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Granville Barker's Ensemble as a Model of Fabian Theatre

While the dialogical relationship between the early twentieth-century British theatre and the rise of socialism is well documented, analysis has tended to focus on the role of the playwright in the dissemination of socialist ideas. As a contrast, in this article Philippa Burt examines the directorial work of Harley Granville Barker, arguing that his plans for a permanent ensemble company were rooted in his position as a member of the Fabian Society. With reference to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* and Maria Shevtsova's development of it in reference to the theatre, this article identifies a correlation between Barker's political and artistic approaches through extrapolating the central tenets of his theory on ensemble theatre and analyzing them alongside the central tenets of Fabianism. Philippa Burt is currently completing her PhD in the Department of Theatre and Performance at Goldsmiths, University of London. This article is developed from a paper presented at the conference on 'Politics, Performance, and Popular Culture in Nineteenth-Century Britain' at the University of Lancaster in July 2011.

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IN JANUARY 1913, in an article titled 'Mr Granville Barker's Gramophones', an anonymous writer in *New Age*, going by the name 'An Actor', launched an attack on Harley Granville Barker and his method of directing. 'An Actor' identified a link between Barker's political position as a member of the socialist group the Fabian Society and his artistic practice, warning: 'Mr Barker is the Sidney Webb of the theatre. Mr Webb's vision of a society of flesh and blood puppets may be compared to Mr Barker's vision of a theatre for marionettes. Both are bureaucratic ideals.'¹ Although the clear anti-Fabian stance of 'An Actor' couched this link between Barker and Webb in derogatory terms, its inclusion nevertheless acknowledged a connection between Barker's politics and his practice which has previously been overlooked.

While the extent to which Barker's political views as a member of the Fabian Society permeated his work as a playwright has been discussed at length, little attention has been paid to how these views influenced his work as a director.² Taking the claim made by 'An Actor' as a starting point, in this

article I will show the lines of convergence between Fabian politics and Barker's plans to establish a permanent ensemble company, and the influence his political position had on his artistic practice. This influence can be inferred through Barker's approach to rehearsals and his writings on the theatre, which contain traces of the Fabian ideals of collectivism and corporatism. Indeed, his proposed solution for what he considered to be the problems of the theatre bore similarities to his proposed solution for the problems of Edwardian society. In both instances, he believed reformation could be achieved through the collective action of all people of good will. It was to this end, with regard to the theatre, that he attempted to establish an ensemble company, first in his pathbreaking seasons at the Court Theatre between 1904 and 1907, and in his subsequent work both as a director and a scholar.

As it is not here possible to detail the distinct forms of Fabianism, the focus is on the specific strand developed by Sidney Webb.³ Webb's Fabianism is particularly helpful in contextualizing Barker, given his status as the unofficial leader of the Society



Sidney Webb photographed in the 1930s.

during the period of Barker's involvement, when a number of his political views were incorporated into Fabian discourse, as will be shown. Similarly, although the instinct of writers such as Anne Fremantle has been to focus on the influence of the Fabianism of George Bernard Shaw, given their close personal relationship, stronger affinities exist between Webb and Barker.⁴

For example, at the heart of both Webb's view of society and Barker's approach to theatre was a fervent belief in the democratic process and the importance of committees, whereas Shaw tended to prize specialized individuals or 'supermen' – as embodied by John Tanner in *Man and Superman* – above the committee.⁵ This re-evaluation of the Fabian influence on Barker focuses on three key questions that Barker sought to address in his approach to directing: his holistic view of the social or artistic group; the influence of competition; and the role of the individual in the collective. This draws predominantly on two central texts written by Webb: 'Historic' and 'The Difficulties of Individualism'.⁶

The Importance of 'Habitus'

To understand the nature of the Fabian influence on Barker's work, it is helpful to turn to the writings of Pierre Bourdieu and, in particular, to his concept of *habitus*. For Bourdieu, *habitus* is a system of transposable dispositions produced by 'the conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence' that structure a person's outlook, his or her expectations, and his or her action.⁷ By 'class of conditions of existence' Bourdieu is referring to such formative factors as a person's education, his or her family environment, and so on.

This transposable system of dispositions generates particular cultural practices, or products, as well as the judgement of these and other practices. In Bourdieu's words, *habitus* is defined by 'the capacity to produce classifiable practices and works, and the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products'.⁸ While *habitus* structures the generation of cultural products or practices, it is likewise structured by these practices. In Maria Shevtsova's words, the central dialogical relationship upon which *habitus* is founded makes it 'a frame in terms of which people perceive and act [that] is not fixed for all time. It is acted upon by social agents'.⁹

As Randall Johnson explains, through presenting a relational social model Bourdieu attempts to circumvent what he believes to be a central epistemological dichotomy between subjectivism and objectivism.¹⁰ The *habitus* is founded upon the structuring-structured process and is socially constituted; it thus acts as a mediation between the objective and the subjective. For example, the *habitus* of the individual social agent becomes shaped and structured in dialogue with both the collective *habitus* and the individual *habitus* of other social agents, and through the action and interaction of these agents.

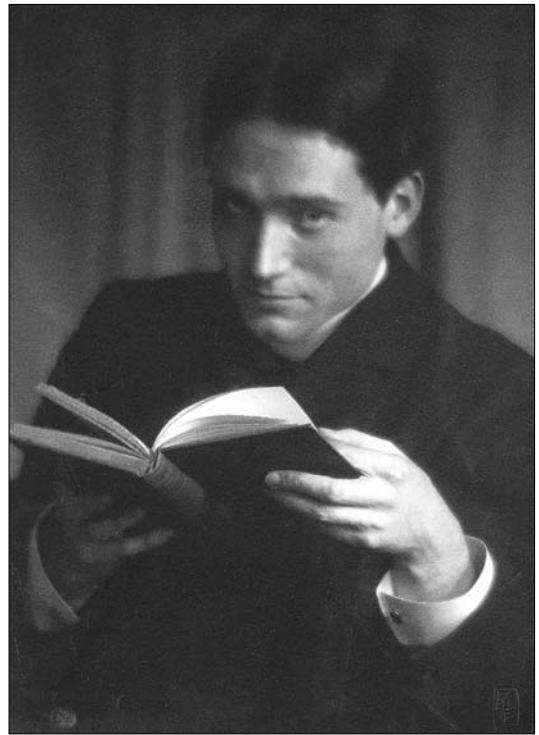
In this sense, *habitus* shows the individual always to be social and collective; it is, for Bourdieu, a 'socialized subjectivity'.¹¹ However, as Shevtsova argues, Bourdieu can be seen to perpetuate the objectivism he is

critiquing through his initial failure to articulate fully how the subjectivity of an agent is able to transform the objective relations of the group as identifiable in the agent's action, although he does begin to remedy this in his later writings.¹²

Shevtsova has defined a social group as composed of individuals with shared values, shared objectives, a shared ethos, and *habitués* that share a number of structural affinities.¹³ In the example of the Fabian Society, it brought together a socially homogenous group of individuals seeking to reform society along collectivist lines, drawing its members from the upper echelons of British society, including its intellectual and cultural elite. The group *habitus*, or the shared ethos, is created through this homogeneity of the conditions of existence and, in turn, structures the *habitus* of the individual members, manifesting itself not only in the shared values, but also in the practices produced by members of this group. Where the Fabian Society is concerned, its group *habitus* was in some ways institutionalized through the creation of the 'Basis of the Fabian Society', the declaration of intent that individuals signed in order to gain membership. This *habitus*, as outlined in the 'Basis', rested upon a socialist disposition that incorporated plans to eliminate individual and class ownership of land and industrial capital, replacing it with collective ownership.¹⁴

As Bourdieu explains, the group *habitus* is 'what enables practices to be objectively harmonized outside of any strategic computation', and, further, this affinity of *habitués* 'is capable of generating practices that are convergent and objectively orchestrated outside of any collective "intention" or consciousness, let alone "conspiracy"'.¹⁵ In short, the individual *habitués* of members of a group are shaped and influenced by the group *habitus*, meaning that two members of a said group can produce work that is similar and harmonious without any direct intention or interaction.

