

## FROM THE EDITOR

Thanks to the generous labors of the guest editors and authors of two special-topics issues (May and November 2002), we are able to feature four articles in this “open” issue of the journal that remind us (as did those) not only of the wealth of scholarship in the field of theatre research but of the seemingly chance confluence of ideas that often marks research. The archive I discussed in my first editorial (November 2001) has been well represented in these three issues, but also the imagination that lifts archival work to the living stage where history is enacted. The present issue—with its substantial references to theatre in the Americas, to theatre and national identity, to theatre in times of disaster and censorship, of prejudice and resistance—underscores the relationship between research and its construction in scholarship, and between scholarship and civic life.

Jason Shaffer’s “‘Great Cato’s Descendants’: A Genealogy of Colonial Performance” examines how plays mean different things to audiences at different times, and how Addison’s *Cato* assumed protean forms: as free speech, as image maker, as parody, and as civic funeral. Theatrical history in the United States is knit into the play’s history through David Douglass’s adroit use of the tragedy to advance his company’s fortunes. Ubiquitous in American higher education throughout the eighteenth century and a staple of the commercial repertory, *Cato* was quoted by figures across the political spectrum, notably by the American revolutionary and spy Nathan Hale. The always already-absent original (Hale’s gravesite is unmarked, and no portrait of him from the life was ever taken), Hale is no less the linguistic and figural representative of American patriotism, and a ready subject for mimicry.

Odai Johnson’s exploration of theatre on the Leeward Islands in the Caribbean in the 1770s brings to view a professional circuit for smaller touring companies extending from Halifax in Nova Scotia to the islands of the West Indies. Not incidentally, Johnson’s research reminds theatre scholars that the imaginative reconstruction of performance history requires an archive, in this case one preserved by Daniel Thibou in the pages of his *Royal Danish American Gazette* (St. Croix) and by the unknown readers and archivists over the centuries who preserved those pages for us. As Johnson suggests at the end of his essay, there are many tantalizing records of this sort, some more complete than others, and many minor eighteenth-century acting companies awaiting researchers’ attention and a chance to drift back to the terra cognita of theatrical history.

Katie N. Johnson’s “*Damaged Goods: Sex Hysteria and the Prostitute Fatale*” takes up the production of Eugene Brieux’s *Les Avariés* in the United States in 1913. Like Shaffer, Johnson analyzes the play’s multiple meanings to audiences at different times, from a view of it as bridging the “conspiracy of silence” against discussing syphilis to an interrogation of the use of the play by

Progressives to normalize traditional gender roles, bourgeois marriage, and reproduction. As a representation of the broader world, *Damaged Goods* served the agenda of race-purity advocates by framing syphilis as a domestic threat and the prostitute (rather than the conditions that created her) as a deadly source of contagion.

Laurence Senelick's "Anti-Semitism and Tsarist Theatre: The *Smugglers* Riots" reclaims the history of a rare theatrical riot in Russia (rare given a regime that practiced intense censorship and sustained repression). Reactionary anti-Semitic forces bent upon producing the play in 1900–1901 were met by theatre personnel, students, intellectuals, and workers equally bent upon stopping productions of *Smugglers* by having them banned, by demonstrating, and by rioting in protest. Though there were revivals of the play in 1901 that escaped both banning and demonstrations, those who found *Smugglers*' anti-Semitism repugnant were not deterred from protesting by threats of arrest, injury, trial, exile, or imprisonment. Indeed, though conditions for Jews in Russia continued to deteriorate, Senelick notes the positive effects of resistance: in slowing or stopping the approval of anti-Semitic works by the government, in stereotyped Jewish characters and anti-Semitic themes expunged from plays, in furthering public protests against *Smugglers* and similar works, and in the acceptance by those making and viewing theatre of its responsibility to the wider world.

The *Re: Sources* essay by Kenneth Schlesinger marks several of the streams of thought struck by these articles. An account of a gallery exhibition devoted to a selection of downtown (New York) directors—Richard Foreman, Peter Schumann, Robert Wilson, Reza Abdoh, and Meredith Monk—Schlesinger considers how the archive shapes the historical imagination and how that imagination shapes the archive. In turn, as the work of these artists makes clear—in what is present and absent, simple and complex, evident and ambivalent about the exhibition—theatre shows a time its face, yet is compelled by its time to face what it shows.

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I would like to record, as well, my deep gratitude to the College of Fine and Professional Arts at Kent State University, its Dean (Richard D. Worthing) and Associate Dean (Timothy J. L. Chandler), and to the School of Theatre and Dance and its Director (John R. Crawford), who generously supported (and support) scholarship and the production of this journal. In addition to thanks, I extend my best wishes to the Associate Editor (now Editor) of *Theatre Survey*, James M. Harding, and to the journal's new Associate Editor, Jody Enders. May your mailboxes always be filled with excellent submissions, and may you be as fortunate as I have been to find an Editorial Assistant as superb as Tracee E. Patterson.

Since this is my last issue as Editor of *Theatre Survey*, I take the liberty of closing with a few reflections of my own. It has been a pleasure to publish scholarship that erases the divide that once produced untheorized history and ahistorical theory, and to publish scholarship that significantly engages the cultures that produced the theatre practices it examines. Thoughtful writing, such as that characterizing the four articles in this issue, promotes the consideration of theatre's role in the larger civic drama. In this, the two years encompassing my editorship have provided a great deal of food for thought.

I teach at Kent State and walk past the May 4th memorial every day I go to classes. That passage bears a particularly poignant, even intimate relationship to my work because, for me, 1970 and Vietnam War protest are lived history. Within the three weeks preceding writing this editorial, two events have added poignancy to that relationship. At the most recent ASTR Annual Meeting (2002), a colleague recalled the meeting at which the Society took a resolution against the war in Vietnam. Then, a few days ago, a former student sent an e-mail beginning, "I leave tomorrow for Pakistan." As a result of work he did in the Philippines, using theatre to address the needs and concerns of indigenous peoples, my student has been invited to participate in a meeting of Pakistani, Afghani, Indian, Nepalese, Uzbeki, and Tibetan young people seeking roads to peace and justice.

Against the immediate landscape of these memories, I juxtapose the history of the 2000 U.S. election, the start of a new millennium, the events of 11 September 2001, the "war against terror," the Homeland Security and American Patriots acts, the elections of November 2002, and the call by George W. Bush for a "regime change" in Iraq. My memory gets in the way of this history, superimposing Steele's belief in the power of theatre to form a freeborn people against the infantile citizenship so many Americans seem to be practicing as 2002 (and this editorship) draw to a close, the power that my student and ASTR colleague so trenchantly recalled. But, then, "The uprising," Heiner Müller reminds us, "starts with a stroll. Against the traffic, during working hours." Or with a whistle against an anti-Semitic play, or a speech of Cato's against war or the arbitrary exercise of power. Perhaps the uprising begins by risking the open sea (or air) to launch a new fellowship, or by defying censorship,

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commodification, and bourgeois values. Unlike Hale's statue, our hands and feet, and our scholarship, are (thus far) unbound, and our tongues, our pens, and our actions can speak.

The relationship between research and its construction in scholarship, and between scholarship and civic life, extends, like a voyaging ship, to the wider world. That ship may not survive all storms or seas of trouble, but it navigates and negotiates them, spreading the word and carrying within it an imagination capable of conceiving another world. As Michel Foucault observed, "In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates." It seems to me more than time that "Great Cato's Descendants" moved to leeward, the quarter to which the wind blows, lest our ship carry damaged and smuggled goods—rather than the imagination needed to conceive the dream of a truly new world.