

writing” (340) a practice that links place and performance by insisting that embodied, sensory knowledge is always generated in relation to its environment. Rusted categorizes his practice as a form of “research-creation” (344), a term that the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council uses to designate fundable arts-based research, and therefore one that shapes performance-based outputs in Canada. The volume’s attentiveness to embodied research, performance-based emplacements, and geographic diversity within Canada are strengths, which would be complemented by an increased focus on diasporic and transnational approaches and more perspectives by artists and/or scholars of color.

*Performance Studies in Canada* endeavors to unsettle definitions of both “performance” and “Canada” through foregrounding work by Indigenous artist-scholars and drawing attention to the performative constructs of Canadian national identity. This makes it a valuable addition to a field that is only beginning to grapple with how its practices intersect with ongoing histories of settler colonialism.

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## Women and Embodied Mythmaking in Irish Theatre

By Shonagh Hill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019; pp. x + 257. \$105 hardback, \$84 e-book.

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In her new exploration into Irish drama and performance, *Women and Embodied Mythmaking in Irish Theatre*, Shonagh Hill works to underline the unexamined importance of performances by women and female characters through a focus on the corporeal—the embodied performances that help to move the conversation from old myths concerning femininity to the creation of new ones. Specifically, Hill painstakingly examines the ways in which “women in Irish theatre . . . have employed mythic narratives to expose the gap between idealized myths of femininity and women’s lived realities” (5) and “how bodies bear the consequences of myths of femininity, while refusing the female body as passive bearer of inscription” (6). Drawing on feminist readings of a range of theoretical concepts, including Roland Barthes’s work on mythologies and Luce Irigaray’s work on reframing female relationships in ways that might contest patriarchal understandings, Hill makes a compelling case that the works she examines are vitally necessary for a reassessment of Irish drama and history.

Chapter 1 investigates the ways in which specific performances by women in the early twentieth century, although apparently supporting preconceived notions of femininity in the burgeoning struggle for independence from Britain, were actually at odds with these notions. One example analyzed is Maud Gonne, whose

performance as the title character in *Kathleen ni Houlihan*—a play that, on its face, reinforces ideas about women representing a worthy but helpless nationhood that must be fought for and defended—in fact “reinforced existing myths and exceeded them” (47). After the first chapter’s examination of woman as nation, Chapter 2 explores ways in which women and the home might be remade and recontextualized. Hill argues that though women may be inextricably linked to the home, they are also made invisible in that space, and she seeks out the ways in which women in Paula Meehan’s *Mrs. Sweeney* and Mary Elizabeth Burke-Kennedy’s *Women in Arms* seek out further, separate possibilities of that space that would make them visible—through claiming a new power dynamic within the home or by leaving the home entirely.

Moving out of the home, Chapter 3 explores, through the theoretical lenses of Irigaray and Judith Butler, how exiled characters may still “attempt to negotiate expression of their embodied subjectivity” (104) in Marina Carr’s *The Mai* and Lady Gregory’s *Grania*. Hill argues that these characters embody metamorphoses that start in abjection and finish in “creative resignification” (114). While exile may mean a figurative death, Chapter 4 interrogates the problems of staging the actual death of female characters. Looking at Marina Carr’s *Ariel* and *Woman and Scarecrow* and Edna O’Brien’s *Iphigenia*, Hill suggests that, while female death often underlines patriarchal notions of a mother’s loving sacrifice or a resetting of a familial order, the deaths in these plays instead “render the uncanny and unhomey visible and disruptive in performance” (137). Hill argues that Carr is more successful in critiquing myths originating in Greek drama concerning the necessity of female sacrifice in her *Iphigenia* adaptation of *Ariel* by having that death occur offstage; O’Brien’s adaptation, however, through its performance of this death onstage, does not fully criticize this myth and works instead to reify it.

Chapter 5 continues the progression from death to an afterlife. Mary Devenport O’Neill’s *Bluebeard*, Eva Gore-Booth’s *The Buried Life of Deirdre*, and Marina Carr’s *Portia Coughlan* all feature examples of ghosts of female characters finding embodiment. Drawing thoughtfully on Joseph Roach’s *Cities of the Dead*, Hill argues that “these three plays offer a genealogy of performance that exposes the body as the site which bears the consequences of the disavowal of violent pasts” (173). Chapter 6 concludes the book with an exploration of actress Olwen Fouéré, whose work plays into ideas concerning the mythologized female body yet also pushes back against those notions, taking ownership against many male playwrights’ gender-rigid portrayals of women by “exploring how bodies undo and rewrite myths” (214).

*Women and Embodied Mythmaking in Irish Theatre* is an important addition to field of Irish theatre and performance, joining Melissa Sihra’s *Women in Irish Drama: A Century of Authorship and Representation*, Susan Cannon Harris’s *Gender and Modern Irish Drama*, and the larger-in-scope feminist analysis of roles for women in Gay Gibson Cima’s *Performing Women: Female Characters, Male Playwrights, and the Modern Stage*. Too often, women’s contributions to Irish theatre are underexamined, and Hill’s book does a thoughtful job of helping to provide context and analysis for some of these works; in particular, the analysis of the works of Marina Carr is vital and lacking from prior scholarship. Additionally, the theoretical work of the book—arguing that the women in the

plays create, through their very bodies, new myths and new conceptions of what Irish theatre is and who Irish women might be—provides helpful new possibilities of ways in which to examine these topics.

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## Restoration Staging, 1660–74

By Tim Keenan. London and New York: Routledge, 2017; pp. xiv + 219, 32 illustrations. \$170.00 cloth, \$57.95 e-book.

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Once the dominion of mid-twentieth-century theatre historians such as Richard Southern and Edward A. Langhans, studies of the Restoration scenic stage in the wake of the “theory revolution” of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s were bypassed for far sexier subjects. Why worry about the dimensions of Lincoln’s Inn Fields—an example of the dreary positivism derided in recent theatre histories—when feminism or queer theory beckoned? With the subsequent turn to materiality in Restoration studies, interest in stagecraft has flowered again, as evidenced by the fine work of Dawn Lewcock, Juan Antonio Prieto-Pablos, and now, with *Restoration Staging, 1660–74*, Tim Keenan. These collective efforts over the past dozen years have not only expanded our understanding of what spectators actually saw in terms of scenic effects but also enhanced our appreciation for the changing material conditions that shaped dramatic form.

Keenan is especially good at teasing out specificity. Older theatre histories tended to treat stagecraft monolithically, as did earlier studies of dramatic form. Robert D. Hume, back in 1976, decimated the long-held notion that comedies of manners dominated the Restoration; instead, in *The Development of English Drama in the Late Seventeenth Century*, he chronicled a startlingly wide array of previously overlooked dramatic forms. Oddly, that same spirit of scholarly insurgency did not spill over to considerations of stagecraft and playhouse architecture, which still imagined a universal model. Keenan, by contrast, shows conclusively how “scenic demand in several Dorset Garden and Drury Lane plays from the mid-1670s exceeds anything in [Lincoln’s Inn Fields] and Bridges Street plays” (37). That attention to detail—to the specific conditions that obtained at successive playhouses—is a major strength of *Restoration Staging*.

Whereas earlier theatre historians relied heavily on illustrations and documentary evidence, Keenan turns instead to the stage directions in the seventy plays that were produced between 1660 and 1674 at the two major playhouses, Lincoln’s Inn Fields and Bridges Street, used by the Duke’s and King’s Companies, respectively. The average Restoration play had upwards of two hundred