

who are engaged with such questions would do well to start with this book and keep their eyes peeled for Walsh's forthcoming (2023) book *Performing the Queer Past: Public Possessions*, which develops many of the key ideas of this collection. *Theatres of Contagion* is both timely and date-stamped, and perhaps this peculiar time signature helps to further underscore the strange disturbances of order that always nest with contagion. In short, it is a book for anyone who is trying to work out the quivering thresholds of now and then.

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Black Shakespeare: Reading and Misreading Race. By Ian Smith. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. 218. £29.99 Hb.

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Speaking in 1989 before being awarded an honorary degree by the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Stuart Hall stressed his conviction that 'no intellectual worth [their] salt and no university that wants to hold up its head in the face of the twenty-first century can afford to turn its dispassionate eye away from the problems of race and ethnicity which beset our world'. Ian Smith's precise, polemical and profound book is, in part, a critique of and corrective to what happened next. Smith shows that the academic industry of Shakespeare studies more than held up its head through the turn of the twenty-first century by doing precisely what Hall had warned against. It redoubled its commitment to 'the tactical denial of blackness and race' by attempting to delegitimize the scholarship of early modern race studies that has emerged since the 1990s through the work of Matthieu Chapman, Kim F. Hall, Sujata Iyengar, Margo Hendricks, Arthur Little Jr, Ania Loomba, Joyce Green MacDonald and Ayanna Thompson, to name but a few (p. 8). As Smith wryly notes, 'despite the overt rejection of the universal human subject, the universal white subject was left firmly in place' (p. 33). The critique advanced by Smith, then, is Janus-faced: addressing the 'systemic whiteness' that produced and was reproduced by 'the modern scholar reader's blindness to ... racial evidence' (p. 3), and charting the possibilities for liberation that 'racial literacy' offers to our understanding not only of Shakespeare and early modern performance (p. 15), but also of the racialized construction of reading itself.

Smith develops this argument through deeply clarifying interpretations of plays whose racialized content is well known but often shallowly understood and sometimes outright denied. The contradictory construction of Othello in that play's first two scenes, as Islamic predator on the one hand and 'black ... Jesus' on the other (p. 64), for example, brings into view an 'interpellated reader' whose 'white positionality' is unmistakable (p. 68). Smith then demonstrates the umbilical connection of that relationship in which a 'white subject ... is legally authorized and sanctioned as a reader of black bodies' to racist anti-literacy legislation in the post-Emancipation United States that denied black people the capacity to read based not upon their legal status but by assigning them the status of texts that were assumed to be racially legible to a white audience. Likewise, Smith's reading of the contingency of financial operations in *The Merchant of Venice* on racial awareness and labelling and his careful unpicking of both Hamlet and *Hamlet's* 'dabbling in blackface' make a powerful case for the long historical imbrication of the theatre with the propagation of racialized myths and typologies. This sustained dialogue between theatrical instances of the racialized mediation of social relations and broader histories of racial domination leaves the reader in no doubt as to the stakes of what

Smith persuasively argues are Shakespeare's repeated demands that we 'ponder the significance of whiteness and misreading' (p. 108).

At times I found myself querying the book's somewhat liberal construction of race as subject to 'misreading' or 'bias' (p. 70), and therefore capable of correction. My concern, here, is that race as a technology of power has long demonstrated its capacity to evade such rereadings or subsume them to its logics. But this is comradely critique and seeks only to expand the wholly warranted challenge set by Smith's framing of the urgent need for racial literacy. This he presents as an 'epistemological competence' (p. 185), deeply rooted in the kinds of personal and political commitment that can exploit, for example, the gaps between 'forms of whiteness' to facilitate antiracist futures (p. 185). Beginning (as it must, at least in part) from within the liberal academy, there is good reason for such a project to stage interventions into 'systemic whiteness' (p. 3) on the historical terrain and in the traditional language of its adversaries. Smith's book contains numerous skilfully executed examples of turning antagonism to race-critical scholarship against itself, concluding in a powerful critique of the ways in which the white academy has failed to 'hold up its head' (to return to Hall) in the face not only of the violent anti-blackness of our own century, but also of Othello's final appeal to 'speak of me as I am'. *Black Shakespeare* is a calm and forceful indictment of our collective negligence in that regard, and an uncompromising but resolutely hopeful evocation of how we might improve.

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Feeling the Gaze: Image and Affect in Contemporary Argentine and Chilean

Performance. By Gail Bulman. University of North Carolina Press, 2022. Pp. 354 + 13 figs. \$47.86 Pb; \$29.99 Ebook.

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Gail Bulman's *Feeling the Gaze* captures a crucial moment in which 'we are all, increasingly, marked by the visual' (p. 19). The exploration of diverse visual elements has driven some of the most innovative work in Latin American theatre and performance in the twenty-first century. Spanning from 2014 to 2020 and the arrival of COVID-19, the eight performances from Argentina and Chile examined in this book reveal a rich *oeuvre* of performances whose bodies, props and spaces are traversed by intermediality, embedded technologies, and a post-digital awareness that pose new challenges to spectators. Bulman examines these challenges and their affective resonances in this book, drawing on her own experience as spectator of the works, and the development of a nuanced, critical approach to image and affect in dialogue with cinema studies, intermediality studies, installation art, visual arts, performance and affect studies.

Bulman engages multiple genealogies here to think critically about the relationship between images and affect in Argentine and Chilean performance. She expertly traces lineages of the visual from Roland Barthes's *punctum* and *studium* to contemporary theorizations of the visual such as Maaïke Bleeker's 'vision machines' and Matthew Causey's notion of the 'post-digital lens', along with many others. She similarly establishes past and present connections between theories of presence and affect, linking Walter Benjamin's concept of aura to contemporary theories of spectatorship (Jorge Dubatti's 'convivio', Jacques Rancière's 'dissensus', Susan Bennett's 'affective transactions', and Hans-Thies Lehmann's 'post-dramatic theatre') and affect (Teresa Brennan, Sara Ahmed, Lauren Berlant and others). One of the most important theoretical contributions of the book is her elaboration of the concept of the 'sensichive', a term Bulman coins to describe 'a record of an affective response to a real event that also includes