# *Concerning Books*

# Embodied and Immersed Is the New Professional

## Potential Alliances between Theatre and STS

*Yelena Gluzman*

***Reconstruction, Replication and Re-enactment in the Humanities and Social Sciences.*** Edited by Sven Dupré, Anna Harris, Julia Kursell, Patricia Lulof, and Maartje Stols-Witlox. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020; 298 pp. €124.00 cloth, e-book available.
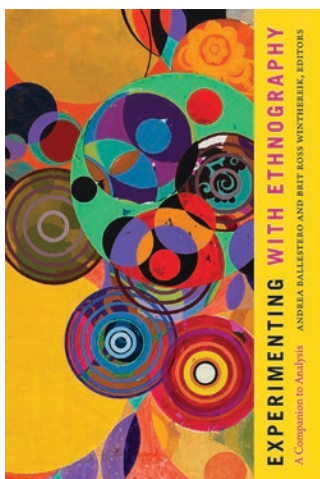
***Experimenting with Ethnography: A Companion to Analysis.*** Edited by Andrea Ballestero and Brit Ross Winthereik. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021; 301 pp. $104.95 cloth, $27.95 paper, e-book available.

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***Transmissions: Critical Tactics for Making and Communicating Research.*** Edited by Kat Jungnickel. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2020; 264 pp.; illustrations. $35.00 cloth.
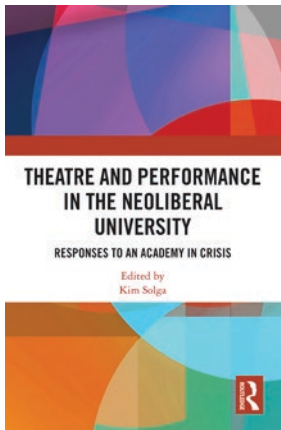
***Theatre and Performance in the Neoliberal University: Responses to an Academy in Crisis.*** Edited by Kim Solga. Abingdon: Routledge, 2020; 262 pp.; illustrations. $160.00 cloth, $48.95 paper, e-book available.

## 1: A House Divided

*Like unhappy families, every unhappy theatre program is unhappy in its own way; and yet, at least from my personal perspective, there seem to be many significant parallels [...].*

—*Marvin Carlson (2011:118)*

It is difficult to say how many university theatre departments in the US are unhappy, afflicted by years of being devalued and under-resourced by the increasingly technoscientific priorities of their institutions, and—less demonstrably but maybe no less insidiously—by interpersonal conflicts of interest from within. Faculty at ailing theatre departments tend not to publish on the troubles plaguing their own houses, and so my own suspicion that this is a relatively pervasive problem, rather than a matter of a few dysfunctional departments, comes anecdotally. I have sat with the déjà vu as theatre faculty friends spill the tea to me over drinks, during informal Zoom catch-ups, and in the corridors of conferences. These stories often involve a rift between "practitioner" faculty—directors, actors, designers, etc.—and "theoretical" faculty who teach historical, theoretical, and performance studies approaches. At issue in these struggles is often the very identity of a theatre department: What counts as adequate training for undergraduate students, what expertise should be sought out in new hires, and what can be considered legitimate work towards a graduate degree in theatre. Each case is singularly situated of course, but as Marvin Carlson points out in the epigraph above, one can't help but see the parallels.

In this essay—the first of *TDR*'s new book review format, which invites consideration of a number of recent publications in respect to broader trends or issues in the field—I reflect on these anecdotal accounts as markers of shifts in the standards for academic professionalism in the social sciences, as evidenced by three recent anthologies in science and technology studies (STS). In noticing the increasing relevance of theatre and performance methods and frameworks to STS, I amplify Kim Solga's suggestion that theatre and performance can "embed systemic critique into the work we do on behalf of our individual education systems, even as we draw on the resources those systems have to offer" (2020:3). I propose that a recent STS turn to embodied, immersive, and experimental methods offers opportunities for *collaborative* resistance to the increasing technoscientism of what Solga calls out as the neoliberal university.

