

# NTQ Book Reviews

edited by Rachel Clements

doi:10.1017/S0266464X1600066X

Marilena Zaroulia and Philip Hager, ed.

## Performances of Capitalism, Crises, and Resistance: Inside/Outside Europe

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. 265 p. £55.

ISBN: 978-1-137-37936-8.

This timely collection explores how performance contributes to the creation of contemporary European identities. It moves through a London-Berlin-Athens axis that highlights the impact of capitalism on the construction of European identities since 2008 – a period marked by a succession of crises in the European project, especially concerning issues of citizenship and sovereignty. Hence, the terms *inside* and *outside* in the book's title refer to political geography, the public and private, economic power, social class, the relationship between performers and audiences, and much more.

This, then, is an ambitious and wide-ranging book, with the risk of drift or incoherence adroitly managed by the editors' decision to group the essays into three loose sections. In section one, we find different approaches to the theme of 'returns', from Giulia Palladini's exploration of how 'the spectre of the Weimar republic' haunts contemporary Europe, to Philip Hager's exploration of how 'Occupy London Stock Exchange' challenged the use of speculation to generate financial 'returns'. The linking of economic return with the regular recurrence of cultural tropes shows how economic and political norms are culturally produced in Europe today – a theme on which the rest of the collection elaborates.

The second section, on paradoxes, illustrates how crises both give rise to and are caused by cultural and societal anomalies and inconsistencies. Thus, Louise Owen writes about how the development of the UK's National Theatre has been affected by transnationalism, while Aylwyn Walsh explores how Greek national identity has been influenced by the representation of immigrants as 'others'.

Finally, the third section focuses on the theme of interpretation, implicitly asking how we as academics – working in universities that are both victims and proponents of neoliberal values – can respond to crisis generally. Of particular importance here is Marilena Zaroulia's essay on a public art installation by Kalliopi Lemos that made use of migrants' boats. Fascinating as a case study, the essay also provides valuable methodological and

theoretical approaches to absence, the body, and the recurrence of cultural tropes at times of crisis.

This, then, is a rich and rigorous collection, uniformly well written by passionate and engaged scholars and performance makers. Its urgency is all the more evident in a post-Brexit Europe, but its approach to questions of methodology, ethics, and the responsibilities of the scholar mean that this collection will have a lasting impact.

PATRICK LONERGAN

doi:10.1017/S0266464X16000671

Helen M. Brooks

## Actresses, Gender, and the Eighteenth-Century Stage: Playing Women

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. x, 201 p. £58.

ISBN 978-0-230-29833-0.

Helen Brook's volume on eighteenth-century actresses adds to and indeed reinvigorates the field. Where other scholars may have focused on performance and the literary, along with Gilli Bush-Bailey in her earlier *Treading the Boards* (2006), Brooks turns to the analysis of professional practice and its connection to changing configurations of gender and the feminine. These she explores in relation to how actresses managed both their careers and their off- and on-stage personas, in the context of changing views of womanhood. Indeed at points she suggests that, as high-profile public figures, some of the actresses actually influenced the ways in which the cultural transformation of women's social roles were inflected by the working and private lives of the actresses themselves.

Brooks evidences the ways in which the highest-profile actresses of the period covering the end of the 1600s and into the early decades of the 1700s were able to command significant earning that placed them outside the category of powerless commodity, and into the high end of professional wage earners, full stop. She explores the importance of establishing a role and holding on to it, as well as developing one's portfolio of other roles and the manner in which this set performers in fierce competition with one another.

Actresses formed alliances with writers and some boosted their public personas through their development of rhetorical skills, which in turn made them even more popular with the public, and enhanced the range of femininities explored on stage. Brooks also discusses the relationship of the 'new fascination with interiority', and the development of theatrical techniques amongst a