# Book Reviews
## Edited by Jeffrey D. Mason

***The Theater of Tony Kushner: Living Past Hope.*** By James Fisher. New York: Routledge, 2001; pp. 274 + illus. $85 hardcover.

Reviewed by David Savran, City University of New York

An avalanche of single-author studies has appeared as a result of the expansion of the American university system since the 1960s, the growth of the "theory" industry, the triumph of the specialist and decline of the generalist, the proliferation of small academic presses, and the increasing pressure on professors (even in many small colleges) to publish. These monographs function, as a rule, as part teaching aid, part research tool, and part undergraduate crib sheet. The best-known series of these monographs is probably the Twayne (U.S., English, World) Authors Series, which started in the late 1950s and now includes over 150 authors deemed securely canonical. Routledge's Studies in Modern Drama is a more modest effort (the front matter of James Fisher's *The Theater of Tony Kushner* lists only ten other titles, mostly monographs). Fisher's comprehensive volume is very much in the Twayne tradition, providing a brief biography of the author, a dash of historical background, a study of the author's works, a production history, and an extensive bibliography, all rendered in a style accessible to specialist and nonspecialist alike.

Fisher's book is impressive for the sheer volume of material it collects on a playwright who, after all, is only in his midforties, and even those who have long admired Kushner's writing will gain a renewed appreciation for the playwright's dramaturgical and political achievements. Fisher appears to have read every review and interview, and has—enviably—been given access to Kushner's large body of unpublished plays and works-in-progress. Fisher has tirelessly tracked down many of the obscure references that riddle Kushner's plays and has carefully documented influences and intertexts. In addition, he provides much tantalizing trivia. (Did you know, for example, that the playwright was named after Tony Bennett?) Fisher is particularly good with the playwright's many adaptations because he compares Kushner's diverse collections of originals to his sometimes radical revisions. Whether the reader is a Kushner fan, a professor preparing an undergraduate lecture, a sophomore in the throes of a research paper, or a graduate student studying the reception of Kushner's plays, each will find *The Theater of Tony Kushner* a useful tool.

Fisher studies Kushner's plays in chronological order, with adaptations and one-acts bringing up the rear. This sequence allows him to document Kushner's development as a writer, to provide a sense of the interrelations among his texts, and (to a lesser extent) to track down the changing political contexts for and implications of Kushner's work. Fisher accomplishes this taxonomic assignment so effectively that I found myself constantly wanting more—specifically, a

deeper, more critical, and less celebratory analysis of the work, with more attention to its historical significance. Fisher's approach is very much of the old lit-crit school—before theory and the new historical writing. Useful as it is to provide plot summaries of unpublished works, Fisher's discussions of the published plays—and I think discussion is the best word to describe them—also consist primarily of plot summary. Brief thematic and structural analyses of Kushner's works rarely go beyond the observations of the daily press or Kushner's own (albeit extremely learned, articulate, and witty) insights. Fisher correctly makes much of Kushner's connection to Brecht and Brechtian dramaturgy, for example, but he never exactly analyzes the political and formal complexities of that link. In fact, Fisher's assertions that Brecht's plays (unlike Kushner's) lack "humanity and emotionalism" and that Brecht's characters are "merely symbols" recycle the tired, old clichés employed by so many American critics to dismiss Brecht. Fisher uses words like "realistic," "postnaturalistic," "lyrical," and "tragic" as though their meanings were self-evident, even though Kushner's work (and its reception) is a testament to the very vexed nature of these terms. More problematic for me, however, is Fisher's casual employment of expressions like "the universally human," which has a very peculiar ring when used to describe the plays of a writer dedicated to interrogating the assumptions behind history and liberal humanism, or Fisher's use of "gay sensibility"—at best, an ahistorical concept, at worst, a meaningless and misleading fantasy—to describe the qualities that Kushner shares with Tennessee Williams.

To its credit, *The Theater of Tony Kushner* does not have the musty quality of the average Twayne tome, but it is just as eager to enshrine its subject. Fisher asserts, for example, that *Angels in America* ensures Kushner will take his place beside those "earlier titans of American drama" O'Neill, Odets, Wilder, Williams, and Albee. Ten pages later, he adjusts his honor roll, deleting Odets and adding Miller and Hansberry (the one woman playwright or playwright of color who apparently belongs in this rarefied company). Kushner, in other words, represents a continuation of the liberal/heroic tradition (playwrights like Adrienne Kennedy or David Mamet, who don't fit the model, are omitted). Fisher is not concerned with interrogating this tradition or the ease with which Kushner finds his place within it. Fisher would seem, then, to be one of those people described by Brecht who say, "this or that is a good work; and they mean (but do not say) good for the apparatus." Indeed, a study of canonizable work provides an excellent pretext for considering the nature of the apparatus, but Fisher holds tightly to his humanist investment in the authority of the artist-creator.

Although Fisher is eager to add Kushner's name to the canon of Great American Playwrights, he is strangely reluctant—when it comes to critics—to name names. He fails to provide endnotes for his discussions of Brecht, Williams, and other playwrights, despite the fact that many major scholars (some of whom he obviously has read) have weighed in on these playwrights. His disinclination to cite secondary sources extends to his treatment of Kushner's



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own critics. Fisher cites countless newspaper reviewers, but largely ignores the considerable (and growing) body of scholarship about Kushner, referring the reader instead to two collections of essays. Fisher's reluctance to engage scholarly criticism, coupled with his humanism and his no-nonsense prose, suggest that his book aspires to what I would call the discourse of common sense: a straightforward, apparently dispassionate form of scholarly reportage. There is a very real irony in trying to hold on to "objectivity" in a study of the work of a playwright dedicated to debunking this fiction.

Despite my carping, if I were to write about Kushner again, I would certainly turn to *The Theater of Tony Kushner* for its informative narrative of Kushner's development as a writer and its indispensable bibliography. Perhaps, however, it is time to retire the Twayne paradigm, not because of poststructuralism's fashionable and pseudoradical challenge to objectivity, rationality, and totalizing knowledge, but because cultural studies and the sociology of culture now offer an irrefutable and far-reaching critique of many of the key presuppositions underlying the Twayne model. By demonstrating that categories like "drama," "literature," "art," "the canon," and "criticism" are contingent, historically constructed sites of contestation, these critiques challenge the old-fashioned humanism that, once upon a time, as here, simply took these categories for granted.

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***The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760–1860.*** By Gillen D'Arcy Wood. New York: Palgrave, 2001; pp. 273. $49.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by Barry Daniels, Independent Scholar

*The Shock of the Real* treats the relationship between literary Romanticism and the visual popular culture of the late-eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. Gillen D'Arcy Wood argues that the new visual culture of this period is the first phase of what we call "modernism," and he claims that he will "illuminate the largely unwritten pre-history of our millennial visual age" (15). Wood's title is somewhat deceptive, since all but one of the eleven essays in the book focus on English Romanticism. His primary concern is the aesthetic debate provoked by the popularity of the new "realistic" visual culture: panoramas, theatrical spectacle, exhibitions, prints, book illustrations, and, finally, photography. Realistic spectacle delighted the masses and horrified the cultural elite in England. Wood examines the various ways in which the poets Coleridge, Byron, Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth, and the essayists Hazlitt and Lamb, participated in "the anti-visual culture prejudice" of the literary establishment in England.

Wood organizes the essays into an introduction, "Belzoni's Tomb," and five chapters entitled, respectively, "Theatre and Painting," "Prints and

Exhibitions," "The Panorama," "Ruins and Museums," and "Illustration Tourism Photography." The book concludes with a brief afterword, "Visual Culture 2000."

The first chapter is the only one that deals with theatre. Its first essay, "The Legible Face: Romantic Anti-Theatricality and the Legacy of Garrick," successfully demonstrates that Garrick's new style of acting, considered "realistic" in its time, combined with his status as a celebrity, resulting in the antitheatrical attitudes of the English Romantics. Wood is especially good in describing how Garrick worked at maintaining his celebrity and how he successfully used paintings and prints as visual media. The second essay in this chapter, "Performing the Real: Reynolds, Mrs. Abington, and Celebrity as Masquerade," explores the idea of celebrity when it crosses from the stage to fashionable society. Theatrical performance influences Reynolds's portraits of fashionable ladies. His paintings of the comedienne Frances Abington are like publicity stills for this popular actress, who often set fashion and who was welcomed in society.

The subsequent chapters will inspire varying degrees of interest among theatre scholars. "The Panorama" is especially disappointing as it deals primarily with Wordsworth's "shock" at seeing the London panorama and how it was reflected in his poetry. "Prints and Exhibitions" provides insight into the importance of the print trade and describes the "theatrical" presentation of the exhibition of large-scale paintings. "Ruins and Museums" is an excellent study of the tension between the sentimental view of the past and the development of the modern museum for antiquities.

Wood's writing is clear and engaging. He provides excellent perspectives on the issues in aesthetics that arose when "realism" became the predominant mode in popular culture. Where Wood fails—and it is a subtle failure—is that, in the vast field under examination, he takes a focus so narrow that issues are simplified: the new visual culture is the culture of the future and it is opposed by a literary elite who see it usurping their position of importance. In this opposition, one senses that Wood favors the literary establishment. Covering similar territory in *Realizations* (Princeton University Press, 1983), Martin Meisel provided more complex insights into the relationship between visual and verbal media and affected an approach both more provocative and more insightful than Wood's limited view. Indeed, Wood's theses work only in England. In Germany and France, for instance, the Romantic writers often embraced the new visual culture and adapted it to their own ends. (Goethe, Schiller, Hugo, and Vigny were prompted by it to create a new dramaturgy and introduce modern staging.)

Wood concludes that his "aim has been to present a history of the Romantic debate of visual and verbal media" (219), a statement that underlines the basic flaw in his approach: he looks for only two sides in a debate and



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ignores those subjects that don't fit into his argument. This said, I would still encourage scholars to read this book. Wood is especially good in describing the issues at play in aesthetics during a period when cultural paradigms were changing. He rightly observes that what we think of as modern culture developed at the end of the eighteenth century, and that much more study of the relationship between the visual and the verbal in this period is needed.

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***Susan Glaspell in Context: American Theater, Culture, and Politics, 1915–48.*** By J. Ellen Gainor. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002; pp. vi + 327. $52.50 hardcover.

Reviewed by Dorothy Chansky, The College of William and Mary

For close to two decades, Susan Glaspell has served as the virtual poster child for feminist playwrights of the American Little Theatre movement. One can no longer call her an unknown, but J. Ellen Gainor's insightful and meticulously researched new book makes it clear that Glaspell as a subject remains, if I may coin a term, underknown.

Glaspell's reputation still rests largely on her first solo play, the 1916 one-act *Trifles*, where her signature concern for the "connotations of geography," "interior settings as corollaries to character," "balance for all perspectives," and "literalizing marginality by having [key characters] never appear onstage" were already operating in full force (124, 84, 127). Beside rural isolation and spousal abuse—the issues in *Trifles*—Glaspell's plays address social Darwinism, free speech, marital infidelity, American hypocrisy regarding immigrants and dissenters, censorship, birth control, and modernism's high art/popular art debate (225). Gainor persuasively argues that Glaspell's dramaturgy was always carefully crafted. Depending on her theme, Glaspell deployed satire, symbolism, farce, parody, expressionism, heightened realism, the well-made play, and detective drama. For her pains, her technique was branded "unstable" and she was accused of appropriating the styles of other writers (93), while her Provincetown Players colleague Eugene O'Neill, who experimented in like fashion, acquired a reputation as bold, innovative, and original.

Gainor's project is partly to discuss "issues of literary form . . . and theater history" (5) in fourteen Glaspell plays (two co-authored with George Cram Cook and one with Norman Matson). More important, though, Gainor wants to set these plays in their social, political, and literary contexts. It is, she argues, "this close engagement with her culture that makes Glaspell's theatrical work important historically, creatively, and intellectually" (3). Indeed, since Glaspell's eighteen years of regularly writing plays were sandwiched between almost equally long periods devoted to journalism and fiction, Gainor is able to make the point that the choice of drama as a genre



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was, indeed, a choice, since Glaspell "exploit[ed] each medium for its greatest impact, revealing a keen understanding of what narratives are well served by theatrical representation" (7).

Gainor draws on her own expertise in drama, feminist theory, and American cultural history to help readers see what they have been missing in Glaspell. Gainor's discussion of the Espionage and Sedition Acts of 1917 and 1918, for example, and her clear differentiation among Darwinian, Spencerian, and Lamarckian theories of evolution and genetics, clarify how much Glaspell had on her mind in the 1921 *Inheritors*, a play easy to read today as a generational conflict between the ideals of the main character, who risks jail for her beliefs, and the complacency of her brother and aunt, who urge restraint, self-protection, and the smug isolationism they construe as Americanism. Gainor's point is that to read the play only as a conflict between generations is to miss the both the political punch the work packed when it was new and the intellectual and historical specificity that went into its argumentation and character construction. Indeed, the equation of mistreated Native Americans with mistreated political radicals and Hindu students lobbying for a free India allowed Glaspell to make puns and associations among Reds and reds, and Indians and Indians. In Gainor's view, only the two-part *Angels in America* "has since attempted the scope, sweep, and political force of Glaspell's writing in this play" (141).

