

(1690), composed by two of his sons. The latter two works reveal a reversal of the image of Louis XIV as Sun King: now he is represented by the winter wind that causes “deprivation, hardship and woe” (146). In both works there is an underlying theme of the artist defying the tyrant. The criticism of Louis XIV is also found in the performances of the Comédie-Italienne, whose texts ridiculed such figures as Mars, Jupiter, Apollo, and Hercules, all of whom had traditionally represented the king. In the 1680s the plays of the Comédie-Italienne began to be written and performed in French, and as a result of this change the public audiences increasingly expected that the theatrical works they saw would portray situations that reflected their own experiences, not just those of the king and his court (152).

By the end of the seventeenth century the nobility had joined with the wealthy, upper bourgeoisie in Paris to create a new “court,” or social elite that gathered at the Opéra. Here the theatrical works depicted not celebrations of gods and heroes (as in the past) but comic and pastoral themes that praised the new audience rather than the king. In the opéra-ballet of Campra, *Le triomphe des arts*, the arts were represented as “leading the way to a new, peaceful society under the direct inspiration of Venus” (174). Artists now served a new society rather than a monarch. As in past theatrical works, the theme of love often predominated in the opéra-ballets, but love is now seen as “an ideal in itself . . . [and] as a symbol for a wider advocacy of political freedom” (182).

“A transformed image of the Muses, liberated from the service of Louis XIV and now in the service of a group of deities and allegorical characters representing the public sphere” (191) was a major method by which the new place of the arts in French society circa 1700 was made manifest in the spectacles of music and dance. In the opéra-ballets of Campra and other artists, the most important deity was Folly, who is joined by Momus (the god of satire), Bacchus (wine), Ceres and Flora (abundance), and Plutus, the god of commerce and a symbol of the new commercial theater itself (191). The music of these spectacles also carried political messages. In his opéra-ballets centered on Venetian carnival, for example, Campra wrote in an Italian musical style for the divertissements where political allusions feature prominently, while his music that accompanied the more straightforward scenes were written in a French style of music. Campra did this not only to appeal to the popular taste for Italianate music but also as a “sign of antimonarchical taste” and “public resistance to the crown” (219). This is in contrast to the use of Italian interludes in earlier

court ballets, which depicted otherness. When Louis XIV no longer needed an official French identity to be set against the foil of an Italian identity, then the Italian interludes were discouraged and eventually suppressed in the court ballets (219).

The ideology found in the theatrical works and literature of late-seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century France was given a visual form in Watteau’s paintings, particularly in the *Pilgrimage to Cythera*. This painting was finished after the death of Louis XIV and before the official start of the reign of Louis XV in 1721. It can be seen, Cowart argues, “as an expression of resistance to the politics and aesthetics of the old king, as well as a utopian blueprint for the regent and king-to-be” (249). The vision of a new society, which artists like Molière, Lully and his sons, Campra and Watteau, encoded in their artistic creations, may not have been fully understood or appreciated by every member of the audience. This ideological vision, however, was available to all in one form or another in that “it could be comprehended in more general terms by an audience sensitive to the nuances of image and iconography” (249–50). In *The Triumph of Pleasure* Cowart has made sure that twenty-first-century readers will also be aware of these nuances and the messages carried by the music, text, and dancing of these spectacles.

This book makes an important contribution to the understanding of the place of the festive arts in seventeenth-century France. It is particularly significant in the case of the art of dance, an art that has been seen by some historians as inhabiting only the physical sphere and without any relationship to the wider intellectual, philosophical, and political discourses within its contemporary society. Cowart’s lucid and detailed analysis of spectacles performed at the French court and in the Parisian theaters makes it impossible to dismiss the dance as merely physical activity that is devoid of any wider meanings.

