

Falsettoland (1998, 2007) and David Leveaux's 2004 Broadway revival of *Fiddler on the Roof*, which featured a mixed cast of Jewish and non-Jewish actors.

Positing that theatre, as a sociocultural institution, is part of a politicized process, Pao argues that it is therefore in the position of being able to challenge cultural power through nontraditional casting interrogations of text and production. As such, *No Safe Spaces* provides a key exploration of the potential shifts in cultural power that may result from meaning-making casting practices, as Pao reopens questions of nontraditional casting and repositions previous debates for a new generation of theatre practitioners and scholars.

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Bulldaggers, Pansies, and Chocolate Babies: Performance, Race, and Sexuality in the Harlem Renaissance. By James F. Wilson. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010; pp. 262, 12 photographs. \$27.95 paper.

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James F. Wilson's *Bulldaggers, Pansies, and Chocolate Babies* "focuses on the ways in which depictions of blackness and whiteness, male and female, homosexual and heterosexual, highbrow and lowbrow merged and coalesced in the theater and performances of the 1920s and 1930s" (3). In his "Introduction: 'It's Getting Dark on Old Broadway'," Wilson identifies the "often highly ambiguous, ambivalent, and bewildering" Harlem Renaissance performances of race and gender as "central" to his study (3). Through his examination of the period, Wilson describes stereotypes, extremes, and the superfluity of identities that exists along the borders of difference. He achieves his goal of showing the variety and complexity of defiant portrayals, which (sometimes blatantly and other times subversively) transgressed legal and social limitations to offer statements of autonomy usually not permitted decades before the civil rights movement and Stonewall. Actually, several of the artists Wilson highlights—were they still working today—might bring a welcome change to current stages and screens through their gifts of enacted courage, because many of the oppressive forces dominant during the early twentieth century continue to wield considerable power.

One of the strengths of this book is that Wilson draws in his study on a wide knowledge base and an extensive bibliography. His research derives from a range of biographical, critical, historical, sociological, philosophical, literary, dramatic, lyrical, and archival sources; these sources represent points of view within and around the Harlem Renaissance, current perspectives on race and sexuality, and significant works that have influenced both discourses during the past century. However, Wilson's concentration on quotations—although they are richly informative—often eclipses the reader's ability to discern Wilson's own stance on the subject. Sometimes he even fails to provide commentary on the blatantly biased and offensive statements that he reproduces in his text. Certainly, an author

should not insult readers by telling them how to interpret what they read, but Wilson's frequent absence of remark appears glaring.

Ironically, the last chapter of the book, which seems to offer the deepest insights into Wilson's personal opinions, feels like it does not belong. The author manages to weave certain recurring themes (generally relating to the effects of censorship and judgmental moralizing upon the expression of personal identity) and references (to select iconic figures and images that captured the popular imagination of the 1920s and 1930s) throughout his text, but only his Introduction and first three chapters tie together cohesively. Although these portions of the book discuss a number of individuals, they focus primarily on various cultural phenomena of the Harlem Renaissance, such as rent parties, slumming, the arrival of blacks on the Broadway stage, and drag balls. This approach recreates the atmosphere of the era and promotes the examination of a variety of racial and sexual issues prevalent during the period.

In contrast, Chapter 5 reads like a biography of Gladys Bentley, a black lesbian singer and pianist who became a popular nightclub act, known for the double entendres of her song lyrics and for her preference for dressing in men's clothes, particularly her trademark white tuxedo. Her story is fascinating, but due to the fact that much of it takes place in 1940s and 1950s California, it does not readily fit into Wilson's earlier discussion of the Harlem Renaissance. Additionally, Wilson spends several pages comparing Bentley to the main character in the controversial British novel *The Well of Loneliness* by Radclyffe Hall. This content comes across as a separate topic, which, with some augmentation, could become an entire book of its own. It would be preferable if, instead, the information specific to Bentley's Harlem nightclub performances contributed balance to the somewhat disjointed Chapter 4 analysis of the performance careers of both Florence Mills and Ethel Waters, which seems to require an additional element to cohere.

Another annoying aspect of this text is that several mistakes managed to find their way into the published book. Most are easily overlooked, such as the repetition or omission of words that are not essential to comprehension of the passage in question. Unfortunately, at least two instances affect factual understanding of the subject matter. In one case, syntax and pronoun choice create confusion as to whether the rape that resulted in the conception of Ethel Waters was also an act of incest. The other instance appears in one of the endnotes, in the writers' credits of the songs recorded by Gladys Bentley. One of these song titles appears in the list twice, supplanting another title and making it difficult to guess who wrote the missing song. Granted, the reader can look to other sources to find the answers to these questions, but it is frustrating to have to do so while in possession of a credentialed scholarly reference.

Ultimately, the primary value of *Bulldaggers, Pansies, and Chocolate Babies* is its usefulness as a compilation of primary evidence of the ongoing struggle against racism, sexism, and heterosexism waged by heroes "often relegated to footnotes or parenthetical statements," an injustice that Wilson corrects by giving these figures their long-withheld acclaim (3). Although frequently delightful, this book does not provide a completely satisfying reading experience. After starting strongly with a clear sense of direction, Wilson gets lost along the

way. His scanty, four-page Conclusion does nothing to remedy this situation, as rather than reiterating and fortifying the preceding argument, it devotes half its short length to an abbreviated biography of Walter Winston. Like the chapter on Gladys Bentley, this material is interesting, but it distracts from the continuity needed at the end of the book. Nevertheless, Wilson deserves praise for illuminating the lives of Winston, Bentley, and the many others he names, reclaims, and recognizes for their contributions to history.

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Theatre & Interculturalism. By Ric Knowles. Theatre&. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010: pp. viii + 95. \$9.00 paper.
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Theatre & Interculturalism is a potent addition to Palgrave's excellent Theatre& series, as Ric Knowles peels away layers of Western-based unidirectionism to reveal a space where a level playing field might be built, one upon which the fragile ideals of interculturalism could be performed in an equal exchange by all players. Knowles lays out the geography, history, and primary theories of intercultural theatre, and points to why the intercultural tap needs to turn both ways in our era of "late capitalist McGlobalisation" (54). His central argument, that intercultural theatre must resist Western framing and be studied and practiced outside the perspective of Western egocentricity, enlists the theories of Bhabha, Balme, Lo, Gilbert, and Bharucha, while productively critiquing Pavis, in whose *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture* (Routledge, 1992) the "west and the rest" binary is foregrounded: "our culture and that of others" (quoted in Knowles, 26). Knowles clarifies terms such as *transcultural*, *intracultural*, *multicultural*, and *cross-cultural* (4), and—although he does not refer to it—a strength of this volume is his years as a player in the field, especially as a dramaturge, among intercultural theatres across Canada; his performance ecologies (58) provide snapshot case studies of ethical theatre making in the multicultural city of Toronto, where dozens of diasporas intersect.

Most theatre departments teach that the origins of theatre are located among the ancient Greeks. Informed reading lists may include Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* or Kālidāsa's *Abhijñānashākuntala*, yet remain largely frozen in Europe. As for the body of theatre preserved through oral tradition: if we can't read it, it doesn't exist. Moreover, many non-Western plays that squeeze into the canon took root in postcolonial landscapes. Knowles's first chapters sketch how, from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century, intercultural performance has been molded by the long-term impact of cultural colonialism under imperialism. He then points to an alternative historiography by drawing on examples ranging from the ancient