The departmental laments I'd heard from theatre friends circulated in private conversations rather than public forums. Yet these unhappy stories not only echoed each other, they also played

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out an older lament, an argument made by Carlson more than a decade ago (2011) and indeed, a similar argument by Joseph Roach, made over a decade before Carlson (1999).[1] In his short essay, "Inheriting the Wind: A Personal View of the Current Crisis in Theatre Higher Education in New York," Carlson holds up the defunding of two theatre departments as the canary in the coal mine of university theatre. One factor in the devaluation of theatre in higher education, according to Carlson, was the university's hypervaluation of scientific objectivity as the gold standard for knowledge production, subordinating the "knowing" done in theatre departments to a craft practice, or a form of cultural conservation. Carlson's essay, however, focuses on explicating a second factor in theatre's growing precarity: the destructive effects of internal feuds between the "academic" and "producing" wings of university theatre departments.

Carlson attributed this rift not to an inherent conflict between theatre-makers and theatre researchers, but rather to the enforced *professionalization* of theatre faculty in higher education, arguing that the emergence of different standards for professionalizing scholars versus those imposed on practitioners had laid the foundations for conflict between these groups and led to their subsequent disputes over resources, job stability, and the identity of their departments. Carlson's description of the shift towards professionalization is contrasted with his own experience being trained as a scholar-practitioner:

> When I entered the profession in the 1950s, the general model of theatre in higher education [...] sought to produce theatre scholar-practitioners, equally at home in the archives or onstage, and equally adept at writing a scholarly article or directing or designing a production. How successful or how desirable that model was need not involve us here, but it was widely accepted as the goal of theatre education, and certainly of my theatre education. [...] During the 1960s and 1970s this model began to be challenged both by those oriented toward academic research and those oriented toward production. The argument on each side was essentially the same: both theatre research and theatre production should become more professional, more specialized, more "serious." Theatre historians, it was argued, would be taken more "seriously" by "real historians" if they devoted themselves to research and did not spend their energy "putting on plays." Similarly, university theatre productions would be taken more "seriously" by the "real theatre" if their artists, like "real artists," were not burdened by research obligations. (2011:119–20)

So, Carlson argues, practitioners' professionalization rested on their training for and success in a dwindling US theatre and film industry, while scholars' professionalization was defined by their ability to wield authority, expertise, and scholarly objectivity in respect to their theatrical object of study. How influential were these new standards? According to Carlson, their influence solidified infrastructurally, by the proliferation of conservatory-style MFA programs for practitioners and the construction of multimillion dollar repertory theatres on college campuses. Requiring not only increased financial resources, but also a steady stream of "professional" theatre productions, these new structures created an overwhelming amount of work for practitioner faculty, who needed to teach studio classes, direct and design full-scale productions, and essentially run semi-professional repertory theatres. This left relatively few faculty who did historical, literary, or philosophical theatre research, even while they were handed the burden of teaching an impossibly broad assortment of classes across theatre history, theory, and performance studies. When this leads to exhausted and demoralized faculty fighting over dwindling resources, job security, and legitimacy, Carlson argued, theatre departments are weakened and more vulnerable to budget cuts, lay-offs, and outright elimination by universities.

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1. See also Shannon Jackson's *Professing Performance* (2004) and *Mapping Landscapes for Performance as Research* edited by Shannon Rose Riley and Lynette Hunter (2009) for accounts of how the emergence of the field of performance studies and performativity theory did not mitigate but rather exacerbated these divisions.

Does the situation described in Carlson's essay explain the unhappy stories I was hearing from theatre faculty friends a decade later? This is not a claim I can make with any certainty, and in many ways the ship has sailed on intervening in the infrastructural moves that Carlson saw as institutionalizing such divisions, since both MFA programs and university theatres are now, for better or worse, firmly embedded features across many campuses in the US. Instead, I focus on a related observation that Carlson makes when speaking of the resultant rift within theatre departments, when he observes that "A by no means insignificant side effect of the focus on production and relative neglect of academics [...] was also the steady shrinking of cross-departmental relationships" (2011:122). This observation invites a zooming out, thinking about intradepartmental conflicts through interdepartmental relations with the university more broadly. Here, too, Carlson saw a corresponding shift over time.

