baked into the dramaturgy of American flight, as alluded to in his chapter on the *Enola Gay*. What keeps the image of flight aloft in the American imagination is a technophilia that conceals violence through the aestheticized and distanced act of bombing, further realized in the drone strike. The American infatuation with flight is inextricable from how it aesthetically and anesthetically wields violence that enables the American willing suspension of disbelief that we are not performing violence ourselves.

Despite these issues, Magelssen should be commended for focusing on this topic with sensitivity. Throughout, he thoughtfully engages with performance studies to connect the specificity of the historical archive with contemporary culture and politics. He takes seriously the ways in which flight has not only been central to the American cultural imagination, but also how that figuration is fundamentally shaped by disciplinary regimes of race, gender, and nation. In so doing, Magelssen effectively makes the case for flight's centrality to America's image of itself, with performance as one of its foundational elements.

• • •

Theater as Data: Computational Journeys into Theater Research

Miguel Escobar Varela. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2021; pp. viii + 222, 21 illustrations, 13 datasets, 4 code samples, 4 videos. $75 cloth, $29.95 paper, Open Access e-book.

Harmony Bench

Department of Dance, College of Arts and Sciences, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA

Miguel Escobar Varela's *Theater as Data: Computational Journeys into Theater Research* is a welcome addition to the literature on digital humanities methods in performing arts analysis. Audiences from undergraduates to academic administrators will find, written in an accessible style, a useful survey of projects and scholars working in this terrain, as well as what kind of support is needed to make such work sustainable. As if preemptively to disarm those who would challenge any assertion that theatrical practice can be reduced to data, Escobar Varela notes that the "as" in his title, *Theater as Data*, is a reference to Richard Schechner's familiar distinction between "is" performance and "as" performance (5). Just as any cultural practice can be analyzed as performance for Schechner, so too can theatrical practices be analyzed as data, which then draws certain features of performance into the foreground. Furthermore, echoing a familiar line of argumentation in critical data studies, Escobar Varela contends that "data never *is*—no natural category of data exists without preconditions. But many things can be considered *as* data" (5). Of course, not all aspects of performing arts practices lend themselves to data analysis, and the book clarifies which, from the author's perspective, might particularly benefit from such approaches.

The book's main through line is the distinction Escobar Varela maintains between data-driven and data-assisted research in the digital humanities and its theatrical travels (7). According to the author, data-driven research is motivated by questions that have answers, is replicable, and produces measurements, whereas data-assisted research transforms the questions that can be asked, is interpretive, and includes unquantifiable elements (8). Rather than insist on the superiority of one framework over another, Escobar Varela advocates merging their strengths by nudging readers toward "critical realism" (11), which is committed to an idea of the truth of an external reality while also acknowledging "that our knowledge of that reality is necessarily subjective, contingent, and socially constructed" (37). Readers might not share the author's investment in distinguishing between data-driven and data-assisted research, especially because both modes are frequently in play in the digital humanities and in the examples Escobar Varela offers from his own work. However, these terms help readers less familiar with this territory better understand these distinct viewpoints, which they might encounter as theatre, dance, and performance scholars increasingly bring the tools of data analysis to bear on their research.

Theater as Data is divided into three parts. In the first, "Pre-departure Reflections," Escobar Varela offers a solid gloss of both empirical and interpretive research while laying out the values and biases of these approaches and the benefit of combining them. He gives special attention to statistical analysis and data visualization, noting that whereas only data-driven analysis can make use of statistics, both data-driven and data-assisted research can employ visualization to great effect. Data-driven analysis "can work within the constraints of established visualization conventions"; data-assisted research "requires critical interventions to invent new forms suitable to its purposes" (60).

The second part, "Guided Tours," forms the core of the book. These chapters introduce four analytic sites where theatre studies can make great use of data-driven and data-assisted approaches: words (e.g., texts such as reviews), relationships (e.g., characters within a scene), motion (e.g., performers' movement), and location (e.g., theatrical venues). Escobar Varela covers common methods and points to scholars working with each, identifies untapped areas of study, and draws examples from his own extensive research on performance practices in Indonesia and Singapore in what he calls "excursions" (17). Although readers can benefit from these excursions without pulling up the datasets, code, websites, and videos related to them, I highly recommend going down these rabbit holes. The book appropriately maintains its focus on building bridges between digital humanities and performance scholarship and reviewing scholarship in this growing field. However, the result of that focus is that the author undersells his own rigorous and multivalent work in this area, which offers excellent and needed models, and has the added benefit of educating readers about performance traditions with which many may be unfamiliar. Of the adjacent resources Escobar Varela makes available, I wished the datasets had been more thorough and supportive of reuse toward new ends. This is a wish expressed from the perspective of my own investment in data-assisted scholarship, if we follow the author's distinctions, whereas Escobar Varela has favored the values of transparency and independent validation for the purposes of data-driven scholarship.

Part 3, "Ensuring the Journeys Continue," offers reflections on how to sustain digital projects once they are complete, and whether digital scholars should also be programmers (Escobar Varela votes yes—at least somewhat). I found Chapter 8, "The Imperative of Open and Sustainable Data" particularly useful in its advice that scholars determine which components of a project should be saved and how, rather than trying to preserve a project across inevitable platform and software changes. Sharing data is critical "to allow others to verify our results, to enable other researchers to combine our data with their own datasets to ask new questions, and, equally important, for use in training courses" (170). Escobar Varela cautions, however, that "sharing without preservation is meaningless" (164). But what does it mean to preserve digital projects? Escobar Varela advises readers to identify "the data, the data models, and the visualizations and interfaces worth keeping for posterity" (174), while recognizing that the theorization of ephemerality in performance studies equips the field both to understand and to value the temporary nature of much digital inquiry. This chapter is vital reading for scholars, graduate advisors, and administrators who might find themselves in the position of overseeing, advocating for, or explaining digital projects and who thus need a concrete understanding of the challenges specific to digital scholarship.

With its impressive survey of scholarly projects, methods, and debates, *Theater as Data* is an important text for everyone working at the intersections of the digital humanities and theatre, dance, and performance studies.

• • •

Games and Theatre in Shakespeare's England

Edited by Tom Bishop, Gina Bloom, and Erika T. Lin. Cultures of Play. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021; pp. 332. $136 cloth, €108.99 e-book.

Nora L. Corrigan

Department of Languages, Literature, and Philosophy, Mississippi University for Women, Columbus, MS, USA

In recent years, multiple edited collections have grown out of a surge of scholarly interest in medieval and early modern game cultures. *Games and Theatre in Shakespeare's England* joins such volumes as *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature* (ed. Serina Patterson, 2015) and *Playthings in Early Modernity: Party Games, Word Games, Mind Games* (ed. Allison Levy, 2017), but with a focus on the stage that makes its insights and concerns distinctive. As coeditor Gina Bloom argued in her earlier monograph, *Gaming the Stage* (2018), early modern theatrical audiences would have perceived an intimate link between stage plays and gaming and experienced the theatre as a participatory space where they did not simply *watch* a play but *engaged* in mutual play with the performers.