walking may engender a sense of mobile belonging in and through the commonplace, as walking produces the spatiotemporal grooves of place to which a walker might “latch,” her rhythms syncopating with those of the street.

Within an everyday walking practice, an attentive walker might sense the rhythms of daily life and recognize differences in her experience of a daily routine—observing more or less traffic at certain times of day or night along her routes, changes in uses and users of space, the appearance of programmed events in “non-eventful” spaces, all of which point to shifting meanings and daily uses of this place, as well as to displacements. She might also take into account how seasonal and atmospheric changes impact on how she senses or makes sense of her experience of place. These methodological possibilities for everyday walking as a place-based research method align with my embodied experiences of walking the Promenade Ontario as I conducted research for the *Curiosité* project, observing, sensing, and interpreting the street on a daily basis.

Writing from Walking: Field Notes from the Promenade and a Personal Archive of Place

Throughout the winter and spring of 2012, I walked the Promenade Ontario, taking my digital camera to snap photographs, and a backpack and wallet to collect or purchase materials of the street. For me, photography served as an aide-mémoire and creative inspiration, a way to focus my looking at the time, and later, to prompt writing, as I will describe below. I gathered objects as possible artefacts for display in the *Curiosité* cabinet, or, alternately, as they might inspire or prompt subsequent writing. Artists who engage walking as a method of place- or site-based research-creation might find other documentary “technologies” or media more suited to their own particular imaginations, needs, and outcomes—a sketchbook, video and sound-

recording instruments, even a drumstick, might be engaged to “capture” different sensory aspects of the walk.⁹⁰

As another approach to documenting my experiences, I wrote field notes following these individual walking events. At this phase of research-for-creation, I was concerned with creating autobiographical narratives from walking—narratives which mapped my own experiences of walking in relation to the social life, rhythms, topography, and social histories of the street. My field notes were not intended for an external readership, but as personal documentation and intermediary materializations of my curiosity toward Rue Ontario. They drew upon four “sources”: the experience of walking the street; the personal photographic archive I produced during these walks; the histories of the street I recovered in my review of secondary and primary literature; and my experience of sitting at my table to write, surrounded by archival materials, both digital and material. While I chose to write my field notes after these walks, and at home, others may choose to write *in situ* or on the fly, producing “immediate” archives of place as they walk.

I align my field note practice with feminist approaches to writing place, identifying them as autotopographical compositions, a term I borrow from performance scholar and site-specific performer Deirdre Heddon. Heddon (2009) refers to the personal acts of storytelling that emerge in and from walking as “autotopographical.” Like Lucy Lippard’s (1997) personal geography, autotopographical compositions offer an accounting of the local(e), marked by the partial and situated point of view of the walker-writer, and embodying the contingencies of her subjectivity as they performatively interact with the contingencies of place. Writing about walking, she asserts, facilitates the articulation of the personal, social, and historical to the geographical, prompting individual reflection on places and their pasts, and engendering reflexivity as to one’s interrelations with place as a material, social, and temporal interface.

⁹⁰ Tim Edensor (2010) describes performance artist Francis Alÿs’ walking piece *Railings* (2004) as a method of rhythmanalysis, exploring the unexamined complexity of everyday routes, routines, and rhythms of urban space (p. 75). In *Railings*, which he later transformed into a multi-channel video and multimedia installation, Alÿs used a drumstick as an “extension” of his body as he walked, sensing and sounding out the patterns of railings surrounding Georgian squares, streets, and homes in London (P. Roberts, 2016). The piece not only called attention to the rhythmic production of the built environment, but to how railings “echo” and “reinforc[e] certain power structures,” dividing pedestrians from private property, and marking out public squares as authorized and delimited by power (P. Roberts, 2016).

My field notes appear to me as collages of self and place, present and past, personal and social, exterior and interior. They trace not only my physical movements and shifting views, but also what Giuliana Bruno (2008) has described as the “interior” landscapes of walking—the “mental itinerary” of emotions, experiences, and memories that attends any movement in space.⁹¹ My field notes combine present-tense narration and movement along the street with pauses in the journey, reveries that illuminate some of the historical layers of these sites recovered in memory or in the archive. Some of the field notes are “stamped” with date, time, and location signatures, and clearly located in particular time-geographies; others meander along without much detail as to when or where. There are oversights and occlusions. I say very little, if anything, about the natural—or cultivated nature—including the green spaces along the Promenade. This is a feature of how I was looking at the street, my curiosity toward and privileging of the anthropocentric—of human activities, histories, and the built environment—within the Promenade. I also reflect little, if at all, on the domestic landscapes of writing. These are bracketed out, perceived in the act of inscription as extrinsic to the experience of walking the Promenade that I privilege in my account. This is not to suggest that the place and conditions of writing do not inflect these notes, however. Both walking and writing “take place” in and through particular scenes and temporal contexts, in my case, in the street, and in my home, respectively. The field note, from this framing of writing, is a “double” trace—a document of the act of walking, and of the subsequent material practice and embodied act of inscription.⁹² As writing is a material and embodied practice, the space of writing is, like the space of walking, a socio-material, spatial, and temporal environment which performatively affects the inscription of experience in the field note.⁹³

⁹¹ Bruno (2008) describes this interior landscape in her reflections on cinema’s genealogy in the architectural promenade, wherein she contends that cinema translates modernity’s passion for locomotion through sites (the promenade) into haptic, affective moving “sights.” As Bruno notes, psychogeography holds out a similar conception of the affective ambiances of the city in transit in the *dérive* (drift); Bruno’s account, however, suggests that cinema is “implanted . . . with its own psychogeographic version of transport” (p. 26).

⁹² In *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling, and Skill* (2000) Tim Ingold asserts that dwelling is the condition of human subjectivity: “taking the human condition to be that of a being immersed from the start, like other creatures, in an active, practical, and perceptual engagement with constituents of the dwelt-in world” (p. 42). Feminist rhetoric and composition scholar Laura Micciche (2014) extends this thought, arguing that if dwelling is the condition of subjectivity, it is also the condition of writing, which is “codependent with things, places, people, and all sorts of others. To write is to be part of the world, even when viewed as an ironic turn away to an interior space of quiet and mystery” (p. 501).

⁹³ I wrote on my laptop at the dining room table, facing the rear-facing glass door of the semi-basement condominium that I share with Alain. Outside, the “terraced” garden—two planter boxes—lined with the assortment of objects collected from the street: a makeshift reliquary and source for creation.

The field notes (excerpted below) suggest the variety of genres, selves, and places that might be generated in and through daily walking, and the possible writerly personae one might take up or embody to “recollect” the lived experience of a local, vernacular landscape in textual form. I chose to implement conceits and techniques from a variety of literary walkers as they suited my spatial curiosity, leftist feminist positioning, mood, and perceptions of and reflections on place at the time of writing.

The field note entries range in form, tone, and style. Some are styled with the blasé attitude, cool gaze and ironic distance close to *flânerie* wherein a disembodied, roving eye catalogues the characters and surfaces of the urban field. Some are more diaristic, detailing my everyday interactions and experiences of the street. Some appear as anthropological efforts to interpret social interactions, or archaeological narratives tracing the origins of the built environment through recourse to archival documents and historical accounts. Others document walking in the context of local political demonstrations, archiving the embodied politics of walking in particular social formations, and in particular places and times. To better orient the reader and aid in their imaginative visualization of the street, I have added both historical and contextual details and photographs taken during the walks and used in the composition of these written traces.

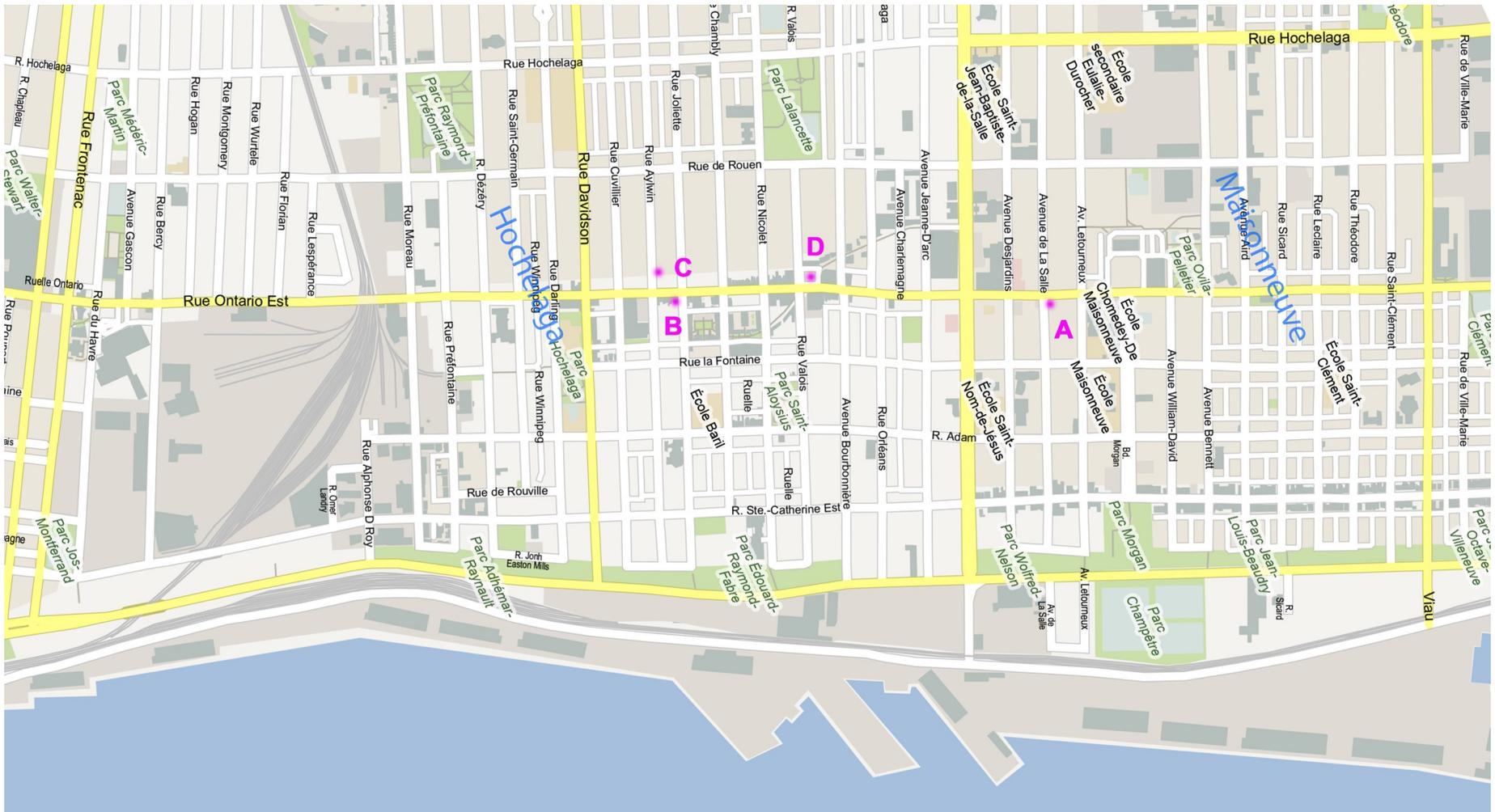


Figure 30. A map of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, with field note locations indicated A-D. Adapted from *Vector map of Montreal (center) (gmap city map theme) (Adobe Illustrator format)* [Map], by ScalableMaps & OpenStreetMap Contributors, n.d., ScalableMaps.com. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors. Adapted with permission.

Field Notes: Passages along the Promenade

A.

Heading to the nearest branch of my bank to withdraw cash is an uncanny experience. I approach a neoclassical architecture with granite columns, climb the stairs beneath the portico, passing a line of mourners, dressed in black and smoking cigarettes on the steps. Once inside the entryway, arrows direct me one of two ways: to the glass door on the left, a narrow, windowless room containing the guichet automatique (automatic teller machine), all that remains of the Maisonneuve branch of the Bank of Montreal of 1911.

Straight ahead, on the other side of the louvered French doors with white lace curtains, the Bleu ciel espace hommage: Vivre son deuil autrement funeral parlour. Blue Sky Memorial Centre: Live Your Grief Otherwise. On my first visit to the bank, I took the wrong arrow, and ended up in the carpeted lobby. Today, I retrieve my cash, and pass the mourners a second time, returning from their smoke break outside.

The Bank of Montreal closed its Maisonneuve branch on Ontario Street, as did Banque d'Hochelaga (Banque Nationale), and Bank of Toronto, in the years after deindustrialization, and as Toronto became the new financial centre of Canada.

There are many funeral homes in the neighbourhood, including one further west on Rue Ontario with the maudlin namesake T. Sansregrets—You are without regrets.



B.

La Québécoise: Orange and white-striped brick box serving spaghetti familiale. And a man with a hairnet, wispy beard, toute garnie,⁹⁴ with a rottie-pit mix tied up outside, belongs to nobody in particular. Glass top counter, two sweating grill spots, and booths in back, with soccer (Greece versus somebody else, everybody else) on TV. Ponytailed waitress, mid-40s. No, mid-30s. Ball-cap, straight billed backward, faux fur lined hood, deux steamies,⁹⁵ every day for the last twenty years, since he was this high. He's not much higher than when he was once that high. Slow to order, quick to serve. Bus 125 ambles along. Bumping at the counter, polite elbows, even at 6 and 7, less so at 2 and 10.



⁹⁴ Or, all dressed.

⁹⁵ A local expression for a steamed—rather than grilled—hot dog.

C.

HoMa. A recent appellation for Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, taken up by condo developers and local businesses: Projet HoMage (condominium project), ArHoMA (bakery), Espace Homa, an arts and culture rental space. HoMa, the new Soho, the next Plateau.



20__ Aylwin, just off Ontario, and just down the block from our condominium. HoMa, again. Un autre projet jamais réalisés par—. The signs have been flipped so all that's visible is the silhouette of the real estate agent formerly assigned to the site. There were one or two one-storey houses here. The guy with the detailed Porsche sold it off to a developer. The signs went up 70% sold, and the houses came down. The plans were revealed. The construction started. Stopped. Started. Stopped.

And then came the cats, and the squeegees, out to Rue Ontario during the street fair, and local kids (boys mostly), climbing around in there. And they're there this afternoon, the couple with the enormous dog, beer in plastic coke bottles. Once they were chased out by the cops after a neighbour called to report that a car had crashed into the building and caught fire. So now they sit in a parking space in the little ruelle, or on the roof of their apartment. The woman in the fruiterie below claims they brought the bed bugs to the building and not much else.

April 23, 2012
 [G]rêve general illimité |
 Unlimited General Strike / Dream



A warmer than usual spring day. The Place Simon-Valois is hosting an event related to the *Printemps érable* [Maple Spring],⁹⁶ A Quebec student movement named after the pro-democracy movements in Tunisia and Egypt called the Arab Spring (2012), the *Printemps érable* took on a wide-ranging set of social demands, although it is best known for its rejection of the provincial Liberal government's proposed tuition hike for post-secondary education in Quebec.⁹⁷

I am here today as a spectator, artist-researcher, and interested supporter. A hub of people, fabric banners, motor-scooters and media attention. Students at the Université du Québec à Montréal are *en grève* [on strike]. They and the coalition Profs solidaires (Professors in Solidarity) are co-facilitating the outdoor *École populaire*, or popular school. A banner stretched between a tree and a lamppost conveys the theme: “*Pour un savoir émancipateur et gratuit*” [“For emancipatory and free education”]. The marble and granite cubes which offer seating bear the traces of the red paint splashed across the Place the week before, ad hoc *carrés rouges* [red squares]—a symbol of the student movement, referring to student debt—“to be squarely in the red.” Around the *École populaire*, an employee of the William Walter Saucissier spectates while on his smoke break, the electric motor-scooters rally, and a few Place regulars continue their afternoon routines.

⁹⁶ Student unions and associations from francophone universities, individual schools and departments at anglophone McGill University and Concordia University (including Humanities doctoral students), and the public pre-university and vocational CEGEPs (Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel) [College of General and Professional Studies] successively joined the strike beginning in March 2012. The student strike extended beyond educational institutions and into public space, and the street. On March 22, 2012, the largest student protest included some 200,000 participants. The gathering and procession would be repeated on the 22nd of each month throughout the summer. In addition to these daytime events, Université du Québec à Montréal's political science student association held nightly demonstrations, which departed from Berri Square, snaking through different parts of the city along unannounced and seemingly unplanned itineraries.

⁹⁷ In Quebec, the idea of tuition-free higher education—a publicly funded educational system similar to that of social democracies in Europe—came to fruition during the Quiet Revolution, as francophone Quebecers gained political power, and partially in response to the province's historically low levels of post-secondary educational attainment. Between 1967 and 1970, the provincial government created a province-wide network of free post-secondary and pre-university colleges (CEGEP), and expanded the number of French-language universities with the creation of the Université du Québec network (Musée québécois de culture populaire & Hamon-Bienvenue.ca, 2012).

Social Walking and Collective Archives of Place

Throughout the summer of 2012, I continued to walk along Rue Ontario, extending both an invitation to walk to my new collaborators in Curiocté and the itinerary to include new segments of the street beyond Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. I aimed to share my own experiences and memories of place, and to collect and learn from my collaborators' experiences and memories of Rue Ontario. As with the earlier solo walks, I used these walks as writing prompts, generating field notes and encouraging others to produce their own writings. I also brought my camera to document the research and prompt further reflection.

Walking with others drew me toward an experience of the social aspects of the street—the traces, histories, and memories of the recent and distant past, as well as the fantasies that the street holds for others in the present. I came to understand walking as a dialogical method for “gathering” these social memories, and for prompting the sharing of personal and collective memories and place-based knowledges with others. This practice and understanding of the social and discursive aspects of walking aligns with contemporary feminist walking practices. Deirdre Heddon (2007), Misha Myers (2010), and the London-based feminist walking collective walkwalkwalk⁹⁸ use the open event structure of the walk to produce intimate and dialogical social encounters, and to evoke personal, place-based archives and narratives. Guided by simple prompts or suggested itineraries, these walking events generate collective memory by inviting participants to share personal memories of place with one another over the course of the event.⁹⁹

Social walking within Curiocté supported a curious approach to place in how it demonstrated multiple articulations of place and self, how it explicitly framed place as the “object” of social curiosity and inquiry, and as such, elicited and provided for the sharing of place-based narratives and knowledges. Walking in the Centre-Sud with Mélanie Binette revealed how the places with which I was engaged held differential personal, historical, and

⁹⁸ Walkwalkwalk are Clare Qualmann, Gail Burton and Serena Korda. See Heddon and Turner, “Women who Walk,” 2012 for a discussion of walkwalkwalk’s projects, as well as others that challenge “epic” modes of walking (p. 233). The collective’s website also includes archival notes and photographs from their many public walking events: <http://www.walkwalkwalk.org.uk/toplevelpages/walks%26events.html>.

⁹⁹ Myers (2010) describes the dialogue among walkers in her community arts projects as “conversive wayfinding,” the sharing of place-based knowledges and memories, and the mapping of interpersonal memories along shared routes.

social memories and meanings for my collaborators, and helped me to identify shared sites of interest and intrigue for long-time residents like Mélanie, and by extension, the diverse publics which might compose Curiosité's audiences. Moreover, social walks became shared events that fostered rapport among collaborators, as we sought out and listened to one another's accounts and experiences of place, and related them to our own.

Field Notes: Around the Pôle Frontenac

June 15, 2012

I am walking with Mélanie Binette. We cover the stretch of Rue Ontario that passes through the Centre-Sud, walking in order to become familiar with Rue Ontario, to photograph “sites” of personal interest, and seek out accidental theatres in the landscape.

Like Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, the Centre-Sud (which includes Sainte-Marie, the Gay Village, and the Quartier des Spectacles) was a working-class enclave in the industrial period, its population hard-hit by deindustrialization. Today the district comprises three pôles or “hearts,” including the Village, Cité des Ondes [Wave City], and the Pôle Frontenac. The Village, imagined after the East Village queer scene in New York, developed along the eastern segment Ontario in the late 1980s. The Cité des Ondes is named after the numerous radio and television broadcasting networks situated between the St. Lawrence River and René-Levesque Boulevard. The Pôle Frontenac, the “heart” through which we walk today, includes the Frontenac metro station, and is a centre of artistic, cultural, commercial, and industrial activity in the district.

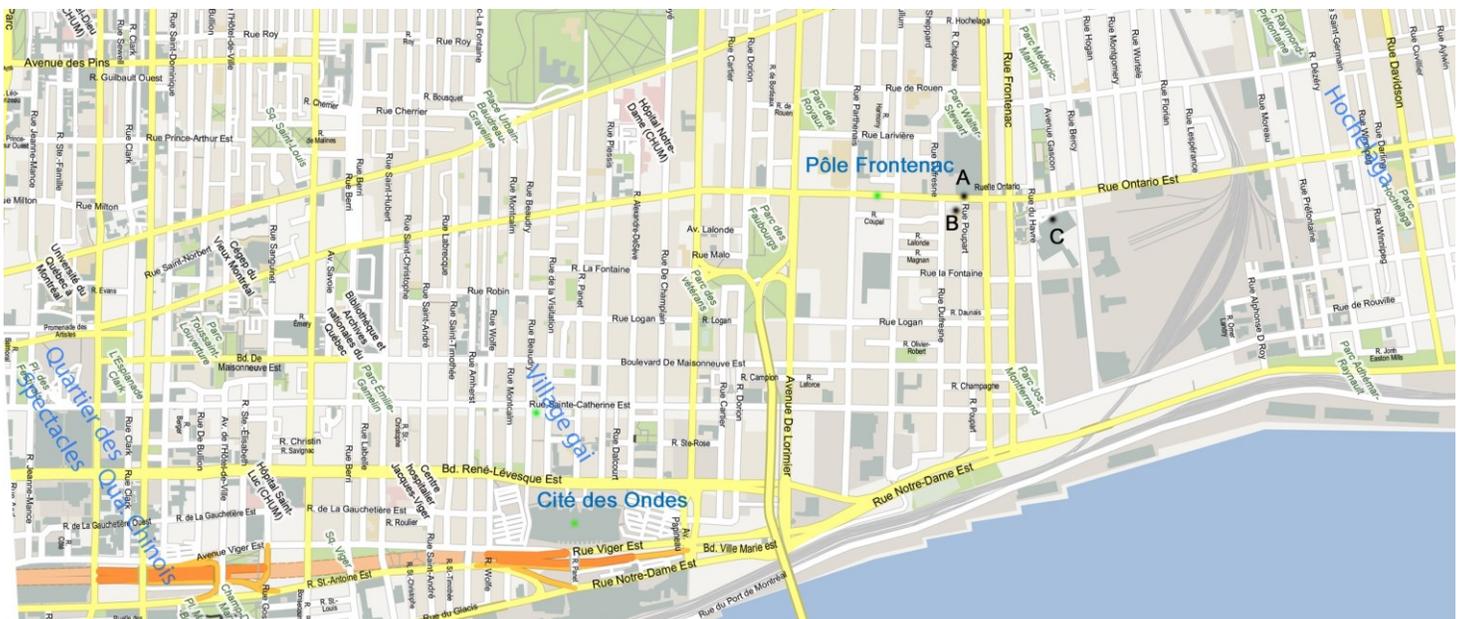


Figure 31. A map of the Centre-Sud neighbourhoods, including the three poles, or hearts: the Village, Cité des Ondes, and the Pôle Frontenac. Letters A–C correspond with the field notes which follow. Adapted from *Vector map of Montreal (center) (gmap city map theme)* (Adobe Illustrator format) [Map], by ScalableMaps & OpenStreetMap Contributors, n.d., ScalableMaps.com. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors. Adapted with permission.

A.

We are staring up at the red aluminium siding of the building, designed to mimic what we assume must have been the original brick of JTI (Japan Tobacco International) MacDonald Factory, and its clock-faced tower. The analogue hands of the clock mete out time, a curious contrast to the space-aged design of the Frontenac metro station.

The smiling face of what, to me, looks like a Girl Scout, hangs over the archway entrance.



Figure 32. The Scottish Lassie oversees the entrance to JTI-MacDonald Factory. June 15, 2012. Personal photographs.

Mélanie corrects me. This is the “Scottish Lassie,” the logo of MacDonald Tobacco since the 1930s. Her image became synonymous with Export A cigarette packages during World War II, and the packs continue to circulate her face in miniature, worldwide.¹⁰⁰ Mélanie explains the draw of the building to her: her grandfather worked as a manager for Imperial Tobacco, whose headquarters were further west in the Saint-Henri neighbourhood, another of Montreal’s post-industrial areas.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ The “MacDonald Lassie” character was created in 1935 by Toronto-based artist and popular illustrator Rex Woods, who is credited with creating some of the most iconic Canadian advertising images of the decade (Cook, 2012, pp. 18–21).

¹⁰¹ The building was originally called the W.C. MacDonald Factory, after Sir William C. MacDonald, a businessman of Scottish heritage.

B.

Scanning the rooftops this June afternoon, I am drawn to another face across the street—in tension with the smiling Scottish Lassie adorning the archway of JTI-MacDonald. The Angel of Literacy: a severe yet chubby-cheeked cherub, carved in stone, reading a book. An allegorical figure of Youth and Education to counter the Scottish Lassie, the alluring face of the commodity fetish.



Figure 33. The Angel of Literacy welcomes the reader. June 15, 2012. Personal photograph.

Mélanie has done some archival research on the school, learning that it was intimately connected with MacDonald Tobacco, across the street. Built in 1914, and named after Gédéon Ouimet, the Minister of Public Education from 1876 to 1895, the building was created as a school for the children of working-class families of the Centre-Sud, most of whom, along with their mothers, fathers, and siblings, worked in non-specialized trades, and thus, did not go to school (Écomusée du fier monde, n.d., École Gédéon Ouimet section). The school was intended to function as a deterrent to child labour, and a nearby alternative to factory work, positioned just across

MacDonald Tobacco. In 1978, it was converted into a school for continuing education for adults. Now run by the Commission scolaire de Montréal (one of the city's French-language school boards), the Centre Gédéon-Ouimet offers high school (secondary school) programs, as well as programs for literacy and French language acquisition, geared toward the immigrant populations of Centre-Sud and neighbouring Ville-Marie.

C.

We come upon a mysterious wooden frame, with safety orange reflective tape, attached to a stake, and directing our gaze to two brutalist concrete towers—the Tours Frontenac.

The Tours are a social housing complex with 800 rental apartments, built in 1972, when the Frontenac metro station was the terminus of the green line of the metro.¹⁰² Today, the Tours house some 1200 residents. The caption on the wooden frame reads: *Parce que: les tours sont si grandes qu'on les voit de partout dans le quartier.* [Because: the towers are so tall you can see them from anywhere in the neighbourhood.] Before seeing this sign, I'd paid little attention to these buildings. But now, I look again. The frame invites us to adopt the subjective viewpoint of another, to see a fragment of the urban landscape in which we live, work, or pass, through another lens. I wonder where this intervention came from, who provided the caption, who put this sign here. Mélanie thinks she recognizes the logo inscribed on the frame: a column posed atop a wheel. She identifies the artists responsible for this particular *prise-de-vue*: Péristyle Nomade.



Figure 34. *Parce que: les tours sont si grandes qu'on les voit de partout dans le quartier.* June 15, 2012. Personal photograph.

¹⁰² Data on the Tours Frontenac comes from *La vie aux tours*, n.d.

Creative Correspondences: Péristyle Nomade’s Poetic Framing Crane—La Grue

Three years after this social stroll in the Centre-Sud, in interviews with two of its creators, I learned more about the frame in the parking lot, a remnant from *La Grue de cadrage à traction poétique* [The Poetic Framing Crane]. Péristyle Nomade (PN) is a collective of artists and an artistic platform co-created by Catherine Lalonde Masseur and Nicolas Rivard in 2006. Péristyle Nomade create performative and participatory interventions in the post-industrial sites, everyday spaces, and *terrains vagues* of the Centre-Sud neighbourhood.

While the sites and outcomes of our respective practices differ, in my interviews with Lalonde Masseur and Rivard in the fall of 2015 and winter of 2016, I found that we shared methods for becoming familiar with the places and communities in which we live and work and performative strategies for creating eclectic archives of place. Like *La Grue*, Curiosité engaged walking, photography, and conversation as methods for gathering and sharing memories and representations of places along Rue Ontario. Both Catherine and Nicolas moved to the Centre-Sud from smaller towns in Quebec, and remarked upon the central role that Café Coop Touski—a local activist hangout and cooperatively owned and operated restaurant—played in helping them to acclimate to life in the Centre-Sud and to get to know its community members.¹⁰³ Significant to this chapter’s emphasis, both also identified walking as their preferred methods of “wayfinding” in their newly adopted neighbourhood. Walking helped them to develop a sense of belonging and attachment to place and to the city. Catherine recounted, “I learned to love [the Centre-Sud] by wandering around” (C. Lalonde Masseur, personal communication, February 8, 2016).

La Grue

Lalonde Masseur and Rivard, along with scenographer Karine Galarneau, conceived *La Grue* within the context of a two-year (2010–2011) cultural mediation programme *Labyrinthe artistique: une nouvelle façon de visiter le Centre-Sud* [Artistic Labyrinth: A New Way to Visit the Centre-Sud]. Projects included within the *Labyrinthe artistique* had the principle aim of producing research and artworks rooted in the perspectives and experiences of the

¹⁰³ Nicolas Rivard moved to Montreal in 2006. He grew up in Chambly, a suburb to the southeast of Montreal, and spent a gap year in Baie-Saint-Paul, a city on the northern shore of the St. Lawrence River. After moving to Montreal, he began working at Café Coop Touski, where he met Catherine. Catherine spent much of her childhood in northern Québec (Quartaq) and in the Laurentians before moving to Montreal—and the Centre-Sud—to attend the Université du Québec à Montréal.

neighbourhood's inhabitants, community organizations, and users. *La Grue* circulated along Rue Ontario, between Rues Parthenais and Frontenac, collecting the public's subjective representations of Rue Ontario. PN would eventually make a select number of these representations public in other artistic media and contexts. These later iterations included a booklet documenting the project titled *Cadrer le Réel* (2011), made available on their website and sold as a hard copy at Café Coop Touski, and a public sidewalk installation along Rue Ontario titled *Poésie durable* (spring 2012), which was the source of the sign we'd encountered on that June walk in 2012.¹⁰⁴

Performing as *La Grue*. A team of three artists—an operator, a photographer, and cultural mediator with a notepad—push *La Grue* along Rue Ontario in search of spectators who will help to guide this human-powered framing crane, and thus contribute to building what Rivard calls the “poetic memory” of the Centre-Sud. Physically, *La Grue* is a mobile platform on wheels, equipped with a green plastic lawn chair and a moveable “crane”—an articulated metal arm hinged to a vertical boom. The operator (an artist in reflective vest) manipulates this arm, to the left, right, up, or down, according to the dictates of their seated foreperson.¹⁰⁵ The crane arm extends above and just beyond the foreperson, to which is attached an empty wooden picture frame that protrudes into their line of vision. The operator, photographer, and “mediator” provide a series of instructive prompts to the foreperson: “Sit, direct the operator toward your desired viewpoint; your view will be photographed” (Peristyle Nomade, 2011, *Mode d'emploi* section, *translation mine*). The foreperson carries out the instructions, finds their favoured *prise-de-vue*. The mediator asks why they have selected this particular landscape, scene, or “forgotten detail” for framing by the crane and capture by the camera. The mediator then records the foreperson's response on his/her clipboard. And so on. The performance of *La Grue* also draws the eye of passersby and voyeurs—those who might not wish to perform as

¹⁰⁴ *La Grue* was one event in a larger performance called *Parcours hors les murs*, performed within the 2011 Écho d'un fleuve festival. Spectators became *spectateurs-marcheurs* [spectator-pedestrians] and were invited to an interdisciplinary promenade piece comprised of six stations of artists positioned throughout neighbourhood streets.

¹⁰⁵ *La Grue* was co-conceived and created by artistic coordinator Catherine Lalonde Masseur, urban designer Patrice St-Amour, scenographer Karine Galarneau, editor and builder Christian Guay-Poliquin, costumes and installation Miriam Larose Truchon, cultural mediator Nicolas Rivard, with creative support from Samuel Fontaine. The “operators” of *La Grue* included Catherine Cormier-Larose, Jonathan Lafleur, Yan St-Onge, Marie-Paule Grimaldi, Marie-Charlotte Aubin, and Hugues Dargagnon.

forepeople, but who might spectate from a distance—whether as pedestrians on the sidewalk or as residents in Les Tours Frontenac. The ad hoc ensemble of builders, with reflective vests and lawn furniture, produce their own street spectacle.



Figure 35. A page from *Cadrer le Réel: Chantier de la Grue de Cadrage à Traction Poétique, Quartier Sainte-Marie de Montréal* (2011), a booklet produced about La Grue. From *Cadrer le Réel: Chantier de la Grue de Cadrage à Traction Poétique, Quartier Sainte-Marie de Montréal* [The construction site of the poetic framing crane, Sainte-Marie District of Montreal], by Péristyle Nomade, P. St-Amour (Graphics), & M.-C. Aubin & Hugues Dargagnon/Talion'h Kaärd (Photogs.), 2011, (<http://www.peristylenomade.org/fr/traces/galerie/cadrer-le-reel>). Copyright 2011 by Péristyle Nomade. Reprinted with permission.

I imagine that passersby might have viewed this strange assemblage in ways similar to how they viewed Curioicité's troupe and our cabinet in its passage from my apartment to the Parc Hochelaga: a group of actors, some in shorts, one in an apron, and another in a suit coat, towing a wooden display cabinet covered in chalk, and filled with household objects along Rue Ontario.

Poésie Durable. The frames that Mélanie encountered in our social stroll in 2012 were a further extension of *La Grue*, designed to appeal to urban commuters, their preconceptions of the Centre-Sud, and time constraints. In an informal phone conversation, Catherine Lalonde Masseur noted that she hoped the frames, placed along Rue Ontario between Rue Frontenac and Rue Iberville might help commuters see this place like those who inhabited it: "The negative view of the neighbourhood at the time was coming from the people

who didn't live there, who found it had ugly architecture. We chose [this section of the street] because people commuted along it. [They] didn't live there, but commuted to school [École Gédéon-Ouimet] or to the Grover building [a factory repurposed into artist studios and offices] . . . It's difficult to ask commuters to change their relations to this space, to take the 15 minutes to explore an alleyway. So [this installation] was designed to appeal to those people, who don't have the time to stop and watch a performance, but who can see the signpost, and reflect differently" (C. Lalonde Massecar, personal communication, February 8, 2016).

Correspondences. Both *Curiocité* and PN's *La Grue* engaged movement along the street with subjective documentation and narration—photography and verbal narration—to produce points of view on and in place. Both projects are concerned with “capturing” the variety of memories and experiences held by Rue Ontario, and do so by collecting and representing the partial ways of seeing of its daily users.

In our interview, Nicolas Rivard also addressed the potential sociospatial and political ramifications of the crane in urban space in ways that helped me see clearer connections between our respective projects:

La grue est aussi un puissant symbole visuel d'une ville en expansion : lorsqu'il y a des grues dans le paysage urbain, ça veut dire que celle-ci va bien (au niveau capitaliste du terme, i.e. de sa rentabilité économique). L'idée de ramener le symbole visuel de la grue (rattaché au pouvoir capitaliste) à l'être humain, celui qui parcourt la ville, qui se l'approprie, était pour nous un puissant symbole de réappropriation citoyenne de l'espace urbain et surtout un merveilleux outil d'interaction avec le citoyen incident. (Personal communication, 2015)

[The crane is also a powerful visual symbol of an expanding city: when there are cranes in the urban landscape, things are going well (in capitalist terms, e.g., its economic profitability). The idea of bringing back the visual symbol of the crane (attached to capitalist power) to the human being, the one who uses the city, who appropriates it, was for us a powerful symbol of citizen re-appropriation of urban space and, above all, an excellent tool for interacting with passersby].

Rivard's connection sparked my own memory. During my own walks along Rue Ontario in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and in the Centre-Sud (and in the southwest neighbourhood of Griffintown) I had been struck by the scale of the cranes and noise of pile-drivers constructing

the new—and displacing much of the old, the incumbent, the residual. Like Rivard, I was interested in smaller gestures, and in what could be imagined in and through the self-same old, incumbent, and residual. Rivard’s notion of “rescaling” the visual symbols of urban development and returning the production of the city to the user or the passerby through *La Grue* resonated with my conception of the cultural work of *Curiosité*. As a collaborative performance dramaturgy that might be taken up by others, I had imagined the cabinet as *theatrum mundi*—a microcosm and analogue of the city—a small, idiosyncratic, ephemeral, and transient collection of urban fragments brought together to perform a variety of different narratives and offer a collection of urban views. In both projects and in their processes, I see a shared interest in radical urban planning, and the desire to inhabit, produce, imagine, and experience the city according to values beyond economic profitability.

The key differences between *La Grue* and *Curiosité* lie in how we staged walking as part of—or prologue to—the dramaturgy of the performance event, and in our positioning of participants or audiences in relation to our respective framing devices. *La Grue*’s guides walked their foreperson toward their desired *prise-de-view*, engaging walking as a modality of the performance event itself. In *Curiosité*, walking is an intermediary method of research-for-creation whose traces carry into the theatrical scenography and dramaturgy. (I discuss this in more detail in section C. The Dynamic Scenography of the Street: From Panorama to *Bänkelsang* and *Banners-and-Cranks*). With *Abattoir de l’est*, my collaborators and I produced a sequence of *prises-de-vue*, or subjective frames, through which the audience “looked,” and along which it was invited to travel vicariously. We not only assembled the visual framing device (the crankie), we also acted as its forepeople, guiding the audience—via narration, music, and gesture—through the sequence of urban scenes depicted on the scrolling banner.

Reflections: Walking as a Curiosity-Driven Method

Below, I summarize the value of walking as a method—and its attendant practices of composing photographs and field notes—to urban performance research. Through *Curiosité*, I have come to understand walking as a situated, reflexive and ongoing method for knowing place. Walking Rue Ontario drew me into reflection on my daily interrelations and interactions in the street, and toward the Promenade Ontario as a social hub and node within my research-creation project. Frequent walking along Rue Ontario attuned me, the walker-as-performance-researcher, to the “commonplace”—the everyday of a place—and, by extension, alerted me to

changes, displacements, and disruptions, to shifts in and over the “time-geographies” which constitute this commonplace.

A vernacular walking epistemology orients spatial curiosity in *Curiosité*. This epistemology differs from the defamiliarization and disorientation tactics through which oppositional walking would know its “objects.” In oppositional walking, as in the Debordian *dérive*, the walker effects a detachment from the commonplace, and attempts to walk “out of sync” with the rhythms and routines of the urban so as to entertain novel and uncommonplace spatiotemporal experiences, and thus to know the city in unfamiliar ways. Through my research with *Curiosité*, I have come to understand that oppositional walking does not hold exclusive rights to spatial curiosity, or as an epistemology of the urban. Everyday walking can know and value the familiar, attend to local knowledges, and sense the consistencies of the commonplace as well as the “internal hybridities” of place (Massey, 2004, p. 117). Everyday walking can know and value the new, the unfamiliar, and the unusual as they too constitute place and the local, and as the limits of these categories themselves shift in relation to the walker’s situated viewpoint and evolving understanding. Lastly, everyday walking can sense transformations in and of the local, including (but not limited to) the displacements and disorientations that occur in the disruption of localized rhythms and routines.

Walking, Writing, and Sensing the Rhythms of Contested Places

In “Rhythms of Gentrification: Eventfulness and Slow Violence in a Happening Neighbourhood,” feminist geographer Leslie Kern (2016) writes about the gentrification of the Junction, the Toronto neighbourhood in which she lived between 2001 and 2010. Her daily experience of living in and walking in the Junction and her field notes serve as the “basis” of her analysis of how gentrification alters the rhythms of everyday life, and takes place away from those who cannot participate in those new rhythms. She suggests that the transformation of everyday, “non-eventful” space into organized, eventful social space aligned with consumption “pushes people not just to the margins of a space but also the margins of the day, the week, or the month” (p. 450). Kern’s framing of how gentrification acts upon the rhythms and social spaces of a neighbourhood suggests how walking, positioned as a place-based or site-specific research-creation method, might draw the performance researcher toward an awareness of—and ethics of care toward—social spaces threatened by the rhythms of commercialization and diverse forms of consumption, including the consumption of culture.

Through regular walking and writing, I became sensitized to the complexities of social space, and made aware of the occlusions of urban revitalization discourse. I began to think of how commerce might not only be “making” or “reviving” the local, but also taking the social space of other locals. This way of thinking about commercial activity, the local, social space, and rhythm impacted not only the themes and performance techniques of the play *Abattoir de l’est*, but also where and when I chose to site performances (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of my siting methodology). My daily experiences provided insight (and foresight) as to how my performance might impact on the rhythms and users of a site, and allowed me to imagine how the story that *Curiosité* told might resonate with or confront its regular users.

Stillness. While displacement (walking from one place to the next, in motion) constituted one “half” of my curious approach to place in *Curiosité*, emplacement (remaining in place) constituted its other half. Standing in place and taking a photograph focus looking and extend thinking in ways different from the travelling eye which scans the horizon. These moments of focussed looking and stillness centre differential sensory experiences, may aid memory and spark imagination, prompt different modes of writing, and permit an elaboration of details that might go unremarked in an overly mobile conception and articulation of place.

Reflections: Field Notes

Drawing upon Richardson’s (2000) contention that in-progress writing is central to knowing, Chapman & Sawchuck argue that in any creative process “Knowledge is not separate from the practice of inscription; indeed, it is through the ways we iterate our projects back to ourselves that we come to know” (p. 18). I engaged with my field notes as reflexive, fragmentary documents of my walks, revisiting these compositions to extend my thinking and materialize the *Curiosité* project. Within the creative process, the assemblage and analysis of field notes moved *Curiosité* toward its next iteration as a performance event. Analysis of the formal features of the field notes led to insights as to how the media of representation might correspond with or take up the tacit knowledges and implicit strategies of the methods of data collection (walking) and inscription (writing).

Returning to the archives of walking in the course of developing *Curiosité* and *Abattoir de l’est*, I engaged in reflective practice to refine, critique, and reorient my walking methodology. As I sought to embody curiosity as ongoing inquisitiveness and an ethics of care toward the vernacular landscape or “commonplace” of Rue Ontario, this reflexive approach had an

iterative effect on how I walked. By attending to unfamiliar (to me), refused, previously occluded, or unacknowledged aspects of Rue Ontario, and in walking with others both in the process of creating *Abattoir de l'est* and in the composition of the exegesis, I consciously sought to expand my repertoire, to enrich the quality of my noticing, listening, experience, and representation. Through differential modes of somatic and social attention, I walked routes and routines individually and with others, toward the collection of an archive of self and place that was always unfinished and ongoing.

C. The Dynamic Scenography of the Street: From Panorama to Bänkelsang and Banners-and-Cranks

This section of the chapter focusses on the second movement of *Curiosité*—the development of the theatrical apparatus for the transposition of my research-for-creation modalities and methods. In this movement, I sought to transpose my experiences of walking in and along the street, the visual collection I had gathered, and different features of my field notes into modes of theatrical presentation. I initiated this second movement in the midst of the first. When I started walking and collecting, I had yet to determine both the format of public presentations (other than as performance), and my own role in them. This entertainment of uncertainty as to outcomes encouraged me to:

- approach the field notes documenting my walks, images gathered in my archival research, and objects collected in and from the street from a variety of angles;
- consider a wide range of media and media capacities; and
- imagine the different collaborations that might take shape in and across their realization.

In the overlap between these movements of research-creation, I reflected on my past research to sketch the contours of an exhibition space, and continued to walk, collect, and take field notes with an eye toward their unveiling in the *Curiosité* cabinet theatre. I conceived of the six boxes of the cabinet as spaces for the material culture of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve—the representation of place through artefacts or objects. Meanwhile, I imagined the central pane of the cabinet as a miniature theatre of Rue Ontario. Extrapolating from my research-for-creation modalities and methods, I identified three modes that I would incorporate in the staging of Rue Ontario within the miniature theatre of the *Curiosité* cabinet: 1) polyphonic narration, as embodied in the field notes, and as performed in social strolling, 2) visual depiction, based on the material and virtual collection of photographs, maps, and scenes, and their variety of views of and on the street; and 3) motion and travel, drawn from both the mode of kinetic perception afforded in walking along the street and the itineraries of my solo walks and social strolls. My process of finding the performance form for *Curiosité*'s miniature theatre entailed research into the discourse of curiosity and its intersections with urban scenography, the motion picture, and popular street performance forms.

Within histories of Western theatrical scenography and urban entertainments, I identified the panorama as one of many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century media forms linked to the discourses of curiosity. Art historian Giuliana Bruno (2019) contends that the curiosity cabinet, the grand tour, flânerie, and the panorama, among other cultural forms, translated—and sought to satisfy—the “spatial curiosity” of European modernity, with its “fascination for views and the psycho-physical hunger for space that led the subject from vista to vista in an extended search for urban and environmental pleasure that could open mental maps” (From the Wall section, para. 3). The panorama mediated this spatial curiosity through pictorial illustration, motion, and—on occasion—narration.

As my research into the history of the panorama and its media effects progressed, I began to gravitate instead toward a variety of itinerant picture recitation forms, media which held similar capacities to transpose key aspects of my research modalities. Beginning in both print and virtual archives of several of these picture recitation media, I read secondary literature and practitioner accounts. I then participated in workshops with artists currently engaged in these forms, and attended performances as a spectator. Through these modalities of research-creation, I gleaned techniques for mobilizing spatial curiosity, some of which I later took up in *Abattoir de l'est*. My experiences as a spectator also led me to intuit a model of reception that further interested me, as these media forms, in their combination of picture recitation and montage techniques, set elaborate interpretive and associative tasks for the spectator.

BANVARD'S PANORAMA.--Figure 1.



Figure 36. An engraving of famed panorama showman John Banvard's *Panorama of the Mississippi River*, featured in an 1848 issue of *Scientific American*. The article also details the cranking technology used to advance the canvas in performance, and its impact on London audiences: "The Panorama of the Mississippi has had an astonishing effect upon all classes in London. The most of the English people think that our Western country is nothing but a wild-man-of-the-woods region, and no doubt but many places on the Mississippi are wild enough, but Banvard's panorama presents many scenes where the poet might indulge his fancy and the lover of the picturesque sigh to behold in reality" (p. 100). From "Banvard's Panorama" [Engraved illustration with text], 1848, *Scientific American* 4(13), p. 100, Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Moving_panorama.jpg). In the public domain.

Visions of Empire: Spatial Curiosity and the Urban Panorama

By the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century in Europe, the pleasures of travel and the desire to embark on real or imaginary excursions into the unknown—whether a foreign country or a little-known region of the nation—had been popularized, domesticated, and spectacularized.¹⁰⁶ European audiences read about and viewed illustrations of unusual

¹⁰⁶ Urban historian M. Christine Boyer (1996) identifies a nineteenth-century "passion" for travelling, conceived as the "primary means to learn about history," with "travel narratives, history books, historical painting, and architectural ruins" imagined and consumed as "modes of vicarious travel through time and space" (p. 228).

people and places in the travelogue and picturesque guide book. Scenic artists translated the desire for vicarious travel, knowledge of the unknown and news of the world, and novel perspectives into scrolling panoramas that brought the experience of circulation and travel into the theatrical experience.¹⁰⁷ In the panorama, or “all-view,” spectators could satisfy their desires to see the cities in which they lived from new vantage points, and witness the unfolding of recent historical events and epic national histories (Stafford, 2001, p. 95).¹⁰⁸

Art historian Barbara Stafford (2001) and urban historian M. Christine Boyer (1996) have argued that the tightly regulated, continuous panscape of the large-scale moving panorama proscribed differential and conflictual readings, and instead reinforced shared, universal views.¹⁰⁹ Stafford (2001) links the popular passion for the panorama not only to a modern desire for novelty, but to contemporary processes of colonization—to the “explosion of conquests” that dominated the Napoleonic era (p. 97). The scenographic technology of the panorama reflects imperialist discourses and their “need to incorporate masses of vanquished people of varying national identities” into the nation. The panorama, Stafford argues, was an effort to “embrace such swarming multiplicity” through the “huge, industrial, lucid” spectacle whose “landscape repertory was rooted in the subjugation of vast spaces: blank deserts, frozen wastes, teeming cities, the rotting fields of global warfare. These hyperviews of grandeur and desolation pointed toward a vast stage beyond the confines of the theatre. The always-escaping actuality of Hindustan, Gibraltar, Cairo, Jerusalem, Algiers, and Moscow, or closer to home, Paris, Rome, London, and Waterloo [...]” (pp. 97–8). In the panorama, these places were rendered not only visible, but legible, pacified, and controlled, materially, spatially, and temporally. As a

¹⁰⁷ As the reader will note, my focus in this chapter is on the “head-on” version of the nineteenth-century panorama, where a masked canvas scrolled past the viewer. In immersive versions of the panorama (or cyclorama) and diorama, the canvas provided a circular 360-degree perspective that surrounded the viewer.

¹⁰⁸ The thrills of simulated travel could also be produced in the portable version of the panorama. Curator of photographs at the Getty Institute Frances Terpak (2001) describes the portable panorama created by the Parisian artist known as Carmontelle (Louis Carrogis) in the late eighteenth century: “The ends of the panorama were attached to the rollers, which were turned by hand using a crank so that the panorama’s scenes would scroll past in the frame, backlit by the sun’s rays coming in a window or by candles” (p. 330). Carmontelle’s panorama included narration—the artist would commentate on the passing panorama for the viewer (his ducal patron) whose head was tucked beneath the viewing curtain, and whose gaze was directed at the figures and landscapes moving by, left-to-right, before him. The narrated miniature form of the panorama appealed to me for both its scale and movement capacities, although I imagined an audience for *Curiosité* larger than a single person or patron.

¹⁰⁹ See Boyer, 1996, pp. 252–257. An exception to this reading of the panorama has been taken by media archaeologist Erkki Huhtamo, who cites the materiality and theatricality of specific panorama shows in *Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles* (2013). His work will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

phantasmagorical extension of the imperial project and its geographical reach, the panorama could assimilate, convert, and subjugate these vast stages, bringing both foreign landscapes and teeming cities under the eye of imperial power.¹¹⁰

Boyer (1996) and Stafford (2001) consider the effects of the panorama on the urban spectator's visual perception of the city beyond the amusement hall. As opposed to the "labyrinthine cave of multilayered wonders" that confronted the user of the curiosity cabinet, the panorama "presented the world as lucid and uninterrupted entertainment" through a pseudo-scientific lens which catalogued the city, conveying its contents "coolly, neutrally, and without emotional inflection" (Stafford, 2001, pp. 90–91; p. 95). The 'lucidity' and immediacy of the panorama's mobile vision obscured the complexities, depths, and incongruities of the city (Stafford, pp. 90–91). This "rational entertainment," imagined as both an educational tool and as a phantasmagoric spectacle taught its viewers how to see the city by "reinforcing a new urbane look"—a "slightly bored" gaze "that accepted the world of appearances without particular challenge" (Boyer, p. 253). This urbane look might characterize other modern and mobile bourgeois personae—the disinterested and disembodied mobile gaze of the bourgeois flâneur, the window-shopper, even the train passenger.

