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## ***Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices.*** **Edited by Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason. Bristol:** **Intellect Books, 2012. Pp. 224. £29.95/\\$50 Pb.**

Ananda Breed

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issues – two entire chapters – and although these are important topics, the study would have benefited from the inclusion of additional types of disability theatre performance.

Johnston successfully positions her research between the mainstream theatre artist and the disability theatre artist, pointing out the dilemmas and challenges in creating disability work. What is disability? Illness? An aesthetic? An identity? A minority? An artist? Johnston turns those questions around for a reader in disability studies, theatre studies or minority theatre, or even arts administrators or someone who simply wants to understand more about disability theatre.

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***Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices.* Edited by Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason.** Bristol: Intellect Books, 2012. Pp. 224. £29.95/\$50 Pb.

*Reviewed by Ananda Breed, University of East London, a.breed@uel.ac.uk*

The ‘corporeal turn’ towards embodied knowledge provides an opportunity for practitioners and theorists between the arts and sciences to engage with a vast range of practice-based research methodologies. Both the scholarly impact and the potential challenge of *Kinesthetic Empathy* is due to the ambitious interdisciplinary and cross-methodological range of the edited volume. Empathy and the affect of embodied performance are explored and interrogated between wide-ranging theoretical and practical frameworks from neuroscience and philosophy to varied practical applications of embodiment (and disembodiment) through dance, theatre, photography, music, film and applied performance. Dee Reynolds articulates the form and function of kinesthetic empathy, ‘as a movement across and between bodies, which, in an artistic situation, can have affective impact with potential to change modes of perception and ways of knowing’ (p. 88). The focus on the ‘potential to change modes of perception and ways of knowing’ is a key area of inquiry throughout the book.

Reynolds and co-author Matthew Reason provide editorial introductions in five main parts that are based on ideas of affect, communication, epistemology, motor systems and skills and participation. Several chapter contributions enhance the nuanced reading of empathy, whether based on the ontological separation between filmic visual and internal bodies (D’Aloia), the role of witnessing and the mimetic power of empathic engagement through dance (Meekums), or the ontological function of empathy in relation to recognizing otherness within the self (Parekh-Gaihede). Additional informative applications include the association between digitization and kinesthetic empathy on remote bodies and environments. Both Reynolds and Reason rightly address ethical constraints and the limits of empathy in relation to circumventing otherness and the potential to collapse self into other.

Reynolds and Reason close with a series of questions regarding the functionality of kinesthetic empathy for rehabilitation, how spaces might be constructed to inform kinesthetic empathy, and the limits of kinesthetic empathy when manipulated by adverse power networks. The book offers a progressive awareness of how kinesthetic empathy can evolve varied disciplines, whether through mirror neuron research using puppetry with

autistic youth (Shaughnessy) or through the use of stillness as a reflective practice (Gray). Both scholars and practitioners can benefit from the project's illuminating engagement with practice-based research.

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***Feeling Theatre.* By Martin Welton.** Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, Pp. x + 184. £53 Hb.

*Reviewed by Andrea P. Balogh, University of Leuven, andrea.pbalogh@gmail.com*

As an art form, theatre has traditionally been associated with vision and the acts of seeing and being seen. The construction of theatre in terms of its visual dimension also involves the conception of sight as the detached sense that provides a basis for understanding the theatrical performance analytically as an aesthetic experience. Martin Welton challenges this abstraction through proposing an ecological approach to theatre as a practice in the Bourdieuan sense. In doing so, the author also contests the perception of theatre in terms of the distinction between aesthetic experience and ordinary lived experience. Whilst the categorical distinction is maintained, Welton persuasively shows that, for spectators and performers alike, the theatrical experience is aesthetic and everyday at once.

The exploration of feeling as a phenomenon, act of communication, and theoretical concept provides the key to the interpretation of theatre productions as mundane and yet extraordinary. Feeling is defined in an inclusive sense, as a modus of perception and sense-making. At the same time, in line with the current efforts in the humanities to retheorize feeling in terms of embodiment, personal and cultural encounters, movement and moving of and across boundaries, the author proposes a subject-centred dynamic model. The claimed position becomes somewhat betrayed in the autobiographically inspired chapter ('Somewhere, Somehow') considering 'theatrical motility' and 'plac[ing] attention on the movement within theatrical tourism of quotidian structures of feeling' (p. 108). The chapter narrates a travelling of *Unknown Origin/Ursprung unbekannt*, a theatre production performed by the author and Klaus Seewald, 'in collaboration with his Graz-based company Theater ASOU', from Britain, via Austria, to Albania (p. 112). The account constructs 'Albanian reality' through staging centuries-old clichéd images of geocultural difference familiar from the Western exoticist discourses on South East Europe. Albania is depicted as a country 'being towards Europe's edge geographically' as well as 'economically and to some extent culturally' (p. 118). (Mis)matching economic development with cultural advancement, the description mediates the imperial construction of the relationship between the centre and the margin. The account of encountering difference is limited to the discussion of the 'strangeness' of the Albanian natural and urban landscape but makes no reference to the inhabitants as embodiments of subjectivity and agency. Correspondingly, the narrative of theatre tourism 'assimilate[s] difference' through the 'familiar habits and routine' of the discourse of imperialism (p. 119).