Here lies the significance of Barker's membership of and interaction with the Fabian Society. Shevtsova explains the dialogical relation between the group and the individual



Barker in the 1890s, photographed by Frederick Henry Evans (National Portrait Gallery).

habitus by extrapolating from Bourdieu's concept of the 'interiorization of the exterior'. 'We could argue,' she asserts, 'that objective conditions become subjective (personal, individual) when social agents interiorize, incorporate and embody them through their *habitus symbiotically*.'¹⁶ In the case of Barker and the Fabian Society, he interiorized the group *habitus* through his own *habitus*, and incorporated its ethos, its dispositions, and its expectations into his practice.

It is through Shevtsova's development of Bourdieu in relation to the theatre that *habitus* begins to shed light on the influence of the Society on Barker's attempt to establish an ensemble company. As Shevtsova argues, the socialized subjectivity of *habitus* 'undergirds the choices made by . . . practitioners'.¹⁷ Shevtsova's argument is central to understanding the interpolation between politics and art in Barker's life. *Habitus* here presents the link between Barker's political disposition as a Fabian and his artistic practice, and shows how, whether consciously or not, the former influenced the latter.

Of course, this is not to suggest that the Fabian Society was the only influence on Barker's life and work. There is no doubt of the extent to which he was influenced by, for example, William Poel, George Bernard Shaw, and, in later life, Konstantin Stanislavsky.¹⁸ Rather, the argument made here is for the inclusion of the Fabian Society into the myriad of influences that shaped Barker's *habitus* and his approach to directing. The question of the influences on Barker's work is further nuanced by the emphasis placed on the influence of a social group and a political orientation rather than that of any one individual, which is the case in such accounts of Barker as those referred to above.

Barker and the Fabian Society

Barker joined the Fabian Society in 1903 at the age of twenty-six, a year before he began his seasons at Sloane Square's Court Theatre with John Eugene Vedrenne. His decision to join the Society showed his increasing social and political consciousness as well as the influence of George Bernard Shaw.¹⁹ His growing dissatisfaction with the political system existed hand-in-glove with his growing dissatisfaction with the commercial system upon which the British mainstream theatre was predicated. Indeed, his membership of the Fabian Society was anticipated in 1900 by his membership of the Stage Society, a group that, while not an official part of the Fabian Society, was, nevertheless, an affiliate organization.

As Ian Britain explains, the Stage Society was formed under 'Fabian influence', with its founder, Frederick Whelen, serving on the Fabian Executive Committee between 1896 and 1904 alongside Charles Charrington and Janet Achurch, two other leading members of the Stage Society.²⁰ Similarly, a large proportion of audiences for early productions of the Stage Society were Fabians and, at this time, the Society depended on a 'Fabian public' for its support.²¹ The two groups occupied a similar position and directed themselves towards an intellectual coterie. Being brought into contact with prominent members of the Fabian Society such as Shaw,

Charrington, and Achurch on a regular basis was no doubt a highly formative experience for Barker, and, according to Britain, the social and political stimulation he received from the Stage Society encouraged him to become a Fabian.²²

Having joined the Fabian Society in 1903, Barker sat on the Executive Committee from 1907 until his departure from the Society in 1912. As part of his work for the group, he lectured on the role of the arts in society, the paramount example being his 1911 lecture, 'The Necessary Theatre'. In the lecture Barker extended the Fabian programme to municipalize services and utilities in Britain in regard to the theatre, thus echoing Charrington's 1897 lecture 'A Municipal Theatre', which had called for the collective ownership of theatre buildings.²³

The exact role played by Barker is unclear due to a number of conflicting reports regarding his position in the group, and relatively little information of his involvement remains in the Society's archives.²⁴ Regardless, the significance of Barker's membership is that it positioned him within a group of like-minded individuals at the forefront of the socialist movement in Britain. The constant and intimate contact he had with this group would have shaped his *habitus* and, of course, his practice as a director.

A Non-Populist Approach

There are a number of striking similarities between the Fabian Society and Barker's attempts to reform the theatre. Sociologically speaking, both movements occupied a similar position in their respective fields among the 'dominant fraction of the dominated', to use Bourdieu's much quoted phrase, and were confined to a particular and largely homogenous social group – that is, the intellectual and social elite.²⁵ As noted earlier, the Fabian Society was not a movement directed towards the workers in the manner of other contemporary socialist groups such as Keir Hardie's Independent Labour Party. Rather, from its outset, with early meetings being held in the private drawing rooms of its members, the Society brought together the

upper echelons of the British socialist movement and attempted to motivate change by working from the top down and permeating existing social institutions to which members had access. In short, the Fabian Society brought together a group of individuals who all possessed substantial cultural, educational, social, and, in some cases, political and economic capital.

Similarly, Barker's theatre could not be described as a populist theatre; it also was directed towards the intelligentsia of London and was a restricted theatre, in Bourdieu's sense of the term.²⁶ This non-populist approach was apparent in his Court Theatre seasons, where the programme of weekday matinees, while necessary for financial reasons, excluded workers from attending. Thus, audiences at the Court comprised for the most part society women, political figures, fellow artists, and intellectual, affluent men – largely the same figures who would be seen at Fabian meetings. In fact, Barker actively encouraged fellow Fabians to attend Court performances, and in 1904 asked the Society secretary Edward Pease to circulate promotional material among the London membership of the Society.²⁷

The Court Theatre's location in Sloane Square also signified a certain removal from the realm of popular theatre. Geographically positioned outside the commercial West End, Barker and Vedrenne were not only able to avoid the high rental costs that besieged other theatre managers, but were also able to distinguish themselves from the numerous competing theatre ventures. As Mario Borsa remarked in his 1908 account of the English theatre, 'the "great British public" . . . artless, coarse-minded and dull-witted – does not frequent the Court; the entertainment there is not to its taste.'²⁸ Not wanting to bow to the whims of this larger public, Barker and Vedrenne instead focused on cultivating a dedicated following 'composed of persons of culture and students, with a goodly percentage of society people'.²⁹

In part, they managed to do this by offering theatregoers a chance to see productions played evenly by an ensemble of actors, as opposed to the 'top heavy' productions of

companies under actor-management. As Archibald Henderson recalled in 1911, Barker and Vedrenne distinguished themselves from their contemporaries by presenting seasons that became noted for 'the unity of tone, the subordination of the individual, the genuine striving for totality of effect, the constant changes of bill, the abolition of the "star" system'.³⁰

Underlying Barker's work with the actors and his desire to substitute the star with the ensemble was a view that mirrored the teachings of Webb and the Fabian Society. This disposition was identifiable in the words he chose to describe the companies that worked with him. For example, at the dinner held in honour of his Court seasons, he made a public declaration of his belief in the collective, stating that he 'would rather think of [the actors] as a company than as individuals, brilliant individually as they may be, for I feel very strongly that it is the playing together of a good company which makes good performances'.³¹

The Whole as Greater than the Part

Sidney Webb's social theory was founded upon a belief that society was an organism that should be served by each individual. Drawing from the theories of Charles Darwin, Auguste Comte, and the social Darwinism developed by Herbert Spencer, Webb argued that society, just like every organism, was undergoing its own evolutionary process.³² However, while Spencer concluded that the end of this evolutionary process would bring about an individualist state where the 'law of equal freedom' ruled – with the celebration of the 'survival of the fittest', the Spencerian phrase often mistakenly attributed to Darwin – Webb believed that the evolution of society would result in socialism.