Panorama as Performative Medium

Media archaeologist Erkki Huhtamo (2013) has argued that recent histories of the moving panorama—including Stafford (2001)—have overlooked the multimedia and performative aspects of historical panorama performances. In *Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles* (2013), Huhtamo articulates a more complex picture of these spectacles than appears in most accounts: "the painted panorama [...] became a performed panorama when it was unrolled in front of the spectators, who also listened to the lecturer, observed his gestures, enjoyed the music, and admired the special

¹¹⁰ In many ways, this critique of the panorama resonates with similar critiques of the imperialist origins and colonial spatial imagination of the curiosity cabinet (see Introduction to this exegesis, pp. 37–39). Giuliana Bruno (2014) connects the discourse of curiosity to a host of "georamic" media, including the panorama: "[E]arly] museographic spectacles and practices of curiosity gave rise to the public architecture of interior design that became the cinema. This was a spectacular theatrics of image collection that activated recollection. The spaces for viewing that would become filmic architecture included many sites of public intimacy and projection: the interior-exterior projects of magic lantern shows and phantasmagorias, cosmorama rooms and camera obscuras, wax and anatomical museums, performative tableaux vivants, cabinets of curiosity, vitrine and window display, worldly collections turned actual museums, fluid visions and sequences of spectacular motion, exhibitions of a georamic nature and panoramic vision, dioramic shows, the panoramas of view pointing, and other techniques for viewing collections of images" (p. 152).

effects . . .” (p. 15). The technology of the crank also transformed the spectator’s experience of the painted canvas and its depicted subject:

the painting metamorphosed depending on the speed with which it moved, the cranking direction, and the choice of rolling it continuously or intermittently. While gazing at the canvas, the spectators must also have been aware of other spectators, as well as issues such as the design and the temperature of the auditorium. Such factors were elements of the moving panorama apparatus as a performative medium. (p. 15)

Reading Huhtamo’s work *after* having experimented with the technology of the panorama in *Curiosité*, I find his focus on the performed panorama—his reference to specific panoramas, the techniques of performance, and contexts of performance—particularly valuable for those who remain curious about working with it or with related media forms.¹¹¹

Other forms of the urban panorama suggest complex modalities of spectator contemplation and engagement with the city. Commissioned for the 1964-65 World’s Fair, urban planner Robert Moses’ *The Panorama of the City of New York*, a three-dimensional scale model (1 inch = 100 feet) and simulated helicopter tour of New York, presents yet another variation of the “performed” panorama.¹¹² Performance studies scholar Blagovesta Momchedjikova (2002) contends that the original *Panorama* provided fairgoers with a moving, birds-eye view of a planned city that was “unpeopled, clean, clear-cut, safe, and quiet” (p. 267). Reconceptualized as a walking tour of the city’s five boroughs in 1994, the *Panorama* is currently housed in the Queens Museum of Art (formerly the New York Pavilion), where it is updated at intervals to reflect the changing topography the city. Visitors—Brobdingnagian in comparison to the miniature city—circumnavigate the model via skywalk. Tour guides narrate and visitors recall (or conjure) what is both present and absent from the model—the personal and collective memories held by its buildings and landmarks. Momchedjikova describes the city model as “a memory theater,” produced in the dialogue between the fixed view (the city plan) and the pedestrian observer (p. 278). The mnemonic aspects of walking and social strolling in the city carry into the redesign of the *Panorama* model as a memory theatre, another medium

¹¹¹ I also direct the reader to John Bell’s (1996b) account of the nineteenth-century panorama as a propaganda apparatus oriented toward the reproduction of mythic (or epic) history, in which he also draws out the performed panorama’s formal distance from dramatic realism and its proximity to Brecht’s epic dramaturgy.

¹¹² For more information on *The Panorama of the City of New York*, see Momchedjikova (2002) and Uva (2020).

for the transposition of urban memory in and as scenography. The redesigned *Panorama of the City of New York*, conceived as a memory theatre *and* virtual tour in Momchedjikova's account, intersects with my understanding of Curioité's urban theatre as a *theatrum mundi* and virtual tour of the city. (I may yet explore the miniature model—and these intersections—more explicitly in future performance research and writing.)

In what follows, however, I discuss my interest in popular motion picture media within Curioité, as I imagined these forms to convey my modalities of spatial curiosity, which included vernacular walking, social strolling, autopographical field notes, and the collection of views of place from historical archives.

(Motion) Picture Recitation and Street Performance: Bänkelsang to Banners-and-Cranks

Cantastoria (Italy), bänkelsang and moritat (Germany) combine written or spoken text or lyrics, visuals, music, and a narrator (Bell, 1991, p. 8). In these picture recitation forms, a narrator uses a pointer to move between scenes of a story depicted on a large painted canvas.¹¹³ Theatre scholar and picture recitation practitioner John Bell (1991) describes the bänkelsang as a precursor for the motion picture, “the ultimate modern mechanical combination of image, text and music” (p. 8).¹¹⁴ The bänkelsang “developed in the fairs and public thoroughfares of sixteenth-century Europe and reached its height of popularity in the 1800s. Folk painters depicted mystery plays, tales of recent disasters or crimes on the panels of a bänkelsang canvas, which was then sold to the travelling performers (often families) who

¹¹³ Some practitioners use multiple sheets of canvas strung together, flipping each image panel as they narrate the story; others invent other methods of moving between images. For example, in her revisionist moritat of “Mack the Knife” from Brecht's *Three-penny Opera*, Meredith Millar retrieves crumpled rags from a bucket, smoothing them out to reveal the bloody images she narrates in her performance. A video of her performance at Links Hall in Chicago in January 2011, titled *Lady Mack the Knife*, is available here: <http://www.meredithjmillar.com/portfolio/lady-mack-the-knife/>.

¹¹⁴ I do not intend here to suggest a teleological account of the bänkelsang which ends in cinema. My allusion to the cinematic qualities or capacities of picture recitation indexes my efforts to translate and transpose the visual language of these forms into what is, for me, the more familiar language of cinema. Bänkelsang, cantastoria, and the Indian and Chinese secular narrative picture recitation practices upon which these European popular forms draw are very much living performance forms (see Mair, 1988). Rooted in popular oral traditions and epic poetry, in picture recitation traditions, the narrative is (most often) related through sung verse, rather than narrative prose. In *Abattoir de l'est*, I interpolated the literary Gothic as narrative mode. This literary approach distinguishes my storytelling—its sources, models of apprenticeship and story acquisition, and manner of recitation—from both traditional forms of picture recitation and its neo-folk revivals, including the practices of Clare Dolan and Bread & Puppet.

made their living singing the ballad narrations to the pictures” (Bell, 1991, p. 8).¹¹⁵ The *Bänkelsänger* (the name ascribed to the narrator of these picture shows) was an itinerant, a hawker of sensational stories, and a “current events” crime reporter, who used performative techniques, provocative headlines, and imagery as “hooks” to attract a crowd (Mair, 1988).

The secondary sources and early nineteenth-century German depictions I encountered in my research suggested that the *bänkelsang* may have afforded women significant roles as storytellers and mediators of public discourse (including news discourse). Mair (1988) contends that women and men (often husband and wife duos) performed together as *bänkelsängers*, while other sources suggest that roles were gender-specific: women declaimed the story before men sung it in ballad form (Heger & Iglhaut, 2014). In some depictions, women also appear to perform peripherally as accompanying musicians and dancers, or as vendors of broadsheet, sheet music, and chapbook versions of the performed story (see Figure 37). I viewed the *bänkelsang*’s distribution of narrative across modes (the visual, the sung, the declaimed) and across performers as a model I might adapt to transpose the visual, narratological, and dialogical aspects of walking Rue Ontario in performance. As you will recall, in the social stroll, place emerged as a site of personal and collective memory, and a “shared” viewpoint became a prompt for differential narration, our lived experiences attuning us to distinct aspects of place and leading us to distinct accounts and interpretations. In the *bänkelsang*, I located an analogue for this shared viewpoint in the central image around which the performers convene to tell the story.

¹¹⁵ In his genealogy of picture recitation practices in China and around the world, sinologist and vernacular performance scholar Victor H. Mair (1988) describes a typical nineteenth-century *bänkelsang* performance:

The *Bänkelsänger* would wander about from place to place in search of people who were interested in watching him perform. He would set up a stand, often in a town square and especially during market season, and upon it he would hang a large picture [. . .] The performance consisted of singing and chanting about the picture as the *Bänkelsänger* pointed to the appropriate parts of it. The subjects of his narration were often topical events of a sensational nature such as fires, robberies, murders, and so on. The *Bänkelsänger* would ask for donations during their performances but they also earned their living by sale to the audience of printed versions of the sung narratives. (p. 127)



Figure 37. Swiss artist Hieronymus Hess's (1832) depiction of a Bänkelsänger in Basel recounting the horrors of an earthquake in Basel in 1356 and floods in Holstein in 1830. From *Bänkelsänger am Nadelberg* [Watercolour on paper], by H. Hess, 1832, Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hess_Baenkelsaenger.jpg). In the public domain.

Banners-and-Cranks

My research into the panorama and bänkelsang led me to the related motion picture medium of banners-and-cranks, or the crankie show.¹¹⁶ Banners-and-cranks refers to a genre of motion picture recitation in which a narrator employs a crank mechanism to scroll images vertically or horizontally in time with the spoken (or sung) narrative. The crankie show can incorporate a variety of visual techniques to simulate the visual, rhythmic, and mnemonic experiences of urban walking, many of which also belong to the panorama and to cinema in a grander scale.¹¹⁷ Like the urban panorama, the crankie can present a continuous streetscape in

¹¹⁶ Practitioners of the banners-and-cranks attribute this term to theatre-maker and founder of Bread and Puppet Theatre Peter Schumann (born 1934). Huhtamo (2013) does not make express mention of banners-and-cranks in his discussion of moving panorama antecedents, though it bears similarities to the urban peepshows he describes, and, as I've noted previously, to Carmontelle's portable panoramas and picture roll transparencies.

¹¹⁷ Much scholarship has been devoted to the analogy of cinema and urban walking. Bruno (2019) describes cinema as "an intimate geography born with the emergence of a public penchant for flânerie" (Cinema and Public Sites section, para. 3). "Like the city," Bruno (2008) writes, "motion pictures move, both outwards and inwards: they journey, that is, through the space of the imagination, the site of memory and the topography of affects" (p. 26).

motion to a spectator who follows along, according to the pace and geographical itinerary of the crankist.¹¹⁸ The crankie show can also use montage to make “leaps” in time and distance, and between imagery, ideas and viewpoints in ways that might mimic the porous, aleatory, and imaginative experiences of walking in the city.¹¹⁹

Cantastoria artist Clare Dolan (n.d.) describes the medium’s capacities for staging the “current age,” the rhythms and visual dramaturgy of contemporary experience:

while the simple technology of cantastoria encourages us to think of it as an incredibly antiquated anomaly, we should also keep in mind its utterly postmodern attributes. The use of pastiche, the ability to jump forwards and backwards in time, the multiple personas [*sic*] of the singer (who often embodies the characters within the narrative, yet also provides meta-commentary as a narrator outside of the story), the visual allegory and double-and-triple meanings of the pictures—all are things that seem very much a part of this current age of video montage, cinematic quick-cuts, multiple identities and interrupted narratives. (para. 23)

Dolan’s discussion of cantastoria’s postmodern and contemporary attributes resonates with my own experiments with motion picture performance in *Curiosité*. Working with banners-and-cranks in rehearsals revealed that liveness, the conditions of performance, the scale, form, and content of the painted canvas, and the multimedia techniques practitioners engage to animate that canvas all interact to produce different interpretive possibilities. We could choose to produce a painted canvas that was playful and performative in its own right, selecting a discontinuous sequence of images to “represent” the city, and integrating multiple viewpoints, forms and styles of depiction. Moreover, different animation and mediation techniques could further transform the painted canvas or depicted image. The narrator’s gloss,

¹¹⁸ For an example of a crankie piece which incorporates the streetscape, see Great Small Works’ Trudi Cohen and John Bell’s *Sidewalk Ballet* (2014), which cleverly stages the conflict between Robert Moses’ and Jane Jacobs’ respective urban ideals. Named after Jacobs’ essay of the same title in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961/1992), *Sidewalk Ballet* engages the crankie show format (among others) to narrate the story of Moses’ modernist urban planning—and Jacob’s critique of it—in the mid twentieth century. Through a “panorama” of New York’s streets (and sidewalks), their show combines text from Jacob’s essay with an imaginary panscape of collaged together storefronts and ghost signs—places recently shuttered on the Lower East Side. (See the video of the performance here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0MlUjeCgJw>)

¹¹⁹ Bell (1996a) suggests that picture performances rely on techniques similar to those of Brecht’s revolutionary epic theatre, including “montage, interruption, and the juxtaposition of incompatible elements” as well as “an emphasis on argument and on the spectator’s critical study and estranged observation of the picture of the world portrayed” (p. 283–284).

a swirl of incidental music, a pause in the cranking speed—all held the potential to intervene in the image and make it mean differently.



Figure 38. Alain Bonder sketches fragments of the moving city panorama on the canvas scroll in April 2013. Personal photograph.

Bänkelsang and Banners-and-Cranks in Curiocité

Curiocité’s theatrical apparatus emerged between the modalities of walking and collecting the street, and the media capacities of the bänkelsang and banners-and-cranks. The strategies and modes of public picture recitation central to the bänkelsang inspired the narrators in Curiocité.¹²⁰ The Curiocité troupe (hereafter referred to as narrator-demonstrators) draw a crowd by placing themselves in the public spaces of Rue Ontario, promising to reveal the mysterious contents of their cabinet—the materials and stories of the past that grip the present. They use the cabinet’s curiosities—which include, among others, a banner-and-crank mechanism—to narrate these stories of Rue Ontario to interested audiences, each narrator-demonstrator approaching the story from a different point of view.

¹²⁰ As I explore in Chapter 2, this narrative technique also derives from Brecht’s conception of the street-demonstrator, which Mair (1988) suggests owes to the Bänkelsänger tradition (pp. 127–128).



Figure 39. *Curiocité's* narrator-demonstrators (Rae Maitland as Romance, Mélanie Binette as Science, and Nicolas Germain-Marchand as Mystère) perform different relations to an image on the scroll during a performance of *Abattoir de l'est* at Galerie Alt Art & Design, September 14, 2015. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Printed with permission.

Curiocité's narrator-demonstrators describe the story world as it appears along the length of the scroll, glossing each image for the assembled audience, and finding a place for each image within their narrative. The narrator-demonstrators illuminate the correspondences between scenes, call attention to the barely perceptible or implicit meaning of an image, or take a detour into the personal, the political, the fragmentary, the tangential, or the forgotten, offering to the viewer a counterpoint to the dominant reading, or, another path through the story. Instead of taking the spectator on a first-person walk along Rue Ontario, or providing her with a visual panorama of the length of the street, I understood *Curiocité* and its narrator-demonstrators to be taking her on a walk of a story, moving from one place to another, one scene to another, one view to another. The spectator of the crankie show is encouraged not only to follow along, but to imagine her own path (within the constraints of the medium) through the visual and narrative amplitudes, the interior and exterior landscapes of the story—to interpret the sequence of images and ideas, the overlapping viewpoints, and contesting voices presented for their consideration. In this articulation of *Curiocité's* crankie show as a virtual journey, I find myself strikingly close to Sergei Eisenstein's description of cinema as an "imaginary path [. . .]

across a multiplicity of phenomena, far apart in time and space, gathered in a certain sequence into a single meaningful concept” (Eisenstein 1985/1989, p. 116).¹²¹

¹²¹ I owe this correlation to Bruno’s (2019) discussion of the convergences between the techniques of filmic and architectural promenades, where she highlight’s Eisenstein’s “walking description” of cinematic montage and spectatorship (Filmic and Architectural section, para. 2).

D. Summary, Reflections, and Bridge to the Next Chapter

This chapter tracked how my curiosity toward a vernacular landscape—the everyday place and transit route of rue Ontario—informed the selection of research-for-creation methods, and the choice of media forms for the theatrical representation of place in *Curiosité*. I identified walking as a curiosity-driven method of reflexive, sensory place-based performance research, and detailed the strategies for representing walking textually in the field notes, and theatrically through banners-and-crank.

In their attention to “the familiar, local, temporal, and socio-cultural, as well as the unknown, immediate, solitary, wild,” feminist approaches to walking align with and orient my spatial curiosity and its object(s) in *Curiosité* (Heddon & Turner, 2012, p. 233). As a modality of spatial curiosity, everyday walking knows and collects place from a partial perspective, as a “conjunction of many histories and many spaces,” and with attention to its “interior hybridities” (Massey, 2004, p. 117). *Curiosité*’s walking archive—my field notes and photographs—reflects the contingencies, tensions, histories, and memories of both the archivist and her object(s). As a source for performance creation, the walking archive can supply both medium and content.

As I approached the walking archive as a source for performance creation, I undertook parallel research into popular performance forms that have been aligned historically with spatial curiosity and analogically with practices of walking in the city. From among the many media forms I considered in my research, I oriented toward those which incorporated 1) polyphonic narration, 2) visual depiction, and 3) motion, as I understood these attributes to correspond with my modality of walking, the representational strategies of my field notes, and the contents of the archive. I located in the moving panorama a visual strategy for conveying motion and travel in space and for mobilizing multiple perspectives on and memories of place. Critiques of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century panorama I encountered in my research identified its spatial curiosity, pictorial strategies, and ideological effects with imperialism. The panorama, in this view, mobilized the city as a surface for the blasé urbane gaze, and defused the critical capacities and inquisitive desires of the beholder.¹²²

¹²² These curiosity-effects resemble Brecht’s (1957/1964c) critique of bourgeois realism and its reality-effects as well as Debord’s (1967/2014) critique of the society of the spectacle. Giuliana Bruno (2014) suggests a critical amendment to these ideological critiques, and to my own ways of thinking about the panorama and its centering of the visual sense. She proposes that the curiosity cabinet, the panorama, and flânerie shape the spectator’s experience of the haptic in other terms, by “enable[ing] the imagination to form the habit of feeling through the eye” (Hussey, 1927, as cited in Bruno, 2014, p. 156).

Popular (motion) picture recitation forms, antecedents of the large-scale performed panorama and of cinema, retained my interest and attention, and I experimented with their potential to transpose not only locomotion, but the personal and political dimensions of my spatial curiosity. In the *bänkelsang* and banners-and-crank, I recovered epic techniques and postmodern aesthetics for staging place as a conjunction of fragmentary and contested vantage points, views, and histories. This way of staging place and the local—as social, contested, and contingent rather than essential, unified, and pure—aligned with my leftist, feminist standpoint, and contrasted with many of the representations of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve I was encountering in urban renewal, popular media and advertising discourses at the time.

In Chapter 2. *The Dramaturgy of Curiosity: A Theatre of Capitalism(s) in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, or the Abattoir, Exposed and Enchanted*, I continue down several of the paths I've pursued thus far, though I begin from a different place—the shared footprint of the former abattoirs de l'est and the current headquarters of *Journal de Montréal*, a major French-language newspaper. The chapter highlights the political dimensions of my curiosity, explains my orientation toward neoliberalism in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve as a context of performance research, and relates the process of assembling the dramaturgy of *Abattoir de l'est* from a collection of personal experiences, news media, and fictional sources, as well as epic theatre forms and techniques. I close the chapter with a discussion of *théâtre d'objets* [object theatre] as a curious methodology for engaging with the material culture of the street, and position curiosity (through its close relative of enchantment) as a dramaturgical disposition and guiding ethos within a collaborative rehearsal process characterized by an openness to the unknown, experimentation, and shared authority.

Before the second chapter, however, we must first pass through the slaughterhouse, by way of Prompt Book 3: *Abattoir de l'est*.

Prompt Book 3: *Abattoir de l'est*

Monday, September 14, 2015, approximately 8:30 p.m., Galerie Alt Art & Design, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.¹²³

Our electrical system is not safe on the wet terrain. After a weekend of heavy rain, I send out an emergency e-mail blast seeking a performance space in the neighbourhood for our workshop performance, originally scheduled for Parc Hochelaga. Éric Tremblay, a local business owner, responds quickly, offering his art gallery on Sainte-Catherine and Bourbonnière for the evening free of charge. Galerie Alt Art & Design is situated along another of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's neighbourhood shopping streets—the Promenade Sainte-Catherine. There is frequent turnover of the shops along the Promenade Sainte-Catherine; a number of storefronts—shuttered long before I moved here in 2009—remain so. Unlike the Promenade Ontario, business along Rue Sainte-Catherine has been slow to recover, due in part to the lower number of nearby residences.



Figure 40. Lantic Sugar Refinery, as seen from the nearby and now defunct cooperage. Fall 2015. Personal photograph.

Across the street from Galerie Alt Art & Design, the silos, catwalks, and original brick of the Lantic Sugar Refinery, formerly the St. Lawrence Sugar Refining Company.¹²⁴ The refinery stretches along the southern side of rue Notre-Dame, between Avenue Bourbonnière and Boulevard Pie IX, covering approximately 48,000 square feet (Direction générale du patrimoine et des institutions muséales du ministère de la Culture et des Communications, 2013). I am already familiar with this site, having conducted archival research and plotted the refinery into the narrative of *Abattoir de l'est*. Founded in 1887, by 1913 the refinery was the largest employer in Maisonneuve, with its 500 employees making up approximately a quarter of all those employed in the Canadian sugar industry. During the period of deindustrialization, several

¹²³ A note on photographs. Whenever possible, I have included photographs taken of the performance on September 14, 2015. In some cases, I have selected photographs from other performances of *Abattoir de l'est* where they more clearly illustrate the scenes in this section of the Prompt Book and the thematics of the chapter which follows.

refineries across Canada either closed or consolidated, and in 1980, St. Lawrence Sugar became the lone operational refinery in Montreal.¹²⁵ St. Lawrence Sugar Refining Company now bears the logo of Lantic Sugar—actually a conglomeration of Atlantic Sugar, Rogers Sugar, and St. Lawrence Sugar—which has occupied the refinery since 1984. Lantic Sugar Company remains a large employer in the district, employing approximately 300 people (*Carnet de bord: Lantic, centenaire toujours active*, 2014).

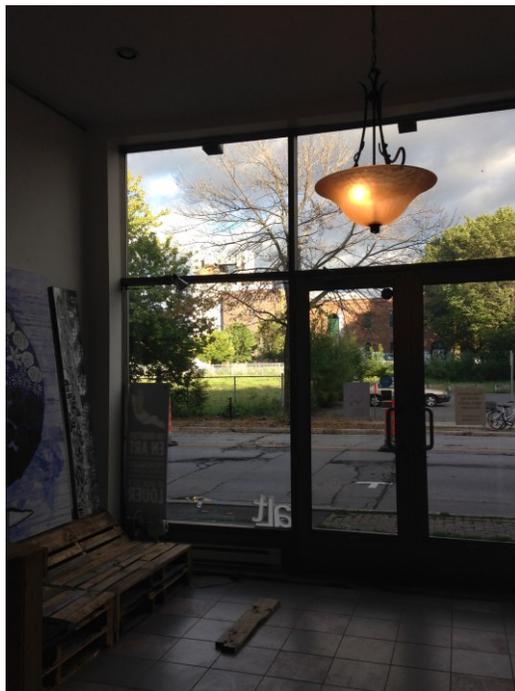


Figure 41. Inside Galerie Alt Art & Design, looking out. September 14, 2015. Personal photograph.

Inside the Galerie, a framing area, with different backings hung against the wall, and an empty glass showcase below; an untuned piano tucked in the corner, and a stairway leading into what looks to be an unfinished basement. In the back room, row upon row of wooden pallets stacked against the wall, salvaged from the summer events at the Stade Olympique, where they were being used as ad hoc seating. In the corner, a small bathroom with toilet and utility sink filled with paint rags. In the unlit section of the room, a painting studio and storage space: piles of brushes, tubes of paint, stacked stretcher bars on tables.

A whoosh of cool September air, and the wooden floorboards creak beneath the feet of spectators arriving late to the performance, which is already in progress. Inside, I can hear a few folks meandering through the gallery, trying to find the source of the sound and light, as Alain helps to usher them into the back room, warm with bodies. All adults here tonight, no children.

¹²⁵ In 1968, workers at the St. Lawrence Sugar Refining Company went on strike for increased wages. In 1983, newspapers reported the end of a 14-week strike at the Maisonneuve plant, which was resolved by “offering its 250 production workers a more generous agreement than previously thought,” though the article does not mention specific terms of the agreement (“70 Jobs Saved at Sugar Firm,” 1983, B5). The most recent labour dispute occurred in March 2016, when 200 unionized employees went on strike for a new collective agreement (*Presse Canadienne*, 2016).

There is shifting among the audience members to make room for the newly arrived on the discarded pallet risers. Julian Menezes, our composer and live musician, is perched high up in the risers in our makeshift “house.” Tonight’s performance will be in French. Nicolas as Monsieur disappears behind the cabinet, and pops up, on a stepladder, behind it. He dons a leather glove, transforming himself into the slaughtering machine.



Figure 42. Julian Menezes accompanies the Curiocté performers on guitar at Galerie Alt Art & Design, September 14, 2015. Photo credit: Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

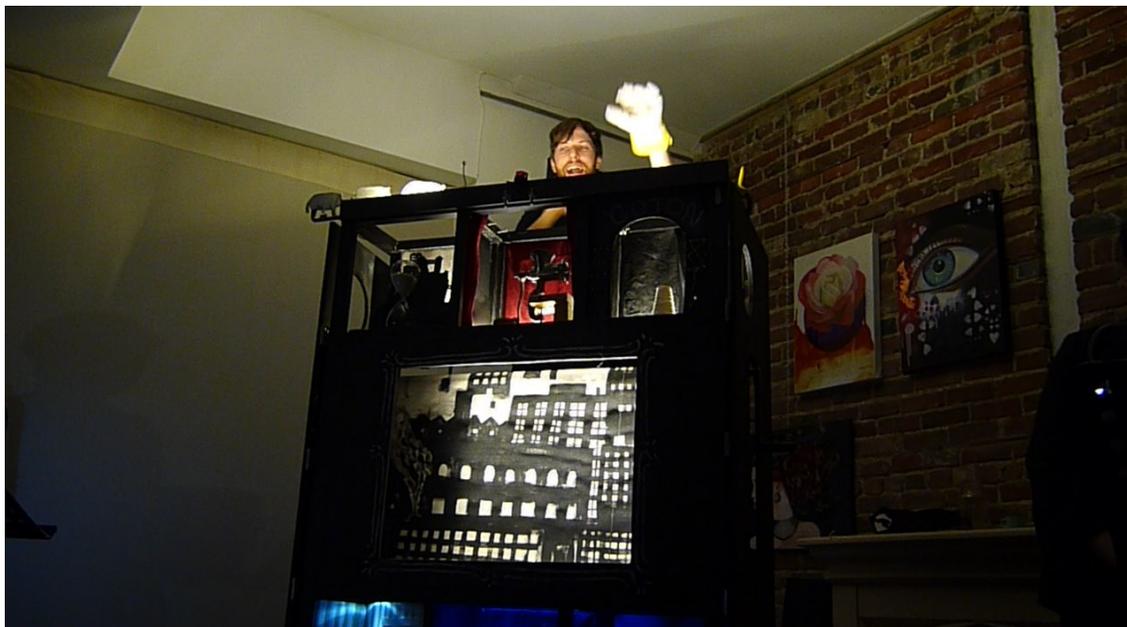


Figure 43. Monsieur (Nicolas Germain-Marchand) transforms into the slaughtering machine of the *Abattoir de l'est* at the Galerie Alt Art & Design, September 14, 2015. Photo credit: Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

[He buzzes and whirrs, pressing a button on the top of the cabinet (a bicycle light) with his left hand to cue the movement of his right. The left hand pushes the button. The right hand advances three papercut pigs, tacked in assembly line fashion, forward, toward his left hand. His killer left hand rises (with an excited buzz), grabs the closest pig and drops it into the top centre compartment (or box) of the cabinet, whose red velvet theatre curtains barely conceal an old-fashioned steel meat grinder. Monsieur's machinic mouth grinds as the right hand revolves the grinder's crank. This cycle repeats again . . . until—]

Science:

Chapitre un: La tuerie!

Chapter One: The Killing!

Monsieur:

La tuerie!

The Killing!

Science:

La tuerie était chose commune à l'abattoir.

Killing was commonplace in the abattoir.

[The third pig in the disassembly line evades Monsieur's left hand.]

Science:

Mais un cochon, ce cochon, avec une vraie tête de cochon comme on leur connaît, avait quelques réticences envers la façon dont les choses se passaient à l'Abattoir de l'Est.

But, one pig, this pig, pigheaded like all pigs, had one or two objections to these ordinary ways of doing.

Romance:

La truie avec un tête de cochon se faufila donc entre les jambes du boucher, couinant et grognant . . . jusqu'à s'échapper de l'abattoir.

She squealed out of the abattoir, through the legs of the butcher—

Monsieur:

Tout un exploit pour une truie enceinte.

Quite a feat for an expectant sow.

Science:

Dans le chaos qui s'ensuivit, la truie en cavale ne put se retenir.

In the ensuing chaos, the fugitive sow could no longer contain herself.

[Science turns the crank, taking leave of the abattoir and leading us into an overview of the city plan—a Cartesian grid, seen from above.]



Figure 44. Science (Mélanie Binette) takes in the City Beautiful street grid at the Galerie Alt Art & Design, September 14, 2015. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Printed with permission.

Raisonneuse:

Sur son chemin, nulle part en particulier,
Elle laisse tomber une traînée d'orphelins,
Un porcelet à chaque coin de rue.

Along her route to nowhere in particular,
she left a trail of orphans,
one piglet per intersection.



Figure 45. "Along her route to nowhere in particular, she left a trail of orphans." Documentation of shadow puppet tests for the sow's flight from the abattoir. March 2013. Personal photograph.

Raisonneuse :

Le dernier est né sur la rue Notre-Dame . . .

The last came into this world at rue Notre-Dame . . .

[In shadow, Romance raises the last little piggy onto the map—splat.]

Science:

Et est sorti de ce beau monde exactement au même endroit.

And exited this world in exactly the same location . . .

[Science collects the two aluminum soup cans hanging from around her neck. She kneels beside the cabinet and clangs the cans, imitating the sound of horse hoofs on cobbles, a conjuring of the Rag-and-Bone Man. In shadow, the Rag-and-Bone Man, his cart, and his nag enter the scene and traverse in hitches and starts. And then—a squeal as the runt of the litter falls beneath the wheels of the Rag-and-Bone Man's cart.]

[The panorama descends to reveal an open vista of the riverbank, a frontal perspective, capturing the shore from the middle of the river itself, and bordered on either side by a few gnarled trees, rogue weeds and grasses.]

Raisonneuse:

Ayant perdu son plus jeune, la truie était bouleversée.

Having lost her young, the sow was distraught—

Science:

. . . en admettant que les cochons puissent avoir des sentiments humains.

. . . as far as pigs can be thought to feel, as we do.

Raisonneuse:

On peut donc dire que la truie était fatiguée. Et voilà qu'elle s'étend de tout son long le long du Saint-Laurent, à bout de souffle, songeant à ses bébés éparpillés à travers la ville.

The sow, it can be said, was fatigued. And so she lay on the banks of the St-Lawrence, sucking air and thinking of the babes she'd left throughout the city.

Science:

Mais sur la berge se dressait une ombre.

There, on the horizon stood a silhouette.

Raisonneuse:

Madame X, la gardienne de la rue, phare dans la nuit pour les âmes perdues, portant une croix de Malte ornée sur la tête, symbole des chevaliers qui gardaient la route vers la Terre Sainte.

The grande gardienne de la rue, Madame X, a beacon for lost souls, who bore an elaborate Maltese cross atop her head, the symbol of ancient knights who guarded the route to the holy land.



Figure 46. Madame X flitters and floats as the sow heaves on the shores of the St. Lawrence River. Workshop at Hexagram Concordia, June 15, 2014. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Printed with permission.

[The faint figure of Madame X appears as a cast shadow along the shoreline, at a distance at first, growing as she nears the sow. A moving shadow with a fluttering gait, her stoic upper body still, her neck, face, and Maltese cross headpiece a clear silhouette of painted mylar; her torso of cut paper, and her legs, two of Romance's dainty twiddling fingers, to which two high-heeled paper boots are attached with loops of tape. She floats as she walks.]

Science:

Alors elle guetta . . .

She was watching . . .

Raisonneuse:

Attendit . . .

Waiting . . .

[Romance clips a smaller mylar form of Madame X—a figure to scale with the painted landscape—to the side of the canvas scroll.]

Raisonneuse:

Droite comme un piquet . . .

Stiff as a board . . .

Science:

Légère comme une plume . . .

Light as a feather . . .

Raisonneuse:

Muette comme une tombe . . .

Quiet as a nun . . .

[A tiny beat of flickering light, a point at first, growing, convex then concave. Fetal? A liquescent, protean changeling, an immaterial, undefined and indefinable form.]

Science & Raisonneuse:

La Trouvée.

The Foundling.

[Behind the screen, Romance deftly manipulates a tiny scrap of reflective mylar, moving it along one curvilinear edge of an LED spotlight, watching the screen with attention as the image expands and retracts, flickers and wavers, with her every breath. La Trouvée/The Foundling migrates to the sow's belly, and develops the recognizable contours of a mouth, opening and closing, all the while her amorphous edges dilate and shrink, pulsating light, refracting and diffracting.]

Science:

La truie remarqua à peine la minuscule petite chose qui cherchait les tétines sur son ventre. Vaincue, elle laissa la Trouvée téter son lait, et se perdit dans ses pensées . . .

The sow barely noticed the tiny creature suckling at her belly. Overcome, she allowed the foundling to nurse, lost in her own thoughts . . .

[Science conjures the Rag-and-Bone Man by clanging the soup cans. Monsieur retreats behind the cabinet, and the figure of the Rag-and-Bone Man atop his cart and horse appears in shadow moments later.]



Figure 47. The Rag-and-Bone Man appears on the horizon. Galerie Alt Art & Design, September 14, 2015. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Printed with permission.

Raisonneuse:

De son père, le Guenillou avait appris à reconnaître un animal à l'ombre qui se découpait sur l'horizon, à la manière de celui qui sait distinguer l'oie de la mouette à la trace que son passage laisse dans le ciel. Depuis le chemin, il a reconnu l'ombre de la truie qui se détachait des berges boueuses du Saint-Laurent.

From his father, the Rag-and-Bone Man had learned to tell an animal from the shape it cut on the horizon, much as one tells a goose from a gull by the mark it carves in the sky.

From the road, he saw the shape of a sow against the muddy banks of the St-Lawrence River.

[The Rag-and-Bone Man dismounts and appears in profile on the shore, a shadow cast by the combination of a cut cardboard silhouette and Monsieur's right hand, his fluid stride created by the alternating, knuckle-by-knuckle articulation of middle and index fingers, each with cardboard boots attached.]



Figure 48. The Rag-and-Bone Man approaches the sow. September 14, 2015. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Printed with permission.

[As he nears the sow, the Rag-and-Bone Man's silhouette magnifies, spills over, seems to approach the audience. He peers down at the sow. Kicks at her with one of his booted feet, disappears Monsieur's hands become those of the Rag-and-Bone Man, appearing on the screen, frozen in shadow. The Rag-and-Bone Man's hands disappear, as if they were hiding from watchful eyes of the sow's rightful owner.]

Figure 49. The wary hands of the Rag-and-Bone Man. Galerie Alt Art & Design, September 14, 2015. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Printed with permission.



Science:

C'était un homme vigilant.

He was a cautious man.

[The hands return, carefully again, moving with desire toward the sow. Then the fingers and palms jut upward and curl inward, and the palms retreat as if repulsed by the sow: a rhetorical gesture indicating wariness.]

Science:

Un homme prudent.

A careful man.

[The fingers develop a life of their own, a rhetorical gesture of desire, greed, fingers tickling the air in anticipation, the fingers telegraphing his scheme to claim the sow as his own.]



Figure 50. The thrifty fingers of the Rag-and-Bone Man stake their claim on the sow. Parc Hochelaga, June 20, 2013. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Edited by the author with permission.

Science :

Un homme économe.

A thrifty man.

[The hands decide their course of action, and, without further guidance from the narrators, descend with consciousness, with confidence even, toward the prostrate body of the sow.]

Raisonneuse:

Personne autour ne se réclamait propriétaire de la truie. Et tout le monde sait qu'on trésor appartient à celui qui le trouve.

The owner of the sow was nowhere in sight.
It was as good as his.

[Romance makes a strange, gurgling coo/cry, speaking as and for La Trouvée. But, to my ear, this sound has no “interiority”—it is impossible to tell the meaning of the sound.]

Raisonneuse:

Et il l’a entendu.

And then, he heard something.

[The Rag-and-Bone Man’s hands repeat the gestures of retreat, repulsion, and wariness, in response to this sound.]

Raisonneuse:

Maintenant qu'il y regardait de plus près,
le Guenillou apercevait autre chose qu'un cochonnet.

At first, he thought it must be a piglet.
But now he wasn't so sure . . .

[With this new piece of information, this breach between narrated world and narrator world—the sharing of Raisonneuse’s knowledge and vision with the Rag-and-Bone Man—the hands adopt a tentative, uncertain posture, suspended above the sow.]

Science:

Quoi?

What was it?

Raisonneuse:

Quelque chose d’autre. . .

Something else . . .

Science:

Mais quoi?

Yes, but what?

Raisonneuse:

Quelque chose de complètement différent.

Something else entirely.

Science:

Mais QUOI?!?

What?!?

[Our own curiosity, or that of the narrator, or perhaps even that of the Rag-and-Bone Man himself drives the hands toward the Foundling; they deftly slip below the canvas scroll to collect La Trouvée from the underwater box beneath the scroll. The hands come together to form a cradle, and dip behind the chunk of scavenged concrete standing in as an underwater rock.]

Raisonneuse:

Il ne pouvait le dire exactement . . .

He couldn't say, exactly . . .



Figure 51. The hands surface in the world of light and shadows. Galerie Alt Art & Design, September 14, 2015. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Edited by the author with permission.

[The hands surface in the world of light and shadows, cupping the luminous La Trouvée.]

Et c'est là qu'il a vu la corde.

And it was then that the rope was revealed.

Science:

La corde?!?

Rope?!?

[The shadowy hands, cupping the Foundling, continue to rise, and meet the resistance of a length of twine that appears at once as a rope tied to the rock in the underwater box.]

Raisonneuse:

Une cordelette qui semblait relier ce qu'il pensait être des chevilles à une grosse roche complètement immergée dans l'eau du fleuve.

A thin strand binding one of what he thought were its two ankles to a large rock submerged in the river.

[Above, in the river of light and shadow, a thin black line connects the small swirl of light cradled in the Rag-and-Bone Man's two benevolent hands to the murky depths, to the concrete rock, below.]

[The Rag-and-Bone Man cups the Foundling in one hand, and the other vanishes, only to return, this time, with a dagger—the shadow cast by Monsieur's dull pocketknife. As the knife rises—]

[Raisonneuse and Science inhale, anticipating the violence they expect to play out. But the Rag-and-Bone Man instead flicks and rotates his wrist, and saws at the rope, releasing the Foundling from the rock. Romance—as the Foundling—gurgles again, a voice that is neither human nor animal but which is life all the same.]



Figure 52. The hand threatens. Galerie Alt Art & Design, September 14, 2015. Photo: Kathleen Vaughan. Edited by the author with permission.

Raisonneuse:

La Trouvée ne pensait jamais être trouvée. Personne n'aurait dû la chercher.

(À part) Il pensait que c'était elle, mais, alors qu'elle était couverte de boue, c'était dur à dire.

The foundling hadn't been meant to be found. No one would come looking for her.

(Aside) He thought it was a her, but with all the muck, it was hard to say.

Science:

Elle?

Her?

[The Rag-and-Bone Man's single cupped hand retreats from the scene, with the Foundling, leaving only his left hand holding the knife, and the image of the prostrate sow along the riverbank. With a flick and rotation of the wrist, the vertical hand again becomes a threat, the pocket knife a dagger, as the hand, the dagger, plunge into the unmoving and immovable sow.]



Figure 53. Science grabs the crank and moves the story forward. Galerie Alt Art & Design, September 14, 2015. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Printed with permission.

[Science grasps the crank in one hand and turns vigorously, revealing an even more gruesome scene. As the sow drifts up and out of view, a stream of cadmium red rises, and the Rag-and-Bone Man stabs at the sow's exposed belly, a black hand in a blood red river.]

[A gasp from a few in the audience; a few "ohhs," some more ironic than others.]

[Raisonneuse picks up a glass jar containing a tiny mechanical music box. Holding the jar in the palm of one hand, she twists the tiny metal crank hinged to the lid of the jar. The song is tinny at first, muted, nearly inaudible.]

Science:

La truie ne résista pas. Étendue, amorphe, elle regarda son sang quitter son corps pour aller se diluer dans l'eau du Saint-Laurent.

The sow did not fight back, but lay and let herself drain out, into the waters of the Saint-Lawrence River.

[Science ends her cranking on the blood red streak, and Raisonneuse places the glass jar on the wooden floorboards, where the duet from Swan Lake resonates, amplifies, and fills the room.]

MARCHÉ

Monsieur :

Le Guenillou saigna donc la truie sur les berges du fleuve
avant de les traîner, elle et la Trouvée, jusqu'au marché.

And so the Rag-and-Bone Man butchered the sow along the
banks of the river, and carted both her and the Foundling to
market.

[The canvas scroll remains fixed in the pool of red for a moment. The translucent qualities of the paint permit further shadow play. Romance retrieves a cardboard silhouette of the Rag-and-Bone Man, his cart, and horse, with the sow perched precariously atop the ensemble. She rocks the ensemble into a full gallop across the bloody screen. Science clasps the cans around her neck a second time and follows the feverish pace set by the silhouette.]

Monsieur :

Il fouetta sa jument, direction ouest, la tête fourmillant de
promesses délicieuses, promesses d'une vie qu'il n'avait
jamais même osé imaginer avant aujourd'hui.

Due west, the Rag-and-Bone Man whipped his nag, head
crooked forward in anticipation of a life he had never
imagined—until now.

Raisonneuse :

Or, la vieille jument était loin d'être habituée aux courses
folles et, portant le poids de la triste truie derrière elle, elle
pouffe et souffle, pouffe et souffle, pouffe et souffle . . .

The nag, unaccustomed to such speed, and to the added
weight of the formerly sad sow, heaved and hoed, heaved
and hoed . . .



Figure 54. “Due west, the Rag-and-Bone Man whipped his nag.”
Galerie Alt Art & Design, September 14, 2015. Photo credit:
Kathleen Vaughan. Printed with permission.

[Monsieur, still in front of the cabinet, front facing, turns his head up to the ceiling, and brings his Rag-and-Bone Man’s hands to his chest, in full view, as he speculates as to the inner desires spurning the Rag-and-Bone Man on. The fingers of either hand tickle one another in anticipation—]

Monsieur :

Oh, les choses qu’il allait acheter,
Les femmes qu’il allait courtiser,
Les hommes qu’il allait mépriser
Et qui, eux, ne pourraient plus jamais l’ignorer!

Oh, the things he would buy,
the women he would woo,
the men he would ignore who could no longer ignore him!

[Monsieur slips further into the character of the Rag-and-Bone Man, no longer given the role of speculating narrator, but voice of the Rag-and-Bone Man himself. He ad libs a list of things the Rag-and-Bone Man, in his understanding of the character, might find desirable. The list changes each performance, but tonight it consists of:]

Monsieur:

*Un château dans Westmount!
Un veste de vaisselle en or!
Une piscine en forme d'étoile
Pis un ostie de gros char parké dans l'entrée.*

*A mansion in Westmount!
With gilded spoons, and forks, and knives too!
A pool in the shape of a star
And a huge-ass Hummer in the driveway.*

Raisonneuse:

Et pendant qu'il laissait fleurir ses rêves d'une vie sans pénurie,
le Guenillou, la jument, la truie et la silencieuse Trouvée
ont été pris au piège par une monstrueuse horde de mouches.

As his dreams of life without scarcity blossomed,
the Rag and Bone Man, his nag, the sow and the silent
foundling fell victim to a hideous swarm of blowflies.

*[With this verbal cue, and an exchange of glances between Monsieur and Science,
Monsieur races behind the cabinet, and his fidgety fingers transform into a swarm of
flies—loose, flapping, disjointed, flailing fingers in front of the halogen lamp, and a
comical buzz from both narrators. The fingers create flickering shadows around the Rag-
and-Bone Man.]*

Raisonneuse:

Le boucher,
un homme aux gros poings velus,
qui venait justement d'enlever les asticots de ses morceaux de choix,
a crié au Guenillou
de s'arrêter sur-le-champ.

The Meat Man,
a ham-fisted ham,
seeing pestilence approach his little corner of the marché
and its maggot-picked filets,
cried out for the Rag-and-Bone Man to go elsewhere—

Science (as the Meat Man):

Aweille!

Scram!

Raisonneuse:

Mais le Guenillou ne pouvait et ne voulait rien entendre.

But the Rag-and-Bone Man could not, would not hear him.

*[The flies return, one final time. Science—representing the Law—blows her police
whistle. Twice, for good measure.]*



Figure 55. Science (Mélanie Binette) as the Law, shooting flies. Galerie Alt Art & Design, September 14, 2015. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Printed with permission.

[Romance—as Lady of the Flies—steals the sow from the cart, and she and Monsieur now produce the sound of gobbling, swallowing, en masse.

Science cranks the scroll into a loosely rendered, charcoal marketplace—an interpretation of an archival photograph of the Marché St-Jacques, in fact.

Raisonneuse retrieves her glass mason jar, and cranks a half-turn on the music box—the Swan Lake melody returns.

Slowly, deftly, Romance draws what's left of the Rag-and-Bone Man's kill toward the halogen light, revealing a thin acetate on which is painted the skeleton of the sow. She continues to pull the silhouette toward the lamp, aligning the area where the sow's heart would be with a drip of red paint that spilled from the bloody scene above into the marketplace.]

Raisonneuse:

Au final, tout ce qu'il restait, c'était des os, la Trouvée, le Guenillou et la Loi.

In the end, all that was left were some bones, the Foundling, the Rag-and-Bone Man, and the Law.

[In contrast to her slow, deliberate pullback on the sow's remains, Romance raises her other hand in shadow—this, a grabby hand, and as the officer of la Loi, the arm of the Law, she yanks the entire silhouette downward, out of the world of light and shadow, as Monsieur effects a hard black-out on the lights. The narrator-demonstrators wait for the Swan Lake melody to finish playing out before beginning the next scene.]

HUDON COTTON

[Julian plays the “Factory Song,” a bi-tonal march.

Science climbs the stepladder positioned behind the cabinet, and, from the stage left upper box (marked in chalk) as “COTON” pulls out the large spindle of cotton twine and replaces it with a counter bell. She sticks a pencil behind her ear, shoves her hands and a ledger pad in, and then juts her head so that it is perfectly framed by the miniature proscenium arch. Her face becomes a focal point, illuminated by a set of LED lights positioned below her chin. She peers outward, her eyes, scanning, left to right, meeting the gaze of all but Monsieur. She grimaces, sneers. Slaps angrily at the bell, calling all to order.]

Science:

Chapitre Deux!

Chapter Two!

[Romance walks stiffly to the crank, shrugs first one then the other shoulder backward, raises her right arm as if it were a part of the cranky itself, and begins to turn through foot after foot of monochrome (maroon), patterned canvas. She stops on a monochromatic (black and white) painting of a young boy or girl working in a factory, barefoot, and surrounded by rows and rows of spindled cotton. Romance brings her crank arm to her side. Monsieur is in the posture of repose, his back and neck arched, head tilted back and eyes turned upward, one hand behind his head, fingers intertwined in his hair in idleness. (In this workshop presentation, his other hand is placed on his script, ready for a page-turn). He lazily breathes out his next line, a borrowed aphorism, as if it were a daydream, recounted to a friend . . .]

Monsieur:

« Si on dit que l'oisiveté est la mère de tous les maux, je dirais plutôt qu'elle est la seule chose qu'il vaille la peine de pratiquer en ce bas monde. »¹²⁶

“Far from idleness being the root of all evil, it is rather the only true good.”

¹²⁶ A paraphrased translation of a passage from Kierkegaard's “The Rotation Method: An Essay in the Theory of Social Prudence” (1843/1944), p. 237.



Figure 56. Monsieur in the gesture of repose, as Science looks on. Galerie Alt Art & Design, September 14, 2015. Photo credit: Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

[Science's sharp, angular face, with its birdish movements, surveils this body at ease (or body seemingly at ease but, of course, working). This body we've seen elsewhere performing so deftly, so carefully, so meticulously and intricately, whose other hand, poised on the script, reminds us of the work he is performing. Science as Manager aims at correcting the energy and enervation of this body, reanimating this body—and not by stern tone alone.]

Science:

Ce serait plutôt Kierkegaard qui le dirait.

You're quoting Kierkegaard?

[Julian reprises the "Factory Song."

Monsieur and Romance, "re-energated" or initiated into this particular energy and new temporality and gestural vocabulary—that of the time-clock, time as money, time as productivity, ticks and tocks, and fragmented body parts, eyes, heads, hands, fingers, shuffle over and reframe the box with their upper bodies—heads and hands.]

[Raisonneuse grabs one of the LED floodlights and orients its beam to illuminate this miniature world of the factory. Monsieur and Romance create the riverbank in flesh and bone, the river somewhere, out there, in front of them—in the gulf between their bodies and the audience, perhaps. With the index and middle fingers of their left hands, and a gibberish language suited to headless fingerpeople, they create the Weaver and her son, respectively.]



Figure 57. Monsieur and Romance, illuminated by Raisonneuse, and watched over by Science. Galerie Alt Art & Design, September 14, 2015. Photo credit: Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

Monsieur:

Ce jour où le Guenillou égorgea la truie, c'est en se rendant
au travail que la tisserande—

On the day the Rag-and-Bone Man butchered the sow,
the Weaver—

[Romance's fingers, followed by her eyes, jump from her hip to her elbow (centre stage), and, with a sly curtsy, the Weaver says: « Ooh »]

—et son fils à l'œil de lynx—

—and her eagle-eyed son—

[Monsieur shifts his gaze from audience to address his fingers, as they skip to his arm from his shoulder: « Aioo! » says the weaver's son]

—découvrirent le fleuve rouge de sang.

—discovered the red river on their way to work.

[The Weaver's singsongy "la-ti-da, la-ti-da" and her son's "da-da-da-da" accompany their hurried walk across the banks (and arms) of the Saint-Lawrence River. The son skips ahead of the weaver, and as his finger-legs dip over into the space between arm and audience, he leaps back in fear. « Maman, maman » he calls. The Weaver hurries over, in a flourish of « quoi quoi quoi! ». Together the finger-leg weaver and her son dip over the edge, knuckles peering at the gap. They gasp, together mumbling « Oh no oh no oh no » as they scurry up over Nico's shoulder and off to work at Hudon.]

Romance:

La rumeur a fait boule de neige à la Hudon Cotton.

The news spread quickly down the line at Hudon Cotton.

