



PERFORMANCE
PHILOSOPHY

EDITORIAL

LAURA CULL Ó MAOILEARCA UNIVERSITY OF SURREY
KÉLINA GOTMAN KING'S COLLEGE LONDON
EVE KATSOURAKI UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON
THERON SCHMIDT UNSW AUSTRALIA

This editorial has been composed out of contributions received from an open call for writing in response to [REDACTED]'s inaugural with the constraint that responses had to be in the form of a single sentence. All submitted contributions have been included; collated by Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca, with individual authors listed in the endnotes below. The name [REDACTED] has been redacted whenever it appeared in the text. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

*Una mattina mi son svegliato
o bella ciao bella ciao bella ciao ciao ciao
una mattina, mi son svegliato, e ho trovato l'invasor¹*

I am not watching you.²

I chose not to watch the inauguration of a man I refuse to name since performances only have power if they are watched and validated.³

[APPLAUSE]

January 20th, 2017 marks the opening day of a performance that will define the Republican Party: a contemporary American retelling of Faust.⁴ Theatrocracy has expanded its domain—beyond the orchestra pit, the cinema, the rock show, and reality TV, but now also in the booming bellicose hollows of “presidential” speech.⁵

[APPLAUSE]

Today he sauntered down the inauguration aisle hoping his ratings would be top notch; I turned off the news.⁶ Just couldn't watch the inauguration, spent the rest of the day parsing over the transcript of ██████'s speech for use as a teaching tool in my speech communications class, thinking about what exactly is terrifying about it, and also how it was written to appeal to his target audience.⁷

*I want to thank you all for hearting the thumbs up,
I'm all about the double thumbs up...⁸*

#sohelpusgod⁹

Sutherland, Barthelme, Pleasence, Duck: desirable alternatives in order of preference.¹⁰

[APPLAUSE]

Immediately after ██████ took the oath of office—a successful (though I'd hesitate to say “felicitous”) performative utterance that transformed him into the President of the United States—he undertook to perform an even more momentous speech act, declaring himself synonymous with “the people” (“*January 20th 2017 will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again*”), but alas, J.L. Austin teaches us that in cases where “there is not even a pretence of capacity or a colourable claim to it” nor any “accepted conventional procedure,” such a speech act is not merely “void” but “a mockery, like a marriage with a monkey” (Austin 1975, 24).¹¹ Reading Michelle Obama's [beautiful face](#), I learn that the theory of performative utterances holds no sway, but that, instead, epistemologies of ignorance—for example, the kind that allows one to think “the American people” as a substantive and cohesive entity—undergird ██████'s so-called philosophical address.¹²

Well deserved America, ridiculous populist!¹³

[APPLAUSE]

In his inauguration speech, ██████, masked the cruelly unresolvable power differentials between “the American nation” and “the people”, as a dialectically resolvable opposition between the administrative DC, on the one hand, and the “forgotten” American citizens, on the other, so that performances of nation/people power differentials remain hard to conceptualize and thus infinitely legitimizable and undisturbed.¹⁴ *Should we insist that the declaration of giving power back to the people immediately annul the inauguration of the man?*¹⁵

I don't want you to mistake my getting up to leave for a standing ovation.¹⁶

It was also the absence of any voice-over commentary on the live feed that BBC Parliament was broadcasting that got me, which meant for a while the only sounds were from the camera mics picking up the soft-voiced how do you dos of people who know each other from way back and know how this goes, as if the fact of this happening really could be recorded dispassionately—and not a single tumbling angel of history in sight, so to say.¹⁷

My society is bi-polar,
and the most unhealthy patient of them all is at the helm.¹⁸

[APPLAUSE]

Realitik: USA has been officially inaugurated as the new Banana Republic.¹⁹ Child of Europe: the ignorant spectacle of the U.S.—its enslaving, genocidal, capitalist, misogynist, world dominating, anti-earth foundations—has found complete manifestation in the election of president ██████████²⁰

congrats fucker.²¹

Sick of mourning Enlightenment's subject, whose poisoned flower of youth prefigured the American Revolution, the electoral system produced a tombstone, a great bronzed and gold-plated slab upon which Geist's engraver etched the first marks in fewer than 140 characters.²² Hair Furor's inauguration is the unintentional yet inevitable consequence of a glib postmodern stance that asserts confidently there is no truth nor any meaningful difference between high and low culture: a fact-free reality TV star with no relevant experience becomes President of the United States.²³ Extraordinary how potent cheap bravado is.²⁴