Part of the "context" in Gainor's title is the context of dramatic criticism, during Glaspell's lifetime and in the past four decades. In at least one instance, where only two written commentaries for a play exist, Gainor breaks new ground with her own detailed, nuanced analysis. *Springs Eternal*, Glaspell's last play, was written in the midst of World War II and never presented. Lawrence Langner, producer of the Theatre Guild and a fellow traveler from Glaspell's Little Theatre days (he co-founded the Washington Square Players, as Glaspell did the Provincetown), turned down the play as dated and too much of a "conversation piece" (245). Gainor acknowledges the "conceptual problem" of reconciling a comic tone with a debate among privileged characters not directly touched by the war, but she sees Shavian sophistication where Langner saw only a lack of salability. Among modern critics, Gainor notes the limits of W. B. Worthen's assessment of *Trifles*, which misses the lesson in spectatorship Gainor sees in the play. For Worthen, the piece perpetuates the patriarchal "othering" of its female subjects that is the hallmark of realistic theatre (55); for Gainor, the play teaches "how to spectate as a woman" (49) by using the (then-popular) detective genre and audience collusion in solving a mystery, a collusion requiring the adoption of the female characters' points of view.

Even as Gainor generates the kind of excitement and interest in her subject that could lead to revivals, she acknowledges plot setups in Glaspell's plays that may seem "contrived," convention-bound characters who are "virtually caricatures," and the "justified" observation by Marcia Noe that some of



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Glaspell's dialogue is "neither very witty nor very profound" (126, 187, 187). Glaspell's role as a social critic and formal experimenter, however, makes her a crucial figure through which to examine how theatre served modernist activism (and vice versa) in the United States between 1910 and 1930. Gainor's methodology reflects her assessment of Glaspell as a "blend of conservatism and radicalism" (73): Gainor has mastered the staggering amount of Glaspell scholarship that exists and respectfully engages the arguments of her predecessors, yet her interpretations are new recalibrations of virtually everything she cites and with which she wrestles.

My own understanding of political work differs from Gainor's, and I was not always persuaded that Glaspell's plays fit an activist bill, but this is a small point in the context of an otherwise impressive study. In the end, Gainor reminds us that present definitions of feminism and the failure to look at Glaspell's pursuits "more holistically" (264) may foreclose the possibility of examining the playwright's work with an eye to "important connections between her theater and other components of American history, especially those that may not traditionally have included the arts as part of their discursive arena" (266). Precisely by making such connections—studying and situating Glaspell's work "in context"—Gainor has produced not just a stunning study (which is also, by the way, a deliciously "good read"), but a fine model for assessing the work of other theatre workers.

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***Stoppard's Theatre: Finding Order amid Chaos.*** By John Fleming. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001; pp. 344. $45 hardcover.

Reviewed by Katherine E. Kelly, Texas A&M University

John Fleming has used the Tom Stoppard archive, housed at the Harry J. Ransom Humanities Research Center in Austin, Texas, to bring before students and scholars of Stoppard's plays a rich array of contextualizing materials. Letters, manuscripts, notes, typescripts, and other documents provide a wider frame for viewing Stoppard's authorship than has been available before now. Fleming has used these materials to revisit the entire Stoppard dramatic canon to 2000, correcting some errors of fact passed down by critics, and by using more recent plays to comment on earlier ones, offering the first comprehensive critical monograph about Stoppard since 1992.

The book is divided into twelve chapters, with all but two dedicated to single plays. Fleming bases his analyses upon published texts but also includes (in endnotes) references to variant texts (including performance texts) together with archival information that contradicts or complicates commonly accepted textual interpretations. Chapter 2 on *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, for example, contains a section titled "Textual History" (as do seven other chapters)



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in which Fleming traces in detail the construction of the text. As Stoppard observed in the preface to the Samuel French acting edition, "There is no definitive text of [*Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*]. . . . I would like each director to control the length and complication of each production . . . and . . . I would like to define the area in which he has a free hand with the text" (quoted in Fleming, 51). Fleming takes his cue from the playwright: "[M]y analyses . . . do not treat the plays as completely stable objects. . . . for many of Stoppard's plays there is no definitive text" (8). Neither Stoppard nor Fleming is charting a postmodern position on textuality, however, since there are "nearly" definitive texts, and Stoppard claims the authority to define the limits of textual license.

Fleming's Stoppard bears a good deal in common with Paul Delaney's Stoppard, in whose *Tom Stoppard: The Moral Vision of the Major Plays* the playwright assumed his by now familiar self-definition as a middle-class intellectual, invested in Judeo-Christian principles, with a view of art as a moral matrix. A more recent, alternative view of the author's works, by Michael Vanden Heuvel, is less categorical, noting that Stoppard "expresses keen interest in certain intellectual . . . and ideological positions associated with postmodern art and drama, while he is at the same time antipathetic to . . . the more radical . . . claims of postmodern social theory and its view of the human subject" (*Cambridge Companion to Stoppard,* 213). Fleming's Stoppard is the staunch social conservative badly misread by deconstructionists like Thomas Whitaker.

As Fleming himself admits, the real novelty in his book lies not in his interpretations, which tend to the conventional, but in the new materials he uses to contextualize Stoppard's works. The best example occurs in the chapter devoted to Stoppard's *Galileo*, begun for Paramount Pictures as a screenplay loosely based on Brecht's *Life of Galileo*. Stoppard wrote a "corrective" to what he perceived as Brecht's manipulation of the historical record, a corrective Paramount eventually rejected for its failure to feature a conventional heroic figure imperiled by authorities with whom viewers would feel involved (this critique is doubly ironical in its anti-Brechtian insistence on viewer identification and its apparent indifference to questions of history). Stoppard attempted to adapt the screenplay for a staging in the London Planetarium, where he could use a projector to create a series of celestial images on the ceiling, but technical difficulties prevented its showing, and the script was set aside. Much of the action and dialogue that Fleming describes in Stoppard's script will be recognized by those familiar with Brecht's play, for example, Galileo's insistence that all who observe natural events rely directly on the evidence of their senses. The differences between the Brechtian and Stoppardian scripts emerge somewhat unevenly in the chapter, since Fleming distinguishes the two in formal and thematic terms. In formal terms, Stoppard relies on a narrator in his play (suggesting the kind of mediation of history that we encounter in his narrated television play, *Squaring the Circle*) and on a version of events closer to those credited by historians than to those dramatized by



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Brecht. In thematic terms, Fleming notes that Stoppard celebrates Galileo (and, indirectly, science) as an uncompromised hero to be respected rather than a Brechtian antihero whose political indifference invites critique.

A second interesting addition to existing Stoppard commentary occurs in the book's opening chapter, where Fleming describes early Stoppard writing (much of it apparently forgettable) as surprisingly realist in style and sincere in its conveying of sentiment. As Fleming very clearly demonstrates, the "high and dry" Stoppard style of *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* and *Jumpers* is a later development, reached only after much early trial and disappointment. In describing Stoppard's years as a fledgling writer, Fleming offers some lovely anecdotes of the playwright's poverty (leading him to write a check against an empty account while disguised in a false beard to avoid recognition by the bank teller), friendships (notably with A. C. Smith), and a "pattern of debt and doubts, punctuated by holidays" (39). The "doubts" included occasional periods of writer's block, omitted by the playwright in his own recollections of his early writing days. Throughout the chapters devoted to single works, Fleming offers additional commentary, sometimes based upon multiple variant performances of a play, for example, *Jumpers*, where the 1976 production accented a contradiction between George's words and his actions that underscored his own lack of humanity, and where a comparison of the concluding Codas of the play's two variant published texts reveals their distinct thematic resonances. Fleming's clarification of the two published versions of *Travesties* and their relative merits offers a similar kind of detail useful to teachers and scholars who might be tempted to treat the texts as linguistically determined and final. Fleming is particularly helpful when tracing the discontinuous composition of many of these plays. Stoppard wrote *In the Native State* sporadically, for example (it is the radio precursor of what would become the stage play *Indian Ink*), interrupting its composition with revisions of *Hapgood* for its Los Angeles debut and with the direction of the film version of *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*. Similarly, a film script (*Hopeful Monsters*) intervened between the beginning and completion of *Indian Ink.*

The book's weaknesses are tied to Fleming's decision to describe unpublished works as well as the contents of letters and other archival documents. These descriptions lead, perhaps inevitably, to wearying plot summaries, which can be excused as a reasonable price to pay for acquainting readers with unknown or lesser-known Stoppard writing. The Stoppard scholar will also find some of the critical analysis and synthesis of the major stage plays obvious or overly familiar. All scholars, however, will benefit from Fleming's familiarity with the archive, and both novice and experienced readers of Stoppard's dramas will find much of value in Fleming's book. *Stoppard's Theatre: Finding Order amid Chaos* has recently been joined by Ira Nadel's biography of Stoppard, which offers new information about the life and writing of a gifted playwright whose reputation has grown steadily over the past four decades.



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***Theater and the Politics of Culture in Contemporary Singapore.*** By William Peterson. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001; pp. 287. $24.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Evan Darwin Winet, Cornell University

Singapore's extraordinary economic success, taken with a cultural ideology of "authoritarianism lite," have inspired imitation throughout Asia and the developing world. Many in the West viewed the 1994 caning of American teenager Michael Fay (for spray painting cars and stealing road signs) as a model of effective crime prevention. In the midst of his campaign to run the United States more like a business, Ross Perot named Singapore his "favorite country."

In *Theater and the Politics of Culture in Contemporary Singapore*, William Peterson (who lived in the country in the 1990s, and inaugurated a theatre studies program at the University of Singapore) looks at the cultural implications of the Singaporean success story as manifest in Anglophone theatre, and produces a work that challenges both the boundaries of American scholarship about Asia and current American theatre scholarship. On the one hand, Peterson makes clear to Asian specialists that theatre is a significant cultural expression of postcolonial nation building within a heterogeneous Asian city-state. On the other, he offers theatre scholars a compelling work of politically contextualized scholarship about a major national theatrical and dramatic tradition that contributes to current discourses about the performance of identity and the postmodern, postcolonial, and intercultural in Asian theatre.

In the first three chapters, Peterson argues that the Singapore government has developed the arts solely to make the country resemble the affluent nations of the West, which are perceived to generally support their cultural traditions. This mechanistic cultural policy has been reflected in a preference for high-prestige ventures and a lack of support for the actual diversity of identity and opinion in local Singaporean theatre. Singapore has asserted its cultural distinctiveness by taking a leading role in inventing "Asian values" (based predominantly on Confucian "family values"), which is posited as the basis for all sociocultural policy. According to Peterson, the Singaporean theatre is uniquely situated in global discourses of this sort, which center upon interculturalism and orientalism, and its representations support or contest the official East–West binarism.

The middle three chapters address controversial representations of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. Peterson considers sexualized representations of Caucasian and Asian bodies in Singaporean advertising and onstage from the perspective of Arun Mukherjee's challenge to address "the cultural work that a



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post-colonial text does on its home ground" (rather than *only* in the West). In this context, Peterson sees racist caricatures of Caucasians onstage as reactions to pervasive media images of white men as the subjects of pleasure and sexual conquest. Some theatre artists have recovered Asian sexuality through graphic fantasies, while others have presented images of emasculation. Although "feminism" is a taboo word in Singapore (as in most of Asia), various plays have struggled, ambivalently, with the independence Singaporean women have gained in the past decade. Some plays despair at the chaos attributed to Western (i.e., non-Asian) gender equality, some address the economics of gender (in the development of a subclass of maids from poorer Southeast Asian countries, for example), while other plays celebrate the fragmentation of Singaporean femininity. The government has found the depiction of homosexuality particularly dangerous to its cultural regime, on the ground that it challenges the generational progression fundamental to Confucianism. Peterson discusses how a production of David Hwang's *M. Butterfly* precipitated a hiatus in official and self-imposed censorship against theatrical representation of gays in the 1990s. The government later banned the entire category of "performance art," however, perceiving it as a form devoted to gay obscenity.

