

mance work suggests “continuity, rather than a radical break, between the eras of dictatorship and neoliberal democracy” (91). I wonder too at the conspicuous absence of any engagement with China, a country whose unique combination of Maoist socialism and free-market economics speaks to neoliberalism’s uneven diffusion throughout the world and its insidious capacity to penetrate unlikely places and forms of governance. David Harvey’s *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005), cited by several essays in the collection, devotes a whole chapter to the country, describing how China’s market socialism has yielded widespread dispossession and economic precarity—precisely the issues to which so many of the collection’s contributors attend.

If the exclusion of China is a missed opportunity, however, the editors have made the utmost of the collection’s wide-ranging survey of global performances, arranging the chapters in a way that puts unlikely sites of cultural production and activism into generative conversation with one another. Bishnupriya Dutt’s essay on feminist activism in India after the gang rape of Jyoti Singh, for instance, is followed by Tiina Rosenberg’s argument that *Femen*’s militant activism in France has ceded to the Islamophobic populism that has accompanied the displacement of social democracy in Europe: where the former looks to the female insurgent as a potential figure for future feminist activism, the latter suggests the limits of an insurgency that fails to account for intersectional multi-solidarity. Similarly, Nobuko Anan’s reading of Yanagi Miwa’s *Elevator Girl*, a collection of photographs that figures female solidarity in intimate, imaginative spaces, gains something by its proximity to Christina Svens’s discussion of Kurdish-Swedish performer Nisti Stêrk, whose participatory work forges social solidarity in the intimate space of the theatre. Placed side by side, the essays draw a through-line that joins Japanese and Swedish artistic production in a shared imperative to imagine new affective pathways for feminist activism. Productive, revelatory pairings such as these proliferate throughout the book, a testament not only to the breadth of the collection’s scope, but also to the fascinating interstitial resonances that link one chapter to the next.

Performance, Feminism and Affect in Neoliberal Times collects a wide range of timely scholarship that interrogates the multifarious ways in which performance engages the neoliberal re-stitching of the social fabric. There is little romance here. As the editors remind us in their introduction, performance “may be part of that social stitching, or part of its unravelling; often it is both” (2). Performance and activism, of whatever stripe, wend often predictably between the poles of complicity with and resistance to neoliberalism’s revisions of social life. Whether

extending existing scholarship or highlighting performances that have yet to receive adequate scholarly attention, the collection makes an important and laudable contribution to our understanding of how performance engages feminist activism and ethical, affective spectatorship in the age of neoliberal hegemony.

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WAYWARD LIVES, BEAUTIFUL EXPERIMENTS: INTIMATE HISTORIES OF SOCIAL UPHEAVAL. By Saidiya Hartman. New York: W. W. Norton, 2019; pp. 464.

Saidiya Hartman’s *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* potentially transcends the limitations of the archive to recall and re-narrate the everyday practices that young black women innovated and embodied at the turn of the twentieth century to refuse impositions on their autonomy and freedom. This lush, imaginative social history sharpens particular focus on the ways that, in the decades following the de jure end of slavery and the collapse of Reconstruction, a rebellious cast of characters hailing from the ghettos of Philadelphia and New York City began rehearsing and enacting alternative existences in defiance of the unrelenting conditions of anti-blackness. Hartman draws her unruly protagonists from an array of records that, even while offering few if any details about the young women that appear in them, betray a commitment to marking the circumstances and events of their lives as pathological and criminal. She rejoins the various misrecognitions she encountered in the archive by fashioning a layered narrative that ponders its subjects as “radical thinkers who tirelessly imagined other ways to live and never failed to consider how the world might be otherwise” (xv). The book is a masterful act of recuperation and speculation that meticulously renders and reveals black women and girls as significant agents of social transformation.

The methodological framework Hartman employs is surely among the book’s most remarkable and rewarding attributes. A note included at the beginning of the text outlines some of the specific practices the scholar relied upon to refigure “archival documents so they might yield a richer picture of the social upheaval that transformed black social life in the twentieth century” (xiv). “I employ a mode of close narration, a style which places the voice of narrator and character in inseparable relation, so that vision, language, and rhythms of the wayward shape and

arrange the text," Hartman writes (xiii-xiv). A notable effect of this decidedly performative style is the synthesis of method and content that it engenders. Perhaps as important are the ways it enables Hartman to exploit slippages between the indicative and the subjunctive.

