

tant work that should spark new inquiries that other scholars in the field undertake. More extensive work in the archives in South Asia will likely demonstrate the value of the questions Syan poses in his work to scholars of Sikhism and of the Mughal Empire.

Purnima Dhavan
University of Washington, Seattle

Alan Filewod, *Committing Theatre: Theatre Radicalism and Political Intervention in Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2011). 364 pp. Paperback \$31.95.

In early 2016 on the Canadian drama (CANDRAMA) listserv, a senior professor inquired as to when the first Canadian theatre and literature courses were created, where they were taught, and what they comprised. The questions received immediate responses; emails were sent by Canadian theatre historians, staking their claim for the first courses taught. In doing so, these historians were performing their knowledge of the discipline for each other (and myself), while describing when this canon was formed, what it contained, and their role in its formation. In the aftermath of these listserv responses, it became clear to me that when Canadian theatre (and scholarship) ‘started’ and what it contained is still an important topic for many theatre scholars in Canada. While I made my way through Filewod’s *Committing Theatre*, the stakes of his contributions seemed higher in light of the recent CANDRAMA listserv performance.

Committing Theatre is the newest iteration of Filewod’s work on political theatre in Canada, and Canadian theatre historiography more broadly. Indeed, two years prior to its publication, Filewod’s 2009 edited collection, *Theatre Histories: Critical Perspectives on Canadian Theatre in English* was a compilation of essays that addressed explicitly the history of Canadian theatre history scholarship. *Committing Theatre* then, is an exhaustive expansion of Filewod’s previous scholarship, which engaged with theatre historiography in Canada. But what does Filewod really have to say that he did not already say in *Theatre Histories* and elsewhere? Well, not much really. Despite this, Filewod does provide substantial evidence for his argument and demonstrates his ability to critically examine political performances that exist outside of “what the British activist scholar and director Baz Kershaw has defined as the disciplinary regime of the ‘theatre estate’” (5). In the process, Filewod also argues for the efficacy of non-traditional radical performance practices over theatre in more traditional theatrical spaces that have limited and self-volunteered audiences.

In early Canadian theatre history scholarship, narratives of the birth of a ‘native’ Canadian theatre began after the Massey commission in the late 1950s and comprised a traditional historiographical method. Indeed, in the first chapter of the book, Filewod states that,

Until fairly recently, much of theatre history in Canada consisted of building detailed performance calendars and reconstructing conditions of performance... it has been subject to one major restriction: it can only outline the histories of theatres and performances that left such traces. 'Theatre' thus becomes that which is findable by theatre historians (3).

In response to this historiography, Filewod argues that this narrative and historiographical approach that posits the birth of Canadian theatre in the 1950s, is based on official traces of national professionalized theatre. Filewod instead productively suggests that theatre in Canada developed through rhizomorphic chaos, which he expertly traces throughout the book; this chaos spans from the early nineteenth century to the present, and includes a vast array of theatrical forms such as closet-dramas, agitprop, collaborative creation, and guerrilla theatre tactics. Filewod argues that these rhizomorphic performance networks cannot be contained to theatre spaces. In his introduction, Filewod provides an astute example of performative political intervention, describing an event that occurred in Vancouver in June 1916; a man showed up at the mayor's office with a bouquet of caterpillars, in a performative protest of his community's grievances. Building on this example, Filewod states that, "He was performing a theatrical intervention, although he probably did not understand his actions in those terms. But he knew he wanted to be seen, and wanted others to spectate" (4). In highlighting various political interventions that employ theatrical techniques, Filewod opens up the potential for alternative narratives in Canadian theatre history that focuses solely on 'official' theatre performances.

Filewod's exhaustively researched examples however, are leftist and the majority take place in centralized locations. The book cites only one or two performances of the radical right (Chapter 3) and in the Maritimes (Chapter 7). Filewod's examples are also limited to white, male, and Anglophone performances, occasionally peppered by non-white, female, and Francophone bodies. And, as usual, Indigenous performances are relegated to the beginning of the book and therefore the past, without a discussion of Indigenous performances later in the twentieth century. In the book's preface, Filewod attempts to address this gap by situating the publication in his own experiences: "Readers may well note because of this personal history my analysis is oriented towards hegemonic normatives: of cultural geography in Toronto, of demographics of whiteness, of gender in heterostraightness, of language in English" (vii). Perhaps, then, Filewod's intervention is a first iteration based on his own experiences, and in doing so, invites other theatre scholars to expand on the narrow, although laudable, focus of his project.

Reductively speaking, Filewod's intervention into Canadian theatre historiography in *Committing Theatre* involves employing performance studies approaches to traditional theatre history scholarship, by stretching what constitutes performance. Performance studies approaches often use performativity approaches to re-

search topics, employing transdisciplinary theories and methodologies. Filewod, in opening up what constitutes performance in Canadian theatre history through the case studies he examines, borrows heavily from performance studies. As a graduate student who straddles both theatre and performance studies, I was frustrated reading Filewod's framework, as it is nothing new in performance studies approaches to history. Even for Filewod this framing is not particularly original—he has been researching unconventional performances for the last two decades, such as pageants, military parades, and historical reenactments in *Performing Canada: The Nation Enacted in the Imagined Theatre* (2002). However, Filewod's intervention in Canadian theatre historiography in *Committing Theatre* proves to be an important and interesting read for both researchers of Canadian theatre and history (or historiography) more broadly. And perhaps, it is also an important read for those theatre historians performing on the CANDRAMA listerv as of late.

Megan Davies
York University

Nancy Fraser, *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neo-Liberal Crisis* (London: Verso, 2013). 256pp. Hardback \$99.50.

Fraser's recent book is an impressive collection of essays published over the past 25 years detailing her interpretation of the importance of feminist politics, feminist theoretical insights on social theory, the politics of the welfare state, and neo-liberal capitalism. The chapters traverse extensive theoretical ground referencing a wide range of social theorists ranging from Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Karl Polanyi, to Michel Foucault, Raymond Williams, and Judith Butler. As Fraser argues in chapter one, a compelling "critical social theory frames its research program and its conceptual framework with an eye to the aims and activities of those oppositional social movements with which it has a partisan—though not uncritical—identification" (19). With this objective in mind, she considers how the politics of the feminist movement can inform social theory, specifically addressing the question of how gender is, or could be, incorporated to explain male domination and female subordination in contemporary society. Her overriding goal, then, is to undertake a feminist critique of social theory but also to develop feminist models of justice responding to (welfare) state-organized capitalism and to the current neo-liberal capitalist crisis. Throughout her analyses she searches for gender blind spots or the hidden gender subtext that may inform or limit theory, while also striving to reveal the emancipatory potential of theoretical frameworks by proposing feminist models for social change. As she explains, "the goal throughout is to develop new conceptual and practical strategies for combating gender injustices of economy and culture simultaneously" (12). Following this broad approach, the chapters in *Fortunes of Feminism* "document major shifts in the feminist imaginary since the 1970s" (2). The