The three chapters that conclude the book offer challenging and original insights into the ethics and mechanics of global interculturalism. Peterson describes the government's ambivalent attempts to turn Singapore into a world-class arts venue while maintaining firm control of free expression. A festival of buskers (street vendors), for example, was so fettered with restrictions that the participation of actual buskers was discouraged. In contrast, the Singapore Arts Festival has served as a major venue for both local and foreign avant-garde theatre, but it has failed to gain grassroots support, preventing Singapore from becoming another Edinburgh: "Edinburgh," Peterson observes, "was not created from the top down; rather it sprang up from the ground because the conditions that reward and recognize artistic excellence were and continue to be present" (179). Western musicals offer different intercultural conundrums in Singapore. Local musicals that have met with local success are both highly derivative of Western forms and yet too parochial to export to the Great White Way (the "Holy Grail" for Singaporean producers). Indeed, Peterson argues in his penultimate chapter, Singaporean theatre artists are not, simply because they are Asian, immune from postmodern consumerism, orientalist exoticism, and superficial pastiche (typical offenses of Western interculturalism); and the work of Ong Ken Sen, Singapore's most celebrated director, in Peterson's view, reifies the Singaporean government's distinctive vision of what it means to be Asian.

Peterson is careful to balance his criticisms of Singaporean cultural policy with recognition of the government's accomplishments. His book challenges Western theatre scholars to reconsider the performance of identity and the politics of interculturalism within the sophisticated, postmodern, Asian context of contemporary Singapore, and concludes with the hope that "someday soon



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the government will come out of crisis mode and allow the richness, diversity, and promise of Singapore to shine through" (235).

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***Beckett: Waiting for Godot.*** By David Bradby. Plays in Production Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; pp. 255. $60 hardcover.

***Empty Figure on an Empty Stage: The Theatre of Samuel Beckett and His Generation.*** By Les Essif. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001; pp. 254. $47.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by Sidney Homan, University of Florida

These two studies of Beckett will be of enormous use to scholars but perhaps of somewhat less use to those charged with staging his plays, and therein hangs a tale.

David Bradby offers a meticulous, often fascinating review of the major productions of *Godot*, from its first appearance at the Théâtre de Babylone in 1953, to Peter Hall's innovative London production two years later, to stagings by Luc Bondy in Lausanne and Walter Asmus in Dublin just three years ago. There are "political" *Godot*s here, notably Susan Sontag's in Sarajevo in 1993 and one by Donald Howarth in Cape Town in 1980. The order of the chapters presents a story in itself, as we move from the Paris premiere, to a fascinating account of Bert Lahr's efforts to adjust the play to his comic style for the 1955 New York production, to the exhilarating (but also constrictive) effect on subsequent stagings of Beckett's own *Godot* at the Schiller-Theater in Berlin in March 1975, to a chapter nicely titled "Fail again. Fail better." Bradby concludes with discussions of the political *Godot*s and an update on recent productions.

This book is beautifully researched, and, short of giving a line-by-line account of the options taken by actors and directors during the rehearsal period, the various aspects of production are nicely documented. Aspects of *Godot* productions considered include adjusting to the stage space, making decisions about the tree and the rock, the "take" on Vladimir and Estragon, directors' concepts for a playwright known for being prescriptive, playing off Pozzo and Lucky against the two leads, and balancing the play's comedy and its dark view of humankind. The most informative chapter is one aided by Beckett himself, Bradby's account of the Berlin production informed by the playwright's own comments in his notebook. Here Bradby is able to bore in on the play as something happening moment by moment, beat by beat, the sort of detailed performance criticism that sometimes drives traditional scholars to distraction, fixed as they can be on "the larger picture" (and, I must add, one that is after the

fact). In the account of that Berlin production, we feel the play forming, being put together by a craft that is surely the most labor-intensive of all. With his eye for detail, Bradby could write the perfect book on a single production, from the director's concept to the audience's reactions.

The first two chapters of Bradby's book—"Beckett before *Waiting for Godot*" and "*Waiting for Godot*—The Play"—seem perfunctory. Although the "Plays in Production" series imposes brevity, these chapters appear to rush through the early Beckett and offer a conventional discussion of the drama before Beckett, time and theatrical performance, the symbiotic relation of Vladimir and Estragon, Artaud and Adamov on literality, and so on. Once Bradby gets to the productions themselves, however, the work shines. Throughout, I wished Bradby had asserted himself more, as he does in a tantalizing "Conclusion," where he talks about "the idea of the game" in *Godot*, the way the play is structured like a piece of music, how it can immerse its audience in the waiting, and—most especially—the work's basis in the "concrete, physical stage idioms" (212). Bradby plays the scholar's role well and, in so doing, surely establishes his right to blend the critic's role with his admirable account of what *Godot* has meant to the theatre.

Les Essif's study is more thematically based and less useful to the director or actor, though the finest moments in this excellent book are precisely those where Essif's discussions of "Beckett's Pursuit of Emptiness," for example, or the use of the "Hypersubjective Dramatic Character" are interwoven with an account of how these notions actually lead to stage enactment. Essif's is a large canvas; he reviews the literature concerning the theme of emptiness, this century's "progression toward the void" (21), and the move toward what Essif calls a "surrealist inner space," before focusing on Beckett's plays themselves.

The middle section of the book moves outward from Beckett to other modern playwrights, from Boris Vienna's *The Empire Builders* (1957) to Stoppard's *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*. The review of playwrights, although mechanical, because Essif needs to familiarize the reader with plots of plays that are not well known, serves the purpose of comparison well, and when the author turns to specific examples of stage enactment the study comes wonderfully alive.

Essif reviews the major themes of his study in a marvelous concluding chapter: the way the empty stage of the modern theatre changed audiences' perceptions of character and the antithesis between action and "the body of the character," even the "virtual space of the empty psyche" evoked by Hamlet. Beckett, too, celebrates this psychic space; his emptiness and its "manifestations" in death and nihilism constitute a kind of "truth" for the living (194–97). Essif's is a long, sometimes slow, academic way to this conclusion, but the end is well worth the journey.



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***The Cambridge Companion to Harold Pinter.*** Edited by Peter Raby. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; pp. 272, 10 photos. $54.95 hardcover, $19.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Ed Menta, Kalamazoo College

One might wonder if there is anything new to be written about the work of Harold Pinter. Other than Brecht and Beckett, there may be more volumes of criticism on Pinter than any other playwright of the twentieth century. The difference is that Pinter is still very much a living and evolving artistic force in today's theatre, not only as a playwright, but as a screenwriter, director, and actor. Despite some minor flaws, *The Cambridge Companion to Harold Pinter*, a collection of critical essays edited by Peter Raby, accomplishes the purpose stated in its brief foreword: to "provide an introduction to one of the world's leading and controversial writers, whose output in many genres and roles continue to grow."

Raby has divided the book into three main sections. Part 1, "Text and Context," focuses on the historical and aesthetic context of Pinter's writing (including the screenplays). Part 2, "Pinter and Performance," examines representative plays as performed in England and the United States (as well as in Ireland and Russia), but also explores Pinter's contributions as a director and actor. In Part 3, "Reactions to Pinter," Raby treats the reader to such diverse topics as "Pinter and the Critics" and "Pinter as Celebrity," and there is an afterword entitled "Harold Pinter and Cricket," a brief and somewhat disappointing essay by John Fowles, author of the novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, which Pinter adapted into one of his more successful screenplays.

The strength of this volume lies in Parts 2 and 3. "Pinter and Performance" leads off with "Body Language in Pinter's Plays," by Richard Allen Cave, an informative essay that details such topics as the deployment of physicality in final tableaux in plays like *The Homecoming*, *Old Times*, and *No Man's Land*, and is highlighted by a discussion of Pinter's own portrayal as Harry, the aging homosexual in *The Collection*. Famed British actor Michael Pennington gives an intriguing account of "Harold Pinter as Director" of Ronald Harwood's Holocaust drama, *Taking Sides*, in which Pennington appeared. Immediately following, Sir Peter Hall offers insights from a lifetime of directing Pinter's work, in one of the plum essays of this collection. Hall carefully analyzes the three types of "Pinter Pauses"—three dots, the pause, and silence—in terms of "moments of turbulence and crisis" among the characters. Hall also cites the need for actors to know very clearly every "ambiguous moment" in a Pinter play, even if they never express it emotionally in performance, and he also notes how listening to Pinter himself in ordinary conversation has been the most useful guide to discovering the rhythm of Pinter's dialogue. "Pinter and



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Performance" concludes with two truly informative essays, Charles Evans's "Pinter in Russia" and Anthony Roche's "Pinter and Ireland."

One of the most significant contributions to this volume is Drew Milne's "Pinter's Sexual Politics," which opens Part 3. Although there have been previous discussions of this topic in the canon of Pinter criticism, Milne tackles newer works such as *Ashes to Ashes*, as well as (the by-now familiar analysis of) Ruth in *The Homecoming*. Of all contemporary male dramatists, Pinter has most often been given a "bye" from the academy in terms of scrutiny of the gender politics of his plays (as opposed to say, David Mamet or even Arthur Miller). Milne attempts to address this inequity, stating, "The human condition is not male. Perhaps unintentionally, Pinter's predominant focus on male characters reveals conflicts of sexual difference as the micro-politics of social being" (200). Two fascinating pieces follow: "Pinter and the Critics," by Yael Zarhy-Levo, and Harry Derbyshire's "Pinter as Celebrity." The former chronicles the distinct phases and strategies of Pinter's acceptance (nay, even promotion) by the critical establishment. The latter traces Pinter's often-unhappy relationship with the tabloids of contemporary British pop culture (over the past decade, Pinter has especially been taken to task by the press for his political pronouncements). One of the most insightful points of this piece is Pinter's admission, as early as 1971, of the distinction "between his own perception of himself and his public image: '. . . I tend to get quite exhausted about being this Harold Pinter fellow. . . . He's not me. He's someone else's creation' " (230). Part 3 concludes with Mireia Aragy's "Pinter, Politics, and Postmodernism," also the title of Austin Quigley's opening essay of the book. Although this section seems to lack some of the specificity of insight and vital writing of Parts 2 and 3, essays such as Ronald Knowles's "Pinter and Twentieth Century Drama" and Steven Gale's "Harold Pinter, Screenwriter: An Overview" contribute useful perspective. Editor Raby's contribution, "Tales of the City: Some Places and Voices in Pinter's Plays" includes an analysis of Pinter's most recent play, *Celebration*.

*The Cambridge Companion to Harold Pinter* contains significant commentary on material from Pinter's third, so-called political, phase (which includes such works as *Mountain Language* and *One for the Road*), as well as from the first-phase "comedy of menace" plays (*The Birthday Party* through *The Homecoming*), and the second-phase "memory plays" (*Old Times* through *Betrayal*). There is material about Pinter's screenplays *and* his own acting and directing, which help make *The Companion* a worthy critical compendium. Although perhaps not as valuable as other works in the Cambridge Companion series (the Brecht volume, for example, contains more insightful and concise essays on Brecht's total impact, in both his life and legacy), the Pinter volume does contain a great deal of new insight. In a time when there are many performances of Pinter's plays and many publications about him, including Pinter festivals, journals, and reviews devoted exclusively to his work, one can still learn many things from *The Cambridge Companion to Harold Pinter*.



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***Performing O'Neill: Conversations with Actors and Directors.*** By Yvonne Shafer. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000; pp. 259. $24.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by Brenda Murphy, University of Connecticut

This volume is primarily a collection of eleven interviews with distinguished actors, directors, and producers who have brought Eugene O'Neill to the stage. In addition to interviews with James Earl Jones, Jane Alexander, Michael Kahn, Jason Robards, Theodore Mann, Arvin Brown, Len Cariou, Theresa Wright, Gloria Foster, Edward Petherbridge, and Fritz Weaver, Yvonne Shafer contributes a seventy-page introduction describing the work of earlier actors and directors that enables the book to span the entire production history of Eugene O'Neill's plays on the professional stage. This perspective makes a valuable contribution to O'Neill studies, which is heavily concentrated on the plays as literary texts.

The introduction presents a wealth of information in an accessible, lively style. Shafer creates a sense of immediacy through her discriminating use of quotations from reviews and just enough theatrical gossip to make the actors come alive. Stories of Richard Bennett's "bizarre behavior" on- and offstage, and Lynn Fontanne's possible treachery in leaking the script of *Strange Interlude* to Alexander Woollcott before its premiere, keep the introduction from assuming an encyclopedic tone, while the number and variety of figures that Shafer discusses—Alla Nazimova, Fredric March, Charles Gilpin, Paul Robeson, Lunt and Fontanne, Louis Wolheim, Walter Huston, George M. Cohan—is itself an index of O'Neill's great range as a playwright.

