

aftermath of unimaginably violent, historical states of exception produce human environments free of nostalgia for the future?

The Berlin-based interlude brilliantly suturing these encounters describes how youth from different Balkan regions created a gallery-based installation-exhibition to frame performed actions exploring civil-war repercussions and nation-building processes. Kuftinec's impressionistic and heart-stopping account presents a powerfully fragmented event with solo performers mostly in separate spaces and an ensemble-performed denouement that presents as collage moments of acute disconnection. In a book advocating theatre activities that inspire war-damaged youth to repair (for) the future, this startling, bleak, and challenging centerpiece iconoclastically eschews overt gestures toward utopian hope by ironically refracting the coping-strategy affects that remain. This lowlights a profoundly honest and brave between-the-lines disquiet regarding even the most skillful facilitations aiming to make a positive difference in the war-torn lives and lands of the youth they engage.

The book's subtle conjunctions between global-city gallery installations and war-zone site-responsive events gesture toward fresh, alternative aesthetics for deconstructing the hellish environmental niches of third-millennium intraspecies degradation. Given the clarity, acuity, and probity of Kuftinec's analyses—which include a sharp suspicion of nation-forming narratives—it is fitting to venture a supportive caveat about theatre facilitation in severe conflict zones. To make a humane difference with young people in those circumstances certainly merits admiration and applause. Yet the contextual sensitivity of such practices indicates that an efficacious grip might best be gained by an aesthetic-analytical mix aimed at radical transformation through affective indirection, rather than via the head on routines of Boalian joking. If so, might the historical terms of engagement of politically oriented participatory theatre no longer provide sufficient leverage on the sources of endemic violence in international environments? Does the African American-sourced theatricality of Wesley Days's "Middle East" interventions as reported in Kuftinec's closing chapter come closer to the radical transformative mark? That this stimulating book prompts such queries is surely a distinctive measure of its timeliness when everyday states of extreme exception appear to be becoming the global rule.



***Feminist and Queer Performance: Critical Strategies.*** By Sue-Ellen Case. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; pp. 240. \$105.00 cloth, \$39.00 paper. doi:10.1017/S0040557411000627

Reviewed by Season Ellison, Northern Arizona University

Following shortly on the heels of the 2008 reissue of her influential text *Feminism and Theatre*, Sue-Ellen Case here brings together a selection of articles that trace her journey as a scholar and problematize the development of feminist and queer theory and performance in the United States since the 1980s. Despite

the fact that each of the articles included in Case's *Feminist and Queer Performance: Critical Strategies* has already been published, each speaks to and against others to offer insight not only into their original cultural and historical contexts but also into our contemporary attempts to make meaning in an ever-confusing and unsettled global world. As usual, Case strives "to make certain relations visible" and mark "invisibility in the process" (13). In so doing, she troubles the already troubling binary relationships between feminist and queer theory, masculine and feminine, heterosexuality and homosexuality, gay men and lesbian women, and global and local.

Case's Introduction is retrospective yet introspective, tongue-in-cheek yet self-aware. She recognizes that each of the individual articles was written to respond to the most "lively debates of the moment" and was "consciously inscribing the social agendas and critical strategies of the times" (1). After acknowledging the various difficulties of making broad claims about particular eras, she briefly outlines the rise of feminist critical theory, queer theory, and the later "rise of transnational and new media studies" (5). Her outline proves useful, given that in it she places her essays into their original historical and also personal contexts. Case charts her journey as an academic from the campy style she modeled after her experiences at Maud's and adopted in an endeavor to find a lesbian scholarly voice, to her theoretical attempt to "find a way to install the feminist as a subject of time that could continue into the future" (13).