For Webb, this socialist state would require the collective control of the main instruments of wealth production, collective administration of rent, and, in terms of human relations, it would encourage 'the real recognition of fraternity, the universal obligation of personal service, and the sub-

ordination of individual ends to the common good.³³

The concepts of gradualism and permeation to which Fabian theory was closely tied were rooted in this belief in society's inevitable gradual evolution towards socialism, as epitomized by Webb's famous phrase 'the inevitability of gradualness'. Webb, who placed society, or the community, in the primary position, thus reversed the priority Spencer gave to the individual's evolution. As Peter Beilharz notes: 'Society came first; individuality was the result, not the premise.'³⁴ To this end, Webb revealed the holism that underpinned his political theory and argued for the consideration of society as something greater than the sum of its individual parts, arguing to this effect that:

It was discovered (or rediscovered) that a society is something more than an aggregate of so many individual units – that it possesses existence distinguishable from those of any of its components. A perfect city became recognized as something more than any number of good citizens – something to be tried by other tests, and weighed in other balances than the individual man. The community must necessarily aim, consciously or not, at its continuance as a community: its life transcends that of any of its members; and the interests of the individual must often clash with those of the whole.³⁵

Webb, along with his wife Beatrice, rejected the individualism of Spencer's claim for a necessary struggle that existed between the individual and the state, believing, instead, that co-operation could rule, with each individual occupying his or her place in society.³⁶ He sought to move away from the cultivation of the individual personality, as promoted by individualism, arguing that through submission to the social group an individual would experience greater riches. He states: 'We must abandon the self-conceit of imagining that we are independent units, and bend our jealous minds, absorbed in their own cultivation, to this subjection to the higher end, the common Weal.'³⁷

Barker replicated Webb's rejection of individualism within the context of the theatre and a company of actors. He believed that the theatre was, first and foremost, a 'social

art', resting on the co-operation and collaboration of a group as opposed to the rule of an individual personality, whether it was the personality of an actor, a playwright, or a director.³⁸ In *The Exemplary Theatre*, Barker's 'manifesto' for the future of theatre in Britain written ten years after his departure from the Fabian Society, he warned against the domination of any individual in a theatre company:

The theatre is not the place for the unchecked expression of a dominant individuality, and any attempt to make it so is a step towards its destruction. Much could be learned, no doubt, from seeing a theatre glorified and destroyed by an individual genius.³⁹

Instead, he believed that a company committed to working together could produce something that was worth more than the sum of the individual efforts, and that an actor could grow as an artist through his or her submission to the group:

[By] yielding themselves utterly, body and spirit, as instruments to the harmony of the play's purpose, a company of actors does bring birth to a thing of powerful beauty that was not in the play before, that is not in themselves, but has now some of the absolute virtue of fine music, some of the quality that can make small things grow. There is honour in this art.⁴⁰

His proposal for a unified and committed company of actors, willing to forego individual glory in order to achieve the 'beauty' of the composite performance, was radical for the time. As Barker explains in the above quotation, he also believed that this commitment could elevate the actor's position in society and improve the level of his or her work.

III Effects of the 'Star System'

Barker was directing at a time when the stage was dominated by actor-managers and a commercial theatre system that, much like the commercial system in contemporary Britain, worshipped 'star' names and faces. In this climate, actor-managers such as Henry Irving and Herbert Beerbohm Tree organized and controlled their companies



Harley Granville Barker with Sidney and Beatrice Webb and Graham Wallas, photographed by George Bernard Shaw (Society of Authors on behalf of the Bernard Shaw estate).

with a substantial level of self-promotion, with the 'star' personality being placed well ahead of the company. Edwardian author Leonard Merrick criticized the actor-manager whose first concern was 'to find a play in which he shall have a good part, and the second to look to it that nobody else shall have so good a part as himself'.⁴¹

Similarly, in his 1891 essay on the need for an English Théâtre Libre, George Moore bemoaned the ill effects of the 'star' system, where 'managers have substituted a star system for the system of *l'ensemble*, and about a favourite actor or actress we find a number of "sticks", whose ignorance and stupidity serve to bring the star into prominence'.⁴² The supporting actors in an actor-manager's company were treated as little more than props for the 'star' to act against and, when on stage, their job was to make sure they did not get in the way of the star. As Cathleen Nesbitt, Perdita in Barker's 1912 production of *The Winter's Tale*, recalled,

when working under an actor-manager, 'One never "marked" anything [in rehearsals], we just kept out of each other's way. If there wasn't an empty space you sat down on the nearest chair.'⁴³

Barker believed that the established theatrical system encouraged self-promotional, mechanical, and uninspired acting, where actors were confined to the demoralizing position of casual labourers and were reliant on 'fecklessness'. To counter this, he sought the co-operation of a team of actors working collaboratively on a production under a director who behaved more like a facilitator than a dictator. The emphasis was on giving each actor space to explore the material, develop his or her own performance, and take an active role in the creative process, which would ensure that these performances were organic and would keep the production 'a healthy living body'.⁴⁴

The continuity experienced in a permanent and committed group would aid the

actors' ability to be spontaneous and develop work together in rehearsals, and this in turn would aid the collaborative process and limit the need for the director to drill actors and dictate all movements.⁴⁵

The Seasons at the Court

A permanent ensemble company is what Barker first attempted to achieve at the Court Theatre. Financial limitations meant that he was not able to achieve his goal there, although he did have a core group of regular players, among them long-term collaborators. This group, which included Lillah McCarthy (Barker's first wife), Lewis Casson, Edith Wynne Mathinson, Sydney Fairbrother, Edmund Gwenn, and Edmund Gurney, returned to work with Barker at the Court on numerous occasions and provided him with a small sense of continuity.⁴⁶ However, Barker managed to harness a collaborative sense even among players brought together for a particular production. He established this sense of teamwork and abolished the 'star' system in his productions through his approach to rehearsals, where, following the Fabian model, he argued that the company should be treated as a committee with the director taking the chair.⁴⁷

During rehearsals, Barker placed equal importance on every character of a play and paid careful attention to the acting of every role in rehearsal, making each actor aware of the vital part they played. For example, the first rehearsal would involve Barker reading the entire play to the assembled company. This was of course a well-established practice in the theatre of the time, but Henry Irving, for example, used these readings to indicate how lines should be performed and delivered, whereas Barker used them to give each actor a sense of the play as a whole, and how each character fitted into that structure.⁴⁸

For the same reason, Barker sent each member of the cast a full and complete script prior to the commencement of rehearsals to ensure that all the actors understood the totality of the play – a practice that was unprecedented in the British theatre at that time, the conventional approach being for

cast members to receive cue scripts which consisted solely of the individual actor's lines and cues. These cue scripts made the play look fragmentary, and placed the emphasis on individual characters, with little regard for any through-lines or a conception of the play as a whole.⁴⁹ Countering this, Barker worked to establish a shared understanding of the play, and it was to this end that he treated the company as a committee and spent the early rehearsals working through the text scene by scene with the assembled actors.

