

PERFORMANCE AND TRANSLATION IN A GLOBAL AGE

This global overview of how translation is understood as a performative practice across genres, media and disciplines illuminates the broad impact of the ‘performance turn’ in the arts and humanities. Combining key concepts in comparative literature, performance studies and translation theory, the volume provides readers with a dynamic account of the ways in which these fields fruitfully interact. The chapters display interdisciplinary thinking in action across a wide spectrum of performance practices and media from around the world, from poetry and manuscripts to theatre surtitles, audio description, archives, installations, dialects, movement and dance. Paying close attention to questions of race, gender, sexuality, embodiment and accessibility, the collection’s rich array of methodological approaches and experiments with scholarly writing demonstrate how translation as a performative practice can enrich our understanding of language and politics.

AVISHEK GANGULY is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Literary Arts and Studies at Rhode Island School of Design. He is an interdisciplinary scholar working on the ethics and politics of translation, theatre and performance, contemporary literatures in English, sound studies and public humanities. He is co-editor with Emily Apter, Mauro Pala and Surya Parekh of *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: Living Translation* (2022). He is currently working on a monograph on the cultural politics of ‘Global Englishes’ and a research project at the intersection of humanities and design.

KÉLINA GOTMAN is Professor of Performance and the Humanities at King’s College London. She writes widely on the history and philosophy of disciplines and institutions, language, performance writing and translation. She is author of *Choreomania: Dance and Disorder* (2018, David Bradby Award for outstanding research) and *Essays on Theatre and Change: Towards a Poetics Of* (2018); co-editor of *Foucault’s Theatres* (2020); editor of *Theories of Performance: Critical and Primary Sources*, 4 vols. (2022); and translator of Félix Guattari’s *The Anti-Oedipus Papers* (2006) and playwright Marie NDiaye’s *The Snakes* (2016). She collaborates internationally in the arts.

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A GLOBAL AGE

EDITED BY
AVISHEK GANGULY
Rhode Island School of Design
KÉLINA GOTMAN
King's College London



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Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
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103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

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Contributors

SRUTI BALA is Associate Professor in the Department of Theatre Studies at the University of Amsterdam.

JOSHUA DAVIES is Senior Lecturer in Medieval Literature at King's College London.

ENZA DE FRANCISCI is Senior Lecturer in Translation Studies in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures at the University of Glasgow.

AVISHEK GANGULY is Associate Professor in the Department of Literary Arts and Studies at the Rhode Island School of Design.

KÉLINE GOTMAN is Professor of Performance and the Humanities at King's College London.

OLIVIA C. HARRISON is Associate Professor of French and Italian, Comparative Literature, Middle East Studies and American Studies & Ethnicity at the University of Southern California.

BRYCE LEASE is Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London.

ALVIN ENG HUI LIM is Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Linguistics and Theatre Studies at the National University of Singapore.

ELEANOR MARGOLIES is a UK-based writer and theatre maker.

DANIEL J. RUPPEL is a performer, theatre-maker, and Visiting Assistant Professor in Theatre History at Susquehanna University, Pennsylvania.

FARAH SALEH is a dancer and choreographer and PhD candidate at Edinburgh College of Art.

List of Contributors

KIRSTIN SMITH is Associate Professor in Drama in the School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia.

GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK is University Professor in the Humanities at Columbia University.

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This book has been many years in coming; although in some ways it started in the context of the symposium ‘Theater & Performance + Translation & Multilingualism’ at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), in Providence, RI, in 2015, organized by Avishek Ganguly with talks by Olivia C. Harrison and Kéline Gotman, many conversations and debates, twists and turns, have transpired along the way. In certain respects, the conversations long antedate even this, during our years at Columbia University where questions of language and the ‘global’, performance and theatre, were formative to intellectual trajectories that continue to move today. Working across continents and time zones has not been easy, but perhaps this was essential to the task at hand, keeping us always aware of the disjunctions and disorientations as well as the alignments that carry us through and that thwart communication and co-labour every day. In so many ways, the challenges we have faced with writing and thinking together across distances have forced consideration of how embodied our everyday lives are: we know this well, and yet the false promise of electronic co-presence signals an ever-more urgent need to reinscribe at least our thinking into the lived ecologies of our current places and times; this does not mean one is less ‘global’, but local with the full and fierce awareness of just how far other places can be. This is exacerbated by restrictions on travel – themselves critical not only on account of human health, but more broadly to the health of the entire planet. Writing during a time of increasing crises – yet within the particular academic mode that is nearly of necessity always ‘slow’ – we dig deeper into the problems of translation, explored here with regard to theatre and performance, to poetry, to archives, to history and to violence, to racism and xenophobia, to inequality and justice, and so much more.

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