> [W]hen these [now defunded theatre] programs were most active and influential academically, both had strong ties across disciplines, especially with colleagues in the languages and literatures. As both programs turned toward a production emphasis, they also turned inward, toward the admittedly demanding concerns of running a would-be professional theatre, and most of these interdisciplinary relationships dried up. This also meant, of course, that neither program had many devoted friends in other disciplines when major cuts began to be discussed. (Carlson 2011:122)

Moving our focus from institutional pressures, which may seem unrelenting and difficult to mitigate, to a focus on broader interpersonal engagement allows for a different and, I propose, more actionable approach to creating sustainable relations within universities. I don't mean to suggest that the pressures of professionalization no longer matter, but rather to notice how the very notion of academic professionalization is changing. Can those changes begin to blur the formerly insurmountable divisions between production and scholarship and invite new forms of life for theatre faculty? Might looking outward to colleagues across the university, to shared concerns and interests, invite a different way to approach the conflicts in and resulting precarity of theatre departments? A number of recent publications in the social sciences, and specifically in STS, the interdisciplinary study of science, technology, and society, speak to this question.

## 2: Professional Developments

*STS will not alone be enough. We also need art [...], a means to capture something that is hard to express in the logos of academic writing.*

—*Trevor Pinch (2021:xxi)*

The standards for professionalism in scholarly research, especially in research that engages the history, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology of human experience, seem to be changing in important ways. Across disciplines, there has been increasing interest in embodied methods, first-person experience, a multiplicity of partial perspectives, and the role of affect and the sensorium in processes of knowing or coming-to-know. The American Anthropological Association, for example, recently took up the term "multimodal methods" to refer to a growing body of research that includes artistic, embodied, and/or performance methods, and rebranded the Visual Anthropology section of the association's flagship journal as "Multimodal Anthropologies" (Collins, Durington, and Gil 2017). The Society for the Social Studies of Science is the major US professional organization for research on science, technology, and society; although STS has long incorporated historical, philosophical, sociological, and anthropological methods to consider how science is and is not different from other modes of knowing, it also has turned to artistic and performance practices for research methods, analytic frameworks, and modes of transmission (see Salter, Burri, and Dumit 2017). In 2015, the field's annual conference inaugurated a now annual Making and Doing exhibition to showcase STS research working in experimental, artistic, performative, or participatory modes outside of traditional scholarship (Downey

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and Zuiderent-Jerak 2017). Academic jobs in the humanities and social sciences increasingly stress interdisciplinarity, engaged methods, and community impact as valuable academic contributions, and thus recognize the potential of various so-called creative modalities—including theatre, dance, film, podcasts, and installations—to produce and disseminate this type of work.

Following Carlson's hint to look at relations outward, it is precisely the relationship between bifurcated theatre departments and the uptake of artistic methods in STS and related fields that I explore in this short provocation. Here, I would like to imagine a view of theatre departments not through the eyes of their family dramas, nor through Carlson's lens of institutional professionalization, but from the perspective of scholars outside theatre, and especially those in STS, who have increasingly taken up and championed artistic methods in their academic research. Indeed, as evidenced by the publications that I discuss below, I suggest that a stable ground that would allow easy differentiation between professional research and professional art-making is shifting in interesting ways. What professionalization means or looks like is changing within the university, and this has the potential to shift the role of theatre departments in the wider constellation of campus missions, methods, and commitments.