By dedicating the early rehearsals to study of this kind, the company would become absorbed in the play and be in tune with each other. This meant that, when they took to the stage, they would be able to work together to create their own performances. As the prominent critic Desmond MacCarthy noted, actors in even the smallest roles were given time and attention throughout the rehearsal period, when Barker was 'careful to leave as much room for [the actor] in his scene as the construction of the play allowed'.⁵⁰

The time and space given to all actors in the rehearsal period resulted in productions that were commended for the even playing of the company, the actors being 'absolutely unhampered by either the desire or by the obligation of [an] actor-manager to make the interest of a performance centre upon one or two characters.'⁵¹ North American critics made similar observations when watching Barker rehearse during his tour of the east coast of the United States in 1915:

It is part of the Barker creed that the supernumerary with the tiniest part should do what he has to do as well as the player in the most important role. . . . It is a no-star performance with all its parts as nicely adjust as bits in a mosaic. . . . So [in rehearsal] the interpreters of minor parts come in for individual attention as well as the principals.⁵²

As this journalist acknowledged, by encouraging the actors to commit to the group and to combine their individual efforts into a communal effort, Barker created productions that, to refer to Webb, were more than the aggregate of the individual units and transcended the work of any individual actor.

As a consequence, Barker's companies became one of the only places in London where actors were willing to take on smaller roles. Barker's method of treating the entire company as parts of a composite whole removed the competitive tension between actors who felt the need to vie for the director's attention. The hierarchy that prioritized 'star' roles and ignored smaller parts was absent. As Lillah McCarthy recalled:

Any of us would cheerfully take a small role, for we knew that even so we should not have to be subservient, negative, or obsequious to the stars – for, as I have said, there were no stars. We were members of a theatrical House of Lords: all equal and all Lords. Edmund Gwenn was Baines, the butler, in *The Return of the Prodigal*. Only a few weeks before, he had played a great part – that of the immortal 'Enery Straker in *Man and Superman*. But as the butler, in a lesser part with little to say, he was allowed so much space that his performance was as it had been in the bigger part of 'Enery Straker.⁵³

The policy was likewise adhered to when popular 'stars' such as Ellen Terry and Mrs Patrick Campbell performed at the Court Theatre, bringing a symbolic power and 'star' appeal which Barker refused to exploit.⁵⁴ Instead, by spending time working with each member of the company, Barker established a climate where individual actors were willing to be subordinate to the production as a whole.

According to McCarthy's recollections, Barker managed to instil into his performers a belief in the need to subordinate one's own needs for the benefit of the group: 'When we went elsewhere, the part was everything; but at the Court, the whole was greater than the part.'⁵⁵ This was a belief that the majority of the actors shared. Barker's approach was praised by theatre critics, who also felt that the art of acting would improve through the actors' commitment to the group. Later, discussing Barker's work, William Bridges-Adams explained how under his management 'even well-known players seemed to do themselves more justice than elsewhere'.⁵⁶ Similarly, Desmond MacCarthy noted that the actors, who earned praise when working with Barker, 'seemed to sink again to normal

insignificance' when performing under managements that did not encourage this holistic perspective.⁵⁷

Communal Spirit over Competition

Another way in which Barker's ensemble incorporated elements of Fabian socialism was by the removal of competitive tension within a theatre company. In his 1896 Fabian tract 'The Difficulties of Individualism', Webb outlined the fundamental principles upon which individualism was founded, including the assertion that 'open competition and complete freedom from legal restrictions furnish the best guarantees of a healthy industrial community'.⁵⁸ Webb critiqued this claim that the free market benefited the growth of industry, arguing that while open competition prevented the monopoly of an individual, it did not stop the monopoly of a particular class of people. More important, it did not stop the domination of the workers by, to quote Webb, 'a hierarchy of property owners, who compete, it is true, among themselves, but who are nevertheless able, as a class, to preserve a very real control over the lives of those who depend upon their own daily labour'.⁵⁹

Webb believed that the system of open competition encouraged by individualism was predicated on a fundamental inequality that meant the divide between the rich and the poor, the dominant and the dominated, was upheld and perpetuated. While those placed in the dominant class could compete with each other, they faced little or no competition from those who are dominated.

Furthermore, Webb criticized the effects of competition and the manner in which it was predicated upon the individual's needs as opposed to the needs of the community. He believed that putting emphasis on personal success over the success of the community encouraged a selfish and self-centred attitude in all citizens. Similarly, it prompted individuals to think of obtaining personal riches rather than producing for the benefit of the wider social group. In the case of industry, this meant increased production of the commodities that were guaranteed to sell

rather than of those that were needed for the well-being of society. For Webb, this was indicative of a flawed system that encouraged the production of commodities in the wrong way and for the wrong ends. He wrote to this effect:

The whole range of the present competitive individualism manifestly tends, indeed, to the glorification, not of honest personal service, but of the pursuit of personal gain – not the production of wealth, but the obtaining of riches. The inevitable outcome is the apotheosis, not of social service, but of successful financial speculation, which is already the bane of the American civilization. With it comes inevitably a demoralization of personal character, a coarsening of moral fibre, and a hideous lack of taste.⁶⁰

Competition and the Acting Company

While it is possible to discuss the issues surrounding open competition in relation to the late-Victorian and Edwardian commercial theatre industry as a whole, and Barker's criticism of it, the focus is here restricted to an analysis of how Webb's criticism of competition can be seen to resonate in Barker's observation of the acting company.⁶¹ Barker understood that the theatre climate in which he was working and its prevailing 'star' system fostered competition between actors working on a production. To succeed in the mainstream theatre of London, an actor had to distinguish him or herself from the masses. With no permanent employment guaranteed, actors were at the mercy of fashion, and it was only through securing lead roles and becoming recognizable that they could move up the 'star'-oriented West End hierarchy and increase their chances of future employment.

Of course, this prioritized the individual actor's interests – and the personal gain he or she pursued – at the cost of the production. Similarly, the conventional short and hurried rehearsal periods were not conducive to establishing an atmosphere of trust among a company of actors brought together for the first time. Instead, the short time made it difficult for the individual actor to relinquish the sense of competition and to 'surrender' any previously acquired symbolic power in

order to submit him or herself to the collective. As Barker observed:

The individual actors and actresses will take care to rouse what delight they can by exercise of their personal charm; exercising it, though, as often as not directly upon the audience rather than primarily upon the play. They have their excuse. To surrender this personal power to whatever unity of effect can be achieved in three weeks' work or so among a strange company might be to lose it altogether, and to get nothing in exchange – so thinks the theatre-wise actor; therefore, while rehearsals go forward he holds it carefully in reserve.⁶²

Barker believed the acting tradition of the commercial theatre perpetuated the need for self-preservation and for maintaining and obtaining symbolic power at the expense of producing a piece of art that transcended the personal 'star' appeal. It is here that Webb's warning of the tendency towards the obtaining of personal riches over the production of wealth resonates in the context of the theatre. As Webb argued for a society not founded upon competition, so Barker's permanent ensemble company aimed to establish a sense of equality and security among the actors, where they would be able to commit to a role without using it as a vehicle through which to advertise their talents to the assembled audience.