[Science rings the bell.]

La cloche du dîner retentit et tous les ouvriers se précipitèrent sur les berges pour voir de leurs yeux ce qu'ils avaient entendu de leurs oreilles sur les berges de la rivière rouge sang.

At the lunch bell, the workers went to have a look, to see the blood red river with their own eyes.

[This time, the Weaver and her son are joined by the entire cast of fingers exiting the factory. The factory workers, embodied in Romance and Monsieur's fluttering right hands, scurry down their shoulders to gape at the red river. Romance and Monsieur—as the factory collective—gasp at the gulf before them, then split apart, kneel, becoming the factory workers in their faces only, and framing the underwater box with their giant, multi-character heads. But, they do not see a red river, only the blue underwater box. Their gasp becomes a collective "hunh?" Monsieur realizes he has forgotten to create the miraculous redness of the river, and reaches into his apron pocket for a remote control. He flicks the button, and shifts the LED lights inside the box to a sanguine red. Rae and Nico face each other once again, face the audience, then, once more attend to the red river. They perform the long-awaited collective gasp of the factory workers, previously interrupted.]

Science rings the bell again, twice.]

Raisonneuse:

Jusqu'à ce que le patron coupe leur pause *net-frette-sec*.

Until the boss cut short their break.

[With the sound of the work bell, Romance and Monsieur once again become The Weaver and her son, their entire bodies standing in for the characters. The Weaver grabs one of two strings woven through the proscenium arch of Hudon Cotton, and her son grabs the other. They begin to wind the threads around their index fingers, first hers

then his, then back around, tying themselves to one another in the performance of work.

Julian builds a pizzicato rhythm on two of his own strings, following the pace of the Weaver and her son.

The Weaver and her son slow the pace, exchanging cautious glances, stealing looks at Science, whose gaze is split between her accounting ledger and the two workers beneath her.

Julian's rhythm follows the conspiracy as it unfolds, collapses, rebuilds again.]

Romance:

La tisserande y va de son idée: « Ça doit être du sang qui vient de l'Abattoir! »

The Weaver broke the silence: "I'll bet it was blood from the abattoir!"

[The pace slackens, the tempo of the pizzicato slowing to match]

Monsieur:

Son fils répond, avec diligence:

« Moi, je dis que c'est la poussière du fer de la fonderie. »

Her son responded, carefully:
"Or iron dust, from the foundry."

Romance:

« Peu importe ce que c'était, peut-être était-ce le signe des jours meilleurs à venir. »

"Or, is it a sign of better times yet to come . . ."

[The music and the work stop together. Science (as Manager of Hudon Cotton) clucks her tongue, clears her throat, eyes with her overseeing eyeballs. The workers pick up their threads, and wind faster than before, as Julian plucks the guitar strings.]

Monsieur (at a whisper):

« Des jours où y'aura pus de pauvres
Pus de faim. »

"A time without poverty?"

Romance:

« Un temps sans pénurie!? »

"A time without scarcity?"

[The music and work stop together, again. Another scolding eye from the Manager of Hudon Cotton. The workers pick up the slack, but only for a beat.]

Monsieur:
« *Des jours où y'aura pus de misère!* »

“A day without misery!”

Romance:
« *Le temps de la vengeance!* »

“Our day of vengeance!”

Monsieur:
« *Des jours où y'en aura pus de boss, pus de gros pleins de cash!* »

“A day without bosses or bureaucrats!”

[Their fingers abandon any semblance of work, and instead participate in imagining a revolutionary future.]

Romance:
« *Le temps de l'éviscération!* »

“A time of total evisceration!”

Monsieur:
« *Des jours où on va tout détruire !* »

“Total exsanguination!”

[Science/Manager slams down on her counter bell once.]

Monsieur :
« *Défoncer leurs p'tits cochons!* »

“Rob the piggy banks!”

[Science/Manager slams down on her counter bell twice.]

Romance:
« *Briser leurs machines!* »

“Smash the machine!”

[Science/Manager slams down on her counter bell three times.]

Romance:
« *C'est l'heure de l'expropriation!* »

“TOTAL EXPROPRIATION!”

[A succession of bells, too numerous to count.]

Monsieur:

Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire « expropriation »?

Wait. What is expropriation?

Romance (in English):

Well, it's when—

[Ding!]

It's when—

[Ding!]

It's—

[Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding!]

Science:

C'est pas le moment de parler de ça.

Now is not the right time.

[Raisonneuse turns the crank, taking us to the front page of the Journal de Montréal.]

***L'Opinion publique*/Public Opinion**

Science:

Chapitre 3! L'opinion publique!

C'était une époque où les commérages étaient assez importants pour nécessiter une intervention urgente et attentive de la part des Pères de la Cité. Pour préserver l'ordre social, ceux-ci décidèrent que si le fleuve était rouge, c'était bel et bien la faute du Guenillou solitaire.

Chapter 3! Public opinion!

Gossip, as in the past, required the careful intervention of the city fathers, who in preserving the public calm, found an explanation for the red river in the misdeeds of a lone Rag-and-Bone Man.

[Romance and Monsieur (as The Weaver and her son) dial up the editors of the Journal de Montréal to report the red river. Raisonneuse (as Receptionist) picks up the other end of a tin can telephone. Science (as Editor) picks up pad and pencil. The actors improvise a conversation based on recent headlines.]

Raisonneuse:
Journal de Montréal. Comment je peux vous aider?
 Journal de Montréal. How can I help you?

Monsieur:
 Oui, on a une histoire pour votre journal!
 Yes, have we got a story for you!

Raisonneuse:
 Oh ouin?
 Oh yeah?

Monsieur:
 Ouais, l'eau du fleuve St-Laurent est devenue rouge....
 Yeah, the St. Lawrence River is running red.

[Raisonneuse the Receptionist confers with Science the Editor for a beat before returning to the tin can telephone.]

Raisonneuse:
 Ok, comment ça c'est fait?
 Ok, and why is that?

[Romance and Monsieur confer.]

Monsieur (to Raisonneuse):
 On pense que c'est la poussière de la fonderie.
 We think it might be iron dust, from the foundry.

Raisonneuse (to Science):
 Ils pensent que c'est la poussière de la fonderie.
 They think it's iron dust, from the foundry.

Science (to Raisonneuse):
 C'est une histoire de gauche—
 What kind of radical leftist—

Raisonneuse (to Monsieur):

Oh non non non. On peut pas dire ça.

Oh no no non. We can't print that.

[Romance and Monsieur confer.]

Monsieur:

C'est le sang qui a coulé de l'abattoir?

Maybe it's blood that dripped down from the abattoir?

Raisonneuse (to Science):

C'est le sang qui a coulé de l'abattoir—

It's blood that dripped down from the abattoir—

Science (to Raisonneuse):

[improvised string of expletives.]

Raisonneuse (to Monsieur):

Non non non non. On peut pas dire ça

No no no no. We can't print that.

[Romance and Monsieur confer.]

Monsieur (to Raisonneuse) :

C'est de la pollution de Rio Tinto Alcan . . .

It's pollution from Rio Tinto Alcan.

Raisonneuse (to Science):

Rio Tinto—

Science (to Raisonneuse) :

C'est notre plus gros commanditaire.

That's our biggest sponsor.

Raisonneuse (to Monsieur):

Oh non non non non non.

Oh no no no no no no.

Science:

J'ai une idée!
C'est l'histoire d'un guenillou
qui a volé une truie,
qui l'a éventrée,
laissant couler le sang partout dans le fleuve.
C'est ça qu'on va raconter.
Merci. Bonsoir.

I've got it! It's the story of a Rag-and-Bone Man
who stole a pig,
disemboweled it on the banks of the river,
and let the blood drip into the water.
That's it, that's all.
Thank you and goodnight.

[Raisonneuse hangs up her tin can, loudly buzzing a dial tone to end the scene and silence The Weaver and her son. A few in the audience chuckle.]

Monsieur:

C'est ainsi que le *Journal de Montréal* fabriqua de toute
pièces ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui . . .

Thus the *Journal de Montréal* formed what is known as—

Ensemble :

. . . l'opinion publique.

Public opinion.

[The front lights flare out and the halogen light rises as Science turns the crank into the next scene, featuring a sketch artist's rendering of a criminal facing the court. Romance flicks her lace fan, revealing a gallery of audience members, including Madame X. The audience mumbles.]



Figure 58. *Le procès*. September 14, 2020. Photo credit: Kathleen Vaughan. Printed with permission.

Le procès/The Trial

Chapitre 4!

Science:

Chapter 4!

Monsieur:

« La justice: une commodité, qu'on pourrait dire, actuellement, dans une condition plus ou moins altérée, qui est vendue par l'état aux citoyens afin de les récompenser pour leur allégeance, leurs taxes et leurs services personnels. »¹²⁷

“Justice: A commodity which is a more or less adulterated condition the state sells to the citizen as a reward for his allegiances, taxes, and personal service.”

¹²⁷ Monsieur quotes Ambrose Bierce's satirical *Devil's Dictionary* (1886/2000) entry for “Justice” (p. 174).

Romance:

Sur un banc de la salle d'audience, pendant le procès du Guenillou, Madame X brodait en silence. Elle brodait : une vertu capitale par bras, une valeur chevaleresque par point. Puis, au moment où le Guenillou s'est avancé devant le juge, elle a brodé un point de sympathie.

On a bench inside the courtroom, Madame X crocheted in silence during the Rag-and-Bone Man's trial.¹²⁸ She crocheted, one cardinal virtue per arm, one chivalric value per point. As the Rag-and-Bone came before the judge, she was crocheting a point for Sympathy.

Science:

Devant le tribunal, le Guenillou a déployé toutes les excuses de convenance.

In court, the Rag-and-Bone Man made all the usual excuses.

Monsieur (as the Rag-and-Bone Man):

« L'eau était rouge ben avant que je tue le cochon!
Pis j'avais le droit de le tuer!
J'ai vu des affaires ben pires sur le bord du fleuve,
ben pires que de tuer une truie malade.
Pis faites par des gens ben plus riches que moi. »

"The blood red tide was there before I kilt the beast, the beast was mine to kill, and I've seen far worse done on the riverbank than the slaughter of a sick pig, and by men richer than myself."

Science:

A ce moment, le Juge crût bon de le remettre à sa place . . .
Il le réprimanda d'abord en français:

At which point the Judge threw the big book at him,
and admonished him in French:

¹²⁸ There is a curious discrepancy here between the French translation and the English original with respect to embroidery (broderie) and crochet, which have different class and mercantile histories. The original translator Mireille Mayrand-Fiset changed crochet to embroidery, and took my use of *point* (in reference to the points of the Maltese Cross) to refer to stitch (un point) in French. In the subsequent translation, Joëlle Bond, working with both the English original and French translation, kept the translator's variation.

Monsieur (as Judge):

« Vous êtes un véritable danger pour la santé publique,
Monsieur. »

“You pose a serious threat to public health, sir.”

Science:

Mais pour appuyer son discours encore davantage, le Juge
s’adressa également à lui en anglais.

But to reinforce this point and others, the judge
admonished him in English as well.

Monsieur (as Judge):

« The slaughter of a sick pig triples the severity of the infraction. »

Science:

Et le juge lui imposa une amende sévère.

And the judge slapped him with a hefty fine—

Monsieur (as Judge):

« 1\$ par livre de chair de l’animal. »

“\$1 per pound of the animal’s flesh.”

Science:

Ce qui était bien au-delà du prix du marché, mais c’était,
selon le juge—

Far above the going market rate, but, as the judge saw it—

Monsieur (as Judge):

« —proportionnel à la gravité du crime ! »

“In proper proportion to the crime!”

*[Science hums 1, 3, and 5 of a major scale, and then all sing a harmony, led by Science:
(1) Guilty—Romance (3) Guilty—Monsieur (5) Guilty—Bored “Guilty”.]*

La jument/The Nag

Science:

Ainsi il fût prouvé que le Guenillou avait ensanglanté le fleuve en massacrant illégalement une truie qui ne lui appartenait pas, dans un endroit qui n'était en rien désigné pour pareille barbarie. Les berges du St-Laurent ne sont pas faites pour tuer, mais bien pour se promener, pour pêcher . . .

Thus it was proven that the roguish Rag-and-Bone Man had caused the river to bleed by illegally butchering a sow he did not own in a place that was not designated for such brutality. Riverbanks are not meant for murdering, but for strolling, fishing,

Romance:

Pour *cruiser*!

Cruising!

Monsieur:

Oui, la cruise!

Yes, cruising!

Science:

Et les pique-niques, les pique-niques!

Picnicking. Picnicking!

Monsieur:

Mais surtout la cruise . . .

But mostly cruising . . .

[Science turns the crank to reveal the Rag-and-Bone Man's nag. The narrator-demonstrators look on.]

Romance:

Le jugement qui s'était abattu sur le Guenillou était sévère. Pour s'acquitter de cette nouvelle dette, il devrait se départir sa précieuse jument.

The judgement upon the Rag-and-Bone Man was harsh. He would lose his prized nag to pay his debt.

Science:

Le Guenillou, accompagné de la Trouvée, conduisit sa fidèle compagne jusqu'au marché pour une dernière fois. Comme toujours, la mystérieuse Madame X les suivait de près. Et après une inspection minutieuse, le Guenillou découvrit que sa bonne vieille jument n'était pas une bonne vieille jument du tout, mais bien une bonne vieille mule. Elle valait donc plus cher comme rôti que comme amie. Les sabots, la chair et les os furent répartis, à part égales entre les parties lésées. Et voilà que le Guenillou, la Trouvée et le chariot étaient seuls.

The Rag-and-Bone Man, the Foundling beside him, drove his horse to market one last time, pursued, as always, by the shadowy Madame X. Upon closer inspection, it was discovered his nag was not a nag at all, but a mule, worth more as meat than as a draught animal. Hooves, flesh, and bone divvied up among the injured parties. It was only the Rag-and-Bone, the Foundling, and the cart now.

[Science picks up a music box, twists the small crank, and the mechanical theme from Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake underscores the loss of the nag, or mule, rather.]

Romance:

Dans un acte de rébellion discrète, Madame X défit le bras de la justice sur son ouvrage et disparût sur la rue Ontario, la pointe de la persévérance se démarquant clairement sur le bras du courage.

In a quiet act of defiance, Madame X unravelled the arm of justice, and disappeared down rue Ontario, the Point of Perseverance poking up from the Arm of Fortitude.

Les Méfaits/Capers

Chapitre 5.

Science:

Chapter 5.

Monsieur:

« On en vient à aimer son désir et non plus l'objet de son désir. »¹²⁹

“In the end, we love our desires and not the thing desired.”

Science :

Le Guenillou traînait son charriot derrière lui.

Il gardait la Trouvée emmitouflée dans des rouleaux de tissus pour éviter qu'elle ne prenne froid, bien sûr, mais aussi pour éviter qu'on la voit.

Il faut dire que, depuis le procès, les bonnes gens de la ville craignait le Guenillou et s'inquiétait du malheur qu'il pouvait traîner derrière lui dans leurs ruelles.

Les conserves de graisse s'amassaient dans les logis de Maisonneuve, les ménagères verrouillaient leurs clôtures arrières, et la Trouvée grandit, se nourrissant de tout ce que le Guenillou avait accumulé au fil des ans.

Le Guenillou aurait pu laisser la Trouvée là où il l'avait trouvée, et s'en débarrasser

une bonne fois pour toutes. Mais il en était incapable. Il la garda comme sienne, trouvée par lui et par lui seul.

The Rag-and-Bone Man towed the cart behind him. The Foundling he kept bundled in bolts of cloth to keep it both warm and hidden from a suspicious public, who, after the trial, feared what manner of contagion the Rag-and-Bone might cart into their alleys. Tins of grease amassed in every home in Maisonneuve, housewives kept their back gates locked, and the Foundling grew, consuming every scrap of the Rag-and-Bone Man's lifelong collection. The Rag-and-Bone Man could have left the Foundling where he had come across it, and been done with it. But he didn't, or he couldn't. He kept it as his own, found as it was, by him and him alone.

¹²⁹ An apothegm stolen from Friedrich Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, 1886/2002, p. 73.

[*Science turns the crank into a painted reproduction of Emil Nolde's lithograph Man in a Top Hat (1911). As she narrates his actions, the sticky fingers of the Rag-and-Bone man appear in shadow, animating the painting.*]



Figure 59. The Rag-and-Bone Man's sticky fingers, animated by Nicolas Germain-Marchand. September 14, 2015. Video still by Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

Science:

Lui qui n'était autrefois qu'un charognard,
ramassant tout ce que les autres laissaient derrière eux . . .
voilà qu'il devait prendre tout ce dont la Trouvée avait
besoin. Ce qu'elle demandait d'un regard embué, ce qu'elle
insinuaient, ce qu'elle exigeait. Alors oui, le Guenillou a bien
été obligé de se mettre à voler.

Where before he'd been a scavenger, claiming that which
others left behind, now he took only what the Foundling
required, what the Foundling, in misty-eyed, wordless
glances, demanded. Yes, the Rag-and-Bone Man was driven
to thief.

Des chaudrons fumants laissés sans surveillance.

Steaming pots, left unwatched.

Des épingles à linge et le linge épinglé.

Clothes pins and the clothes that came with them.

Science :

Des vélos abandonnés.

Bicycles unattended.

Des montres de poches sorties de leur poche.

Pocket watches unpocketed.

Des accessoires . . .

Stage props . . .

[The Rag-and-Bone Man's hand reaches from behind the cabinet to steal Romance's lace fan from her apron pocket. She swats the hand away.]

Romance:

Des petites choses que la Trouvée recevait avec plaisir, d'après Madame X, qui ralentissait le pas à chaque fois qu'elle croisait le Guenillou et son chargement le long de la rue Ontario. Elle n'aurait jamais révélé quoi que ce soit à qui que ce soit sur les mauvais coups du Guenillou. Elle voulait simplement voir le drôle de petit paquet perché sur siège du charriot.

All of which the Foundling, Madame X thought, took in with pleasure. She slowed her pace when they passed one another along rue Ontario. But she kept quiet about his capers. She only had eyes for that peculiar bundle, perched on the wagon seat.

Science:

Assez rapidement, le Guenillou s'aperçût que sa nouvelle profession l'obligeait désormais à laisser derrière un de ses deux fardeaux. Il décida donc de laisser son charriot stationné parce qu'il devenait trop risqué de le traîner dans les ruelles et devant les magasins où il faisait sa besogne. Il n'osait pas abandonner la Trouvée, qu'il attacha sur son dos avec un bout de tissu pendant ses longues sorties à pied. La Trouvée, qui doublait son poids et son appétit à chaque jour qui passait, forçait le Guenillou à prendre des risques de plus en plus gros, à commettre des méfaits de plus en plus graves, toujours dans l'espoir de gagner un peu plus . . . une carotte au bout d'un bâton, faisant avancer l'âne coûte que coûte.

Science (cont.):

Soon into this new profession, the Rag-and-Bone Man was forced to give up one of his two burdens on the road. His cart, too risky to pull into the alleys and storefronts where he plied his trade, he now kept parked. He didn't dare leave the Foundling alone, and so he strapped it to his back with a binding cloth during the long hours on foot.

The Foundling, doubling in size and appetite almost daily, compelled the Rag-and-Bone Man to pull off bigger, riskier heists, with the promise of a payday yet to come, looming just ahead of him, on the horizon, like a rabbit on a stick.

Chapter 2. The Dramaturgy of Curiosité: A Theatre of Capitalism(s) in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, or the Abattoir, Exposed and Enchanted

This chapter traces the third and fourth movements of performance research through which the dramaturgy of *Abattoir de l'est* materialized, from the process of scripting the parable to the collaborative methods of its mise-en-scène. Drawing upon my own and my collaborators' reflections, I sketch a dramaturgical methodology of Curiosité which proceeds from engagements with the city as theatre and archive for performance creation, and which imagines a collective dramaturgical process that is both oriented by curiosity and attentive to context. This chapter pivots around four formations of curiosity, defined as:

- 1) a critical orientation toward “uncurious” ideologies and narratives of place;
- 2) a method of assemblage, or the search for correspondences, continuities, and patterns between (un)like things and their arrangement as dramaturgy, linked to a Brechtian socio-historical critique through representation, and to an aesthetic exploration of the contexts of performance research;
- 3) a defamiliarized epistemic stance taken toward the object within object theatre; and
- 4) enchantment within the event of collective dramaturgy, or a dramaturgical disposition and hermeneutics of openness to indeterminacy, affective response, and the potentiality of the other.

Dramaturgy as Assemblage and Contextual Practice

Dramaturg and core member of the Exeter, UK-based artist walking collective Wrights & Sites Cathy Turner (2015) provides a scan of the expanded field of contemporary dramaturgy, from its wide application within theatre and performance, to its use as a metaphor for social behaviour in sociology (Goffman, 1959), to its more recent uptake within performance studies, where dramaturgy offers a hermeneutic for interpreting a variety of “spatio-temporal structures” (p. 3). Dramaturgy is both a doing and the thing done; one can speak of the dramaturgy of a play, a performance event, a building, or city, or of dramaturgy as the work of composing and/or analyzing such spatio-temporal structures (Turner, p.3).

In their joint inquiry into the convergences between the disciplines of theatre and archaeology, Exeter, UK-based site-specific performance practitioners and researchers Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks (2001) describe dramaturgy (composition) as “an act of assemblage” (p. 55). The event of performance, they contend, derives from the “doings” of

dramaturgy, which include “the identification, selection and accumulation of concepts, actions, texts, places and things which are composed and orchestrated in space and time according to a set of governing aesthetics, ideologies, techniques and technologies” (p. 55). Dramaturgy also describes a critical intervention in the process of composition. Rijeka- and Zagreb-based dramaturg Marin Blažević (2014) contends that dramaturgy is “the *work of* and the *work* (interpretive, analytical, critical, theoretical) *on* and *over* (before, after, and during) the action” (pp. 550–551). The work of dramaturgy, whether performed individually or collectively, might be called upon throughout a process of composition (or assemblage) to perform a variety of interventions, though primary among them is contextualization. Since its emergence as a profession in nineteenth-century German theatre, the production dramaturg has been tasked with “researching historical background, maintaining the coherence of a project, and explaining its context to an audience” (Romanska, 2014, p. 70). Blažević adds that dramaturgy attends to the “contextual conditions and implications—political, ideological, and cultural—of an action,” suggesting dramaturgy’s curious orientation toward the contexts and contextual resonances of its compositions (p. 550). Curiosity’s dramaturgical methodology draws upon this expanded field, incorporating concepts, acts, orientations, and methods to connect the artist-researcher with the context(s) of performance research.

Pearson & Shanks’ (2001) dramaturgy as assemblage—the collection and arrangement of the heterogeneous and fragmentary into another order—resonates with my methods of sourcing, scripting, and collaborative *mise-en-scène* in *Abattoir de l’est*. The body of spatio-temporal structures, actions, and events composing the city served as contextual “resources” for composition: from the common sense cultural systems which order the city, to the heterotopic social movements which demonstrate “alternative possibilities of ordering” (Butler, 2001), to the durational dramaturgy of deindustrialization.¹³⁰ My engagements with these urban contexts oriented my subsequent research in the urban archive, shaping my curiosity and its

¹³⁰ A range of historical and contemporary scholars and theatre-makers have imagined and analyzed the city (or street) through the lens of dramaturgy or performance, configuring the city as stage (Schechner, 1993), theatre or theatrical scene (Brecht, 1950/1964b; Benjamin, 1928/2009; Boyer, 1996; Whybrow, 2005; Romeyn, 2008), situation (Debord, 1957/2006a), or performance (Martin, 2014). In *Curiosity*, I draw upon these approaches as methodological tools for urban performance creation, while focussing on dramaturgy because of its associations with acts of composition (including the writing of plays) and critique, its gathering around action, and its contextual focus.

objects, and providing cues and context for their subsequent arrangement in/as performance dramaturgy.

The urban archive provided further context and content for dramaturgical composition, consisting of “concepts, actions, texts, places and things” related to the place of performance research, including primary and secondary historical sources and scholarship, the walking archives (see Chapter I), found objects, sound recordings, the cultural imaginary, and aesthetic discourses of the city (Pearson & Shanks, 2001, p. 55). While I drew primarily from local sources in this process, I also collected material from other geographical contexts as they provided new perspectives on the local.

Further to these archival sources, *Curiosité* draws its performance repertoire from the embodied dramaturgies of collaborators as they interpret the script, interact within the rehearsal process, and engage with the urban archive, from the visual artist’s techniques of depiction and visualization, to the actors’ production of movement vocabularies and experiments with found objects, to the composer’s creation of a contrapuntal soundscape, to the dramaturg’s acts of reflection, selection, translation and contextualization.¹³¹

Itinerary

A. Neoliberalism as Context and Catalyst for Performance Creation: The Slow Violence of Austerity and Deindustrialization. As dramaturg, I begin with an act of contextualization, elaborating key contexts driving the dramaturgical process for *Abattoir de l’est*, and reflecting upon how the parable emerged as a curiosity-driven response to the “common sense” political-economic discourse of neoliberalism in Quebec, and my understanding of its sociospatial and political implications for Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.¹³²

B. Process Story: The Abattoir as a Theatre of Capitalism, Past and Present. From my engagements with these contexts, I then take the reader on a tour of the abattoirs de l’est in the urban archive, recollecting vital source materials in the

¹³¹ I draw the term and concept of embodied dramaturgies from Blažević (2014), who uses it to describe the reflexive and interpretive work of the actor.

¹³² The reader may note a consonance in this reflective contextual approach with performance studies scholar Richard Schechner’s (2004) articulation of the “nested” nature of performance events within wider social events, and in his elaboration of the interactions of social and aesthetic drama.

composition of the parable, and demonstrating the range of interpretive approaches I took up within this third movement of performance research.

- C. The Dramaturgy of (Late) Capitalism: Assembling the Epic Dramaturgy of *Abattoir de l'est*.** Pursuant to the foray in the archives, I describe my uptake of epic dramaturgy through which I sought to mediate these contexts and collections, relating critical curiosity toward the common sense to techniques of epic historicization through representation, and to Walter Benjamin's (1936/2007b) discussion of the amplitudes of storytelling.
- D. Creative Correspondence: The Dramaturgy of Urban Ruination in *At the Vanishing Point* and *Abattoir de l'est*.** In this comparative interlude, I attend to differential dramaturgies of urban ruination, contextualizing my dramaturgical choices by placing my fused industrial/postindustrial urban panorama of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve in conversation with Naomi Iizuka's *At the Vanishing Point* and its episodic elegy to Butchertown in Louisville, Kentucky.
- E. A Collective Dramaturgy of Enchantment: A Material Collection of Place and a Theatre of Curiosities.** I close the chapter with an exploration of enchantment as a dramaturgical disposition and hermeneutic in *Curiosité* that reanimates the dramaturgy of urban ruination, positioning object theatre as a curious methodology for engaging with the material culture of place and reflecting on the contextual implications of a dramaturgy of enchantment.
- F. Summary, Reflections, and Bridge to the Next Chapter**

A. Neoliberalism as Context and Catalyst for Performance Creation: The Slow Violence of Austerity and Deindustrialization

As I was beginning research for the *Curiosité* project in January 2012, neoliberalism and its repertoire of political-economic practices, including austerity, were cropping up in media discourse, in discussions with other artists, and in conversations with my PhD cohort, graduate students, and professors. With its origins in liberal economic theory of the 1970s, neoliberalism is most often associated with Thatcherism in the United Kingdom, and Reaganomics in the United States (Harvey, 2007, p. 5). Marxist geographer David Harvey (2007) describes neoliberalism as a hegemonic mode of thought and a “common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world” (p. 3). Clifford Geertz (1975) elaborates the common sense as a “cultural system” that presents itself as “reality neat”:

common sense consists in an account of things which claims to strike at their heart [. . .] As a frame for thought, and a species of it, common sense is as totalizing as any other: no religion is more dogmatic, no science more ambitious, no philosophy more general. Its tonalities are different, and so are the arguments to which it appeals, but like them—and like art and like ideology—it pretends to reach past illusion to truth, to, as we say, things as they are. (p. 17)

Neoliberalism as common sense presents itself as reality, rather than an ideological position. According to Harvey, neoliberalism seeks to reconsolidate the class power that had been partially redistributed and dispersed by the social reforms of Western welfare states, and which had contributed to the growth of the middle class.¹³³ It insists on the market as natural law and model of ideal social relations, “hold[ing] that the social good will be maximized by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions, and it seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market” (Harvey, 2007, p. 3). In the neoliberal state, the social Darwinist logic of the market prevails, privileging “the essentialist ideals of meritocracy, selfishness, and competition” (Leyvva, 2009, p. 365).¹³⁴ Those who can participate in the global

¹³³ Pineault (2012), after Harvey, defines neoliberalism as a “social practice aiming to restore hegemonic class power by the economic elite, in particular restoring the space for specific capital accumulation processes on which restored class power is based” (p. 30).

¹³⁴ See Leyvva (2009) for a discussion of the continuities between historical forms of Social Darwinism and the contemporary neoliberal regimes. Critical pedagogy scholar Henry A. Giroux (2013) argues that the singular focus on “market-driven values” in the neoliberal imagination serves as an alibi for the social costs of deregulation: “In the absence of alternative social visions to market-driven values and the increasing separation of global corporate

economy and its global flows as investors and as consumers progress, and are both prioritized and valued. Meanwhile, those “bound” by the nation state—place-bound wage earners dependent on industrial or other wage labour (Pineault, 2012, p. 33)—are neglected or left “behind,” positioned within neoliberal discourse as victims of their attachment to past ways of doing, and their refusal to modernize or else.¹³⁵

Neoliberalism in Quebec, or an Old Pair of Shoes

On March 30, 2010, austerity appeared in the guise of Quebec’s Liberal Minister of Finance Raymond Bachand, or rather, in his shoes. In a televised press conference that day, Bachand told the assembled reporters that the government would soon announce a “cultural revolution” in Quebec fiscal policy. For the occasion of the budget announcement the following day, he quipped, he would “model” austerity: “he [would not] wear a new pair of shoes, as is customary for finance ministers on budget day,” but would instead “have an old pair fixed up for less than \$10 dollars [sic]” (*Quebec budget takes aim at deficit*, 2012). Bachand’s performance of austerity foretold a budget that slashed funding for public services while imposing or raising individual citizen’s “user fees” and taxes for health services, electricity, and higher education, while reducing taxes on corporations (see Collombat, 2014; see also Frappier et al., 2012). The 2010 budget evidenced the Liberal government’s neoliberal orientation, including the consumerist logic of austerity and its political-economic strategy of “accumulation through dispossession” (Pineault, 2012), continuing a pattern of neoliberal governance that began in Canada in the 1980s, and emerged as a dominant political-economic discourse in Quebec in the 1990s.¹³⁶

power from national politics, neoliberalism has wrested itself free of any regulatory controls while at the same time removing economics from any consideration of social costs, ethics or social responsibility. Since the economic collapse of 2008–2009, it has become increasingly evident that neoliberalism’s only imperatives are profits and growing investments in global power structures unmoored from any form of accountable, democratic governance” (p. 516).

¹³⁵ Massey (2005) suggests how neoliberal values legitimate or are used to rationalize violence against those who cannot or refuse to accept the “inevitability”—what she calls the ineluctability—of globalization: “The trajectories of others can be immobilized while we proceed with our own; the real challenge of the contemporaneity of others can be deflected by their relegation to a past (backward, old-fashioned, archaic); the defensive enclosures of essentialised place seem to enable a wider disengagement, and to provide a secure foundation” (p. 8).

¹³⁶ With the federal election of the Conservatives in 1984, led by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (1984–1993), neoliberalism emerged as a dominant economic-political discourse in Canada. As Premiers of Quebec, former Mulroney cabinet members Lucien Bouchard (1996–2001) and Jean Charest (2003–2012) implemented policies of economic liberalism, “reduced” government, and zero-deficit budgets at the provincial level (Dostie & Lefebvre, 2004). In his successful political campaign for the Quebec Liberals in 2003, Jean Charest promised to undertake a

Following Bachand's 2010 budget announcement, Premier Jean Charest's Liberal government introduced a succession of austere fiscal budgets, corporate tax cuts, and anti-union policies, as well as economic development and resource extraction plans. Charest presented austerity measures as necessary to the economic "modernization" and future prosperity of Quebec, the sole approach for securing the province's position within the global marketplace.¹³⁷ The following year, Bachand's 2011–2012 budget included additional austerity measures aimed at postsecondary education, among them a 75% increase in Quebec's tuition fees over a five-year period, the potential deregulation of tuition fees for international students, and a "plan to encourage private companies to donate" to universities (Monpetit, 2011). The tuition hike mobilized university and college students throughout Quebec, who participated in a seven-month long strike action (February–mid-August 2012), the largest and longest in Quebec's history.¹³⁸ By mid-March, 300,000 of 400,000 full-time students were on strike throughout the province, and demonstrations of hundreds of thousands coursed through the city (Pineault, 2012, p. 29). In addition to its significance to the contemporary history of Montreal, the strike movement spoke specifically to my graduate student position at the time, and to the positioning of my collaborators, each of us differentially impacted by the budgetary cuts, and engaged in different forms of critical and creative dissent.¹³⁹

Conditions of Possibility: Neoliberalism, Exposed

Economic sociologist and Université du Québec à Montréal professor Eric Pineault (2012) interprets the Maple Spring student movement as an "authentic popular struggle," "one

"reengineering of the state," "a program that included the traditional elements of neoliberal state restructuring: shrinking of the public sector, public-private partnerships, and pro-capital fiscal policies" (Collombat, p. 145).

¹³⁷ High et al. (2017) date the uncritical embrace of "modernization theory" and the championing of the "universal benefits of liberalized global markets" in Canada to the first decades of de-industrialization (pp. 4–5).

¹³⁸ There have been eight student strikes in Québec since 2005, but this strike—referred to as the Printemps érable [Maple Spring] lasted longer and involved significantly more students than previous strikes. In Quebec, the provincial government sets university tuition rates, and, as such, is the primary (though not sole) adversary in the movement for free postsecondary education. Students on strike in 2012 collectively voted in their student associations to not attend classes or exams and engaged in a wide variety of direct actions and tactics to fight the tuition hike, including creating alternative learning sites, blockading public institutions, and organizing mass demonstrations. See Spiegel (2015) for an elaboration of particular government policies and actions which led to the 2012 strike, and for spatial analysis of creative protest actions associated with the student movement.

¹³⁹ Several of CurIOCité's actors and artists were involved in or affiliated with the student movement in some way. At the time, Mélanie Binette and Rae Maitland were post-secondary students, and Julian Menezes was a sessional lecturer at a neighbouring university whose students were also on strike. Nicolas Germain-Marchand and Alain Bonder also participated in demonstrations in support of the strike, joining a large contingent of artists engaged in the movement.

of North America's first large-scale challenges to the politics of austerity that have been imposed since the 2008 [financial] crisis" (p. 30). The movement, Pineault contends, "was able to displace the meaning of the struggle from the single issue of tuition fees to the larger issue of the predominant political economic regime," and to expose the ideological basis of neoliberalism's austerity regime by revealing that the hike "had no budgetary or economic foundations" (p. 30).¹⁴⁰ In essence, what the student movement "exposed" was that austerity was not the economic necessity it was claimed to be, nor would it promote wealth and economic growth.¹⁴¹

Against the neoliberal dream of fiscal utopia, the student movement proposed an "awakening" from the dreamscape of late capitalism, an exposure of its austerity imperative as cynical and violent accumulation scheme, and a refusal of neoliberal globalization as natural law.¹⁴² Throughout the city of Montreal that summer, in lieu of attending classes, students (and supporters) performed public demonstrations, supplying both a critique of and counter-dramaturgy to neoliberal narratives and orderings of the urban, including its ideals of the self-disciplined civilian and free-flowing commercialized space. Students took up a complex dramaturgy of multiple movements and events dispersed in time and space: *tout nu* [naked] and all-masked parades, night marches, bridge blockades, sit-ins, open-air "schools," tongue-in-cheek Kraft dinner cooking demos on how to eat on a strict student budget, and art exhibitions, among others.

¹⁴⁰ Giroux (2013) concurs, rooting the movement's popular appeal in its transposition of a "disquieting narrative" about "the future of young people entering adult life" beyond the college and university context to the "troubling reality of a broader social system that increasingly places its political allegiances, social investments and economic support in the service of rich and powerful financial institutions while eviscerating the social state and the public treasury" (p. 523).

¹⁴¹ On July 12, 2012, the Coalition large de l'Association pour une solidarité syndicale (CLASSE), published a manifesto which challenged key tenets of neoliberal ideology and practice and identified a wide set of leftist, feminist, and anticolonial social demands. The CLASSE manifesto sketches the general outlines of the neoliberalization of the state: cuts to public funding for education, healthcare, and public utilities, and transfer to a user-payer model of access to social services; the transfer of ownership and responsibility for social services to the private sector entailing also a re-direction of public revenue toward corporations tasked with providing these services at a profit. The tuition hike is one example of austerity in action, the effects of which, the CLASSE manifesto argues, are the exacerbation of poverty and debt, and reduced access to higher education. For an English translation of the manifesto, see Coalition large de l'ASSÉ (2012).

¹⁴² Like their modernist antecedents, neoliberal narratives of globalization proffer "a singular universal story" and evolutionary account of space and civilization, pitting the globalized West temporally "ahead" of the "developing" global South and East within "the one and only narrative it is possible to tell," as if progress were equivalent to one's placement along a timeline, determined by one's position in "an historical queue" (Massey, 2005, p. 5). While this story claims to describe things as they are—to defer to the natural laws guiding reality—it is rather, as Massey contends, "an image in which the world is being made" (p. 5).

Converging Dissent: Local Demonstrations and Novel Affiliations

Following the National Assembly's passage of controversial Bill 78, a province-wide ordinance designed to end the strike and curb student demonstrations,¹⁴³ spontaneous *tintamarre* [racket/din] demonstrations irrupted in neighbourhoods across the city, including in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Neighbours assembled in the streets, on balconies, and in local public spaces with their kitchen battery, shouting and clanging their *casseroles* [pots and pans]: “La Loi Spéciale *clang, clang, clang-clang-clang*, On s’en calisse!” [“Special law, *clang, clang, clang-clang-clang*, we don’t give a fuck”].¹⁴⁴ At the Place Simon-Valois demonstrations I attended with Alain Bonder and Mélanie Binette, residents manifested plural and occasionally contradictory forms of dissent, gathering with *casseroles*, masks, slogans, flags, large-scale puppets, and placards, and calling for *une grève générale illimitée* [a general unlimited strike/dream]; free tuition; Quebec sovereignty; *Ni Canada Ni Québec* [Neither Canada nor Québec] (an assertion of Indigenous sovereignty); Charest’s resignation; the right to assemble; access to social housing; an end to fracking; direct redress of systemic racism, gender-based discrimination, and ableism in universities and in society; and the demilitarization of police with collective cries of “You’re sexy, you’re cute, take off your riot suit!” Positioned within these neighbourhood demonstrations, I encountered—and found myself implicated within—a local politics of assemblage, a convergence in place of dissenting interests, orientations, and bodies, each positing differential political demands and projecting distinct visions of utopia.

Pineault (2012) reads the nightly neighbourhood *tintamarres* as giving rise to an “empowering form of political expression rooted in community solidarity, that was able to cross some class and age barriers” by uniting neighbours irrespective of “political affiliation or work place affinity” (p. 48).¹⁴⁵ I am inclined to mark my own experience of the new formations

¹⁴³ Bill 78 included a number of stipulations related to public protest, including limits on the size of legal public gatherings to fifty people, the banning of masks to facilitate identification of protestors by police, and the requirement that demonstrators supply itineraries for what had become roving street marches.

¹⁴⁴ Referred to as both *tintamarre* and *casseroles*, this public demonstration of resistance drew upon the Chilean practice of *cacerolazos* [casseroles] during the Pinochet dictatorship, and on the Acadian *tintamarre*, a festive noise-making parade which scholars date to 1955, when it was performed in Moncton, New Brunswick to commemorate the bicentennial of Acadian Expulsion (see Labelle, 2007).

¹⁴⁵ In the same article Pineault argues that working-class neighbourhoods were not as deeply involved in the casserole demonstrations as middle-class neighbourhoods, and suggests that the movement failed to produce a collective class identity among all wage-earners: “a class able not only to resist the elite’s struggle for the restoration of unilateral class power, but to actively contest it and engage in a struggle for a different economy and society” (p. 53). Pineault does not account for how he measures the “prominence” and depth of political engagement by and within working-class neighbourhoods, nor whether Hochelaga-Maisonneuve figured into his

and practices of belonging embodied within these local demonstrations similarly. In the exhibitions I'd organized, the general assemblies I attended, the city-wide marches I participated in, I was an international graduate student-worker precariously positioned within or in relation to the university. In the *tintamarre* at the Place Valois, I was both a student and a local constituent in a pluralistic political assemblage, implicated here and now in the collective imagining of the future of the local.¹⁴⁶

Interpreting Austerity as Class Violence in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

As my political and research activities converged upon rue Ontario and the Place Simon-Valois throughout summer 2012, my attention gravitated toward neoliberal practices and their local sites of impact in the neighbourhood of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.¹⁴⁷ Sensitized to the problem of social housing in the neighbourhood during the *tintamarre* demonstrations, I engaged with local activists' accounts of gentrification in community papers and zines. I read local historiography and scholarship related to the deindustrialization of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. I reviewed literature on the processes, enduring social and environmental effects, and uneven scales of global capitalism, seeking to situate local impacts in relation to others.

Through this research, I came to view neoliberal austerity, deregulation, and privatization strategies as the latest iteration of earlier forms of capitalist violence in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. The increase in sales and fuel taxes, utility, health, and tuition fees—in addition to substantial cuts to public spending—would further impoverish a district still reeling from the economic and environmental fallout of deindustrialization.¹⁴⁸ As in other de-industrializing sites across the West, in the 1970s, as companies shuttered their Hochelaga-Maisonneuve factories and reinvested capital in global markets, they defaulted on workers' pensions, left behind brown fields, derelict buildings, and soil contaminated by heavy metals—situations of socioeconomic

account. In the postindustrial era, Pineault argues, “[t]he poetry of the past, with its workerist 1930s imaginary peopled by grim proletarians wielding manly tools against the background of smokestacks, cannot form the basis for a new progressive or socialist imaginary that can have a mass appeal in Québec” (p.54). In this respect, I think the student movement produced a democratic socialist imaginary that—if only for a short duration—held mass appeal. I propose, if hesitantly, that a more nuanced and intersectional understanding of labour and middle- and working-class identities emerged in the context of the movement.

¹⁴⁶ I am not so much trying to advocate a model of participatory or emancipatory citizenship here; rather, I'm identifying a shift in positioning that suggests also a transposition of the location of care within my performance research practice. I should mention that this ethics of care toward place is not necessarily new or fleeting, but rather that the demonstrations put it in relief.

¹⁴⁷ In Chapter 3, I explore the Place Valois in more detail, considering the pasts and futures of this place through the urban planning construct of the “urban village” (pp. 263–265).

¹⁴⁸ For more on these cuts, see *Bachand: Quebecers need to pay for the services they use*, 2012.

and ecological devastation for which local residents and former factory employees were left holding the bag.¹⁴⁹ The inadequate provisions for social and low-income housing in the Bachand budget would intensify the ruination and displacements entailing the departure of industry from the neighbourhood in the previous decades. As local housing activists cautioned, faced with a lack of social housing and increased user-fees, lower-classed and marginalized residents would be priced out of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, their displacement clearing the way for further gentrification by making the neighbourhood's real estate available to investors, wealthier residents, and new businesses (Konan, 2010, p. 8).

Violence, Fast and Slow

In humanities and environment scholar Rob Nixon's *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011), I found a compelling account of the durational dramaturgy of capitalist violence that correlated with what I was learning from local activists, urban researchers, and historians of deindustrialization in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Nixon reads austerity measures and deregulation as characteristic of neoliberalism's many political-economic strategies of "covert violence" (p. 10). This violence operates covertly because it escapes framing as violence full-stop; it appears, rather, in and through the discourse of liberal economic rights and freedoms. Because its effects may only be sensible over time scales longer than a single news cycle, Nixon contends that austerity and deregulation constitute forms of "slow violence." Slow violence is "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. [It is] a different kind of violence, a violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales" (p. 2). Over time, "slow violence is often not just attritional but also exponential, operating as a major threat multiplier; it can fuel long-term, proliferating conflicts in situations where the conditions for sustaining life become increasingly but gradually degraded" (p. 3).

¹⁴⁹ Urban researcher Gilles S en ecal (1995) describes de-industrialization as a double-shock ("double choc") for working class residents in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (para. 2). Deindustrialization produced economic and political ruination, as well as psychosocial and topographical trauma. Facing growing poverty, many residents of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve who were reliant upon wage labour in its industries were forced to relocate. Since the mid-1990s, as the neighbourhood became more residential and middle class, local attitudes toward industry also shifted, with many residents advocating for the closure of remaining industries, citing environmental concerns and noise pollution.

Because of its dispersal across times and spaces, slow violence is particularly difficult to render in a way that sustains attention and makes it feel urgent or actionable, and as a result, other stories often take precedence in corporate news discourse. For Nixon (2011), the dominant (or common sense) conception of violence is as spectacular, instantaneous, and personal: “violence as a highly visible act that is newsworthy because it is event focused, time bound, and body bound” (p. 3). News media often recapitulate this dominant discourse of violence in stories that include violent spectacle, a sharp delineation between perpetrator and victim, clear beginnings and endings, and bounded crime “scenes” or sites of impact. These dominant ways of apprehending and scripting violence have the effect of “simplify[ing] violence and underestimate[ing], in advance and in retrospect the human and environmental costs. Such displacements smooth the way for amnesia, as places are rendered irretrievable to those who once inhabited them, places that ordinarily pass unmourned in the corporate media” (Nixon, 2011, p. 7). Nixon suggests that the challenge for scholars is “to devise arresting stories, images, and symbols adequate to the pervasive but elusive violence of delayed effects” (p. 3). As a resident of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, I shared Nixon’s concern that attritional violence not go “unremarked,” that the places it degrades not pass unmourned; I also shared his hope that forms of slow violence might be confronted with urgency.

B. Process Story: The Abattoir as a Theatre of Capitalism, Past and Present

In September 2012, the strike ended with the return to classes, the Liberal government's electoral loss to the Parti Québécois, and the election of two student union representatives to Parliament. As promised in her campaign, on her first day in office Premier Pauline Marois struck down the fee increase and reversed course on the Liberal's health taxes and certain of its environmental extraction projects.¹⁵⁰ As the movement's demonstrations tapered and its social grievances fell out of the news cycle, I continued my walks in the neighbourhood and began my search for "content" for the Curioité cabinet theatre in the urban archive. I turned my attention to the archives of industrialization and de-industrialization of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, which included late nineteenth- and twentieth-century newspapers and magazines.¹⁵¹ I sifted through ephemera rather casually, allowing material to seep in and out without a strict directive. And yet, my concerns for the future of the local, for the degradation that deindustrialization and neoliberal policies were continuing to produce in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve were certainly there in the background, the political (and spatial) unconscious (Jameson, 1981/2002) guiding my search and selection of stories, images, and symbols which held me at the time.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Scholars disagree as to the longstanding victories, failures, and other effects of the student movement. The entry of several student activists into official electoral politics suggests one obvious site of impact. The two student union representatives elected to parliament in 2012 ran with the PQ. In 2017, *porte-parole* [spokesperson] for the more radical leftist CLASSE union Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois ran for and was elected to parliament with the social-democratic nationalist party Québec Solidaire. Performance studies scholar and circus artist Jen Spiegel (2014) reads the movement as producing spaces of dissensus, drawing upon philosopher Jacques Rancière's account of dissensus as an aesthetic of the political: "Both the goals of the movement as well as tactics deployed were [. . .] heavily subject to critique from both within and without. The movement had created a plethora of spaces of 'dissensus' [. . .] where diverse and occasionally conflicting perspectives were embodied through heterogeneous tactics and counter-tactics, as well as the conjoining of multiple sites of occasionally convergent and often conflicting activity" (p. 777). As I related in this chapter, I read the local *tintamarre* demonstrations in which I participated as embodying local critical plurality, or a convergence of differently dissenting orientations toward neoliberal governance in Quebec, each positing differential political demands and projecting distinct visions of utopia.

¹⁵¹ As I noted in Chapter 1, working in the archives was a corollary to the "collection" practices I engaged in while walking along Rue Ontario. In that primary movement of research-for-creation, I searched the archives for images, histories, and collective memories that resonated with my personal experiences and memories of the places I encountered on my walks.

¹⁵² I borrow the concept from Marxist scholar Fredric Jameson (1981/2002), who describes the political unconscious as an implicit political dimension of the artwork, the problem in the social Real for which the artwork proposes a symbolic resolution. As literary scholar Rita Felski (2015) suggests, Jameson's hermeneutic imposes Marxism as a "master code, allowing the critic to redefine cultural artifacts as socially symbolic acts in order to restore a buried reality of material conditions" (p. 57). The critic registers "literary techniques [as bearing] the indelible traces of an overriding story of social struggle and class conflict" (pp. 57). In the exegesis, I suppose I am

Sandwiched between the covers of a popular magazine, an exposé of an industrial abattoir. My brush with this exposé became a turning point in the trajectory of *Curiosité*, turning me on to a meandering path of inquiry in the urban archives, from this news feature, toward the pasts and presents of the abattoirs de l'est, and into the cultural imaginary of the industrial city. Through this convolute, which I recapitulate below, I developed the epic dramaturgy of the parable.

Abattoirs de l'est, or *Le Ventre de Montréal*



Figure 60. Animals in stockyards on market day, Abattoirs de l'est, 1902. From [Photograph of *Album universel* clipping featuring the abattoirs de l'est on market day], 1902, Archives de l'Atelier d'histoire Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, Montreal, QC, Canada (INDU-QHM-292). Courtesy of l'Atelier d'histoire Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

August 2012. I typed “Hochelaga” in the search engine, hit enter, and began clicking through the results in the collection of digitized historical periodicals held by the Bibliothèque et archives nationales et du Québec (National Library and Archives of Quebec, or BANQ). I came across a blurred photograph of Hochelaga in a 1902 issue of *l'Album universel*.¹⁵³ Cattle penned in stockyards lining a muddy thoroughfare, a crowd of people at the vanishing point,

working backward with his methodology as dramaturg, surfacing an aspect of the political unconscious, the contextual that subtends the dramaturgy of *Abattoir de l'est*.

¹⁵³ *L'Album universel* was a weekly French-language periodical printed in Montreal between 1902 and 1907, well-known for its engravings and photographs.

buyers on market day. Herds of cattle in the city, headed to the slaughterhouse. One in a series of photos in an exposé of the abattoirs de l'est, the photograph indexed a semi-agrarian, semi-industrial past in Hochelaga, a touchstone for remarking the drastic changes in urban landscapes and urban life that have occurred here over the last century.