I see the ██████████ presidency as a 'huge' man-baby balloon, filled with toxic gases, filling up and floating across western skies, casting a 'huge', rude 'n ugly shadow, leaking fumes and slowly making a descent to the ground, where, inevitably one of us, or hopefully, many of us are waiting with prescient pin in hand to deflate the hateful bubble, even though we know we'll still have to breathe and filter the noxious air it will release into the atmosphere.²⁵

The 45th POTUS committed from the pulpit of USA's democracy to bring back the "lines of tribe" that the 44th had wished to dissolve, as he reiterated and the cheering crowd approved, with prejudiced patriotism, the vision and dreams of a ██████████ed America—of American hands, American business and the business of borders and battles.²⁶

Let them bleed.²⁷

The wasteland grows: mid-leap, over the abyss, ██████, the last man, decouples truth from representation, inaugurating the end of metaphysics; the performance is everything: all that is to be known is what unfolds, not what is told; all politics that has gone before revealed as a now-impossible dissimulation: this is what has shown itself to us, and this is the hope to which we might cling.²⁸

Perpetual breathlessness in anticipation of recklessness leaves many of us sweating bullets, dropping our jaws, and pointing fingers, calling out this or that cause for our ills; yet beyond fatalistic foresight and knee-jerk trite (the Russians are coming!), many more of us seek new tasks with humility, turning toward one another as infinities, looking to be movers-and-shakers in new ways and finding a shared commitment to forging an interpersonal ethic of togetherness, centered on the most vulnerable, a popular movement perhaps unthinkable without the presidential ascendancy of this oh-so-sur/real catastrophe.²⁹

'That's how it is on this bitch of an earth.'³⁰

'It's a lot. One can have too much of a good thing.'³¹

The American experiment with democracy was always flawed, always built on exploitation and violence, but we cannot let it end like this.³²

[APPLAUSE]

Saturday, post President ██████'s inauguration, many Chicagoans were welcomed with an unusually warm January day.³³

If there were anything like "alternative facts", then the world would wake up tomorrow and find itself trapped in the narcissistic dream of ██████, but since this expression just indicates his constant disregard for reality, the world has to wake him up today in order to make him face it.³⁴

We held our own inauguration on January 21st: one that insisted that one man cannot change the character of a nation if millions of people put their bodies on the line to resist.³⁵

[APPLAUSE]

My faint hope for the coming years is that things will get done not because of the President, but despite the President, and that individuals, companies and institutions will share between them the duty of care for the planet and the people of all cultures.³⁶

[APPLAUSE]

Let us love every single body.³⁷

[APPLAUSE]

Our love will be fierce and protective and, fuelled by the wisdoms of diverse voices and bodies, cultures and minds, sciences and faiths, it will shatter your frightened tyranny.³⁸ Because consistency and truth telling is requisite for care and trust, bombastic hyperbole and platitude appear particularly vacuous and even disquieting.³⁹ Envy is a deeply nonpolitical affect, because it never leads to anything productive and enriching for a community (it never even leads to anything productive and enriching for a single subject).⁴⁰

Even a single moving wave is not just a crest and a trough.⁴¹ When we as citizens join the free flow of experiencing through art, our world grows larger with us.⁴²

Fair-minded humility towards every other human being, towards life, towards our planet should be the first motive of every single action.⁴³ Human beings have the power to think, the power to feel, and the power to act.⁴⁴ Greatness is within the human capacities to learn, to communicate, to understand, to feel attentively, and to develop oneself and environment beyond any personal, national, and sectoral borders.⁴⁵

The water we share with the lands, air, animals, and humans of Earth will circulate in more meaningful ways than the blood of one country.⁴⁶ Many lines of that speech tried to radically redefine the line of inclusion and exclusion, but beware that what is more dangerous than ‘faked facts’ and furious feminists: those historic humanist truths, which even through the hysteric carnage of demagogic rage always will surface, as they are ever so inherent to the contrast of justice and violence and to the nature of every wo/m/an/imal: because we all bleed the same red blood—period.⁴⁷

[APPLAUSE]

