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***Interrogating Antigone in Postmodern Philosophy and Criticism.* Edited by S. E. Wilmer and Audronė Žukauskaitė. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, Pp. xiv + 429. £84 Hb. *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage.* Edited by Erin B. Mee and Helene P. Foley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xxi + 469. £85 Hb.**

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and autobiography (what Kelly performed in *Dramatic Recollections*). This connects with a seam of theatre history scholarship that attempts to recover and engage the work of actors/actresses so as to reformulate those premises in more conventional theatre history-making that still rely on plays and the buildings in which they were staged as the cornerstones of their narratives. The first fifteen pages of *Performing Herself* should immediately become required reading for any historiography class.

The core of this project is described as 'A Performance Biography' by the author. In other words, she eschews any notion of definitive coverage and signals an intention to focus on Kelly's performance contexts. Discussion of theatre business – everything from wages to ticket pricing – is especially interesting, as is the thoughtful examination of Kelly's ultimately failed attempts to launch a Royal Dramatic School that would prepare the nation's actors. *Dramatic Recollections* (a show that lasted some 3–4 hours in performance) offers another version of the life and times. Both biography and script deserve extended study, and together they provide a suggestive model for other theatre history projects that hope to challenge rather than sediment the historiographical protocols with which they work.

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Interrogating Antigone in Postmodern Philosophy and Criticism. Edited by **S. E. Wilmer and Audronė Žukauskaitė**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xiv + 429. £84 Hb.

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In the theatre, Oedipus' pre-eminence among the myths of modernity has been challenged by theoretical takes on Antigone to articulate the main preoccupations of postmodernism. At the same time, productions and adaptations of *Antigone* proliferate on theatrical stages across the world. In this light, the simultaneous appearance of two edited volumes on the reception of *Antigone* in the last decades comes as a surprise. However, not only do these two volumes contribute to an examination of the play's recent popularity among theorists and theatre practitioners; by situating *Antigone* in postmodern and global contexts the essays published here mark a departure from the text's humanistic Western legacies, eloquently represented in George Steiner's celebrated 1984 *Antigones*.

In the first book, by Wilmer and Žukauskaitė, the inquiry into Antigone is set against the 'clash of philosophical, psychoanalytical, and gender interpretations' (p. 1). Rather than offering an overview of the various theoretical engagements of which Antigone has commonly been at the centre, the book provides the site of an ongoing debate between psychoanalysis and feminist criticism. The carefully planned sections of the volume relate the antithesis between law and kinship, which is central in Hegel's dialectical reading of Sophocles' play, to contemporary theoretical debates. Within this framework, the

individual essays critically respond to philosophical accounts (e.g. Chanter on Antigone's monstrous representations in Heidegger, Lacan and Žižek) or speak for dominant, yet conflicting, interpretative strands, as in Irigaray's gendered inversion of the Oedipal order and Griffith's programmatically psychologizing reading of the play in the context of its original performance. It is indicative that the critique of psychoanalytic interpretations is consistent with the politicization of Antigone, by means of either challenging French postmodernism (Eagleton) or turning to Butler's counter-discourse (Kahane, Ettinger). The book features a series of thought-provoking essays which scrutinize Antigone as a paradigm of bodily exposure and exile, drawing on Agamben's and Arendt's concepts of bare and naked life (Sjöholm, Žukauskaitė).

The closing section of the book is dedicated to pictorial and theatrical representations of the myth. The analyses of performance and visual sources are bound with the theoretical issues tackled in the volume (e.g. Fischer-Lichte's discussion of the individual–community polarity in landmark productions). Wilmer's closing essay acknowledges the contradiction between Antigone's unequivocal place within philosophy and her straightforward theatrical representations as a fighter against state oppression.