Following the trail of the abattoirs de l'est in secondary literature, I learned that they were constructed in 1880, at the peak of industrialization and urbanization in Montreal.¹⁵⁴ Comprising both slaughtering and meat processing facilities, the abattoirs de l'est supplied the meat to wholesalers and markets throughout Montreal. In 1904, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), which at the time owned the abattoirs de l'est, opened the Angus shops, one of the largest industrial employers in the city, in the adjacent plot (Nadeau, 2009, pp. 36–37). Situated at Montreal's city limits, this heavy industrial zone was colloquially known as the *ventre de Montréal* [the stomach of Montreal]. Home to the city's undesirable industries, the *ventre* attracted large rodent populations, and generated noxious odours and fumes, toxic wastewater, and constant noise (Nadeau, p. 42).

The Abattoir in Socialist Narrative

The infernal—or rather gastrointestinal—image conjured by historical accounts of *le ventre de Montréal* reminded me of the dystopic depiction of the abattoir in twentieth-century socialist narrative, especially Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906). First published in serial form in the socialist newspaper *Appeal to Reason*, the social realist novel has been a direct and indirect source for subsequent socialist treatments of the abattoir as an index of urban society and as an actualized hellscape.¹⁵⁵ I had encountered *The Jungle* in the late 1990s on the reading list of a high school history course, somewhere below George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945) and above Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* (1980). The novel marked me at the time, shaping my imaginary of the industrial past and turning me off meat for my remaining high

¹⁵⁴Historian Gaétan Nadeau (2009) described the period in which the CPR, the Angus Shops and surrounding industries were constructed in Hochelaga as the height of empire in Montreal, characterized by the expansion of urban infrastructure and technologies, including wire and wireless communications, the combustion engine, electricity, and water purification systems (p. 36).

¹⁵⁵ Several plays take *The Jungle* and its use of the abattoir as either a direct or indirect source. Bertolt Brecht's *St. Joan of the Stockyards* (1929–31), for example, engaged the abattoir as a scene for reflecting upon social relations and working conditions in the industrial city (Barrett, 2006, p. 7). So too, have contemporary playwrights. Naomi Wallace (*Slaughter City*, 1996) and Naomi Iizuka (*At the Vanishing Point*, 2004) use the abattoir to explore social relations, identity politics, and the experience of working-class people in Louisville, Kentucky. (For more on *At the Vanishing Point*, see Part D. Creative Correspondences, pp. 212–216, this chapter.)

school years.¹⁵⁶ I returned to the novel and to its critical reception, recovering in the process some of the techniques and tropes of the social realist exposé, and once again, experiencing their capacity to churn my stomach.

The Jungle offers a gritty portrayal of Lithuanian immigrants working in Chicago's Union Stock Yards. Using the abattoir as an illustrative scene (or rather, anatomical theatre) of class exploitation, drudgery, and degraded work under industrial capitalism, Sinclair presents a counter-image to capital's phantasmagoria—its promise of plenty.¹⁵⁷ *The Jungle* emphasizes the harsh working conditions of the slaughterhouse, the greed of capital, and the viscera of the kill room—not only the bloody scenes of animal slaughter, but the bodily injuries and the “becoming” meat of the very workers tasked with producing it. Subject to capitalist forces in ways similar to the animals they butcher on the line, the human worker is debased and dehumanized.

Abattoir as Spectacle of Industrial Modernity

In cultural historian Dorothee Brantz's (2001) short essay “Recollecting the Slaughterhouse,” I encountered a contrasting and utopic image of the *abattoir*. Brantz describes municipal abattoirs as a spatial paradigm of industrial modernity, a nineteenth-century phenomenon, attendant to the processes of industrialization and urbanization, and “emblematic of the rise of mass-production and the amalgamation of science, technology, and state politics.”¹⁵⁸ By systematizing and surveilling the procedures for killing animals within the municipal abattoir, city authorities sought to standardize and increase urban meat supplies,

¹⁵⁶ The explicit scenes of the abattoir in *The Jungle* were employed for their shock value—and for a didactic purpose—to shock us into an awareness of how our meat is made, and to draw the reader's empathy toward those who make the things we consume, the conditions under which they labour, while directing our critique at capitalist modes of production. (Sinclair dedicated the novel “To the Workingmen of America”). Yet, as Sinclair lamented, the novel spawned consumerist concerns, rather than socialist ones. In terms of public reception, the anti-capitalist allegory was subordinated to the “surface,” the graphic depiction of the meatpacking process: “I aimed at the public's heart and by accident hit it in the stomach,” (Sinclair, 1906, as cited in Denney Boran, 2016, p. 395).

¹⁵⁷ As literary historian Christopher Phelps (2005) notes:

The book's title conveyed [Sinclair's] view that capitalist society, by favoring profits over people, had reverted to a raw state of nature. As a metaphor, ‘jungle’ denoted the ferocity of dog-eat-dog competition, the barbarity of exploitative work, the wilderness of urban life, the savagery of poverty, the crudity of political corruption, and the primitiveness of the doctrine of survival of the fittest, which led people to the slaughter as surely as cattle. This animalistic jungle, Sinclair held, should be replaced by a more humane, civilized, cooperative society. Socialism was the answer to modern-day barbarism.” (paras. 2–3)

¹⁵⁸ Prior to the advent of the municipal abattoirs, the slaughtering of animals in streets and backyards had been common practice, and ensured the safety and freshness of the meat supply.

improve meat safety, and reduce noxious odours (miasmas) generated by decaying animal matter, which, at the time, were thought to cause disease.¹⁵⁹ Brantz's "recollection" introduced a peculiar image into my imaginary: the abattoir as theatrical showcase of industrial progress. At the World Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, she notes, the industrial abattoir appeared as a popular scientific attraction. In the slaughterhouse spectacle, audiences could glimpse the techniques and technologies of modernized slaughter first-hand from the safe distance of a viewing platform.

Abattoirs de l'est and the "Stages" of Capitalism in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

From Chicago's opposing abattoirs, I returned to the historical abattoirs de l'est. Online, in the BAnQ's digital repository, Canadian news archives, and the website of the City of Montreal, I gathered insurance plans, maps, city planning documents, and newspaper articles related to the abattoirs de l'est in the century after their construction. In and through this collection, the abattoirs de l'est appeared as another kind of theatre—a theatre of the major urban transformations in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve over the past century and a half—past, present, and ongoing.

¹⁵⁹ In his discussion of the cultural meanings of the "malodorous environment" of Montreal in 1885, Canadian historian Michael Bliss (1991) writes that "[b]y the early nineteenth century it was sanitarian orthodoxy to believe that most infectious disease was caused by miasma, or poisonous gasses, emanating from decaying animal and vegetable matter" (Early August section, para. 6). Animal industries were of particular concern to modern urban reformers because their production methods required vast quantities of fresh water, and generated large volumes of wastewater, which contributed to the contamination of the city's water supply and spread of cholera and other infectious diseases.



Figure 61. Articles in various Montreal newspapers (1973–1980) detail the gradual dissolution of the abattoirs de l’est—and its meatpacking facility, Legrade Meats. Digital collage of newspaper clippings by the author.

De-Industrialization and Closure of the Abattoirs de l’est. Articles published in the French dailies *La Presse* and *Le Devoir* in the 1970s detailed numerous changes in ownership and corporate mergers at the abattoirs de l’est.¹⁶⁰ In the years before its closure in 1978, Palmont Packers, the latest corporate owners of the abattoirs de l’est, laid off most of its workforce, and became embroiled in a number of labour and legal disputes over payment of employee severance and pensions. The mergers and eventual closure of the abattoir coincided with wider shifts in Montreal’s economy, among them the relocation of “undesirable” industries

¹⁶⁰ While the abattoirs de l’est were responsible for the slaughter of animals, Legrade Meats made charcuterie and other animal products from the slain animals (Roesler, 1973, C2). In the early 1970s, the Coop fédérée began to concentrate its operations in Princeville, Quebec, outside of Montreal. In September 1972, the abattoirs de l’est and Legrade Meats were purchased by Palmont Packers (based in Ontario). In January 1973, after the Palmont Packers takeover, 130 Legrade employees were fired when Palmont shut down the processing operation. A legal dispute between Legrade and Palmont Packers ensued over which of the companies was responsible for paying out employee severance and pension payments. Palmont argued that it had purchased the buildings and not the operations, and thus, was not responsible for workers (see Roesler, 1973, C2). Palmont remained in operation until the late 1970s, employing some 300 people, slaughtering and processing between 2,500 and 3,500 animals per week (Pouliot & Roesler, 1977, A3). The plant closed in 1978, soon after a public scandal involving the illegal sale of spoiled pork. In 1980, these ex-employees sued the company to receive vacation benefits that had not been paid out during their employment. This came after an earlier court battle over the non-payment of vacation pay went into arbitration, and the company failed to comply with the terms (“Les ex-employés de la Palmont réclament \$191,671”, 1980, B12). In 1985, a notice of dissolution was posted for Palmont in the French-language daily *Le Devoir*.

to the countryside, the scaling down of operations at the Angus shops (which shut completely in 1992), and the de-industrialization of Montreal as a whole.¹⁶¹ The dissolution of the abattoirs de l'est appeared to me as one scene in the protracted sociospatial crisis of de-industrialization in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

Revitalization: A “Business Opportunity” in the Ruins of Industry. In late August 2012, I diverged from my daily walk along rue Ontario, instead making my way toward *le ventre de Montréal*.¹⁶² From the city’s strategic economic development plan for 2011–2017, I had learned that the Angus Locoshop and surrounding areas had been repurposed in two “phases” between 1984 and 2011, and that yet another phase was underway.¹⁶³ Weaving through the archways of the preserved brick façade of the Angus Locoshop, across the parking lot of a Canadian supermarket chain, I found myself in a suburban-style shopping centre on an industrial scale. Adjacent, a spectacular unobstructed view of Mount Royal and a *terrain vague* of high grasses, an unfinished zone identified in the strategic plan as the Technopôle Angus. A postindustrial sociospatial ideal guiding urban planning and economic modernization strategies in Montreal, the technopole designates the clustering of information, communication, science and technology sectors in former industrial sites.¹⁶⁴ The technopole, the plan contended, would position Montreal as a major player and hub in the postindustrial knowledge economy, particularly in science and tech-related industries, while also creating local jobs, encouraging sustainable development, and maintaining links with the local community (Deschamps, 2011, p. 72, p. 31).

¹⁶¹ By the 1980s, large-scale heavy industrial employers such as Versatile Vickers, Bombardier, as well as the grocery chain Steinberg had closed.

¹⁶² The area once occupied by the Angus shops now belongs to the Rosemont district, created in 1976 from land which had previously been considered part of Hochelaga.

¹⁶³ Both phases of development followed decontamination of the site, which had been saturated with heavy metals from over a century of heavy industry. Just east of the Angus shops are rowhouse cooperatives dating to the first phase of redevelopment (1983–1994), which had been oriented toward “respond[ing] to the community’s specific housing needs and ensur[ing] a high degree of social mix” (Service de mise en valeur du territoire et du patrimoine, 2005, p. 26).

¹⁶⁴ The technopole is not a model unique to Montreal urban planning; it hails from Southern California, where A.J. Scott (1990) used it to describe the emergence of “high-technology industrial districts” beginning in the 1980s (p. 1602). As the abattoirs de l’est and other heavy industries shuttered across Montreal, the federal and provincial governments abandoned the industrial economy and began funding new sectors. In the 1970s, information and communication technologies received government subsidies and support. Later, in the 1980s and 1990s, the knowledge, culture, and creative industries became the prized economies, tasked with reshaping former industrial areas in the city of Montreal, including the Technopole Angus. Montreal comprises five such technopoles, located throughout the island (Deschamps, 2011, p. 72). For more on the Technopôle Angus development and its different phases, see Klein et al., 2001 and Office de consultation publique de Montréal et al., 2017.

From the Technopole Angus, I continued north to my desired destination: the abattoirs de l'est. In my research, I'd learned that the headquarters of the *Journal de Montréal*, the most widely circulated French-language daily in North America, was the current occupant of the former footprint of the abattoirs de l'est and stockyards. Québecor, the media conglomerate which publishes the *Journal de Montréal*, had built its offices and the *Journal* headquarters there in 1984. I recalled my own encounters with the *Journal de Montréal* during the student strike, and the consumerist discourse espoused by the newspaper's regular columnists, who defended austerity, denounced anti-austerity activism and promoted zero-deficit economics using common tropes, rhetorical devices, and neoliberal arguments.¹⁶⁵ A quick media scan revealed that between 2009 and 2011, the owners of the *Journal de Montréal* had been involved in a labour dispute with unionized employees, and resorted to a lock-out. The *Journal de Montréal* / abattoirs de l'est site appeared to me as a theatre of both urban continuity and urban change, an in-between place exposing the entanglements of the past and the present, the industrial and the post-industrial.



Figure 62. A rival newspaper (*La Presse*) covers the lock-out at the *Journal de Montréal* in 2009 (see Ballivy, 2009). From *Des employés en lock-out du Journal de Montréal font du piquetage devant le bureau du quotidien* [Screenshot of online newspaper photograph], by D. Boily, 2009, *La Presse* (<https://images.lpcdn.ca/924x615/200901/25/42631-employes-lock-out-journal-montreal.jpg>). Copyright 2009 by David Boily. Screenshot by author.

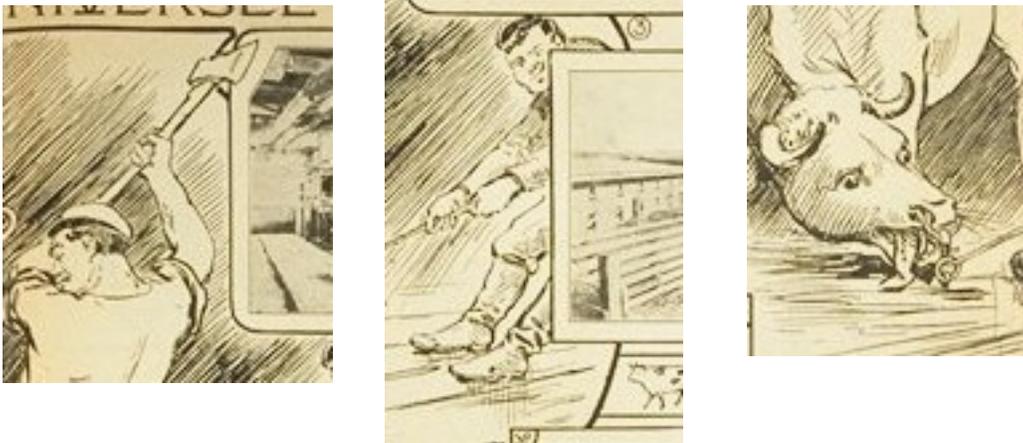
¹⁶⁵ Several prominent politicians who advanced neoliberal policies in Canada and Quebec during their tenures in office currently sit on its board of directors, including former prime minister Brian Mulroney. As a doctoral student on strike during the Printemps érable, I became most familiar with the writings of Richard Martineau, who acted as the *Journal's* mouthpiece for anti-strike editorials. In his columns, he publicly defended not only the Liberal government's tuition hike, but the extension of economic rationality to a wide range of public and social services. Martineau's blogs marry the language of rights and freedoms with the market; for example, he recasts freedom as the free market, and the individual and his right to consume. Taking up Charest's rhetorical device of referring to the strike as a "boycott," Martineau positions education within consumerist logic, denying student unions the political clout and bargaining positions of organized labour. He presents the reduction of elite class privileges as the "real" social harms, such that government spending on social welfare programs and corporate taxes appear as assaults upon personal and economic freedoms. For an example of this rhetorical discourse, see Martineau, 2012.

L'Album universel: Acts of Assemblage

Following my visit to the *Journal de Montréal* / abattoirs de l'est, I returned to the *Album universel* exposé from May 17, 1902 which had first captured my attention. The abattoir in the exposé could hardly be further from social realist portrayals; it appears, rather, as an industrial marvel in the World's Fair tradition, the antithesis and antidote to previous—and bloodier—modes of slaughter. A cool spectacle.

The two-page illustrated spread is entitled: “Où Montréal prend sa viande, qui a considérablement augmenté de prix depuis quelque temps (une visite intéressante et toute d'actualité faite par le reporter et les artistes de l'*Album universel* aux grands abattoirs de l'est). [“Where Montréal gets its meat, which has risen in price over time (an interesting visit made very recently by the reporter and artists of the Universal Album to the giant eastern abattoirs).”] Beneath a photographic portrait of owner M. Joseph Villeneuve,¹⁶⁶ the *Album universel* editors promise an exposé, a vicarious tour of the abattoirs de l'est in the pages that follow: Where does our meat come from? How does it arrive at the butcher shop? So many interesting questions, which the *Album universel* will answer, taking you (the reader) by the arm and guiding you through the abattoirs de l'est. To assuage readers made queasy by the prospect of a foray into an industrial kill house, the editors note that Montreal boasts abattoirs that rival in cleanliness—if not in capacity—those of the largest cities in the world.

¹⁶⁶ According to an accompanying article, Villeneuve managed both the abattoirs de l'est and ouest (located in Saint-Henri), and held a virtual monopoly on the beef trade in Montreal (“Nos abattoirs,” 1902, p. 50).



Inside, a sequence of black-and-white photographs of the new municipal abattoirs de l'est frames a graphic illustration of the old slaughtering process—a butcher caught in mid-motion swinging a mallet at a distressed cow, held down to a peg in the ground by a rope through the ring in its nose. A central image of suspended drama, a hot struggle—unresolved—between human and animal over life and death. I see the hand-hewn sketch in close-ups and cuts: the wooden planks, the terrified eyes and languid tongue of the beast about to be slaughtered.



In the frame, an orderly sequence of photographs documenting the modern abattoir and its methods draws the reader's eye along the perimeter of the spread, from one photograph to the next: from the movement of animals along a disassembly line, to the men of the abattoir with the tools of their trade, to exterior shots of smoke stacks and stalls, to interior shots of kill rooms. The photographic frame telegraphs sterility and order. The tough working-class

masculinity of unnamed abattoir employees stares back at the *Album* photographer, who, in turn, offers up a sober regard on the industrial abattoir in which they work.



A tidy caption, with numbers corresponding to the respective photographs, underscores the images, identifying each in turn. The third photograph in the sequence, the caption informs me, depicts pig slaughter as an “automatic” process, from bleeding to skinning to disembowelment. I will take their word for it, as in close-up, it appears as a blur with steps.



The *Album universel* provides readers with a spectacle of modern progress and process, albeit in textual and vicarious form, with the reporters standing in for their readers. The tour of “where Montreal gets its meat” appears also to be a story of industrial modernity’s orderly victory over its barbaric, uncivilized past—the “old method” and mode of depiction surrounded and defeated by the new. The infantry in the regiment—miniature two-dimensional sheep and cows, one after the next as if on an assembly line—confront both wary steer and the frantic butcher. Who are these soldiers for Modern Progress? These simple outlines queuing up for slaughter propose the animal as commodity fetish, always already in the process of becoming meat, becoming consumable.

With these fragments in mind, I stand back, squint at the spread in its totality, and search for the thread. What is the story here? What draws these images together? I recall Dorothee Brantz’s assertion that “[s]laughter reflects the course of civilization, both its continuity and change,” and refocus my attention on the central *agon*—not that between

butcher and beast, but between past and present, a recurrent *agon* in my performance research. Walter Benjamin's (1950/2007d) critique of progress, Doreen Massey's (2005) account of capitalist telos and its imperative to modernize or else, and Rob Nixon's (2011) concept of slow violence come to mind, threading through my reading.

The feature presents an origin story for the commodity—where it comes from, how it is made—and embeds that story within a moralizing myth of civilization's victory over barbarism. The abattoir performs within this feature as a symbol of industrial capitalism's vanquishing of its others—the past, old ways of doing, the animal—and of the victorious “rise” of the commodity. This technocratic industrial myth reverberates in the neoliberal myth of modernization through globalization, even as the figures differ, the roles change, and the violence is less explicit and perhaps “slower” (if not to the animals killed). In the neoliberal variant of the myth of progress, the apparatus of transnational capital vanquishes the now obsolete abattoir and the worker (or the newspaper and the reporter), relics of the past industrial economy, using more covert techniques of dispossession.

Reflections on Archival Research

The abattoir research informed several aspects of the dramaturgy and *mise-en-scène* of *Abattoir de l'est*. My use of the abattoir as a spatio-temporal emblem of industrial modernity within the dramaturgy of *Abattoir de l'est* drew upon the oppositional “theatres” of the industrial abattoir—both situated in Chicago—that I encountered in my research. The *mise-en-scène* of *Curiocité's* abattoir—red velvet curtains veiling a gleaming meat grinder—references both the World's Fair spectacle, where the abattoir serves as *theatron*, a place for viewing the marvels of industrial modernity, and the socialist realist *exposé*, which peaks behind the curtains of industrial capitalism, penetrates the shiny surfaces of the commodity, and reveals the “slaughter” of humanity behind it (see Prompt Book 3, Figure 43, p. 142).¹⁶⁷

In urban planning documents and in the media archives of the *ventre de Montréal*, I gathered a story of capitalism's different “stages,” the changing ideals, formations, and social and material effects of capitalist practices in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve over time. The industrial slaughterhouse appeared as paradigmatic place in the industrial history of Hochelaga, indexing

¹⁶⁷ The abattoir behind the curtains in *Abattoir de l'est* is of another genre—perhaps another species—than that which appears in *The Jungle*. In Nicolas's theatre of the abattoir, the lead actors were already “dead”; they were, rather, commodities reanimated through object performance. (I address these staging choices in more detail in Part E. of this chapter, pp. 217–230).

the changes in culture and topography that accompanied industrialization. The mergers, labour disputes, and layoffs at the onset of de-industrialization told a story of the social violence of late capitalist/neoliberal economic practices. The “transformation” of Angus shops into the *Technopôle Angus*, and the displacement of the abattoirs de l’est by the *Journal de Montréal*—a mouthpiece for neoliberal editorial discourse—illuminated the social, economic, and geographical changes that mark not only this place, but other former industrial and working-class places in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Moreover, the recent past of lockouts at the *Journal* suggested to me the continuation of classist discourses and class struggle in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve’s postindustrial economy. Through my interventions into and assemblage of the archives, the abattoir emerged as a curious spatio-temporal figure, one to which I could anchor both a fable of the industrial past and a political critique of the neoliberalizing, post-industrial present.

C. The Dramaturgy of [Late] Capitalism: Assembling the Epic Dramaturgy of *Abattoir de l'est*

The third movement of performance creation—the scripting of the parable—proceeded through further acts of assemblage, as I incorporated the abattoir (a spatio-temporal figure composed of the industrial past and the postindustrial present) into epic dramaturgy, and its techniques of narrative exposition and methods for politicizing the past. My repertoire of epic techniques, which I elaborate below, drew from Bertolt Brecht’s original writings, as well as from contemporary dramaturgs’ and theatre practitioners’ commentaries.

In his account of epic (or narrative) theatre in “A Short Organum for the Theatre,” Brecht (1953/1964a) describes techniques of *Verfremdungseffekt* [defamiliarization] by which the theatre produces the spectator’s “inquiring attitude” toward the present, identifying the incorporation and adaptation of historical materials within his dramaturgy as “providing a starting point for a dialectical treatment of history” (Turner & Behrndt, 2016, p. 52).¹⁶⁸ Among these techniques, historicization is a “method of setting the events at a slight distance from the audience’s own experiences, to enable a more objective appraisal of the forces, the ‘contradictions’ at work” (Turner & Behrndt, p. 55). Brecht scholar and theatre practitioner Meg Mumford (2009) outlines both the different techniques and imagined effects of epic historicization, which include “distancing (contemporary) phenomena by placing them in the past; presenting events as the product of historically specific conditions and choices; showing differences between the past and present and evidencing change; showing similarities between the past and present and urging change; revealing received versions of history as the views of the ruling class; [. . . and] presenting all versions of history as serving vested interests” (p. 72). Mumford identifies additional framing strategies, such as “prologues, epilogues, narrators and projected captions foretelling the main action of the scene,” by which epic theatre presents “events as historical phenomena that are now under quasi-scientific observation,” and thus available to critique (p. 73).

¹⁶⁸ Mumford (2009) defines *verfremdung* as a “political intervention into the (blindingly) familiar” (pp. 60–61). Epic dramaturgy, in contrast to bourgeois drama, “both provoke[s] an inquiring attitude towards the present through the past, and challenge[s] dominant versions of history” (p. 72). As she notes, this holds much in common with more recent feminist and anti-colonial retellings of history. *Verfremdungseffekt*—best translated as “defamiliarization”—has also been translated and used synonymously with epic historicization, historical defamiliarization and historical distanciation, all of which refer to the setting apart (in past time and space) of narrative events from the present of the audience.

Techniques of Epic Historicization in *Abattoir de l'est*

To compose *Abattoir de l'est*, I drew loosely upon these epic techniques of historicization to represent contemporary sociospatial conflicts in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve through a defamiliarized and comparative lens. The appeal to historical comparison made through epic historicization techniques hinted to me of curiosity's penchant for strange pairings, and of its fervent search for similarity, correspondences, and patterns between (un)like things. Applied as a dramaturgical framework, epic historicization might open up an audience's curious negotiation of the past and present, continuity and change, potentially prompting recognition of ongoing or slow violence in its differential and often covert forms. I chose the parable, a frequent genre of epic dramaturgy which employs allegorical and anachronistic discourse, as I understood this genre to prompt the spectator's curious interpretive activity and invite historical comparison. I used narrator-demonstrators to present the tale, using Brecht's (1950/1964b) "street scene" as a model and narrative context.¹⁶⁹ I integrated a prologue and epilogue, and included borrowed aphorisms to introduce each chapter in the narrative. I incorporated primary historical sources—past events, archival images, quotations—into the narrative dramaturgy of *Abattoir de l'est*, as I understood them to convey or carry the topical and contextual, to speak to the here and now. In addition to using the historical archives of place to create the fused industrial/postindustrial Montreal that composes *Abattoir de l'est* (and which I recount below), I also drew much of my urban mythos from the cultural imaginary, appropriating—sometimes

¹⁶⁹ Brecht articulates epic dramaturgy most succinctly (and for me, most pithily) in his "Street Scene" essay, in which he supplies the modern theatrical metaphor for the city, diagramming an epic theatre that "transforms spectators into social observers" (Martin, 2014, p. 13). In the street scene, Brecht (1950/1964b) presents us with "an incident such as can be seen at any street corner: an eyewitness demonstrating to a collection of people how a traffic accident took place. The bystanders may not have observed what happened, or they may simply not agree with him, may 'see things a different way'; the point is that the demonstrator acts the behaviour of driver or victim or both in such a way that the bystanders are able to form an opinion about the incident" (p. 121). The street corner is the theatre of everyday life, providing the dramaturgy—the physical milieu and social situation—by which theatrical scenarios and spectatorial dynamics of epic theatre are to be understood.

explicitly, other times unconsciously—aesthetic figures and forms of the city from expressionism¹⁷⁰ and the Gothic mode.¹⁷¹

While borrowing these techniques from Brecht, I imagined the spectator and the substance of the “distance” I was creating in other terms, positioning my dramaturgical discourse in tension with common sense neoliberalism and its “as is” narrative formations. I drew this dramaturgical discourse from literary critic Jeffrey Tambling’s (2010) account of the “other-discourse” of allegory, Walter Benjamin’s reflections on the amplitudes of storytelling in “The Storyteller,” and theatre scholar Patrice Pavis’s (1998) description of the parable.¹⁷²

Benjamin (1936/2007b) describes storytelling as a dying art, vanishing in the years after World War I with the objective presentation of wartime information in the bourgeois press, and the deepening sense of the incommunicability of experience. The press presents information according to structures of plausibility, verifiability, and causality, structures of intelligibility foreign to storytelling, he contends. Every reported event is “shot through with explanation”—explained and explainable—either as a function of psychology or as a function of natural or scientific law (Benjamin, p. 89). In short, the “lesson” of the event is presented as self-evident, the meaning of the event always already framed for the reader who receives it as

¹⁷⁰ I appropriated and détourned what literary critic John W. Lindh (1998) describes as the “urban mythos of expressionism,” the city perceived as a site of “arbitrary” violence and expressed through “hyperbole, distortion, caricature, and mechanization” (p. 120). This act of pastiche aligns with Brecht’s repurposing of expressionism in *Jungle of Cities* (1924). As Lindh notes, Brecht had adopted the expressionist (and socialist) metaphor of the city as lawless “jungle,” and adapted expressionist techniques to his political project of staging the social and individual effects of reification and economic determinism of the industrial city in the play. Against the city as a site of arbitrary violence, Brecht used expressionism to render violence and its scales of impact as socially [and economically] produced. In *Abattoir de l’est*, I understood these recontextualized components of the expressionist city to illuminate correspondences between past and present capitalist discourses, and to focus spectatorial attention on the figures and forces of capitalism which produce the unrelenting atmosphere of violence through which the Rag-and-Bone Man is conducted, as well as his conduct itself.

¹⁷¹ The Gothic refers to a mode developed within Romanticism to express and address the experiences of fear and uncertainty produced by the rapid social, economic, and cultural transformations associated with Western modernity and industrialization, though it has since experienced a number of revivals, revisions, and adaptations, among them feminist, postcolonial, and eco-Gothic. Recent criticism theorizes that the Gothic mode mediates moments of historical crisis, revealing deeply entrenched inter- and intra-cultural anxieties related to capitalist colonialism (Sugars & Turcotte, 2009a; Del Principe, 2014); critiques dominant social discourses (Del Principe, 2014); produces ontological uncertainty rather than stability (Inverso, 1990); and speaks to the looming sense of environmental catastrophe that haunted our industrial past and continues to haunt our present moment (Del Principe, 2014).

¹⁷² Literary critic Jeffrey Tambling (2010) describes allegory as an “other-discourse,” arguing that it encourages the spectator to “probe” what is said “for another meaning,” and “draw[s] attention to a split between the surface meaning and what is underneath” (p. 6). I viewed the other-discourse of allegory as prompting the spectator’s inquisitive attitude toward rhetoric, and came to understand allegory as a strategy for referring obliquely to the events of the present in the terms and forms of the past.

is, for what it is. For Benjamin, the absence of information and explanation characteristic of storytelling are central to the participation of the listener in the event. The accent placed on the detailing of “extraordinary” and “marvellous” events constitutes the “amplitude” of the story—its range, abundance and breadth of possible meanings (Benjamin, p. 89). Amplitude, as I understand it, refers to the imaginative distance to be traversed by the spectator in their encounter with the narrated story. They transpose the events narrated to the other registers. They have the task of making sense of the story in the present, of discerning its meaning in relation to their proximities.

The parable, as a story form, invites the imaginative and comparative activity of the spectator through its multiple registers. Pavis (1998) describes the parable as a genre of “duality and ambiguity,” composed of “the immediate narrative, which is a perceptible exterior, and the hidden narrative whose ‘soul’ must be discovered by the listener” (p. 248). The lesson of the parable emerges from the reader’s (or spectator’s) transposition of the depicted situation—“a fictitious or real milieu in which the events are supposed to have occurred”—to the “serious” register, by which they “draw parallels with [their] own situation” (p. 248). The parable’s pedagogy lies within the spectator’s imaginative activity of appropriating, “transposing,” and “translating” its objects into other registers. In the process of transposing and translating the story elements in relation to their own experience, the spectator gains a new or unfamiliar way of perceiving the here and now. It is this defamiliarized perspective which provides insight into the present.

The parable form could produce what was for me an essential and urgent story for the here and now—a sociohistorical critique of ongoing capitalist violence in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve that would irritate closed, “as is,” and uncurious narrative forms of the common sense. As a dramaturgical structure, the parable could carry multiple stories and remain “open” to multiple interpretations and negotiations, available to audiences with experiences, social positions, and understandings different from my own. As Pavis (1998) insists, the parable should not be conceived as “a simple dressing-up of a univocal message . . . It must always retain some measure of autonomy and opacity in order to signify on its own; never be fully translatable into a lesson, but lend itself to a signifying practice and the reflections of theatricality” (p. 248). Pavis’s framing of the epic parable recalled for me an object of curiosity, valued beyond its instrumentality or function, never wholly assimilable to a sole category. In his account of the

parable's resistant "surface"—its refusal to illustrate a singular interpretation and its capacity to hold multiple identifications—I encountered a narrative structure around which the narrator-demonstrators of *Curiosité* might gather, a shared (though differently translated and embodied) story to go with the shared viewpoint on place presented in the cabinet theatre.

I also speculated as to how the parable, as an "open" performance text, might orient the process of collective dramaturgy toward curiosity rather than closure, allowing ideas, materials, and objects to seep in and out of importance, valuing the interpretive capacities and embodied dramaturgies of collaborators, and inviting the contingencies, errancy, and discoveries of collaboration to take precedence over strict conveyance of a "deeper" message. Below I describe my conception and scripting of the parable, identifying the dramaturgical strategies I used as "surface" to convey the "depths" of the story I wanted to tell.¹⁷³

Narrativizing Late Capitalist Violence in the Parable

I dedicated one scene to the historical abattoirs de l'est in the parable: this scene—*La Tuerie* [The Killing]—opened the play. This placement would, I hoped, illuminate at the outset the theme of capitalist violence in the city, one theme among many that I wanted audiences to follow and which would reappear for them in other places in the story in different forms. My understandings of neoliberal capitalism's sociospatial strategies shaped my composition of the urban mythos of the parable. In the globalized economy which it takes as its prioritized sphere of action, neoliberal capitalism distributes violence across bodies, places, and things. It cannot be confined to the kill floor of the abattoirs de l'est. To my mind, this violence required an epic exposé—a narrative unfolding of violence over space and time, and across bodies, places, and things. A pervasive capitalist atmosphere and force within the narrated world, neoliberalism distributes violence across the urban panorama.

The plot of *Abattoir de l'est* follows the daily routes and routines of a Rag-and-Bone Man as he passes along rue Ontario and encounters different places in the past and present of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, meeting a range of potential opportunities or catastrophes.¹⁷⁴ A

¹⁷³ The script was only one surface of many composing the dramaturgy of the parable in performance, and in *Embodying Neoliberal Narratology* (pp. 208–211), this section) and Part E. A Collective Dramaturgy of Enchantment (pp. 217–230), I describe the collectively composed dramaturgy of the parable.

¹⁷⁴ In addition to performing as Benjamin's figure of the materialist historian, the rag-and-bone man (or the chiffonier, or ragpicker) is a historical (and contemporary) profession which emerged in industrializing cities like Montreal, as well as a literary and theatrical type, and "founding paradigm of modernist artistic production" (McDonough, 2010, p. 25). As Tom McDonough (2010) notes, Baudelaire's chiffonier supplied the metaphor for

“moving target” for “displaying” and compounding neoliberalism’s protracted range and various scales of effect, the Rag-and-Bone Man wanders the city, collects its refuse, experiences its phantasmagoria, and accumulates both the city’s ire and woe. Forming the accumulation regime, capital’s narrative “agents” assume diverse natural and cultural, material and immaterial, solid, liquid, real, and imaginary forms. They infiltrate public and private space, even reaching the interior of the protagonist and driving his conduct, with a common imperative: the accumulation of value through dispossession, displacement, and degradation.

Embodying Neoliberal Narratology: The Characterization of Science

In a variation of Brecht’s “Street Scene,” three narrator-demonstrators (occasionally expanded to four)—Science, Romance, and Monsieur Mystère-Misère [Mister Mystery-Misery] (referred to as Monsieur throughout)—together relate the parable of *Abattoir de l’est* through the Curioité cabinet. Each assumes a hermeneutic posture as sociospatial (and literary) critic, adopting different moods and attitudes toward the plot, its structure, and moral and social philosophy.¹⁷⁵ These personae draw from different political and cultural discourses, including neoliberalism as hegemonic or “common sense” discourse shaping the present. By providing a caricature of neoliberalism in the narrator Science¹⁷⁶—and in subsequent drafts, the “twin” character of Raisonneuse¹⁷⁷—and placing her discourse alongside the differential narratological

the artist who “scavenged the daily cast-offs of the great city” under the “transformed conditions of modern urban life and the incipient regime of the commodity” (p. 25). Catherine McNeur (2014) describes the ragpicking profession in industrial New York in the 1840s, which she attributes both to “rising poverty levels and the demand for raw materials from various local industries” (p. 189). She writes: “Salvaging materials out of garbage heaps kept many people afloat when wages for unskilled workers could barely cover the basic needs of a family. Ragpicking, though grueling and far from lucrative, was a safety net that allowed adults as well as children to scavenge as a temporary solution to unemployment or underemployment. It was a business in which any individual, practically regardless of age or sex, could make a living” (pp. 188–189).

¹⁷⁵ I drew the name and concept for Monsieur Mystère-Misère from interdisciplinary scholar Esther Romeyn’s (2008) contrasting of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Lower East Side guidebooks and the genre of immigrant “misery and mystery.” Romeyn (2008) argues that while guidebooks written for bourgeois tourists to the Lower East Side sought to render intelligible and legible an increasingly “opaque” and diverse city by mapping its physiognomies, the immigrant misery and mystery genre was interested in transforming an unknown city of strangers into a known community related by blood ties (p. 8; p. xxvi). I did not borrow the latter’s melodramatic conceit, but instead began to think about how a narrator-demonstrator might intervene in the physiognomic mapping of the city to stage its ambivalence—its mystery and its misery.

¹⁷⁶ This approach rehearses a Brechtian understanding of character as caricature, where caricature—as dramaturgical strategy—is employed to expose the “interior” effects of the economic imperative of the city on subjectivity. Lindh (1998) describes Brecht’s characters in *Jungle of Cities* (1921) in this regard as “the magnified perversion of their economic functions; the mutilations imposed on the personality are externalized and projected in the form of caricature” (p. 121).

¹⁷⁷ Raisonneuse is the feminine variant of *raisonneur*, a character who is assumed to voice the “author’s” viewpoint within the play; and, of course, it also implies the possession of “reason.”

discourses of *Monsieur and Romance*, I aimed to highlight neoliberalism's peculiar rhetorical strategies and ideological paradoxes, and to subject its "common sense" social interpretation to scrutiny. In the first draft of the script, I inserted a few moments of divergence among narrator-demonstrators with respect to plot, as in the opening scene of the narrative, when they disagree over the inciting incident of the story—the "cause" of the red river (see *Prompt Book 2*, pp. 79–81). Through ensemble work, the actors and I discovered other moments for differential interpretation and narration, and each actor developed distinctive orientations toward the images on the scrolling banner, different narrative techniques, gestures, and movement vocabularies, and methods of commenting on the narrative acts of others. Below, I describe the narrator-demonstrator character of Science as created through this ensemble work and performed by Mélanie Binette.

Science begins the play as crankie operator, primary narrator, and story editor, moving us through the time and space of the story visually and verbally. Personifying the "reality neat" realism and cynicism of neoliberalism, Science guides us through the events of the story, shaping our vantage point. In a reflective interview, I asked Mélanie to elaborate on the neoliberal worldview she sought to caricature: "[There is] science behind neoliberalism; a technocratic discourse about progress and the advancement of humankind, but just certain humans. My character is evil but convinced I'm doing good. As the authority figure in all of the scenes, [I demonstrate the] morphing faces of neoliberalism that sneak into all spheres of the social life" (M. Binette, personal communication, August 2, 2020).

In performance, Mélanie embodied Science's authority through the *Gestus* of the crankie. Meg Mumford (2009) describes the Brechtian concept of *Gestus*, which refers to "[s]ocialized gesticulation as opposed to psychological facial expression; contextualized and alterable comportment; and the rhetorical artistic gestures of the performer. For the theatre practitioner, showing a *Gestus* involved crafting gestures, comportments and groupings so that they vividly illuminated the way human behavior and social relations are both shaped by economic and historical forces and open to change" (p. 172). With her hand on the crank, Mélanie (as Science) wields social and material power within the troupe, taking control of how the parable is presented, and how long each image lasts in the central pane. She grips the crank with force, swings it into a revolution, rapidly changing the scene, and giving herself a chance to take control of the narrative commentary from others. Controlling pace, she expedites story

delivery, speeding us through scene after scene of violence, one catastrophe after the next, and chastising others who disrupt the flow of events to reflect on the losses, pursue subplots, or diverge from what she deems the appropriate logic and order of events. Throughout the performance, Science maintains distance from the dramatized scenes, assuming an exegetic role that upholds her material, visual, and verbal command over the performance. I interpreted her narratological approach through cinematic and peripatetic metaphors: Science takes us on a fast-forwarded tour of the city, alternating modes of transport between speeding car and aerial drone.

As an ensemble, we determined that in her rare appearances within dramatized scenes, Science would play authority figures, which in Mélanie's treatment became grotesque caricatures. We composed the *mise-en-scène* of these dramatized scenes through structured improvisation, the actors starting with an assigned role and some scripted dialogue. The actors fleshed out the ways that their respective narrator-demonstrators would animate those roles and inhabit these "dramatized" scenes, layering their narrator-demonstrator characters into (and over) their dramatic roles. They changed or departed from the scripted dialogue, invented material, and found new ways of using Curioité's theatrical cabinet to tell their story.¹⁷⁸ At Hudon Cotton (see Prompt Book 3, pp. 158–164), which references a historic local weavers' strike of 1880, Science plays the *patron* [boss]—using her cameo appearance to intervene when the narrative stylings of Monsieur (as weaver's son) and Romance (as weaver) appear to drift into excess, and, even worse from her standpoint, class analysis. At the *Journal de Montréal* (see Prompt Book 3, pp. 164–167), a semi-improvised scene,¹⁷⁹ she performs as cultural editor and arbiter, determining which stories will receive attention and which will not, who counts as a cultural authority and who does not.

As the ensemble developed the *mise-en-scène*, Mélanie voiced concern that in some scenes, Science's continuous commentary and frequent interjections might be distracting or detracting from the performances of the other narrator-demonstrators, potentially circumscribing their meaning for audiences or disenchanting them with exposition. She proposed revising these scenes so that Romance and Monsieur would perform on occasion

¹⁷⁸ The prompt book scripts included in the exegesis reflect these changes, inventions, and interactions.

¹⁷⁹ This scene changed in each performance context, as the actors invented different headlines, based on the news of the day or week, chosen for their pertinence (or complete irrelevance and irreverence) to the events of the story and the place of performance.

without her intervention. I returned to these scenes in the script, redistributing the narration of plot across narrator-demonstrators—reassigning or cutting dialogue so that the scenes “belonged” to Romance and Monsieur—and to their differential modes of demonstrating and storytelling, such as shadow and object theatre, among others.

I also curated beats either within or after these scenes where Science’s interventions would reveal her to be an unfit narrator, and neoliberalism a “skimpy” interpretive framework. Where were Science’s sense-making activities, her reductionist conceptions of human nature, the social, and the spatial, failing to account for the complexity, variety, and nonsensical nature of the phenomena performed by her colleagues? As I observed the ensemble performing—Romance and Monsieur demonstrating and Science providing exposition and explanation—I pinpointed moments of rupture between the demonstrated and the narrated, seeking to increase the frequency, duration, and intensity of these ruptures as the performance went on. As a dramaturg, I viewed this occasional sidelining of the primary narrator and her interpretive framework to produce a space for the spectator as translator of demonstrated events. Without Science as reliable guide, the spectator might choose another, or adopt her own relation to the tale, relying upon her own sensorium, affective responses, and experience to judge or assess its meaning.

D. Creative Correspondence: The Dramaturgy of Urban Ruination in *At the Vanishing Point* and *Abattoir de l'est*

Los Angeles-based playwright Naomi Iizuka's *At the Vanishing Point* (2004) addresses the industrial past through the de-industrializing present of Louisville's Butchertown, weaving in the allegorical imagery of photographer and optician Ralph Eugene Meatyard (1925–1972), a Lexington, Kentucky resident who used photographic abstraction—"multiple exposures, motion-blur"—and depicted masked children (his own) in abandoned, expressionist spaces (Fraenkel Gallery, n.d.).¹⁸⁰ Butchertown takes its name from the many German immigrants engaged in the butchering trade who settled in East Louisville in the nineteenth century. During Louisville's industrial period (1860–1964),¹⁸¹ most meatpacking industries in Louisville were situated within Butchertown. After the closure of most of its slaughterhouses, and amidst the repurposing and redevelopment of industrial architecture, developers began referring to Butchertown as "NuLu," or New Louisville. NuLu's newest residents complained of the odours emanating from Swift, the last remaining meatpacking plant in Butchertown, and petitioned the city to have it closed (Kubala, 2010).¹⁸²

Theatre scholar Hank Willenbrink (2014) describes Iizuka's process for creating *At the Vanishing Point*:

During her residency, Iizuka interviewed residents of the Butchertown neighborhood, entered into its abandoned meatpacking plants, walked along its streets, and created characters from composites of people that she had met there. In keeping with the play's connection to the neighborhood, *Vanishing Point* premiered in an abandoned Metropolitan Sewer District warehouse in Butchertown. Rife with post-industrial ghosts, myth, and lost history, Iizuka's work resuscitates a lost time and lost people by weaving together the physical and metaphysical landscape. (p. 209)

¹⁸⁰ I did not witness the 2004 production of the play. Naomi Iizuka recollected the process of creating *At the Vanishing Point* in a personal conversation with me in April 2014.

¹⁸¹ For a discussion of the industrialization of Louisville and midwestern cities more broadly, see Meyer (1989).

¹⁸² In spring 2020, the Swift plant in Butchertown remained open, despite the petition. However, as deadly outbreaks of COVID-19 impact employees in meatpacking plants across the United States and Canada, the Swift plant among them, Louisville's public health department is considering a temporary closure of the plant, and its immediate future remains uncertain (see *State reports 34 positive cases of COVID-19, 1 virus-related death at JBS Swift in Louisville*, 2020).

lizuka's approach to scripting post-industrial places in *At the Vanishing Point* bridges narrative, history, geography, and myth. In contrast to *Abattoir de l'est*, wherein I condense and (con)fuse industrial and postindustrial temporalities into a linear narrative, lizuka renders the transformations of urban space across several generations of residents in episodes. In monologues, characters from Butchertown's recent and distant past recall their experiences of life and work in the neighbourhood, including as cutters in the meatpacking plants. Performed inside a ruined warehouse filled with pigeons and weeds, these intergenerational monologues conjure different historical and geographical strata of Butchertown. Between the monologues, the masked child-subjects (a boy and girl) of Meatyard's expressionist photographs appear, enacting the Orpheus and Eurydice myth. Audiences are asked to piece together the complex of forces which produced the transformations of Butchertown, including ecological, socio-economic, and political forces, and are called to witness the direct impacts and echoes of these transformations as they resonate in lives and reverberate in livelihoods.

For Willenbrink, lizuka produces a "geography of disappearing"—linking history (time) and geography (space) in her scripted, post-industrial dramaturgy: "characters, as well as the neighbourhood itself, are perched on the edge of oblivion as urban social processes challenge the neighborhood and the characters are undone by time" (p. 209).¹⁸³ Inside the ruined warehouse, this geography of disappearing is amplified, as the living voices of and from the past are recast as ghostly apparitions, their death and dissolution foretold in the dilapidated architecture that surrounds them and their contemporary audience. Willenbrink (2014) contends that the dramaturgy of *At the Vanishing Point* contributes to the resonance the play had with local and visiting audiences alike, asserting that "lizuka's work has the rare quality of opening numerous avenues of critical investigation while remaining located in a specific way through myth, community, and geography" (p. 210).

My approach in *Abattoir de l'est* both resembles and departs from lizuka's dramaturgy in *At the Vanishing Point*. *At the Vanishing Point* is aleatory and melancholic in its elegy to a ruined neighbourhood. The characters' monologues invite us to empathize with their situations as

¹⁸³ Willenbrink (2014) takes up Edward Soja's concept of "geohistory" to produce his reading of *At the Vanishing Point*. Geohistory "emphasizes the unprioritized inseparability of geography and history, their necessary and often problematic interwovenness" (Soja, 2000, as cited in Willenbrink, p. 210). The social, historical, and spatial are produced in and through their relationality, Willenbrink observes, as lizuka "constructs characters and space through relationships (both familial and economic) and history (as told through narrative) embedded in geography" (p. 209).

individuals contending with social and economic forces larger than themselves. I locate in the play's dramaturgy of ruination a reflective nostalgia, which late scholar, artist, and playwright Svetlana Boym (2001) identified as a form of nostalgia which "lingers on [and in] ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time" (p. 41). Boym writes (2001): "[N]ostalgia characterize[s] one's relationship to the past, to the imagined community, to home, to one's own self-perception," noting that "[l]onging might be what we share as human beings, but that doesn't prevent us from telling very different stories of belonging and nonbelonging [. . .](p. 41). These stories, Boym asserts, represent "the ways in which we make sense of our seemingly ineffable homesickness and how we view our relationship to a collective home" (p. 41). Iizuka's characters recollect overlapping stories of longing and loss, returning to a remembered past that is incomplete, irreducible to a single narrative, and never stable as an idealized scene.

In *Abattoir de l'est*, I composed a variation on the geography of disappearing, seeking to attend to ruination through a different dramaturgical structure. Using spatio-temporal confusion and compression, caricature, and multiple performance modes (including the expressionist and the Gothic), I sought to compose a dramaturgy of ongoing "undoing"—a durational dramaturgy of urban ruination—in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. I imagined this dramaturgical approach to ruination as a counterpoint and intervention into a well-rehearsed image of the ruin I was encountering in urban revitalization discourses: the postindustrial ruin, the ruined neighbourhood "revived" and reinhabited by capital as ambiance and atmosphere for aspirational living.¹⁸⁴ To my mind, that story, in its elegies to "abandoned" industrial architecture

¹⁸⁴ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1995) describes the heritage industry as a "mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past" (p. 369). The placement of an artefact or building within a heritage industry economy excises it from its context of signification in the "real," and severs it from the depth of experience one has with it in life. Such discourse proclaims the obsolescence of that which it protects (in regard to its former function) and places it in what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett calls the "second life" of heritage. A lifestyle feature published in a local paper provides a typical example of how this discourse imagines the "second life" of heritage, shaping the industrial past as ambiance to be consumed (Collette, 2012). The article celebrates the architecture from Maisonneuve's early twentieth-century City Beautiful era as well as the rowhouses, duplexes, and triplexes of Hochelaga's industrial past. In claiming the architectural heritage of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve as a commodity, the discourse separates the building from its current users, usages, and, paradoxically, from a historical past it claims to protect. Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's working-class inhabitants, conceived as part of this departed past, are redrawn as signifiers of an old industrial era, registered as ambiances and flavours, but not as people. As the author frames it, working-class is not a real material position of difference, rather it is a posture, an affect, and an ornament: Hochelaga-Maisonneuve "hasn't lost its working-class candour, which is part of the charm," nor is it short on cheap "comfort classic" foods offered in quintessentially Quebecois greasy spoon *patateries* [fry shops].

and its invitations to capital to restore and colonize the ruins of empire, was complicit in the ongoing degradation of the neighbourhood it was claiming to bring back to life. In *Abattoir de l'est*, I chose dramaturgical strategies for narrativizing and materializing ruination as persistent, ongoing process, shifting focus from the “undone”—the ruin as fait accompli—to the act of undoing.