As has been noted, Barker developed a rehearsal method that sought to instil a sense of community within actors brought together on a production, and he worked hard to make each actor aware of the vital part he or she played in the production, regardless of the size of his or her role. As McCarthy explained, by banning any notion of the 'star' from his companies, Barker likewise removed the fear that a smaller role would necessarily mean an actor was placed in a subservient position.⁶³ When praising the work of Barker at a dinner held in 1907 in honour of the Vedrenne–Barker seasons at the Court, the actress Edith Wynne Mathison verified McCarthy's comments and confirmed Barker's intentions:

At the Court Theatre there have been no rancours, no jealousies, no groans of the ill-paid and sweated in our midst; sanely and surely there has

been realized among us a very real and very precious sense of human brotherhood and sympathy, firmly based on economic equity and artistic opportunity.⁶⁴

The Actor and the Director

The final comparison between Barker's plans for an ensemble company and Webb's plans for social reform focuses on the role of the individual within the collective and, more specifically, the criticisms both men faced regarding their supposed threat to individual liberty. In the case of Barker, these criticisms were epitomized in the accusations levelled at him by 'An Actor' and the subsequent debate that took place in the pages of *New Age* for a period of approximately two months in early 1913, as noted at the outset of this article.⁶⁵ In 'Mr Granville Barker's Gramophones', 'An Actor', who claimed to have experienced Barker's method of directing when working with him on *The Winter's Tale* in 1912, accused Barker of authoritarianism when directing a play.⁶⁶ When giving an account of rehearsals under Barker, 'An Actor' depicted him as a condescending bureaucrat, saying that he forced his interpretation on to the actors and demanded that they follow his every move:

The actor for Mr Barker is nothing more than a gramophone record made during rehearsal by Mr Barker himself, and the more faithful the nightly reproduction the more affectionately does Mr Barker pat 'the actor' upon the back. . . . In the Barker factory there is only one record: a boss record, upon which are registered the brain-waves of Mr Barker. . . . The Barker disc is then pressed firmly upon the plastic matter, and when the contriver has retired into the stalls in order to observe the result, he perceives with pride upon the facsimiles of his impressions.⁶⁷

Underlying the criticism of 'An Actor' and his description of 'the Barker factory' was the fear that the emergence of the director – the role that Barker was establishing in Britain at this time – would signal an end to the supposed freedom of the actor. 'An Actor' portrayed Barker, and, in turn, directors in general, as bureaucratic 'middle men', who sought to divide the actor from the audience by erecting a barrier between them. Equally,

'An Actor' argued that the director threatened the individuality, the personality, and the spontaneity of each actor, stating: 'The actor's impulses must be given scope. He must be allowed to be spontaneous. He must be given SPACE. . . . He must not be too strictly limited to what is professionally termed "business".'⁶⁸

As Cary Mazer notes, the accusations made by 'An Actor' were indicative of a wider debate regarding the role of the director that was taking place in the British theatre at the time.⁶⁹ Questions surrounding the function of the director, the amount of power he or she should wield, and the relation between the director and the actor resulted in the establishment of a false binary that placed the actor and the director in opposition with each other.

In a subsequent letter by 'An Actor', the author revealed his inability to perceive a situation in which an actor and a director could work together in harmony. His argument was that 'if the "intellectual producer" becomes general we shall have no more classic actors'.⁷⁰ Hermon Ould, on the other hand, argued against the claim that the actor was a creative artist, stating that he or she should come under the 'dictatorship of the author or the producer'.⁷¹ In contrast, Barker rejected this actor–director binary. He saw his role to be not at odds with the work of the actor but, rather, positioned 'at the center [*sic*] of a perennial conflict between the actor and the playwright'.⁷²

Likewise, opposition between the individual and the collective was constructed through the various responses to 'An Actor's' article. Many of those defending Barker argued that achievement in art necessarily meant the suppression of the individual: 'In all perfect art, as in perfect life, character or individuality is eliminated. Type is represented, character is suppressed.'⁷³ In contrast, 'An Actor' and his supporters argued that the individual must be free and must supersede the needs of the collective, stating, 'Every artist must be unique or he is not an actor,' and proclaiming, 'I object on general grounds to the subordination of one personality to another.'⁷⁴ Not only did Barker,

the director, pose a threat to the actor, but so, too, did his call for a committed ensemble company.

The 'Old Gang' and the 'New Age'

The anti-Fabian undertone of the initial article suggests both the political position of 'An Actor' and the political motive behind its publication in *New Age*. Although originally founded in 1907 by two Fabians, Holbrook Jackson and Alfred Richard Orage, with the support of the Society, *New Age* soon distanced itself from Fabian politics, dissociating Holbrook and Orage's movement from the Fabianism represented by Webb and the 'Old Gang'. By 1909, prominent members of the Society were criticized in the magazine's editorials and leading articles.⁷⁵ The attack on Barker's method of directing – described as 'the Fabian method' – can be read as a loosely veiled attack on the Fabian politics outlined by Webb.⁷⁶

In his claim that Barker's threat to the actor mirrored the threat posed by Fabianism to the freedom of the individual, 'An Actor' showed he was an opponent of the Fabian Society, arguing against Webb's plans for social reform through the example of Barker: 'Mr Webb's vision of a society of flesh and blood puppets may be compared with Mr Barker's vision of a theatre for marionettes. Both are bureaucratic ideals.'⁷⁷ In both instances, the anti-Fabianism of 'An Actor' influenced the interpretation of the principles of collectivism and duty to the group to mean the subordination and the imprisonment of the individual.

The interrelationship of the individual and the collective was seen as a point of concern for the majority of Fabians, including Webb. As Britain notes, questions regarding the ability of the individual to maintain his or her freedom in a collective were raised repeatedly in Fabian literature, where the 'common notion that the two principles were antithetical or mutually exclusive was vigorously denied'.⁷⁸ In contrast, Fabians argued adamantly that a socialist state would actually bring about the development of individual freedom. Webb

himself addressed this issue at length in 'The Difficulties of Individualism', where he critiqued the personal freedom posited by individualism as being based on a fundamental fallacy.

Analyzing the development of society, Webb assessed the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution and the growth of the new middle class of businessmen, entrepreneurs and 'captains of industry', arguing against the common belief that the changes in industry and the growth of the factory age had brought about 'freedom for all'. Rather, he believed that it should be more accurately interpreted as 'freedom for the middle class'. 'The enormous increase in personal power thus gained by a comparatively small number of persons,' argued Webb, 'they and the economists not unnaturally mistook for a growth in general freedom.'⁷⁹ In contrast to the proposed general freedom, Webb observed that the growth of industry had actually further imprisoned the individual worker, who now became merely 'an item' in a large organization.

While the departure from the feudal system had increased the political freedom of the working class, it had simultaneously limited their economic freedom:

The mere worker became steadily less and less industrially independent as his political freedom increased. . . . He was free, but free only to choose to which master he would sell his labour.⁸⁰

As in the case of competition, it was only the affluent, industrious middle class, the dominant fraction of society, who were in a position to experience the economic and political freedom posited by individualism.

The observation made by Webb rings true in the case of 'An Actor'. Throughout the article and in subsequent letters, 'An Actor' argued that the art of acting had been lost through the emergence of the director, and that the theatre should be restored to a state where actors had total freedom. When questioned about an alternative to the Barker method, he called for a return to 'acting for actors'.⁸¹ Similarly, John Francis Hope, the theatre critic for *New Age*, likened a company of actors to a group of chamber musicians,

where each member would contribute his or her interpretation of the music in concert with the other musicians and without the need for an overseeing conductor.⁸² Yet these claims for a return to 'acting for actors' were founded on the same mistake that had been identified by Webb – namely, the false belief that there existed a period when there had been general freedom among all actors.