Though I frame this essay and the publications discussed below through a debate that properly belongs to university theatre departments, in actuality I was prompted to recall those old debates when, in short succession, three scholarly anthologies landed on my desk, none of which self-identifies as relevant to theatre. These books—*Reconstruction, Replication and Re-enactment in the Humanities and Social Sciences* (Dupré, Harris, Kursell, Lulof and Stols-Witlox 2020), *Experimenting with Ethnography: A Companion to Analysis* (Ballestero and Wintthereik 2021), and *Transmissions: Critical Tactics for Making and Communicating Research* (Jungnickel 2020)—each take up different aspects of the scholarship process, primarily focusing on research, analysis, and scholarly communication, respectively. All affiliated with STS in one way or another, these books share a common argument: that taking up the methods of art and performance is a means to do better research. They do so by investigating the multisensory and situated ways that scholarly knowledge can be different when produced through a commitment to what one essay in the collection on *Reconstruction, Replication and Re-enactment* calls "sensual experiences" (218). While the three volumes share cognate questions with theatre and performance studies—with some contributions narrating explicitly theatrical methods and concepts (such as reenactment) that have been long explored in performance studies—theatre and performance literatures make almost no appearance in the books' analysis or citations.

The various contributions in the anthology *Reconstruction, Replication and Re-enactment in the Humanities and Social Sciences* (henceforth abbreviated as *RRR*) focus on "performative methods [...] in which researchers perform (past) practices" (9–10). Chapters investigate how replication, reenactment, and reconstruction practices are used in a number of different scholarly and conservation fields: taxidermy, archaeology, historical studies of musical instruments, painting techniques, and art conservation. Some of these chapters reflexively narrate the authors' own experiences in using such practices, as does H. Otto Sibum in his description of how his "actual performance of a nineteenth century experiment" allowed insight into the tacit dimensions of historical scientific activity, even when the improvising body was written out of the scientific record (290–91).

Other authors focus on reconstruction, replication, or reenactment projects undertaken by others, as Petra Tjitske Kalshoven does by observing how taxidermists reconstruct a formerly living creature to appear natural or exemplary. For Kalshoven, these naturalistic reconstructions are in contrast to how artists use taxidermy to challenge the category of the natural, as in, for example, artist Anthea Walsh's dismantled bird, a delicate interweaving of taxidermy and embroidery that "did not aim for a realistic woodpecker [...] Rather, its mode of replication resided in human—animal analogies [...] stitches resembling feathers, and feathers merging into stitches" (55). Through embedding readers in specific processes of reconstructing pasts toward reworking

futures, Kalshoven, like a number of authors represented in the volume, challenges assumptions of objectivity that cast these reconstructions as unproblematic pathways to an original. As Kalshoven observes,

> The case of taxidermy shows replication to be a constant, political and ideological, play with categories that moves back and forth in time as animal skins get stripped, used, and reused to make statements about natural worlds. It shows replication to be a skilled act of prototyping for the future. (2020:58)

Although she does not consider works of theatre and performance that have long been practically and theoretically engaged with Bertolt Brecht's (and before him, Viktor Shklovsky's) notions of alienation or defamiliarization, Kalshoven employs these concepts. Taxidermic reconstructions that aim for seamless verisimilitude, creating lifelike birds seemingly frozen in time, are considered by Kalshoven to naturalize or *familiarize* distinctions between nature and culture. These are set against taxidermic artworks, like Walsh's dismantled and embroidered woodpecker, that seek to *defamiliarize* and thus challenge that such nature-culture distinctions are givens. Although the author does not take up theatre directly, she identifies this practice of defamiliarization through foregrounding artifice as a powerful epistemic strategy that can change how we know the world, a view that supports theatre-makers and thinkers who see their work as a relational form of world-making.

Other chapters in *RRR* involve performance more centrally, including pedagogical experiments in the history of science, walking as a psychogeographic method in anthropology, and reenactment as a way to grasp tacit, embodied, and improvisational practice in historic scientific experiments. All these approaches highlight what I'm suggesting is an expanding set of standards and concerns for academic professional training and practice. Having students replicate 300-year-old chemistry "recipes" from primary sources, as one group did in the chapter by Hagendijk, Heering, Principe, and Dupré, was a way to put "emphasis on the doing by attempting to access and understand the manual, sensual, and bodily skills of an experiment or process for historical purposes" (201). This is hardly the view of professionalization offered by Carlson's account of gatekeeping "serious" historical work by protecting it from frivolous engagement with performance. In these chapters, scholars in the humanities and social sciences actively explore how first-person experience with the push and pull of the material world can prompt new ways of thinking and knowing. The volume in its entirety supports an argument for experimentally embedding oneself in reconstruction, replication, and reenactment as interpretive and improvisational processes toward richer and more responsible ways of knowing history, doing research, and accounting for the lived, encultured body in the production of social knowledge.