Hartman organizes the volume's twenty chapters into three books. In the first, "She Makes an Errant Path through the City," she situates the ghetto as a site of radical possibility "where the poor assemble, improve the forms of life, experiment with freedom, and refuse the menial existence scripted for them" (4). She also details how her search to find photographic evidence of what living a meaningful, free life involved for black women and girls in the wake of slavery led her to follow in their footsteps and recreate aspects of their often-peripatetic journeys. For the characters who animate the book, lingering on or strolling down the street might mean catching the attention of a black luminary like Paul Laurence Dunbar or W.E.B. Du Bois, who would wonder in writing what the waywardness they witnessed perhaps foretold about "the future after slavery" (85). More often than not, however, it meant evading the law or thwarting the lascivious advances of those who imagined all black women and girls as sexually available. Hartman suggests that despite the hyper-surveillance and regulation that their very presences often induced, young black women continued to pursue freedom dreams, seek out tenderness, and "believe that another kind of life was within reach" (139).

The chapters in the second book, "The Sexual Geography of the Black Belt," consider the different kinds of intimate arrangements young black women began establishing to stake a claim for the abundance of their desires. A highlight of this section is a chapter titled, "Mistah Beauty, the Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Woman, Select Scenes from a Film Never Cast by Oscar Micheaux, Harlem, 1920s," which centers on the endlessly fascinating entertainer Gladys Bentley. While much has been written about Bentley by performance and cultural studies scholars in recent years, Hartman offers a completely fresh take, reimagining scenes from the artist's life as if they were the plot of a Micheaux film. In so doing, she further surfaces the forms of refusal that Bentley and others began honing to embody more sensuous ways of moving, knowing, and loving. "Bentley's life refracted through Micheaux's cinema is the wild, deregulated movement that refuses the color line and flees the enclosure of the ghetto," Hartman writes (197). Movement, the book insists, is both a necessity and danger for the wayward.

The chapters in the third book, "Beautiful Experiments," provide additional insights into the range

of strategies that became essential to cultivating and maintaining a sense of the possible while negotiating the state's efforts to make "civil death" (264) an inevitability for black people. For those young black women incarcerated for any number of trumped up trivialities during the Jim Crow era, receiving a letter from a lover could spur new hopes. Sometimes, however, they were forced to meet the state's gratuitous violations with black rage and black noise. No matter the bleakness of their circumstances, Hartman illuminates that black women and girls found ways to press on and embody a different kind of freedom, a different kind of beauty, a different kind of intimacy.

Although Hartman does not explicitly name it as such here, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* extends her ongoing engagements with the practice that she theorized in earlier writing as "critical fabulation." It is a practice that relishes in reading between the lines and against the grain to venture more robust accountings of the anonymous, the captive, the minor, and the sidelined. Hartman offers her most comprehensive and compelling exploration of the practice to date with the book, demonstrating its potency, efficacy, and, perhaps most importantly, its redressive potentiality. Notably, in addition to enhancing our understanding of the ways that black women and girls have fought to make freedom a reality, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* powerfully examples for scholars across multiple disciplines and fields what can be gleaned by carefully attending to the movements and yearnings of those "deemed unfit for history" (xv).

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AUDIENCE AS PERFORMER: THE CHANGING ROLE OF THEATRE AUDIENCES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY. By Caroline Heim. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016; pp. 200.

LOCATING THE AUDIENCE: HOW PEOPLE FOUND VALUE IN NATIONAL THEATRE WALES. By Kirsty Sedgman. Bristol: Intellect, 2016; pp. 230.

Although theatre and performance scholars often ask questions *about* contemporary audiences, only rarely do they ask questions *of* them. Turning to the questionnaire and the personal interview, Caroline Heim and Kirsty Sedgman argue in their respective studies that audiences have valuable things to say.