Never has the fight for freedom of the pen been more relevant, the ideas of the enlightenment heroes come alive and so do I.⁴⁸

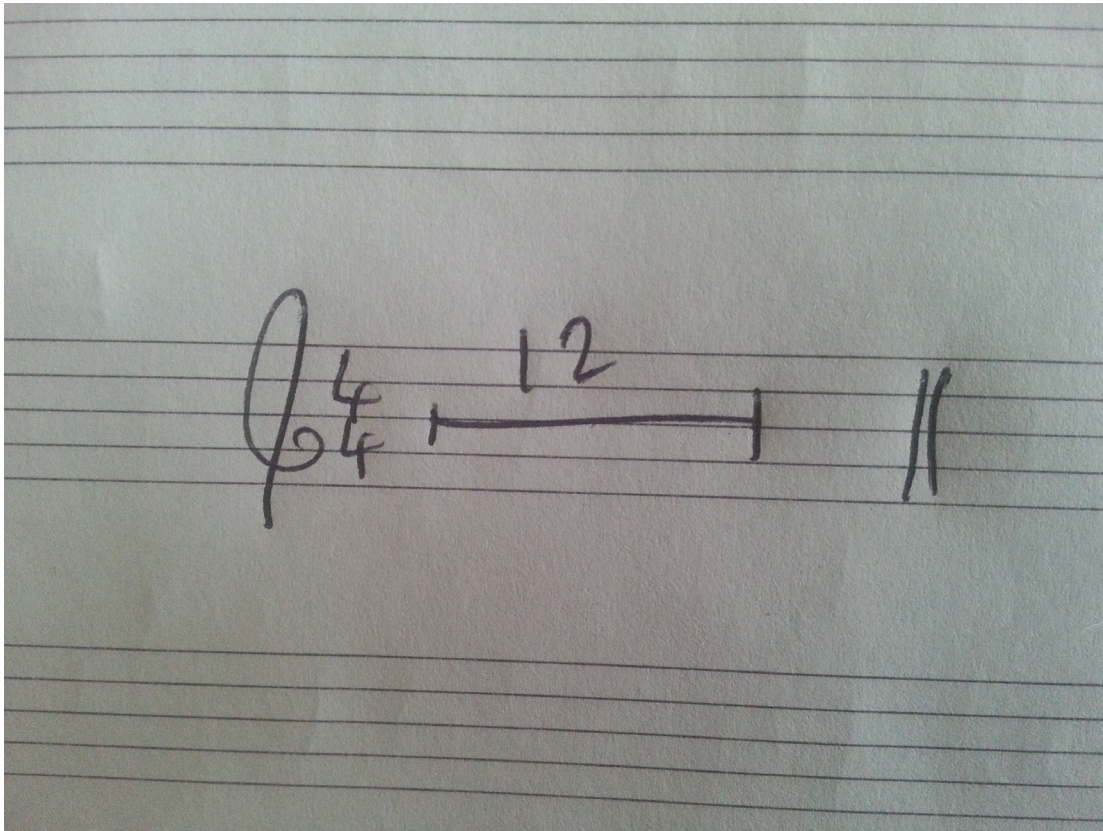
Vital skills for the future: conflict resolution, critical thinking, empathy, emotional intelligence (“game on” for everyone in the arts).⁴⁹

Celebrity, billionaire, narcissist, chauvinist, racist, sexist, xenophobe, despicable liar portraying our world as a disastrous bleeding hell, so that whatever transpires, he will take credit undercutting Obama’s legacy, a lie over here, a lie over there, “catch me if you can”; the only way to bring this monster down is by boycotting all the corporations that align with him, and continue to be alert, resist, act, ROAR, lead with love and kindness, call Congress every day, stand up for civil liberties and human rights, and be the change we want to see for ourselves, brothers, sisters, and future generations.⁵⁰

[APPLAUSE]

Have the courage to...affirm the present in spite of itself.⁵¹

[APPLAUSE]



