

BOOK REVIEWS

These productions place pressure upon stock depictions of women as self-erasing symbols of religious salvation or objectified accessories to masculinity and probe the counterdiscursive possibilities and limitations of moving toward what Frederick Burwick refers to as a "meontic" mode of representation (60). This mode, which is held in tension with the mimetic, endeavors to stage what is not there, that which resists or has been denied signification in relation to presupposed realities. This kind of dual perception holds what is visibly demonstrable in tension with what is invisibly operative in performance. It also promotes a critical reception of performances that make harm to women's bodies and selves meaningful only in relation to how their injuries affect their male relatives.

Solga's book ends by encouraging practitioners and feminist spectators to engage with hidden violence as they approach early modern performance texts. She asks us to embody ghosts, acknowledge pain, and articulate what has been unnamed, as a means of combatting this vanishing act. The urgency of this project cannot be underestimated. *Violence Against Women in Early Modern Performance* reinvigorates political and ethical questions surrounding gendered violence, the shaping modes that bring that violence to consciousness, and the potentialities for theatre as an embodied medium that appropriates, historicizes, and hopefully defamiliarizes an experience that should never be reduced to shorthand. This important contribution to the field of performance studies is useful reading for all scholars and students of theatre history and early modern drama, especially those who have an interest in gender and the political implications of observing violence against women as readers, practitioners, and audience members.

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Theatre/Performance Historiography: Time, Space, Matter. Edited by Rosemarie K. Bank and Michal Kobiálka. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. 270 pp. \$90.00, cloth. \$85.50, electronic.

In the introduction to their new volume on the theory and use of theatre historiography, *Theatre/Performance Historiography: Time, Space, Matter*, editors Rosemarie K. Bank and Michal Kobiálka waste no time and pull no punches in establishing their collection of essays as a direct challenge to what they identify as shortcomings of the seminal 1989 anthology *Interpreting the Theatrical Past*.

Editors Thomas Postlewait and Bruce McConachie introduced that work, Bank and Kobialka note, "without defining 'historiography,'" and, subsequently, any use of the term, or its derivatives, "could be perceived as apart from theatre history, cross-disciplinary (if not interdisciplinary), and synonymous with 'methodology,' 'interpretation' (criticism), and 'theory' (and so, with 'terminology' per se)" (1). *Interpreting the Theatrical Past*, Bank and Kobialka argue, was published at the crest of an academic and social sea change—the former in the field of theatre studies, precipitated by the introduction and rapid popularizing of the performance studies model, and the latter exemplified by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the political and social assumptions that crumbled with it. Such shifts "would underscore the problems created in theatre and performance scholarship by the absence of a 'historiography' that is not conflated with 'methodology,' 'interpretation,' and/or 'theory'" (2). In other words, through failing to specifically define "historiography" at a time of almost unprecedented social and academic change, *Interpreting the Theatrical Past* was out of date before it was released.

It is no accident that this critique informs the three thematic pillars that organize *Theatre/Performance Historiography's* essays: Bank and Kobialka "want to recoup a definition of historiography as the arrangement of the historical record," they write. "To that end, we called for essays that addressed theatre and performance history in terms of the historiography of time, space and matter" (2). What results is a diverse group of eleven theoretically rigorous essays from a varied collection of academic heavy hitters and exciting young scholars, all of whom model creative and scholarly (re)arrangements of theatrical and performative historical records around concepts of time, space, and matter.

The anthology follows an organizational strategy implied by the theoretical insights. Following Bank and Kobialka's introduction, "Part I: The Space of Formations" offers four essays, each of which is focused on how historical narratives are arranged by space, time, and matter. "Part II: Temporal Matter" comprises three essays on "the polychronic and multitemporal construction of archival matter" and how such constructions are used to generate "aesthetic memory" (9). "Part III: Material Spaces," which includes four essays that draw from theories of dialectical materialism, challenges concepts of historical fixity through the piecemeal construction of theatrical history. While these three themes organize the essays, there is considerable productive crossover with each section's organizing principle. The result is a collection of essays that manages to address a wide swath of topics without sacrificing cohesion, delivering on Bank and Kobialka's promise to "target a historiography that is the time, the space, and the matter it takes . . . a historiography whose function is to be a mode of thinking,

to explore how time, space and matter mediate historical subjects" (7). The epistemological argument for Bank and Kobialka's approach to theatre historiography echoes Diana Taylor's argument that performance is a way of knowing; Bank and Kobialka define historiography as being intrinsically defined by, and composed of, time, space, and matter. Twelve images—frozen time and space given material form—included in the book are confined to two essays: Angenette Spalin and Scott Magelssen's "Performing Speciation" and Patricia Badir's "The Design of Theatrical Wonder in Roy Mitchell's *The Chester Mysteries*," and I wish that some of the other contributors would have included images, as well. Gwyneth Shanks' "The Ground of (Im)Potential," for example, takes the reader through an intimate exploration of a Shanks family binder of personal stories about the San Francisco earthquake. Much of the text of that essay is devoted to describing the visual affect of "a sort of unsettledness, a twisting narrative of retraces, back steps, and add-ons" implied by Shanks' experience with the text (220). Including images may have saved Shanks some narrative space to further the construction of "historiography as Earthquake."

While all eleven essays are worthwhile and contribute in various measures to using time, space, and matter as organizational keystones in thinking about and practicing theatre historiography, a handful stand out for both the quality and accessibility of their scholarship. The aforementioned "Performing Speciation: The Nature/Culture Divide at the Creation Museum" is a remarkably strong essay to kick off the volume. By positioning the Petersburg, Kentucky, Creation Museum's fossil reconstructions as an example of a "historical narrative shaped by the concepts of space, time, and matter" that participates in antiscientific arguments against evolution, Spalin and Magelssen effectively demonstrate the value of historiography as a way of thinking (7). The Creation Museum's displays shape a historical narrative that must be understood as being implicated in, and shaped by, political, religious, and corporate interests. Will Daddario's essay, "Adorno, Baroque, Gardens, Ruzzante: Rearranging Theatre Historiography," seeks to reposition central questions of theatre historiography from asking "what really happened?" toward a philosophical understanding of the encounter between a historical event and the historian. Repositioned as an encounter, rather than a description, Daddario illustrates the potential of moving away from positivist historical work and toward the act of historiography as a way of knowing the past.

Theatre/Performance Historiography is, to borrow a phrase from Daddario, a collection of eleven works that are "reinvigorated and theoretically nimble." A bold and brash addition to the field of theatre historiography, the anthology has left me genuinely excited to see what kind of new work is inspired by the

arguments and insights developed by the contributors and skillfully curated by Bank and Kobialka. I anticipate that many young scholars working their way through the essays will find themselves challenged, impressed, and inspired. Just as *Interpreting the Theatrical Past* entered the graduate studies canon, *Theatre/Performance Historiography*'s carefully cultivated essays should prove to be required reading on theatre historiography syllabi going forward.

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