Prior to Barker, as an exemplar of the modern director, the work of actors was still controlled, shaped, and dominated, by actor-managers, who dictated the movements and the gesture of the supporting company. In the hierarchical structure of companies led by actor-managers, a sense of freedom was limited to those 'stars' positioned at the apex.⁸³ Similarly, all actors were dominated by the growing commercial system, where success was judged by ticket sales and box-office receipts.

From the turn of the twentieth century, the British theatre was increasingly controlled by financiers and business magnates, who began to purchase theatre buildings and drive up the cost of rent.⁸⁴ The rise in overheads increased the theatre managers' reliance on high ticket sales, and this, in turn, influenced their programme choices, leading Edward Gordon Craig to denounce 'that powerful usurper of the theatrical throne – the box-office'.⁸⁵

A Healthy Society and a Healthy Theatre

The increased overheads and competition between theatres led also to a greater reliance on 'star' actors and social personalities, whose fame would guarantee large audiences. The profitability of these 'stars' meant the power they wielded in a company also grew at the expense of the supporting actors, who were not as economically valuable. Just as the Industrial Revolution brought about freedom only for the 'captains of industry', so the commercial theatre brought freedom only for a small and select group comprising actor-managers or 'star' actors and financial speculators. The supporting actor, like the worker, continued to be dominated and was left relatively powerless.

In contrast to the false freedom postulated by individualism, Webb believed that true freedom came as a result of collectivism and collective control. He argued that through first committing and subordinating themselves to the welfare of the group, individuals would be given the space for the highest possible development of their own personality.⁸⁶ Moreover, such individuality would be developed in relation to the other citizens of the social organism rather than in competition with them, creating a sense of harmony and co-operation that would be free from power struggles. In short, healthy citizens would be created through the creation of a healthy social organism:

Though the social organism has itself evolved from the union of individual men, the individual is now created by the social organism of which he forms a part: his life is born of the larger life; his attributes are moulded by the social pressure; his activities, inextricably interwoven with others, belong to the whole. Without the continuance and sound health of the social organism, no man can now live or thrive; and its persistence is accordingly his paramount end.⁸⁷

Furthermore, Webb believed that the collective control of the socialist state and its ability to check any actions that pose a threat to the well being of the social organism would protect society from any new group or individual who attempted to dominate it:

His conscious motive for action may be, nay always must be, individual to himself; but where such action proves inimical to the social welfare, it must sooner or later be checked by the whole, lest the whole perish through the error of its member.⁸⁸

Barker, likewise, believed that individual freedom was attainable only through the collective. With regard to the theatre, this meant that the actor could experience a stronger sense of freedom in performance through an ensemble, where the individual personalities were developed not in competition with one another, but in harmony. This was one of the reasons why he insisted on collective work in rehearsals and banned any solitary work, believing that performances developed in isolation had the poten-

tial to bring about discord and disruption in a company. He argued that it was impossible for an actor to know his or her part without knowing the whole, which was something that could only be achieved through collective work:

But unless they [study their parts] in concert with their fellows they really more often harm the rest of the play than help the whole. For an isolated performance, of however great interest . . . must distort the play's purpose. No matter if the one seems to be right and all the others wrong. Nothing is right unless the thing as a whole is right.⁸⁹

Individuality through Harmony

In the role of director, Barker believed in the importance of maintaining the individual personality of each actor, stating that 'it is the power of the actor, adopting the speech and action of the author's imagining, to elucidate the character in terms of his own personality that gives the thing that apparent spontaneity of life which is the drama's particular virtue'.⁹⁰ Rather than seeking to suppress the individuality of the actor and to replace it with the individuality of the director, as 'An Actor' asserted, Barker was attempting to establish a harmonized company through which the individuality of each actor could develop:

The symphonic effect must be one made by the blending of the actors' natural voices and by the contrasts that spring from their conflicting emotions which their mutual study of the parts spontaneously engenders. Even over things that seem to need the exactitude of orchestration the scheme of the play's performance must still, as far as possible, grow healthily and naturally into being, or the diversity of the various actors will not become unity without loss of their individual force.⁹¹

To a certain extent, Barker proved his point. The majority of actors' responses to his method verified his belief that the actors' individuality would become fully developed within the framework of a unified group. While 'An Actor' portrayed Barker's rehearsal method as restricting the freedom of the actor, Lillah McCarthy explained that 'the craftsmen – the actors and actresses – felt no

constraint. On the contrary, we enjoyed a larger sense of freedom; for author and producer alike encouraged the actor to let himself go.'⁹² Similarly, 'An Actor's' claim that Barker restricted the actor's impulses and spontaneity was directly contradicted by the account of Cathleen Nesbitt, who would have worked alongside 'An Actor' on *The Winter's Tale*:

Barker had the gift of galvanizing the whole cast. Everyone trusted him, everyone turned themselves inside out for him. . . . I think one of the reasons Barker was so wonderful to work for was that in many ways he gave his actors such freedom. He was not one of those directors who does a lot of homework with a set of puppets, and then says to the actors 'I have you standing stage left on that line and moving stage centre on this.' He worked *with* his actors.⁹³

The space given to the individuality of the actor through the work of the unified group was acknowledged by numerous critics both in England and America, whose favourable reviews corroborated Barker's claim for the freedom of the individual in the collective:

[The productions] are acted in free, fluent, elastic, and interweaving ensemble by a company excellently trained in common pace and rhythm, in unfolding design, and coordinated detail. Yet within that scheme and ensemble, every major and nearly every minor personage had the individuality that the player's imagination and skill, as well as the producer's, must lend to it.⁹⁴

As can be deduced from Barker's own writings, his intention, when working with actors, was to give them a greater sense of freedom than that allowed under the actor-manager or 'star' system. This freedom would be a freedom for all, much like the universal freedom that Webb believed would arise from socialism. Contrary to 'An Actor's' accusations, Barker's approach worked to encourage this freedom, as experienced by those working with him and those observing him.

Although a full exploration of the link between Fabian politics and Barker's practice has not been attempted within the limits of this article, it has been possible to identify several points of convergence and to reassess



From Barker's production of *Twelfth Night* at the Savoy (1912). Above: 'Good madonna, give me leave to prove you a fool.' Below: 'Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?' (Photos and identifying captions from *Play Pictorial*, XXI, No. 126 (1912).



the relation between these two aspects of his life. While this article has been restricted to Barker's method of directing and working with actors, numerous other areas could be examined to show this relation. For example, Barker's plan to establish a repertory system, which was integral to his proposed reforms of the theatre, was one shared by other members of the Fabian Society, including Stewart Hedlam and Herbert Trench.⁹⁵

Similarly, Barker incorporated the Fabian Society's attack on the property landlord – as epitomized in 'The Unearned Increment', the first tract from the Fabians' Municipal Programme – in his crusade against the theatre landlord and the rising ground rents of London theatre buildings.⁹⁶ In 1907 Barker acknowledged this link, stating: 'As a good Socialist I am able to sum up the chief of those difficulties in one word – rent. The theatre manager cannot stand up against the ground landlord.'⁹⁷

Barker left the Society in 1912 and, three years later, left the British stage, moved out of London and, eventually, left Britain altogether. As his growing desire to reform the British stage coincided with his desire to reform British society, so, too, did his departure from active work. Barker continued his proposal for artistic reform through his publications and lectures as a theatre scholar, all of which contained traces of the ideological principles of Fabianism. This is, of course, understandable as the influence of the Fabian Society on his world view would have remained long after his active involvement with the group ceased. It is for this reason that when discussing Barker's practice as a director, it is important to consider his political position in Britain in the opening decade of the twentieth century as providing an essential context for understanding his artistic choices.

