anhand der einzelne Aspekte vertieft werden, ohne diese näher zu erläutern. Formen des episierenden Metadramas bietet insgesamt eine gelungene Erweiterung der Typologie von Vieweg-Marks und eine gute Einführung in das Werkschaffen Sanchis Sinisterras.

Passau Martin Weis


Performing the Matrix: Mediating Cultural Performances brings together in article form the contributions of some seventeen speakers at the international conference of the same name held in Mainz in 2005. It includes contributions from renowned scholars who are field-leaders in performance research in a number of European countries and, in this sense alone it is a volume of significance. In a review of this scope it is not possible to remark upon all the contributions and a selection is chosen for comment below in an attempt to give a taste of its contents. But the impact of the volume overall will depend in part upon whether the contents add up to more than the sum of their parts in respect of the guiding notions of "the matrix" imbricated within "performance" and vice-versa. How might such a concept differ from, say, Williams's seminal 'structure of feeling' or Foucault's 'regimes of truth'? What might the combination of the established, though contested, sites of both "performance" and "the matrix" contribute to an understanding of the "in-between" in contemporary culture? Wagner and Ernst deftly and knowledgeably mobilise the conceptual model in the introduction.

Taking their cue from the now legendary Wachowski brothers' The Matrix (1999) movie and its legacy in academia, Wagner and Ernst invite a reflection not upon the shadows of Plato's cave but on "the processes and effects of the media-matrix" (12). Indeed "a double exposure of thematic and methodological issues" (12), arising when performances are inexorably mediatized and media are ineluctably performed, yields a metaphor more akin to a dynamic double helix than the shadows flickering from Plato's cave. Is there any escape, Wagner and Ernst seem to ask, from a virtual web as determining as DNA on the one hand but endlessly deferring the significance of human cultural performance on the other? To assist the reader in pondering her options in respect of this structure in process, Wagner and Ernst provide an etymology of terms from the Greeks to Thomas Kuhn, from Böhme to Butler to show how concepts historically are constructed, and revised, in discourse.

Given the understandable editorial refusal to "promote a clear-cut distinction of structure and process in this volume" (18), a range of approaches in the articles might be expected. In 'Seeing Sound', Christopher Balme explores an interdisciplinary practice in the form of mental imaging of a postdramatic theatre in which "the drama takes place in the music, not on stage" (80). Drawing upon theories of the "visual" and "iconic" turns and referencing Helmut Lachenmann's The Match Girl and Adriana Holsky's The Invisible Room, Balme proposes a scenography of "a music that is working towards a visual effect without resort to crass, mimetic effects" (80). Balme's essay finds a resonance with other contributors' explorations of a new set of aesthetic relations within the "matrix". In a thought-provoking engagement with the "factual fictions" of Walid Raad with the Atlas Group, Martin Doll brings out the performative aspect of "pictoriality" (as distinct from representative-ness) and goes further to expose "fictitious rules of production as fictitious" (330–31). Doll prefers the lecture-presentations of Raad over his installations precisely because they mobilise a dialogic play in the process of performance and in reception. Both Balme's and Doll's pieces, like others in the volume, offer insightful analyses of ground-breaking contemporary arts practices but they do not perhaps promote the "matrix-performance" concept since they might simply be embraced by the, admittedly over-expanded, notion of 'performativity'.

In outlining his ecological perspective, however, Baz Kershaw overtly takes up — and illustrates
a performance of – the volume’s conceptual framework. Indeed, he reprocesses his IFTU paper exploring the ecology of theatre by reflecting upon his early community theatre work and his more recent *The Iron Ship* in a performed and interactive presentation. In the process, Kershaw advocates another hybrid, the citizen-artist engaged in a dialogic interactivity, in place of the commercial-professional genius artist delivering a gnomic message from on high to passive recipients. He makes a distinction, however, between ‘matrix’ defined as “the structure of a system” and ‘ecology’ defined as a “system in process” (262) on the grounds that ‘ecology’ places an emphasis on process which ‘matrix’ lacks. He thus confounds the overall issue since the editors of the volume evidently see the matrix in performance as a fluid and dynamic concept.

Undertaking a case study of the dance piece *Mes Jours et Mes Nuits* (performed by Michèle Noiret), Peter Verstraeet further stirs the conceptual waters in exploring a matrix which is technological rather than ecological. For Verstraeet, the matrix is “the technologically sensitized grid that makes space responsive and its knowledge proprioceptive […] for the dancer to interact with the system” (158). However, he is refreshingly modest in claims about new proprioceptive modes of knowing through interaction. Though he discerns a new experience for the dancer, he is less certain about the engagement of the spectator. In another nuanced essay, drawing useful conceptual distinctions between inside/outside, sight and sound experiences, haptic and optic spaces (drawing on Deleuze, Massumi, Mulder, Sobchak), Verstraeet ultimately leaves open the question “as to whether interactive dance could result in a new paradigm of knowledge about the body, movement and spatial experience” (170), where all too many commentators have simply begged the question. In the piece under discussion, the virtual grid (illustrated in a diagram, 173) is a matrix, but ironically of a more concrete, technological, rather than meta-conceptual, kind.

In the final essay in the collection, Kati Röttger illustrates Rancière’s theory of political art with a discussion of Schlingensief’s *Bambiland*. She concludes that the piece has “a clear political impact [because] it distributes sensuousness” (357). *Bambiland*, as experienced by Röttger is a paradigmatic example of Rancière’s notion that political response is mobilised by theatre conceived as “an intermedial event [which] opens up and stages perspectives on media revealing their mediality” (355). Audiences, however, are not committed to a “politics of action” but left with a “politics of aesthetics” (338) which may change perception but does not necessarily commit to intervention to address the inequalities of the actual world (as Brecht proposed). If, to adapt Jameson, the internet is a prison-house of freedom, intermedial theatre becomes the prison-house of politics in which sensuousness may be distributed but not perhaps wealth or power. In the context of the edited collection, however, another thought-provoking article yields yet another conception of a matrix, in this case a concept very similar to Kattenbelt’s notion of theatre as a “Hyperrmedium” (see Chapple & Kattenbelt (eds.), 2006).

In sum, this volume is a useful and stimulating collection of articles which provokes thought on a range of practices in the arts and media, located in diverse but overlapping conceptual frameworks. It is unfortunate that the very clear lay-out of the contents is a little marred by errors of typography and English expression, despite the editors’ best endeavours. The greater majority of the contributions apply and unpack a contemporary theoretical perspective in discussing a specific example of performance practice. Raymond Williams’s structure of feeling purports to be “as firm and definite as a ‘structure’ suggests, yet it is based in the deepest and often least tangible elements of our experience” ([1952] 1981: 10). Wagner and Ernst are seeking in the notion of “performing the matrix” to mobilise a similar conceptual framework for the twenty-first century. Indeed a matrix in performance begins to emerge in the loose form of overlapping and dynamically interacting accounts of subject-object relations in the experience of arts and media. But before it solidifies, it dissolves to reform in another configuration. Since Williams’s time the boundaries between concepts have become more porous, and digital culture has caused us to revise our mind-sets in the light of new experiences of time and space. In today’s context, a new dynamic conceptual model is
appropriate and it may be that "performing the matrix" captures an apt tension in the contemporary between securing "the structure of a system" and abandonment to a "system in process".

References