Although Foley and Mee's volumes share a clear focus on *Antigone*, the two books do not overlap but rather complement each other. The essays presented by Foley and Mee illustrate the play's performance reception in the last decades, examining stagings presented in diverse cultural, political and national contexts. The introduction provides methodological remarks for the study of the text in performance which can be of significant help to classicists working on the reception of ancient drama. The editors draw parallels between adaptation and performance as modes of mobilizing the classical texts, while also arguing that performances of *Antigone* constitute political acts. The sections of the book introduce larger thematic categories which help to establish connections across the numerous case studies. The wide impact of Sophocles' *Antigone*, starting already in antiquity (see Hall's opening essay), is further traced in productions internationally. The strong emphasis on postcolonial contexts works well with discussions of uses of *Antigone* which destabilize cultural traditions (burial and mourning in Macintosh) or political discourses of the West (e.g. Van Steen, Robinson). Yet an overarching conceptual framework would have helped the reader deal with the wide-ranging material and relate performance aesthetics to the broader questions of modernity and the nation state, both addressed in Fradinger's double contribution to the volume. Whilst most of the essays question the role of the classics (Goff, Hardwick, Worthen), there are cases where the approach to both *Antigone* and its appropriation by local communities goes rather unproblematised (Hunsaker on the Yup'ik). The useful appendix presents an annotated productions record of *Antigone* outside Europe and the USA.

Reception studies have raised awareness of the broader cultural impact and significance of classics; yet, as both volumes demonstrate, each in its own manner, this awareness is by no means tantamount to a complacent celebration of diachronic and contemporary refigurations of antiquity. If *Antigone* encompasses the historical and intellectual experience of the late twentieth century it is not just because the play interweaves issues of sovereign state, repressive law and ethical struggle, but rather due to

its inextricability from the cultural and discursive processes which have both sustained and defied power and authority.

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Drama and the Succession to the Crown, 1561–1633. By **Lisa Hopkins**. Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama. Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2011. Pp. x + 178 + 1 illus. £55/\$99.95 Hb.

Religion and Drama in Early Modern England. Edited by **Jane Hwang Degenhardt and Elizabeth Williamson**. Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2011. Pp. xiii + 281 + 4 illus. £60/\$104.95 Hb.

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The question of succession in the late sixteenth century most vividly involved the problem of who was to succeed the childless Elizabeth I to the throne. Up to a dozen potential candidates for the crown can be cited, but in her new book Lisa Hopkins argues that the problems surrounding the succession did not go away with Elizabeth's death and the accession of James I. Instead she steadily and persuasively lays out the case that succession in early modern drama was an ongoing issue and traces how playwrights adroitly but carefully steered through the potentially dangerous waters of the subject. Marlowe, Shakespeare, Webster and Ford all demonstrate varying degrees of interest in the topic but Hopkins additionally introduces a number of less-well-known plays, which she suggests also raise questions of succession. Primogeniture is brought under scrutiny in a number of these works and Hopkins delves into complex dynastic family trees to argue that there were alternatives to the eldest son automatically enjoying unhindered succession.

Hopkins is particularly careful to emphasize that playwrights had often to be oblique in their references to matters of succession and she provides the reader with caveats regarding reading too much into a particular play or scene, noting that ideas are 'delicately hinted at or faintly suggested' (p. 155). Nevertheless, she is consistently provocative in her interpretation of various allusions in the texts of the plays and even argues that the names of characters (she cites the use of Antonio, among others) may have significance in possibly alluding to questions of succession. Even more intriguingly, Hopkins enrols fairies (particularly Oberon), Robin Hood and the Romans (more specifically Pompey) in her arguments to demonstrate that the problem of succession pervades what might seem the most unlikely dramas. Hopkins argues that questions of succession surface again on the death of Prince Henry in 1613 and after the Scottish coronation of Charles I in 1633 (which was coincidentally the year in which Charles's second son, James, was born).

Hopkins elegantly, and nearly always persuasively, proposes that a number of dramatic works of the time reflect and negotiate the issue of the succession to the throne. In doing so she opens up the debate and points out new directions for further study.