

node in this network, linking different circles and theatrical productions. But aside from shedding new light on Copi, *Actor-Network Dramaturgies: The Argentines of Paris* is perhaps the most comprehensive study to date about Savary and TSE.

A chapter dedicated to Savary and Copi retraces the series of lineages, events and substances interwoven in their theatrical collaborations. Boselli delineates the evolution of Savary's baroque and festive performances, which initially contrasted with Copi's aversion to improvisation. But the dynamics of friendship and certain alcoholic beverages played their part, eventually, in allowing this creative pair to collaborate on the opera-tango *Good Bye, Mister Freud* in 1974.

Alfredo Rodríguez Arias's highly stylized theatre, *à la page* with New York City (NYC) minimalist choreographies of Chris Cunningham, emerged among papier mâché sculptures and pop artworks by Marta Minujín in the Argentine 1960s. TSE's arty flower power thrived amid the Di Tella Visual Arts Center, epicentre of Buenos Aires avant-garde, first, and was welcomed by star gallery owners of NYC soon after, until a couple of socks stolen by troupe members and hostile US immigration officials forced them to seek new directions. Once in Paris, they staged Copi's *Eva Perón* in 1970, with actor Facundo Bo in drag performing *Evita*, which sparked the fury of young conservatives who vandalized the theatre in one of many complex interactions of these Argentines of Paris with the turmoil of their home country's politics at the time. In Boselli's account, however, Alfredo Arias and Argentine dictators played as big a role as Bo's Alzheimer's or Copi's HIV.

Another chapter focuses on director Jorge Lavelli and his collaborations with Arias, Copi and Witold Gombrowicz, as well as with non-human performers. The appointments of Arias and Lavelli as heads of theatres in France are clear examples of a policy of decentralization of a more open-to-diversity France in the 1980s, where Argentines found a place. In this complex interplay of agents and factors, one may wonder whether these creators' whiteness might have also played a significant role in French cultural institutions' openness to certain – and certainly not all – others.

Boselli seamlessly transitions from artistic (voluntary) decisions to the material conditions of production, weaving in the influence of non-human agents that often go unnoticed. At times, readers may yearn for further exploration of these elements, contemplating, for example, how Copi's plays, full of animals and strange creatures, might have been influenced by his first audience as a child, consisting of family dogs, a parrot, and even bear cubs. Boselli himself warns us about the difficulty of selecting what to include in a study that engages with seemingly endless interconnections, and challenges usual conventions about who are thought to play central roles in our critical narratives. The drift through actors and materials could be extended even further and reach Paloma Picasso, Marguerite Duras or Yves Saint Laurent, all of whom became closely involved with many of these Argentines of Paris, but these could form part of another equally daring critical account.

The book serves as a bold experiment in applying ANT, inviting readers to engage with theatre – and the world – in a novel light, showcasing the productivity of this critical approach.

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Realisms in East Asian Performance. Edited by Jessica Nakamura and Katherine Saltzman-Li. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2023. Pp. vii + 278. \$95 Hb; \$39.95 Pb.

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As Jessica Nakamura and Katherine Saltzman-Li note in their essay collection *Realisms in East Asian Performance*, the conflation of reality with realism is very much a product of the realist movement in the West and its concomitant popularity. The 'real' onstage has been less of a

concern for traditional East Asian performing arts, many which consider what they present onstage to be realism. The traditional view of realism in Asia still connects it with Western imperialistic overtones originating in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth. In this Eurocentric view, older Asian performing arts were labelled 'classical' and celebrated not for their authenticity but instead for their 'theatricality'. Confronted with this paradigm, a work such as *Realisms in East Asian Performance* is very welcome. Through a broad selection of essays, covering material from *pansori* and *jingju* to the contemporary theatre, Nakamura and Saltzman-Li explore the multiple ways in which the theatrical 'real' is understood throughout Japan, China and Korea. Despite a few minor concerns about terminology and organization, *Realisms in East Asian Performance* presents the reader with a slew of interesting, and intellectually compelling, essays that add to the ongoing discussion of what constitutes the 'real' onstage. The editors are to be commended for selecting and developing essays that feel absolutely in conversation with each other.

The book is divided by theme into four sections: 'Revealing Realisms', 'Real Life Onstage', 'Technologies' and 'Evolving Realisms'. The first section contains essays on Kabuki, *jingju* and the Korean realist theatre form *sasiljuuigeuk*. Katherine Saltzman-Li reclaims the term 'realism' by looking at how Kabuki actors trained, studied and were evaluated upon their ability to play material realistically. Xing Fan's examination of the performance text of *Picking Up a Jade Bracelet* argues that the body of the performer creates a realistic performance 'text'. The final essay, Soo Ryon Yoon and Ji Hyon (Kayla) Yuh's 'Racing the Real: Korean Realism Theater and Racial Representation in Cha Bumseok's *Yeoldaeo*', looks at the mid-twentieth-century play *Yeoldaeo* (Tropical Fish) and at how this work explores the complexities of race and realism in South Korea. This essay, while well written and interesting, seems somewhat out of place with the other two in this section; a better fit would have been Min-Hyung Yoo's essay on *pansori* (which is in Section 2 of the text).