In *RRR*, as in the other books I will discuss below, authors' changing concerns around professional practices in STS and the humanistic social sciences more broadly are not grappling with ways to shore up claims of objectivity, but rather trying to develop, share, and evaluate ways to extend and incorporate intersubjectivity. *Experimenting with Ethnography* addresses researchers who already use—or are learning how to use—ethnography toward projects in anthropology, STS, and cognate fields. The vast majority of publications that consider the methodological nuances and problematics of ethnography focus on intersubjective relationships with interlocutors "in the field." In contrast, *Experimenting with Ethnography* focuses on the relatively rarely discussed process of *analysis* that follows fieldwork. The editors of the volume ask how the intersubjective entanglements of the field, along with researcher's commitments to partial perspectives, multiplicities of interpretation, and their own response-ability can be extended through the process of analyzing ethnographic data (Ballestero and Winthereik 2021:3–10). Each chapter offers a concrete methodological intervention in the analytic process, alongside an account of how the chapter's author(s) implemented, navigated, and learned from it.

Many of the actual interventions described may seem trivial to those who regularly deal with the complexities of performance collaboration, including tactics such as touching,

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drawing, sounding, and diagramming to, as Rachel Douglas-Jones in her essay "Drawing as Analysis: Thinking in Images, Writing in Words" puts it, "work with the inchoate" (94). For our discussion of what constitutes a serious professionalist approach, two things are of particular note. The first is that, rather than seeking to facilitate sense, cohesion, and explanatory power, these methodological interventions are instead oriented to facilitate (not prevent!) "breakdowns" in sense and understanding, as contributor Steffen Dalsgaard contends in "Facilitating Breakdowns through the Exchange of Perspectives" (198). In Trine Mygind Korsby and Anthony Stavrianakis's chapter "Object Exchange," for example, the authors each send the other an artifact from their different ethnographic sites. Each invites the other to "hold" their object, think through it, and return it after several weeks "transformed" (82–93). While temporarily swapping research objects might feel less than revolutionary, this—like many of the experimental protocols offered in moving from the field to analysis—is a powerful way to disrupt the rush toward producing smooth, coherent, authoritative accounts. These interventions instead invite lingering, wondering, and seeing/sensing differently. Korsby and Stavrianakis, like many of the contributors in *Experimenting with Ethnography*, resist the model of the individualist ethnographer-author by deliberately constructing sites and paradigms to extend collaboration into analysis. Other tactics, like those proposed by Alberto Corsín Jiménez and Helen Verran, aim to reveal and amplify the collectivities that *already* shape, inform, and reorient a researcher's understanding of work that they mark as their own, what Verran describes as being a "singular participant in the collective action of ethnographic knowing" (240).

The second point to note is that among the contributors to the volume are some of the most celebrated and cited scholars in anthropology and STS, including George Marcus, Marisol de la Cadena, Sarah Pink, Lucy Suchman, Annemarie Mol, Helen Verran, and Joseph Dumit. These are not, in other words, marginal or splinter approaches but reflect legitimate and influential perspectives in the field that model how to be a researcher while demonstrating that the aims of such research are not towards certainty and authoritative conclusions, but toward working from within what de la Cadena calls "not knowing" ("Not Knowing: In the Presence of..."; 247–52).

By centering commitments to intersubjectivity in interpreting ethnographic material, *Experimenting with Ethnography* challenges the mandate, rooted in Western science, that a researcher must properly stand apart from their object of study—a disinterested observer whose authority derives from their position outside the data (see Daston and Galison's 2007 *Objectivity* for a historical analysis of this paradigm). As much as this mandate towards objectivity has shaped standards for research methods and analytic protocols in the social sciences, it has arguably been even more strictly enforced in the output of scholarship: the conference talk, the journal article, the public lecture, the dissertation. These are the sites taken up by *Transmissions*, the third anthology on my desk. Here, editor Kat Jungnickel assembles a collection of fascinating examples where STS researchers reject the unmarked style of academic voice and its purported neutrality and instead allow their idiosyncratic research phenomena to structure and inflect how their projects are encountered, discussed, and disseminated.

