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## **Dance on its Own Terms: Histories and Methodologies ed. by Melanie Bales and Karen Eliot (review)**

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the result that they are less interesting overall than the more focused thematic threads, such as Tian's preoccupation with the dangerous woman, his bohemian activism, or his repeated demonstration that poetry is central to revolution. In Ferrari's case, the problems are reversed, with the strength and clarity of the central argument at times leading to oversimplification of historical issues. Her effort to establish the importance of the post-Mao generation leads her to reductive treatments of the earlier periods, especially of Maoist theatre practices. Luo's warning against viewing Mao-era culture as "a monolithic, hegemonic system" (211) could be viewed as a direct critique of Ferrari's reading of that period.

Apart from their significant contributions to scholarship, Luo's and Ferrari's books both offer welcome additions to the existing material available for teaching Chinese theatre and the global avant-garde. Thanks to recently available English translations of works by Tian and Meng, instructors can effectively use sections of these books together with primary sources in their courses. For teaching Tian, Luo's epilogue "Endings, Happy and Otherwise: Tian Han and *Guan Hanqing*" could be paired with Tian's 1958 play *Guan Hanqing*, now available in English translation. This generates an excellent set of discussions around the topic of politics, resistance, and theatre as activism. For teaching Meng, Ferrari's chapter 7, "Intercultural Hybrids, Pop Strategies and 'Meng-Style Delight': Toward a New Concept of the Avant-Garde," could be paired with *Rhinoceros in Love*, of which a subtitled performance video is already available and an English translation is currently in progress. This offers an interesting set of questions about the commercialization of romance in contemporary China and its reflection in experimental musical theatre. Alternatively, if one wishes to introduce Chinese opera, one could assign Luo's chapter 5, "A White Snake in Beijing," with a *jingju* (Peking opera) production of *White Snake*, an English version of which has recently been produced. Until now, Sinophone theatre has often been taught through figures like Mei Lanfang, Gao Xingjian, and Stan Lai, all of whom have established connections to international avant-garde movements. Now, thanks to Luo's and Ferrari's important work, instructors can expand their teaching to include the equally important, although previously less-internationally-well-known figures of Tian and Meng.

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**DANCE ON ITS OWN TERMS: HISTORIES AND METHODOLOGIES.** Edited by Melanie Bales and Karen Eliot. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013; pp. 456.

Since the mid-1990s, dance studies has integrated with other disciplines, including performance studies, visual studies, cultural studies, and others. The 1997 volume *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance* set a standard for this kind of interdisciplinary work, and others—*Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader* (2001) and *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader* (2010)—have sprung up in response to the field's increased visibility in academia. In their new collection, editors Melanie Bales and Karen Eliot aim to re-center dance studies onto dance itself: onto movement and its phenomenal and material qualities. They argue that dance studies' interdisciplinary forays, while rich and provocative, have compromised the study of dance on its own terms: "[i]n their eagerness to adopt theoretical language from other disciplines, dance scholars have lost fluency in their own language" (4). This language emphasizes familiarity with particular schools of movement analysis and notation, allowing for scholarship that springs from dancing itself rather than beginning with external concerns about the body as a site or sign. *Dance on Its Own Terms* provides great depth in terms of modeling strong, dance-centered scholarship, but represents a fairly narrow range of dance itself.

The editors divide the volume's sixteen chapters into three sections that emphasize, respectively, spectatorship and reconstruction, physical/kineshetic dance histories of particular figures, and methods of dance notation. Section 1 begins with Karen Eliot's analysis of canon formation in British ballet circa World War II, including her timely reminder that "the mechanics and politics of canon formation . . . do not operate uniformly across the disciplines" (13). Ann Dils's reflective chapter on restaging the challenging Jean Cocteau/Darius Milhaud farce *Le Boeuf sur le Toit* (1920) for a contemporary college audience provides a clear analysis of race and gender issues within the work, and also a model for imagining our pedagogical practices alongside our artistic ones. Deborah Friedes Galili offers the highly useful notion *culture of reconstruction*, terminology that frames her investigation of the "institutional structures and artistic and scholarly discourses" that determine reconstruction practices across geographies (67). Betsy Cooper convincingly demonstrates that the Production Code Administration's censorship assessments about the "decency" of a dance in Golden Age Hollywood films were linked to a high art/popular entertainment binary that reified balletic movement, even if those choreographies

technically violated the code. Harmony Bench reads Beyoncé's viral "Single Ladies" choreography (2008) as a negotiation of gender and sexuality within internet culture, offering an exemplary integration of a dance-centered perspective (movement analysis of the choreography itself and its lineage) with contemporary theoretical concerns (kinesthetic transfer through digital media).