Contributors

¹ Mitra Azar. English translation: "One morning I woke up / goodbye my Beautiful, goodbye my Beautiful, goodbye my Beautiful, goodbye / one morning I woke up and I found the invader"; ² Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca; ³ Roberta Mock; ⁴ Brice Ezell; ⁵ Wade Hollinghaus; ⁶ Kate Thomas; ⁷ Melissa Wansin Wong, 黄璇心; ⁸ Anton Krueger; ⁹ David Williams; ¹⁰ James Burton; ¹¹ David Saltz; ¹² Will Daddario; ¹³ Leo Rafolt; ¹⁴ Christina Banalopoulou; ¹⁵ Lev Marder; ¹⁶ Tara Turnbull; ¹⁷ Joe Kelleher; ¹⁸ Rana Siegel; ¹⁹ Mónica Gontovnik; ²⁰ Rania Kalil; ²¹ Samantha Johns; ²² Ed McKeon; ²³ Julia Lee Barclay-Morton; ²⁴ Joshua Edelman; ²⁵ Cecile Rossant; ²⁶ Sushant Kishore; ²⁷ Cissie Fu; ²⁸ Ian Maxwell; ²⁹ Aaron Ellis; ³⁰ Pozzo in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* – via Jonas Tinius; ³¹ Brecht's "Schweyk in the Second World War", quoting Jaroslav Hašek's "Schweyk in the First World War" – via Alice Koubova; ³² Jon Foley Sherman; ³³ Monica Moki Tantoco; ³⁴ Sonja Schierbaum; ³⁵ Kat Lieder; ³⁶ Claudia Kappenberg; ³⁷ Tanner Bowman; ³⁸ Peter Wood; ³⁹ Maurice Hamington; ⁴⁰ Elisabeth Schäfer; ⁴¹ Nik Wakefield; ⁴² Fröydi Laszlo; ⁴³ Katharina Schmidt; ⁴⁴ Nic Fryer; ⁴⁵ Einav Katan-Schmidt; ⁴⁶ Rachel Weaver; ⁴⁷ Charlotte Gruber; ⁴⁸ Michael Pereira; ⁴⁹ Meghan Moe Beitiks; ⁵⁰ Deema Bayrakdar; ⁵¹ Mauricio Gonzalez-Rozo; ⁵² Steve Tromans, "The Fake Blues (a.k.a. Sympathy for [REDACTED])". The performance directions are as follows: "Conclude as fast as possible, with no repeats."

Introducing this issue

As these testimonies from the field reflect, the grand theatrics of US politics has dominated the world stage, punctuated by the performative acts of oaths and executive orders. These events have made all too apparent the urgency of thinking both the history and the future of relationships between philosophical thought and performance agency, and between performative thinking and philosophical agency. The collection of articles we publish here come from open submissions received in 2015, and attend to these questions in careful and provocative ways, addressing issues of ecology and embodiment, feminism and post-capitalism, histories of political theatre and political thought, and localised disruptions to the Rancièrian 'partition of the sensible'.

Such an expansive speculation is exemplified by **Teemu Paavolainen's** article, in which he rethinks the notions of theatricality and performativity, beyond their reduction to binary opposition and the theatre-specific language of actors and roles, in favour of new textural terms borrowed from the 'fabric philosophy' of Tim Ingold and Stephen C. Pepper. Through these textural metaphors (which are themselves conceived as performative rather than 'mere figures of speech'), performativity comes to be seen as a meshwork of interwoven lines of action; whilst theatricality appears according to the figure of a network which simplifies the interwoven nature of the social in ways that are only made possible by a certain distance or 'zooming out' from the entanglements of relationality. Whilst Ingold's account tends to value the former over the latter, Paavolainen takes a more balanced approach emphasizing the perspectival nature of both mesh- and network, and indeed contends that there are phenomena—like global warming—that can only be perceived through theatricality.

Whereas Paavolainen looks to the speculative future of performativity, **Tawny Andersen** traces its history, exploring the figure of J.L. Austin (who is invoked by some of the contributors in the editorial response above). As is well-known, his influential 1962 text *How To Do Things With Words* is a reconstruction by others of lectures given by Austin, rather than an authored text; and Andersen frames her excavation with a thick description of her attempts to track down traces of Austin's talks from the period, including a rare audio recording preserved at Gothenburg University. She offers a careful consideration of the ways in which the form of Austin's philosophizing—sharing his thinking through verbal exchange and interpersonal dialogue— informs the ideas presented within them. And yet, she is careful not to fetishize the 'original' object of the audio recording; instead, taking inspiration from Derrida's reading of Hamlet's ghost, she reflects on her work as a kind of acousmatic 'hauntology'.