The second section looks at how 'realistic expression can reflect the world back to us and what strategies are used to do so' (p. 9). In the essays on the plays of Park Kunhyung by Kee-Yoon Nahm and post-socialist realism in China by Rossella Ferrari, readers familiar with the theories of de Certeau and Lefebvre will find fascinating Asian examples of the interactions between the everyday and the performative.

The book's third section contains some of the work's most compelling scholarship. Aragorn Quinn's essay on Yagi Ryūichirō's kinodrama *The Laughing Letter* (1937) is incredibly well researched, shedding light on this fascinating film/theatre hybrid. Quinn's essay is especially valuable as it highlights the supposed greater 'realism' inherent in film and demonstrates how this was not the case in this situation. Cody Poulton's essay on Japanese playwright Hirata Oriza, covering his work on colloquial and android theatre, connects the material in this chapter with Jyana Browne's essay on puppet theatre and Guojun Wang's look at clothing in traditional Chinese theatre. The field of material and object performance is emerging in the West and these essays add greatly to this scholarly field, reminding readers of the long traditions of material/object performance in Asia.

The final section of the book looks at the interactions between realistic performance and sociopolitical changes. With essays by Siyuan Liu (on *huaaju*), Jessica Nakamura (on colloquial theatre in Japan) and Miseong Woo (on Korean realist drama of the 1920s), this section deals most closely with the historical understandings of realism.

There is one quibble I have with the text in its use of terminology. Realism is a recognized historical movement; the choice of the editors and authors to overwhelmingly use the term 'realism' as opposed to 'real', 'reality' or 'truthful' kept pulling that movement into the conversation. While this is certainly germane for some essays (such as Siyuan Liu's), for others the use of this term was distracting.

This is a minor issue, however. *Realisms in East Asian Performance* is an excellent text, highly readable, and full of intriguing ideas and information about a wide variety of theatre forms. It is an excellent read for anyone interested in representations of reality on stage; it is especially valuable for scholars of East Asian theatre.

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Dramaturgy of Sex on Stage in Contemporary Theater. Edited by Kate Mulley.

New York: Routledge, 2024. Pp. i + 131. \$64.95 Hb.

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Throughout the entertainment industry, the notion that ‘sex sells’ is one of great prominence. However, the ramifications and intimacy that the staging of sex scenes requires in theatre and Hollywood were overlooked until approximately five years ago. *Dramaturgy of Sex on Stage in Contemporary Theater*, edited by Kate Mulley and written by a collection of eighteen writers, aims to explore the dramaturgy of sex in contemporary theatre from the social, cultural and historical context in which the play was written. Through the lenses of many writers, the book covers a range of topics and genres from musicals to plays, verbatim theatre, fringe, and dance performances. The book magnifies power structures and exposes how they are maintained in theatre while providing a critical lens to queering and dismantling these structures onstage and off. Through examining these depictions of sex onstage from a dramaturgical, sociological and cultural perspective, the book also explores the development and rise of intimacy directors and coordinators and how the landscape of contemporary theatre has changed across the world.

A portion of Part One explores the breakdown and history of queer theatre and how plays express gay sex onstage. The book references the Broadway musical *Strange Loop* by Michael R. Jackson and summarizes major plot points, but also highlights a major flaw with the musical as the only depiction of homosexual sex is violent and provides a negative representation of queer intimacy. This is not just a flaw with *Strange Loop*; the text notes a pattern in other plays and films that continue to perpetuate queer sex as wrong and violent. The book expresses the flaws in mainstream shows and how many queer intimacy productions are absent of non-binary characters, characters with disabilities, and other marginalized communities. The author calls to the reader’s attention how queer selected Broadway shows express ‘palatable’ homosexuality in order to be profitable. However, the author notes fringe theatre and how queer representation is more expansive in that medium. The text explores sexual discovery and queer theatre, and demands that future mainstage productions create a space that is reflective of authentic and non-violent queer relations.

Part Five of the book, ‘Depicting Female Desire’, is particularly fascinating. The section starts off with a chapter by Cristina (Cha) Ramos and Claire Warden called ‘Context, Cliché, and Other Considerations for Staging Female Desire’ (p. 83). This chapter is a zoom conversation between Ramos and Warden. Warden gives insightful thoughts and questions for directors who must stage intimacy. She states that directors and intimacy coordinators should offer context-based suggestions when providing actors with intimacy feedback, for example, ‘Why might this character sound like this? Maybe they are being performative in this moment, maybe they’re choosing to make pornographic sounds. But let’s get specific about where their sound might come from. Where is the character’s lived experience and how do we tell that in the sound?’ (p. 86). Warden provides a framework for directors to give specific and character-driven feedback that will inspire authenticity in the actor.