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Radical Theatricality: Jongleuresque Performance on the Early Spanish Stage

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tions of classical plays. Fiona Macintosh's "Performance Histories" establishes key research issues that are well complemented by the two contemporary case studies of a post-dramatic *Oresteia* in Italy and an Aristophanes in Jerusalem, respectively. Taking a different approach to the subject, Angeliki Varakis's essay, "'Body and Mask' in Performances of Classical Drama on the Modern Stage," provides a succinct discussion of the ancient mask. Grounding her analysis in ancient concepts of ritual, identity, collectivity, and physicality, Varakis's contribution provides unique insight into studying and producing classical drama, masked or unmasked.

Whereas the theatre section offers multiple viewpoints on theatrical production, "Film," the shortest section, is lacking. Film is often neglected in classical reception study, but Joanna Paul's "Working with Film: Theories and Methodologies" makes a strong case for studying classicism within this popular medium. Several of the volume's contributors argue that reception is a two-way dynamic, citing examples where modern receptions reconfigure the source text. This construct is perhaps best represented by Paul's use of film in the wider humanities; seeing *Troy*, for example, will affect subsequent readings of *The Iliad*.

With essays on philosophy, archaeology, and visual culture, parts 7 and 8, "Cultural Politics" and "Changing Contexts," explore antiquity in modern cultural history. Two essays stand out as exemplary studies of moments where the past is mobilized in political and cultural discourse. Catherine Edwards's "Possessing Rome: The Politics of Ruins in *Roma Capitale*" looks at how the materiality of Roman ruins has been caught among the claims of politicians, peoples, and visitors; and Bryan Burns's "Classicizing Bodies in the Male Photographic Tradition," on late Victorian responses to viewing male bodies, is a splendid example of how classicism can inform broader scholarship in areas such as the history of photography, literature, and sexuality.

This volume is by no means definitive of classical reception studies. More attention could be paid to popular culture, as well as to a broader range of theorizing. However, it is a critical step forward in bringing the ancient world into deeper engagements with modern subjects. For the classicist, this volume offers a consistent argument that Greece and Rome are always being received and re-imagined. For the theatre scholar, the book shows how performance has played a key role in wider struggles to constitute the modern idea of antiquity. Many of the chapters may be too specific for the general reader, but taken together, *A Companion to Classical Receptions* provides innovative and informed ways of connecting with the ancient past.

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RADICAL THEATRICALITY: JONGLEUR-ESQUE PERFORMANCE ON THE EARLY SPANISH STAGE. By Bruce R. Burningham. *Purdue Studies in Romance Literatures*, vol. 39. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2007; pp. xii + 260. \$43.95 paper.

It is a common trope that the writing of theatre history is haunted by the ultimate irretrievability of the instant moment and the phenomenon of embodied performance. For scholars of medieval Iberian theatre this historiographic dilemma is compounded by a number of concrete obstacles to inquiry. Evidence of European medieval performance is famously scarce, and peninsular performance history in particular—often dismissed for a regrettable lacuna of textual evidence of liturgical tropes and plays—has long lived in the shadow of the English and French traditions. New approaches to the study of European medieval theatre have opened up channels of investigation by redefining and expanding the performance archive, but these methodologies have yet to be applied in earnest to the study of Catalan, Castilian, Galician, Portuguese, and Andalusian cultures. It is this historiographic void in theatre studies that Bruce Burningham begins to fill with *Radical Theatricality*, principally by arguing that performative phenomena of embodiment can, in fact, be identified in the Iberian jongleur tradition.

Radical Theatricality describes medieval and early modern oral traditions through the culture of "jongleuresque" performers: *juglares*, *trovadores*, and other itinerant players, who have been relegated to the fringes of theatre history. In order to overcome the barriers presented by the lack of traditional forms of evidence, Burningham analyzes "performance as a *process* rather than as a *product*" (3). He rehearses familiar theories from anthropology and social ritual (the work of Bakhtin and Schechner are particularly influential), laying the groundwork for an analysis of nonliterary forms presented on flexible stages, as well as literary and dramatic texts that contain traces of improvisatory, popular practices. Throughout *Radical Theatricality*, Burningham conjures names of performance artists from across the historical spectrum, each of whom have embraced a "poetics of jongleuresque performance" encompassing "a performative aesthetic and set of praxes that underpin a wide range of performance traditions" (4). Some readers might take exception to this synchronic exegesis, which, in effect, suggests an essentialized brand of street performer. However, archival evidence describing the tradition of early itinerant players in detail remains elusive, thus novel research methodologies are required to revive this obscured culture. In addition to trans-historical

analogues (Homeric bards, Richard Tarleton, and vaudevillians are a few examples), Burningham culls evidence for the jongleuresque from Spanish romances, epic poetry, dramatic theory, and plays. The jongleuresque is epitomized by acts committed on "simple stages," defined as an everyday space that is radically transformed into a space for popular, multiform spectacles "at the behest of the performer" (27).