In section 2, Catherine Turocy's strong essay on how dancers (and scholars) in the present might enter into the spatial world of Baroque dance includes an invaluable series of exercises for readers and dancers that demonstrates the Baroque understanding of space, physicality, and aesthetics. Bales's own excellent chapter in this section, a comparative movement analysis across three different interpretations of *pas de deux* (Marius Petipa, George Balanchine, and William Forsythe), connects movement itself across the three dances and to disciplinary questions in dance criticism and history in rich and compelling ways. Carrie Gaiser Casey examines the shape of maternal relationships between Anna Pavlova and her ballerinas through a feminist lens, arguing that we acknowledge the contradictions inherent in these relationships "as an integral part of dancer experience" (226). Geraldine Morris carefully parses the collaborative strands of Frederick Ashton's 1937 ballet *A Wedding Bouquet* (music by Gerald Berners, text by Gertrude Stein) to argue for an integrated analysis of movement, music, and literature. In her Laban-based analysis of Anna Sokolow's 1945 solo *Kaddish*, Hannah Kosstrin performs vital recovery work, tracing the evolution and adaptation of the choreography through several dancers, including Sokolow herself. Finally, Jessica Zeller focuses on the uniquely American pedagogy of ballerina Rochelle Zide-Booth to provide a useful overview of trends in American ballet during the twentieth century and advocate for a less "monolithic" understanding of classical ballet (300).

Potentially both revelatory and challenging for scholars new to dance notation, section 3 includes a rich diversity and depth of expertise in methods of translating dance. Sheila Marion historicizes the developing relationship of Vladimir Ivanovich Stepanov's notation to musical scores and anatomy within nineteenth-century imperial ballet culture. Historically, and relative to musical notation's stability, dance notation systems are reliably idiosyncratic (if used at all), and Rebecca Schwartz-Bishir convincingly argues in her chapter on August Bournonville's 1836 ballet *La Sylphide* that "*Musique dansante*, which is music that suggests the bodily motion of nineteenth- and twentieth-century ballet dancing, has much to tell us about the history of classical ballet variation" (341–42). Bringing a visual studies approach to Labanotation, Victoria Watts asserts that

dance notation systems "visually instantiate a complex of particular values," analyzing several scores of Balanchine's *Serenade* to show that deciphering notation scores necessarily engages the embodied subjectivity of the scholar (367). Rachael Riggs-Leyva examines Mark Morris's 1995 adaptation of Henry Purcell's 1689 opera *Dido and Aeneas* through music visualization analysis, wherein choreography physicalizes and makes visible musical changes. In this case, Morris's choreographic and storytelling choices support the dualism of the Baroque score. Candace Feck closes the volume with a valuable exploration of her data on how students write about dance—what categories they use and how their writing process results in the pedagogical golden apple of knowledge transfer because "[t]he art form itself is so richly evocative, so full of information and so open to multiple points of entry" (429).

Bales and Eliot explicitly "make no claims to address all of" what they call "the richness and vibrancy of the dance field," and further note that "[h]istorical and ethnographic methodologies encouraged a broader view of the field, challenging the practice that left non-Western dance out . . . and neglected the study of forms not typically considered high art" (4). However, the content of this anthology indicates the necessity of these non-dance-centered methodologies: of sixteen chapters, only Galili's focuses on what might be considered non-Western dance, and only Cooper's and Bench's contributions focus on non-concert dance. While most individual chapters are strong scholarship, the anthology as a whole represents a slimmer slice of dance studies than one might wish for in a work with such large ambitions. *Dance on Its Own Terms* represents a range of scholarly approaches; however, the diversity of dancing represented in previous collections remains critical to the field.

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**STAGE DESIGNERS IN EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA: ARTISTS, ACTIVISTS, CULTURAL CRITICS.** Christin Essin. Palgrave Studies in Theatre and Performance History series. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012; pp. 280.

"As a visual language that increasingly bridged theatrical stages and everyday landscapes, design emerged as a significant presence and influence in American culture," writes Christin Essin (12). In this book, Essin breaks with traditional style-based approaches to design in favor of a cultural histori-