

## Editorial: On Moving and Being Moved

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Tania Bruguera's commission for the Tate Modern, London (October 2018–February 2019) responds to the recent global migration crisis by offering visitors, and the local community, opportunities to engage with some of its data, imagery and effects. A central feature of the Turbine Hall installation is a heat-sensitive floor, which when touched or laid upon by visitors releases bodily imprints in ghostly grey. A portrait of Yousef – killed while fleeing Syria for London – materializes if enough bodies lie on the floor at the same time. Surging from speakers along the back wall, Kode9's (Steve Goodman) unnerving 40,000-watt electronic soundscape makes it difficult to get too comfortable in this deceptively frivolous playpen.

The given title of the Cuban artist's piece is actually an ever-escalating figure that captures the number of recorded migrations the year prior to the artwork's opening, and the number of deaths since the project began – at the time of writing, *10,144,499*. An updated figure is stamped on each visitor's arm as we enter the crying room, a small space to the side of the main floor which is flooded with a tingly menthol compound that quickly leads to tears. The accompanying statement claims that the room is intended to provoke 'forced empathy', explained as Bruguera's attempt to counter apathy through emotional display. 'Crying together in public breaks down our social barriers and leads to a shared emotional encounter', the text reads.

Bruguera's installation invites us to engage with some of the sensorial and emotional effects of migration through movement – often subtle, sometimes coercive. But it also asks us to think about the relationship between different forms of movement, including migration processes, performed gestures, emotional responses and sociopolitical formations. Can bodies playfully moving together in a gallery (or theatre) adequately summon or honour migration's recent traumas? Does a reflex physiological response expose or precipitate emotional conviction? Might a physical action index a genuine political commitment, or contribute to – even inaugurate – a movement? During a time when the free and safe movement of people (and goods) is under threat, including along UK borders as it prepares to leave the European Union, can performance help us to conceive or craft new lines of action and connection?

The articles in this issue are all concerned with movement and its formal dimensions, sociopolitical underpinnings, emotional registers and cultural effects. Of course, you could argue that all theatre is concerned with movement at some level, but the writings gathered here share an interest in the particularities of different movement forms and dynamics, across diverse theatre and performance practices and contexts. Authors explore how the interactions of staged, mediated and worldly movement expand or remap our understandings of history, tradition and culture by

attending to the ways in which the effects of discrete and large-scale gestures ripple outwards, or are frustrated and fixed in place.

One of the greatest obstacles to transnational movement, Wendy Brown argues, has been the construction of walls by nation states to assert sovereignty and confer a sense of ‘protection, containment and integration’.<sup>1</sup> Walls, for Brown, represent a ‘theatricalized and particularized performance of sovereign power’,<sup>2</sup> which can both assert and undermine state authority through their necessity or inadequacy. From Trump’s ever-promised (ever-deferred) wall around Mexico, to the deliberate fencing off of European countries to deter migration (e.g. Austria, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia, Slovenia), to the as yet unsealed fate of the Irish border post-Brexit, it feels like we are living through a moment of significant geopolitical restructuring in which the threat of partition and isolation looms large. Against this backdrop, rather ironically, some of us find ourselves more globally connected than before – as if walls and their clearing are caught in a perpetual dance.

But some obstacles are easier to outmanoeuvre than others. In the past couple of years, for instance, we have witnessed how communication technologies can rapidly spread and amplify singular performative gestures to become the building blocks of larger global movements (e.g. Me Too or Black Lives Matter, to name a couple). Social media have been instrumental in this shift, and the first three articles in this issue address some of the ways they interact with live performance, extending or subverting its reach. But the barriers that contain and divide us are not just material entities, but also symbolic formations. For many of us, including the authors represented in this issue, theatre and performance hold hope for circumnavigating or dismantling cultural divides, through the movement of bodies and objects in ‘real’ and virtual space.