Although he is not the first to deconstruct the evolutionary explanation of ancient and medieval drama, Burningham dismantles the common assumption that early theatre was born out of less complex ritual forms (i.e., the moment the *quem quaeritis* trope unglued itself from the Christian rite). Next, he argues that many medieval and early modern Spanish texts need to be re-situated in their performative contexts. Burningham correctly points to a pervasive oral tradition that was responsible for the dissemination of musical and linguistic culture: ballads and stories underwent continual modification through the bodies and voices of minstrels and troubadours. An example of a text that has received more philological than performative analysis is *Calisto y Melibea*. Burningham argues that in the absence of staging evidence for *Calisto y Melibea*, questions of performability and genre are beside the point: what really matters is that a poetics of street performance is firmly embedded in Rojas's work.

The next four chapters proceed in chronological fashion, effectively supporting Burningham's argument that jongleuresque performance transgressed the medieval/modern divide. In chapter 2, Burningham conducts a close reading of the poetry and music of Spanish *romanceros* and *villancicos* in order to highlight their dialogic meanings, as well as the multiple talents of the jongleurs themselves who were required to hold their audience's attention by employing a myriad of expressive forms. The following chapter describes radical theatricality in the picaresque novel, extracting theatrical action from *Riconete y Cortadillo* and *Lazarillo de Tormes*. The characters of the novels perform ritual speech-acts, creating "fictitious representations of themselves, and thus express emotions and desires not (necessarily) belonging to the 'self' behind the character" (98–99). These prototypes belong to a genus of sixteenth-century Spanish culture of swindlers, *pícaros*, and actors who existed in the lower strata of society and made their livings by staging frauds and entertainments. It is from this culture that Lope de Rueda will emerge.

The final two chapters inscribe the *comedia* into the jongleuresque. Burningham demonstrates a facility with Spanish literature and criticism, relying on a catalog of *corrales* research to support his

claim that the *corral* "constitutes an elaboration of an already existing simple stage" (143). Burningham expands his scope in this section, comparing other, contemporaneous European stages to the *corral*. Carefully chosen excerpts from the plays of Encina, Rojas Zorrilla, and Sor Juana indicate a metatheatrical, socially interactive style of performance that flows backwards to medieval practices. The final chapter is devoted entirely to Cervantes's prologue to *Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses nuevos, nunca representados* and Lope de Vega's *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*. Burningham convincingly argues that although the playwright/theorists aimed to reconcile the jongleuresque of their contemporary stage with Aristotelian precepts, their attempts fall short. A careful dissection of each manifesto shows how their endeavors to erase traces of medieval traditions from Renaissance theatre, including their own dramaturgy, unwittingly expressed an ambivalence that frustrated their discourses on "new" art.

There are two groups that have the most to gain from *Radical Theatricality*. The book is part of a series in romance literature (which might explain the unfortunate lack of English translations of the Castilian), and students of European literature will probably find the performative approach to canonical texts liberating. *Radical Theatricality* could also be used in college courses in medieval and Spanish Golden Age theatre. Burningham's lively prose style and sweeping engagement with pan-European examples produces associative forces that deepen our regard for this underrepresented part of theatre history.

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LAUGHING MATTERS: FARCE AND THE MAKING OF ABSOLUTISM IN FRANCE.

By Sara Beam. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007; pp. xi + 268. \$57.50 cloth.

Sara Beam's *Laughing Matters* convincingly and productively refines our understanding of the relationship between the comic theatre and political culture of early modern France. Starting from the premise that "laughter can function as a litmus test of shifts in people's ideas about themselves and the political culture in which they live" (2), Beam argues that "the gradual demise of satirical farce was not the product of absolutism but one of its central constituents" (4). Beam seeks to revise the widely accepted timeline of the decline of French farce, claiming that it preceded and directly contributed to the triumph of absolutist discourse. To support