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BEING WATCHED: YVONNE RAINER AND THE 1960S

by Carrie Lambert-Beatty. 2008. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 362 pp., illustrations, notes, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Attracting impressive awards (2009 de la Torre Bueno Book Prize and Honorable Mention, Music and the Performing Arts category, 2008 PROSE Awards) and with glowing responses from the likes

of Peggy Phelan, one wonders what more there is to add in a review of Carrie Lambert-Beatty's *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s*. The book is the first monograph to critically engage with Rainer's early body of work, and the author does an excellent job of synthesizing critical discourse on Rainer to date and setting out a new thesis that is clearly and persuasively argued.

I have engaged with Lambert-Beatty's earlier work on Rainer in my writing on dance and film because her thinking added much to considerations of the impact of Rainer's work and ideas on the development of cine-choreographies. Since then there has been a flurry of new publications on Rainer, including her own autobiography.¹ While there is no doubting the need for critical debate around Rainer's role in the New York avant-garde of the 1960s, and the temporal distance seems about right for objective reflection, the question "why now" may be worthwhile asking. With a strong thread of interview-based articles on Rainer going back to the 1970s, Rainer has perhaps been seen as speaking for her own choreographic work with sufficient critical acuity. She was, after all, the most prolific writer within the group of practitioners surrounding the Judson Dance Theater, producing several documents that have come to "speak for" that period in dance history.²

Lambert-Beatty's success—and *Being Watched* is clearly an excellent addition to the field of work on this period in dance and art history—is in deftly articulating those aspects of Rainer's aesthetics and ideas that point to her currency in the early twenty-first century, some of which preempt central preoccupations of the most recent creative practice and associated critical theory. Firstly, there is Rainer's identification of the resistance of dance to perception "as an artistic problem" (1) both in terms of form/content and traditional understandings of spectatorship. The book is an extended analysis of how this central enquiry plays out in Rainer's work. Accounting for Rainer's approach to this "problem" through both her writing and her early choreographies and films, Lambert-Beatty's book demonstrates how Rainer's analytical, reflective, and deeply articulate approach in the 1960s is a clear precursor to the recent "conceptual" choreographic work that André Lepecki describes as "any dance that probes and complicates how it comes into presence, and where it establishes its ground of being" (2006, 5). Lepecki is referring here to work of the last fifteen years or so that he believes "deploy[s]" theoretical concepts associated with contemporary deconstructionist and poststructuralist philosophy and their revision of our understanding of both "presence" and

"the body." While Lepecki describes a more-or-less one-way flow from philosophy to dance practice, Lambert-Beatty's book recuperates Rainer as an artist who preempted, and possibly informed, philosophies and creative practices emerging around the same time as her choreographic research and performance. This helps establish Rainer's position as the precursor of a new breed of experimental dance artists, including Xavier Le Roy and Jérôme Bel. Rainer's interest in "the gaze" has already prompted suggestions (Phelan 1999, 8–10) that her performance work anticipated the feminist critique within film studies catalyzed by Laura Mulvey's essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975), so, in a way, Lambert-Beatty brings dance studies up to date in this regard.

But philosophy or theory *per se* does not drive this book; performance does. Lambert-Beatty's second major point is that, while Rainer's contributions to the refiguring of the dancing body were monumental, this project was not primarily about the development of a radical new movement vocabulary (this would be played out in the work of her close associates such as Trisha Brown) but about refiguring "the body as offered up to the eye." (4) It was through performance that Rainer developed her enduring ideas, and this can be distinguished from the research-based, mind/body focus that emerged later for some of her peers. Lambert-Beatty's definition of this dominant enquiry in Rainer's choreographies as "between the body being, and being watched" (6) builds on Phelan's earlier writing on Rainer and spectatorship and provides the title for the book (Phelan 1999, 3–7). Rainer's interest in a choreography that completely digresses from the functional and purposeful while maintaining an everyday attitude, along with her radical antidramatic phrasing, are thus shown by the author to be driven by concerns regarding performance and spectatorship.