We turn first to a field in which the mass choreographed actions of a site-specific performance usher participants back through time. In ‘Remembering the Finnish Civil War: Embodied Empathy and *Fellman Field*’, Hanna Korsberg, Laura-Elina Aho, Iris Chassany and Sofia Valtanen examine *Fellman Field: A Living Monument to 22,000 People* by Kaisa Salmi. The artwork took place in 2013 in Fellman Park, Lahti, Finland, where in 1918 thousands of civil war prisoners were held before being taken to a camp. The article argues that Salmi used choreography on the site to produce ‘embodied empathy’, as part of an attempt to reckon with the impact of historical trauma on the present. Unlike Bruguera, however, the authors do not find empathy instantly achievable, but perceive it as a mode of bodily engagement to be practised over time and across different sites. They discern evidence for their claims in the performance event itself, but especially in the trail of testimony and discussion which was recorded on the event’s Facebook page.

With the Olympics, movement isn’t just sport, but also theatre and politics on an international stage. Physical training, display and competition are central to the Olympic movement’s goal to ‘contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practised in accordance with Olympism and its values’.<sup>3</sup> In ‘Staging Sochi 2014: The Soft Power of Geocultural Politics in the Olympic Opening Ceremony’, Susan Tenneriello exposes gaps between a movement’s global ideals and their more localized pursuance. Tenneriello analyses how spectacle was used in the

2014 Sochi Winter Olympics opening ceremony to warmly reimagine a new post-Soviet Russia for a world audience, mediated across television, news and social media. The opening ceremony, according to Tenneriello, can be understood as the creative deployment of 'soft power', mobilized and moulded to project a progressive image of Russia to the world – contrary to the reality of Putin's conservative regime. But even Russia's tightly engineered PR complex could not prevent stories of behind-the-scenes corruption and abuse filtering through social media and news, which offered an entirely different perspective on proceedings.

Matthew Cohen's article also attends to the ways in which social media are used to extend artistic communities and audiences, bypassing the limitations of physical geography. In 'Wayang in Jaman Now: Reflexive Traditionalization and Local, National and Global Networks of Javanese Shadow Puppet Theatre', Cohen explores how social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube are being used by traditional Indonesian shadow puppet theatre to create new opportunities for international exposure, comment and debate. While *wayang* has historically been dependent upon the intricate handiwork of local puppeteers and spectators, Cohen's article charts how social media have enabled the art form to grow dispersed, global audiences. Instead of heralding the end of traditional crafts, as some claim digital culture inevitably does, Cohen argues that social media have been central to the mobility of the puppetry form.

This issue also includes a dossier of writings on theatre and migration, which emerged from different working groups at IFTR's 2018 conference in Belgrade. These articles are largely intended to provide snapshots of research projects or processes in progress. Each piece is concerned with how forms of movement and performance have been central to the sustenance of migrant communities and/or their diaspora.

Continuing with a concern for communication technologies, Sabine Kim's 'Haitian Vodou and Migrating Voices' examines a development in Haitian vodou in the 1970s and 1990s that saw migrants who fled to Florida to escape the Duvalier dictatorship communicate with relatives back home by 'writing letters'. These were tape cassette recordings that allowed people to still participate in the ritual practices of home, thus sustaining vodou culture among the diaspora. In 'Maritime Migrations: Stewards of the African Grove', Anita Gonzalez considers how maritime performance in the nineteenth century provided an important scene for cultural dialogue and exchange for free and enslaved people, and supplies the backdrop to the establishment of the African Grove in 1821 – the first African American theatre company. Ankush Gupta's 'Trans-lating *Hijra* Identity: Performance Culture as Politics' examines how the identity of South Asia's *Hijras* (often translated as 'eunuchs' or 'hermaphrodites', which Gupta critiques) is constituted through a locally situated performance culture, which resists imperial and contemporary Western definitions of sexuality. With 'Performing Public Presence: African Migrant Women Create *Uncomfortable Conversations* in London', Lesley Delmenico describes her work with a group of London-based migrants, who have been fiercely stigmatized by their experience of migration and the tenor of current debate. Delmenico's article exposes the identity

concerns that many of the female participants articulated, and the emotional and psychological impact of their experiences.

The dossier also includes a collaboratively written article by members of IFTR's Performance and Disability working group. In 'Responding to Per.Art's *Dis\_Sylphide*: Six Voices from IFTR's Performance and Disability Working Group' the authors analyse the Serbian company Per.Art's *Dis\_Sylphide*, a dance performance including a disabled cast which featured as part of the Belgrade programme, but which has also toured widely. Reading the work from different critical standpoints, the article demonstrates how performance and modes of scholarly response can intervene in some of the rigid movement conventions and bodily ideals of the twentieth-century dance canon, as well as some of the difficulties and possibilities encountered by disabled scholars and artists in accessing theatre and performance.

