

mentation *Theatre Work* and the 'Katzgraben' Notes. Taken together, the extracts presented here form a rich collection that includes significant work from when Brecht returned to theatre-making in 1948.

These two volumes represent an excellent extension of Brecht's writings in English. The editors draw on contemporary scholarship, apply high editorial standards, and offer a readability that opens up Brecht's theories and practices for a new generation.

DAVID BARNETT

doi:10.1017/S0266464X15000585

James Thompson

Humanitarian Performance from Disaster Tragedies to Spectacles of War

London: Seagull Books, 2014. 205 p. £22.05. ISBN: 978-0-8574-2109-8.

This is a historic and contemporary critique of the humanitarian project through the critical perspective of performance studies. It starts with a story of the author's intrigue in searching for the evidence of a bold humanitarian architectural project to build new houses in post-tsunami Sri Lanka. Designed by a successful global architect, Libeskind (responsible for the design of the Ground Zero site and Jewish Museum in Berlin) and launched in a fanfare of grandstanding publicity, the goal was part of a rebuilding Sri Lanka humanitarian mission. Unfortunately the plans never eventuated. Thompson goes to Sri Lanka, map and plans in hand, only to discover an empty quarry and puzzled local residents. The story beautifully captures the complexities of the humanitarian industry, its competing rationale to portray each cause as more worthy than the other. The greater the suffering, the more potential there is to garner donations and political support. Suffering, trauma, and pain become commodities in the competition for attention. Or as Hoffman and Weiss in the book offer: 'Humanitarianism is a performance.'

Thompson is clear about not diminishing the need for support and international responses to crisis, nor in this book is he concerned with actual performances and cultural events, but rather the ways in which a 'troubling mix of iconic images, compassion economics, celebrity concern, and the staging of misery congeal into a peculiar drama of humanitarian aid'. This therefore is a book that layers performance insights on historical and contemporary examples of humanitarian responses exploring the deficits, contradictions, and morality of when and how actions fail, misfire, and are misappropriated.

The book falls into two parts, 'Humanitarian Performance' and 'Humanitarian Performance Events'. In the first part Thompson deals with setting up the parameters of his argument, pro-

viding an incisive and interdisciplinary context to the discourse, and shaping the complexities of how his argument defines and redefines the 'show business' of the humanitarian industry. The second part of the book seeks to apply these arguments to three case studies: Kosovo, Darfur, and the Asian Tsunami. In doing so, Thompson goes into considerable detail about each of the political contexts and the nature and complexities of the humanitarian response. The mapping of his arguments on to specific sites offers the opportunity to test, extend, and deepen the debate.

Humanitarian Performance manages to provoke, critique, and encourage new perspectives on a worthwhile but complex industry. While readers might miss the direct reference to performance acts in sites of conflict and the insightful personal encounters so prevalent in Thompson's previous publications, the book nevertheless challenges the ways in which it is all too easy to regard the humanitarian enterprise as being above reproach. This is a dangerous position. As Thompson notes, 'We must acknowledge that many are aware of the need to perform and seek to play, but success, being heard, is disproportionately a reward for the powerful.'

MICHAEL BALFOUR

doi:10.1017/S0266464X15000597

Hans-Thies Lehmann

Tragödie und Dramatisches Theater

Berlin: Alexander Verlag, 2013. 734 p. €68. ISBN: 978-3-89581-308-5.

In his substantial new book Lehmann argues for something of a 'performative turn' when discussing tragedy. His aim is to reclaim the theatrical dimension as the central aspect of tragedy, arguing that all too often theories and histories of tragedy have been written without performance in mind, locating tragedy in an entirely literary discourse. This text-based approach, however, neglects the fact that tragedy cannot be thought of without performance – and it is this aspect in particular which links *Tragödie und Dramatisches Theater* to Lehmann's hugely influential *Post-dramatic Theatre* (2004). Lehmann argues that there can be no 'tragic experience without a theatrical experience' but that this tragic experience is not necessarily linked to dramatic theatre.