In questioning the image of the dancer and dancing that supported existing systems of training, production, and performance, Rainer and her colleagues continued the modernist interrogation of disciplinary foundations carried out across the twentieth century. But Lambert-Beatty's emphasis upon Rainer's attention to *spectatorship* is important as it identifies a focus beyond the body that distinguishes Rainer from those same colleagues and sets her within another fundamentally interdisciplinary lineage. Rainer's love-hate relationship with dance is well documented and is significant regarding the disciplinary-interdisciplinary tension that is currently intensifying within dance practice and dance studies. Lambert-Beatty cites Hal Foster

on this tension in relation to minimalism generally: “a crux between the still-powerful modernist model of medium-specific thinking about art, and the context-contingent, interdisciplinary mode” (38). Of course, Rainer would move toward the discipline of film that offered her so much more scope regarding spectatorial configurations.

But the moving body was, during this period, her medium, and dancing was particularly well placed within the experimental scene of New York City to enable the aesthetic and political moves she wanted to make. Lambert-Beatty’s book repositions dance, through the figure of Rainer, to its right and influential place within this artistic milieu, where it worked alongside the Happenings of Alan Kaprow and the minimalist sculptures of Robert Morris in deconstructing the performer/audience divide and insisting on the contingency of all works of art. Lambert-Beatty is clear on her intention here: to write the Judson group’s aesthetic project “into social histories of the period” (72). While Lambert-Beatty cites Nick Kaye, Hal Foster, and Henry Sayre, who all draw dance *into* their relevant historical accounts of this New York scene, the author follows Annette Michelson’s lead in recuperating the importance of somatic-based research during this time. She goes so far as to suggest that Rainer is a “bridge between key episodes in post-war art” (9), converting the spatial minimalism of visual arts into a temporal form, and complicating any clear characteristics relating to -isms in general.

Lambert-Beatty grounds her arguments regarding Rainer’s tussle with spectatorship in an oppositional relationship with “the mediated condition of everyday life in the postwar United States” (25), and this is the point on which Lambert-Beatty departs from other commentators on Rainer, as well as Rainer herself. She suggests that the increase in visual media—television, news, film—during this era impacted upon the work of Judson Dance Theater, “albeit for the most part at a level other than conscious intention” (72). The author is up front about the potential criticism of such an approach as “retrojecting” today’s concerns into the past, and there is a real risk that this fashionable interest in media and new technologies vis-à-vis corporeal experience could railroad the book. But instead, Lambert-Beatty is vigorously convincing, citing examples where Judson artists interacted directly with media sources—radio, film, newspapers, photography—as a means of manipulating the relationship between the moving body and the logic of its presence in the here and now of performance.

This theme in the book comes to a head in her

account of *Trio A*, where she shifts the “reactive” reading of this iconic work from a relation *to* earlier modern dance to a relation *with* a mediated post-modern condition and its challenge to established models of “spectatorship, representation, and embodiment” (131). It is in these nuanced revisions of accepted dance scholarship that Lambert-Beatty so effectively deepens the debates surrounding Rainer and reveals so clearly the “ambiguity” at the heart of her work.

The author links this concern with spectatorship to questions around time, duration, memory, and “meditation,” opening up new themes beyond the issue of movement quality that has dominated critical discourse on Rainer’s choreography. Her discussion of time in these performances, drawing on the work of art theorist Pamela M. Lee and film theorist Mary Ann Doane, is an example of the deeply interdisciplinary concerns and knowledges that Lambert-Beatty draws on across the book. She throws new light on the question of Rainer’s task-like movement quality specifically through the issue of time, citing Michelson on Rainer’s use of “real or operational time,” and connecting this to concurrent interest in other fields such as ethnography, where diverse cultures measured time by tasks, not vice-versa (86). And the discussion of time also leads her back to “mediation” via John Cage, when she shows that “the ribbon of time that is film or magnetic tape” became the model for the structured time frames in works like *Parts of Some Sextets* (92).

