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Mime & Mimesis: On the Phenomenology of Absence

The target of harsh yet conflicting criticism, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms* has been taken to task by Performance Studies theorists for its implied universal subject – the trans-historical spectator of phenomenology – and, inversely, by Theatre Studies scholars for its lack of theoretical rigor in neglecting to account for prior and seminal philosophical texts of the same Continental tradition. Still, States' work (and a very few others') initiates a spectator-based descriptive methodology, neither semiotic nor psychoanalytic in its contingency, with unique applications in the study of theatrical diegesis and its shifting triangular dynamic between embodied spectators, performers, and characters. This paper expands upon the original object of *Great Reckonings* by examining the (im)material 'spaces' and 'mimed' objects of fully improvised performance in order to apply pressure to the alleged irreconcilability between phenomenology and politico-theoretical abstractions of performance such as context and difference, and thereby to uncover viable constituents of States' receptive 'system', which Performance Studies has put to rest monolithically.