Part of Shafer's agenda in the book is to counter a cliché in O'Neill scholarship: that O'Neill hated the theatre because of his early experience with his father and had contempt for actors and other theatre professionals. Shafer provides several anecdotes in the introduction about O'Neill's appreciation of actors and his friendships with men like Gilpin, Wolheim, and Huston that belie this cliché and show that O'Neill was as comfortable with theatre people as he ever was with anyone. Other received critical notions that Shafer takes on include that O'Neill writes clumsy dialogue and that most of his plays are too literary or too "heavy" for the theatre. Shafer makes a point of asking her subjects what actors think of O'Neill's plays, particularly the dialogue, and many of the interviewees respond that they had dreaded acting in O'Neill, but ended up participating in what director Michael Kahn calls "a major artistic event of their lives" (115). Kahn comments that actors in his productions "loved" doing O'Neill. Fritz Weaver, who says that acting O'Neill is the closest thing he knows to acting Shakespeare, comments that "you dive into these parts and there's no bottom. It just goes forever, the fullest amount of energy you bring is not enough" (251). Encouraged to point out the difference between "acting language" and "book language,"



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several interviewees stress the power of O'Neill's dialogue. Ted Mann notes that the "tremendous emotion" in O'Neill's dialogue comes out in the performance, and Arvin Brown speaks of the rhythm of repetition that produces "a kind of poetry that is essential to the O'Neill experience" (168).

Two themes familiar from earlier interviews about O'Neill with the articulate Arvin Brown reverberate throughout this book, those of love and humor. Countering the idea that O'Neill is humorless and heavy, Shafer invites comments about O'Neill's comic side, drawing a complaint from Brown that critics undervalue the "wonderfully funny" *Ah, Wilderness!*, which Brown has staged for appreciative audiences five times, and an admiring comment from Teresa Wright about the "amazing" comedy that punctuates the tragedy of *Long Day's Journey into Night*. The discussion of the family in O'Neill stresses the motif of love between fathers and sons. Shafer's conversations with both James Earl Jones and Jason Robards return several times to the relationships between these actors and their actor-fathers, with implications for understanding the family as O'Neill experienced and envisioned it.

Other interesting discussions, that of race and ethnicity in O'Neill's plays, for example, arise from the choice of interviewees. James Earl Jones describes being picketed by the NAACP during a 1964 production of *The Emperor Jones* and says that O'Neill created in Brutus Jones "the first fully heroic African American character for the stage" (82). The actor also analyzes the effect that his playing Hickey in an overwhelmingly white cast had on a production of *The Iceman Cometh*. Gloria Foster comments on the recent debate between August Wilson and Robert Brustein over "color-blind and interracial casting," noting that an O'Neill play "is considered a universal work, because it speaks to people of different cultures" (226). Teresa Wright and Jane Alexander, on the other hand, speak of the importance of their Irish-American backgrounds for understanding *Long Day's Journey*: "I felt I knew these people surprisingly," Alexander comments.

Like any book of interviews, this one can be uneven. Some interviewees are more knowledgeable or have more experience with O'Neill than others, some are simply better at talking about it, but Shafer is a skillful interviewer and gets the most from her subjects. As a whole, the collection offers a great deal that is of interest to students and scholars of O'Neill, and it fills a significant need for work that helps us understand O'Neill as performers understand him. *Performing O'Neill: Conversations with Actors and Directors* is essential reading for anyone with a serious interest in the playwright and his works.

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***Jonathan Dewhurst: The Lancashire Tragedian, 1837–1913.*** By Philip and Susan Taylor. Sussex: Book Guild, 2001; pp. xvi + 240. £16.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by Jim Davis, University of New South Wales



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Despite an increasing awareness that the history of English theatre must necessarily encompass the study of those actors who were not stars and who worked in the provinces and suburbs rather than in the West End, there is still a comparative dearth of information about such players. Philip and Susan Taylor write that "for every actor about whom much is written and recorded, there must be at least 100 over whom the waters of time have closed without trace, but without whose contribution the theatre would not exist" (xv). In what Peter Thomson, in his foreword to the volume, describes as "an act of recovery" (x), the authors have lovingly and painstakingly documented the life of Philip Taylor's great-great uncle, the provincial tragedian Jonathan Dewhurst.

Dewhurst performed in the West End only occasionally, appearing in supporting roles. In the Midlands, however, and particularly in Lancashire, his career was far more prominent. He also spent several years in Australia and India, following the path of other actors, known as "leaders of the second rank," whose careers were focused on the provinces and the colonies. Born in 1837 in Lowtown, not far from Wigan, Dewhurst studied the art of acting while working as a grocer's assistant. Inspired by the example of Barry Sullivan, he turned professional at the age of twenty-seven, when he was invited to join Charles Calvert's company in Manchester. After performing in the Midlands and playing opposite Adelaide Neilson in *Amy Robsart*, he was engaged at Drury Lane Theatre in 1871 to play a leading role in *Rebecca*. He did not establish himself in London but, from 1872, secured engagements as the leading man to a number of popular actresses, traveling with them in the provinces. He played largely in the legitimate drama, particularly Shakespeare. As Leontes in a spectacular production of *The Winter's Tale* he was described as "at times rather too noisy and demonstrative" (54), although the Taylors are at pains to show subsequently that he was anything but the barnstorming, ranting actor of tradition. In 1878, when he first played the lead in Bulwer-Lytton's *Richelieu,* one of his most successful parts, in Liverpool, he formed his own "powerful legitimate company," touring to venues such as Leigh, Oldham, Sheffield, and Southport. His repertoire was predictable: besides Richelieu, he played Othello, Hamlet, Shylock, Claude Melnotte (in Bulwer-Lytton's *The Lady of Lyons*), Petruchio, Richard III, and Benedick.

In 1881, Dewhurst sailed for Australia. His initial engagements in Melbourne and Sydney met with largely hostile criticism. His Richard III was considered "commonplace, extravagantly melodramatic and stagey . . . only worthy of a very minor theatre" (71). The Taylors are particularly engaged by the wittily scurrilous comments on Dewhurst in the Sydney *Bulletin*, but they do not consider the pro-Republican stance that generally informed the *Bulletin*'s view of English actors. Dewhurst was received more favorably in smaller towns, such as Ballarat, where the local critic interestingly praised him for losing his identity as the character Richelieu. Dewhurst subsequently played in India, where he was more successful.



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On his return to England, Dewhurst toured the Northern circuit in classical roles until 1884, when he was invited to join Wilson Barrett's touring company of *Claudian* prior to appearing as the Ghost in Barrett's lackluster London production of *Hamlet*. In 1886, he played Banquo to J. H. Barnes's Macbeth at the Olympic Theatre, even taking over the title role for a time. After a tour of the Drury Lane melodrama *A Run of Luck* and playing, with his third wife, Fanny Rivers, the leading roles in *The Duke's Motto* at Manchester, he embarked on the final phase of his career.

From 1888 to 1906, Dewhurst was manager and lessee of the Theatre Royal, Leigh, a town where he had spent much of his youth. Although his brother-in-law described Leigh as "a very dull town and people hang about the streets in crowds not knowing what to do" (146), Dewhurst was clear about his own mission, announcing that "the object of the drama and the stage is not to pander to the low and vulgar, but to elevate and refine" (139). This Dewhurst attempted to achieve, enacting his first Lear in 1890 and engaging touring companies of high quality. He also became a leading figure in the literary and social life of the town. From the early 1900s, however, audiences clearly demanded more popular fare than he was perhaps comfortable providing. He retired from the theatre and spent the remaining seven years of his life as manager of the Royal Oak Hotel, Chorley.

The Taylors' well-illustrated, well-presented biography of Dewhurst reveals a life that would otherwise have remained hidden. There are, however, a few methodological aspects that need addressing. The lack of footnotes, despite a full bibliography, can occasionally be irritating. The contextualization of Dewhurst's life within the society of his time is often excellent, but occasionally, as in accounts of shipwrecks and voyages, there is too much extraneous detail. Although speculation is at the heart of all biography, at times the writing here is overspeculative, especially when addressing the attitudes and feelings of Dewhurst's first two wives. The newspaper research is exemplary and wide-ranging, but there is too much quotation and too little analysis. I would have liked a more abbreviated use of quotation in the narrative, but fuller use of it in, say, an additional chapter on Dewhurst the actor. There is a need to explore further the implications of Ben Iden Payne's comment that he and a group of actors supporting Dewhurst as Othello in 1906 came prepared to laugh but went away chastened, for "all the verse was spoken simply and naturally under the guidance of sincere emotion" (169).

As it stands, the biography never quite gets to the heart of what made Dewhurst so interesting and complex an actor. Even so, the Taylors' "act of recovery" is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of nineteenth-century theatre and of an actor who, driven by self-help and the goal of social and educational improvement, made a significant but unsung contribution to the theatre of his time.



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***Ghana's Concert Party Theatre.*** By Catherine M. Cole. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001; pp. 196 + ill. $52.95 hardcover, $21.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Kevin J. Wetmore Jr., California State University, Northridge

The problem with much postcolonial theatre theory in the West, as Catherine M. Cole points out in her introduction, is that it is "dominated by literary analysis of European-language written texts," while much of the performance in Africa occurs in the form of "non-textual expressions in so-called indigenous languages" (7). How, then, is the theatre theorist and historian to study the concert party of Ghana, a twentieth-century traveling popular theatre, a comic variety show "that combined an eclectic array of cultural influences," including, but not limited to, Al Jolson, American movies, Anansesem (Ghanaian "spider stories"), "highlife" music, African-American spirituals, and others in which there is no literary text but there is most definitely a performance text?

Cole's response to this query is a combination of archival research (examining reviews, newspaper articles, and the work of Ghanaian theatre scholars), interviews with those who developed the form and performed in it from its golden age to the present day, and a form of theatre anthropology in which she participated as an actress in concert party performances in Ghana. The end result, argues Cole, is "simultaneously a cultural history of a performance form and a social history of the people who created and consumed it" (3).

The first chapter serves as an introduction to the concepts and methodologies. Chapter 2 examines the significance of the use of blackface in concert parties, which Cole claims must be read in an interpretive frame different from that of American blackface. Having cleared the Western preoccupation with the representation of ethnicity, the third through the sixth chapters provide a historical survey of the development of the concert party, taking into account Western influences, the pragmatics of performance, female impersonation, and political efficacy. An epilogue notes the threat that television and film pose to the staying power of the concert party, describes the shifts from local to national to international focus that concert parties have taken, and suggests possibilities for future study.

Cole relies upon interdisciplinary methodologies in order to study her subject, including postcolonial theory, feminist performance theory, and queer theory. She argues, however, that to approach African theatre with these Eurocentric theories will result in an inaccurate understanding of Ghanaian theatre. Blackface and drag, for example, "mean" differently in Ghanaian culture than in the West, and it would be intellectually dishonest, if not culturally imperialistic, to study African theatre with Western tools. Cole thus attempts to answer the questions of interest to the non-African theatre historian in African terms. The fourth chapter,



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for example, purports to "analyze the fundamental principles of concert party performance, and, in a more general sense, Akan creativity in and on their own terms," rather than using hegemonic Western paradigms (80). Ultimately, the concert party, even as it occupied a marginal position in Ghana's "Official" culture, "served as [a] forum for the creation, dissemination, and contestation of identities among Ghanaians in the colonial and early post-colonial eras," and also "created a space for critical evaluation of Western behaviors even as they modeled these behaviors for spectators to emulate" (5, 77).

Cole is a canny historian and theorist, well aware of the cultural minefields, problematic constructions, and mediated representations that remain omnipresent when an American (even one of African descent) engages African culture. One must admire her reading of the significance and meaning of the concert party in Ghana, pointing out the traps of postcolonial theory as espoused in the West even as she avoids them. This volume, analyzing a performance form that has been long deserving of in-depth study, even as it has been neglected in many West African theatre histories, is a welcome addition to the growing body of literature on African popular theatre. Cole's book is eminently readable, valuable to both the scholar and the student, and, arguably, a model for the study of postcolonial African performance forms.

Over a dozen pages of illustrations and photographs, along with copious notes and references, support the text. The book would have benefited from the inclusion of additional material, however, perhaps at least one of the transcribed, translated "playscripts" Cole mentions. (One can only hope that a future volume of concert party scripts will be published.) Cole also could have brought her historical narrative further toward the end of the twentieth century (she stops in the mid-1960s, even though her own fieldwork experience occurred in the mid- to late 1990s). Cole also tends to accept statements by her interviewees unquestioningly, offering up oral history as sole proof for some of her contentions. None of these concerns, however, prevents thinking *Ghana's Concert Party Theatre* an excellent study. Rather, they suggest the need for more work to allow scholar and student alike access to this nonliterary, vibrant, popular African form.

Also available from Indiana University Press is *Stage-Shakers!* by Kwame Braun (the author's husband and videographer), a ninety-minute companion video researched and filmed in collaboration with Cole's writing, which serves as "an important extension of the book."

