

and nationhood? And what about the political role of these popular ballet productions? Government subsidies to the performing arts are, for example, only mentioned in passing, and existing research and archival material not thoroughly investigated. There is no review of the existing research literature, no attempt to place this study in a discourse. In fact, the performances themselves remain curiously absent from Eliot's book, which really is a study of the critical reception of ballet during the Second World War – nothing less, but certainly nothing more.

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Bryce Lease

After '89: Polish Theatre and the Political

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224 p. £70.00.

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As Bryce Lease sees it, Poland's Solidarity Revolution of the 1980s was one of the great turning points in history: you could hear the gears crash, smell the rubber burn, and feel the earth shake beneath your feet. Accordingly, he investigates what he regards as the post-1989 'rebirth of the theatre as a site of public intervention and social critique' in Poland. He examines this phenomenon through the work of directors such as Paweł Demirski, Maja Kleczewska, Monika Strzępka, and Krzysztof Warlikowski, all of whom 'have flaunted cultural commonplaces and begged new questions of Polish culture'. These questions focus primarily on gender, sexuality, national identity, Holocaust memory, and the role of the Church.

This book is at its best when it presents descriptive accounts of specific productions, although its emphasis on political theatre that practises provocation comes at the cost of sidelining the concept of the political that would encourage a politics of respect and dialogue in a deeply divided society. The book's analytical and interpretive project is hampered by sweeping generalizations, factual errors, and the unhelpfully dichotomous language that arises from treating 1989 as both wall and fulcrum.

Scholars of modern European history will thus be surprised to learn that 'the establishment of democracy' began in Poland only in 1989. Scholars of political theory will be puzzled by Lease's conflation of nationalism and patriotism, even though Richard Price, in his London speech of 1789 that provoked Edmund Burke's wrath in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, famously redefined the concept of patriotism. Scholars who do new research on Poland's Romantic era will be amazed by the stubborn persistence of the mistaken conviction that motherhood was a fundamental value of Polish Romanticism, or that the

communist censor banned Kazimierz Dejmek's 1967 production of Adam Mickiewicz's *Forefathers' Eve* (*Dziady*, 1832) because it was critical of Russian oppression. Mickiewicz scholars will be struck by the absence of any reference to a heated Polish debate over his Jewish background, and at least some theatre scholars will wonder why Paweł Wodźński and Bartosz Frąckowiak's reconceptualization of the theatre's role in a community receives lavish praise while Alina Obidniak's pioneering initiatives, including festivals of street theatre at the Cyprian Norwid Theatre in Jelenia Góra during the communist period are passed over in silence.

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Gay Morris and Jens Richard Giersdorf, ed.

Choreographies of Twenty-first Century Wars

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The editors of *Choreographies of Twenty-first Century Wars* are interested in the unique properties of post-9/11 conflicts, and how this particularity can help to articulate the relationship between recent wars and choreographed movement. Whereas many twentieth-century wars have been understood in terms of conflicts between national armies, twenty-first-century wars require attention to circumstances such as increasing privatization and mediatization, as well as porous borders.

In the past decade, monographs by Jenny Hughes (2011), Sara Brady (2012), and Rustom Bharucha (2014) have applied theatre and performance studies approaches to the war on terror and the idea of terror itself through case studies ranging from plays to video games to protests. While it is a shame that these are never engaged as interlocutors, this book takes a broader scope, to include also case studies such as the war on drugs. Coming from the perspective of dance studies, there is an emphasis throughout on the experiences of bodies in and out of the theatre, as well as a particular understanding of the lens of choreography as 'an organizational, decision-making, and analytical system that is always social and political'. Such choreography is represented in multiple ways, including reports on its investigation via the authors' practice of dance itself.

In the preface and again in the introduction, Gay Morris and Jens Richard Giersdorf explain that they approached these authors and gathered the essays in order to pose a question about the nature of twenty-first-century wars. This has resulted in sixteen essays that cover a broad geographical scope including Europe, the Middle East, Africa, South East Asia, and the United