Poet and researcher Laura Watts brilliantly describes the stakes of this refusal to remain "objective" in her chapter "Poetry and Writing":

I intended to do more than just transmit facts concerning the tide energy test site in a neutral, passive voice. I intended to make a future. I was world making. And I was using a poetic apparatus as part of my terraforming experiment.

        Poetic
        apparatus,
written to show the old binary divide.
[Quick breath]

You are standing in a seminar room, at one end of an oval table. Through one wall of windows, clouds dull the light. Haphazard chairs cluster around the table where your generous

audience crowds in, listening to your poetic apparatus. You bow. There is applause. Then, countable heartbeats of silence. Always silence. Finally, The Question, obdurate, despite its many guises you have heard over the years:

"I felt something!" He says, hand on heart with suspicion.

"Is this academia?"

"Are you an academic? Or are you a poet?"

> Binary incarnate, it is a question of two categories. Sorting you and me into boxes: artists over here, scientists over there; women over here, men over there; culture over here, nature over there; fact over here, and fiction definitely over there. (20)

Much like the enforced distinction between theatre thinkers and theatre-makers referenced by Carlson, Watts makes visible the objectivist assumptions separating scholarship and poetry *by violating them*. This is not a mere critique of the supremacy of scientific objectivity, but, as Watts explains, a "world making" project. By enacting an argument about the epistemic potency of poetry *by presenting it in poetry*, Watts invites her colleagues to experience the argument both as concept and proof of concept.

Given the tense, tired scene evoked by Watts, I don't want to overstate my case about scholarly professionalism. Indeed, a number of contributors to *Transmissions* mention the risk, discomfort, embarrassment, and potential failure of their experimental approaches to transmitting their work. So, while I maintain that conceptions of professionalism in the humanistic social sciences are changing, these changes do not (yet) constitute a complete paradigm shift among the field as a whole. Pressures towards objectivity are sticky, even in disciplines understood as interpretive, lingering long after we cease to notice. Yet, taking Watts's claims to world-making seriously, the volume presents a significant number of projects that, *in their doing*, carve out a space for academic arguments done differently.

## 3: A House Ignited

*Can theatre and performance find ways to be instrumental to the neoliberal university, without fully becoming instrumentalised by it?*

*—Kim Solga (2020:3)*

I began by evoking the internal troubles of US theatre departments, as described by Carlson over a decade ago, and wondering if these divisions—and their resulting precarity—persisted in universities today. I suggested that shifting interests in academic fields outside of theatre, and particularly in STS, may signal a weakening of broader expectations to separate professional theatre-thinking from professional theatre-making. These shifts can make available new communities, collaborations, and allies for both theatre scholars and practitioners in the academy. And, though I did not say so outright, I tried to gesture to the ways that recent STS commitments to embodiment, sensual knowing, and participatory, collaborative, and experimental frameworks enact an increasingly recognizable argument against the sort of technoscientific objectivity that is tacitly and explicitly prioritized by universities, contributing to ongoing intradepartmental rifts and the current precarity of theatre in higher education.

I realize that by suggesting alliances between STS and theatre faculty, I may inadvertently raise red flags for some. Theatre scholars and practitioners alike are justified in having a chip on their shoulder when theatre is positioned as subordinate to another discipline,[2] especially one with "science" in its name. I remember the angry rebuttals to early work in the so-called cognitive turn, when some theatre scholars and practitioners turned to developments in cognitive

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2. I am referring to the longstanding antitheatrical bias that has positioned theatre as suspect (Barish 1981).