The book is organized thematically into three parts, entitled "Queer Theory and Performance," "Feminist Performance," and "Gendered Performance and New Technologies." Somewhat embodying the notion that "the personal is the political," Case begins her foray into queer theory and performance with a reflective essay entitled "Making Butch: An Historical Memoir of the 1970s" in which she attempts, in part, to "correct" her "earlier stance" about the relationship between butch and femme as outlined in the second chapter of the book, a reprint of her germinal essay "Toward a Butch-Femme Aesthetic." She also, in part, attempts to "understand a different reception around issues of 'female masculinity'" (26), which becomes evident through "the encounter between the classic butch and the hippie butch" and its somewhat performative "focus on style," as opposed to the earlier polemic, which focused on the butch-femme as essentially "the way we are" (28–9). Throughout all of the essays in this part Case challenges binary notions of gender and sexuality, and in "The Queer Globe Itself" she troubles the mostly unchallenged conception that globalization is a "genderless, sexless phenomenon" (86).

The challenge continues throughout the second and third parts of the book. In Part II, "Feminist Performance," Case traces the development of gender and sexuality studies in academia and argues that these areas of study are more "post-disciplinary" than "interdisciplinary." This distinction is important because while interdisciplinarity, according to Case, "signals a sense of a unified field," "'post-disciplinarity' retains nothing of the notion of a shared consciousness," but instead "suggests that the organizing structures of disciplines themselves will not hold" (108). Part III, in postdisciplinary fashion, combines feminist and queer theory alongside cybertechnology and transnationalism. In "Performing the

Cyberbody on the Transnational Stage,” Case notes that the “transnational zone is organized through licit or illicit relations across the bipolar [heterosexual] gender divide” and argues instead for a queer reading, which, while liberatory, is also laden with cultural imperialism (161, 165–6).

In her final essay, “Dracula’s Daughters: In-Corporating Avatars in Cyberspace,” Case tackles the varying ways in which avatars often reify the normative among online identities. She concludes with a call for feminist and queer intervention, posing the question, “[W]hat if users with more activist agendas began to people cyberspace with the images of the poor, the weak, and the disenfranchised?” (185–6). Here, and in the concluding paragraphs of her “Introduction,” Case calls the reader to action both in cyberspace and in the material world. After detailing her attempt to “imagine something like ‘hope,’” she expresses her concern over the current state of affairs on our planet. She writes, “Will there be sustainable life on this planet?” and then critiques ecofeminism for instilling “an essentialist notion of ‘woman’ alongside neoRomantic notions of ‘nature’” (14). She charts her new route for scholarship in the future: “I must admit, I don’t know how to write about ecological activism from a feminist or lesbian perspective. But I think I must try” (14). I suspect that an attempt to do so on Case’s part will be a welcome addition to the field.



*Queer Notions: New Plays and Performances from Ireland.* Edited by Fintan Walsh. Cork: Cork University Press, 2010; pp. x + 266. \$55.00 cloth.  
doi:10.1017/S0040557411000639

Reviewed by Charlotte McIvor, University of California at Berkeley

Fintan Walsh’s *Queer Notions: New Plays and Performances from Ireland* serves as a critical intervention and unique resource for researchers and artists alike. The offerings range from full-length naturalistic plays, to solo performance pieces, to a photo-essay by graphic artist Niall Sweeney. While accomplished and frequently produced in Ireland, the artists and playwrights presented here do not enjoy the same national or international critical acclaim as popular playwrights Brian Friel and Conor McPherson, among others, and thus this collection seeks to broaden who is perceived among the cutting-edge Irish theatre artists of today.

The composition of this volume is critically inflected by Walsh’s invaluable introduction, “The Flaming Archive,” which situates the emergence of queer politics and performance in Ireland and reflects on the broader state of Irish theatre. Thus, *Queer Notions* not only serves as an investigation into and indictment of Irish heteronormativity and queerphobia in social relations, but considers also the formal restraint and thematic narrowness of the Irish theatre at large, which has consistently depended on literary naturalism and themes of nationalism. Yet, while multiple Irish artists and theatre companies have pushed at these boundaries in the past twenty years, Walsh further insists that queer