

Editorial

BRIAN SINGLETON

This collection addresses issues of performativity and the practices of representation, both historically at the interfaces of theatre practitioners and sexual practices, and intermedially at the intersection of performance and the constructed liveness of mediatized events. The formula of the performative as a ‘doing’ by a thing done, as phrased by Elin Diamond, neatly conveys the ‘mediation’ of the events which are extra-performative and locates performance in a particular tense, thus heightening the tension between the simulation of an act and its enaction.

Two articles focus on the period at the end of the ‘long’ eighteenth century, with Michal Kobialka focusing on the representational practices operating both within and without the theatre in late eighteenth-century London which placed the sexuality and sexual practices of actors within the discourse of pamphletized satire. These satirical attacks on actors Garrick and Foote functioned as power mechanisms to rein in the deviant, and elevated the social position of the actor as an object of scrutiny to be deconstructed in the same way as the characters that body uses to represent otherness. Here, at the point of intersection between the social and the representational, lies a beginning (though tacit) acknowledgement of an economy of power which thrives off the performative mediatization of the social. These satires’ scriptural enactment of an imagined though suspected act presses home the point that the performative exposes the unreality and non-liveness of what is constructed as once was real and live. George E. Haggerty moves the argument within the stage itself by focusing on Gothic drama and revealing how its sensationalism turned the actor into a spectacle in his own right, this time to deconstruct normative values of sexuality by making ‘the hypertheatrical spectacle of broken masculinity’ expose ‘the vulnerable centre of heteronormativity’.

The remaining three articles address contemporary theatre in ways which explore issues of mediality and the complex web of object and subject within representation. Peter M. Boenisch introduces the field through a retrospective analysis of the genesis of intermediality as a concept dispelling the novelty of the intermedial by siting ‘mediality’ at the very core of theatrical communication, rendering contemporary electronic performance not simply an intermedial act but, in fact, a late-medial art form. The addition of new media technologies to the vocabularies of performance do not throw up a binary opposition between theatre/performance and other media, but through reinforcing the already medial

nature of performance, seek to evolve new cognitive strategies of perception which glide over the dramatic.

Strategies of engagement with performance form the core of Yong Li Lan's analysis of Shakespeare websites. Digital re-mediation of Shakespeare's texts have transformed their fetishization by the academy into cybertext which brings into question the already existing textual uncertainty and uses that uncertainty as performance by constructing strategies of engagement through hyperlinking which, while not 'desubstantiating' the ur-text, aims to set it within the context of performative material. Yong's focus on similar strategies of engagement with the performance of those texts reveals a participatory *telos* of re-mediation which ensures a continuing 'liveness' beyond the staged event, but instead of freezing it in a (once live) past tense, the virtualization of performance, Yong reveals, abstracts it into a 'continuous instant' which, in fact, reconstitutes it as performance beyond a real-time, historically anchored, time-space continuum. The theatricality of internet re-mediation of performance, therefore, points out that the nature of performance is to virtualize the actual. Intermedial communication, in fact, becomes a form of performative rhetoric.

Taking Jean Baudrillard's revelation of simulation as a false positing of reality for material consumption, Johan Callens applies Slavoj Žižek's Althusserian analysis of television mediation to two theatricalizations of the 1992 Los Angeles riots and to 9/11. Callens constructs a defence of intermedial theatre as a potential device of healing and dialogue using the plays of Anna Devereaux Smith and Mark Ravenhill as examples, whilst lambasting the news and film/video corporations for their de-realization of the actual. He argues essentially less for the transmissive and more for the transgressive in representation which implies a participation in performance which the intermedial can achieve best through performative dialogue. A note of caution might be added that global corporations are well-equipped to simulate such dialogue, and that global theatrical spectacles for mass intercultural consumption through festivalization operate a performativity of difference through the embrace of multiple, equated performance languages, as evidenced in William Peterson's analysis of Ong Keng Sen's *Desdemona*. The concept of a 'one-world' crucible of performance is similar in its drive to the perpetuated myth of 9/11 changing the world. If anything, 9/11 pointed out the impossibility of the separation of 'us/them', democracy/terrorism, modernity/tradition, despite the binarizing rhetoric in the aftermath of 9/11, and reveal how multi-national corporations enmesh financial/business operations and cultural transmissions as global capital, exposing binarism as a tool to ensure further production and control. The 'thing done' of 9/11 awaits a performatively transgressive 'doing thing'.