Hamlet also haunts **Janus C. Currie's** article, which analyses Christoph Schlingensiefel's 2001 re-imagining of the play, a production that controversially cast 'redemptive neo-Nazis' as the players in the famous mousetrap scene. Currie places Schlingensiefel's intervention within its then contemporary context of deradicalization programmes, but also within a significantly older context: the concepts of *adikia* (disjointure, dislocation, injustice) and *dike* (jointure, ordering, justice) that are found in the oldest surviving Greek text, the Anaximander fragment. Drawing on Heidegger and Derrida's explications of this fragment, Currie suggests that these concepts have

something to offer to our understanding of the contemporary politics of fear, as manifested in what he calls Schlingensief's 'radical deradicalization'.

From this relatively recent example of political performance, the next two articles reach further back into the twentieth century, to Brecht's 1948 production of *Antigone* based on Hölderlin's unorthodox translation. Drawing extensively on Brecht's writings, **Bruno C. Duarte** gives a rich account of the theoretical issues with which Brecht was wrestling following his post-war return to Germany from his US exile. While Brecht himself would privilege later innovations over his experiment with Greek tragedy, Duarte argues that there is value in picking up some of the 'loose threads' of Brecht's earlier exploration, in which Brecht seeks to appropriate the form of tragedy while simultaneously dismantling the 'element of fate.' The 1948 *Antigone* and the relationship between Brecht and Hölderlin are also central to **Matthias Dreyer's** article, written independently of Duarte's, and so a useful point of scholarly comparison. Dreyer uses Hölderlin's suggestive remarks on 'caesura' to illuminate questions not only of the staging of historical dramas (as Brecht was doing in relation to Greek tragic drama), but also to interrogate ideas of historicity itself. In doing so, Dreyer thinks about Greek tragedy 'after Brecht', comparing the theoretical approaches underpinning formal choices in Brecht's *Antigone*, Einar Schlee's *Seven Against Thebes* (1986), and Dimiter Gotscheff's *The Persians* (2006).

Alongside these historical investigations, the next articles think about the centrality of the body but from very different perspectives. In his article, **Ben Spatz** argues for an understanding of embodiment as an ontologically and epistemologically primary affordance—a first site of negotiation and experimental engagement with reality from which all other affordances follow. As in Paavolainen, Ingold's work is of value here insofar as concepts of tinkering, tracking and tuning are transposed from such realist ontologies of artisan craft and scientific experiment, and reconceived as three modes of engagement with the materiality of embodiment itself. Ultimately, Spatz argues, there is also a political dimension to acknowledging embodiment as first affordance as a perspective from which to rebalance the lived relationship between ecology and technology.

In contrast, **Tero Nauha's** article speaks through the terms of François Laruelle's 'non-standard' philosophy and Karan Barad's notion of the intra-action of thought and matter, to consider performance's thinking as coming from the Real, rather than as a representation of it. Culminating in a discussion of an instance of his own experimental performance practice, Nauha explores what changes in our understanding of the relationship between the body in performance, philosophy and economy (understood in particular as 'cognitive capitalism') in the move from a Deleuzo-Guattarian model of schizoproduction to a Laruelian vision of 'superposition'.

The last cluster of articles address specific contemporary productions, thinking through the various configurations of the social and political at play within them and within their contexts of production. **Kai Roland Green** takes an original approach to examining the relationship between contemporary male playwrights and the female protagonists they create in their plays. Suggesting that 'the paucity of female protagonists in male authored plays may be a new stimulus for asking questions about the potential for performance/philosophy,' Green turns to Emmanuel Levinas to

read the work of Martin Crimp, Simon Stephens, and Tim Crouch. Some of the parallels drawn between the negation of the feminine in Levinasian 'fecundity,' in particular, and the negation of the female in the primary texts being examined, illuminate the complexities of female representation and its position in contemporary feminist discourse. The article further considers the question of ethical female representation and of how or whether the notion of 'objectification' in male playwrights adds to presenting the feminine as a negative force, which, for Green, is a type of writing 'towards disappearance.'

