

Deleuze and Performance. Edited by Laura Cull. Deleuze Connection Series. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009; pp. vi 282. \$115 cloth, \$37.50 paper.

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Reviewed by Will Daddario, Gustavus Adolphus College

Laura Cull's edited collection of essays *Deleuze and Performance* begins with an overture by Herbert Blau that sets the key for the entire volume: "Double pincer, double bind: God may be a lobster, but 'down in the hole, lingeringly, the grave-digger puts on the forceps' (Beckett 1954: 58), while reminding us that mortality is the unseeable substance of theatre, there, not there, which in the consciousness of its vanishing endows it with Life" (33). This blast from "Performing in the Chaosmos: Farts, Follicles, Mathematics and Delirium in Deleuze" assembles many of the notes that resonate throughout this exciting and useful book's chapters: Gilles Deleuze's thinking *on life through* theatre, the reoccurring role of Beckett in the philosopher's lifework, the ephemeral nature of live performance and philosophy's role in discussing that nature, and the pronounced albeit contradictory call to arms that lingers inside Deleuze's constant invocation of the powers of performance.

This contribution to the Deleuze Connection series explores the collision between the twentieth-century French philosopher and numerous subcategories of performance, such as theatre, radio plays, happenings, dance, VJing, and televised opera. Cull addresses the need for this particular Deleuze connection in her introduction where she writes that "Although the arts are frequently privileged in Deleuze's philosophy as sites of fundamental encounter, he seems to have had a complex, even troubled, relation to performance" (1). She continues: "'Performance' was chosen as the conjunctive term for this collection in order to indicate a broad engagement with the performing arts, beyond any single genre such as theatre or dance" (2).

This troubled relation to performance emanating from all of Deleuze's written works receives attention from fifteen authors. The book breaks down into three "acts" and two "intervals" that Cull has deployed as diverse staging areas whereupon the tensions between Deleuze and performance play out. In Act I, the chapters oscillate around Deleuze and theatre, specifically the ideas of Antonin Artaud, Samuel Beckett, and Carmelo Bene that play and replay in Deleuze's thought. Act II shifts to the more liquid field of "live performance" and draws connections among Deleuze, Allan Kaprow, Adrian Piper, Goat Island, Ivana Müller, and the Restless Dance Company. Cull dedicates Act III to "performance and new media," which delimits the realm of digital choreographic technologies, the art of VJing, and "prosthetic" performance such as that developed by Stelarc. Between these acts, the intervals function as processing centers where major concepts and philosophical lines of thought appearing in the acts resonate to produce a type of thinking out loud. In the first, Daniel Watt and Julian Wolfreys mull over the concept of the schizo-stroll and Heideggerian themes in the works of Deleuze and Guattari. In the second, Barbara Kennedy offers a "posthuman

theory of *emergent aesthetics*" (184) and theorizes how the Deleuzian diagram and biogram can help to reinvest performance studies with the capacity to grapple with all that is "fresh, passionate, scintillating and inspirational about the pleasures of performance" (183).

Of the three acts, the second is especially noteworthy. Stephen Zepke opens it with a deep analysis of Allan Kaprow's *Happenings* and Deleuze's conception of the virtual and the actual. Matthew Goulish and Laura Cull engage in a latitudinal exploration of Bergson's concept of duration, on the one hand, and Goat Island's embodiment of that concept on the other. Together, these first two essays through their content explicate the movement between performance and everyday life present in Deleuze's philosophy while also *performing* that movement through the form of their writing. Maaiké Bleeker's essay "Thinking through Theatre" adds another layer to this analysis/performance as she reads Ivana Müller's performance *How Heavy Are My Thoughts?* alongside Deleuze and Guattari's *What Is Philosophy?* in order to present a new perspective on theatricality. Finally, Anna Hickey-Moody develops an image of that new theatricality through her critique of the medical discourse that creates the terms for discussions on intellectual disability. This critique moves between Deleuzio-Guattarian concepts of faciality and haecceity and a reading of Restless Dance Company's repertoire of performance. This repertoire, comprising some members with intellectual disability and others without, becomes a staging ground for all of the main concepts featured in Act II to intermingle.