Anthropologist Ann Stoler (2008) provides me with the critical language to describe and contextualize these formal tendencies and the dramaturgical structures of urban ruination within *Abattoir de l'est*.¹⁸⁵ In her framing of ruination as an active process, and in her curiosity toward imperial debris and entailments, I find echoes of my concerns about the ongoingness and refiguration of capitalist violence in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Contrasting her approach to the ruin with the “wistful gaze of imperial nostalgia” toward abandoned “monumental structures,” Stoler contends that postcolonial scholarship must orient toward imperial formations and their “vital refiguration” in the present, attending to imperial debris: “to what people are ‘left with’: to what remains, to the aftershocks of empire, to the material and social afterlife of structures, sensibilities, and things” (p. 194). The point of this scholarly curiosity toward ruins, Stoler argues, is not to “fashion a genealogy of catastrophe or redemption” but rather to insist on ruins as “unfinished histories . . . open to differential futures” (p. 195). Stoler defines imperial formations as “processes of becoming” and “relations of force, harboring political forms that endure beyond the formal exclusions that legislate against equal opportunity, commensurate dignities, and equal rights” (p. 193). Imperial formations endure across multiple temporal scales, producing “weak and tenacious trace[s],” dispersed and “less dramatic” material and social effects (p. 196; p. 193).

In Stoler’s account of the processual structuring, rescaling, renaming and reanimation of imperial formations and entailments over time, I encounter a correspondent for my dramaturgical choice to structure and scale ruination as an epic historicization across an urban panorama in *Abattoir de l'est*. In the fused industrial/postindustrial temporality of mythic Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, neoliberal sensibilities, austerity policy, and deregulation were to both

¹⁸⁵ Stoler is addressing the problem of the “post” in postcolonial studies, which would suggest a radical break from a colonial past and mode of governance. Canada and Quebec remain colonial powers absent British or French imperial rule. In my project, I attend to local colonial histories of the industrial and the post-industrial, thinking alongside Stoler about “tenacious traces”—continuities between the past and present—and with historians of deindustrialization High et al. (2017) who interpret the post-industrial as an extension of—rather than end to—processes of deindustrialization (Stoler, 2008, p. 196; High et al., 2017, p.17).

coincide and appear “of a kind” with past acts of dispossession and degradation, opening up to an audience’s curious negotiation of continuity and change, rather than positing a clean break from the past, or as Bachand claimed, a “cultural revolution.”

Stoler’s account of imperial debris is also conversant with Iizuka’s dramaturgical geography of disappearing in *At the Vanishing Point*. The reflective nostalgia through which the play casts urban ruination and chronicles loss counters both “imperial nostalgia” and vague critical catch-alls like “colonial legacy” or “colonial vestige” which, Stoler contends, “deflect analysis more than they clear the way” (p. 196). The premier production of *At the Vanishing Point* repurposed imperial remains, appropriating a forgotten site as a memory place, the decaying interior an echo and ambience for the play’s exploration of intergenerational economic and psychological trauma. I interpret the episodic, polyphonic structure and convoluted temporality as permitting Iizuka to correlate these internal and external effects, and to trace the shifting morphology of imperial formations across temporal scales within the span of about two hours of performance time. This structuring also enlists the spectator in the search for correspondences, asking them to assemble a timeline and to draw the relations between episodes through shared details and (literal) family resemblances. In this dramaturgy of family resemblances, Iizuka registers loss and scarring as familial (though not hereditary), intergenerational, and psychological. Notably, while Iizuka turns to the familiar and the intimate to examine trauma as an enduring and interior trace of urban ruination, in *Abattoir de l’est*, I chose to remain in the parable. In the parable’s amplitudes, opacities, and resistant surfaces, I saw storytelling strategies for emphasizing the sociospatial effects of imperial formations while refusing them full explanatory power, and thus for staging ruination as historical process rather than fate.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ The epic characters of the playworld—flattened out ciphers with neither individuality nor interiority—play a part in this Brechtian “externalization” strategy: as allegorical types, they resist efforts to “read in” for psychological motivation. The epic actor performs character to produce a rack-focus effect so as to resist psychologization, seeking to bring the background (social context) into the foreground (dramatic agon): “As the background came to the front of the stage so people’s activity was subject to criticism” (Brecht, 1957/1964c, p. 72). For a corollary discussion of the relation between shadows, silhouettes, and the refusal of “depth” in shadow theatre, see Kentridge (2008). Kentridge usefully articulates how the shadow surface demonstrates a Brechtian attitude toward character in its refusal of depth. It is also significant to note that I had chosen to stage these allegorical characters in and through shadow play, without giving much thought to the obvious relationship between shadows and allegory, silhouettes and “types.” To me, what appealed about the silhouetted figure was its clarity of depiction—it is recognizable, and quickly—as well as its obscurity—it is only legible in and through its outlines.

E. A Collective Dramaturgy of Enchantment: A Material Collection of Place and a Theatre of Curiosities



Figure 64. Digital collage of objects in *La Tuerie* [The Killing], created by the author. Sketches by Alain Bonder.

In this section of the chapter, I attend to the fourth movement of performance creation—the collective dramaturgical process through which my collaborators and I composed the mise-en-scène of the parable. I focus on the materialization of *La Tuerie* [The Killing] to excavate a methodology of collective dramaturgy oriented by enchantment and curiosity toward the materiality of place.

Curiosité's Collective Dramaturgy of Enchantment: Ideals, Models, Orientations

My methods and ideals of collective dramaturgy draw upon a diverse set of approaches known in English-language contexts as collective creation (Shank, 1972; Filewod, 1987; Barton, 2008; Syssoyeva & Proudfoot, 2013a, 2013b) and devised performance (Oddey, 1994; Heddon & Milling, 2005), and in French-language contexts as création collective (Hébert, 1977; Beauchamp & Larrue, 1990).¹⁸⁷ These terms are often used interchangeably to describe similar

¹⁸⁷ Many companies aligned with alternative politics and practices of collective theatre-making emerged globally in the 1960s and 1970s, including Quebec's Théâtre expérimental de Montréal, Théâtre expérimental des femmes, Grand cirque ordinaire, Théâtre Euh!, and théâtre Parminou. Contemporary collective creation processes in Quebec often draw upon these companies' practices, as well as on *Les cycles Repère*, an acronym for Montreal's Théâtre Repère [Landmark Theatre] devising process. Created in the 1980s, the acronym distinguishes four "cycles" of creative development: **R**essources [Resources], the gathering together of all of the material that might be used in composition, including the "human resources" of ensemble); **P**artitions [Scoring], the initial arrangement of resources), **l'É**valuation [Evaluation], the selective and collective editing process, and **R**epresentation [Performance], the performance of the devised work before a public. For more on each cycle, see Beauchamp and Larrue's (1990) interview with the company's artistic director Jacques Lessard. Both Mélanie Binette and Nicolas Germain-Marchand have used the cycles in previous productions, and brought this experience into the rehearsal room with *Curiosité*. Before collaborating with Mélanie and Nicolas, I was ignorant of the Repère cycles, though I

collaborative processes of composition, even as they trace their genealogy to geohistorically diverse traditions and practices.¹⁸⁸ Most often, use of these terms to designate a production process signals a departure from the institutional model of literary theatre, positing a more egalitarian distribution of labour wherein collaborators share authority, “inventing, adapting, and creating” as an ensemble (Oddey, 1994, p. 1).¹⁸⁹ The resultant performance is recognized as an assemblage of the collective’s “multivision,” rather than a realization of the director’s unified concept (Oddey, p. 1). The “leveling” of hierarchies often extends to the treatment of the script (if any), and to conventional aesthetic hierarchies and signifying practices within performance, such that “[a]n object [can] have the same importance as a human body. The spoken word [can] be on equal footing with gesture. One idea [can] hold the same importance as another on the same stage at the same time” (Bogart & Landau, 2006, p. 4).¹⁹⁰

Several of these familiar ideals of collective creativity, shared and differential authority, and non-hierarchical aesthetics governed the collaborative dramaturgical process with *Abattoir de l’est*, even as the ensemble began with a script.¹⁹¹ The script (the parable) served as a

found them to converge with collective devising practices in the US and UK with which I was familiar, and to correspond with the movements of performance creation with *Abattoir de l’est*.

¹⁸⁸ As Syssoyeva (2013) observes, the tendency among scholars has often been to conflate “collective creation with sixties counterculture and New Left politics” (p. 2).

¹⁸⁹ UK-based devised theatre practitioner and scholar Allison Oddey (1994) defines devising as “an eclectic process” that:

enables a group of performers to be physically and practically creative in the sharing and shaping of an original product that directly emanates from assembling, editing, and re-shaping individuals’ contradictory experiences of the world. There is a freedom of possibilities for all those involved to discover; an emphasis on a way of working that supports intuition, spontaneity, and an accumulation of ideas. The process of devising is about the fragmentary experience of understanding ourselves, our culture and the world we inhabit. The process reflects a multivision made up of each group member’s individual perception of that world as received in a series of images, then interpreted and defined as a product. Participants make sense of themselves within their own cultural and social context, investigating, integrating, and transforming their personal experiences, dreams, research, improvisation, and experimentation. Devising is about thinking, conceiving, and forming ideas, being imaginative and spontaneous, as well as planning. It is about inventing, adapting, and creating what you do as a group. (p. 1)

¹⁹⁰ Saratoga International Theater Institute (SITI) Company cofounders Anne Bogart and Tadashi Suzuki’s ensemble-driven composition methodology loosely informed my approach with *Abattoir de l’est*. Bogart articulates these methods of composition with Tina Landau in *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition* (2006), and this text has become a touchstone for many working with collective creation. Bogart and Landau trace their contemporary practice to methods developed by Judson Church dancers and choreographers Mary Overlie and Aileen Passloff. Critics have pointed to incompatibilities between Bogart’s and Overlie’s methodologies, despite Bogart’s assertion of the genealogy of her own Viewpoints (see Perucci, 2017).

¹⁹¹ I do not claim my process to be non-hierarchical. As the We See You W.A.T. (White American Theatre) and #MeToo movements have recently amplified, and as my own experiences beyond *Curiosité* attest, claims of equity and of “non-hierarchical” processes may ring false for ensemble members from marginalized and racialized communities. Positing the “absence” of classed, gendered and racialized power dynamics in the rehearsal room allows them to structure the creative process as an implicit dramaturgy that prioritizes and amplifies the cultural

blueprint to orient collaborators, becoming an open and dynamic object among others, its contents shifting and expanding in translation, collecting and reassembling in new configurations throughout the process.¹⁹² As an ensemble, each of us brought into the rehearsal room our own interpretations of the parable, as well as a wide range of ideas, place-based and theatrical knowledges, different linguistic competencies, aesthetics, materials, and methods for translating the parable into theatrical form. I assumed an editorial role in this dramaturgical process, selecting what we kept and what was culled, while basing many of these decisions on feedback from my collaborators.¹⁹³

The Dramaturgy of Enchantment: A Disposition and Hermeneutics

In rehearsals, I made room for the dramaturgy of enchantment to reanimate the dramaturgy of urban ruination and its narrative exposé of ongoing capitalist violence, attending to the details, surfaces, and textures composed by my collaborators, and opening up to a wider spectrum of interpretive orientations and affective responses to the parable. The dramaturgy of enchantment describes a dramaturgical disposition and hermeneutics developed within the rehearsal processes for *Abattoir de l'est* that holds in productive tension critique and curiosity. The dramaturgy of enchantment reorients and reanimates the authoritative gesture of critique, inviting other (potentially foreclosed) gazes and affects to irritate, expand, and soften its sharper-edged hermeneutics. As a hermeneutics of performance, the dramaturgy of enchantment describes an interpretive orientation taken up by the dramaturg in the rehearsal room that may extend to the audience in performance. A personal dramaturgical orientation that reflects my leftist feminist standpoint, my ongoing curiosity toward place, and my investment in open theatrical collaboration, the dramaturgy of enchantment parallels Jane

authority of some while claiming to speak for all. I use collaborative and collective not “non-hierarchical” to describe my dramaturgy both because this process centred my perspective, and because rehearsals take place in social and material contexts rather than in a vacuum.

¹⁹² I draw the term blueprint from New York City-based playwright Chuck Mee, who envisions in his scripts as points of departure for the ensemble in his collaborations with Ann Bogart and the SITI Company.

¹⁹³ Within this open collaboration, it is important to note my particular investments as distinct from the other collaborators, which is not to say there were no convergences. As the script’s originator, the dramaturg who gathered the ensemble, and the artist-researcher situating this project within an academic degree, I held different objectives and contexts of significance for *Abattoir de l'est* than others in this collective process.

Bennett's (2001) elaboration of enchantment as curious disposition toward the (material) world and intervention in both leftist critique and capitalist discourse.¹⁹⁴

Jane Bennett (2001) conceives of enchantment as “a state of openness to the disturbing-captivating elements in everyday experience,” “a window onto the virtual secreted within the actual,” and as “a mood with ethical potential” that is “operative in a world without telos” (p. 131). Bennett's enchanted world intervenes in the disenchanting nature of modernity, especially as it underwrites Marxist criticism, its formations, and foreclosures—its “picture of power as a hypercompetent and impermeable fortress,” its teleological account of history, and its repudiation of the theatrical capers of the commodity (p. 116; p. 126).¹⁹⁵ While Bennett does not wish to do without the Marxist critique of the commodity, she suggests that a disposition of enchantment toward the commodity locates “openings, ambiguities, and lines of flight within systems of power” in crucial ways (p. 116). Enchantment emerges as a necessary rejoinder to both progressive (melancholic) and neoliberal/conservative (cynical) claims to know once and for all. An enchanted world remains inherently uncertain, one where:

¹⁹⁴ The dramaturgy of enchantment likewise echoes literary and cultural studies scholar Rita Felski's (2015) critical “hermeneutics of restoration,” and resonates with the late performance studies scholar José Muñoz's (2009) “affective reanimation” of queer theory toward hope. Felski's critique of critique is valuable to me for two reasons: 1) it helps me to elaborate my understanding of the narrator-demonstrators as “critics” of the sociospatial, operating in and through different critical orientations and “moods,” which shape how the world (or the world of the parable, in this case) appears to an audience, and 2) for how it might be applied within a dramaturgical process to interpret the script and to imagine and model curious and critical spectatorship beyond the limits of Brecht's (and Marxism's) detached social observer. In *The Limits of Critique*, Felski (2015) argues for a more capacious critical repertoire for literary scholarship than that afforded by Marxism and Freudianism, and what she describes (after philosopher Paul Ricoeur) as the “hermeneutics of suspicion.” As a critical “style, method, and orientation,” a hermeneutics of suspicion is “oriented toward the bad rather than the good,” appearing as “a spirit of ferocious and blistering disenchantment—a desire to puncture illusions, topple idols, and destroy divinities” (p. 37). Felski (2015) describes suspicion through early twentieth-century British psychologist Alexander Shand, who wrote of suspicion as a “secondary emotion composed out of basic affects such as fear, anger, curiosity, and repugnance” (p. 37). In this accounting, a hermeneutics of suspicion, characterized by “hyperalertness and sharpened attentiveness” operates as a corollary of curiosity, and as a critical modality through which a text's repressed meaning is expertly decoded (p. 37). Felski's discussion of Ricoeur's hermeneutics of restoration, as I read it, presents a different valence and critical modality of curiosity—curiosity as wonder or enchantment. A hermeneutics of restoration approaches the text with a “good-faith effort” (p. 57) and interprets it through the “yielding gaze of pleasure, absorption, or entrancement” (p. 37). As such, it opens the critic (or here, the dramaturg) to a different range of meanings and a positive emotional spectrum of affective responses—moving away from fear, wariness, anger, certainty, or gloom to “moments of wonder, reverence, exaltation, hope, epiphany, joy” (p. 32). While my investments in the hermeneutics of suspicion endure, my debts to Marxist theory and to Jameson's political unconscious shaping part of my own critical “common sense” in my approach to neoliberal discourse and the urban archive in *Abattoir de l'est*, in rehearsals, the hermeneutics of restoration oriented my dramaturgical acts.

¹⁹⁵ Bennett (2001) bases her critiques on Marx's writings on the commodity fetish, and on Horkheimer and Adorno's essay “The Culture Industry” (1944). Curiously, she does not engage with Benjamin's materialism, or with his more generous writings on the commodity and its affects.

wondrous events compete with acts of cruelty and violence, where magical gestures occasionally displace instrumental reason, where molecular activity is both surprising and responsive to scientific investigation, where governments and economies are neither as competent as many hope nor as overwhelming as some fear, and where the social fabric is continually reassembling rather than progressively fragmenting. There, wonder and fascination cohabit with realism and fear; there, enchantment is a real possibility [. . .] Enchantment consists of a mixed bodily state of joy and disturbance, a transitory sensuous condition dense and intense enough to stop you in your tracks and toss you onto new terrain and to move you from the actual world to its virtual possibilities. (p. 111)

Enchantment is as such articulated to the dramaturgical methodology taken up in *Abattoir de l'est* at several turns: in my critical appraisal of the neoliberal common sense and its “as is” realism, in my dramaturgical structuring of ruination as an unfinished history rather than *fait accompli*, and, as I describe below, in the ensemble’s object theatre demonstrations with the material culture of the Promenade Ontario, and in my openness to being moved in the process of collective dramaturgy.

***Théâtre d’objets* [Object Theatre] as Methodology of Curiosity-Driven, Place-Based Performance Research**

As the ensemble gathered in March 2013 to compose *La Tuerie* [The Killing], we turned our collective curiosity toward the material culture of the Promenade Ontario as a resource for creation, experimenting with objects and object theatre methodologies. Several “accidental” object theatres I’d encountered in my performance research oriented this curiosity toward the object: from the noisy *tintamarre* of the neighbourhood *casseroles*, where the tools of the kitchen battery became instruments of dissent (see this chapter, pp. 184–185), to Finance Minister Raymond Bachand’s “as is” demonstration of austere shoes on budget day (see this chapter, p. 181), to the evolving vitrines of the Promenade Ontario’s pawn shops, thrift stores, and boutiques.

Puppet scholar Margaret Williams (2015) describes *théâtre d’objets* [object theatre] as a performance genre “in which everyday objects are substituted for humanoid figures. In such performances there is no attempt at visual illusion—the objects are moved about by a visible manipulator and imaginatively transformed into notional characters suggested by their shape

and movement, although they can also be used in counterpoint to their inherent form and function [. . .] either in accord with or against their ‘iconicity’” (pp. 19–20).¹⁹⁶ The materials that might be animated by performers range from “bric-à-brac, children’s toys, and ‘found objects’ from the site of performance,” chosen by the performers for “their uses, shapes, mechanical properties, and emotional and cultural evocations” (Williams, 2015, footnote 2).

In a conversation with me in 2014, Nicolas Germain-Marchand described the object theatre methodology he brought into the rehearsal room of *Abattoir de l’est*. Tracing his techniques for working with found and everyday objects to his collaborations with Montreal-based company Théâtre de la pire espèce (Theatre of the Worst Kind), Nicholas demonstrated his “trial and error” process for me with a McIntosh apple.¹⁹⁷

The primary step in his method of performing objects is creative “forgetting”—in other words, laying aside the question of “what it is,” as well as the familiar or prescribed uses of the object, so as to recover new possibilities in its material affordances. What does the object feel like, look like? What movement qualities and capacities does it possess? In the playful world of object theatre, where inappropriate uses of the object are the rule rather than the exception, any object—no matter how overdetermined or everyday—assumes a vitality of its own.

Later in the process, Nicolas returns to the socially recognized and recognizable capacities of the object, exploring its iconicity, referentiality, and functionality—its resemblances to other objects, its cultural associations and contexts, the ends to which it is put, and the linguistic metaphors it might be used to express. The “final” performance combines the multiple roles for the object recovered in rehearsal, playing between recovered affordances,

¹⁹⁶ While performing objects have long been used in theatre and performance of all types, Williams (2015) dates object theatre as a classified genre to the 1980s in Europe, and cites Christian Carrignon and Katy Develle of Le Théâtre de Cuisine and Tania Castaing and Charlot Lemoine’s company Vélo Théâtre as its originating artists (see Williams, 2015, footnote 2). Puppeteer Marcel Violette (2009) mentions modernist antecedents in Géza Blatner’s Arc-en-Ciel [Rainbow] Puppet Theatre in Paris (1930) and Kurt Schmidt’s Bauhaus creations (1919–1933), whose practices of object performance, among others, he groups under “assemblage.”

¹⁹⁷ The company’s name plays on the double meaning and materiality of *espèce* as species and coin. The company was co-founded by Olivier Ducas and Francis Monty in 1999. Their best-known performance is their touring “tabletop” adaptation of Alfred Jarry’s *Ubu Roi* [*King Ubu*] titled *Ubu sur la table* [*Ubu on the Table*]. Jarry’s modernist play, first performed at the Théâtre de l’Oeuvre in Paris in 1896, sparked riots on opening night, due in part to its heavy dose of political satire staged in and through “non-theatrical” vulgar language (the first word of the play is *merdre*, or “shite”), farce, and slapstick violence. Théâtre de la pire espèce takes the play further into the carnivalesque, delighting in the confusions of human and object, and in the digestive processes of lower bodily stratum. In their restaging of the play, everyday objects, utensils, comestibles, and the performers’ hands share the stage—or tabletop—as co-stars. A short trailer of the performance *Ubu sur la table* is available at: <https://youtu.be/4Y392UhuYRg>.

conventional or accepted usages, and metaphoric valences.¹⁹⁸ At the end of the demonstration that day, he consumed the apple. I see curiosity as guiding this object theatre methodology in each of these steps: in the defamiliarized (or curious) epistemic stance taken toward the object; in the performer's subsequent pursuit of correspondences; and in the final assemblage of the object's capacities in performance.

An Allegorical Map of Place: Assembling Everyday Objects in Curiosité

Throughout the spring of 2013, I concentrated my collection of objects along the Promenade Ontario, guided by the object theatre methodology I was observing in rehearsals with Nicolas, by archaeological object methodologies (Pearson & Shanks, 2001), and by Benjamin's ragpicker who "devote[s] himself . . . to the fate of those unattended things . . . that no longer circulate as well-behaved commodities should" (Wohlfarth, 1986, pp. 146–7). The Promenade is a place where the everyday traffic of commodities, second-hand merchandise, and foodstuff is commonplace—a routine spatial practice. Object theatre's fascination with these categories of object suggested its suitability as a methodology for the material culture of the Promenade. To select objects for inclusion in the cabinet, I approached each as an assemblage, drawing upon Nicolas' object theatre methodology (described above) and upon Pearson and Shanks's (2001) archaeological assemblage, and its methods of classifying, narrating, and exhibiting artefacts. I took each object for its social relationships, for what I understood it to bring together "through its design, exchange and consumption" as well as for what it might bring together in performance (p. 53). From the Promenade Ontario, I collected "outmoded" or rarely used artefacts, domestic objects which "belong" inside the home, but which are also embroiled with life outside the home in a variety of ways. I chose kitchen utensils, food, and children's toys for their figurative associations with place as emblems, their synecdochic and metonymic associations with place, as well as for their material affordances and signifying capacities.

¹⁹⁸ Nicolas' process of object exploration collides for me with cultural theorist Bill Brown's (2001) theory of the thing. An object becomes a "thing," per Brown, when it possesses a life of its own, circulating in and out of commodity-status, at times producing itself in uncanny relations to both subjects and objects. More or other than its use-value, the thing evades easy definition, and troubles the relation between subject-object by nature of its resistant and unstable materiality.

The objects I was collecting were to serve triple duty as local artefacts of exhibitionary value, scenographic emblems or icons of local places, and performers in the narrated world of the parable. The cabinet theatre display was to function as an allegorical map of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, with a moving centre—the scrolling banner of the crankie. The six upper and lower compartments of Curiosité’s theatrical cabinet were to exhibit the “stuff” of place in a quasi-surrealist ethnographic display of local artefacts, and to represent “actual” places (domestic, public, interior, outdoor, natural, and industrial) in the itinerary of *Abattoir de l’est*.

On a thrift store shelf within the Promenade Ontario, beside an electric popcorn popper and perched atop a dusty microwave cookbook, a vernacular curiosity. As I contemplated this object as an assemblage, the places and processes in which it was enmeshed came into view, snapshots in the career of a stainless-steel meat grinder:

- a shuttered factory in Chicago where it was once mass-produced.
- a kitchen countertop, a domestic interior where it was a part of the everyday grind.
- a shelf in the Promenade’s *Village des valeurs* [Value Village], where its like-new sheen, the endearing name embossed on its cylinder (Porker), and apparent dysfunction have failed to attract all but passing attraction.
- a box in Curiosité’s cabinet theatre, where it stands in for the *Abattoir de l’est*, the daily tools and tasks of the kitchen temporarily transformed into an industrial slaughterhouse, performing alongside the discarded material culture of the Promenade Ontario.

On Iteration, Selection, and Feedback in a Collective Dramaturgy of Enchantment

The object theatre demonstration I describe below manifests the “iterative cyclic web” of collective dramaturgy within *Abattoir de l’est*, a model devised by practice-led researchers Hazel Smith and R.T. Dean (2009b) to schematize the basic patterning of the feedback loop in practice-led research (p. 23).¹⁹⁹ While I use Smith and Dean’s “iterative cyclic web” to capture the rhizomatic, reciprocal, and dialogical character of creative flow within *Abattoir de l’est*, I situate my own feedback cycle within production dramaturgy, taking my cues from existing

¹⁹⁹ Others may make sense of this cycle through the enquiry cycle of action research, which practice-led researchers take up to describe (if not guide) the “recursive and iterative” aspects of a devised performance creation process (see Haseman, 2010, p. 152).

practices for devising, revising, and giving feedback in theatre, performance, and dance (Blažević, 2014; Lerman & Borstel, 2003).²⁰⁰

I understood my actions in this collective dramaturgy of enchantment to be that of an enchanted production dramaturg—providing context, observing, interpreting, reflecting, and editing from a standpoint of openness. As a creator of situations and context provider, I arrived at rehearsals with a range of collected objects and archival materials for the scene to be blocked that day, as well as a question, concept or an idea that I wanted to explore with others in rehearsal. I often abandoned the initial concept as collaborators began generating material, pursuing images and ideas as they emerged, and choosing to keep felicitous accidents and errors. As we worked through each scene of the play, I provided feedback (reflective, critical, and contextual commentary) on the ensemble's demonstrations to orient each new assay. I mostly left the how-tos to my collaborators, seeking to engage them holistically in the process, and trusting their capacities to interpret and translate this feedback into action or image.

Nicolas found that this feedback style and the open-ended, evolving *mise-en-scène* process it entailed allowed him to flex his critical and reflective capacities as an actor, articulating his experience of embodied dramaturgy thusly:

We are trying to put the theory in practice. So we're trying a lot of things. You know, trial and error. But at the same time, sometimes I try something and you see a meaning, the bigger picture. And that's what I really, really enjoyed in this particular work, you know. The dialogue between having a concept before doing it, and then doing some things and [reflecting on them] afterwards. You know, saying okay, when we do this, well, okay, this is silly, we won't keep it. But this, there's like an image that's interesting, and then you were able to say why it was interesting. Whereas usually with actors, it's more like instinct. You know, it's like—*it feels right so I'm doing it*. (N. Germain-Marchand, personal interview, February 26, 2015)

²⁰⁰ My methods of giving feedback converge with dance choreographer Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process. Lerman and artist John Borstel (2003) schematize this four-step process in *Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process: A Method for Getting Useful Feedback on Anything You Make, from Dance to Dessert*, which I find to be handy approach for those interested in giving (not only getting) useful feedback within a performance creation process, particularly for those who seek to engage the actor more holistically as a collaborator.

Nicolas' account of praxis ("putting theory into practice") also highlights the reciprocal feedback between his "trial and error" demonstrations and my acts of interpretation, with each holding the capacity to reorient and affect the other.²⁰¹

Process Story: Object Theatre Abattoir

Rehearsal, March 20–26, 2013.

We are working toward the performance of *Abattoir de l'est* at the PHI Centre. I arrive at the Curiocté studio in the Old Port for a rehearsal with Julie Tamiko Manning, Rae Maitland, and Nicolas Germain-Marchand. Julie is filling in for Mélanie Binette (Science) in these early workshops, as Mélanie is out of town. The purpose of this rehearsal is to stage *La Tuerie* through the combination of narrated story, dialogue, and object theatre. The three actors arrive at rehearsal and encounter the collected materials for the first time. As an ensemble, we work with these materials, using the script and techniques of object manipulation to guide, find, and build the *mise-en-scène*.

Red velvet curtains, whose texture and colour recall both flayed flesh and theatrical exhibition.

A stainless-steel meat grinder with wooden handle marked "Porker," whose motion mimics (in miniature) that of the cranky.

A large metal hook or latch, suspended from a length of thick rope. Probably lost by a cargo truck.

A collection of identical cut paper pigs, bodies identified by future cuts of pork—head, shoulder, back, middle cut, belly, ham. The pig resembles the poster of a pig that hangs in my local butcher shop on rue Ontario, and the commodity fetishes in the *Album universel*.

A leather gardening glove, lost and found.

²⁰¹ My interviews with the actors, all of whom have different professional backgrounds, knowledges, and linguistic competencies, suggest that this process was a challenging one—at times overwhelming—because of the short time frame for rehearsals, and the multiple, simultaneous, and differential demands made on the actors: from generating material, listening to and translating my feedback, learning lines, demonstrating and revising scenes, to operating lights and other "behind the scenes" production elements. Complicating these demands was the number of variables in play at any one time, from changes in scripted dialogue, to additions of materials and concepts, to shifts in *mise-en-scène* driven by changes to concept and performance context. As Rae Maitland observed, the ongoingness of feedback and revision, the mutability of nearly every aspect of dramaturgy, the challenges she encountered in learning lines in a secondary language, combined with the time constraints under which we were working, made the process of fixing and memorizing the "kept" for each performance feel "like cramming for an exam" (March 15, 2015). Aside from more obvious (and no less important) solutions, such as dedicating more time to rehearsing scenes in "fixed" form, and perhaps adding another collaborator, I wonder if there might be other ways to alleviate demands that seem to overwhelm rather than productively engage collaborators. I suspect recasting performances more explicitly as "assays" rather than endpoints would be a start, so that terms like mastery, control, and virtuosity—the qualities attributed to the well-trained and disciplined actor—might hold less value in an actor's self-evaluation of their work.

Nicolas begins with the meat grinder. He reaches for the handle first. Spins it for one complete revolution. Spins it again, faster this time.

He pauses.

He spins it again. Another revolution. His mouth begins to hum in rhythm to the revolving handle, as if he is revving an engine. He repeats the movement and the sound together several times. The third time, the sound of the engine transforms into that of a ravenous appetite, chewing and swallowing.

He pauses.

He reaches for a paper pig. He holds it over the mouth of the meat grinder. He squeals like a pig, not a cute squeal, but one of utter terror. He draws the paper pig away from the grinder, up and away, and the squealing stops. He repeats this—lowers the pig, squeals like the pig, ascends with the pig.

He pauses.

I observe and interpret. The violence of slaughter as child's play, as cartoon violence, as farce, rather than graphic spectacle.

I compare. This is not the tragic abattoir of the social realist exposé, with its grist and grind as grounding techniques.

He grips the handle of the meat grinder. He holds the paper pig in his other hand, dangling it over the mouth with thumb and index finger. The pig squeals. He drops the pig. The other hand turns the handle to the sonic accompaniment of a revving engine-become-digestive tract.

This I love—it's funny. But why? What is he imitating, compressing for comic effect?

He's abridged the spatio-temporal process of slaughter, bypassing the kill floor and bringing the pig directly to the consumer's stomach. He has made the line more efficient than Ford would ever have imagined. I want to see it repeated. Again and again and again.

Over the course of the rehearsal, he further develops this basic pattern, playing with the possible interactions between the hands, the voice, the face, the grinder, and the paper pigs until he has become a cyborgian butchering machine, speaking in the squeals of pigs, the grumbles of the stomach, and the language of compressors, conveyor belts, mechanical pulleys, and processors.

At times, I step in during this "building" process to add or subtract an object from his repertoire. Once in a while, I offer up a "reading" of the effects his performance has produced for me, and, based on my interpretation, he revises his performance to accentuate that interpretation or to alter it. Sometimes my laughter or that of Rae and Julie communicates what

he ought to “keep” of his performance going forward. Given the dark nature of the story, his performances provide breathing room, levity, lightness.

As Nicolas becomes more fluent with the gestures and idiom of the abattoir, Rae in the role of narrator-demonstrator Romance and Julie as narrator-demonstrator Science begin the process of placing their commentary in and around his performance of the Pig-Consumer-Killing Machine, finding moments where they might interrupt, guide, play with, intervene in—or simply watch—the spectacle.

As we continue, Nicolas takes up the leather garden glove as a “mask” for his left hand—the hand which delivers each pig into the grinder. He manifests the slaughtering queue—the assembly line, a timeline, a telos, a figure of space-time I recognize. Three paper pigs, one after the next, slide right-to-left across the top of the cabinet, hurdling toward their end in Monsieur’s Machine. Suddenly—

A duel breaks out between the right hand which operates the conveyor belt and the left which drops the pigs into the grinder.

A glitch or malfunction in the Machine—a chance at life for the sow.

A swerve.

The sow floats, flutters, riding a draft from the cracked window, settles.

***La Tuerie* as the Enchantment of the Critical Gesture**

As an audience to Nicolas’ curious epistemic demonstrations of the object in *La Tuerie*, I felt Bennett’s “disturbing-captivating” affective response of enchantment. My untoward responses of delight, surprise, wonder, hope—even epiphany—as observer to object theatre slaughter convened with my recognition of the demonstration’s sly repetition of the critical gestures both embedded in the parable and embodied by the narrator-demonstrators. Monsieur’s demonstration appeared as a bowdlerized pantomime of Science’s neoliberal approach to storytelling and her Gestus of the crank. An imperfect repetition, his scenic “reduction” of neoliberalism bore many differences from its original. In Monsieur’s adaptation, the central character—the sow—escaped slaughter. Ventilating Science’s weighted and weighty “things as they are” telling of the Rag-and-Bone Man’s decline, Monsieur enchanted the narrated world, its overdetermined plot, and rules with misbehaving objects. In his animation of the abattoir, he embodied for me Foucault’s (1978/2007) critical “how not to be governed like

that,” using object theatre—the performative idiom of things—to not only parody Science’s narrative reductionism but to intervene in its unrelenting atmosphere of catastrophes.²⁰²

For me, the utopic images in *La Tuerie* were concrete: the malfunctioning mechanism and the swerving sow, hope felt—in the midst of slaughter, no less. These images appeared to me to be both revelatory and anticipatory within (and hopefully beyond) the dramaturgy of *Abattoir de l’est*, to be opening onto potentiality rather than narrative foreclosure. As prelude to the unfolding of neoliberalism’s abattoir-narrative-machine, the concrete abattoir provided me with a curious frame for interpreting the ensuing plot, casting Monsieur’s subsequent demonstrations as so many choices and chances—even if not realized—for a detour from narrative decline.

Reflections on Object Theatre Potentiality, the “Not, But,” and the Glitch/Swerve

Nicolas’ object demonstrations suggest to me an enchanted variation on Brecht’s “not, but,” a specific actor-to-character positionality which allows for critical observation from the audience. In the essay “Short Description of a New Technique of Acting Which Produces an Alienation Effect” (1951/1964d), Brecht writes of the actor: “When he [*sic*] appears on the stage, besides what he actually is doing he will at all essential points discover, specify, imply what he is not doing; that is to say he will act in such a way that the alternative emerges as clearly as possible [. . .] Whatever he doesn’t do must be contained and conserved in what he does. In this way every sentence and every gesture signifies a decision; the character remains under observation [. . .]” (p. 137). If I transpose and translate the “not, but” to an actor-to-object positionality within a dramaturgy of enchantment, the actor’s task becomes to demonstrate at every turn the object’s potentiality—its latency, its excess, its material affordances, and its social relations—beyond its function within the plot. Every demonstration of the object in performance thus opens onto alternatives rather than the necessity of plot. Such an approach takes (and gives) pleasure in the excesses of the everyday object as it détournes (capitalist) trajectories, recovering in the overdetermined object—the “locked-down

²⁰² Romance, too, intervenes in Science’s plotlines, by rescuing the sow from the abattoir, grieving—rather than glossing over—the deaths of animals throughout the play, refusing to let them pass by unmourned. I remain interested in the capacities of Romance as a curious theatrical discourse, particularly in its iterations as reflective nostalgia and mourning. I suspect this may yet be a place and disposition for further curiosity-driven performance research.

dead commodity,” as late performance studies scholar José Muñoz (2009/2019) adroitly put it—an “opening and indeterminacy,” and an as yet unrealized potentiality (p. 31).²⁰³

In *Abattoir de l'est*, the utopic moments or gestures of potentiality are embodied for me in the glitch and the swerve, moments of excess, indeterminacy and deviation that echo materialist philosophies of enchantment. Jane Bennett (2001) recounts how Epicurus’s materialist allegory of freedom—the occasional “swerve” of an atom from its “straight, downward path through the void”—captivated and disturbed a young Marx (p. 119). Marx read this swerve as the “declination” of the atom to the “order of natural necessity,” suggesting, Bennett reasons, that Marx may have been more of a vital materialist than even he allowed. The swerve of the material world, for Epicurus and Marx, hinted at the possibility of indeterminacy in even the most deterministic of plots.

I suspect that *La Tuerie* might be my version of the “street scene,” a model of the dramaturgy of enchantment and dramaturgical hermeneutics wherein the animation of the critical gesture through object theatre recasts the spectator/dramaturg as enchanted interpreter of place. As I looked forward to the place of performance—the sites of future performance for *Abattoir de l'est*—I tried to imagine the wider (social, political, spatial, material) contexts, implications, and registers of the glitch and the swerve. Attending to the dramaturgy of urban ruination while concretizing indeterminacy, the dramaturgy of enchantment opened my own imagination to potentiality—and to the declination of place to fate. I wondered if these concrete gestures would be half as remarkable for audiences as they were for me. I wondered if a misbehaving mechanism or a fluttering sow would similarly enchant others, entwining moments of hope, pleasure, and wonder with those of lament, anger, and refusal.

²⁰³ Muñoz (2009) locates moments of queer utopia in the commodity form in Frank O’Hara’s and Andy Warhol’s Coke bottles, and finds “utopian traces” in choreographer and dancer Fred Herko’s ornamental movements and “kinesthetic stuttering,” his deviations from the compulsory, the purely functional, or conventional marking “other ways of moving within the world” (pp. 177–178).

F. Summary, Reflections, and Bridge to the Next Chapter

In this chapter, I sought to demonstrate a curiosity-driven, critically-engaged dramaturgical methodology of *Curiosité* through a narrative account of the third and fourth movements of performance composition—scripting and collective *mise-en-scène*. Casting my scripted assemblage of *Abattoir de l'est* as an autotopographical collection of the contexts of performance research, its contents bearing the traces of the subjective orientation of its maker, I reflected upon how my own positioning and my desires to deviate from common sense “as is” neoliberalism and to expose the slow violence of capitalist agendas in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve took shape in and as the epic dramaturgy of urban ruination.²⁰⁴ I unpackaged the different components of this dramaturgy—the abattoir as a figure of space-time, the epic street scene as narrative context, the genre of the parable as dramaturgical frame, and epic historicization of the urban panorama as narrative technique—linking these dramaturgical fragments to my own curiosity toward place at the time, reflecting on influences and implications for these approaches, and identifying how I imagined these choices to position the spectator and collaborator as curious interpreters of the relations between place and parable.

The chapter closed with the encounter between this individually composed epic dramaturgy of urban ruination and the dramaturgy of enchantment embodied within the event of collective dramaturgy. Both a disposition and hermeneutics within a collaborative process, the dramaturgy of enchantment describes an openness to indeterminacy and affective response, attentiveness to the materiality of place, and interest in the knowledges, capacities, and potentialities of others (including objects). The dramaturgy of enchantment emerged as a “street scene” for *Curiosité*—a mood and model of dramaturgical interpretation that holds to the tension between critique of and curiosity toward place.

To conclude this chapter, I want to bend back toward the potentiality of mood and affective response within the dramaturgy of enchantment, to consider, along with literary and cultural studies scholar Rita Felski (2015) how mood is primordial in one’s orientation toward

²⁰⁴ I borrow this approach from Montreal-based practice-led researcher, scholar, and artist Kathleen Vaughan (2009), who describes the artwork as a “holograph” of process: “embedded and embodied within a work of art, almost holographically, is a reservoir of knowledge and understanding, the ‘research’ of the work as conducted by the artist” (p. 169).

the world, shaping its appearance, what (or whom) matters in it, and delineating the repertoire of possible engagements and interactions within it.²⁰⁵ In her Heideggerian account, mood

refers to an overall atmosphere or climate that causes the world to come into view in a certain way. Moods are often ambient, diffuse, and hazy, part of the background rather than the foreground of thought. In contrast to the suddenness and intensity of the passions, they are characterized by the degree of stability: a mood can be pervasive, lingering, slow to change. It “sets the tone” for our engagement with the world, causing it to appear before us in a given light. Mood, in this sense, is a prerequisite for any form of interaction or engagement; there is [. . .] no moodless or mood-free apprehension of phenomena. Mood . . . is what allows certain things to matter to us and to matter in specific ways. (pp. 20–21)

Felski’s account—positioned within her discussion of the orientations of the cultural or literary critic—provides a useful framework for thinking about the role of mood in differentiating the orientations of the narrator-demonstrators toward the narrated world of the parable, and, as such, in inflecting the appearances of the narrated world for the dramaturg and for audiences.

Within the parable, and in *Science/Raisonneuse*’s unfolding of catastrophes across the industrial/postindustrial urban panorama, place assumed the form of a descending slope—a simplistic inversion of Massey’s evolutionary trajectory of globalization. Such straight lines, Tim Ingold (2007) contends, “epitomize . . . rational thought and disputation” (p. 4). Yet, these straight lines—as the habitual “as is” narrative formations or *telos* through which place appears—are not “moodless,” Felski upholds, but rather suggestive of the moods (or critical postures) that give rise to them, whether ironic, melancholic, or “low-key” aggressive and cynical.²⁰⁶ As dramaturg to Monsieur’s “not, but” animations of the commodity world, I apprehended the world of the parable through enchantment as mood and orientation embodied in the actor-to-object disposition, encountering place in forms other than linear

²⁰⁵ Felski describes an orientation (after Heidegger) as “a constellation of attitudes and beliefs that expresses itself in a particular manner of approaching one’s object [. . .]” (p. 21).

²⁰⁶ Felski writes of the detached posture of critique as a common-sense system, a way of approaching the world and its objects that sediments over time: “Critical detachment is not an absence of mood, but one manifestation of it, casting a certain shadow over its object. It colors the texts we read, endows them with certain qualities, places them in a given light. A certain disposition takes shape: guardedness rather than openness, aggression rather than submission, irony rather than reverence, exposure rather than tact [. . .]. Like any other repeated practice, it eases into the state of second nature, no longer an alien or obtrusive activity but a recognizable and reassuring rhythm of thought. Critique inhabits us, and we become habituated to critique” (p. 21).

decline through a different set of affects. I felt the reorientation of my gaze toward the unimportant, inessential, and the unknown, was moved in different ways by moments of material and performative excess, experiencing pleasure in the reanimation of industrial debris, epiphany in the glitch and swerve of subjects and objects, disturbance and doubt in the unstable reflections of the Foundling, such that the epic dramaturgy of urban ruination—so enchanted—appeared unfinished and arresting.

In Chapter 3. From Found Space Dramaturgy to the Scenography of Correspondence: Siting *Abattoir de l'est* in the Place Valois, I describe the methodology of siting taken up for *Abattoir de l'est*, exploring the processes and possible implications of situating the enchanted dramaturgy of urban ruination in the urban field. Using spatial performativity as a critical and curious lens, I return to the Promenade Ontario, to the pasts and presents of the Place Valois, drawing upon the scenography of place, the archives of site, and the memories and meanings that have accreted in this urban public space to demonstrate the Place as an actual, ideal, and as yet unrealized situation for Curiosity's *Abattoir de l'est*.

Before taking the reader into a planned performance that never was, however, I first invite them to return with me to the shadows of Lantic Sugar Refinery, and to experience for the first time the folkloric attractions of the Dominion Amusement Park in Prompt Book 4: (Post)modern Appetites and Attractions . . .

Prompt Book 4: (Post)Modern Appetites and Attractions

September 14, 2015

Inside Galerie Alt Art & Design, the performance event is already underway and nearing its end, the epic plot converging upon St. Lawrence Sugar, or what used to be St. Lawrence Sugar, and our current location. I consider how the parable might resonate with this place, the steaming funnel, rusted silo, and ruined *tonnelerie* [barrel-making workshop] of Lantic Sugar Refinery just visible through the vitrine.

I recall two photographs of the interior volumes of St. Lawrence Sugar, taken at the peak of the postwar industrial economy in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. I had encountered these photographs in the course of my archival research for *Curiosité*, as I was seeking out possible sites for future performances of *Abattoir de l'est*. Like the images of the abattoirs de l'est, they had held my fascination at the time. Here and now, in the shadow of the refinery and in the midst of the epic dramaturgy of urban ruination, they flash up again.

In the first photograph, a mountain of mass-produced sugar in black and white exceeds the frame. In the next, a worker appears at the base of the sugar pile with a cart, to haul it away.²⁰⁷



Figure 65. Left: Sacks of sugar piled high inside St. Lawrence Sugar Refinery. From [Photograph of sugar sacks piled high inside of St. Lawrence Sugar Refinery], 1950, Archives de l'Atelier d'histoire Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (INDU QHM-340), Montreal, QC, Canada. Courtesy of l'Atelier d'histoire Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Right : A worker hauls sacks of sugar. From [Photograph of a worker hauling bags of sugar inside St. Lawrence Sugar], 1950, Archives de l'Atelier d'histoire Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, Montreal, QC, Canada (INDU QHM-336). Courtesy of l'Atelier d'histoire Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

²⁰⁷ I first encountered these images—taken for insurance purposes in 1950—in winter 2014, after a visit to the Atelier d'histoire de Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, which holds the archives of St. Lawrence Sugar. These photographs inspired the addition of the white sugar “hourglass” to represent St. Lawrence Sugar in the performance of *Abattoir de l'est* at Galerie Alt Art & Design the following September (see pp. 244–247).

Refined sugar towering over the unnamed worker, sacks of sugar stacked like bodies. A veritable *Hill of Skulls* (anonymous, German, 1917), the allegorical image of history as a heap of dust depicted in interdisciplinary scholar Susan Buck-Morss's (1991) excursus on *The Arcades Project*.²⁰⁸ This allegorical reading, of course, took no account of the experience of the unnamed worker in the specific scene photographed, going about his business as a photographer captures the scenography of the industrial sublime within the refinery—all for insurance purposes.

In this moment, these recalled photographs reflect upon the plot, becoming anticipatory visions of catastrophe yet to befall the Rag-and-Bone Man. Having worked for three years on *Abattoir de l'est*, I know what's coming—or rather, what is supposed to unfold in Science and Raisonneuse's tragic tale, anyway. But this not a forecast for the fate of place: the ruin as *fait accompli*, the allegorical collapsed into the real. The dramaturgy of enchantment, of the “not, but,” holds onto the distance, to the excess, and to the amplitudes of the parable. In Monsieur's live demonstrations, even the most overdetermined of fates is liable to swerve and to move us in unexpected ways.

Douce chanson/Sweet Melody

Chapitre 6.	Science:	
	Romance:	Chapter 6.
	Monsieur:	
Capítulo 6. « À quoi bon avoir une maison si l'on n'a pas de planète acceptable où la mettre ? » ²⁰⁹	Capítulo 6. “What's the use of a fine house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?”	
	Science:	
La ville reprit son rythme, sans porter trop d'attention aux faits et gestes du Guenillou. Des nuages de fumée noire s'élevèrent, des bateaux déchargèrent leurs cargaisons de canne à sucre des Caraïbes et des barils quittèrent l'usine St. Lawrence Sugar les uns à la suite des autres.		

²⁰⁸ The image is reprinted in Buck-Morss's *The Dialectics of Seeing* (1991, p. 169). Buck-Morss interprets it in relation to Benjamin's conception of allegory in the *Trauerspiel* (*The Origin of German Tragic Drama*), wherein he discusses the “ruin” as an image of hope—an end of a firmly entrenched order. She writes: “In allegory, history appears as nature in decay or ruins and the temporal mode is one of retrospective contemplation” (p. 168).

²⁰⁹ Passage from a letter written to H.G. Blake by avid walker Henry David Thoreau on May 20, 1860 (see *The Familiar Letters of Henry David Thoreau*, 1894, pp. 415–419).

Science (cont.):

Mais la nuit où les doigts croches du Guenillou
rencontrèrent le poing de fer du barman—

The rhythms of the City went on, without much notice of
the Rag-and-Bone Man. Black puffs of smoke rose, boats
unloaded Caribbean cane, and wooden barrels left the St.
Lawrence Sugar factory, en masse. But, on the night the
Rag-and-Bone Man's sticky fingers were met by the
barman's iron fist—

Romance:

Madame X arracha une mèche de ses propres cheveux
pour compléter le point de l'austérité sur sa Croix de
Malte.

Madame X plucked a strand of her own hair, using it to
finish the point of austerity on her Maltese Cross.

Monsieur:

Et la Trouvée a chanté une chanson, une douce chanson
sans paroles.

And the Foundling sang a song, a sweet song without
words.

Science:

Et même s'il n'arrivait pas à se rappeler ni où ni quand il
l'avait entendue, le Guenillou crût reconnaître la mélodie.
Elle allait et venait, jouant à la fois fort et tout bas, et
semblait venir de l'intérieur de la Trouvée, sortir
directement de son ventre.

And though he couldn't now remember when or where
he'd first heard it, the Rag-and-Bone Man thought he
recognized a pattern.
It came and went with the internal volume of what may
have been, anatomically, the Foundling's stomach.

*[Romance (Rae Maitland) and Julian Menezes (as the Foundling) sing a consuming
melody that resolves into itself. The Foundling's melody dissipates, if only for a moment.]*

Monsieur:

Pour tous ses pénibles efforts, le Guenillou n'avait rien reçu
en retour.

For all his trouble that the day, The Rag-and-Bone Man had
gotten nothing in return.

Science:

Et la Trouvée avait faim.

And the Foundling was hungry.

Monsieur:

Les chaussures élimées, le Guenillou rejoignit son charriot
et son lit, qu'il gardait stationné au Parc d'attraction
Dominion.

His shoes worn thin, his nose still crooked from the
barman's blow, the Rag-and-Bone Man found his cart and
his bed, which he kept stationed at the Dominion
Amusement Park.

*[Julian strums the hurdy-gurdy theme as Science cranks the scroll to a garish image of a
carnival clown, his mouth wide open like the entrance to a funhouse.]*



Figure 66. The Rag-and-Bone Man is the latest attraction at Dominion Amusement Park. Still from video by Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

Science:

Là, entre les sifflement du train miniature et le *Frontier Saloon*, le Guenillou pouvait se cacher aux yeux de tous, devenue une sorte d'objet folklorique, dans la plus pure tradition des Expositions Universelles.

There, between the choochooing novelty train and frontier saloon, the Rag-and-Bone Man could hide in plain sight, a bit of quaint scenery, in the World's Fair tradition.

[Romance and Monsieur crouch and approach the exhibit, kids to a carny hawker's demonstration of the past.]

