

both economically and artistically. The deep, personal investment of Wooster in TIE may be the book's chief strength but it is also at the root of its weaknesses. Despite the cogency of its overall structure, he tends to move from one topic or detail to another in ways that could be confusing for the uninformed reader. No cogent definition of TIE is offered early on in the book and the reader is expected readily to understand condensed summaries of the politics of the time and elliptical references to specific TIE programmes. When the programmes are thoroughly described, as in the central section of the book, they make for fascinating if rather uncritical reading. It is this overall lack of critical distance that, in the final analysis, make this less an academic text and more of a personal memoir.

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doi:10.1017/S0266464X16000750

Augusto Corrieri

**In Place of a Show: What Happens inside Theatres when Nothing is Happening**

London: Bloomsbury, 2016. 198 p. £70.

ISBN 978-1474-25672-8.

We all have a Desert Island book we would harbour beyond Shakespeare's works and the Bible that are pressed upon us along with those tracks. Mine is currently *In Place of a Show*. The auguries were good before the end of the brief acknowledgements: Heathfield, Bayly, Williams, and Lavery amongst others, each a specialist in a certain kind of uncertainty, a proudly topical dérivist affective methodology that has informed European performance scholarship of the twenty-first century and made it indispensable reading.

Corrieri joins those floating signifiers with just about the best theatre thing in the form of writing I have encountered since Kelleher's *The Illuminated Stage* and Ridout's *Passionate Amateurs*, sharing with both a genuine, evidential interest in theatrical scholarship, a gritty materialist grip, and the poetic generosity of Calvino, Sebald, and Bachelard, the true heirs to this marvellous work. Lots of men in a ragged line, self-appointed and privileged to be opaquely opinionated maybe, but one of the most interesting engagements with masculinity itself over a short century by way of being a by-product of thinking and expressing oneself about being embodied and out-of-bodied in spacesite, through the emotional contours of history.

In this work, ostensibly four theatres are at stake, a German Baroque auditorium, a London music hall, a Renaissance Italian theatre, and an Amazonian rainforest opera house (yes, the one that opens Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo*), where nothing theatrical would appear to appear, but each is an excuse for thinking something through about

happening itself. The 'what goes without saying' theatre that Roland Barthes would have suggested we might carry as a measure in our heads, given here the placeholder name: *théâtre à l'italienne*. This is phenomenology by stealth, very much my own preferred modus operandi, given the inevitability, irrespective of our suppleness, of losing out to performance's more agile spring.

Corrieri conducts here with lightest of baton touches, gesturing towards some offstage figures who do not need to be brought 'on' for us to feel their subtle sway: apparatus (Agamben), foreground-background (Benjamin), nonhuman (Lyotard), rubble (Gordillo), atmospherics (Sloterdijk), theatre=theatre (May, Theresa), nostalgia (Stewart), dust (Pailos), walls (Flusser), monuments (Musil), abandonment (Stengers) – each woven between the folds of a gripping narrative that, following a delicious false start (itself a page-staged *coup de théâtre*), takes us to and fro in the sleight hands of a conjuring author.

For each of these unnamed associations there are as many that are figured, framed, and fostered to new and revived relevance: La Cecla, Augé, Lévi-Strauss, Lingis, Harraway. It occurred to me that for all Harraway's remarkable 'cenes' (most recently the Chthulucene), her generously expansive calling out of human exceptionalism and methodological individualism, would do well to detour via work of this genuinely open 'nature'. I am not sure – thanks to a rigorously policed citational hierarchy that seems to bedevil North American scholarship, despite its thematic concerns with inclusiveness – that Corrieri is about to sit between Cixous and Croce in those indexes, but he should. He pre-empts me anyway, by eschewing the index in his own work, as though the alphabetical is just too tight for words.

On a visit to the Hackney Archive in search of the Dalston Theatre the author photographs this sign, bannered across the wall: 'Turn the pages of your imagination. READ.' He mistranscribes it into uniform caps in his own text, reminding us he is human after all, but the picture is there for us all to see. Corrieri imagines the imagination that is the child's imagination, imagining the building that these fragments once belonged to, remnants hanging from the library walls. But I take it as something more selfish, altogether more personal, a bespoke imperative: 'Turn the pages of your imagination READ.' By reading this book, I did. Others will find their own signs, taken for wonders, here. When you become bored with your Bible and the complete works, in the undergrowth of that desert island there will be a theatre, there always is. In the absence of drinkable water, when the light begins to bend, *In the Place of a Show* will remind us that the show, really, does not need to go on. There's no business.

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