In 'No Manifesto' (1965), Yvonne Rainer somewhat notoriously argued for a restrained dance aesthetic, by ending with the charge 'no to moving or being moved'.<sup>4</sup> Rainer would later clarify that the manifesto itself was a gesture, intended to 'clear the air at a particular cultural and historical moment',<sup>5</sup> and not a prescription for inert, affectless performance. Indeed, reading these articles we are made aware not only of the relationship between bodily movement and forms of social and political (in) action, but also of the connection between movement and feeling.

The word 'emotion' comes from the Latin *emovere*, meaning 'to move out, remove, agitate'.<sup>6</sup> To feel, in light of this etymology, necessitates moving beyond ourselves, even if this shift often makes our individual selves more intensely felt. Yet this feeling does not just move us outwards, but can also attach us to people and places. As Sara Ahmed reminds us, 'What moves us, what makes us feel, is also that which holds us in place, or gives us a dwelling place'.<sup>7</sup> For many of the articles in this issue, theatre is what moves us (in every sense), but also what holds us in place.

This journal's editorial board is not immune to such comings and goings, and in some instances, holding place. Over the past three years I've had the pleasure to work with outgoing Senior Editor Paul Rae and Assistant Editor Sarah Balkin – often as fuzzy and sometimes freezing images Skyping across time zones – and I thank them for all I have learned from our working together. How Paul's meticulous and imaginative editorship has enriched the journal will be self-evident to readers, but as I take over the role I am particularly grateful to have been exposed to his steadfast commitment to the often slow, delicate and complex collaborative work required for running an international journal with aims such as ours.

I'm delighted to be joined by Silvija Jestrovic (University of Warwick) as the new Associate Editor, and Tanya Dean (Ulster University) as Assistant Editor. Caoimhe Mader McGuinness (Kingston University) is our new Senior Books Reviews Editor, and Europe and Africa Editor, and she will work with Mary P. Caulfield (Farmingdale State), our Americas Editor, and Charlene Rajendran (National Institute of Education, Singapore), our Asia Pacific Editor, to publish book reviews across regions. Marcus Tan (National Institute of Education, Singapore) assumes the new role of Online Content Manager, and we will work together to enhance the journal's digital provision in the coming months.

For most readers, the journal's editorial board is a column of names silently guarding its inside cover. But in practice it is very involved in representing the journal, reviewing submissions or advising on decisions. We extend thanks to the outgoing cohort, and welcome new (and continuing) members: Nobuko Anan, Susan Bennett, Elin Diamond, David Donkor, Dirk Gindt, Katherine Hennessey, Lee Hyunjung, Andrés Kalawski, Peter Marx, Ameet Parameswaran and Paul Rae. Our editorial board includes members working in institutions in Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, India, Japan, Kuwait, Sweden and the USA, though no one's expertise is confined to their country of work.

During my tenure, my immediate and most daunting task is to maintain the high standards I've inherited. I also hope to expand the journal's online provision with Cambridge University Press. It's my wish, too, that readers will have the chance to discover more about underrepresented research emerging from IFTR's working groups, starting with this issue. From the next issue onwards, the book reviews section will take a dip into our archives to assess the longer-term impact on our field of texts already reviewed in the journal.

Although I write this editorial in October 2018 as an EU resident – originally from Ireland, now based in London – around the time this issue comes to print in March 2019, the UK is at least scheduled to bob alone in newly unfamiliar seas. With these articles to hand, I take heart from the ways theatre and performance can move us into a deeper understanding of global history, tradition and culture, and of how, when faced with breaches and barriers, its gestures still hold the power to reorient and rebuild.

## NOTES

- 1 Wendy Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), p. 26.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- 3 'Leading the Olympic Movement', at [www.olympic.org/the-ioc/leading-the-olympic-movement](http://www.olympic.org/the-ioc/leading-the-olympic-movement), accessed 11 October 2018.
- 4 Yvonne Rainer, *Feelings Are Facts: A Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), pp. 263–4.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 264.
- 6 'Emotion', *Online Etymology Dictionary*, at [www.etymonline.com/word/emotion](http://www.etymonline.com/word/emotion), accessed 11 October 2018.
- 7 Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 11.