Notes and References

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1. 'An Actor', 'Mr Granville Barker's Gramophones', *The New Age: a Weekly Review of Politics, Literature and Art*, XII (November 1912–April 1913), p. 225.

2. See, for example, Margery Morgan, *Drama of Political Man: a Study in the Plays of Harley Granville Barker* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1961); Eric Salmon, *Granville Barker: A Secret Life* (London: Heinemann, 1983); and Christopher Innes, *Modern British Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

3. As a group, the Fabian Society incorporated a mixture of heterodoxies that often conflicted with one another. This created numerous internal frictions and ruptures, leading H. G. Wells, the former Fabian, who, in 1907, pioneered the attempted 'revolution' in the Society, to observe how 'the Fabian Society had gathered together some very angular and incompatible fragments . . . and at every meeting it stirred with mutterings beneath its compromises'. See H. G. Wells, quoted in Samuel Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 89. For a detailed comparison of the nuances of thought in the strands of Fabianism presented by Sidney Webb, Beatrice Webb, George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells and G. D. H. Cole – all prominent members of the Society at one time or another, see Peter Beilharz and Chris Nyland, ed., *The Webbs, Fabianism, and Feminism* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1998), p. 9–53.

4. Anne Fremantle describes Barker's position in the Society as being merely a 'crony of G.B.S', a claim that Eric Salmon rejects. While he argues that Shaw certainly influenced Barker's decision to join the Society, he is adamant that, once in the Society, Barker worked under his own volition. See Salmon, *Granville Barker*, p. 79.

5. Beilharz and Nyland, *The Webbs*, p. 44.

6. While these two essays are, of course, a mere fraction of Webb's prolific output, both were written during the formative period of the Society for the purpose of introducing the general public to Fabianism. For this reason they contain some of the clearest articulations of Webb's thought. 'Historic' was first published as part of *Fabian Essays in Socialism*, edited by George Bernard Shaw in 1889. 'The Difficulties of Individualism' was published in 1896 and was the sixty-ninth Fabian tract. In the article, Webb aims to dissect the prevailing ideology of individualism in detail before offering Fabianism and collectivism as an alternative.

7. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p. 53.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Maria Shevtsova, *The Sociology of Theatre and Performance* (Verona: QuiEdit, 2009), p. 102.

10. Randall Johnson, in Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), p. 3.

11. Pierre Bourdieu with Loïc J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p. 126.

12. Shevtsova, *Sociology of Theatre*, p. 94.

13. 'Performing Groups, Social Groups and Social Contexts', Shevtsova's Research Seminar in the Sociology of Theatre and Performance at the Inaugural Summer University of the Grotowski Institute, Wrocław, Poland, 23 September 2011.

14. 'The Basis of the Fabian Society' was reproduced in full in Edward R. Pease, *The History of the Fabian Society* (London: Fabian Society, 1925), Appendix 2. As Pease shows, the Basis barely changed between 1884 and 1925, with the exception of a line being added in 1907 to note the Society's increased interest in the

women's suffrage movement. In this updated version, the Society expressed plans for social and political changes, 'including the establishment of equal citizenship for men and women'.

15. Bourdieu with Wacquant, *Invitation*, p. 125.

16. Shevtsova, *Sociology of Theatre*, p. 103 (original emphasis).

17. *Ibid.*

18. For William Poel's influence on Barker see, for example, William Bridges-Adams, *The Lost Leader* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1954); Christine Dymkowski, *Harley Granville Barker: Preface to a Modern Shakespeare* (London: Associated University Presses, 1986); Christopher McCullough, 'Harley Granville Barker', in John Russell Brown, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Director's Shakespeare* (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 105–22. For George Bernard Shaw's influence on Barker, see C. B. Purdom, *Harley Granville Barker: Man of Theatre, Dramatist, and Scholar* (London: Rockliff, 1955); Eric Salmon, *Granville Barker*. Although there is no detailed examination of the influence Stanislavsky and the work of the Moscow Art Theatre had on Barker's views on the theatre following their meeting in Moscow in 1914, the influence is identifiable in Barker's own writings, in which he refers repeatedly to his conversations with the Russian director. See, for example, Harley Granville Barker, 'At the Moscow Art Theatre', *The Seven Arts*, I–II (November 1916–October 1917), p. 659–61; 'Notes on Rehearsing a Play', *Drama*, I, No. 1 (July 1919), p. 2; *The Exemplary Theatre* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1922), p. 230.

19. There already exists a large body of writing regarding the relationship between George Bernard Shaw and Barker and so no further detail is needed here. See, for example, Charles B. Purdom, ed., *Bernard Shaw's Letters to Granville Barker* (London: Phoenix House, 1956); Dennis Kennedy, *Granville Barker and the Dream of Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Tracy C. Davis, *George Bernard Shaw and the Socialist Theatre* (London; Connecticut: Praeger, 1994).

20. Ian Britain, *Fabianism and Culture: a Study in British Socialism and the Arts, 1884–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 173. See also Jan McDonald, 'Chekhov, Naturalism and the Drama of Dissent: Productions of Chekhov's Plays in Britain before 1914', in Patrick Miles, ed., *Chekhov on the British Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 30.

21. Purdom, *Harley Granville Barker*, p. 13.

22. Britain, *Fabianism and Culture*, p. 175.

23. Harley Granville Barker, 'The Necessary Theatre', *Fabian News*, XXII, No. 8 (July 1911), p. 58; Charles Charrington, 'A Municipal Theatre', *Fabian News*, VI, No. 12 (February 1897), p. 47.

24. In his biography of the Fabian Society, Edward Pease remembers Barker as being 'one of the most active' of the new members who joined the Society in the early 1900s. See Pease, *History of the Fabian Society*, p. 100. In contrast, Ian Britain quotes an unnamed fellow Fabian who claimed that after 1908 Barker's attendance at Society meetings became rather erratic and his commitment to the group waned, although he continued to be re-elected on to the Executive Committee due to 'his theatrical reputation'. See Britain, *Fabianism and Culture*, p. 175.

25. Bourdieu nuances the rather simplistic binary of dominant–dominated, the fundamental division of power relations that exists in all fields, through the

concept of 'fractions' or heterogeneous social groupings. The phrase 'dominant fraction of the dominated', a phrase Shevtsova notes as intimately associated with Bourdieu's work, refers to an individual or a group occupying a position that exists in the top 'tier' of the dominated section of a field. See Shevtsova, *Sociology of Theatre*, p. 90.

26. In his numerous writings on the field of cultural production, Bourdieu argued that the structure of the field was founded upon a central opposition between the field of restricted production and the field of large-scale cultural production. The field of large-scale production adheres to the laws of competition and seeks to conquer the largest possible market, whereas the field of restricted production develops its own autonomous criteria for evaluation, seeking cultural recognition from a peer group of fellow artists. See Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), p. 112–41. Barker prized the symbolic profits of recognition from his peers above the economic profits of appealing to the widest possible audiences.

27. Harley Granville Barker, letter to Edward Pease, 19 April 1904 (LSE Archives, Fabian Society/A/6/1, Folios 43–60).

28. Mario Borsa, *The English Stage of To-Day*, trans. Selwyn Brinton (London: Bodley Head, 1908), p. 112.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Archibald Henderson quoted in Anthony Jackson, 'Harley Granville Barker as Director at the Royal Court Theatre, 1904–1907', *Theatre Research*, XII, No. 4 (1972), p. 126.