Science (as Carny Hawker/Parent):

Regardez, les enfants, un Guenillou! La démonstration parfaite de la vie comme on la vivait autrefois, d'anciennes coutumes passées de mode! Voilà une bonne occasion pour vous apprendre une leçon sur une chose ou sur une autre, et aussi sur la valeur du travail acharné et sur les autres trucs du genre.

Step right up, kids, and have a look: a real live Rag-and-Bone Man! A perfectly preserved specimen of the old ways of doing that are going, if they have not yet already gone, out of style. Let this be a lesson to you about something or other . . . and . . . also . . . the value of hard work and stuff.

Science:

La Trouvée avait faim.
En pêchant le long des rivages artificiels du manège *Mystic Rill*, le Guenillou déroba un bâton de réglisse dans la poche d'un préadolescent pâmé qui avait enfoui son visage dans celui d'une autre.
Il a porté le bâton de réglisse à ce qu'il croyait être la bouche de la Trouvée . . .

The Foundling was hungry.
Fishing along the artificial shores of the Mystic Rill ride, the Rag-and-Bone Man pinched a coil of liquorice from the pocket of an amorous preteen buried in the face of another.
He brought the coil toward what he thought was the Foundling's mouth . . .

Monsieur:

. . . mais la Trouvée, sans relâche, continua malgré tout à fredonner cette curieuse chanson sans paroles, directement dans son oreille cette fois, inlassablement.

. . . but the Foundling, all the while, continued to whimble, directly in his ear this time, that same wordless song, without end.

[*Foundling's song.*]



Figure 67. The Rag-and-Bone Man reaches the banks of the St. Lawrence River with the Foundling strapped to his back. Still from video by Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

Science:

Et alors, oppressé qu'il l'était, le Guenillou prit la route avec la Trouvée, pour ce qu'il croyait être la dernière fois.

And so, beleaguered as he was, the Rag-and-Bone Man set out on the road with the Foundling, for what he thought would be the very last time.

Après plusieurs heures et plusieurs kilomètres de chanson, le Guenillou arriva au bout de son rouleau.

Il se trouvait non loin de l'endroit où il avait trouvé la Trouvée, le jour où le fleuve est devenu rouge.

After several hours and miles of the song, the Rag-and-Bone Man reached his limit not far from where he'd found the Foundling on the day the river turned red.

Science:

Avec détermination, il entreprit de délester le bout de tissu
qui accrochait la Trouvée dans son dos . . .

With determination, he set out to untie the binding cloth
from his shoulder—

Mais le nœud ne voulait pas se défaire. Alors, se tordant le
bras, il donna un bon coup à la Trouvée . . .

The knot would not be undone. So, winding his arm up, he
took one fell swing at the Foundling—

. . . mais il l'a raté, son coup.

But he missed . . . Was it dead? Stunned?

Étourdis tous les deux, la Trouvée et le Guenillou firent silence.

Dazed, the Foundling and the Rag-and-Bone Man alike went
quiet.

Mais la Trouvée . . . elle était morte?

But the Foundling . . . Was she dead?

S'imaginant s'être enfin libéré de sa compagne de
fortune qui pesait de plus en plus lourd, le Guenillou
ressentit un mélange de plaisir et de terreur.

The Rag-and-Bone Man felt something between terror and
pleasure in the silence, as he imagined his life without his
newest and heaviest companion.

[Temps. Silence.]

Sans trop savoir que faire d'autre, le Guenillou commença
à fredonner la chanson sans paroles de la Trouvée, tentant
de la ramener à la vie en l'amadouant par cette mélodie
désormais familière.

Not knowing what else to do, the Rag-and-Bone began to
hum the Foundling's wordless song, trying to coax it back to
life with a by now familiar strain.

*[The Rag-and-Bone Man hums the Foundling's song. After several tries, the Foundling
responds in harmony with his humming.]*



Figure 68. The Foundling returns to life. Still from video by Annie Katsura Rollins. Printed with permission.

Science:

Confiant d'avoir ranimé la Trouvée qui s'en était tirée sans trop de mal, le Guenillou retourna chez lui, passant devant la St. Lawrence Sugar et ses doux parfums, la Trouvée toujours recroquevillée sur son dos.

Confident he'd revived the Foundling without much harm, the Rag-and-Bone Man returned home, past St. Lawrence Sugar and its sweet perfumes, the Foundling still a lump on his back.

Il chanta la chanson de la Trouvée tout le long du trajet, passant devant les prématurés exposés aux yeux de tous comme une curiosité, passant devant le petit train miniature, jusqu'à son charriot qui était, tout comme le Mystic Rill . . . en feu.

He hummed the Foundling's song the rest of the way home, past the incubated infants and the choo-choo, to the cart, which, he discovered, along with the Mystic Rill, was now ablaze.

[*Science turns the crank . . .*]

Science:

Les flammes rugissaient, et tous fuyaient le parc
d'attractions . . .

As the flames rose, the fairgoers fled.

Monsieur:

. . . tous, sauf le Guenillou.

But not the Rag-and-Bone Man.

Science:

La Trouvée toujours sanglée sur le dos, le Guenillou courut
jusqu'au fleuve, s'emparant d'un baril vide de l'usine St.
Lawrence Sugar pour y transporter de l'eau. Au moment où
il plongea le baril dans l'eau, il entra perçut le reflet de la
Trouvée, qui l'observait par-dessus son épaule. Quelque
chose qui ressemblait à un œil, ou une paire d'yeux
humides et mélancoliques.

The Foundling still strapped to his back, he rushed to the
river, stealing an empty barrel from St. Lawrence Sugar to
carry water. As he plunged the barrel into the water, he
caught sight of the Foundling peering over his shoulder.
Something that looked like an eye, or a pair of moist
melancholy eyes.

Monsieur:

Et alors, la Trouvée parla. Un mot. Un seul.

And then, the Foundling spoke. A word. Just one.

Romance:

La Trouvée dit une chose presque imperceptible à l'oreille
humaine.

The Foundling said something, nearly indistinguishable to
the human ear.

Science:

En entendant ce mot, le Guenillou souleva le baril et courut
fiévreusement de toutes ses forces vers le feu.
Sur son passage, il a poussé un enfant qui pleurait pour sa
maman, une adolescente qui appelait Gaétan—

Upon the word, the Rag-and-Bone Man hoisted the barrel
and ran, head down, feverishly, toward the fire.
He pushed past a child screaming for mummy, a teen crying
for Bobby—

[Romance moves behind the cabinet. Her profile appears in shadow against the flames.]

Romance:

. . . et un acteur dévoré par les flammes qui suppliait pour
avoir de l'eau!!!!

and an actor engulfed in flames, crying for water!!!

[The Rag-and-Bone Man courses into the wide open mouth of Romance.]



Figure 69. Flames engulf the Rag-and-Bone Man and the actor. Still from video by Annie Katsura Rollins. Printed with permission.

Monsieur:

Le Guenillou jeta l'eau du baril sur son charriot, qui se
désintégra complètement.

The Rag-and-Bone Man tossed the bucket of water onto his
cart, which disintegrated into nothing.

Romance:

Il regarda ses possessions, sa collection amassée au fil de sa vie, disparaître en fumée sous ses yeux cette nuit-là. Toutes ses possessions sauf une. La Trouvée, qui l'a consolée toute la soirée en chantant sa mystérieuse mélodie.

He watched his possessions amassed over a lifetime disappear that night, all save one, the Foundling who soothed him that evening with the wordless song.

Romance:

Chapitre 7.

Chapter 7.

[Raisonneuse approaches the St. Lawrence Sugar Factory: A backlit scissor-cut paper silhouette of Lantic Sugar and, in front of it, an hourglass. The last white granules drain out from the upper bulb, filling the lower. Raisonneuse had placed the hourglass there at the top of the show, popping it in through the circular window of the closed cabinet, where it served to mark the passage of real time—as opposed to story time. Time materialized.]

Raisonneuse exchanges a look with Monsieur, and with care, concentration, and surehandedness removes the hourglass from its cubby. One palm each on top and bottom of the artefact, she twirls around on one heel and hands it off to Monsieur. Monsieur grasps the hourglass with confidence, then suddenly, loses his grip.

He cries out—catches it, barely—reassures the audience that it was only a slapstick joke—the precariousness of a glass object on stage is always good for a laugh, right? He begins to turn and loses his grip once more—he catches it, and now grumblingly reassures the cast—and the audience—that he has the show in hand. He walks behind the cabinet, and soberly climbs the stepladder.

Monsieur holds the hourglass in one hand and picks his teeth with the other. Romance, Raisonneuse, and Science leave their positions at the sides of the cabinet and come to centre, primping, patting at their cheeks, tucking in hair, and preparing as if for a television shoot, playing to those members of the audience who have cameras in hand.

The ladies, now a chorus, regard Monsieur and the hourglass. Pulling one final bit from his teeth, he gives them the thumbs up: “Action!” The Ad-ladies pull themselves up, from feet to shoulders to chins to smiles, angling themselves slightly to appear slimmer before a television audience that does not exist.]

[Monsieur assumes his new role as the Ad-Man—he breaks into a wide grin, as his hands become confident once more, demonstrating the beauty of the hourglass to the audience. As he tips the glass on its head—]

Science:

St. Lawrence Sugar: fabriquer le sucre dans les conditions les plus amères.

St. Lawrence Sugar: Manufacturing sweetness from the bitterest conditions.

[The ladies draw their right index fingers across the inside of their left wrist and taste the sweetness oozing from their skin; Raisonneuse punctuates her taste with a cheek pop, which Julian quickly follows with an ascending chord.]

Raisonneuse:

St. Lawrence Sugar, où chaque jour est un miracle d'alchimie moderne.

St. Lawrence Sugar: where every day is a marvel of modern alchemy.

Science:

Où la canne à sucre des Caraïbes transformée en sucre raffiné, qui sera utilisé pour faire de la réglisse, des confitures . . .

Caribbean cane transmuted into refined sugar for licorice, preserves—

Romance:

. . . et un ajout délicieux à cette extase turque, à cet opposé de la bière qu'on appelle . . . le café.

—and as a sweet addition to that Turkish ecstasy—the opposite of beer—known as coffee.

Monsieur:

Le café!

Coffee!

Science:

Le café, autrefois, avait la mauvaise réputation de causer l'impuissance masculine.

Coffee, in the past, had been blamed for masculine impotence.

[Monsieur assumes a sombre, sour face, as Julian punctuates his expression with a slide on the kazoo.]

Science:

Maintenant, il est l'ami des lèves-tôt, des vaillants travailleurs et de tous ceux qui vont d'un pas décidé d'un endroit à un autre, la mâchoire devant, la tête haute, sans perdre ni temps ni énergie.

Now it is the staple of early risers, worker bees, and all those who walk efficiently, jaws tilted forward, from here to there, without wasting energy, or time.

[The Ad-Ladies, careering women, bustle around one another for centre-stage, as if high on . . . caffeine. The kazoo slides up this time, timed with the edges of Monsier's mouth into a smile.]



Figure 70. The Ad-Man and Ad-Ladies extol the miracle of sugar, refined. Still from video by Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

Raisonneuse:

St. Lawrence Sugar. Où chaque jour est un miracle d'alchimie moderne.

St. Lawrence Sugar. Where every day is a miracle of modern alchemy.

[The Ad-Ladies repeat their gesture of tasting the sweetness that is on the surface of their skin, as if the sheen of the commodity itself were transferred to the epidermis.

Pop! Ascending major chord.

They break from the advertising image for a moment, their smiles dropping. They look up at Monsieur who, having added only a minute or so of extra granulated time, rights the hourglass, and replaces it in the St. Lawrence Sugar box.]

Science:

Un mois après l'incendie du *Mystic Rill*, une fois les corps dénombrés, l'un d'eux mal identifié et enterré sous le nom d'un autre . . .

A week after the fire at Mystic Rill, after the bodies had been counted, one misidentified and buried as someone else . . .

Raisonneuse:

. . . un professeur à la retraite s'est rendu à Niagara Falls dans un baril et a survécu au voyage . . .

. . . a retired schoolteacher went over Niagara Falls in a barrel and survived

Romance:

. . . Madame X a commencé une nouvelle broderie . . .

. . . Madame X started a new bit of piecework—

Monsieur:

. . . et le Guenillou s'est glissé dans un tonneau de la St. Lawrence Sugar.

Chaque soir, depuis l'incendie, c'était la même routine. La Trouvée chantait sa chanson sans paroles jusqu'à ce que le Guenillou se déclare vaincu et la transporte vers les berges du fleuve, près de l'usine St. Lawrence Sugar. Là, ensemble, ils passaient la nuit à observer les travailleurs faisant rouler des tonneaux vides jusque dans la raffinerie pour qu'ils soient remplis de la substance sucrée.

Monsieur (cont.):

And the Rag-and-Bone Man slipped into a barrel of St. Lawrence Sugar.

Every night since the fire at Dominion Amusement Park, there was a new routine. The Foundling would sing her wordless song until the Rag-and-Bone Man caved and carried her to the riverbank, by way of the St. Lawrence Sugar Refinery.

There, together, they would pass the night watching the workers rolling empty barrels into the refinery to be filled with the sweet stuff.

Romance:

Et la Trouvée chuchotait encore ce mot, presque inaudible pour l'oreille humaine. Un mot qui faisait grincer les dents du Guenillou.

And the Foundling would again whisper that word barely audible to the human ear. A word that set the Rag-and-Bone Man's teeth on edge.

Science:

Quel était ce mot?

What was that word?

Monsieur:

Personne à part le Guenillou ne le savait. Et c'est ainsi que le Guenillou préférait les choses.

No one knew, save the Rag-and-Bone Man. At that was how the Rag-and-Bone Man preferred it.

Science:

Il y avait maintenant une semaine que le Guenillou n'avait pas fermé l'oeil.

The Rag-and-Bone Man had gone without sleep for over a week.

Romance:

Ce soir-là, Madame X a regardé le Guenillou, avec la Trouvée sur son dos, suivi d'une mouche ou deux, grimper dans un baril de la St. Lawrence Sugar.

Tonight, Madame X watched as the Rag-and-Bone Man, the humming Foundling on his back, and a fly or two, snuck into a barrel destined for St. Lawrence Sugar, a peephole carved into the wood.

Science:

Et, exactement comme tous les autres soirs, un tonnelier, torse bombé, tira ce tonneau dans l'usine, où il fut reçu par le Raffineur Raffiné. Une fois dans l'usine, par un petit trou travaillé dans le bois du tonneau, le Guenillou vit une montagne de sucre, si haute qu'elle touchait presque le plafond.

And, just like every other night, a barrel-chested barrel-maker bowled the barrel to the factory, where it was received by the Refined Refiner.

Through the peephole, the Rag-and-Bone Man saw a mountain of sugar, piled high inside the factory.

Raisonneuse:

Il attendrait le départ des ouvriers avant de sortir de son baril avec la Trouvée. Il pourrait enfin dormir pendant qu'elle, ou cette chose, se gaverait du sucre raffiné.

He would wait until the workers clocked out, and let himself—and the Foundling—out. He would sleep in silence as the Foundling gorged herself, itself, on sugar, refined.

Science:

Et après, enfin, le Guenillou pourrait retourner à ses vieilles habitudes. Enfin libéré de la Trouvée, il irait s'acheter un charriot neuf ou usagé, peu lui importait. . . et il pourrait retourner à ses habitudes passées de mode, celles qui, précisément, étaient en train de disparaître.

Only then would the Rag-and-Bone Man return to his old ways of doing.

And it would not be long before his big return, when free of the Foundling, he would buy a new cart, or used, it did not much matter to him—and return to his old-fashioned ways of doing, which were dying out—

Raisonneuse:

Pour parler franchement et appeler un chat un chat.

—To put it bluntly.

Science:

Le tonneau resta dans l'usine jusqu'à ce que la cloche annonce la fin du quart de travail.

The barrel sat inside the factory until the horn signaled the end of the work night.

[Ding]

Raisonneuse:

Une mouche puis deux sortirent du tonneau, suivies de près par le Guenillou et la Trouvée.

One fly, then two, emerged from the barrel, followed by the Rag-and-Bone Man and his Foundling.

Monsieur:

Alors, la tête pleine de pensées heureuses, savourant le silence de la Trouvée qui s'était tue pour la première fois depuis si longtemps, le Guenillou s'étendit au pied de la montagne de sucre et s'endormit.

And so, with happier thoughts in his head, and the Foundling silent for the first time in quite some time, the Rag-and-Bone lay down at the base of the sugar mound and slept.

[Ding]

Science:

Le Raffineur Raffiné, en arrivant au travail le lendemain matin, trouva la montagne de sucre réduite de moitié ainsi qu'une nuée de mouches bourdonnant autour d'un tonneau. Intrigué, il en souleva le couvercle . . . libérant un nuage de mouches . . .

The Refined Refiner arrived at work the next morning to find the sugar mountain reduced by half, and a flurry of flies emerging from a barrel marked VIAU. He was curious. And so he pried the lid off of the barrel . . . and released a cloud of flies into the factory . . .

Raisonneuse:

Il regarda dans le baril. Il y avait bien quelque chose au fond, mais cette chose ne bougeait pas. Il brassa le baril . . .

He peered into the barrel. There was something in there, but it would not budge. He shook the barrel—

Science:

Rien. Il l'inclina et en sortit . . .

Nothing. He tipped the barrel, and out came . . .

Monsieur:

. . . un cube de sucre de la taille du tonneau . . .

. . . A sugar cube the size of the barrel . . .

Science:

Le Raffineur Raffiné ébrécha le cube délicatement,
révélant . . .

The Refined Refiner chipped away at the cube,
revealing . . .

Raisonneuse:

Pas la Trouvée, dont le Raffineur Raffiné n'avait jamais
entendu parler. De toute façon, la Trouvée avait
complètement disparu.

Not the Foundling, whom the Refined Refiner knew
nothing about. The Foundling was nowhere to be
found.

Science:

Mais le Raffineur Raffiné trouva quelque chose, et ce
quelque chose était . . . quelqu'un.

But the Refined Refiner revealed something, and that
something, or someone was—

Raisonneuse:

Et le Raffineur Raffiné a reconnu sa tête, son nez, son corps . . .
qui avaient été parfaitement préservés, momifiés, dans le sucre
cristallisé.
Le sucre miraculeux!

—The Refined Refiner recognized his head, his nose, his
torso, as they had been perfectly preserved—
mummified—in crystallized sugar.
Sugar, The Miracle of!

*[Raisonneuse winds the music box, and places it on the floor. The Swan Lake melody
resonates with the wooden floorboards, filling the room.]*

Épilogue

Science:

Le jour où le Guenillou fût découvert, entièrement
préservé dans le sucre depuis ses cheveux jusqu'à ses
doigts de pieds . . .

On the day the Rag-and-Bone Man was discovered,
preserved in sugar from hair to toenail . . .

Raisonneuse:

La mélasse devint rouge plutôt que brune . . .

The molasses ran red not brown . . .

Science

. . . le boucher tua 15 des porcs à l'abattoir . . .

. . . the butcher slaughtered 15 of the
Stockyard Tycoon's hogs . . .

Raisonneuse:

Le prix du sucre doubla . . .

the price of sugar doubled . . .

Romance:

Et Madame X a descendu la rue Ontario, portant un petit
paquet dans ses bras, à qui elle chuchotait un mot, un
seul, presque inaudible pour l'oreille humaine . . .

And Madame X wandered rue Ontario
with a new bundle in her arms, to
whom she whispered one single
word, barely audible to any human
ear . . .



Figure 71. Madame X absconds with a crystalized Rag-and-Bone Man. Still from video by Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

Monsieur:

Un mot . . .

One word . . .

[Romance, in shadow, whispers a secret to the silhouette of Monsieur.]

As Science turns the crank to the final image, I hear the exterior door to Galerie Alt Art & Design swing open, feel a gust of wind. Audience heads turn, and a local woman I recognize makes her way into the back room where Curiocté is performing. She asks if she can have a bottle of water from the case near my feet. I nod. She grabs one and exits.



Figure 72. Romance whispers one word to Monsieur. Still from video by Florencia Marchetti. Printed with permission.

FIN

Chapter 3. From Found Space Dramaturgy to the Scenography of Correspondence: Siting *Abattoir de l'est* in the Place Valois

A multi-modal and multi-media event shaped through methods of site- and place-based research—walking, collecting, dramaturgical archival research and assemblage, narrative and object theatre demonstration (among other performance modalities)—the *Curiosité* cabinet of *Abattoir de l'est* embodied multiple representations of rue Ontario, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, and the city, among them:

- a *theatrum mundi*: an analogical map of place, an everyday museum, and a theatre of the material culture of the street;
- a polyphonic story of place, relayed through the differential embodied dramaturgies of the narrator-demonstrators (and objects) and through a soundscape;
- a visual and narrative tour of place: a walking panorama of the street and the neighbourhood, and an epic historicization of the city.

As the fifth movement of performance research within *Curiosité*, siting describes the process of transposing the dramaturgical to the scenographic environment of place. The dramaturgical, in this chapter, includes these multimodal representations of place, referring to the *mise-en-scène* of *Abattoir de l'est*, inclusive of its discursive, temporal, material, choreographic, and acoustic registers, as assembled in the rehearsal studio.²¹⁰ Through the siting process, the artist-researcher seeks to correspond with a found space (or place) through the theatrical event (and its registers) toward the production of a hybrid scenography.

Personal and felt affinities toward a found place—as a stage space—initiate this process of transposition from the dramaturgical to the scenographic. Archival research and *in situ* encounters follow, as the artist-researcher inventories a wider range of potential event-site relations, conceiving of site as a performative dramaturgical (con)text and scenographic

²¹⁰ The dramaturgy of *Abattoir de l'est* developed in and through the scenographic environment of the studio: my positioning as dramaturg-spectator in front of the cabinet; the darkening of the room to convey intimacy and accommodate the play of light and shadow; the positioning of the actors around and above the architecture, visuals, and objects of the cabinet, the gaps in the wooden flooring of the studio space a porous boundary between the framing shop below, a soundscape of hammers, saws, and spray guns and an olfactory atmosphere of paint fumes; the stifling heat and occasional breeze from open windows; the dog, and other studio neighbours, who wandered into rehearsals from time to time.

environment mediating and mediated by the event of performance.²¹¹

Site-Specific Orientations

My approach to siting *Abattoir de l'est* drew upon a wide range of ideals, concepts, and methods familiar to practitioners working in site-specific performance, performance in found space, and street performance. I shared these performance genres' embrace of the contingencies of non-conventional spaces, their interest in the “productive collision [and blurring] between theatrical and extra-theatrical,” (Irwin, 2008, p. 45) and their investment in the performative role played by place in the conception and reception of the performance event.²¹²

Calgary-based theatre and performance scholar and scenographer Kathleen Irwin (2008) notes that when used to characterize a performance event, the qualifier “site-specific” often describes the “absence or devaluation of a textual armature” in the creation of an *in situ* performance, or, as in performance in found space, a practice wherein “the material site is equal to or privileged over, the predetermined text” (p. 41). Use of the term suggests a particular aesthetic genealogy, as well as a set of creative practices, even as it has been used to describe a wide range of performance genres and gestures taken up outside of conventional theatre spaces. Expanding upon art historian Miwon Kwon's (1997, 2004) discussion of the proliferation of “site-specific” art practices at the end of the twentieth century, Irwin (2008) elaborates: “the uncritical adoption of [site-specific] . . . has provoked a rethinking of the word and alternative formulations have been offered to address the nuances that differentiate practices; these include site-determined, site-oriented, site-referenced, site-conscious, site-responsive, site-related, context-specific, debate-specific, audience-specific, community-specific, and project-based.” (p. 42). These formulations both describe and prescribe different relations

²¹¹ The scenographic lens on the place (or site) of performance attends to place not only as a narrative context for Curiocté's *Abattoir de l'est*, but as a material and social assemblage and affective atmosphere (see Hann, 2019) through which the performance event is produced.

²¹² Richard Schechner (1994) frames his genre of environmental theatre around a reconceptualization of performance space as a transformative figure rather than container, a palimpsest of possible performatives brought into consciousness by both performer and spectator, an “active player,” a “vivified space,” a “position” and a “body of knowledge” (as cited in Knowles, p. 69). Erika Fischer-Lichte (2004/2008) has argued that spaces are performative: that is, they are both “self-referential and constitutive” of the event in its “specific materiality” (2008, pp. 24–25). In her view, like the event of performance, spatiality materializes over time and as an experience rather than fixed referent. Spatiality is brought about as an emergent phenomena in and for the spectator, who experiences it in the creation of ecstatic atmospheres around performer's bodies and “things,” through dynamic changes in lighting, sound, and voice, and through his/her own range of sensorial and physical reactions and associative thoughts in the event's unfolding (pp. 116–119).

between artist, work or event, audience, and site, their commonality residing in how “site speaks out as the central creative impulse and organizing principal,” even as conceptions of what constitutes a site vary (Irwin, p. 42).²¹³

In what follows, I sketch my conceptions of the event-site-audience relationship as they informed my siting process, situating my methodology within contemporary scholarship and practice. While I frame my approach within the idiom of curiosity (the scenography of correspondence), others have deployed metaphors of haunting, collage, assemblage, and intertextuality to articulate their understandings of the event-site dyad—sometimes framed as the event-site-audience triad—and to frame a conjoined theory of site-specific or found space performance conception and reception.

Reading and Writing the City: Site as [Performative] Text

In an early articulation of site-specific performance, the founders of the Exeter, UK-based theatre company Brith Gof write that “Site specific performances [. . .] make manifest, celebrate, confound or criticize location, history, function, architecture, micro-climate” (Pearson & McLucas as cited in Pearson, 2010, p. 4). In this framing of the event-site relationship, the event “comments” upon site, taking site as a text to be read, interpreted, or unveiled through the multimedia structures of performance. The textual metaphor for the city—in various formulations, the city as text, as palimpsest, or as archive—has come under scrutiny of late, particularly within urban performance studies. This dominant metaphor, in its prioritization of reading and writing as presumably “private, individualized exercise[s],”

²¹³ Throughout this exegesis, I have mobilized a range of terms (most frequently, place-based and/or situated) to describe Curiocté’s acts of performance research, and to articulate a particular relationship between artist, event of research, and place (or site). I have expressly side-stepped the label “site-specific” so as to avoid collapsing some of the key differences in method and methodology which set Curiocté’s approach apart from more conventional and phenomenologically oriented site-specific performance practices. Toronto-based performance studies scholar Laura Levin (2009) describes the phenomenological turn in recent urban performance practices—the attentiveness to the materiality of site—to an ecological ethos and concern for the non-human. In this formulation of site-specificity, which draws upon a range of theories of nonhuman agency, the artist as human subject refuses the role as “origin and perspectival centre,” deferring to the site’s intention toward “self-display” (Levin, 2009, pp. 244–245). Levin argues that “[t]o be specific to a site” in this approach is “to demonstrate a sense of responsibility toward it and to perceive all of its inhabitants [human and non-human] as potential collaborators” (p. 244). While Levin’s description of the site and its inhabitants as “potential collaborators” resonates with my approach to siting *Abattoir de l’est*, my collection of the city as “resource,” prioritization of narrative dramaturgy, incorporation of a miniature perspectival theatre and cabinet of curiosities as focal points, demonstrate obvious and critical divergences. The key intersections for me are a resistance to the trope of place or space (including theatrical space) as void, and a recognition of spatial performativity; the interactions of the material and the social, the human and non-human, in the production of place.

overlooks the repertoire of “remembered, embodied practices” which also produce the city (Hopkins et al., 2009, p. 6). Carried into an urban performance practice, the textual metaphor may inadvertently default to a model of performance space as *tabula rasa*, implying that the performance “speaks” while the site itself remains a space of (human) exposition and inscription. Seeking to restore performance to its role in producing urban space, dramaturgs D.J. Hopkins, Shelley Orr, and Kim Solga (2009), after Diana Taylor (2003), position performativity alongside textuality as “linked cultural practices that work together to shape the body of phenomenal, intellectual, psychic, and social encounters that frame a subject’s experience of the city” (p. 6). Beginning in the first movement of performance research and extending into the fifth, I sought to complicate the urban text in *Curiosité* via the imposition of performative modalities of place-based research, expanding the conception of the textual and the archival to implicate the affective, the unconscious, the embodied, and the social.

Ghost/Host

In subsequent formulations of event-site dynamics, site- and found-space practitioners adopt spatial performativity as lens, identifying a more active and agential role for place through the invocation of different relational metaphors. McLucas revises the dynamic through the structure of haunting, using the ghost and host dyad to describe the competing architectures which structure both the conception and the spectator’s experience of a site-specific performance (as cited in Pearson, 2010, p. 36; see also Turner, 2004, p. 374). The superimposed structure of performance constitutes the “ghost” which “occupies the ‘host’ site,” where the “host” has “personality, history, character, narrative written into it” (McLucas as cited in Pearson, 2010, p. 36). Cathy Turner (2004) paraphrases the approach: “The ‘host’, including its other previous and current occupations [. . .] remains distinct from the ‘ghost’ and cannot be ultimately identified with it. Indeed, the ‘ghost’ is transgressive, defamiliarizing, and incoherent” (p. 375). Crucial to this formulation is how it conceptualizes place as coeval and agential in relation to the event (ghost). Conceived as incongruent—if at times overlapping—entities, the site (host) can “offer resistance” to and perform in excess of the narrative and material architectures imposed upon it (p. 375). As a metaphor for event-site-audience dynamics, the ghost/host dyad suggested to me a comparative and curious siting methodology, attentive to the relational yet incommensurable orders of both event and site.

Site as a Performative Field in Found Space Scenography

In conventional (literary or dramatic) theatrical practice, scenography has been conceived as the “aesthetic and spatial organization of a theatrical text in a stage space to support the philosophical and ideological themes of both play and production” (Irwin, 2008, p. 39). Within site-specific and found space performance genres, scenography expands its scope and strategies of meaning-making through the discourse of spatial performativity.²¹⁴ Irwin (2008) argues that when mobilized as a lens in site-specific and found space performance, spatial performativity is a critical “way of reading topographies and structures of power in built environments,” which also “presumes a potentiality, an excess or efficiency of meaning rendered strongly present in places framed by performance” (p. 39).²¹⁵ In contrast to conceiving of stage space as a void or ultra-space to be “filled” by the scenographer,²¹⁶ the conception of site as a “performative field” (p. 49) in site-specific and found space scenography insists on the site as “replete with many meanings, ambiguities, excesses, erasures, and already-present potentiality” (Irwin, p. 51).

Of her own scenographic practice, Irwin remarks on its orientation toward “open[ing] up the discourse” around a site by emphasizing and amplifying its plurality in performance (p. 51). Irwin contends that a site-specific scenographer “delineates a site and, using an overlay of myth, memory, personal narrative and contemporary detail, frames a place within a local and global context. In this way, an open, ambiguous work is created that allows the embedded narratives to fragment, proliferate and reveal their interpenetration and interaction of people/place/time: their histories, their desires, and their identities” (p. 55). Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks (2001) concur, arguing that in the event, “interpenetrating narratives jostle to create meanings [and] multiple meanings and readings of performance and site intermingle,

²¹⁴ Irwin notes that scenography has long been concerned with the “production and reception of the visual text of a staged performance” inclusive of the “physical site of the performance and how the spectator functions within that frame” (p. 41). The scenographer, she writes, operates as “a kind of visual dramaturge” (p. 41).

²¹⁵ Irwin (2008) scans the widespread usage of the concept of performativity within theatre and performance studies, rooting her own approach to the spatial firmly in Butler’s citational and iterative acts of gender performance. She contends that the performative, as a lens on how the social identities and normative uses of material sites are produced, “open[s] up the discourse” (p. 55) of a site as both “emblematic of a range of established social norms reinforced by its reiteration or ongoingness” which are at the same time “capable of being subverted or transgressed through performance” (p. 49). She asks: “Cannot a site, designated for performance, be considered a performative field, generating both normative and transgressive readings in relationship to gestures or activities (space-acts) that cannot be imagined as separate from the place in which it originates?” (p. 49).

²¹⁶ For more on the historical conditions surrounding the emergence of the “ultra-space” in modernist theatrical scenography, see Hann (2019), pp. 81–83.

amending and compromising one another” (Pearson & Shanks, 2001, p. 23). Spectators for this “open” work encounter not only the specific material and temporal structures of the performance event, but also “the local contingencies and related histories, legends, myths and memories that the site embodies” (Irwin, pp. 44–45).²¹⁷

With the siting process for *Abattoir de l'est*, I drew upon Pearson & Shanks’s (2001) dual (and duelling) orders of site and event within the ghost/host dyad, and upon Irwin’s account of site as a “performative field” in found space scenography, wherein the place of performance is a site of both excess and normativity, “emblematic of a range of established social norms reinforced by its reiteration or ongoingness” (p. 49). Deploying its own dramaturgical structures within the performative field and scenographic environment of a found place, *Abattoir de l'est* would interact with, illuminate, and intervene in its tangible and intangible constituencies and registers, positioning the spectator within a scenography of correspondence—a constellation of reciprocal relations between event and place. As a *theatrum mundi* in itself, a strangle double situated within, and in relation to a found place with which it corresponds, Curioité’s *Abattoir de l'est* would invite the spectator to encounter both place and event like the curious collector who “draw[s] distinctions, [and . . .] apportion[s] and accentuate[s] secret affinities” between objects (Mauriès, 2011, p. 34).

Itinerary

In this chapter, I elaborate my siting methodology, focusing on the planned siting of Curioité’s *Abattoir de l'est* in June of 2013 in the Place Valois, a former railway crossing become contested commercial and public square situated within the Promenade Ontario.

A. Dramaturgical Correspondences: The Place Valois as Found Space outlines the techniques of spatial dramaturgy, media analysis, and archival and *in situ* research through which I “found” the place of performance for *Abattoir de l'est*. A place shaped by the departure of industry and the displacements of deindustrialization, the social pressures of gentrification, and revitalization discourse (the reanimation of postindustrial space by capital), the Place Valois appeared to me as a nexus for the intersecting dramaturgies of urban ruination and enchantment.

²¹⁷ In McEvoy’s (2006) account of site-specific performance reception, this multiplicity of possible meanings is configured in terms similar to Umberto Eco’s (1962/2006) “open work.” As inter- and hyper-textual events, site-specific performances “disorder, distort and circulate texts, leaving it up to the spectator or critic to reconstruct them in a critical/creative hybrid text of one’s own” (McEvoy, p. 592).

- B. Creative Correspondence: Galerie FMR's *L'Urbaine Urbanité* and the Memory of Local(e)** pursues correspondences between *Abattoir de l'est* and some of the cultural memories held by the Place Valois, as these memories were activated for me in the siting process. Through engagements with the archives of local artist Gilles Bissonet's site-specific event series *Urbaine Urbanité*, the de-industrialized Valois/Ontario Sector appeared as a memory place and working-class social space, its now disappeared scenography haunting the Place Valois in the present.
- C. Attending to the Everyday Scenography of the Place Valois** describes the performativity and everyday scenography of the Place Valois, imagining this site as a theatre of the local and as a stage space for *Abattoir de l'est*, and reflecting upon the implicit and official orders of public space revealed and invoked in and through the permit application process.
- D. Summary, Reflections, and Bridge to the Next Chapter**

A. Dramaturgical Correspondences: The Place Valois as Found Space

My initial apprehension of an event-site correspondence—my identification of a place as a stage space for the dramaturgical and desire to perform in that place—anchored and oriented my siting process. From this individual impulse, I moved toward the excavation of social correspondences, seeking to recover connections between event and site that might resonate with local audiences and users of the found place—in this iteration, the Place Valois. Toward this end, I drew up a series of questions to ask of the found place, framing the responses as a partial, personal, and social inventory of possible relations between the place of performance and the performance event. (I engaged my collaborators in a similar process, asking them to suggest possible performance sites, and to reflect upon these questions.) The questions posed reflect my engagements with feminist standpoints and feminist geography, site-specific and found space performance theory and methods (outlined in the introduction of the chapter), and my assessment of the material and social conditions through which the performance event could appear.²¹⁸ I answered these questions through both archival and *in situ* research, correlating my responses with my own curious collection of place in *Abattoir de l'est*.

Questions to ask a Place

What connection do you have to this place? What experiences have you had here? What does this place ask of you or invite you to do?

What happened here?

What histories or memories of this site are well known? Less known?

How do the themes of the parable resonate with this place and its intangibles—“socio-political context, received history, accreted myths and legends, personal memory and so on” (Irwin, 2008, p. 42)? How might these histories, myths, and memories shape the reception of the parable and performance event, or alternately, how might the performance event activate these aspects of place?

What is happening here?

What kind of place is this? Public? Private? Interior? Exterior?

What is the “feel” of this place? The mood?

²¹⁸ As a method of “site exploration,” this list of questions to bring to a site also resonates with Pearson’s (2009) question sets, which he uses at the outset of his performance research process to iterate the (potential) relations between artist, site, and audience, allowing his responses to guide the devising of site-specific performance events.

What are the function (or functions) of this place in everyday life? What are the rules of this place, the norms or normative structures shaping social interactions in this place?

What might happen here? What futures are being imagined for this place? What futures can you imagine in and for this place?

To the extent that they might be imagined, who is the “audience” for the performance at this place? Who frequents this place, or passes by it?

What or who is permitted here and what or who is not permitted? What is the likelihood that we will be ticketed for or stopped from performing because we do not hold the appropriate permit? Is it illuminated at night, and if so, how and where? Is there a power supply with public access?

What contingency plans are afforded by this place? What will we do in case of rain or inclement weather? Is there bathroom access?

Researching Correspondences

In this section of the chapter, I respond to several of the questions posed above, narrating my process of siting *Abattoir de l'est* at the Place Valois in June of 2013. My everyday experiences, research into some of the histories and presents of the site, and a review of critical literature related to urban renewal and the sociospatial ideal of the “urban village” shaped my impressions of the Place Valois as a found place for *Abattoir de l'est*. Through these modalities of spatial dramaturgy, the Place Valois appeared as an emblem of the ongoing displacements of deindustrialisation and the reanimation of postindustrial “ruins” by capital—a place where the epic dramaturgy of urban ruination and the dramaturgy of enchantment might resonate and/or complicate an audience’s encounter with place.

As the reader will recall from Chapter 1 (p. 93), the Place Valois is located within the commercial zone of rue Ontario known as the Promenade Ontario. Formerly a Canadian National Railroad crossing and working-class social space, between 2002 and 2005 the Place was redeveloped as a public space surrounded by a bakery, *saucissier*, an upscale *terroir d’ici* restaurant, and condominium project.²¹⁹ When I first moved to Hochelaga-Maisonneuve in 2009, and began walking along the Promenade Ontario, the Place appeared to me as a convivial

²¹⁹ *Terroir* derives from French wine labelling, where it is used to describe the character or taste profile of a wine, based on the unique local geographic and environmental features (soil, climate, etc.) of the grape. In Quebec, the *terroir d’ici* label forms part of a “buy local” campaign led by the province’s agricultural and tourism industries, and describes specialty foods and agricultural products produced throughout the province, often further identified by region.

public space—a gathering place for community members, political demonstrations, and commercial events. I frequently shopped at the bakery situated along the edge of the Place. At that time, I was ignorant of the contested nature of the Place Valois, having arrived in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve in the years after its redevelopment. As a high-traffic area, a popular destination in the neighbourhood, the Place Valois presented our best chance of attracting an incidental audience for our weeknight performance.

The Urban Village Construct

As I note in the preceding chapters, in the course of my performance research with *Curiocité*, I noticed that the Place Valois had become a regular feature in real estate advertising and lifestyle sections of both francophone and anglophone newspapers in Montreal, a central attraction in the reincarnation of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve as “HoMa.” Touting local restaurants and food vendors as sites of newly added value in the neighbourhood, condo promoters and commercial developers were using the Place Valois to convert a widely held negative image of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve into a site of desire for upper-middle-class urbanites. Scaffolding this urban development discourse for HoMa, I encountered the “urban village,” an urban planning construct premised on the sociospatial ideal of *mixité sociale*.²²⁰ As I learned in subsequent research, the urban village paradigm was not unique to postindustrial Montreal.

David Harvey (2000) describes the urban village as a late capitalist urban planning paradigm which places emphasis on [re]constructing (or preserving) the architectural features of a real or imagined past, and in reproducing “small town” life in the city. Harvey (2000) argues that the urban village model is seductive to a wide swath of the population, emerging as an “antidote” to the chaos of “large and teeming cities,” to the problems of “social disorder, class war, and revolutionary violence” (p. 170):

In the urban village, everyone can relate in a civil and urbane fashion to everyone else . . . [T]he idea attracts, drawing support from marginalized ethnic populations, impoverished and embattled working-class populations left high and dry through deindustrialization, as well as from middle- and upper-class nostalgics who think of it as a civilized form of real-

²²⁰As the reader may recall from the introduction to the exegesis, *mixité sociale* is the argument that condos and commercial areas attract homebuyers, investors, and tourists to depressed neighbourhoods, improving local economies and the overall quality of life. I described the debate over *mixité sociale* in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve in more detail in the Introduction, pp. 29–31.

estate development encompassing sidewalk cafés, pedestrian precincts, and Laura Ashley shops (p. 170).

Through my own encounters with the local discourse of the urban village and drawing upon Harvey's critique of its broader application, I interpreted the urban village construct as a kind of urban staging, or more precisely, as a scenography—a spatial [re]configuration of social relations and scenarios in the postindustrial global city. Unlike Harvey, I not only understood the popular appeal of the urban village, I also felt an affinity for its scaled down and localized scenographic techniques. The urban village construct, as envisioned in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, proposed a differentiated scenography of the local, an alternative to the imposed and imposing “globalized” scenography of mass consumption crafted by transnational capital. Having grown up in a small town that successfully fought off Walmart in the 1990s, only to see a Costco, Home Depot, Target, Pier One Imports, and more built in the subsequent decade, I could easily imagine the latter. This scenography produces space as “void,” and is characterized as much by the rapid imposition of voluminous big box stores and uniform corporate franchises as by revolving fronts, trap doors, and sudden disappearances with fluctuations in global markets. While I understood the appeal of the urban village, and felt its pull on me over and above the scenography of corporate capital, through Harvey's critique I read the urban village construct's promise to rescue deindustrializing places from urban standardization as complicated by its participation in the commodification of the places it would salvage and redeem.

In the discourse of HoMa, where it appeared in collocation with “creative,” “heritage” and “authentic,”²²¹ the urban village authorized an exclusionary and romantic localism, invoking the spatial as a conflict-free marketplace, and ordering the social (including class difference) through commercial exchanges and consumption.²²² A *Gazette* feature—one in a series on

²²¹ Since 2016, the SDC Hochelaga-Maisonneuve's marketing slogan has been “Hochelaga: créatif et authentique [Hochelaga: Creative and Authentic]” (Société de développement commercial d'Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, 2020).

²²² Social anthropologist Martha Radice (2009) describes how ethnic and cultural interaction and difference become commodified in public discourse surrounding neighbourhood shopping streets in Montreal. Radice's account suggests to me a way of thinking about the possible effects of the commodification and consumption of the “local” in urban revitalization discourse in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Commerce becomes the “universal language” that glides over or transcends cultural (and class) difference, and commercial exchange substitutes for other kinds of possible intercultural (or interclass) exchanges. In ethnically diverse neighbourhoods in the city, shopping streets are “multi-ethnic public spaces,” composed of “ethnically marked places and products” (Radice, p. 140). In drawing “diverse everyday users of local commercial streets (shopkeepers, customers, residents, passers-by)” into social encounters of cultural difference and commercial exchange and serving as “destinations” on tourist routes, shopping streets participate in the commodification of ethnicity and culture (p. 140). Radice registers the embrace of these shopping streets within public discourse, where they are “celebrated for their contribution to the city's

urban villages in Montreal²²³—was representative of this discourse. Once a “ghetto,” HoMa is now “on the way up,” and “slowly evolving” past its incumbent inhabitants and the social strife that marked its recent past. When incumbent residents or the working class appear in this article, it is as unthreatening antic type, folkloric object, or even comestible, a part of a romanticized or nostalgic scene. The author entices readers with a portrait of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve that is now “more Vespa than Harley” (a thinly cloaked reference to the violent biker wars of the 1990s), “hasn’t lost its working-class candour, which is part of the charm,” and still offers cheap Quebecois “comfort classics” in its *casse-croûtes* [greasy spoons] (Collette, 2012). In this urban village sketch, I encountered a scenography of the local as a consumer environment.

Material Signs of Class Antagonism in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

The socially harmonious account of the rebirth of HoMa in the *Gazette* feature clashed with my own observations at the time: social tensions were tangible, if not heightened. New condo projects had become tableaux for anti-gentrification and anti-capitalist messages, visible indicators of class antagonisms. A dowdy disposable coffee-cup cartoon character with a severe croissant moustache was popping up on light posts throughout the neighbourhood, a reference to the bakery at the Place Valois as a site of bourgeois consumption.²²⁴ On May 9, 2013, the windows of two businesses in the Place Valois were sprayed with yellow paint, acts attributed to anti-gentrification activists. The nighttime vandalism at the Place Valois garnered the attention of Radio-Canada (the French-language arm of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), which took these events as an opportunity to interview local residents not only about the vandalism but the gentrification of the neighbourhood. Many residents voiced concern that the new condo projects would increase rents in the district. As local interviewee Johanne Lampron remarked, “On veut faire un nouveau Plateau avec Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Mais ici, il y a des locataires qui ne peuvent pas travailler ou qui travaillent au salaire minimum.

conviviality, in newspaper features, alternative urban heritage tours and the like” (p. 140). In contrast, multiculturalism remains contentious in public (legal, educational, and health care) institutions, conflicting, critics contend, with the values of Quebec secularism championed during the Quiet Revolution.

²²³ Other “urban villages” in the series include the rapidly redeveloping quartiers of Saint-Henri, Griffintown, and Pointe-St-Charles (Collette, 2012).

²²⁴For context to this paste-up, I draw upon *chlag.info*, a site run by the Comité hochelaguien de lutte anti-gentrification (Hochelaga Anti-Gentrification Activist Committee). In an undated blog entry (likely published in 2016), a former employee described the staff positions offered at ArHoMA as temporary and minimum wage, with students prioritized in the hiring process (Anonymous, n.d.).

Les nouveaux sont bienvenus, mais les gouvernements doivent faire autant de logements sociaux que de condos. Sinon les gens se révoltent [“They want to turn Hochelaga-Maisonneuve into the new Plateau [a trendy neighbourhood in Montreal]. Here, however, there are renters who either can’t work, or who work for minimum wage. Newcomers are welcome, but the government needs to create as many social housing units as condos. If they don’t, people will revolt”]” (Despatie, 2013a).

As the locus for public debate about the socio-economic changes occurring in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, the businesses and condominiums bordering the public square incited both the approval and ire of new and incumbent residents of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. For these locals, and perhaps less so for those who visited as (culinary) tourists, the Place emblemized and indexed urban change, whether viewed positively, negatively, or somewhere in between. As both a cipher of and strange double to the place in which it would be performed, the performance event might complicate the urban village construct, disclosing the tensions and displacements involved in the production of the Place Valois as a place of and for consumption. From my standpoint, the parable’s critical read on neoliberal utopian urbanism—the pursuit of financial interests to the exclusion of social ones, and a model of ideal social relations based on commercial exchanges—resonated with these local and localized concerns about gentrification and its social displacements. Positioned as a local product or consumable within and in relation to the consumer environment of the Place, the dramaturgy of enchantment—the affective reanimation of the critical gesture and exploration of the potentiality of local material culture—might insinuate itself into the everyday activities of producing and consuming the local in this place. With my own “why here?” and “why now?” questions satisfied, I extended my search for correspondences to cultural memories, histories, and spatial politics of my found place prior to its conscription within urban village discourse, and before I became part of its scenography.

Redevelopment

I began this search with research into the 2002–2005 development of the Place Valois, gathering press related to the project.²²⁵ From urban planning documents, I learned that

²²⁵ For a thorough discussion of the numerous stages and planning of the Place Valois redevelopment, which is beyond the scope of this chapter and its aims, consult Philippe Cosette’s (2013) graduate thesis “L’emploi de représentations identitaires dans les projets urbains Montréalais: Le cas du secteur Valois/Ontario.” Drawing upon his thesis research, I summarize the stages of development in brief here. In 1997, the SDC Promenade Ontario

deindustrialization had radically altered the zone between Valois and Nicolet streets, referred to as the Valois/Ontario sector, comprising what is now the Place Valois and its adjacent terrain. The closure of the CN railway in 1997, the relocation of Usine Lavo—a large chemical and detergent factory—to the suburbs, and the environmental contamination resulting from years of industrial use left the future of this site uncertain. In 1997, the local businessowners association SDC Promenade Ontario identified this sector as a rift and rupture in the rhythms of the Promenade Ontario (Cosette, 2013, p. 35). They pushed for a redevelopment plan that would serve commercial interests along the Promenade Ontario, attract wealthier residents, and draw tourists toward an encounter with what they described as the authentic, working-class character of francophone Montreal (Cosette, 2013, p. 35).

In 2001, the Division de la planification et de la réglementation de la Ville de Montréal [Planning and Regulation Division of the City of Montreal]—in consultation with a committee composed of private architecture firms, real estate promoters, building owners, elected officials, municipal employees, members of the SDC Promenade Ontario, and municipal urban planning committees—released a preliminary plan for the Valois/Ontario sector (p. 46).²²⁶ Architecture firm EIDE/FIANU drew up the rationale and plans for a public space, the conversion of the CN railway tracks, and the transformation of the Usine Lavo terrain, identifying its primary objectives as strengthening business continuity and valorizing the local character of this sector, while seeking to improve the general quality of life and the attractiveness of the neighborhood (EIDE/FIANU et al., 2001, as cited in Cosette, p. 49). The

undertook a feasibility study for the redevelopment of the Valois/Ontario sector. In 2001, the city of Montreal created a preliminary plan and public consultation with the Comité en aménagement urbain Hochelaga-Maisonneuve for a variety of projects in this sector. Finally between 2003 and 2009, five different projects were realized, among them the Place Valois and the Lien Vert (a pedestrian promenade situated along the former train tracks). Cosette's thesis postdates Curiocté's outdoor public performances in the summer of 2013. I come to this work in the process of writing the exegesis, and have incorporated it here as it helps to clarify the urban planning processes for the Place Valois, and provides needed context for Galerie FMR's *L'Urbaine Urbanité*. At the time of siting *Abattoir de l'est* in the Place Valois, I was primarily reliant on Bissonet's now defunct website, and on the information I gleaned from news archives, urban planning documents available online, and Bissonet and Fournier's (2003) academic article.