What Lambert-Beatty does brilliantly is identify compositional strategies that unsettle conventional habits of perception, thus highlighting *specifically* what dance and choreography achieved and contributed to the most progressive aesthetic concerns of this internationally influential milieu. Part of the significance of dance during this time is identified by Lambert-Beatty as its inhabiting a “cultural fault line” where questions of presence and mediation come to a head, the “stutter step” that Phelan identifies in the seemingly unavoidable configuration of the doer and watcher in dance performance (12). She cites “heterogeneity [or inclusiveness], stillness, slow motion” (41); “improvisation, indeterminacy, and other techniques of spontaneity” (51); the use and abuse of the composition standard “repetition and variation” (55); and nonhierarchical or “paratactic” movement (140) as some of the means employed to open up this fault line to further interrogation. While many of these compositional strategies can be mobilized by other media, it is the collocation of these around presence, motility, and improvisation that make them specific and particular to the

discipline. These strategies are illustrated through meticulous descriptions of performance events resulting from rigorous archival research.

And this is, fundamentally, a book about composition. While the book—and the work it describes—circle around the spectator, there is relatively little account of the actual spectatorial experience beyond the artists' accounts of each others' works, and the critics who were either for or against them. Reading the detailed descriptions of the work that the author provides, one can't help wondering how the theories actually translated for the viewers; but the actual challenge this work presented in situ is generally avoided to focus on creative practice/process. Some of these performances must have truly tested the audience, even the small in-crowd who followed the activities with some regularity. Lambert-Beatty arrives at the term "noninvolvement" to describe the "attentive structure" of Rainer's work, but as we know, spectators are slippery subjects to pin down.

Yet another strength of Lambert-Beatty's book is the author's "tone" or way of proceeding, which is sympathetic to Rainer's procedures as *enquiry* and *experimentation*. The author doesn't settle for a black-and-white account of Rainer's work ("ambiguity" becomes a key term) but is able to account for its complexity in surprisingly simple language. For example, where she confronts the question of whether Rainer was for or against performance per se, Lambert-Beatty writes that "*spectatorship as such* was the social phenomenon to be, not negated, but explored" (13). Like Rainer, Lambert-Beatty doesn't shy away from the difficult questions, and Rainer demands this approach of theorists who confront her work.

One thing that strikes me reading this book in Australia—where the long reach of American post-modernism in dance has certainly been felt—is the New York-ness of the book. The importance of the Judson legacy cannot be in doubt, and reading about these often mad experiments as part of an official canon is very satisfying. But while Lambert-Beatty's reverence for the artists is tempered by a very "personable" tone, the book did turn my mind to the many other lineages and "bodies" of knowledge that are quickly becoming the new ground for innovation in contemporary dance. But this is a personal response regarding broader questions of history and migration.

The book is a smooth read, impeccably researched, full of illustrations, and clearly structured with an introductory chapter that sets out the central thesis in style. I would only have appreciated a separate bibliography and chronology of works as the per-

fect companion to the scholarship. All-in-all, it is a worthy tribute to this radical "shaper of dances," "mover of bodies," and "sculptor of spectatorship" of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (9).

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Notes

1. See Rainer (2006); Woods (2007); Ramsay Burt's account of Rainer's early years in Burt (2007); Sachs (2003), an edited catalogue including another Lambert-Beatty article; plus new writing by Noël Carroll and RoseLee Goldberg.

2. Critical engagement with Rainer's film work is, however, substantial. See *Rainer* (1989), Green (1994); plus book chapters by Lucy Fischer, Peggy Phelan, Kaja Silverman, Ann Kaplan, Lauren Rabinovitz, and Scott MacDonald. And of course Susan Leigh Foster, Mark Franko, Ann Cooper Albright, and Sally Banes have all tackled critical reflection on Rainer's dances writing in the 1980s and 90s.

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THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF PERFORMANCE: A NEW AESTHETICS

by Erika Fischer-Lichte. 2008. Translated by Saskya Iris Jain. London/New York: Routledge. viii + 236 pp., bibliography, index. \$37.95 paper.

Artists hurt themselves purposefully on stage, they spend days with a wild coyote in a gallery, they stage well-known plays with actors ostensibly physically ill-equipped to portray characters, or they invite