31. Dinner in honour of H. Granville Barker and J. E. Vedrenne, 7 July 1907, Criterion Restaurant, London (British Library, 010325/ff/503), p. 12.

32. Sidney Webb, *Socialism in England* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1890), p. 4.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

34. Beilharz and Nyland, *The Webbs*, p. 11.

35. Sidney Webb, 'Historic' in George Bernard Shaw, ed., *Fabian Essays in Socialism* (London: Walter Scott, 1908), p. 56.

36. Beilharz and Nyland, *The Webbs*, p. 13.

37. Webb, 'Historic', p. 58.

38. Barker–Vedrenne Dinner, 7 July 1907, p. 12.

39. Barker, *The Exemplary Theatre*, p. 121.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

41. Leonard Merrick, quoted in James Woodfield, *The Theatre in Transition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 71.

42. George Moore, 'Théâtre Libre', in *Impressions and Opinions* (London: David Nutt, 1913), p. 175.

43. Cathleen Nesbitt, *A Little Love and Good Company* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), p. 59.

44. Barker, *The Exemplary Theatre*, p. 182.

45. Harley Granville Barker, 'Notes on Rehearsing a Play', *Drama*, I, No. 1 (July 1919), p. 4.

46. Between 1904 and 1907 Lillah McCarthy performed at the Court in eleven productions, while Lewis Casson performed in fifteen, Edith Wynne Mathinson in six, Sydney Fairbrother in seven, and Edmund Gurney in fourteen. One of Barker's most frequent players was Edmund Gwenn, who performed in a total of twenty-five productions, including *Man and Superman* and *The Voysey Inheritance*, two of the Court's most popular productions. All figures include revivals of productions. For full company lists for the Court seasons, see Desmond MacCarthy, *The Court Theatre, 1904–1907* (London: A. H. Bullen, 1907), Appendix I.

47. Barker, 'Notes', p. 3.
48. Madeline Bingham, *Henry Irving and the Victorian Theatre* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1978), p. 159.
49. Christopher Innes, *Edward Gordon Craig* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 15.
50. McCarthy, *The Court Theatre*, p. 5.
51. *Ibid.*
52. 'A Glimpse of Mr Barker from Behind the Scenes', *New York Times*, 21 February 1915.
53. Lillah McCarthy, *Myself and My Friends* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1934), p. 90.
54. Jackson, 'Harley Granville Barker', p. 130. Ellen Terry appeared in Shaw's *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* in 1906, while Mrs Patrick Campbell appeared in *Hedda Gabler* in 1907.
55. McCarthy, *Myself*, p. 90.
56. William Bridges-Adams, 'Theatre' in Simon Nowell-Smith, ed., *Edwardian England, 1901-1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 396.
57. McCarthy, *The Court Theatre*, p. 2.
58. Sidney Webb, 'The Difficulties of Individualism', *Fabian Tract*, No. 69 (London: Fabian Society, 1896), p. 5.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
60. *Ibid.*
61. For example, the competitive atmosphere established by the intervention of business managers and financiers in the British theatre at the turn of the twentieth century led to the theatre being treated as instrumental to making profits, which placed ticket sales ahead of artistic value. This, in turn, encouraged theatre managers to produce work that was safe, familiar, and conventional, and which appealed to the widest possible public. See, for example, William Poel, *What is Wrong with the Stage* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1920); H. R. Barbor, *The Theatre: an Art and an Industry* (London: Labour Publishing Co., 1924); Huntly Carter, *The New Spirit in European Theatre: 1914-1924* (London: Behn, 1925).
62. Barker, *The Exemplary Theatre*, p. 222.
63. McCarthy, *Myself*, p. 90.
64. Barker-Vedrenne Dinner, 7 July 1907, p. 20.
65. The debate took place in the correspondence section of *New Age* between 9 January and 27 February 1913. See, *New Age*, XII (November 1912-April 1913), p. 225-6; 263; 286-7; 310-1; 335-7; 364-6; 390-1; 415.
66. It is not possible to determine the identity of 'An Actor' from the company list of Barker's 1912 production of *The Winter's Tale* at the Savoy Theatre. However, as Cary Mazer rightly observes, it is possible to eliminate a number of candidates, including Leon Quartermaine, Nigel Playfair, Henry Ainley, Felix Aylmer, Lillah McCarthy, Esme Beringer, Cathleen Nesbitt, and Enid Rose due to their inclusion in the debate or due to their subsequent comments on working with Barker. Cary M. Mazer, 'Actors or Gramophones: the Paradoxes of Granville Barker', *Theatre Journal*, XXXVI, No. 1 (March 1984), p. 6. Likewise, it is perhaps possible to eliminate the remaining female members of the company, given the writer's choice of the title 'Actor' at a time when the female equivalent 'Actress' was standard usage. For this reason the masculine pronoun 'his' is adopted.
67. 'An Actor', 'Mr Granville Barker's Gramophones', p. 225.
68. *Ibid.* (original emphasis).
69. Mazer, 'Actors or Gramophones', p. 7-11.
70. 'An Actor', 'The Methods of Barker', *New Age*, p. 287.
71. Hermon Ould, 'The Methods of Barker', *New Age*, p. 310.
72. Mazer, 'Actors or Gramophones', p. 12.
73. 'An Artist', 'The Methods of Barker', *New Age*, p. 337.
74. 'An Actor', *ibid.*, p. 286; John Palmer Hope, *ibid.*, p. 391.
75. Britain, *Fabianism and Culture*, p. 172.
76. 'An Actor', 'Mr Granville Barker's Gramophones', p. 225.
77. *Ibid.*
78. Britain, *Fabianism and Culture*, p. 17.
79. Webb, 'Difficulties of Individualism', p. 12.
80. *Ibid.*
81. 'An Actor', 'The Methods of Barker', p. 286.
82. John Francis Hope, 'The Methods of Barker', p. 391.
83. Even then, the leading 'stars' of a company were dominated by the actor-manager. For example, during rehearsals for *Hamlet* at the Lyceum, Ellen Terry suggested that she wore a black dress in the role of Ophelia. Irving quickly refuted this suggestion due to the fact that there was 'only one black figure in *Hamlet*, and that was Hamlet. And so it was. Ellen's black crêpe de chine trimmed with ermine disappeared, and white sheeting with rabbit fur was substituted.' See Bingham, *Henry Irving*, p. 132.
84. For more information regarding the increase in ground rents and the cycle of sub-lets see Barbor, *The Theatre*; and Norman Marshall, *The Other Theatre* (London: John Lehmann, 1947).
85. Edward Gordon Craig, *The Art of the Theatre* (London: T. N. Foulis, 1905), p. 41.
86. Webb, 'Difficulties', p. 10.
87. Webb, 'Historic', p. 57.
88. *Ibid.*
89. Barker, *The Exemplary Theatre*, p. 230.
90. Harley Granville Barker, 'The Heritage of the Actor', *The Quarterly Review*, CCXL, No. 476 (July 1923), p. 62.
91. Barker, *The Exemplary Theatre*, p. 226.
92. McCarthy, *Myself*, p. 90.
93. Nesbitt, *In Love*, p. 62 (original emphasis).
94. *Boston Evening Transcript*, 3 February 1915.
95. Britain, *Fabianism and Culture*, p. 58.
96. 'The Unearned Increment', *Fabian Tract*, No. 30, Fabian Municipal Program No. 1 (August 1895).
97. Barker-Vedrenne Dinner, 7 July 1907, p. 12.