²²⁶ This plan was in fact the second proposed for the Valois/Ontario sector. The first—which centred community organizations—was scuttled, for reasons that were not made clear to its architect Pierre Labonté. For a discussion of this first plan, and a thorough critique of the second plan, called *Le Plan d'aménagement préliminaire du secteur de la rue Ontario à l'angle de l'avenue Valois*, see Cosette (pp. 34–43; pp. 46–57). As Cosette notes, the EIDE/FIANU plan's analysis of the sector included neither a sociodemographic nor economic study; it focused solely on a study of the built environment (pp. 47–48).

initial plans for the Place Simon-Valois²²⁷—one of several projects included in the plan—comprised a stock of mixed commercial-residential buildings surrounding a public square and a new *maison de la culture* [cultural centre], the first of its kind in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.²²⁸

I learned in the course of my research that the plans for the *maison de la culture* had not been realized. Moreover, local artists had been key critics of the municipality's proposed development project. To understand how other artists had engaged with this contested place, with the processes of gentrification and urban renewal in the past, I oriented my research toward Galerie FMR's (Ephemeral Gallery) site-specific intervention *L'Urbaine Urbanité*, locating more information online, in local newspapers and art journals, and in the archives of Artexpte, a contemporary art library and research centre in downtown Montreal. This return to the archives, present within each of the movements of performance research described thus far, extended my contextual research into the fifth movement—the siting process—as I pursued connections between art and performance histories of place and the dual dramaturgy of the parable (the epic dramaturgy of urban ruination and the dramaturgy of enchantment).

²²⁷ The toponymy of Place Simon-Valois derives from Simon Valois (1791–1866), a businessman who owned the large tract of land on which it is now situated.

²²⁸ The public “place” is situated at the junction between the former cities of Hochelaga and Maisonneuve, and is modeled after the typical “place publique montréalaise” of a square surrounded by streets (Cosette, pp. 50–51).

B. Creative Correspondence: Galerie FMR's *L'Urbaine Urbanité* and the Memory of Local(e)

In 2002, sculptor and artistic director of the Galerie FMR Gilles Bissonnet²²⁹ and writer Pierre Crépô invited fellow resident-artists to respond to and resist the proposed plans for the Place Valois. Bissonnet was motivated by concerns about the lack of public consultation in the selection of the plan, the city's privileging of input from urban developers, and the proposed inclusion of a maison de la culture.²³⁰ Bissonnet and collaborator Michel Fournier (2003) put it this way: "It seems obvious to us that if this public place is being developed solely for private and economic interests, using cultural and social factors as a showcase, we are headed for urban disaster" (p. 19).

Between 2002 and 2003, the collective programmed a series of cultural and artistic events called *L'Urbaine Urbanité I* and *II* in the area slated to be redeveloped.²³¹ Through this event series, they sought to question the underlying assumptions of urban planning as it was implicated in the redevelopment of the Place Valois, to provoke critical thought about the role of public art and institutions in facilitating gentrification, and to realize alternative utopian urbanisms through cultural interventions in public space.

²²⁹ In 2009, Bissonnet started *La Galerie Qui Bouge* [The Gallery that Moves], a concept similar to Curioçité's mobile theatre, which brings performances into the public spaces of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. *La Galerie Qui Bouge* was conceived as an "art gallery that comes to the public, rather than the inverse" (<https://www.rrondissement.com/tout-get-communiques/tl/pl/u10480-galerie-bouge>). *La Galerie Qui Bouge* consisted of a cube van, the interior of which Bissonnet transformed into a public exhibition space which toured different locales in the city of Montreal, including parks, schools, and festivals.

²³⁰ Bissonnet read the maison de la culture project as a diversion of funds from local artists to construction companies. As Malcolm Miles (1997) notes, developers regularly include public art or spaces for public art within their plans as amenities, making art "complicit in the abjection . . . that follows development and the extension of privatisation and surveillance" (p. 1). In 2007, Bissonnet's collaborator, activist-artist Philippe Côté noted that since 1992, the Conseil des arts de Montréal [Montreal Arts Council] budget for artists had risen only by ten percent, whereas millions of dollars had been spent in constructing new maisons de la culture (Fisette, 2007, p. 27). Côté contended that money benefits construction companies more than local artists, and Bissonnet further suggested that artists ought to be involved in planning public spaces, rather than brought in as interior decorators after the fact. In a 2007 interview with *Espace sculpture's* Serge Fisette, Bissonnet argued that since their establishment in the 1980s, the maison de la culture has institutionalized culture, privileged visual artists, and decreased the amount of funding and atelier space available to resident-artists in the boroughs in which they have been installed (p. 26).

²³¹ In addition to the artistic programming of *L'Urbaine Urbanité I* and *II*, FMR held roundtables with artists, activists, academics, public officials, developers, and local residents, which, in addition to facilitating critical discussions on the interrelation of urbanism, spatial justice, and public art, ensured that local histories, present uses, and alternative plans for the Place Valois were brought to bear on municipal plans, remembered by and with others, and documented (in part) by artists and academics. For a discussion of roundtable proceedings and participants, see Sioui Durand (2005).

L'Urbaine Urbanité I (October 2–6, 2002) was a sustained, days-long event-cum-occupation, with a range of programming, from community art projects, to interventions by professional artists, to community organization and redevelopment planning information sessions. Seven artists (Gilles Bissonnet, Johanne Chagnon, Sylvie Cloutier, Pierre Crépô, Paul Grégoire, and Armand Vaillancourt) worked quickly to transform the buildings slated for demolition into an *agora de création* [creative agora], using performances, exhibitions, and installations to animate both interior and exterior spaces (Bissonnet & Fournier, 2003, p. 16).²³² The title *L'Urbaine Urbanité* played on the double meaning of the word *urbanité* [urbanity] as the state, condition or character of the city, as well as the virtues of courtesy and civility. Framed as an “innovative form of urban intervention” and an experiment in discovering the *urbanité* of public spaces, the agora was intended as a forum for popular discussion of urban planning, and oriented toward encouraging a wide range of social interactions (“convivialité”) among residents of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (Bissonnet & Fournier, p. 20).²³³

The five-day event served as a countdown to the demolitions, which were carried out in the early morning hours of November 2002, witnessed by only a handful of participants and spectators, Bissonnet among them.²³⁴ Bissonnet and his collaborators painted the façades of the three buildings white, and used the existing signage to redesignate the buildings as that which the bulldozers would eventually destroy. The whitewashed interiors and exteriors referenced the ephemerality of these structures, the white-out signalling their imminent erasure from the urban field. At the same time, the buildings, recast as white cubes, mimicked the voids of gallery space, as the artists slyly parodied their prescribed role in the development plan as set decorators or interior designers of gentrification. La Belle Gare Valois restaurant, retitled “Manger/Aimer/Marcher” [To eat/To love/To walk] on one marquee and “Disparition, Vitesse, Rêve” [Disappearance, Speed, Dream] on the other, served as an information station and

²³² For a description of these projects see Bissonnet and Fournier (2003). The Garage and La Belle Gare hosted performances and installations. In the former headquarters of the local newspaper *Les nouvelles de l'est* and office of Louise Harel (former MP of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve), Armand Vaillancourt installed a large photograph of Jean-Paul Riopelle's *La joute*, taken just before the sculpture-fountain was removed from its base at the foot of the Olympic Stadium, and transplanted in the *Quartier International* [International Quarter] of the city's downtown core.

²³³ An “agora” designates an ideal public space, and is rooted in historical images of classical democratic and sympotic spaces—the marketplace of Athens, for example (Wiles, 2003 p. 93).

²³⁴ In a personal interview in February 2020, Bissonnet related his efforts to document the demolition, carried out early in the morning in November 2002.

meeting point, hosting residents in its whitewashed interior, wherein waiters in white served white cake. The Garage Rozon—whose signage now read “Art Public” [Public Art] and “Gentrification?”—became a Garage de la culture [Cultural Garage], a reference to the proposed maison de la culture which was to take its place. In performance, specters of both distant and more recent pasts emerged alongside ghostly doubles of the present. Johanne Chagnon performed as a working-class phantom of a former era and as restaurant hostess. Paul Grégoire and André Pappaathomas’s *De but en blanc* [Point Blank] referenced the everyday activity of street hockey, as well as Quebecois pop artist Serge Lemoyne’s participatory happening *Slap shot* (1972) (Bissonnet & Fournier, p. 18).²³⁵



Figure 73. The Garage Rozon transformed into the Garage de la culture for *L'Urbaine Urbanité I*. From [Photograph of Garage de la culture during *L'Urbaine Urbanité I*], by P. Crépô, 2002, Private collection of the artist. Copyright 2002 by Pierre Crépô. Reprinted with permission.

²³⁵ Held at the first artist-run centre (Vehicule Art) in Montreal in 1972, *Slap shot* invited gallery-goers to shoot red and blue paint-filled hockey pucks at blank canvasses affixed to the walls to compose the exhibition.



Figure 74. La Belle Gare Valois restaurant, transformed. From [Photograph of the transformed Belle Gare Valois restaurant during *L'Urbaine Urbanité I*], by P. Crépô, 2002, Private collection of the artist. Copyright 2002 by Pierre Crépô. Reprinted with permission.

The events of *L'Urbaine Urbanité I* reoriented audiences toward the everyday spaces of the garage, restaurant, and a municipal office building, disclosing them as significant and valuable sites of heritage, conviviality and collective memory, rather than as symptoms of a perceived social decline of the neighbourhood. Siting an ephemeral agora which collected public memories in places on the verge of being disappeared, *L'Urbaine Urbanité I* activated the mnemonic qualities of the Place Valois, producing it as a memorable place and place of remembrance in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. In so doing, I suggest, these events reckoned with the models of historic preservation and heritage embedded in the Place Valois development plan and refused the dominant trope of conceiving of deindustrialized spaces as “voids.”²³⁶ I interpret the interventional scenography of *L'Urbaine Urbanité I* through folklorist and performance scholar Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s (1995) theorization of “the second life” of heritage and its collaborations with the tourist industry (p. 371). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett contends a heritage

²³⁶ Cosette (2013) notes that the *Plan* did not mobilize the word *patrimoine* (loosely translated as heritage, but certainly linked to patrimony), as had Labonté’s rejected proposal. Even as its architects refused the word, heritage discourse seeds through the *Plan* in its vague reference to maintaining local features or characteristics. As Cosette observes, the *Plan* advocated the preservation of the built environment, rather than maintenance of a way of life (p. 57).

industry economy “adds value to existing assets that have either ceased to be viable...or that never were economically productive...[H]eritage convert[s] locations into destinations and tourism make[s] them economically viable as exhibits of themselves. Locations become museums of themselves within a tourism economy. Once sites, buildings, objects, technologies, or ways of life can no longer sustain themselves as they once did, they ‘survive’—they are made economically viable—as representations of themselves. They stage their own rebirth as displays of what they once were, sometimes before the body is cold” (p. 371). The Place Valois plan enacted the double gesture of displacement and resignification of the local; excluding the enduring, lived social spaces of the Resto Belle Gare Valois and Garage Rozon, the plan proclaimed their obsolescence through recourse to the site’s “historic value.” The plan identified the site—irrespective of its current users and usages—as a local historic landmark and memory place, imposing a new toponymy and a built environment that referenced the industrial heritage of the neighbourhood through (primarily) architectural traces.

As I sifted through the archives of place and the performance series, the events of *L'Urbaine Urbanite I* appeared to me to reframe the municipal expropriations, demolitions, and proposed revitalization plans as forms of social violence and erasure. I began to see these events in relation to my own dramaturgy as staging an epic historicization of urban planning discourse in the city of Montreal, with the Place Valois redevelopment plan recast as an eidolon of the *grand projet*, Montreal’s variation on the modernist myth of creative destruction (see Introduction pp. 26–28). Creative destruction, the driving force behind Le Corbusier’s modernized Plan Voisin (1925) for Paris, refers to the wiping clean of the urban slate to make way for innovation. Part and parcel of modernity’s effort to constitute a break from a collective past, creative destruction scripts a new history, new city, and new society through the construction of a utopian urban space (Miles, 1997, p. 27).²³⁷ In an aptly theatrical framing of the myth of creative destruction, Harvey (1992) calls this the Faustian mode of urban planning. In order to “transfor[m] the wasteland into a thriving physical and social space,” Goethe’s Faust kills the “much-loved old couple who live in a small cottage by the sea-shore for no other

²³⁷ Le Corbusier, of his Voisin Plan, remarked:

[M]y settled opinion, which is a quite dispassionate one, is that the centres of our great cities must be pulled down and rebuilt, and that the wretched existing belts of suburbs must be abolished and carried further out; on their sites we must constitute . . . a protected and open zone, which when the day comes will give us absolute liberty of action, and in the meantime will furnish us with a cheap investment. (Le Corbusier, as cited in Miles, 1997, p. 27)

reason than the fact that they do not fit in with the master plan” (1992, p. 16). Through the events of *L’Urbaine Urbanité I*, the demolitions of La Belle Gare Valois and the Garage Rozon became legible to me as acts of displacement: these everyday working-class social spaces did not appear to belong in or to the master plan and its ideal scenography of the local.²³⁸ Through the archives of the events of *L’Urbaine Urbanité I*, I came to read the revalorization of local heritage proposed by the Place Valois project negatively as socio-spatial engineering—the imposition of a controlled public and commercial space, where the local of official heritage discourse supplanted an already existing *urbanité*.



Figure 75. The 2002 demolition of Garage de la culture/Rozon Garage, as represented in Gilles Bissonnet’s mural *Tout n’est pas de l’art*. In 2003, Bissonnet installed the mural on the site of the former Garage de la culture/Rozon Garage during *L’Urbaine Urbanité II*. From *Tout n’est pas de l’art* [Digital photograph with text], by G. Bissonnet, 2003, Private collection of the artist. Copyright 2003 by Gilles Bissonnet. Reprinted with permission.

²³⁸ I interpret such spaces as composing what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1983) refers to as the “folk imprint on the built environment” of the city. The folk imprint references the informal, unofficial uses and temporary appropriations of urban space by urban dwellers, in contrast to the monumental style and scale of corporate and institutional architectures, including designated public spaces (pp. 191–195).

A blueprint when *L'Urbaine Urbanité I* was performing in the Valois/Ontario sector, a representational structure shaping the future of the site, by June of 2013, the Place Valois project had been completed for almost a decade. My encounters with the memories and traces of *L'Urbaine Urbanité I*, with the documentation of the Place Valois *avant la lettre*, prompted me to return to the Place in the process of siting *Abattoir de l'est* with a renewed interest in its everyday scenography, in the routine users and usages, the social and material constituencies, that now characterized this place.

C. Attending to the Everyday Scenography of the Place Valois

Throughout the summer of 2013, I attended to the Place Valois at night on a regular basis, imagining this place as a found stage space for the intervention of Curiosité's theatrical cabinet and the enchanted dramaturgy of urban ruination. I drew upon the lens of spatial performativity to consider the "topographies and structures of power" embedded and embodied within the built environment, inclusive of their citation, subversion, or diversion (Irwin, p. 39), and upon the "scenographic traits" of the Place Valois (Hann, 2019). In *Beyond Scenography* (2019) Surrey, UK-based scholar Rachel Hann describes scenography as "a process of material acclimatization that occurs *in time* . . . [and] encompasses personal and social decisions, as well as the conditioning affects of physical environments that channel and direct action" (p. 19). Extending scenography "beyond" conventional theatrical practice to include the material, temporal, and intangible qualities of the built environment that orientate and organize our encounters with place, Hann argues that scenography is an act of "place orientation." Orientation implies "haptic proximities (distance, scale, etc.) and social perceptions (normativity, otherness, etc.)" as they emerge from the relations between bodies and objects (p. 15). Hann clarifies:

Orientations emerge from how bodies relate to objects (body-to-object), relate to other bodies (body-to-body), and how objects relate to objects (object-to-object). Acts of orientation extend to the intangible atmospheric qualities (bright-dim, hot-cold, loud-quiet), along with learned social conventions (familiar-unfamiliar, friend-stranger, safe-risky) (p. 19).

Scenography "orientat[es] a body-event relationship that alters or crafts an encounter with place" (p. 19), as the intervention of "scenographics," she contends, "render[s] places as attentive and extra-daily" (p. 83).²³⁹ Hann's discussion of scenography and scenographic traits provides a belated secondary framework (second to spatial performativity) for relating my experiences of the everyday scenography of the Place Valois. Her formulation of the scenographic assembles the mixture of social convention, material relations, and "intangible atmospheric qualities" through which I narrated my encounters with the Place Valois in the

²³⁹ Hann separates scenography from the scenographic trait, aligning her distinction between the two terms with the difference between theatre and theatricality; the former signals "crafting," the latter "orientating": "an object or event can impart a scenographic trait without necessarily being considered scenography" (p. 4).

siting process and sketched the scenographic environment (or found place) for *Curiosité's Abattoir de l'est*. As Hann's account of scenography helps me to organize these experiences and observations of place as a total environment retrospectively for the reader, the process story (below) includes reflective commentary on how Hann's scenography collects the multiplicity of phenomena together.

In these site visits, I also took up orientations toward place common within urban street performance, another “found space” genre. Street performances are necessarily conditioned by and attentive to the spatial performativity and scenographic traits of the urban environment as stage space.²⁴⁰ Street performers recognize the potential theatricality of a given urban space and “devise ways to invite the total participation of the environment,” incorporating incidental audiences and integrating “disruptions” and “distractions” of the site as “props, sets, actors for his [*sic*] show” (Harrison-Pepper, 1990, p. xv). Embodying holistic knowledges of the places in which they perform—and for regular performers, constituting a part of the everyday of these places—street performers navigate the many contingencies and negotiate the normative orders of public spaces in the city.²⁴¹

In my nightly visits to the Place Valois, I reflected upon the performativity and the already extant scenographic traits of the Place, seeking out accidental theatres, and reflecting upon on how I was being oriented by—even seduced by—this place. I speculated as to how *Curiosité* might intervene in the built environment, and where we might situate ourselves in relation to the movement flows and gathering patterns created by these features. I considered the effects (desired or otherwise) our presence might have on everyday and normative rhythms of place. How might the installation of the *Curiosité* cabinet in the Place transform how people engage with, navigate, or attend [to] this site?

²⁴⁰ In *Circle in the Square* (1990), a performance ethnography of street performers and buskers in New York's Washington Square Park, theatre scholar Sally Harrison-Pepper notes that:

the city exerts a primary influence on both [the] perception and reception [of street performance]. The shape, texture, and uses of urban space determine behavioral expectations, performance structures, and the theatrical frame. The width of a sidewalk or shade from a tree, the noise surrounding the performance space, the proximity of other performers, the social as well as the atmospheric climates, the civic regulations concerning performance activities—all are part of the street performer's daily, even minute-to-minute negotiations with a fluid and vital urban environment. (p. xv)

²⁴¹ Parallel to these site visits, I undertook further research into the management and policing of public spaces in the city of Montreal, including gathering information related to busking regulations and fees and performance permits.



Figure 76. The Place Valois in 2008, as framed by newspaper photographer Robert Mailloux. From *Les projets immobiliers se multiplient à proximité des rues Ontario et Sainte-Catherine Est, dans le quartier Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (HoMa pour les branchés)* [Photograph], by R. Mailloux, 2008, *La Presse* (<https://images.lpcdn.ca/924x615/200805/10/84031-projets-immobiliers-multiplient-proximite-rues.jpg>). Copyright 2008 by Robert Mailloux and *La Presse*. Reprinted with permission.

Process Story: A Scenographic Sketch of the Place Valois

I approach the Place Valois as a scenographic environment, considering the ways in which its configuration is already orientating me (and our potential audiences). From the southwest corner of rue Ontario, near the condominiums sited on the former Usine Lavo terrain, the Place appears to converge upon the Stade Olympique, the iconic landmark at the vanishing point of this perspectival scene. At my feet, I find heritage inscribed into the built environment: a textual trail of the dates of operation for the CN railway lines the Promenade Luc-Larivée, a pedestrian pathway superimposed over the former tracks.²⁴²

The Promenade Luc-Larivée cuts through the middle of the Place on a diagonal and splays out like a fan, with granite benches contouring the crossing and creating a spread of what appear to me to be traverse stages. The benches channel pedestrian movement either straight through the square or funnel it outward toward the edges, where the businesses are located, while also providing sitting and resting spots. I've often encountered folks sleeping on them during the daytime. These, I imagine, could act as audience seating during a performance. The

²⁴² As Cosette (2013) notes, the pedestrian pathway was named after a much beloved and at the time recently deceased local resident Luc Larivée (p. 129).

benches, trees, and oddly placed white marble cubes further break up the central square—what is designated as public space—into smaller gathering areas and pathways for movement.²⁴³ The arc-sodiums surrounding the Place Valois flicker on at dusk, around 9 p.m. in the summer, flooding the public square with a bright security wash overnight. This leaves few (if any) pockets of darkness in the public square, deterring overnight guests, and, with respect to *Curiosité*, potentially interfering with our shadow theatre techniques. In the evening, employees of the bakery and *saucissier-crèmerie* [sausage and ice cream shop] collect and secure the bistro tables and chairs lining their shopfronts, which during the day provide al fresco dining options for patrons, and a front row seat to the activities of the public square.

I head to the edges of the square, toward the crafted consumer environments of the food shops and restaurant, sensing their intangible strategies of scenographic seduction drawing me close.²⁴⁴ Inviting olfactory atmospheres—buttery pastry, smoked sausage, melted chocolate and vanilla ice cream—waft from the bakery and *saucissier-crèmerie* into the square. The glass-paned garage doors of the bakery—an homage to the Garage Rozon?—are hoisted open, an invitation to the passerby to pass through the fourth wall and become part of the scene: a cheese counter and a backdrop of carefully stacked loaves offer further enticement.

From behind a row of shrubbery and planter boxes acting as a privacy screen, the *terrasse* of the Restaurant Valois—not to be confused with the Resto Belle Gare Valois—extends its art nouveau ambiance beyond its physical footprint: flickering tea lights, lilting conversation, clinking glassware, the atmospherics and musical score of date night seep through gaps in the foliage, offering a semi-public display of intimacy and conviviality to the passerby, and to diners, discrete peepholes onto the informal performances of the public square.

Along Rue Valois, the western edge of the public square, a row of taxis, windows rolled down, drivers (mostly men) chatting and smoking on the sidewalk as they await hire. In the

²⁴³ Subsequent research suggested that the intention of this design was indeed to prevent large gatherings; Cosette (2013) notes that original architect Pierre Labonté was told by the members of the SDC Promenade Ontario not to make the public space too large or open for fear that it would encourage loitering, and become a refuge for itinerant folks (p. 36).

²⁴⁴ I borrow the concept of “scenographic seduction” from Rachel Hann (2019). Hann contends that scenographics can operate both as “a means of display (of communication) and seduction (of attraction and immersion)” (p. 108). Scenographic seduction refers to the use of scenographics within material cultures to “manipulate the potential of an affective atmosphere to inform decision-making” (p. 108). In this case, I read the prescribed activities suggested by the café culture scenographics of the Place Valois businesses as purchasing and consuming the local, including the visual consumption of the local embodied in the public square.

middle of the square, early in the evening, a cluster of older men on mobility scooters congregate around a bench with a boombox, Top 40 hits blaring. I wonder if they used to gather at the Resto Belle Gare. After dinner, families arrive with strollers, and camp out on the benches, ice cream cones in hand. A dog tethered to a lamppost awaits its guardian, presumably ducked into one of the nearby shops. An artist lays his oil pastel sketches of monsters, comic, and Star Wars characters along the sidewalk for sale. Waiters, shop staff, and restaurant patrons alike grab a smoke on the benches. Some nights, they are treated to a virtuosic performance by a local itinerant violinist who often sits cross-legged on the corner of the square and toward the edge of the sidewalk, dangerously close to passing traffic.

The scenography of the Place Valois—the perspectival staging of the Stade Olympique, the reciprocal spectatorial exchanges conducted between the public square and the commercial facades, the tabletop performances of fine dining and local consumption, the busking performances in the central square—appears to me as a *mise-en-abyme* of interlocking theatrical scenes. I consider the scenographics of the *Curiocité* cabinet in relation to those of the Place. The cabinet, in its resemblance to a street vendor’s cart, a shop vitrine, and even a television console, is its own sort of attraction. The glow of our halogen lights, the scale and frontal perspective of the cabinet, and the unamplified voices of the actors and the acoustic guitar will draw audiences in so as to hear and take advantage of limited sightlines. We may appear to be selling something, though we are not asking for money.

Within this profusion of local attractions, I imagine *Curiocité’s Abattoir de l’est* positioned in several places, one stage space of many. If we can avoid lighting interference, the performance event might take place within one of the interior channels created by the granite benches in the public square. Or, we might situate the cabinet in the middle of the Promenade Luc-Larivée, at a remove from the mobility scooter congregation and the violinist (and their sonic reach), and at the centre of the perspectival scene, with the Stade Olympique as monumental background.

I wonder, however, if occupying the pedestrian thoroughfare might impede access to the square and surrounding condominiums, potentially irritating the merchants and residents, already on edge due to recent vandalism. At best, we might be forced to relocate. Given the time-intensive nature of the set-up for *Curiocité*, the prospect of a last-minute relocation is not ideal. Moreover, while from my standpoint, the parable is to “ghost” the “host”—to question,

confound, or reanimate the urban village construct and the commodification of the local in the Place Valois—I also grasp that telling the story *in situ*—and ensuring the relative safety of the actors—will require good-faith negotiation and a willingness to share space with the many users of the Place Valois, including its merchants, residents, and other regulars. The previous spring and summer’s protest law (*Loi 78*), the restrictions on public gatherings in the city of Montreal, and my own and my collaborators’ differential experiences of police violence related to disobeying public space ordinances (see Chapter 2, p. 185) further guide my approach to this public space, and prompt me to pursue a permit to perform in the Place Valois.

Securing Permits

Finding performance dates is particularly difficult, as Julie Tamiko-Manning and Julian Menezes have other production commitments and longer-term contracts that offer them more job security and take precedence over this project. For our two outdoor public performances, we will be short Raisonneuse and a live musician. We find two dates for performances over the summer that work for the remaining actors: June 30 and July 20. I contact the city to obtain permits for our performances in the public spaces of the Place Valois and the Marché Maisonneuve, the intended site of our second performance.

The city sends me an email response telling me to inquire with the SIDAC, the private organization of businesspeople which handles programming for public spaces along the Promenade Ontario, including the Place Valois, and the group which had been at the forefront of the redevelopment of the Valois/Ontario sector. This redirect is a surprise to me. But I contact the administrative assistant via email to inquire, and quickly receive an email response:

Les Promenades Hochelaga-Maisonneuve ne voient pas d'inconvénient à ce que vous performiez dans notre secteur. Si vous n'entravez pas la circulation et que vous ne faites pas de vente, il ne devrait pas y avoir de problèmes. Mais pour vous assurer de la légalité de votre projet, je vous conseille de communiquer avec la ville en appelant au 311.

The Promenades Hochelaga-Maisonneuve don't see any problems with you performing in our area. As long as you don't block traffic, or make sales, there shouldn't be any problem. But, to assure the legality of your project, I advise you to contact the city info line (311).

In short, as long as we are neither in the way, nor selling anything—and thus, competing with the merchants nearby—we do not pose a problem. I consult with the city about the legal issues mentioned by the Promenade organization, and the representative with whom I speak asks me to obtain a permit for performance. Later, consulting dates with the Promenade assistant on the phone, she informs me that the date and time in question are reserved for a community event involving the use of loudspeakers, and that the Place will not be available to us. We will need to find another locale.

Unpermitted: Performing in Parc Hochelaga

The week prior to our first performance, we are still without a found space. I discuss the possibility of performing without a permit with Nicolas, Mélanie, and Rae. They agree to do so, and together, we brainstorm a list of sites where we might encounter incidental audiences, while avoiding merchants concerned by our presence, other planned community events or performances with which we might conflict, and police interference. These concerns take precedence over dramaturgical correspondences, for the time being.

I gravitate toward Parc Hochelaga, a recreational space which presents different audiences, proximities, material affordances and contingencies than the commercialized public space of the Place Valois. A neighbourhood park, most often frequented by children, but where teens and adults “hang out,” play pétanque, or drink and smoke on summer evenings, in the summer of 2013 Parc Hochelaga is an interclass, interracial, intergenerational gathering place. Within blocks of the social housing projects created as part of the redevelopment of the Usine Lavo terrain, the park is also adjacent to a public pool, children’s library, and elementary school, and not far from rue Ontario and the Notre-Dame bike path. Parc Hochelaga also provides us with a contingency plan: in the event of rain, we can shelter beneath the covered chalet.

In contrast to the six-month siting process I undertook for the Place Valois, I had but one rehearsal-packed week to consider the possible correspondences between parable and place, and to reconceptualize the work that the performance event might do here (see Prompt Book I, pp. 1–8). I did not have time to do my usual archival dig into the collective memories of the site, and relied instead on my personal experiences of Parc Hochelaga, and on my encounters with other users and usages of this site. This foreshortened process also meant that much of the work of siting and set-up was done on the fly, on the evening of the performance, and in collaboration with Alain, Nicolas, Mélanie, Rae, and even a few audience members.

Reflections on a Displaced Performance Event, the Invocation of Private Space, and the Production of Public Space as Venue

Through my attempt to stage *Abattoir de l'est* in the Place Valois, I discovered the extent to which this public space was managed and programmed by the municipality and SIDAC. While I had suspected that the merchants might casually police the areas in front of their businesses, I had been working under the assumption that, as a public space, the acquisition for a permit was a nominal rather than mandatory procedure. I had also presumed that the Place would be “available” to us, not foreseeing that gaining permission to perform or use the space would be conceived in such proprietary terms, nor that gaining official permission might entail displacement of other events. Whether engaged by me or by community organizations who were “booking” the public spaces along rue Ontario, the permitting process invoked a vertical (or institutional) power structure and proprietary order of public space. Permit holders, licensed by the SIDAC and the city, gained protected and privileged access to these public spaces to the exclusion of others. I yet wonder about the possibility of performing without a permit in the Place Valois, and suspect that I missed an opportunity to coordinate shared use of the Place with the other community organization for whom it had been “reserved.”



Figure 77. The beer garden at the Place Valois, with crowd control fencing. September 1, 2019. Personal photograph.

What I did not recognize in June 2013 became obvious to me in February 2020, when I completed this chapter. In 2013, the Place Valois was already in the process of becoming an eventful social space—a venue. Leslie Kern’s (2016) discussion of how gentrification acts upon the rhythms and social spaces of a neighbourhood, transforming everyday, “non-eventful” space into organized, eventful social space aligned with consumption resonates with my ongoing encounters with the Place Valois. Since my efforts to stage *Abattoir de l’est* there in summer 2013 to the date of writing (February 2020), the programming of the Place has intensified. While community organizations make up some of this programming, a hefty balance of the events are commercially-oriented, with farmer’s markets, artisan and craft fairs, and Christmas tree vendors occupying the public space of the Place. In September 2019, the Place was transformed into a beer garden, meaning that users had to purchase tickets to enter the public space.²⁴⁵ I do not mean to deprive folks of the small pleasures of local consumption; I am not, for instance, suggesting that eating a croissant is analogous to internalizing the whole of neoliberal capitalism as worldview. Much as the perverse scale of the metaphor pleases me, I am not so austere. However, the commercial orientation of much of the public programming delimits the range of possible acts that may be performed in the Place Valois. The public invited to assemble here on a regular basis often does so at a cost, and with a designated activity prescribed. And the Place now appears to “speak” this same exclusionary rhetoric. There are now signs against loitering posted outside businesses, door panels advertising bathrooms for customers only, and placards on lampposts citing municipal bylaws forbidding users from leashing their dogs to the trees and light fixtures. A speaker perched atop a tower of aluminum scaffolding at the centre of the Place blares Christmas or pop music, depending on the season. I wonder if this has been devised by the business owners’ association not only to create a festive atmosphere, but to drown out the radios of the elderly men who frequent the square to socialize rather than shop at the businesses or eat in the restaurant.

²⁴⁵ The “beergarden” [sic] event is described here: <https://hochelaga.ca/evenements/evenement/22/>

D. Summary, Reflections, and Bridge to the Next Chapter

This chapter elaborated on the ways in which curiosity toward the personal, dramaturgical, political, social, and scenographic correspondences between event and place drove the siting of *Abattoir de l'est* in found place. Through research into the pasts and presents of the Place Valois, the site appeared to me as an emblem of the urban village construct and its scenography of the local, a situation of explicit interclass conflict, and as a disappeared working-class social space remembered as such through the archives of *L'Urbaine Urbanité*. In June of 2013, the discourse of the Place Valois appeared to me as a meaningful correspondent for the epic dramaturgy of urban ruination and the dramaturgy of enchantment of *Abattoir de l'est*. Through site visits, I encountered the Place Valois as a scenographic environment in its own right, supportive not only of parable's dual dramaturgies, but of other local narratives, constituencies, and activities. I experienced the scenographic seduction of the built environment of the Place Valois, the invitation to enjoy the local(e)—including the heterogeneity of the public square—as a phantasmagoric consumer environment, with interclass orientations (relations) managed through mutual spectatorship between public and private space. I envisioned the *Curiosité* cabinet and *Abattoir de l'est* as a strange double and critical intervention in this site's staging of local heterogeneity as spectacle, an enchanting display of some of the local histories, memories, and potentialities displaced by, excluded from, or foreclosed upon by the urban village ideal.

In applying for a permit at the Place Valois, I had sought to negotiate safer, sustained access to this public space for myself and the actors. In doing so, I inadvertently invoked the proprietary orders governing its use, and participated in the process of transforming the Place Valois into a programmed venue. *Curiosité's* performances in public space—one permitted, the other not—revealed additional points of privilege. Police appeared at both of our performances in outdoor public space, and paid us no mind on either occasion (see Prompt Book 1, p. 4 and Prompt Book 2, p. 83). I suspect that we benefited both from the implicit license and privileged access to public space afforded to the white middle-class in Montreal. We camped out in Parc Hochelaga and Marché Maisonneuve for hours at a time unmolested, rehearsing and setting up for each performance, doing things that itinerant folks cannot do in those same spaces, including laying out tarpaulins, hanging drapes, securing the cabinet to public buildings with rope, even lighting fires (in our case, for mosquito coils). Moreover, I think this speaks to the

way that local art (especially public art) has been folded into the normative orders of public spaces, centred in commercial discourses surrounding the revitalization of the neighbourhood as “value added.” At Parc Hochelaga, the children we met presumed we were one of many cinema and television crews they have encountered in this locale, while at Marché Maisonneuve, we competed for use of the space with a film crew. At our first performance, we drew the attention of a local rickshaw tourism company who offered to add Parc Hochelaga—a site not originally on their route—to their itinerary on the nights we were performing. I wondered what role our recurring presence might play in transforming this place into a destination on the tourist itinerary, and into a programmed venue.

In the conclusion to the exegesis, through fields notes composed in walking in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve in the years after *Curiocité*'s performances, I “return” to several of the places of performance research to remark upon continuities, changes, and unknowns/indeterminacies. (To say that this is a “return” is already not quite right: the I which returns, and the places of return, are otherwise). In this coda, memories of my performance research and the extended, iterative process of composing the exegesis reanimate my encounters with the local, these experiences (as well as others) reorienting my optics and attentions, attuning me to new or occluded sites and senses of curiosity, and suggesting future extensions for the *Curiocité* programme.

Coda

In the years following *Curiosité's* performances of *Abattoir de l'est*, I have continued to walk and collect in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, returning to the places that inspired my performance research project. Shaped dually by the making processes and memories of *Abattoir de l'est* and by the reflective practices of the exegesis, the passages below bear their iterative effects, conceptual and theoretical [re]orientations, opening onto more relational, curious, and enchanted methods of walking and writing the city. The passage also bears traces of its repurposing as a coda to this reflective work in the present (summer 2020).

Autumn Walk: 2016

Urban Nature

Le Botanik. À venir été 2015. The billboard presides over a deep depression in the ground, which used to be Moe's, a large, boxy eatery on rue Sherbrooke not far from Montreal's *Jardin botanique* [Botanical Garden]. The far edge of the hole a slice revealing a geological time scale exceeding urban memory.

Though it is fall 2016, *Le Botanik*—Mondev's projected 112-condominium project announced as completed on the billboard—is still only an image. The billboard depicts a four-storey box of model units and boasts of private balconies and an interior courtyard. I admire the immensity of the hole. The proposed building would, I imagine, fit into its volume perfectly, the roof meeting the sidewalk, with only a bit of a gap. It will be a shame to see it filled in.

Later that evening, I visit the company's website:

HoMa's flourishing community was catalyzed in 2005 with the opening of Place Simon-Valois, an open-air plaza with businesses and condos created to help increase social and commercial activity. With a thriving local economy and increasing population, the demand for new condos in Hochelaga is growing steadily. Residents have some of the best restaurants in the city, in addition to artisan coffee shops, boutique stores and lively entertainment. New businesses and startups are also on the rise with affordable rent and less competition, resulting in the neighbourhood's collaborative vibe that supports its local businesses.

Despite its rising popularity, HoMa hasn't lost its small-town feel either. The neighbourhood's charm, mostly due to its eclectic mix of residents and working-class candour, is alluring for any buyer searching for culture, diversity and urban flair. Mondev's condos for sale in Hochelaga are among the most coveted in the city, and is set to be one of the most stunning areas for independent, urban living. (Mondev Construction, 2016)

Here, orbiting once again around the Place Valois, I encounter the familiar tropes of urban revitalization discourse and *mixité sociale*, the ready-made unity of the urban village, defined by its originary "small-town" feel and its diversity without difference or dispute. Place imagined paradoxically as a closed local system that yet remains open to and improved upon by the condo buyer, the start-up, the entrepreneur. Absent the class conflicts that marked its recent

past, and which persist in my memory, in this imaginary of the city, even among the capitalists, there is “less competition.”

I return to the unfinished Le Botanik, wondering what other desires might be held in the commodity form, and what future potentialities this hole holds open.

Le Botanik’s namesake, the adjacent Jardin botanique, is a 190-acre collection of horticultural wonders from around the world.²⁴⁶ A grandiose botanical garden had originally found a place in the City Beautiful plan for Maisonneuve of 1914 (see Figure 7, p. 23).²⁴⁷ But the garden was abandoned soon after Maisonneuve’s annexation to Montreal in 1918. In 1931, then-mayor of Montreal Camillien Houde revived a downscaled version among his depression-era public works projects, and in 1936, the Jardin botanique de Montréal opened to the public (*Historique du Jardin botanique: Chronologie*, n.d.).

Le Botanik and Le Jardin, each in their own way, reflect a social desire for urban nature, opening onto the question of the right to nature (and nature’s own rights) in the city. Thus far, I have left out of the exegesis these questions of urban nature, even as they cluster around so many of the sociocultural issues of the neighbourhood which have concerned me, and as they confronted me in my earliest walks with Curiocté.

While the northern boundary of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve hosts a garden wonderland open to the (paying) public,²⁴⁸ its southern riverine shoreline remains largely off limits. Looking down onto Hochelaga-Maisonneuve from the elevation of Rue Sherbrooke, I sense a Gothic atmosphere. On this overcast, cool afternoon, the mists rise over Sucrierie Lantic and the St. Lawrence River.²⁴⁹

As I witnessed in my walks along the chain-link fencing that separates Rue Notre-Dame from the shoreline, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve’s contemporary waterfront bears the traces of the unsettling processes of both industrialization and deindustrialization: industrial infrastructure and post-industrial brownfields line the shore, restricting public access to the river.

From the outset of my performance research, this stretch of urban shoreline had appeared to me as a curiosity—a place at the interstice between nature and culture, emblemized

²⁴⁶ The botanical garden hails from the same imperialist and Cartesian spatial imagination that gave rise to the pleasure garden, the *theatrum mundi*, the natural history museum, and the modern city, among others.

²⁴⁷ See Linteau (1981/1985) for a description of the elaborate plans for this park, which, in addition to a botanical garden, included a zoo, aquarium, hippodrome, museum, library, art gallery, hotels, and artificial lakes (p. 156).

²⁴⁸ I’ve purchased the *amis du jardin* [friends of the garden] resident pass which allows me year-round access to its outdoor exhibitions, greenhouses, and library.

²⁴⁹ The Kanien’kehá:ka named the river that washes the southern shore of the island of Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) Kahrhionhwa’kó:wa—The Great Sized River. Kahrhionhwa’kó:wa flows northeast from Oniatari:io (Lake Ontario) to Tiohio’sista’kowáhne (the Atlantic Ocean) (Delaronde & Engel, 2015a, 2015b). The river’s colonial toponym—referencing the feast day of Saint Lawrence—dates from French navigator Jacques Cartier’s arrival in the Gulf of the river in 1535, according to one early twentieth-century chronicler (and celebrant) of colonialism (Johnson, 1905/2007, p. 57). Patron saint of the poor and of cooks, Saint Lawrence was a Roman martyr, reported to have been roasted alive on the gridiron, the saintly attribute featured in his depiction. Saint Lawrence’s feast day of August 10 coincided with the arrival date of Cartier.

respectively by the river course and the city. Of course, as Lucy Lippard (1997) reminds us, while the city is often taken as synonym and index of the social, it is also “a ‘natural place’ although sometimes a grotesquely fragmented one” (p. 251). My personal and distanced encounters with the built environment of the industrialized waterfront (the industrial sublime?), my engagements with the archive of riverine representations—particularly nineteenth-century depictions and more recent accounts of pollution by the city’s overloaded sewage infrastructure—shaped my impressions of this shoreline as a place haunted by ongoing processes of capitalist colonialism.

Poised between the dramaturgy of urban ruination and the dramaturgy of enchantment, the urban riverbank appeared through the Gothic mode, its shadowy thresholds and its hybridized, haunted, and antagonistic nature-culture relations. The Gothic’s mapping of these hybrid interrelations brings their ontologies and ecologies together as entangled and interdependent, staging nature’s (and/or the nonhuman’s) transgressive agency beyond—and often in conflict with—human (and more specifically, imperial) designs upon it.

Uncertainty, Gothic scholar Mary Beth Inverso (1990) contends, is Gothic literature’s only certainty: “in the Gothic universe, where metamorphosis is the rule, things are *not* what they seem. The senses are unreliable, no matter how acute; sensory data only serves to deepen ontological confusion” (p. 10). The Gothic mode resists closure, resolution, and explanation: “Unlike fairy tales, Gothic tales ‘don’t come out right.’ They strike us as arbitrary, unsettled, uncertain . . . The Gothic subverts closure as part of its ongoing program of destabilization and deconstruction” (p. 2). In its resistance to narrative closure and sense-making, I see the Gothic as entertaining curiosity, directing its destabilization toward the “settled” or fixed—notions of place, bourgeois mores, and views of reality and colonial history. The Gothic re-members the repressed, suppressed, the (super)natural, the irrational others of the City, not as past but as present, enacting the “haunting,” as Jacques Derrida (1994) asserts, which “belongs to the structure of every hegemony” (as cited in Sugars & Turcotte, 2009a, p. vii). In its recall of the past in the present, the Gothic opens onto the ongoingness of imperial formations and entailments in the present while also asserting the belonging of the displaced.

In this thought, I am caught by and in an uncanny olfactory atmosphere. The smell of baking bread, cookies, crackers. Sweetness wafts over the unfinished Le Botanik. This scent, part of the everyday sensorium of the neighbourhood, might soon disappear. The multinational Mondelez company, which occupies the terrain east of boulevard Viau, is one of the few remaining food production plants still situated in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve; the company recently announced that it will be shutting down operations in Montreal, citing high production costs—the highest in North America (Gosselin, 2016). At present, there are 454 workers employed at the plant, which produces a variety of snacks, including Oreo cookies and Ritz crackers. Next to the factory, a warehouse: open to the public to buy discounted seconds. The impending loss of these local manufacturing jobs confronts the “thriving local economy” of new start-ups and restaurants in Mondev’s urban village. I wonder what role exists for these factory employees within this new local economy, whether the non-unionized service jobs these local businesses

create will be any less (or more) precarious than factory work. And what will become of the disused plant?¹²⁵⁰

My thoughts drift to recent recastings of industrial architecture that did not turn out according to plan. The Biscuiterie Viau (Viau Cookie Factory) (1906–2003) had once used St. Lawrence Sugar to produce its cookies—the most famous of which was the chocolate-covered marshmallow Whippet. In 2006, developers transformed the factory into loft-style condominiums.

New residents soon found themselves in the territory of the Gothic, however, as toxic mould crept through the walls, sickening many before it was discovered in 2013. After affected residents filed a lawsuit against the building's promoter, developer, and entrepreneur, the mould was eradicated (see Despatie, 2013b). At least temporarily, however, urban nature, the nonhuman had surfaced as antagonist—allied, one could say, with a human antagonist—to reclaim this postindustrial space, to assert its right to the city.

Toxic mould has haunted other industrial era structures in the neighbourhood in recent years, forcing the simultaneous (and continued) closure of three different public elementary schools: École Hochelaga, École St-Nom-de-Jésus, and École Baril.²⁵¹ Teachers, staff, and students at these schools complained in 2010 of poor air quality, respiratory difficulties, and illnesses. When toxic mould was discovered inside the buildings' walls, the schools were closed, plywood placed over the windows, and the more than 800 students shuttled to the neighbouring secondary schools (Paquette, 2016). Residents, teachers, and education advocates described the schools as having long been in need of renovation, pointing to gaps in the provincial funding of education and a neglect of public infrastructure that ultimately forced the permanent closure of École Hochelaga and the demolition of the École Baril in spring 2015.

I had first learned about these closures during a walk in the neighbourhood in September 2013, when I encountered a site-specific installation plastering the boarded-up windows of the École Baril: *plan américain* portraits of displaced students and posters informing passersby that students had been without a local school for more than two years. The posters were removed the following day by order of the school board, before I had a chance to snap a photograph.²⁵² Between the Biscuiterie Viau and the ruined École Baril, I register the uneven social impacts of environmental crises manifested at the local level, effects compounded by the slow violence of neoliberalism.

²⁵⁰ Mondelez closed its Hochelaga-Maisonneuve plant in 2017, and was purchased in 2018 by Boutique la Vie en Rose Inc., a retailer specializing in lingerie and swimsuits. Now the headquarters of the company and its distribution centre, the former cookie factory employs 400 people (Jolicoeur, 2018).

²⁵¹ The École Baril reopened in 2018, after a seven-year renovation that salvaged a portion of its entryway (see Figure 78).

²⁵² The artists remain anonymous, and as of summer 2020, a local newspaper article featuring photographs of the intervention has been pulled from paper's website, possibly because the photographs depict children.



Figure 78. The entryway of the École Baril, after the demolition of the surrounding structure in May 2015. Personal photograph.

I am haunted by these recurring images of ruination; the ruin is always creeping up on me, imposing itself even as I try to hold on to enchantment.

Rita Felski (2015), Jane Bennett (2001), and Ann Stoler (2008) have become a part of my interior landscape of walking, haunting—or rather re-enchanting—my reflections. I wonder about the unintended consequences of the perpetual exhumation of enduring imperial formations. I wonder, for instance, if my critical disposition toward an imperialist conception of urban nature overstates (or affirms) its powers of definition and determination, overshadowing the differential nature-culture relations that exist (and have long existed) in, as, and before the city. And I wonder about the limits of the Gothic and its condensations, allegory and its

abstractions, and their simplifications of complex imperialist processes. Have I transformed colonial history into a vague “legacy,” as Stoler cautions against, staging “unfinished history” as an overdetermined “genealogy of catastrophe” (p. 195)? If the archives and structures of imperialism have haunted my own conception of the city in this iteration of the project, where will this reflexive reckoning with the imperial undead lead?

I return to toponymy. Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. A colonial distortion of a Kanien’kéha word that French colonizer Jacques Cartier subsequently attributed to the island of Montreal in the sixteenth century, conjoined with the seigneurial title of the French “founder” of Montreal (Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve), the official toponym bears the history of French colonization on the island and attests to the “naming and claiming” practices of settler-colonial governments.²⁵³

Yet I am aware of the Indigenous histories and presents of this place not only through colonial distortion. I also encounter Tiohtià:ke, the Kanien’kéha name for the island of Montreal. As a settler in Tiohtià:ke, I live in unceded Indigenous lands and waterways, including those of the Kanien’kehá:ka Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, whose oral traditions and histories confirm their foundational and ongoing presence in and around the island, and their special relations with this place. Widely acknowledged as the custodians of Tiohtià:ke, the Kanien’kehá:ka Nation’s stewardship of the lands and waters shape(d) the past, present, and future of the city. Tiohtià:ke is an abbreviation of Teionihiohtiá:kon, which translates to “where the group divided/parted ways,” referencing the island as a stopping point and site of diplomacy and exchange among First Nations peoples. This toponym speaks to the island’s longstanding history as a gathering place for many First Nations, and to its ongoingness as a gathering place for a diverse urban Indigenous community²⁵⁴ and other peoples.²⁵⁵

The hyphenated toponym Hochelaga-Maisonneuve articulates—in the present—a historical and ongoing relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples in the neighbourhood. According

²⁵³ As I describe in footnote 75, differing accounts exist as to which Haudenosaunee word Cartier misinterpreted when he arrived in Tiohtià:ke (Montreal). Kanien’kehá:ka (Kahnawake) curator Ryan Rice (2009) writes that “upon its initial colonization, the island of Montreal was originally named Hochelaga. It was mistakenly thought to mean ‘large rapids’ due to a miscommunication during French explorer Jacques Cartier’s 1535 first meeting with the inhabitants of the island. Cartier named the territory *Hochelaga*, a misinterpretation of the Mohawk [Kanien’kéha] word *Osheaga*. *Osheaga*, which translates as ‘people of the shaking hand,’ was the term used by the original occupants to describe how Cartier and his crew greeted them” (italics in original, p. 12).

²⁵⁴ According to 2016 census estimates, the city of Montreal has 12,035 residents of Indigenous identity—which includes both status and non-status First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples—accounting for .7% of the city’s residents (Montréal en statistiques & Service du développement économique, 2018b, p. 24; see also footnote 14, this exegesis, for a discussion of census categories).

²⁵⁵ I draw this account of Indigenous Peoples, communities, and First Nations’ presence in and stewardship of Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) from the Indigenous Directions Leadership Group at Concordia, and its excursus to the “Territorial Acknowledgement at Concordia University, Tiohtià:ke/Montréal” (2017) as prepared by Wahéhshon Shiann Whitebean, and edited by Dr. Karl Hele with input from Charles O’Connor. The territorial acknowledgement recognizes Tiohtià:ke as the unceded ancestral lands and waterways of several First Nations, among them the Kanien’kehá:ka of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Huron/Wendat, Abenaki, and Anishinaabeg, and confirms that “the Kanien’kehá:ka have a strong historical and ongoing presence in the territory with two communities bordering Montreal: Kahnawà:ke and Kanehsatá:ke” and draws from “the oral tradition / history of the island that the Kanien’kehá:ka Nation has passed from generation to generation” (p. 2).

to the 2016 census, the neighbourhood is home to a small number of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, as well as to a majority non-Indigenous population, of which I am a part (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

Having conducted the first iteration of *Curiosité (Abattoir de l'est)* with myself as “perspectival centre,” I acknowledge both the limits of my subjectivity and of the tale. In these first gestures, I foregrounded my positioning as a leftist, feminist, white cis-gendered woman artist-student. In seeking to denaturalize dominant discourses of place through my own feminist spatial curiosity, I offered a socio-political—predominantly class-based—analysis of neoliberal dispossession and degradation in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and Montreal, positioning myself, the neighbourhood, my performance research and writing within the settler-colonial governments of Montreal, Quebec, and Canada. Kanien’kehá:ka (Kahnawà:ke) political anthropologist Audra Simpson (2014) identifies these settler-colonial states as the “materially dominant state(s) that sit atop [Indigenous] land and administer their populations” (p. 39).²⁵⁶ My approach—in its critique of and attentiveness to the dominant—risks both obfuscating the particularity of Indigenous histories and experiences of urban industrialization and deindustrialization, as well as obscuring the ways in which both industrialization and neoliberal policy coincide(d) with and fundamentally serve(d) the ongoing project of settler-colonialism in Canada.²⁵⁷

In future gestures of performance research, and with awareness of my positioning as a settler, I hope to attend with more care to local Indigenous perspectives and scholarship, and to acknowledge and respect both the historical and ongoing political facts of Indigenous sovereignty and urbanity in Tiohtià:ke and in the neighbourhood. I would also seek to critique not only the dominance of settler-colonial states within my dramaturgy, but also, to open onto these states’ “settler precariousness,” which, as Simpson (2014) asserts, has always been revealed in their ongoing encounters with Indigenous sovereignty.²⁵⁸

I turn onto avenue Bennett, pausing midway between rues de Rouen and Ontario. New condos, which had been vacant industrial buildings when I started the *Curiosité* project in 2012. How

²⁵⁶ Simpson (2014) describes how settler-colonial nation states become dominant thusly: “In situations in which sovereignties are nested and embedded, one proliferates at the other’s expense; the United States and Canada can only come into political being because of Indigenous dispossession. Under these conditions there cannot be two perfectly equal, robust sovereignties” (p. 12).