In this book Lehmann concentrates not on ancient Greek tragedy but on tragedy since the Renaissance. He does not discuss tragedy as a 'genre', but rather identifies a core tragic motif and then systematically distinguishes the different forms of theatre in which this motif appears. As the core tragic motif Lehmann defines a 'development of transgression'. At the centre of this first lengthy part of his study (which comprises three substantial parts in a volume of over

730 pages) is the 'tragic experience of the spectator', not just as a reflective but as a sensual, affective, bodily experience (particularly as discussed on pages 146–218). He relates this experience to the challenging relationship between philosophy and tragedy and, in fact, theatre and theory more widely. In the second part of the book on 'Drama and Tragedy' Lehmann argues for ancient Greek tragedy to be classed as 'pre-dramatic' and presents a detailed discussion of the characteristics of dramatic theatre (pages 258–81), whereas the book's third part analyzes the dissolution of the dramatic and directs the reader to post-dramatic performance practices in relation to the tragic (particularly pages 576–622).

Lehmann's book is a tour de force from one of the leading theatre scholars of our time. What we are presented with is not 'just' a study about tragedy. Lehmann almost uses his discussion of tragic theatre as a starting point to write an alternative theatre history, reiterating his passionate plea to establish performance at the heart of what we do. Needless to say, Lehmann's new book needs translating into English – fast.

ANSELM HEINRICH

doi:10.1017/S0266464X15000603

Mary Noonan

Echo's Voice: the Theatres of Sarraute, Duras, Cixous, and Renaude

Leeds; London: Maney Publishing, 2014. 200 p.

£49.50.

ISBN: 978-1-907975-50-9.

Drawing on various psychoanalytical frameworks – from Freud to Kristeva and Klein – that position the voice as an intermediary between the body and writing, *Echo's Voice* examines the work of four major female French playwrights of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries: Nathalie Sarraute, Marguerite Duras, Hélène Cixous, and Noëlle Renaude. Noonan's contention is that these stylistically disparate writers use a range of textual strategies to bring the 'soundness' of the word to the fore alongside its semantic function. This leads to a type of theatre in which language becomes deeply ambivalent,

oscillating between sound and sense, asking an audience to listen to both musicality and meaning.

Selected works of each of the playwrights are explicated in separate chapters following a linear chronology. The final chapter on Renaude is the most original, analyzing how she uses pictograms and visual arrangements of words on the page as a method for inspiring a merging of textual and aural features. The chapter on Cixous's writing meanwhile builds on Julia Dobson's often-cited argument that her early experimental plays are closer to *écriture féminine* than the later works with Théâtre du Soleil which use more classical dramatic features. Noonan adds to this argument by showing that these early plays also pay more attention to the sonority of the word.

What is particularly appealing is that the emphasis on the materiality of the spoken word that might be enjoyed for its affective and rhythmic qualities indicates a turn towards affective modes of theatre. While studies such as Lehmann's *Post-dramatic Theatre* discuss this experiential turn in relation to stage practices, it is here investigated from the border of the text. This focus, however, also means that some of the ideas sit awkwardly between literary studies and discourses on theatre. Although the staging approaches of the directors associated with the playwrights are drawn on very productively, live practice is positioned as a realization of the writer's work rather than a negotiation between the director, the performers, the text, and ultimately also the spectator, especially in the first three case studies.

The conclusion offers more comparative perspectives, suggesting how each writer's *oeuvre* illuminates different aspects of the auditory and also nods to a politics of theatre that resists easy consumption. While indicating that the four playwrights share 'a common ground', questions of legacy might have been addressed more directly: does these writers' theatre amount to a tradition with the notion of linear progression, as the genealogical description of Renaude as an 'inheritor' of the other three might indicate? Noonan offers a stimulating insight into how the writings of the four authors produce an auditory theatre, but would have benefited from more careful editing as chunks of writing repeat throughout.

CARA BERGER