



Editorial

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Performing North / South?

For this themed issue we invited contributors to reflect on what it means to be situated in Scotland as part of 'the Global North West'. The contributions assembled here reflect on an attempt by the *Scottish Journal of Performance* to critically interrogate a geographical and also a political position in the so-called Global North. The *Scottish Journal of Performance* works as an open access platform for peer reviewed articles by emerging theatre scholars and art practitioners situated in Scotland. However, for this particular issue, we opened the platform for international scholars and arts practitioners who investigate their situatedness in relation to Scotland and / or the so-called Global North West.

The anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff have proposed a reorientation of the theoretical emphasis on the North and move beyond a North / South (or centre / periphery) binary, by focusing on South / South relationships (2012). They understand the Global South as site of knowledge production, which operates globally and prefigures the North's future, by offering a space of theoretical orientation. North and South here do no longer mean specific locations and geopolitical sites only, but vectors, relations and non-linear directions. What kind of vectors are pointing towards scholarly and performance communities in Scotland, and which relations and non-linear directions can we open up with the platform that is the *Scottish Journal of Performance*?

The last issue published, in summer 2019, focused on hope and working towards radically inclusive futures. Since then, while working on this new issue, high profile world events; the murder of George Floyd; the murder of Sarah Everard; the Covid-19 pandemic and perhaps most importantly a growing cultural and political focus on the potentially catastrophic effects of unabated global warming, have created a different urgency and political necessity for working on the issues raised by thinking about North / South with heightened awareness, care and sensitivity, and a slow approach towards process, rather than published product. During pervasive times of crisis it seems increasingly important for us personally as the co-editors of the *Scottish Journal of Performance* (and in our collaboration with authors, reviewers, critics and readers) to understand and to continue working on decentring our positions as a white, cis-female, able-bodied, German migrant PhD graduate of the University of Glasgow and as a white, cis-male, able-bodied British DPerf student of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. We must all continue to work on making tangible and material changes to our lives in consideration of rapidly changing perceptions of the meaning of human society and culture while striving to find ways to be in solidarity with those impacted by trauma, loss, disease, mourning, mental and emotional distress. We believe that the infrastructure and platform of any academic journal must reflect this to remain vital and relevant.

Janelle Reinelt argued more than ten years ago that the future of performance studies would only become truly international by decentering 'Anglo-centrism' (2007. p.8), by ensuring that 'performance studies participates in the problem of monolingual scholarship, in spite of interest [...] in non-Western performance forms and practices' (p.9). By that, she means 'fostering comparativist research, developing cosmopolitan methodologies and perspectives with regard to our national and local scholarship, and seeking to understand and critique the complex and ever-shifting global context within which we live and work' (p.8). Reinelt contends that the term international is a challenging one and risks being totalising, because performance studies tend 'to be

presented and received as primarily an Anglo-American disciplinary formation' and there are 'the charges of imperialism that are sometimes laid at its door' (p.8). What might it take to not just present international objects and phenomena of study, but to also represent a global scope of the production of knowledge, 'without establishing a hegemonic grip on the future of the discipline'? These are questions that cannot be ignored with respect to academic publishing. Lucy Cathcart Frödén's essay in this edition directly addresses multilinguality as a manifestation of hospitality; in the previous edition Catrin Evans discussed her methods 'to actively move away from the hegemony of an imposed monolingual culture' (Evans, 2019), and while we editors and this issue's contributors continue writing in English in our work, the challenge to a performance journal based in Scotland to take seriously the multilinguality present across Scotland and move towards future multilingual conversations is obvious.

Together with our contributors, (theatre researchers, art practitioners and teachers alike) we therefore work towards 'new habits of thinking the discipline and not just an addition of new things to think about' (Bala, 2017, p.335). The contributions in this issue identify and contest cultural, racial, class-based, citizen-ist and geopolitical borders. They stay vigilant about how cultural values, aesthetics and other representational regimes continue to reproduce colonial structures of North / South, and North / South epistemologies. This issue asks: how seriously do performance practices and theatre research take the ordering of the world into North / South, since the term 'Global South' has entered political stages in the 1980s? How do practitioners and researchers negotiate the ethics, 'hierarchies of power' in cross-cultural engagement with North / South and / or the 'the economic and material conditions that enable it' (Gilbert and Lo, 2007 p.9)?

One need not dig deep to find a range of compelling literature, which deals with the how to challenge

pervasively dominant Eurocentric norms in knowledges, research methods and pedagogies (Ahmed, 2012; Bhabra et al, 2018; Land 2015; Manathunga, 2018; de Sousa Santos, 2014). Yet, the thinking and understanding of the world through ideas of North / South is bound up with the pervasiveness of colonial violence, (in)visible oppressive power structures, violence of archives and memory, public recognition and legitimacy, but also to epistemic injustice. Geopolitical and cultural codings of North and South continue to haunt our critical views and affective takes on the world and its cultural representations. The contributors in this issue wrestle with such predominant modes of looking from the North onto the South and ask about the usefulness of the binary North / South concept.

In *The Trial Against Ourselves, pre-enactment and utopia: imagining alternatives to contemporary global capitalism* Julian Blaue describes how he and his partner Edy Poppy developed a series of performances in the tradition of Augusto Boal and Milo Rau staged as a response to a traumatic incident they experienced on the streets of Rio de Janeiro while the city hosted the 2014 FIFA World Cup. In these performances they press charges against themselves on the basis of structural violence—economic and cultural—that they might be held responsible for and that could be construed as the root cause of that incident. Blaue and Poppy's aim in these re-enactments is to set up a 'utopian dialect' that suggests an alternative to the existing structures of globalised capitalism.

Lucy Cathcart Frödén's article *We are the Sun: Multilingual collaborative songwriting as a hospitable, embodied and political process* describes a series of multilingual songwriting workshops run in Glasgow. The article focuses on the writing of one song in particular 'We Are The Sun', which uses seven languages: multilingualism is demonstrated as a source of integration and hospitality in the creative process and as something that can usefully query and ultimately undermine the binary oppositions (guest / host, central /

peripheral) that arise in cultural contexts that confront and attempt to dismantle the legacies of colonialism.

How located can we be? About situated curatorial practices in Mediterranean Europe is Viviana Checchia's investigation into the potential for curatorial practices to cultivate local understanding of art works. She proposes an alternative 'situated' model of curatorial practice that will help to free cultural production from overbearing historical, social, cultural and social perceptions and operate more effectively to support local knowledge frameworks and interests.

The review section of this issue draws together some of the themes which the research articles have opened up: Helene Grøn's review of the volume *Dramaturgy of Migration: Staging Multilingual Encounters in Contemporary Theatre*, edited by Yana Meerzon and Katharina Pewny, centres on migrant theatre and performing multilingually. With critical generosity, Molly Ziegler reads Sandra Young's monograph *Shakespeare in the Global South: Stories of Oceans Crossed in Contemporary Adaptation* where she investigates the potentials and limits Shakespeare offers for new story-telling and identity formation in non-Anglophone contexts and contexts of dispossession. Finally, Anika Marschall reviews *Migration in Performance: Crossing the Colonial Present*, co-authored by Geraldine Pratt and Caleb Johnston, and *Interculturalism and Performance Now. New Directions?*, edited by Charlotte McIvor and Jason King. She contextualises her reading context self-critically in times of global crises, and discusses the books' potentials and limits in presenting testimonial theatre about the global crises of care, social reproduction and racial capitalism; as well as critical interventions into hegemonic knowledge production and 'hegemonic intercultural theatre' (Lei, 2011).

As an appendix to this special issue is *Not fewer resources, but different: Creative responses to practice*

and research during Covid-19, a report by Victoria Bianchi, Bianca Mastrominico and Anthony Schrag on three on-line seminars hosted by the Centre for Communication, Cultural and Media Studies at Queen Margaret University in January 2021. The Seminars were on Film-making Practice, Practice Research and Liveness in Digital Creative Processes.

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