²⁵⁷ Onondaga scholar David Newhouse (2016) defines the historical period in Canada between 1857 to 1971 as the “Long Assault” on Indigenous people. This historical period coincides with the period of urban industrial modernization that has preoccupied me in my research, a period delimited by “the *Gradual Civilization Act of 1857* which encouraged [Indigenous peoples] to assimilate into Canadian society through the process of enfranchisement and adoption of European values” and the “withdrawal of the much-criticized *White Paper Statement of Indian Policy in 1971*” (Newhouse, pp. 2–3). Newhouse notes, “Throughout this period, public policy-makers saw Indigenous peoples as a problem. As a result, Indigenous people endured more than a century of assault on their lands, economies, cultural practices, knowledges and identities” (p. 3).

²⁵⁸ As Simpson (2014) asserts, Indigenous peoples’ survival and ongoing self-governance perpetually *unsettle* the settler-colonial state and its pretensions to finality and legitimacy. She refers to this sense of unsettlement as the apprehension of “settler precariousness”: “Iroquois [Haudenosaunee] peoples *remind* nation-states such as the United States (and Canada) that [...] they possess a precarious assumption that their boundaries are permanent, incontestable, and entrenched. They possess a precarious assumption about their own (just) origins. And by extension, they possess a precarious assumption about themselves” (p. 22).

stark the contrast between the mouldering interior of an industrial loft and the glossy billboard which invites me into the immaculate kitchen of a young couple sipping orange juice over their granite countertop. On closer inspection, I realize that the man and woman are in fact decorated Olympic speed skaters, now pretend residents of this model condo unit by Samcon. A particular “urban lifestyle” comes with this purchase. Idealized domesticity. Leisure, rather than work. Their training is behind them, physical exertion banished to elsewhere and elsewhere. Here, abundance, rather than avarice. Or abundance: the other side of greed.

An aspirational tagline, collected in the course of my research for the exegesis, superimposes itself over this scene of aspirational living—“Pour un HoMa riche et prospère [Toward a rich and prosperous HoMa].” A report bearing that tagline appeared in a variety of news outlets in July 2016, a few months after anti-gentrification activists had targeted several small businesses along the Promenade Ontario with paint splatter and rocks through the windows. Prepared by Liberal think tank Institut d'économie de Montréal (Montreal Economics Institute), the report touted gentrification as “a positive phenomenon,” citing increased access to grocery stores²⁵⁹ and culture as “added values,” and concluded that the poor were among gentrification’s primary beneficiaries (Geloso & Guénette, 2016, para. 7). The touting of the multiplier effects of *mixité sociale*—a neologism for trickle-down economics—rehearsed again, and again, and again. Repetition with only the slightest of differences.

Autumn Promenade: 2018

Mourning Sickness

As I enter through the eastern archway of the Promenade Ontario at the corner of Boulevard Pie-IX and Rue Ontario, I notice it has undergone a signal change—once announcing Promenade Ontario in white and bluebird blue, the archway now reads Hochelaga, spelled out in marquee bulbs. Hochelaga as spectacle, in its most explicit form. But a spectacle for whom? And who are the performers in this urban show?

The Promenade presents: Hochelaga créatif et authentique [Creative and Authentic Hochelaga]. The SDC-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve came up with the slogan to celebrate and advertise the district’s many entrepreneurs, among them the Promenade’s new *terroir d’ici* and haute-cuisine restaurants, which offer meals made from locally grown and sourced ingredients. Eager foodies and locavores alike pack these spots, performing in the local success story every night, and participating in the staging of the Promenade as a locale for the consumption of the local.

In amongst these nightly performances of thriving local creativity and authenticity, however, I find and recall local failures: a pawnshop, a discount retailer, a halal butcher shop, and a furniture outlet, their vitrines bearing *à vendre* or *à louer* placards, paste-ups, tags, and poetic graffiti. I wonder about the disappearance of these locals. I wonder about their authenticity, creativity, and their value.

²⁵⁹ The article implies that Hochelaga-Maisonneuve was—in 2016, the publication date—a “food desert,” a term used to describe urban neighbourhoods without green grocers or markets, or with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables. I contest this implication, because at the time, a public market, a number of longstanding grocery stores, fruit and vegetable shops, and community food co-ops were all operating here, and had been for several decades.

The surfaces of the Promenade, as the chapters of the exegesis attest, have been recurring objects of curiosity for me. Screens upon which a familiar call-and-response pattern has developed, the surfaces of newer businesses mediate social conflict in the neighbourhood. Paint, rocks, scrawled messages break through, and (insured) business owners quickly repair the damage, or in rarer cases, close up shop.²⁶⁰

The pawnshops have an entirely other aesthetic to the usual targets of anti-gentrification vandalism. Their digital banners scream *Achetons Or!!!* [We Buy Gold!!!]—less costly and arguably less appealing than collectable and now-hip neon signage. Over the vitrine, vinyl decals featuring a gigantic diamond ring, a massive pair of greedy hands clutching gobs of jewelry and a stack of fifties. (I wonder if Nicolas has been doing some hand modelling on the side.) Maybe this is another (overlooked) component of that “working class candour” I’ve been reading about in that urban village series in *The Montreal Gazette*, a side of the neighbourhood’s postindustrial present that only ever appears as “charm” or innuendo. The pawn shop is explicit about its transactions (and the class antagonism behind them), its garish displays of capitalist exchange coming up against the more seemly, subtle and intimate consumerism of the Samcon couple, to cite but one local example.

A few years ago, I had pawned (or rather, sold) a brand-new single cup style coffee machine. I had no intention of reclaiming this well-intentioned but anti-social (it brews but one cup of coffee at a time), eco-unfriendly wedding gift. I came away with \$25, or about the equivalent of a weekly metro pass and a coffee at the nearby Atomic Café. Viewed another way, spatial mobility around the city, and the caffeine and social interaction I needed to get through a day of exegesis writing. (Even the thought of coffee recalls recent bouts of nausea. Over the summer months, morning sickness kept me off coffee and most foods, while the odours of summer in the city put me off walking.)

Pawnshops arrived with deindustrialization in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, after the departure of the banks in the 1970s, and have been a fixture of the Promenade Ontario ever since.²⁶¹ Considered in relation to the flight of global capital which shaped the local conditions of its emergence, the pawnshop appears as yet another predatory loan scheme—a part of the accumulation regime of late capitalism—which, like the cheque-cashing store, would take advantage of economic precarity in neighbourhoods like Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Yes, and—

²⁶⁰ *Le Chasseur* [The Hunter]—a high-end Quebecois-inspired tapas restaurant with tinted windows—was one of the casualties, closing its doors in January 2015, after proprietor Mathieu Ménard expressed incomprehension over the acts of vandalism. He did not identify as a gentrifier but as a long-time resident, complaining that Hochelaga-Maisonneuve’s “problem” was no longer prostitution [*sic*], but the “anarchists” to whom he attributed the acts (as cited in Tobar, 2013).

²⁶¹ In his doctoral thesis on the socioeconomic transformation of inner-city neighbourhoods in Montreal and the role of commercial retailers in these transformations, urban researcher Alexandre Maltais (2016) quotes from one of the newer restaurateurs in the Promenade, who remarks that on their own arrival, there were “only pizzerias and pawnshops” (p. 322). (This is a mischaracterization of the range of businesses in the Promenade at the time the restaurant opened in 2011). What is notable to me is how the restaurateur registers pizzerias and pawnshops as a lack to be filled by new “innovative” businesses—such as a bring-your-own wine bistro or organic grocer—two of the examples mentioned.

The pawnshop is also a local material culture and a local marketplace, where social and object relations are negotiated, and, yes, arbitrated by capital (in the social form of a pawnbroker). Here is a collection of collateral objects (temporarily) parted with, let go for well below their market value, and often against their sentimental or use-values to the lender. These partings might offer a lifeline until payday—without the exorbitant interest of the cheque cashing store across the street, and bearing the promise of return—or more simply (and no less significantly) a treat, helping you both get by and enjoy life.

What does it mean to mourn the loss of a pawnshop? What is there to miss in its disappearance from the local, I wonder?

Conclusions, or The Sixth Movement of Performance Research

Throughout the work of the dissertation and this exegesis, I have been guided by the following research questions: How can curiosity toward place inform urban performance research? What methods and media support a curious approach to performance creation? A range of interlaced valences of curiosity inflected my approach in *Curiosité*. By reflecting on the making processes of *Abattoir de l'est*, the chapters of this exegesis build towards the exposition of *Curiosité*, an urban performance methodology rooted in curiosity as a theoretical, material, and theatrical approach to the city. The chapters position curiosity as the mediating term between self and place, weaving between curiosity as a personal and provisional desire to know embedded and embodied in practice, and curiosity as an ambivalent transhistorical knowledge discourse implicated in the conceptual, social, and material (and theatrical) production of the city. Feminist and Marxist geography oriented my curiosity toward the place of inquiry in this iteration, delineating an epistemic stance through which I pursued and performed knowledge in and of the city. Curiosity, as a material and performance culture, supplied the modalities of place-based inquiry, the forms of theatrical display, and the techniques of dramaturgical representation and siting.

Across the chapters of the exegesis, I narrated my engagements with a range of modalities and media forms of spatial curiosity in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, emphasizing my personal interest in and encounters with ongoing capitalist processes and discourses of urbanization in the neighbourhood. I spoke to *Curiosité*'s capacity to mediate the city (and my own apprehension of it) as a site of ambivalence—to entertain the city as a place of both ruination and potentiality, to hold onto the tension between critique of and enchantment with the urban, opening onto the critical issue of urban inequality and the question of art's role in responding to these inequalities. In this respect, my performance research with *Curiosité* corresponds with a global network of contemporary urban art projects whose “spaces, patterns, and processes” are informed by and oriented toward the city as contradiction (Benjamin, 1982/1999)—as “the concentration of the failures and injustices of contemporary life” and the place in and through which to “address [those self-same] dilemmas of collective inhabitation” (Liinamaa, 2014, p. 539). As artists would seek to respond to these urban dilemmas through the aesthetic, they find themselves implicated in processes of urbanism and urban politics, situated “within competing narratives of urbanization and collective futures”

(Liinimaa, p. 529). Because the “urban question” of social inequalities and the uneven impacts of globalization take shape differently and relationally across cities and within each city, there can be no resolved method set or mode of response that can be carried from city to city, within the city from place to place, or within place from time to time. Through the exegesis I have sought to do the critical and political work of positioning myself and my performance research in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve in relation to these sociospatial discourses and ongoing local histories of uneven development, inequality, and ruination. This reflexive and reflective movement of positioning opens onto curiosity as a spatial discourse that would apprehend and respond to the local particularities of the “urban question” through situated, provisional, and evolving theatrical gestures, including ambivalent, oblique, and errant ones.

The chapters reassemble the contextual ambivalence (ruination and potentiality) mediating the dual modes of aesthetic response (critique and enchantment). They trace the reciprocal relations between my apprehension/experience of urban place as a site of ambivalence and the theatrical mediation of that ambivalence across the movements of performance research: from the composition of the walking archive, to the development of the theatrical apparatus of *Curiosité*, to the assemblage of the dramaturgy of urban ruination, its affective reanimation by the dramaturgy of enchantment, and the speculative positioning of the performance event within place.

In Chapter I. *Along the Promenade Ontario: The Street as/and Spatial Curiosity*, I reflected upon walking as a multi-sensory modality of spatial curiosity and a method of research-for-creation conducted along rue Ontario. Aligning my own approach with feminist and ethnographic walking practices, I outlined a vernacular walking epistemology which would know the familiar and the unfamiliar, attending to the personal and the social, surface and depth, repetition and difference, continuity and change, as these co-constitute place and the local, and as the limits of these categories necessarily shift in relation to the walker’s situated viewpoint and evolving understanding of place.

Curiosité’s walking archive, composed of field notes and photographs, collects in fragments that disclose over time the evolving reciprocal relations between the archivist and the places of her spatial curiosity. These ephemeral compositions of place and self illuminate the complexities of the local, situate the artist within the rhythms and routines of everyday places, and reveal her differential experiences and orientations, including her priorities and privileges,

as well as her missteps and occlusions.²⁶² Through the reflective processes of the exegesis, I have come to interpret walking, field notes and photography—carried on throughout the process of performance creation and extended to collaborators—as positioning techniques oriented by a disposition of enchantment and an openness to being moved by others, including past selves. Additionally, responsive to the contingencies of self and place, and open (potentially) to differential knowledges, unanticipated affinities, and remobilizations of privilege and power, these techniques enable critical and affective revisioning and reorientation of the aesthetic gesture.

In this chapter, the discussion of media form gathered around the ambivalent role of curiosity-related media in the (trans)historical production of the urban imaginary, highlighting their irenic staging of the global city of empire and their dialectical treatment of epic history. The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century large-scale panorama featured “hyperviews of grandeur and desolation,” according to Barbara Stafford (2001), bringing into view (and thus under control) the “always-escaping actuality” of foreign empires and urban centres alike (pp. 97–8). Several critical historical accounts I engaged interpreted the panorama’s visual strategies as crafting an “as is” view of the city, empire, and their respective and relational inequalities, thus shaping a blasé urbane gaze that would accept—rather than question—those relations. In media histories and practitioner accounts of the *bänkelsang* and banners-and-crank, I recovered epic narrative techniques and montage aesthetics, (post)modernist modes of response to the question of urban inequality which would stage the city as a conjunction of fragmentary and contested vantage points, views, and histories, and opening onto the city as a site of socio-historical critique. Laying out my provisional sense of the representational capacities of media form intends toward political position-taking, in Doreen Massey’s (2005) terms, as the apprehension and acknowledgment of the “clash” of place—its contradictory and competing trajectories—precedes that position-taking (p. 158).

Chapter 2. The Dramaturgy of Curiosity: A Theatre of Capitalism(s) in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, or the Abattoir, Exposed and Enchanted situated the composition of *Abattoir de l’est* within key political-economic contests, contexts, and competing discourses of urbanization

²⁶² This awareness might also emerge in the event of social strolling with others, when participants narrate their differential experience of the event of walking, either in the course of the event or in reflective writings and field notes.

and urbanism, identifying my own positioning and stakes in combatting austerity and neoliberal narratives in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. The question of how to respond to—rather than resolve—historical and social inequalities in the city, and the corollary question of how to represent the slow or covert violence of neoliberalism and gentrification underwrote the dramaturgical process with *Abattoir de l'est*. My response to these questions—the scripted dramaturgy of urban ruination—took shape through curiosity as a critical orientation toward “uncurious” ideologies and dominant narratives of place, and as a method of archival research and assemblage linked to a Brechtian socio-historical critique through representation.

My reflective work in the exegesis surfaced the affective dimensions (or moods) of my critical curiosity leading onto the dramaturgy of urban ruination, in its melancholic manifestation, casting urban history (through allegory) as ruination, and in its ironic posture, expressing estrangement and conceptual mastery. Rita Felski’s (2015) discussion of the “moodiness” of critique drew out the limitations of my critical-curious tendencies, and the manners through which critique has “inhabited” me, attuning me to the city as a “concentration of myriad inequalities” (Liinimaa, 2014) more often than as a site of utopic potentiality. My encounters with Jane Bennett’s disposition of enchantment reframed my experience and understanding of the dual dramaturgy of the parable and of the collective *mise-en-scène* process within *Curiosité*. An affective, social, and material rejoinder to my habitual moods, modes, and gestures of leftist critique toward the city, the dramaturgy of enchantment formed around the questions of how to imagine the collective work of urban transformation and urban futures, responding through openness to the other and the utopic gesture of the “not, but.” My own experiences of enchantment—in my collaborations with others in rehearsals, in my encounter with the Promenade’s performing objects, in the swerve of the sow and glitch of the machine—suggest to me the potentiality of the dramaturgy of enchantment to respond to powerful postindustrial urban dramaturgies in the neighbourhood, emblemized as the City as Ruin or the Revitalized HoMa. Enchantment—as an implicit epistemology of collective dramaturgy—transformed my approach to (and manner of approaching) place and these urban dramaturgies, reorienting me to my imbroglia in and of the world, and to the critical potentiality of affect, excess, material pleasure, and indeterminacy.

In deindustrializing and gentrifying urban neighbourhoods, such a disposition may allow us to act with and from within the dramaturgies of urban ruination and revitalization, and to

take up, demonstrate, critique, and reanimate imperial formations, their overdetermined objects, and revitalized remains to other ends. Enchantment as a dramaturgical disposition hints to me of a chance to untangle ourselves from overarching or overdetermined narratives, from both neoliberal realism and Leftist tragedy and their attendant dramaturgies of place as trajectory or fate, and to remain in and with place as assemblage, as radically contingent, undetermined, social and material composition. This enchanted orientation toward place resonates with Doreen Massey's (2005) account of place as "open . . . [and] woven together out of ongoing stories, as a moment within power-geometries, as a particular constellation within the wider topographies of space, and as in process, as unfinished business" (p. 131). This orientation opens onto the political, as it recognizes place as a "clash of trajectories of differential strength where that differential strength is part of what must be negotiated," rather than as a "coherent entity" whose differences are to be "smoothed out" by capital (p. 158).²⁶³

In Chapter 3. From Found Space Dramaturgy to the Scenography of Correspondence: Siting *Abattoir de l'est* in the Place Valois, I described the failed siting of *Abattoir de l'est* in the Place Valois, relating the story of *Curiocité's* imbroglio in the contradictions of the urban. Subjacent to this story, surfacing abruptly at its end, was *Curiocité's* (and the artist's) positioning within the economies and geographies of local tourism in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. The discourse of spatial performativity, as articulated by Irwin (2008), provided the fulcrum between critique of and enchantment with the city in *Curiocité's* siting methods. As Irwin contends, spatial performativity is at once a "way of reading topographies and structures of power in built environments" and a manner of approaching place which "presumes a potentiality, an excess or efficiency of meaning rendered strongly present in places framed by performance" (p. 39). I explored the ambivalence of the urban village construct through its imposition in the Place Valois, holding its enchantments of the postindustrial ruin, its conjuring elements, and its staging of ideal local sociospatial (and economic) relations alongside its antagonisms, its displacements, and its potentiality as a scenographic environment (beyond—or in addition to—the neoliberal script). In this respect, the chapter elaborates the scenography of

²⁶³ Massey (2005) addresses how the centring of financial interests and economic growth configures place as a unity rather than a clash. She argues that this imaginary of the city would respond to the problem of urban inequality through this very unity, promising that all will be swept up in (the service of) capitalist abundance via multiplier effects, or *mixité sociale*. As she notes, the financial city model never advocates gentrification's inverse—"as ever, it is only working-class residential areas which appear to require dilution," by which she means class *mixité* (p. 167).

correspondence for *Curiosité* through its relationship to the inequality and potentiality of the Place Valois, and positions the project—perhaps somewhat uneasily—within the discourses of postindustrial urbanism and urbanization in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

Reflections on the Creative-Analytic Exegesis

Sensing the contingencies of the places that have shaped *Abattoir de l'est*, and hoping to remain attentive to the ongoingness of place, in the sixth movement of performance research—the writing of the exegesis—I again took up curiosity and enchantment as guides. What haunted me throughout the writing process was the risk of oversimplifying place, foreclosing on its pasts, presents and indeterminate futures, because of the partial(ity) of my own situated viewpoint, and my (admitted) critical tendency to remark urban ruination before—and at the expense of—enchantment. In this durational performance of nearly five years, I returned to the places of performance research on foot and in the archives, re-engaging walking and field-note taking, and incorporating interviews with collaborators and local artists to disturb and enchant my critical standpoint and to reflect further on the sociospatial contexts for the performance research. My intentions were to compose a compelling story with (sociospatial) resonance beyond the personal and proximate, and to keep curiosity/enchantment, place, and artistic process—so central to the production of *Abattoir de l'est*—“alive in the writing,” as cultural anthropologist and folklorist Kirin Narayan (2012) would have it for ethnographic narrative.

Endless revision (though perhaps it could more positively be called curiosity) best describes the process of writing the exegesis. I was always drawn toward different dimensions of the project, processes, and places. Ongoing walking and field note-taking led me into different engagements with place, revealing different histories, uses, and social meanings, and drawing out new correspondences. Conversing with Naomi Iizuka and conducting a comparative dramaturgical analysis of her play *At the Vanishing Point* exposed my own dramaturgy of urban ruination which, after many convolutes, became the critical pivot of this document. Feedback from my supervisor Dr. Kathleen Vaughan and from collaborators illuminated enchantment as a tacit yet integral component of the collective *mise-en-scène* process, and as an affective rejoinder to the limits of critique and the dramaturgy of urban ruination.

I have come to understand—and embrace—my own subjectivity as one among many “moving parts” in this movement of reflective practice and contextualization for *Curiosité*. As

Deirdre Heddon reminds me, place and self are “contingent, shifting, always becoming” (p. 42). In the writing, I encountered shifts in my own vantage point from one day to the next, one chapter to the next, even one paragraph to the next, sliding from an ironic gaze into a more irenic disposition and back again. Innumerable variables conditioned the writing: my energy or fatigue, the theory I was engaging with that day, the street poster I’d encountered, the conversation I’d held with another collaborator, the photograph I’d recovered from the archives, or, more poignantly, my discovery late in the Fall of 2015 that the studio in which my collaborators and I had created *Abattoir de l’est* was to be turned into upscale condominiums.

I recognize some of the limitations of this exegesis as a “document” of the performance events. Even as I have endeavoured to materialize the social and material situation of performance—and to carry the sociality, the energy, atmosphere, and feel of live performances with audiences into the prompt book scenes—I acknowledge that the balance of description falls on the dramaturgy and mise-en-scène rather than the scenography of the event. This may have the unintended effect of presenting *Abattoir de l’est* as a closed scene, exclusive of its audiences and their differential experiences and interpretations of the event. In future, I would seek to carry the scenography of correspondence of the event forward into the prompt book scenes. This might mean enlisting audience members as co-authors for the prompt book, asking them to extend their reflections on and of the events—in this exegesis represented only in and through photographs and video stills—in writing.

At the risk of understating the case, between the initial drafting of the Coda (the *Autumn Walk: 2016* and *Autumn Promenade: 2018*) and the writing of this conclusion (begun in *Autumn 2020*), much has changed. In *Winter 2018*, I taught an introductory theatre course (“Theatre and the City”) that engaged walking and collecting as methods of performance creation, focusing on my students’ curiosity toward Rue Sainte-Catherine, a street that stretches from Hochelaga-Maisonneuve to Westmount, parallel to Rue Ontario, and passing along the main campus of Concordia University. As an instructor, I learned from my theatre students about the potentialities and limitations of these methods, encountered an extensive range of performances (and media forms) that might take shape around them, and gathered other histories of place absent or occluded from my own performance research. My students demonstrated the inaccessibility of Montreal’s streets and theatre spaces, engaged with the queer histories of Rue Ontario and Rue Sainte-Catherine, transformed the mundane act of

eating at a *pataterie* [fry shop] into an enchanting object theatre performance; engaged their own bodies as surfaces for the projection of a cinematic montage of the street; invented an audio walking tour that explored the botanical (and other) histories of the downtown core; produced a moritat and miniature crankie to reveal the dark history of a movie theatre fire in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve in 1927.

Since composing *Abattoir de l'est* and writing these chapters, I have spent a summer, fall, and winter pregnant, contending with months of prenatal nausea, developing a new centre of gravity and circumference as well as a new experience of locomotion, moving through life, the city, and the narrow sidewalks and shops of Rue Ontario in a different body. Immediately after childbirth, I struggled to walk as I used to, to regain a sense of balance, and to find the time to walk even the shortest itinerary. Since becoming a parent, I appear now on the street with an avatar—the extroverted Gaël looking out from a carrier on my chest often invites interactions with strangers and passersby.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues into its sixth month in Montreal (September 2020), I find myself and my ways of walking shifting again; I wear a cloth mask and walk at odd hours of the day so as to avoid other pedestrians. Even as I try to maintain a distance of two metres from those I encounter on the street, I find myself craving social interaction, waving to strangers on balconies, especially those with kids. Rather than writing at Atomic Café—where I completed much of this exegesis—I am completing the edits in my son’s (my former) bedroom, propping my laptop on a breastfeeding pillow as my partner manages the childcare in the next room. In short, my self-understanding, ways of being and becoming in the world, my embodiment and ways of moving in and through place are different than before.

COVID-19 has thus far had a differential impact on lower-income neighbourhoods in Montreal, including in Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, where in the month of May, morbidity rates due to the virus were at least twice that of the island of Montreal (see Derfel, 2020a).²⁶⁴ The places of my performance research have also been impacted by the performativity of COVID-19. As social events and gatherings have been cancelled across the city—and the world—the Place Valois has been “de-programmed.” At present, it functions less as a venue,

²⁶⁴ Most of the deaths from COVID-19 in Quebec have occurred in long-term care facilities, and as journalist Aaron Derfel (2020) reported, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve has more than a dozen of these facilities. Montreal North has also been hard-hit by COVID-19, owing to the large number of residents—many of them also asylum seekers and precarious workers—employed in long-term and health care facilities across the city.

hosting more informal gatherings. The Promenade Ontario has been closed down to vehicle traffic in order to provide more space for pedestrians to physically distance, and to allow restaurants to serve customers outside. Restaurants and bars spill out onto the street, waitstaff—behind plastic hoods and surgical masks—serving unmasked patrons on makeshift terrasses. Itinerant folks also make use of the recently installed public seating overnight and after-hours, or sit at picnic tables under the outdoor canopies of the Coalition Action Politique-CARE shelter, which is now regularly beyond capacity. The greenway along Notre-Dame, the linear public park created after the city abandoned the Autoroute 720 expansion, has become a homeless encampment dotted with tents. On August 27, the city announced it would soon dismantle the camp. The district’s mayor Pierre Lessard-Blais described the encampment as a “public safety risk” to local media (Broch, 2020). (Lessard-Blais also owns Espace Public, a popular brewpub along the Promenade Ontario that is currently open even as recent outbreaks of the virus have been traced to bars (see Derfel, 2020b).) In the same press release, the city announced that preparations are underway to reopen the former Hochelaga YMCA as a shelter to house those displaced, at least temporarily.

Creative Correspondences: Mourning, Memory, and Curiosité

In this moment of social distancing, artists have offered virtual modes of sociospatial engagement.²⁶⁵ Digital artist Roby Provost Blanchard, composer Gabriel Ledoux, and cultural mediator Chantal Dumas released their online video game—created prior to the pandemic—in spring 2020. *La bruit des cônes* [The sound of cones] permits users a first-person virtual “walk” along the Centre-Sud segment of Rue Ontario and its shops, some of which are now permanently shuttered due to the pandemic. The player, as pedestrian, wanders the street (pedestrian-free in the version of the game I played), collecting the audio cassettes which hover along a strange Promenade dually composed of recognizable storefronts and more curious spatial emblems. The cassettes function as tokens, allowing you to duck into shops and to listen to a sonic archive of shop owners and residents discussing their experiences of the street. This game suggests another approach to collecting and recollecting the street for others than what I have proposed with *Curiosité*, and one particularly well suited to the pandemic. The first-

²⁶⁵ As I write, theatres throughout the city remain shut. The intimate outdoor spectacle proposed by *Curiosité*’s *Abattoir de l’est* seems to me, in the immediate present, an impossibility. In the early months of the pandemic, however, when the novelty and shock of lock-down was fresh, local artists staged daily back-alley circus parades, inclusive of floats, acrobats, large-scale puppets made of empties, and unicyclists, among others.

person format allows (within constraints) the personal initiative and desires of the pedestrian to guide the itinerary. Among the many places I chose to visit was *Marine achat et vente* [Marine's Buy & Sell].²⁶⁶ I am not the only artist preoccupied with the goings-on and ongoingness of the pawnshop.



Figure 79. La Québécoise, repurposed by the pawn shop. September 1, 2019. Personal photograph.

Incidentally, the shuttered pawnshop which preoccupied me in autumn 2018 reopened without much fanfare sometime in 2019, taking over the storefront once occupied by *La Québécoise*, the long-standing greasy spoon and neighbourhood gathering place (described in my field notes in Chapter 1), and once advertised as a down-home perk of the neighbourhood. Notwithstanding the pawnshop's relocation and the coincident disappearance of *La Québécoise*, I would return to the questions posed at the end of my Coda. *What would it mean to mourn the loss of a pawnshop? What is there to miss in its disappearance from the local?* I continue to think about what mourning means to my own inquiry with *Curiosité*; how mourning inflected and continues to inform my aesthetic responses to the ambivalence of the city; how the politics and

²⁶⁶ A link to the video game is available here: <https://magnes.itch.io/lebruitdescones>

poetics of mourning are situated within conflicting contemporary discourses of urbanization and urbanism not only in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, but in other neighbourhoods, like Montreal's Griffintown, Pointe-St-Charles, or Verdun, and Louisville's Butchertown. I wonder what potentialities mourning holds for future iterations of Curiosité.

The urban performance dramaturgy of Curiosité—the methods, genres, and media forms—emerges from those locals and places caught in the twilight of different utopian urbanisms and their representations of the ideal city. As the industrial City Beautiful—and the industries upon which it depended—recedes, the creative city, the technopole, the eco-recreational city, and the urban village emerge as complementary sociospatial ideals informing urban revitalization and redevelopment discourses in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. It is in this context that I have proposed Curiosité as a methodology by which artist-researchers might apprehend, represent, and intervene in the urban places in which we live and create performances, through more complex, careful, and inclusive theatrical gestures. Curiosité and its methods may appeal to artist-researchers creating performances in a variety of urban places and according to differential curiosities, even as it emerges from the particulars of my own curiosity toward Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. The dramaturgical methodology I have outlined has broader applications, as it seeks to attend in particular to micro and macro effects of protracted sociospatial transformations—such as industrialization, de-industrialization, urban renewal, and gentrification—on urban neighbourhoods. These processes are not limited to Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, or to Montreal's postindustrial neighbourhoods, of course. They are felt globally and relationally, but certainly not uniformly, differentially impacting urban neighbourhoods around the world, and posing different dilemmas for the artist-researcher who would engage them. A performance dramaturgy oriented by curiosity, I contend, would apprehend and represent what is particular to the local within these global processes, while pursuing the question of correspondences between this local and others.

In contrast to some of the urban utopias guiding urban revitalization and redevelopment in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, the epic dramaturgy of urban ruination in *Abattoir de l'est* may appear exceedingly dystopian: the play racks up a significant body count, to be sure—pigs, mules, fairgoers, Rag-and-Bone Men, and more meet their end before the epilogue. This staging of the slow violence of capitalist processes—what High et al. (2019) call the “other side of the progressive panacea of the global liberalization of capital and labour” (p. 20)—reflects a broader

concern for the part urban artists and arts play in neoliberal urbanism. For me, elaborating a vision of the city focused on the harms of capitalist utopias and agendas functioned as a counterpoint to the optimistic script neoliberal urbanism would provide for the artist and the role it would afford the arts in the production of the city. In the creative city, the positive, “problem-solving” capacities of the urban arts are celebrated, and in some cases co-opted and instrumentalized so as to support sociospatial displacement (see Liinimaa, 2014, p. 536). The effect of this framing, Liinimaa argues, can be an attenuation of urban art practices’ potential capacities to “provide mechanisms of recognition, exposition, alternative realizations or critical elaborations” of the city, to address the problem of city as “the social, political, cultural and economic organization of marginalization, division, and scarcity” (pp. 536–7).

I do not intend here to insist artists adopt an allegorical gaze and focus on the bleaker aspects of urban life and the casualties of capitalist empire to the exclusion of the many manifestations of solidarity, equality, resurgence, and hope which also make up the city. Nor do I mean to assert that performances which narrativize or allegorize the social and environmental costs of capitalist urbanisms either escape implication within the sociospatial processes of gentrification or resolve the sociospatial inequalities of the city. Yet, where charisma for a future oriented toward economic growth, a blasé “as is” attitude toward the present, and a nostalgic attitude toward the past all inflect dominant urban renewal discourse,²⁶⁷ there remains a critical and compensatory place for arts which express grief, sadness, or even ambivalence toward the city; for arts which express differential attitudes toward the past, present, and future of the city; and for arts which mourn those places harmed—if not failed—by both industrial and late capitalist agendas. These experiences and expressions belong in and to the category of the urban. I continue to wonder how curiosity might apprehend, invoke and sustain these devalued—or refused—aspects of urban art practice, more specifically, and urban experience, more broadly, helping us to expand our emotional range beyond a habitual critical mood or neoliberal repertoire (and its enchantments), enriching the quality of urban experience.

Identifying the compensatory and affective role played by curiosity cabinets and early

²⁶⁷ I spoke to this “as is” urbane attitude at two points in the chapters of the exegesis, linking it to the urban panorama spectacle and its production of the blasé urban spectator, and to the austere “common sense” of neoliberalism.

modern museums, Maria Zytaruk (2011) argues that such collections “perform[ed] the work of elegy”: “collections register . . . the longing of a fallen humankind and perhaps, like elegy, functioned as a mechanism for consolation” (p. 5). In these historical iterations, curiosity performed a conservative function, expressing the longing for a “prelapsarian” or originary past or divine ordered universe. Curiosity as a mechanism of consolation and oriented toward a former industrial neighbourhood may slip into what Svetlana Boym (2001) describes as “restorative nostalgia” for a mythic industrial past. As scholar and artist Minty Donald (2012) asserts, in former industrial cities restorative nostalgia appears in urban heritage discourses and in art practices which lament the loss of empire and laud the “macho heroism” of the working class (p. 214). Liinimaa (2014) also warns of the reactionary side of commemorative practices: “memory can be invoked to excuse, even forget, and nostalgia or celebration can replace critical reflection. It can easily become meaningless in its expansiveness or malicious in its selectivity” (p. 539).

Boym (2001) renders reflective nostalgia quite differently, as I explored in creative correspondence with Naomi Iizuka’s *At the Vanishing Point* in Chapter 2. While restorative nostalgia “puts emphasis on nostos and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps,” she posits, “reflective nostalgia dwells in *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance,” and “linger[s] on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time” (p. 41). I wonder about the potential of reflective nostalgia toward place as a modality of performance research. In the recollection of local losses, its attentiveness to imperial debris, its interpellation of people, places, and objects through a fragmentary poetics of myth, mourning, and memory, a dramaturgy oriented by reflective nostalgia may open onto the grievability of places once beyond the apprehension of the mourning subject. I am thinking here with feminist and queer philosopher Judith Butler, and her assertion in *Frames of War* (2010) that the “apprehension of grievability precedes and makes possible the apprehension of precarious life” (p. 15). To grieve a disappearing place is the condition for apprehending its precarity, which Butler defines as “our radical substitutability and anonymity in relation both to certain socially facilitated modes of dying and death and to other socially conditioned modes of persisting and flourishing” (p. 14). Mourning performs a (furtive) critical and political function, not only attuning us to these “socially facilitated modes of dying and death,” and “socially conditioned modes of persisting and flourishing,” but applying pressure

to them, ventilating the borders that discourses of power uphold between the valued and obsolete, and forcing a reckoning with imperial formations that would assign life to some and consign others to death (Butler, 2010, p. 14). I am left wondering how reflective nostalgia, its gathering places and objects of mourning, oriented Curiosité's past iterations, and how it may explicitly reorient Curiosité in future iterations, giving rise to differential narratives of belonging and of nonbelonging to place.

The Passing of the Pawnshop

I recall the recasting of the Garage Rozon and the Resto Belle Gare Valois as sites of memory and mourning in *L'Urbaine Urbanité I*. These commercial sites were evidently valuable and grievable to many in the neighbourhood, if beyond the apprehension of the architects and developers of the Place Valois. The passing of a pawnshop matters to me because to acknowledge its loss—and the ambivalence of that loss—would also mean to recognize the complexity of its belonging (and having belonged) to the local. This is the local apprehended beyond its oversimplification as the (neoliberal) reinvention of tradition (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1995)—a claim to belonging based on the assertion of continuity with a “singular sense of the past” (Massey, 1995, p. 184). The prosperous Franco-Quebecois merchants and business-owners who “belonged” to the “Golden Age” serve as privileged antecedents—local roots—for the entrepreneurs, startups, and small business owners who would do business here and now. A mythic local history of liberal capitalist prosperity, social harmony, and self-reliance—to the extent that it underwrites a normative understanding of the local as it should be—maps the future of place. Mythic history eclipses complicated local histories and processes of global capitalism and its uneven impacts, local-global interdependence, class antagonisms, erasing them from belonging in and to the local. To mourn the pawnshop, to register its disappearance as a loss, is, I hope, to refuse the erasure of that ambivalence, to intervene in the oversimplification of place which would refuse it the feeling of and apprehension as loss. As an urban theatre and performance dramaturgy, Curiosité proceeds through mourning toward the political, mobilizing curiosity and enchantment toward the apprehension and staging of ambivalence. Curiosity, through a critical-melancholic gaze and its attentions to ruination, and enchantment, in its openness to the other, recovery of potentiality in the refused, and irreverent reanimation of imperial debris, are dually implicated in this mourning of the pawnshop, and in the collective imagining of what (and who) belongs to the future of place. Positioning the local within the

ongoing processes of global capitalism and their uneven sociospatial impacts, Curiocté's mourning would apprehend and attend to lives made precarious by ongoing processes of urbanization and urbanism, opening onto a recognition not only of their ongoingness, but of their right to (and to contest) the city.

Returning / Cyclorama

Performance is the heart of this research-creation inquiry. With respect to future performances of Curiocté, and my role in their production, I am of several minds. The questions of when, where, and with whom I might perform *Abattoir de l'est* linger, complicated by the realities and restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, and by the fact that Rae Maitland (cast as Romance) no longer resides in Montreal. But, now in my eleventh year as a resident of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, I feel compelled to compose and present another story with Curiocté. This story would refract more recent experiences of walking and collecting Rue Ontario and the neighbourhood, experiences mediated not only by making processes and past performances of *Abattoir de l'est*, but also by the iterative effects of writing the exegesis. These would include the subjective and affective reorientations and the work of [re]positioning catalyzed in this writing as the sixth movement of performance creation. I harbour a desire to compose in and through this moment of understanding and perspective as I move toward the next, to apprehend and encounter the urban through a curious and ambivalent disposition recalibrated by the reflexive and reflective labours of the exegesis. This disposition would hold space for enchantment in urban encounter, allowing both joy and disturbance; it would attend as much to the dream images, material pleasures, and potentialities of the commodity fetish as to its dead ends. It would find "lines of flight," tangents, and aporia in even the most airtight and linear of urban narratives and engage new histories of belonging and non-belonging to place.

As I have noted, this disposition emerged for me in and through collaboration with others, whether in social strolling, in collective dramaturgy, or in reflective interviews. Through others, I encountered the multiplicity of place, experienced enchantment, and recovered the potentiality of the city in the dramaturgy of urban ruination. Beyond this personal subjective reorientation, and the possibilities it presents for my own dramaturgy within Curiocté, I hope that future iterations of this urban performance dramaturgy might be conducted and oriented by others. From the outset, I'd imagined Curiocté as collecting and staging a variety of urban stories—never just *Abattoir de l'est*—each composed by a different storyteller. Curiocté's

potentiality to embody the ambivalence of the city, to refract reflective (rather than restorative) nostalgia, to represent and intervene in ongoing urban processes can only be realized only when it is extended beyond the self (including past selves), and conceptualized as an always unfinished project of collecting and performing stories. *Abattoir de l'est* is a fragment, and it is not to be taken as the whole. I hope that others (in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and beyond) might take up *Curiosité* as an urban performance dramaturgy to reflect on and represent their own experiences of urbanization and urbanism, to both assert their right to the city and to mourn the sites that matter to them. Rather than one story, *Curiosité* would assemble a dialectical repertoire, each performance speaking back to the preceding one while opening onto a previously refused dimension of urban experience. This urban theatre would recognize its audiences as both interpreters and potential collaborators, imagining them as curious and critical dramaturgs of the narrated parable, and as future narrator-demonstrators who would stage differential, conflicting, and contesting narratives of the city.

I also recognize that the gesture of extending *Curiosité* to others in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve is not a simple one, but rather holds political implications, potentialities, risks, and complexities. Curiosity, as a liberal humanist and Eurocentric discourse aligned with the Enlightenment, is implicated in the spatial logics of imperialism, whose gestures of inclusion and incorporation toward the Other were (and continue to be) at the same time gestures of violence, of differing kinds and degrees. The representational media of spatial curiosity, for example, furthered the projects of imperialism and settler-colonialism in their respective land grabs: from the picturesque panorama's "evacuation" of Indigenous peoples from their lands, to the performed panorama's agit-prop in favour of manifest destiny and the genocide of Indigenous peoples (see Bell, 1996b), to the "salvage" impulses driving ethnological displays of a supposedly "vanishing" Indigeneity.

Moving forward, I am reflecting on my positioning as a settler in the unceded Indigenous territory of Tiohtià:ké, asking what ethical gestures that positioning both affords and occludes. I look ahead to engaging through that positioning with the questions and problematics that would arise in framing *Curiosité*, alternately, as an inclusionary, intercultural urban performance dramaturgy, or, as a "nonintegrative" one (Robinson, 2020, p. 3). Stó:lō scholar and Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Arts at Queen's University Dylan Robinson (2020) contends that the term "intercultural" obscures the contemporary politics of performance, suggesting that

“inclusionary performance” more accurately reflects the ongoing asymmetrical power relations between arts institutions and Indigenous artists (p. 6). Robinson argues that the politics of recognition and reconciliation, the fraught inclusionary gestures through which the Canadian government has sought to (re)define its relations with Indigenous peoples and cultural and religious minorities for the past several decades, has inflected arts funding practices, orienting institutional mandates and models of inclusion where institutions can “enrich” themselves and their repertoires by merely including Indigenous content (p. 6). Falling into settler-colonial patterns and perceptual modes of “hungry listening,” inclusionary performances—as he calls these institutional gestures of aesthetic incorporation without transformation—maintain settler-colonial aesthetic frameworks and values, wherein Indigenous “content” serves both settler-colonial “form” and caters to settler-colonial appetites.²⁶⁸ Robinson cautions that:

[s]uch inclusionary efforts bolster an intransigent system of presentation guided by an interest in—and often a fixation upon—Indigenous content, but not Indigenous structure. This apathy toward Indigenous structures of performance and gathering leads to epistemological violence through art music’s audiophile privileging of and adherence to its own values of performance and virtuosity. In this framework, while Indigenous singers, instrumentalists, and other performers are increasingly offered space within a composition or on a stage, they are infrequently offered the opportunity to define what venue for performance might be used, the design of the space and audience-performer relationship, and the parameters and protocol for gathering at the site of performance. Inclusionary music, which on the surface *sounds* like a socially progressive act, performs the very opposite of its enunciation. (p. 6)

In their collective interview on the discourses of settler-colonialism and settler solidarity, political scientists Corey Snelgrove, Rita Dhamoon, and Jeff Corntassel (2014) similarly advise that “without centering Indigenous peoples’ articulations, without deploying a

²⁶⁸ As Robinson (2020) describes, the collocation “hungry listening” comes from: two Halq’eméylem words: shxwelítemelh (the adjective for settler or white person’s methods/things) and xwélalà:m (the word for listening). shxwelítemelh comes from the word xwelítem (white settler) and more precisely means “starving person.” The word emerges from the historical encounter between xwélmexw (Stó:lō people) and the largest influx of settlers to the territory during the gold rush. In 1858, thousands of xwelítem (largely men) arrived in a bodily state of starvation, and also brought with them a hunger for gold. In the context of this book, I use shxwelítemelh to refer to a [non-Indigenous] form of perception: “A settler’s starving orientation.” (p. 2)

relational approach to settler colonial power, and without paying attention to the conditions and contingencies of settler colonialism, studies of settler colonialism and practices of solidarity run the risk of reifying (and possibly replicating) settler colonial, as well as other, modes of domination” (p. 4). The reflexive critical gesture (by the settler-critic), taken in and as an “end” in itself, amplifies settler voices while decentring (if not effacing) the agency, ongoing sovereignty, and struggles for decolonization by and for Indigenous peoples. As I consider in my field notes above (pp. 292–294), a one-sided, settler-critic focus on settler-colonial governmentality—to the exclusion of Indigenous sovereignties, histories, and testimony—risks presenting the settler-colonial nation-state as both omnipotent force and foregone conclusion.

Going forward, I am thinking through what Snelgrove et al. (2014) describe as a “multi-dimensional understanding of settler colonialism” that is

intrinsically shaped by and shaping interactive relations of coloniality, racism, gender, class, sexuality and desire, capitalism, and ableism. This enables specificity in the ways to which place, culture, and relations of power are approached; reflects the ways in which the State has governed subjects differently; and emphasizes that the disruption of settler colonialism necessitates the disruption of intersecting forces of power such as colonialism, heteropatriarchy and capitalism. (p. 2)

This differential positioning among settlers, as settler scholar Corey Snelgrove contends in response to the question of settler solidarity, means that anti-capitalist (like anti-racist) struggles can be read as “incommensurable with but not incompatible with” decolonization insofar as these struggles are thought and conducted relationally, as the “disruption of settler colonialism” requires the dismantling of its many “interactive relations” and “intersecting forces of power” (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 2–3, p. 23; see also Tuck & Yang, 2012). Thus, while a sociopolitical critique of neoliberalism—one dimension of the settler-colonial state apparatus—is a necessary component of a multilayered urban analysis, it is not—nor can it be—its endpoint; significantly, too, such a critique is equivalent to neither decolonization nor Indigenization.

Future performances of *Abattoir de l’est*, specifically, might feature more glitches and swerves, more moments in which the neoliberal (and neocolonial) structures that the play exposes reveal their weakness, or are refused power over both the human and the nonhuman. Moreover, I would revisit the opening gesture of the performance event, beginning with a

territorial acknowledgement of the Indigenous peoples in whose traditional lands we are gathered. Potentially, this gesture might open onto an audience's critical awareness of their own positioning in relation to place, and to the specificities of settler-colonialism in this place—the place of performance.²⁶⁹ To others, for whom this positioning has never been experienced as “background” (see Snelgrove et al., pp. 9–10), a territorial acknowledgement might constitute an ethical gesture, an observance of Indigenous event protocols which claims neither to speak for nor to represent Indigenous experiences. I would hope, too, that this acknowledgement might situate my critique of neoliberal common sense (embodied in *Abattoir de l'est*) in relation to—incommensurable but potentially in “affinity” with—the struggle for decolonization and Indigenization led by and for Indigenous peoples (see Snelgrove et al., p. 23; see also Tuck & Yang, 2012). In relation to that historical and ongoing struggle, as a white, temporarily able-bodied and cis-gendered woman settler in Tiohtià:ke, I am (un)learner and listener, rather than expert, dramaturg, or narrator-demonstrator.

As I consider further and future gestures of performance research, I am asking how *Curiosité*, rather than replicating the violent gestures of incorporation or erasure, might instead work to resist them. How will this next movement of urban performance dramaturgy—located socially and culturally in relation to settler-colonialism, refusing both the gesture of erasure and the epistemological violence of incorporation toward the other, and decentred from my own spatial curiosity—play out?

Approchez-vous, approchez-vous

²⁶⁹ I am reminded, however, that a land acknowledgement is not an endpoint; rather, as Tsalagi political scientist Jeff Corntassel argues, an “awareness of colonial realities requires us to go beyond a simple acknowledgement of the Indigenous nations and peoples of the territories you are visiting. It is a call for justice and the return of stolen lands/waterways to the Indigenous peoples who maintain special relationships to these places. Ultimately, what we are arguing for is a responsibility-based ethic of truth-telling to identify and act upon new pathways to Indigenous resurgence” (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 4).

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Appendix**CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Name of Applicant: Joanna Donehower
Department: Faculty of Fine Arts\Theatre
Agency: N/A
Title of Project: Stories of Place and Practice from the Curiocité
Project: Reflections with Primary Collaborators

Certification Number: 30004215

Valid From: February 04, 2015 to: February 03, 2016

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Pfaus".

Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee



**CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Name of Applicant: Joanna Donehower
Department: Faculty of Fine Arts\ Theatre
Agency: N/A
Title of Project: Stories of Place and Practice from Hochelaga-
Maisonneuve: Reflections with Curiosité
Collaborators and Local Artists

Certification Number: 30004215

Valid From: October 14, 2015 to: October 13, 2016

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Pfaus", enclosed in a rectangular box.

Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee



**CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Name of Applicant: Janna Donehower
Department: Faculty of Fine Arts\ Theatre
Agency: N/A
Title of Project: Stories of Place and Practice from Hochelaga-
Maisonneuve: Reflections with Curiosité
Collaborators and Local Artists

Certification Number: 30004215

Valid From: October 07, 2016 **to:** October 06, 2017

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee



**CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Name of Applicant: Joanna Donehower
Department: Faculty of Fine Arts\Theatre
Agency: N/A
Title of Project: Stories of Place and Practice from Hochelaga-
Maisonneuve: Reflections with Curiosité
Collaborators and Local Artists

Certification Number: 30004215

Valid From: October 10, 2017 **To:** October 09, 2018

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a thin black rectangular border. The signature appears to be "J. Pfaus".

Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee



CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant: Joanna Donehower
Department: Faculty of Fine Arts\Theatre
Agency: N/A
Title of Project: Stories of Place and Practice from Hochelaga-
Maisonneuve: Reflections with Curioicité Collaborators
and Local Artists
Certification Number: 30004215

Valid From: October 16, 2018 To: October 15, 2019

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Hebblethwaite".

Dr. Shannon Hebblethwaite, Vice-Chair, University Human Research Ethics
Committee



CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant: Joanna Donehower
Department: Faculty of Fine Arts\Theatre
Agency: N/A
Title of Project: Stories of Place and Practice from Hochelaga-
Maisonneuve: Reflections with Curiosité
Collaborators and Local Artists

Certification Number: 30004215

Valid From: December 05, 2019 To: December 04, 2020

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard DeMont".

Dr. Richard DeMont, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee