

An Art Like Nature: Theatre Environment as Territory in Tim Spooner Performances

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Abstract

Tim Spooner has described his practice as “an increasingly complex series of live performances centred on the revelation of life in material.”¹ In this article, I consider this revelation as the precondition of a theatre ecology. Spooner stages a theatrical encounter between bodies and environments, in which distinctions between *person-thing*, *subject-object*, *self-other* no longer hold. Whilst there are evident parallels between this practice and *posthumanist*, or *new-materialist* philosophy, I shall describe Spooner’s theatre as *artlike*. This article responds to two thematics outlined in the original call for papers for CDE 2021: “eco-spaces” and “eco-aesthetics.” The argument runs: 1) an ecological space is the result of an ecological aesthetics; theatre is considered fundamentally social, political in significance; art is fundamentally ecological in significance; 2) ecocritical theatre and theatre ecology are categorically distinct: in ecocriticism, political, social, and cultural concerns mediate a concern for nature; in a theatre ecology nature is reconstructed virtually; 3) ecocriticism stages a recognition of an ecological crisis in social terms; theatre ecology stages a revelation of an environment; 4) against theatre, there is legislation; 5) a theatre ecology extends a juxtapositional logic of *political ecology*: this is a false start and ill-timed. The argument leads to a reconstruction of three gestures drawn from three of Spooner’s performances. In these gestures,

theatre is rendered *artlike*. The exposition describes Spooner's practice in terms of *embodiment* and *occupation*, before considering how the ecological implications of an artlike theatre are, firstly and finally, ethical.

Keywords: [Tim Spooner](#); [Baruch Spinoza](#); [Gilles Deleuze](#); [occupation](#); [territory](#)

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