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***Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre.*** By Freddie Rokem. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000; pp. 241 + ill. $42.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by Melissa Gibson, California State University, Fresno



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At first glance, Freddie Rokem's violent yoking of two unrelated events, the French Revolution and the Shoah, seems a bit odd. Rokem has good reason for linking plays treating these disparate subjects, however: both phenomena encourage a view of history "as a series of tragic failures of basic human values" (1) and, as such, the two are viewed dialectically. (In postwar theatre, the Terror has often served as a metaphor for the horrors of World War II.) Issues of representation also seem to make the coupling of these events unusual. While the French Revolution's self-conscious spectacularization seems to lend itself to theatre, the subjective, occluded suffering characterizing the Shoah nearly defies representation. This contrast would seem to present opposing challenges to playwrights, yet, frequently, dramas about the French Revolution and the Shoah employ similar metatheatrical devices—such as plays within plays—to present their histories.

This similarity goes some way toward explaining why a book about history in performance should illustrate its most interesting themes with examples drawn not from a historical drama but from *Hamlet*. Rokem mines *Hamlet*'s metatheatricality to consider the dynamics of the actor—audience relationship in history plays: "What, has this thing appeared again tonight?" Rokem calls actors who nightly re-enact some *thing* that actually happened in the past "hyper-historians," who "serve as a connecting link between the historical past and the 'fictional' performed *here* and *now* of the theatrical event" (13). Rokem engagingly teases out this idea of metatheatrical witnessing throughout the book and, naturally, most of his discussion is focused on the audience. Accordingly, the victimized eavesdropper (Polonius, Orgon), as an audience stand-in, spurs thoughts about the position of the audience at a history play: at most plays, the audience is Polonius eavesdropping behind the arras; at history plays, the audience is Horatio watching "The Mousetrap," monitoring a re-enactment "where the victim is given the power to speak about the past again" (205).

Rokem's chosen themes are most provocative in the first chapter, where he examines Shoah plays performed in Israel. Here, the issues of representation and witnessing come tellingly to the fore. Rokem observes that since the early 1980s, plays about the Shoah have increasingly incorporated elements of the fantastic into the two other dominant modes of dramatization, the documentary and the testimonial, where "The fantastic elements are probed as a means to address and confront the issue of the incomprehensibility and the incommunicability of the Shoah" (36). Citing Todorov's idea that the key to the fantastic "lies in the representation of hesitation as one of the themes in the work itself" (37), Rokem identifies the metatheatrical framing of plays within plays as one form of hesitation. Much of the power in Shoah plays arises from the ambiguous condition of the spectator situated both inside and outside this frame (37). Rokem engagingly examines the viewer's shifting position in Yehoshua Sobol's *Ghetto*, Hanoch Levin's *The Boy Dreams*, and Dudu Ma'ayan's fascinating *Arbeit Macht Frei vom Toitland Europa*.



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The chapters on French Revolution plays cannot quite sustain the level of exciting intellectual inquiry present in the discussion of the Shoah plays. This may be inevitable, given the French Revolution's lack of immediacy for contemporary audiences. Rokem's analysis of Brook's production of *Marat/Sade*, Mnouchkine's *1789*, and Ingmar Bergman's production of Mishima's *Madame de Sade* continue his investigation of witnessing and metatheatrical representation. While they produce a host of witnesses to history, Rokem notes that these plays never directly confront the questions "who becomes authorized to become a witness-historian and how [is] this authorization . . . formulated and crystallized[?]" (133). Though answering such questions need not be the goal of every history play, Rokem has constructed his arguments in these terms. Consequently, the French Revolution plays come out thin compared to the Shoah plays, for which these questions are of central concern.

This sense of thinness increases when Rokem looks at three American productions of Büchner's *Danton's Death* (by Orson Welles in 1938, Herbert Blau in 1965, and Robert Wilson in 1992) to "discover why and in what sense these U.S. productions were unsuccessful or even failures" (136). Rokem acknowledges that it is "problematic to anatomize artistic failures." Perhaps, then, this is a valiant effort to understand the dynamics of historical representation in an American context, but if so, the reader cannot escape the suspicion that these productions may have failed not because they did not "create a viable bridge between the play and [the American] context" (136), but because they were poorly executed. (Rokem appears to have seen only a videotape of Robert Wilson's 1992 *Danton's Death* and the others not at all.) Ultimately, the issue of their quality undermines Rokem's analysis of these productions, although he provides an interesting account of Herbert Blau's press releases and other writings about his *Danton's Death*, trying to situate it in the 1960s' American political scene.

Linking the French Revolution and the Shoah is an intriguing way to frame reflections on the operations of history in performance. Historical drama is a sprawling, unwieldy topic, however; indeed the very definition of a history play, even more the inclusive notion of "the performance of history," is open for debate. Few scholars attempt comprehensive studies, and most limit them by period or topic (the Elizabethan chronicle play, for example, or Joan of Arc plays). By combining two events that do not immediately seem related, and by providing his argument with suitable comparisons and contrasts, Rokem has raised many fruitful questions about the reception of performed history.

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***Dario Fo and Franca Rame: Artful Laughter.*** By Ron Jenkins. New York: Aperture, 2001; pp. 211. $45.00 hardcover.

Reviewed by Stanley V. Longman, University of Georgia



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From the first glance, this is a beautiful book. Its cover is provocative, offering the image of Dario Fo's face stretched across the spine of the book, seemingly held in place by buckles and cables that extend across the front and back cover. The inside of the book contains one stunning presentation after another, including a wide variety of photographs of Dario Fo and Franca Rame in performance or at work, as well as drawings and paintings by Fo himself, paintings by the great masters Leonardo da Vinci and Jacapo Tintoretto as interpreted by Fo, and others by Piero della Francesca and Giotto as altered in Fo's adaptations. Moreover, the layout of the text is beautifully designed. The staff of Aperture, and particularly Yolanda Cuomo, the book's designer, have executed its presentation masterfully.

The text itself is authoritative and engaging. There is probably no one in the English-speaking world who has a closer artistic, professional, and personal association with Fo and Rame than Ron Jenkins. He has worked with them, translated their plays, interpreted for them in live performances, and written about them in articles and in his book *Subversive Laughter* (1994). It is hard to keep up with Fo and Rame: since that book, five more plays have appeared, and Fo has won the Nobel Prize for Literature. The Nobel ceremony occasioned another performance, for Fo, after all, is an irrepressible performer: give him an audience and he is at once creating characters, pantomiming, and telling stories.

What Jenkins does very well is to account for the distinct nature and wide range of the art of Fo and Rame. This calls for an exploration of the special relation between visual and performing art, of the particular "cinematic" technique that Fo and Rame have developed, of how performance meets with audience, of the influence or example of the *giulari* (medieval storytelling minstrels or troubadours) and, above all, of how art relates to society and politics.

Such an account entails a close look at the backgrounds of the two. Fo grew up in a village on the banks of Lake Maggiore, a village populated by fishermen, glassblowers, poachers, and smugglers. Because of poverty and shady dealings, these were people given to concocting elaborate stories. Storytelling was a major form of entertainment, and the villagers spent evenings sharing tales of one sort or another, most of them accounts of peasants, workers, and fishermen gaining the advantage over their "social betters." As a boy, Fo was transfixed by these stories, and he carried them and the taste for storytelling into his artistic adult life. Rame is a *figlia d'arte*, born into a family of itinerant actors, making her stage debut at the age of eight months in the arms of her mother. The Rame family traces its history in the acting profession back two hundred years, so, as Franca Rame puts it, she has performance in her DNA. The family always had a vast repertory of plays or scenarios ready at hand, and wherever they went, they adapted pieces to the local situation and improvised lines and business in accordance with the issues of the time. The interaction with the audience was always vivid and alive, calling for split-second decisions



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and a keen sense of timing. Fo affirms that he profited enormously from the Rame family's store of scenarios and techniques.

The special relationship between visual art and performing art also derives from Fo's background. He graduated from the Brera Academy of Art in Milan as an architect and painter. Not only has this background led to his working as his own scene and costume designer, it has also become an integral part of his preparation of his plays. He works by planning the play in pictures, drawing the scenario rather than writing it, creating images that he may use onstage or suggest through pantomime and transformations. In early plays, such as *Isabella, Three Sailing Ships and a Con-man*, this approach resulted in what we might call painterly theatre: rich in decor, elaborately costumed, and full of vivid imagery. Once Fo and Rame chose to abandon the traditional box-pit-and-gallery theatres and took to performing in found spaces at factories, farms, and city squares, pantomime and transformations replaced spectacle. The drawings became storyboards, and the performance took on the aspect of cinema. Fo would use cuts, montage, close-ups, and long shots. Virtually alone onstage, he can conjure up the world of the play and all the characters in it, and get audiences either to look closely at a detail or to think they are looking at a crowd of people spread across the stage. Jenkins devotes a whole chapter to Fo's presentations about two famous works of art: Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* at the time of the unveiling following its restoration, and Tintoretto's *Discovery of the Body of Saint Mark*.

Jenkins provides an eloquent account of the political function of theatre as seen by Fo and Rame. In the tradition of the *giulari*, especially Angelo Beolco (or "Ruzzante"), performance is by definition a social event and so cannot divorce itself from society. Fo aligns himself with Arlecchino, the *zanno* who is always down-and-out, always hungry, always at the mercy of the *padrone*. He plays roles that reflect not only age-old class tensions but contemporary injustices, oppression, and corruption: the maniac Johann Padan in *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, Marino in *Marino Is Free! Marino Is Innocent!*, and, most recently, Saint Francis in *Francis, the Holy Fool*. This political sense lies at the very heart of Fo's work. For her part, Rame has a talent for shifting readily from a farcical tone to one of intense suffering, never losing the audience in the process. She, too, has a political urgency in her work, evident in such plays as *It's All about Bed, Home and Church,* which she performs alone.

The book is organized in nine chapters, starting with "Origins," describing the background of the two artists, and ending with "A Nobel Jester," an account of Fo's performance in Stockholm on the occasion of the awarding of the Nobel Prize. In between are chapters devoted to plays or groups of plays and extended excerpts translated by Jenkins. While there is no chronological order to the sequence, the whole creates a strong vision of the nature and purposes of the work of the couple. If there is any complaint to register, it is that the organization does tend to occasion redundancies; techniques are described two



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and even three times in the same terms. There are also pictures that are not fully identified (including the provocative picture on the cover) and descriptions of pictures that are not in the book.

All in all, this is an extraordinary and even loving portrait of an artistic pair who have created a meaningful and powerful corpus of work. There may be great clowning and hilarity, but it is always accompanied by an intensely serious purpose. There is also a wonderful sense that emerges in the course of the book of the close, fruitful collaboration Fo and Rame have carried on for half a century. The book is an outstanding tribute to two extraordinary contemporary theatre artists.

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***Guerilla Performance and Multimedia.*** Edited by Leslie Hill and Helen Paris. London: Continuum, 2001; pp. 331. $29.95 paperback.

Reviewed by R. G. Davis, San Francisco State University

Leslie Hill and Helen Paris intend that *Guerilla Performance and Multimedia* "prove a valuable resource to fellow artists on both practical and creative levels," and they hope to "help artists get their hands on more funding to make their work."

The first section of the book presents a series of interviews with independent performance artists, multimedia artists, and promoters. In the first interview, Bobby Baker is pictured holding in her mouth what appears to be a harmonica, but is actually a can of anchovies. (She explains, "I started as a painter and I got very frustrated with the sorts of painting I was doing and started making edible sculpture" [5].) Other interviews introduce Johannes Birringer, who "built a digital dance/art studio in an old warehouse in Houston," Laurie Beth Clarke, who composes computer environments, and Toni Dove, who "started out as a painter" and now works on interactive film. Performance artist Julie Tolentino says of her work, "I consider everything I do as part of making work. For me, it is a radical challenge. The food I eat, the social time I carve out, the naps I take and the choices made during each and every day" (89). When asked what made her a performer, Lois Weaver answers, "Resistance. I was born in the rural south to a Southern Baptist family and whenever I would get 'too big for my britches' (which translates into loud mouthed and loud dressed, independent, or just plain smart), my mother would always say 'Don't show yourself, Lois.' So that is EXACTLY what I had to do. I had to become an exhibitionist. I was desperate to make myself visible" (96).

The book has five other sections. Section 2, "Organizations in Profile," discusses the work of ten promoters, including Artsadmin in London, the Banff Centre in Canada, FADO in Toronto, and Franklin Furnace, one of the oldest,



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started in 1976 in New York. Section 3, "Funding," discusses aspects of enriching one's career—finding funding sources, writing proposals, making out a budget, or providing support material for a foundation or grant application—and offers interviews with managers, agencies, and promoters. Section 4, "Production," describes the need to be prepared to adapt to different rehearsal spaces and equipment, while Section 5, "Documentation and Marketing," contains brief interviews with public-relations people and notes the need for demo tapes and digital photographs. The title of Section 6, "Stay out of Jail," suggests that artists are doing something illegal, but in fact concerns their ignoring ordinary business practices.

