

730 pages) is the 'tragic experience of the spectator', not just as a reflective but as a sensual, affective, bodily experience (particularly as discussed on pages 146–218). He relates this experience to the challenging relationship between philosophy and tragedy and, in fact, theatre and theory more widely. In the second part of the book on 'Drama and Tragedy' Lehmann argues for ancient Greek tragedy to be classed as 'pre-dramatic' and presents a detailed discussion of the characteristics of dramatic theatre (pages 258–81), whereas the book's third part analyzes the dissolution of the dramatic and directs the reader to post-dramatic performance practices in relation to the tragic (particularly pages 576–622).

Lehmann's book is a tour de force from one of the leading theatre scholars of our time. What we are presented with is not 'just' a study about tragedy. Lehmann almost uses his discussion of tragic theatre as a starting point to write an alternative theatre history, reiterating his passionate plea to establish performance at the heart of what we do. Needless to say, Lehmann's new book needs translating into English – fast.

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Mary Noonan

Echo's Voice: the Theatres of Sarraute, Duras, Cixous, and Renaude

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Drawing on various psychoanalytical frameworks – from Freud to Kristeva and Klein – that position the voice as an intermediary between the body and writing, *Echo's Voice* examines the work of four major female French playwrights of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries: Nathalie Sarraute, Marguerite Duras, Hélène Cixous, and Noëlle Renaude. Noonan's contention is that these stylistically disparate writers use a range of textual strategies to bring the 'soundness' of the word to the fore alongside its semantic function. This leads to a type of theatre in which language becomes deeply ambivalent,

oscillating between sound and sense, asking an audience to listen to both musicality and meaning.

Selected works of each of the playwrights are explicated in separate chapters following a linear chronology. The final chapter on Renaude is the most original, analyzing how she uses pictograms and visual arrangements of words on the page as a method for inspiring a merging of textual and aural features. The chapter on Cixous's writing meanwhile builds on Julia Dobson's often-cited argument that her early experimental plays are closer to *écriture féminine* than the later works with Théâtre du Soleil which use more classical dramatic features. Noonan adds to this argument by showing that these early plays also pay more attention to the sonority of the word.

What is particularly appealing is that the emphasis on the materiality of the spoken word that might be enjoyed for its affective and rhythmic qualities indicates a turn towards affective modes of theatre. While studies such as Lehmann's *Post-dramatic Theatre* discuss this experiential turn in relation to stage practices, it is here investigated from the border of the text. This focus, however, also means that some of the ideas sit awkwardly between literary studies and discourses on theatre. Although the staging approaches of the directors associated with the playwrights are drawn on very productively, live practice is positioned as a realization of the writer's work rather than a negotiation between the director, the performers, the text, and ultimately also the spectator, especially in the first three case studies.

The conclusion offers more comparative perspectives, suggesting how each writer's *oeuvre* illuminates different aspects of the auditory and also nods to a politics of theatre that resists easy consumption. While indicating that the four playwrights share 'a common ground', questions of legacy might have been addressed more directly: does these writers' theatre amount to a tradition with the notion of linear progression, as the genealogical description of Renaude as an 'inheritor' of the other three might indicate? Noonan offers a stimulating insight into how the writings of the four authors produce an auditory theatre, but would have benefited from more careful editing as chunks of writing repeat throughout.

CARA BERGER