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neuroscience to theorize acting and spectatorship (e.g., Blair and Lutterbie 2011). Early proponents of this turn were optimistic that brain biology would tell us something new about how we feel in performance, and some went as far as to suggest that science's objectivity (because it was based on falsifiability and replication) was something theatre studies should strive for (McConachie 2008). As historian Tiffany Watt Smith (2016) astutely observed, the problem with this assertion was not only that it subjugated theatre to scientific "explanations" that don't engage the complexities of making and viewing performances, but also that it failed to engage with the sorts of embodied performances that scientists themselves rely on to design, conduct, and analyze experiments on brain and behavior. Uncovering, understanding, and reconfiguring these tacit, embodied, and interpretive ways of knowing—even in the doing of science and the application of scientific standards—is precisely what is facilitated by alliances between theatre and STS.

I am not suggesting that theatre subordinate itself to STS, or vice versa. I am arguing that the very boundaries that marked theatre as one sort of thing and social science research as another are softened by the interests, questions, and practices increasingly shared by both. This does not detract from the likelihood that theatre and STS have the potential to contribute important perspectives, vocabularies, and practical opportunities to each other, as I have argued elsewhere (Gluzman 2017). As restrictions relax for what counts as research or analysis or scholarly output, and as interest sharpens in exploring ways of knowing outside the anxious objectivity of Western science, friendly conversations can more feasibly slide into research collaborations, ludic experiments, funded grant applications, and a stronger network of allies across the university. As we see reflected in our current historical moment, fear of scarcity is meant to divide and thus weaken the body politic. In our universities, the austerity paradigm is—intentionally or not—similar. Building an intellectual community and working on shared problems establishes the bonds that may also facilitate institutional moves: shared governance, bargaining power, and coordination.

What might such collaborations look like, and how might they meaningfully intervene in the subjugating hierarchies of disciplines and universities? For this, the anthology *Theatre and Performance in the Neoliberal University: Responses to an Academy in Crisis* (2020) is a treasure trove of resources for thinking through this question pragmatically. Kim Solga, the volume's editor, lays out the problem succinctly, drawing on Patrick Finn's 2015 argument that big data and the metricization of the university would disproportionately threaten, or steamroll, already precarious theatre departments:

> In the face of a persistent, unrelenting discourse of crisis and austerity, the challenge for us, Patrick Finn argues, is to face "the steamroller" of data collection, measurement, and data-driven efficiency-modelling within the neoliberal university on our own terms. But, in order to do so, we also need to find creative ways to redefine the terms by which that data—and the university administrators, government officials, and increasingly privatised interests it serves—recognises us, and understands our contributions to knowledge. (2)

Indeed, the volume's many contributing authors take up this challenge directly, by considering concrete instances of on-the-ground conflicts and attempted theatre-based interventions that might reveal the cracks in neoliberal university governance. With the exception of Richard Windeyer's chapter proposing theatre pedagogy as a way for students to critically examine the lived realities of big data (71–91), most of the volume's authors do not engage STS collaborations specifically. That said, many narrate specific theatre interventions aimed to circumvent reductive and data-driven approaches. Instead, these authors take up creative, interpretive, and relational theatre practices as meaningful ways to explore the complexities of human experience. For example, Linda Taylor uses dialogic forms to consider nationalism (92–114); Miranda Young-Jahangeer and Bridget Horner draw on popular participatory theatre, initiating collaborations between architecture and drama students to explore space and place (115–33); and Natalie Alvarez works in interdisciplinary teams

to develop, write, and direct training scenarios for police officers (137–47). These and many of the other chapters offer valuable examples of a broad variety of projects and strategies along with a consideration of their potential or actual impacts and, crucially, their limitations and failures. Through its expansive presentation of messy and sometimes contradictory realities of making and thinking theatre in the university, the volume reassembles theatre faculty under a professional banner that does not divide theatre scholars from theatre practitioners, but hails a broader category of theatre university professionals (along with colleagues from other departments, as well as students and staff) as those who are professionally subject to, and using theatre and performance to grapple with, the university. Solga's anthology is at once a call to action, a sharing of resources, and a community-building project that seeks to strengthen and center theatre departments by strategically dismantling their borders.

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