Alice Breemen's article explores the issue of the audience with regards to performance and towards performance. One main part of her discussion considers Jacques Rancière's fundamental text 'The Emancipated Spectator' which is juxtaposed with Grant Kester's theory of *dialogical aesthetics*. Among the questions Breemen asks is 'how can philosophy become a practical act' by which she acknowledges the theoretical placement of philosophy whilst pointing towards its practical application as a method of making performance. Highlighting the participatory role of performance, Breemen situates theatre in a social context, arguing the need for new concepts by which one can analyze the changing role of performance and its spectators, and of how we think about performance and society. From this line of argument, Performance Philosophy is offered as a new theoretical tool by which critical analysis might be seen to possess the possibility of change, not only in terms of analysis, but, more directly, in the form of real change in society by thinking and acting differently, starting from the theatre.

Also drawing on Rancière, **Felipe Cervera** discusses his 'silent' experience of watching theatre about Singapore Malays and reading Rancière. Providing us with an analysis of the efficacy of two Malay performances which he explores through the philosophical lens of Rancière's politics of aesthetics, Cervera's account is a mixture of personal memories from living in Singapore and reflective thoughts from going to the theatre. Cervera's explorations show the intricate connection between the regulatory nature of performance in Singapore, performing silence and the possibility for political action. Reading them through Rancière's concept of the 'partition of the sensible,' his examination uncovers the power of silence as a socio-political instrument and its association to behavioral practices of religion and race.

Finally, the issue concludes with [MARGINS], a section set out to play; to drift; to throw curve balls in critical, performative thinking—reimagining our genealogical legacies and challenging our closest-held assumptions about what critical theory sounds or looks like today, where it is going, and where it may go still. **Hetty Blades** and **Katye Coe's** 'Running, Resistance and Recollection' performs the act of running, the swerve of the off-piste course, the dialogue done in breath; it thinks-with the marginal space of the gallery event, almost off the spectatorial track; it works to interrogate collective authorship, memory, but also most provocatively the empathy and compassion, and the critical care that comes with resistance away from the public glare. It enacts resistance that shifts, queries the gaze; today, these complicities—these sororities—are all the more powerful as we seek to find new ways to rearrange, reorganize and rearticulate what it means to stand (to run, to vent) together. **Christopher Norris's** investigation of poetic form in 'Philosophy as Verse-Performance: Five Poems and a Formalist Prospectus' performs the surprising move of

an apparent return to formalist poetics, yet in doing so suggests an avenue of inquiry situated at another crossroads between poetry and theory; in effect, Norris performs the work of querying poststructuralist predilections for avant-garde form inexplicably, he argues, invested in a formlessness that betrays the sorts of dialogic investigations critical (verse) theory might most productively inhabit. Both these contributions reinvent dialogical thinking, rearticulating in very different ways what it might mean, today, to think across rather than against; to write with rather than for; to compose in and through rather than of or at; to imagine other conjunctural aesthetics, other bridges, other detours.

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Biographies

Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca is Reader in Theatre & Performance at the University of Surrey and Director of the Centre for Performance Philosophy. Her books include *Encounters in Performance Philosophy* (2014) co-edited with Alice Lagaay and *Theatres of Immanence: Deleuze and the Ethics of Performance* (2012).

Kéline Gotman teaches theatre and performance studies at King's College London. She writes on the history and theory of theatre and dance, cultural history of science, disciplines and institutions. She is a founding core convenor of *Performance Philosophy* and editor of the journal's [MARGINS].

Eve Katsouraki is Senior Lecturer in Drama and Performance at the University of East London. She is one of the founding convenors of the Performance Philosophy Network, co-editor of the *Performance Philosophy Journal*, and co-director of the Centre for Performing Arts Development at UEL. Her recent publications include *Performing Antagonism: Theatre, Performance & Radical Democracy* (Palgrave), co-edited with Tony Fisher, a forthcoming collection on theatre and the philosophy of failure, and is currently working on a monograph on the intersections of philosophy, politics and the modernist director.

Theron Schmidt is a Lecturer in Theatre and Performance Studies at UNSW Australia, and works internationally as a writer, teacher, and performer. He is one of the founding co-convenors of the Performance Philosophy network, and in addition to being an editor of *Performance Philosophy*, he is also editor of *Contemporary Theatre Review's* online *Interventions* and on the editorial boards for *Performance Research* and *Akda: The Asian Journal of Literature, Culture, Performance*.

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