By the end of this act, the reader has become acquainted with numerous permutations of key Deleuzian concepts and has been introduced to several performances in such a way that the dominant themes from each of the essays stand out, thus promoting ample recall of the dense material. The main strength of *Deleuze and Performance* lies in its smooth transitions between chapters, and, within those chapters, its deft shifts between theoretical analysis and performance criticism. This book does two things very well. First, each essay offers insights into the most complex areas of Deleuze's thought. The major concepts—the body without organs (BwO), difference and repetition, territorialization, affect, faciality, the fold—receive nuanced treatments by authors who map their complexities. These maps include detailed topographies of the philosophies of Henri Bergson, Baruch Spinoza, Gottfried Leibniz, Martin Heidegger, and the other philosophical antecedents underscoring many of Deleuze's thought performances. Second, the authors take these maps of their own creation in hand and guide the reader through a tour of specific performance events. This two-pronged (double-pincer) methodology produces intriguing interrogations of the philosophical concepts and the theatre/performance/new media under consideration, thereby setting Deleuze's philosophy in dialogue with a multitude of performance practices while challenging performance studies and Deleuze studies to continue this dialogue in the future. For those who have been planning on diving into Deleuze but have repeatedly winced at the challenge—or, from the other end, for those who have toyed with the notion of rethinking their artistic practice by infusing their process with active

philosophical reflection—this book provides a wealth of material to follow through on that curiosity.



Violence Performed: Local Roots and Global Routes of Conflict. Edited by Patrick Anderson and Jisha Menon: Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; pp. 391. \$85 cloth.

Performance in Place of War. By James Thompson, Jenny Hughes, and Michael Balfour. Calcutta and London: Seagull Books, 2009; pp. xii + 352. \$29 cloth.
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Reviewed by Sruti Bala, University of Amsterdam

Violence Performed is a collection of essays that emerged from a seminar called “Documenting Violence/Violating the Document” at the 2003 conference of the American Society for Theatre Research. This anthology seeks to assess how performance studies scholars may serve as interlocutors and analysts of events, representations, and historiographies of violent conflict. The essays include discussions of the genre of “atrocious photographs,” close readings of playtexts representing violent conflicts and audience responses to them, contemporary coverage of violent events in the media, theorizations on the theatricality and spectacularity of politics in the public sphere, as well as studies of theatre work in conflict zones. The contributions present a diversity of topics and vary vastly in terms of quality and rigor. Two of the highlights in the volume are the article by Catherine Cole on the performative aspects of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa and the eruditely contextualized reading of Hanoch Levin’s plays by Freddie Rokem, though both pieces have previously appeared elsewhere. Cole’s essay brilliantly elaborates on how public performance is an integral part of the legal process of transitional justice, requiring special attention from a performance studies angle. Rokem reads two plays of Hanoch Levin, a playwright not very well known outside of Israel, closely looking at narrative strategies of depicting violence, while asking larger questions about the possibility of separating history and tragedy in aesthetic experience. Susan Haedicke’s study of contemporary French street theatre-based interventions around the discourse on immigration, as well as Sonja Kuflinec’s reflections on Boalian image-theatre work with youth in ex-Yugoslavia, the Middle East, and Afghanistan are examples of performance analysis that include discussions of the politics of rehearsal, audience responses, and the ever-looming issue of impact. These contributions indicate a refreshing personal engagement with their subjects and testify to the fact that the authors have spent substantial time on fieldwork.

While the volume genuinely attempts to show a diversity of approaches and regions, tracing, as the subtitle indicates, the “local roots and global routes of conflict,” it is disappointing in those instances where critique is conflated with