When I first heard the book title, I thought it would be interesting to see where so-called guerrilla culture has traveled. In 1965, I wrote an article on guerrilla theatre for *TDR*, describing the work a bunch of us were doing as the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Our notion of guerrilla (with two *r*'s) was that we presented performances and plays that were different from bourgeois art and opposed the establishment, the war in Vietnam, and the oppression of most folks by "ye old Capitalist state." We had a sense of humor about our work, but we were serious about our association with the New Left and the counterculture. We used nonnaturalistic forms and performed in nontraditional venues. In the 1960s, funding for such work did not come from foundations, since the contradictions were obvious. Today, performance art that claims avant-garde status not only is supported by Rockefeller grants, but is taught as a subject in universities as a part of theatre or multimedia studies. I used to think avant-garde art was created in opposition to the status quo. Can one learn how to be antibourgeois in a bourgeois institution? And, if so, how do they grade?

In the early days of a performance art mostly made by ex-painters, sculptors, and dancers, interventionists like Joseph Beuys were innovative. By the late 1970s, resident theatres had become Broadway tryout houses. Taking direction from individualistic painters and sculptors, performance artists had to crack a few eggs to make waves, and took on the burden of being author, composer, performer, director, costumer, publicist, and, eventually, promoter. They had departed from the notion of theatre as a collaborative form, with all those roles spread among a number of people engaged in creating a work far beyond the identity or brilliance of just one person.

This book dwells on the tepid side of performance and multimedia. Unfortunately for the editors, it arrives at a time when the Christian Right is in power and U.S foreign policy (with British and Canadian support) is bent on bombing and invading, creating refugees whose presence overwhelms the identity politics and biographical displays the book describes. Individual activities are coded responses, even, potentially, outmoded responses, given current conditions. Greenpeace activists rappel down buildings, turtles march in the Seattle WTO spectacle, 250,000 Europeans demonstrate in Genoa against globalization, and others gather for the World Social Forum at Porte Alegre, all



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presenting a challenge to performance artists to do more than promote themselves properly.

## Shakespeare and Beyond

***The Medieval European Stage, 500–1550.*** Ed. William Tydeman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; pp. lxii + 720. $140 hardcover.

Reviewed by Michal Kobialka, University of Minnesota

William Tydeman's volume brings together a wide selection of materials constructing a "theatrical history" of the Middle Ages. The focus is on Western Europe; the temporal boundaries are more or less the fall of the Roman Empire and the emergence of "markedly Renaissance forms in Italy"—thus, some one thousand years. The individual sections, each preceded by a brief introduction penned by an associate editor, provide the signposts for this documentary history: "The Inheritance" (Nick Davis), "Latin Liturgical Drama" (Peter Meredith), "Extra-Liturgical Latin and Early Vernacular Drama" (Lynette Muir), "England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales" (Tydeman), "France" (Muir), "The German-Speaking Area" (John E. Tailby), "Italy" (Michael J. Anderson), "The Low Countries" (Elsa Strietman and Muir), "The Iberian Peninsula (Including Majorca)" (Louise M. Haywood), and "Traditions of the People and Folk Drama" (Thomas Pettitt and Leif Søndergaard). These titles unequivocally indicate the scope and the limits of the volume: classical inheritance, the development of liturgical drama within the Roman Catholic Church, and popular religious drama in the vernacular in nine medieval regions. This general historical trajectory is complemented by the extant records about the costumes, audiences, staging, actors, directors, props, contracts, correspondence, and "eye-witness" accounts. Over seven hundred documents of varied length have been compiled from the manuscripts or copied from other reference books on the topic of medieval drama and theatre.

Tydeman's general introduction sets the tone for the volume in terms of how he and the other scholars think about the medieval period and their attitude toward recent shifts and transformations in historiography. On the one hand, the reader is told that "perhaps the best way of regarding the history of the medieval theatre is to view it as a sequence of constant readjustments between contending forces which time and again succeeded in creating conditions favourable to the emergence of great theatrical art" (2). On the other hand, despite the fact that the editor and coeditors acknowledge that we are unable "to chart the survival of dramatic entertainments with any precision" (3) and that "the impulses animating the conception and growth of the Church's Latin liturgical music-dramas remain obscure and controversial" (4), the story of the medieval drama and theatre comes across clearly. In Tydeman's words, "The point of origin is usually acknowledged as being the Easter ceremony known as the Visit to the Sepulcher (*Visitatio Sepulchri*), of which the 'script' is provided by the so-called



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*Quem queritis* trope. This is one of many similar tenth-century textual and musical embellishments to standard Gregorian plainchant, and takes the form of a set of alternating (antiphonal) exchanges imagined as being delivered on the first Easter morning between the three Maries seeking Christ's sepulcher and the angel seated at its entrance. Fittingly enough, it was sung as a prelude to the first Mass of Easter Day, though its place within the programme of Easter services could vary from region to region" (4).

I quote this passage at length because it establishes a link with that medieval scholarship that has been challenged by the new medievalism's concepts of the alterity of representational practices in the Middle Ages, a challenge that redraws intellectual boundaries with the help of postmodern theory. More important, the passage makes clear that, under the veil of openness and general acceptance of different points of view (though the publications that challenge the editor's and coeditors' thinking about what constitutes theatre and drama are conspicuously absent from the Bibliography), this volume exemplifies the methodology of research that claims to present objective historical information. The individual sections constitute a case in point. Each consists of an introduction, which briefly establishes the context, either by presenting a complex geopolitical "slice of history" (the inheritance, Italy, the Low Countries, the Iberian Peninsula) or by establishing clear links between the church or vernacular traditions and a theatre and drama understood in terms of such modernist categories as representation, text, action, and setting, followed by a collection of "primary sources" selected and arranged chronologically by the section's coeditor.

Rather than singling out one of the sections to indicate the workings of this methodology, let me pose a set of questions, which, I hope, will frame future discussions about this book and other collections in the Cambridge series of documentary histories of theatre in Europe. How are we to respond to a volume put together by recognized scholars whose work has undoubtedly contributed to our knowledge of the medieval period, but who now are set up as the authorities who both construct the archive and delimit archivable material? How are we to view this volume and its contents some thirty years after the publication of Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* and its argument that the archive is not just a mass of texts that belong to a single discursive formation? How are we to read this volume vis-à-vis Michel de Certeau's comments in *The Writing of History* that the archive, in effect, implies the combination of a group (the "erudite"), a place (a "library"), and a system of practices (of copying, printing, classification, etc.)? How are we to circumvent Jacques Derrida's observation in *Archive Fever* regarding archivable meanings, which are determined in advance by the structure that archives?

Though the editor and coeditors are not interested in pursuing any of these questions, I doubt they can be dismissed as irrelevant or as a postmodern hijacking of historical investigation. On the contrary, these questions address the



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concerns of many scholars, working within and without the archive, and provide the opportunity to reflect on the notion of a medieval documentary history. Unless this reflection occurs, I am not sure I would like my students to use this collection, no matter how "consumable" its material is.

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***Gesture in Medieval Drama and Art.*** Edited by Clifford Davidson. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001; pp. xii + 239, 48 plates, 28 illustrations. $15 hardcover.

Reviewed by Donnalee Dox, Texas A&M University

The aim of this superb volume is a deeper understanding of physical gesture in European drama and art. Rarely does a collection approach a topic with such commitment and clarity. At a time when theatre historiography construes bodies as cultural constructions or as signifiers of power relationships, these authors delve into the communicative potential of bodies in motion. The eight essays are uniformly incisive in their analyses, convincing in their arguments, and elegant in expression. Each contributor sets in motion a different set of problems and critical perspectives, use of sources, and analytical strategies. Within these variations, a common concern for the performative qualities of gesture (beyond linguistic or pictorial referentiality) gives the volume its organic unity.

Reconstructing medieval gesture is not without methodological problems. Clifford Davidson acknowledges in his preface that, for example, contemporary productions of medieval plays imitate imitations (ix). These authors confront such theoretical challenges head-on and expand conventional categories of thought with expert treatments of their sources. The result is new space for the study of corporeality in medieval theatre and art. Each essay is complete and sophisticated, and each author's voice clear and strong. Together, they resonate in ways that bespeak an ongoing dialogue and, sometimes, creative disagreement.

Jody Enders's essay, "Of Miming and Signing: The Dramatic Rhetoric of Gesture," establishes the unflinching conviction that understanding physical communication is crucial to understanding medieval drama. That conviction characterizes the entire collection. Enders grounds her case in Western theories of rhetorical gesture, from late classical to postmodern, and works toward a theory of gesture with specific reference to the twelfth-century, Anglo-Norman *Jeu d'Adam* (8). When the inevitable problem of matching gesture to intent comes up, Enders shifts the conventional discourse on the degree of theatricality medieval Christianity could tolerate to the power and importance of gesturing.

Clifford Davidson's article, "Gesture in Medieval British Drama," is the centerpiece of the collection and a scholarly tour de force. Davidson seeks



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nothing less than the meaning of performed gesture, a "complicated and dynamic visual fabric," which exceeds such descriptors as realistic, ritualized, lifelike, or stylized (66). Allusions to and evidence of gesture come from a wide range of nondramatic sources, many of which circulate throughout the volume in other essays. Davidson looks to redactions of biblical history, hagiographies, devotional writings, sermons, classical rhetorical texts, the practices of affective piety, and (cautiously) the visual arts. He reweaves the visual fabric of gestures that medieval actors, the carriers of cultural memory, could have used to create recognizable and meaningful stage movements in performances of the English cycle plays. The variations possible in a seemingly simple gesture, such as a kiss, appear, in Davidson's comprehensive analysis, redolent with meanings heretofore unnoticed.

The volume presents a variety of approaches to gesture. Where Davidson eschews play texts as sources, Dunbar H. Ogden goes straight to ceremonies from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries to find "touches of verisimilitude" in characterization (37). He speaks to the nexus of liturgical performance, where the iconographic status of the body meets performers' autonomous creativity (31). Ogden's "Gesture and Characterization in the Liturgical Drama" shows that *Visitatio* and other ceremonial plays yield fine distinctions between iconic gestures, gestures from daily life (e.g., tugging at a sleeve) and gestures indicating attitude or character. His appendix of terms from Easter dramas and ceremonies, like the plates and illustrations throughout the volume, is a valuable aid.

Natalie Crohn Schmitt's essay, "The Body in Motion in the York *Adam and Eve in Eden*," also points to ambiguities in identifying gestures as conventional or expressive, symbolic or realistic (159). Crohn Schmitt deals with the dramaturgical problems of translating static imagery into stage action. In search of medieval conventions of gesture in service of a historical reconstruction of the Fullers' play, Crohn Schmitt analyzes iconography with an acute awareness of its limitations. Her concern for the communicative power of the performing body never succumbs to facile one-to-one correspondences.

Barbara D. Palmer also begins her essay with a dramaturgical reference to the N-Town *Parliament of Heaven and Annunciation*. Palmer's "Gestures of Greeting: Annunciations, Sacred and Secular" looks at the dramatic (rather than religious) function of gestures of greeting in a wide range of plays and texts. English and continental gestures, she proposes, either signify what is not actually represented (places, times, actions, objects, characters) or express character psychology (131). Her systematic investigation of a single gesture reveals continuities and changes in how greetings were performed as a stage gesture and in daily life.

Three of the essays explore art and specific genres of writing (drama, devotional literature, poetic biblical history). Janet Schrunk Ericksen's



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"Offering the Forbidden Fruit in MS. Junius 11" looks at a two-part illumination of The Fall in an Old English verse poem on *Genesis* in order to focus on one gesture: Eve offering fruit to Adam. Ericksen examines discrepancies between the text and the illustrations, working against one-to-one correspondences. Jesse Hurlbut's "Body Language in *Le Jeu de Robin et Marion*" considers 132 miniatures accompanying a manuscript of Adam de la Halle's mid-thirteenth-century play *Le Jeu de Robin et Marion*. Hurlbut acknowledges that illustrations cannot reconstruct a performance, but shows how the miniatures themselves constitute an independent, graphic performance (222). Beth Mulvaney's eloquent "Gesture and Audience" analyzes the repetition and development of gestures in twenty-six panels depicting Christ's Passion (the back of Duccio's fourteenth-century *Maesta*). Visual art becomes a performance, like drama, in which spectators supply details of attitude, emotion, characterization, and action. Mulvaney gives devotional texts their full spiritual value and also speaks to theatricality in speculations on Siena's civic processions and the Montecassino *Passion Play*.

*Gesture in Medieval Drama and Art* is a vital resource for historians of medieval theatre, dramaturgs, and directors. The essays stand as models of medieval theatre scholarship, particularly for students learning to read and analyze primary sources. A disciplined reader, patient with finely rendered descriptive details and a kaleidoscope of information, will be richly rewarded by the theoretical nuances in this exceptional collection.

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***Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare's Time.*** By Roslyn Lander Knutson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; pp. x + 198. $54.95 hardcover.

***Rough Magic: Making Theatre at the Royal Shakespeare Company.*** By Steven Adler. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2001; pp. xxii + 272. $50 hardcover, $20 paperback.

Reviewed by Cary M. Mazer, University of Pennsylvania

It's ironic that Shakespeare is in the title of Roslyn Lander Knutson's book, since "Shakespeare" and centuries of Shakespeare scholarship are parts of the problem she is addressing in *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare's Time*. Forget everything you think you know, she tells her readers, about the great rivalries of early modern commercial theatre practice. Forget the rivalry between the Lord Admiral's Men and the Lord Chamberlain's/King's Men, between landlords Philip Henslowe and James Burbage, actors Edward Alleyn and Richard Burbage, and their spouses and in-laws and partners. Forget the passage in *Hamlet* about the "Little Eyases" of the boy companies whose success has forced the adult players to tour Elsinore, the "Rival Traditions" of



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the populist public theatres and the elitist private ones, and forget, above all, the "War of the Theatres," the battles of wits in which Ben Jonson and his contemporaries lobbed satiric portraits at one another in rival plays written between 1599 and 1601 for the rival adult and boy companies. These putative rivalries, she explains, are the product of a misguided and self-perpetuating narrative, sculpted in the eighteenth century and cast in bronze in the nineteenth, a narrative that, in part, sought to exceptionalize Shakespeare and the theatre enterprise that nourished both his works and the writer whose genius inspired envy among his contemporary actors, playwrights, and theatre companies, and left them to fight for leftover scraps of business. To support this exceptionalism, Knutson advances a piece of court testimony from 1589–1590 by Edward Alleyn's brother John, testifying how James Burbage quarreled with the widow of his brother-in-law and business partner until his son Richard chased her out with a broom, testimony that morphed into a master narrative of cutthroat personal rivalries and even more cutthroat business practices.

If the theatre companies, their actors, and their playwrights were rivals at all, Knutson explains, it was in the sense that Bernardo uses the word when he refers to Marcellus and Horatio as "the rivals of my watch" in the Second Quarto and Folio texts of *Hamlet*: as a synonym for "partners" (the word used in the First Quarto text). Yes, landlords, building owners, entrepreneurs, sharers, and actors sued one another with astonishing frequency, but they also shared buildings, came together for joint performances, court appearances, and tours, invested in one another's business ventures, lived in the same neighborhoods, named their children after one another and took them in as apprentices, and crossed company and family boundary lines to do so. In a series of introductory chapters, Knutson shows how managers, actors, and playwrights functioned more as fellow guild masters than as marketplace competitors. Like booksellers in St. Paul's churchyard, the rival theatre companies practiced "cluster marketing," recognizing that business generates even more business. They were quick to copy one another's fashionable genres, not to satirize one another but rather to exploit each other's successful commercial trends. They generally respected one another's dramatic property. The playwrights (Shakespeare, perhaps, excepted) worked for any and all theatre companies that would hire them, and with whatever collaborator could help them get the play written expeditiously, before the fashion for the latest genre had ebbed. The companies sold their playscripts to printing houses for publication not because the pieces had exhausted their market in the theatre, but in order to generate buzz for similar plays currently in their repertoires, and when the industry was attacked from outside, the companies would pull their theatrical wagons in a circle, protecting their shared assets.

To argue her case, Knutson must "dismantle the narrative" of several centuries of scholarship. To do so, she needs to swim with the narrativizing sharks, thus her subsequent chapters on *Histrio-Mastix, Hamlet, Poetaster*, and *Satiromastix*—the key dramatic specimens of the War of the Theatres—though



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meticulously argued, are extremely slow going. John Marston's *Histrio-Mastix*, as a play produced in the commercial theatres in 1599, can, she acknowledges, convincingly be used to make a case for a narrative of rivalry . . . except for the fact that it wasn't produced in 1599, it was never produced in a commercial theatre, and it almost certainly wasn't written by Marston. To prove this—or rather, to disprove what never was sufficiently proved in the first place—Knutson laboriously employs doubling charts and statistics about verbal style, and occasionally resorts to her own narrative making, arguing (convincingly) that the Hamlet—First Player dialogue in the First Quarto of *Hamlet*, which she dates at 1600–1601, expressed "mock despair" over the fickleness of playgoers for favoring "humours" plays at children's companies; that the playwright revised the script for a 1603–1604 revival (preserved in the Q2 text), excising references to boy companies, and substituting references to touring during a plague year; and that the 1606–1608 script (published years later in the Folio) reinserted a reference to boy companies not to complain about the competition, but to warn the boy-company managers about producing plays that were too politically controversial, and that therefore risked drawing increased regulation on the entire industry.

Like Knutson, Steven Adler understands that theatrical art can only be created in relation to the materials and the material conditions at hand. Adler's *Rough Magic*, like Knutson's book, is a snapshot of a the physical, organizational, and fiscal conditions—and constraints—that make it possible for theatre to be made in a particular time and a particular place, in this case the Royal Shakespeare Company in the late 1990s. A working stage manager and university theatre administrator, Adler knows that theatre, however much impelled by artistic vision, must work within the realities of the auditorium, the workshop, the loading dock, the dressing room, the rehearsal room, the accounting office, and the box office. He culls from his many interviews with artists and staff the nuts-and-bolts concerns of running five theatres in two cities, along with extended residencies and domestic and international tours: the technical director who must convince a designer to lower the height of a tower by a foot so that it can fit in the wings while other productions are on the stage; the company voice coach who acknowledges that actors would rather do their laundry than work on their scansion between shows; the casting director who must deal with actors reluctant to sign on for a season until their television gigs get lined up; the actor scouting out the right gym for her exercises; the tour manager who must find a way to ship back to England the surfboards some actors have purchased in California; and the American-born actor who can't renew his green card.

Adler talks about how the mission to produce Shakespeare informs the RSC's season selection and helps to solidify their national and international status. He discusses the Stratford season's dependency on tourists and the company's competition with the Royal National Theatre for scarce public



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funding, but rarely talks about ways that the RSC collaborates in the exploitation of the "National Poet" as cultural capital, a subject addressed recently by numerous scholars of contemporary Shakespearean performance. Similarly, while Adler repeatedly hints at the ways that the complex organization of an enormous theatrical enterprise can occasionally generate extraordinary art, he rarely talks about the ways that it is actually able to do so, or (more revealingly) why it often does not. Only when he quotes Katie Mitchell about her reasons for quitting her position as Associate Artistic Director in charge of The Other Place at Stratford does the volume begin to suggest that the prevailing organizational structures might be more of a barrier than a springboard to the creation of art.

Adler shows us an organization just as it was beginning to depart from its established managerial models. Then-Artistic Director Adrian Noble had already expanded the company's touring schedules and American residencies, shortened the length of the actor's commitment from two years to 18 months or fewer, introduced single-play short-runs and London-to-Stratford transfers, shortened the company's London season at the Barbican Center, then eliminated the Barbican summer season, and then severed its connections with the center entirely. When Adler conducted his interviews, plans were already on the table to remodel drastically the Royal Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford. Since the book went to press, greater changes have been afoot, including a plan to tear down the main house entirely, which generated a public outcry that subsequently led to Noble's resignation and the tabling of his plans (as I write, the future of these plans remains uncertain). Adler's book speaks in the present tense of an institution of a particular size and shape and way of working, but his present has already become the company's past, and ours. Without, perhaps, intending it, Adler has, like Knutson, written a work of theatre history.

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***Performing Shakespeare in the Age of Empire.*** By Richard Foulkes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; pp. 235, 10 illustrations. $60 hardcover.

Reviewed by Richard W. Schoch, Queen Mary, University of London

Within the past few years, scholarship on Shakespearean culture in the Victorian and Edwardian periods has gained surprising momentum, with contributions by, among others, Jane Moody and Russell Jackson. Palgrave's decision to publish a two-volume collection of papers from the conference "Victorian Shakespeare" (London: Institute for English Studies, 2002) indicates that a critical mass of scholars is now profitably working at the intersection of performance criticism, literary history, and cultural studies. In the midst of what has been mostly specialist activity, Richard Foulkes has written the first general



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account of Shakespeare in performance from 1832 to 1916, that is, from the passage of the Great Reform Bill (and the meeting of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's Select Committee on Dramatic Literature) to the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death.

The first chapter of *Performing Shakespeare in the Age of Empire* rehearses familiar material on W. C. Macready's noble but doomed attempt to revive the national drama during his management of Covent Garden (1837–1839) and Drury Lane (1841–1833), and the (ultimately successful) campaign to deregulate the theatrical marketplace. Foulkes also offers the first of several references to Thomas Carlyle's belief in Shakespeare's centrality to a culture of "Saxondom" (19). The second chapter provides a compressed account of mid-Victorian Shakespeare: Samuel Phelps at Sadler's Wells (1844–1862), Charles Kean at the Princess's (1850–1859), and performances at such minor theatres as the Standard, the Britannia, and Astley's Amphitheatre. Particular attention is given to Kean's productions of Shakespeare at Windsor Castle (1848–1857). The next chapter focuses on the 1864 Tercentenary of the Bard's birth. Foulkes recounts not just the events that took place in Stratford but also the misfortunes and controversies that hampered the work of the London and Stratford committees in their rival efforts to honor the national poet.

In a useful corrective to London-centric scholarship, Charles Calvert's management of the Prince's Theatre in Manchester dominates the fourth chapter. Henry Irving receives his due in the fifth chapter through descriptions of the famed actor's rivalry with Edwin Booth and Tommaso Salvini, his American tours, and the patronage accorded to him by the Prince of Wales. Foulkes gives some attention to the Meiningen troupe and such transnational stars as Sarah Bernhardt, Helena Modjeska, Adelaide Ristori, and Ernesto Rossi. Chapter 6 is devoted principally to Herbert Beerbohm Tree's management of the Haymarket and of Her/His Majesty's Theatre, and to his contributions to Bardolatry, including annual Shakespeare festivals. The discussion includes passing remarks on Shakespearean culture in colonial India. Much ground is covered in the following chapter, which ranges from Harley Granville Barker's productions to debates on the creation of a national theatre, and from Annie Horniman's theatre management to William Poel and the Elizabethan Stage Society. The similarly wide-ranging final chapter encompasses the 1916 Tercentenary, Lilian Baylis's regime at the Old Vic, concert parties performed for soldiers during the First World War, and early cinematic versions of Shakespeare. In a brief conclusion, Foulkes observes that "in the years leading up to the First World War Shakespeare ceased to be a genuinely popular dramatist" (205).

This is a book of great promise but little achievement. While Foulkes is one of the more knowledgeable theatre historians of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, he is also one of the more timid. *Performing Shakespeare in the Age of Empire* provides a great deal of information but fails to sustain an



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argument. Because of its traditional emphasis on personality, chronology, and description, Foulkes's work does not allow its own themes and ideas to emerge, still less to be developed or discussed. It is hardly an advance in scholarship, for example, to assess Macready's career with what amounts to a tribute: "[he] had answered the call of Shakespeare, the theatre and his country with great distinction" (31). The author provides only vague and scattered assertions of Shakespeare's importance in British national—and imperial—identity. Three examples will suffice: "Shakespeare's greatness was inextricable from his Englishness" (74), "Shakespeare had reached the heart of the British establishment" (148), and "Shakespeare was to take his place in the nation's armoury alongside the battle-ships constructed" for the First World War (180).

It is hard to disagree with these claims, for they have become commonplaces in scholarship concerning Shakespearean appropriation. Even so, such rhetoric hardly constitutes a study of cultural nationalism comparable to those undertaken by Peter Bailey, Linda Colley, and Gareth Stedman Jones, none of whose influential works is ever mentioned. Foulkes's attempt to provide an historicist account of Shakespeare in performance is, moreover, seriously compromised by such essentialist claims as "Shakespeare's direct emotional force and thrilling story line transcended barriers of time, culture, race, and language" (151) (so much for the culturally sensitive scholarship of such critics as Dennis Kennedy and Takashi Sasayama). Foulkes's remarks betray not only intellectual naïveté, but also an astonishing lack of familiarity with developments in performance historiography, cultural history, and Victorian and Edwardian studies.

These objections certainly reflect generational differences in theatre scholarship. Tellingly, Foulkes does not place his work within any critical context, but represents the positivist tradition exemplified by Michael Booth. This book is problematic, however, even in terms of scholarly procedure. Despite the abundance of primary sources, there is little original research; hence the extraordinarily brief notes, the lack of archival material in the list of "references," and the perfunctory index. Despite the author's long-standing interest in Shakespeare and nineteenth-century theatre, Foulkes has composed this work largely from secondary sources, with considerable reliance throughout on his own prior publications, most notably *Church and Stage in Victorian England* (1997) and *The Shakespeare Tercentenary* (1985). Far from engaging current scholarship, Foulkes is content merely to cite its existence, and it is a pity that the book features only ten illustrations, four of which are from the *Illustrated London News*. Even so, in its diligent marshaling of facts, *Performing Shakespeare in the Age of Empire* will be useful to scholars and students alike. While such a contribution is to be welcomed on these grounds, a searching account of Shakespeare in performance between 1832 and 1916 still remains to be written.



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***Not Shakespeare: Bardolatry and Burlesque in the Nineteenth Century.*** By Richard W. Schoch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; pp. xiii + 209. $55 hardcover.

Reviewed by Cary M. Mazer, University of Pennsylvania

"A bad Shakespeare burlesque," Richard Schoch writes, "is bad in a way that has not been generally appreciated." Schoch's study of Shakespearean burlesque is a celebration of the bad, a multifaceted examination of the ways that British (and American) theatrical burlesques of Shakespeare plays and performances stand in relation to the larger culture. Burlesque, Schoch explains, is both politically radical and conservative, both an attack on the pomposity of high culture and an attempt to rescue the essential Shakespeare from his own theatrical proponents. Burlesque attacks high culture in the form of low culture; but at the same time, Schoch observes, burlesque rejects "reductive oppositions between 'high' and 'low' culture." In any event, the Shakespeare burlesque is—unlike Shakespearean adaptation, or the transformations the script undergoes when it is performed in a theatrical aesthetic different from the one for which it was written—arguably *not* Shakespeare: "while an adaptation *is* the play it adapts, a burlesque *represents* the play it burlesques." Schoch is able to stand outside of the script and the performance itself, and to situate the burlesque in the larger culture, because, he explains, "it is impossible to stay inside such a script because, in fact, it has no inside; the burlesque is always outside itself."

Each of the four chapters takes on a different aspect of Shakespeare burlesque. In the first, Schoch examines language, arguing that burlesques are virtually illegible as reading texts, not only because of the inane rhymes, the incessant punning, and the lost referents of the topical satire, but because the language belongs to a larger strategy of "unmeaning." In the second chapter, he suggests that burlesque willfully undermines the high-cultural claims of the great Shakespearean actor-managers, asserting itself as a form more authentic and ultimately more "Shakespearean" than the grand archaeological, upholstered productions of the nineteenth century. Moreover, (passing over the third chapter for the moment), in his final chapter, Schoch finesses the political messages of burlesque, which he sees as neither consistently revolutionary nor consistently conservative.

Schoch's analyses throughout are eloquent and breathtakingly clever, his larger assertions astonishing in their scope and sophistication, if not always completely convincing. In Chapter 1, for example, he claims, weakly, that the wordplay of burlesque "exposes the ideologies of Shakespearean authorship" (48), and, though he describes a piece of business in T. C. DeLeon's 1870



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*Hamlet Travesty* marvelously (an actor dressed as a rooster impatiently walks onto the stage and interrupts Hamlet and the Ghost's campfire tête-à-tête) the conclusion he draws from it—"the burlesque playfully tests—and enforces—the limits of Shakespearean boundaries" (69)—seems a bit strained. Schoch bases his analysis of political meanings in his final chapter on only three examples: an anonymous 1870 *King John* travesty, which he reads in the context of the Hyde Park riots; an 1846 *Coriolanus* burlesque, which he reads in relation to the repeal of the Corn Laws; and Robert and William Brough's *The Tempest* burlesque, *The Enchanted Isle* (1848), which he reads in relation to the 1848 revolutions in France and Italy. These examples are of limited use, as Schoch readily admits (two of the burlesques were never performed, and they mocked plays that had dropped from the active repertoire); indeed, the last chapter reads more a like an interlinked series of journal articles on individual plays than a coherent conclusion to his book.

By far the most interesting, important, and persuasive chapter of the book is the third, "Shakespeare in Bohemia," in which Schoch situates burlesque in relation to a specific audience: not the working classes of the gin palaces and music halls, but bohemia, the London of unmarried middle-class writers, clerks, journalists, and lawyers, who frequented private supper clubs and "coal holes" and lived in the central London lodgings vacated when middle-class families moved north and west to the new streetcar suburbs. His key text here is Francis Talfourd's *Shylock; or, The Merchant of Venice Preserved* (1853). Schoch shows how the burlesque's trial scene replicated the paratheatrical dinner parties of the "Judge and Jury Society," a bohemian club that met regularly in supper rooms to re-enact contemporary divorce trials (at one benefit performance of Talfourd's burlesque at the Olympic Theatre, the Duke of Venice was played by the mock "Lord Chief Baron" who regularly presided at the Judge and Jury Society, symbolically surrogating one form of burlesque with another). Schoch then shows how Marie Wilton, who had established her career as a burlesque actress, retained the elements of burlesque in her subsequent career—even when, as Marie Bancroft, she explicitly abandoned burlesque for cup-and-saucer respectability—by writing metatheatrical burlesque turns into the otherwise realistic characters she played in T. W. Robertson's *M.P.* and *Society*. Wilton, Schoch observes, always gave free passes to the opening nights of Robertson's comedies to the bohemian members of the Savage Club, creating "an audience well-poised to appreciate the social contradictions of the theatre which they patronized and, moreover, to regard burlesque not as the grotesque antithesis of the legitimate, but as the 'problem' of the legitimate turned back upon itself" (148).

More than just a study of Shakespeare, *Not Shakespeare*, in its compelling chapter on burlesque and bohemia, is the most sophisticated and far-reaching scholarly study yet of an important, elusive and, well, deliciously bad nineteenth-century theatrical genre.



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***Shakespeare on the American Yiddish Stage.*** By Joel Berkowitz. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002; pp. 294 + illus. $32.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by Jeffrey Veidlinger, Indiana University, Bloomington

In the 1890s, professional Yiddish theatre was still a new and self-conscious form of art. Yiddish playwrights and actors were anxious to prove both themselves and their language. The Yiddish language, or *zhargon* (as it was commonly dubbed), was regarded by many as a language fit for housewives and itinerants but not for sophisticates, and certainly not for lofty theatre. Many feared that continued adherence to Yiddish would prevent new immigrants from becoming American and would stigmatize the rapidly growing American Jewish population. The Yiddish theatre that dominated the Lower East Side at the time did little to assuage these misgivings. The first generation of American Yiddish theatre was dominated by so-called *shund* (trash) theatre: melodramatic plots written by playwright hustlers, theatrical grandstanding by affected stars, and scripts rife with macaronic language and double-entendres. Even so, Yiddish theatre audiences of this generation could rival any for their sheer adoration of, if not their sophistication about, the stage. The notion of presenting Shakespeare in Yiddish seemed grotesque to much of high society, fantastic to Yiddish enthusiasts, and just plain strange to Yiddish theatre audiences, many of whom wondered who this Shekspir was. As Joel Berkowitz shows in this wonderful book, Shakespeare on the American Yiddish stage proved the value of Yiddish theatre, introduced Yiddish-speaking audiences to the Western canon, and introduced the American theatre world to its Yiddish counterpart. In these ways, Shakespeare served as a "cultural bridge" between new Jewish immigrants and the American culture into which they were assimilating.

Berkowitz focuses on direct translations of Shakespeare into Yiddish as well as on Yiddish adaptations of Shakespearean plays. He concentrates on the five plays that most affected the American Yiddish theatre—*King Lear, Hamlet, Othello, Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Merchant of Venice*—devoting a chapter to each. He surmises that these plays appealed to the American Yiddish theatre for a variety of reasons: *King Lear* and *Romeo and Juliet* because of their emphasis on familial relations and conflicts; *Hamlet* because of its ability to legitimate a troupe or an actor; *Othello* because of its treatment of racial issues; and *The Merchant of Venice* because of Shylock and the broader issue of anti-Semitism.

Translators of Shakespeare into Yiddish struggled to give respectability and legitimacy to the Yiddish language while faced with impatient audiences unaccustomed to the plot complexities of Elizabethan drama. As a result, Yiddish translators routinely streamlined Shakespeare's texts in an effort to advance the action, removed characters they regarded as extraneous in order to highlight the leading stars, and censored sexual language and situations.

Further, Shakespeare's psychological complexities and emotional ambivalences were routinely resolved for the benefit of the audience. The most notable exception was the Yiddish theatre's productions of *The Merchant of Venice*, in which, for obvious reasons, Shylock was routinely portrayed with greater moral complexity than Shakespeare's text warrants. (Although Berkowitz provides us with transliterations of some important passages, it would have been interesting to see more examples from the Yiddish texts.)

It was not enough for the Yiddish theatre merely to translate Shakespeare, however. In the words of one famous advertisement, Shakespeare on the American Yiddish stage was *fartaytsht un farbesert!* (Translated and improved!) Thus, most of Berkowitz's book is concerned with Yiddish adaptations of Shakespeare. Yiddish playwrights helped their audiences relate to Shakespeare by replacing exotic themes and characters with ones that touched closer to home; thus King Lear becomes, through the pen of Jacob Gordin, the wealthy Vilna businessman Dovid Moyshele, who divides his estate among his three daughters before he moves to Palestine. In Gordin's other take on *King Lear—The Jewish Queen Lear; or, Mirele Efros*—the megalomaniac king is replaced with a Jewish mother struggling to hold her family together. In another Gordin play, *The Lithuanian Brothers Luria*, a family feud comes between the love of Rivke and Yankl. Since no Yiddish play could be complete without a wedding scene, Rivke and Yankl end the play in a joyous union rather than by meeting the fate of their archetypes, Romeo and Juliet.

Jacob Gordin was not the only American Yiddish playwright to adapt Shakespeare. Sam Shneyer's version of *Romeo and Juliet*, entitled *Yehudis,* was set during the Spanish Inquisition. Nokhem Rakov's *The Oath on the Torah; or, the Jewish Romeo and Juliet*, portrayed a woman from an Orthodox Jewish background who falls in love with a Hasid; Gershon Einbinder set his *Romeo and Juliet* in the tenement houses of the Lower East Side. Rakov's version borrows verses from the biblical "Song of Songs," whereas Einbinder incorporates slapstick humor, as Dave (Romeo) rips his pants climbing Susie's (Juliet's) tenement balcony. One of the most interesting adaptations was Maurice Schwartz's 1947 version of *The Merchant of Venice*, entitled *Shylock and His Daughter*, in which Shylock is historicized and portrayed largely as a victim of the anti-Semitic legislation of sixteenth-century Venice.

Although Berkowitz does not seem to agree with the puffery that claimed to present improved versions of Shakespeare's plays, he does display a palpable appreciation for the burgeoning Yiddish theatre's efforts and ambitions. By transforming Shakespearean productions from high culture for social elites to popular entertainment for the masses, Berkowitz observes that, ironically, the Yiddish theatre came more nearly to resemble Shakespeare's own Globe Theatre, and Yiddish theatre fans Shakespeare's own audience.

Berkowitz's analysis includes the texts of the plays, their stagings, and even their publicity. His sources range from published and unpublished scripts



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to memoirs, reviews, and advertisements. *Shakespeare on the American Yiddish Stage* will be of interest not only to scholars of Shakespeare and the Yiddish theatre, but also to all those interested in the encounter between East European Jewish culture and the Western canon that led to the transformation of American Jewish culture.

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***Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance.*** By Dennis Kennedy. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; pp. xxv + 408 + illus. $90 hardcover, $30 paperback.

Reviewed by Paul Nelsen, Marlboro College

Cambridge University Press issued the first edition of this magnificent book in 1993. Kennedy's insightful work explores how the scenography of Shakespearean production "transmits meaning" and how directorial treatment of plays from the canon signal cultural disposition. The 358-page first edition attracted critical kudos and quickly earned a place on many university reading lists. This second edition adds a complementary chapter to look at selected examples of international Shakespearean production from the final decade of the century that the book surveys. The enhanced contents add forty-five new pages of incisive commentary that include twenty-two black-and-white production photos (plus two new color plates to accompany the original twenty-one). Cambridge prints this augmented edition on a brighter gloss stock than the original, making an already richly visual volume—one where scrutiny of pictures is integral to appreciation of critical perspective—even more eye-friendly.

Kennedy grounds his auxiliary chapter in comprehension of how sociopolitical catalysts of the 1990s influenced the Shakespearean zeitgeist and production practices. With the collapse of Soviet governments, for example, came a substantial withdrawal of socialist subsidies from the scenographically "adventurous" Eastern European theatres. Decreased government funding in the U.K. pressured venerable institutions like the Royal Shakespeare Company to emphasize box-office revenues and cultivate corporate patronage. Kennedy makes passing reference to "the series of surprising films" that "expanded the range of visual reference for the plays by drawing upon popular and filmic culture" and achieved commercial success. He summarily anoints Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books* (1991)—a film that "aggravated some viewers"—as "the most important film from a visual standpoint" (313).

Picking up a gauntlet dropped by some critics of the first edition, Kennedy gives considerable attention to the work of director Yukio Ninagawa and some of his Japanese confreres (absent in the 1993 volume). "For Ninagawa," Kennedy

observes, "Shakespeare is a monument, but clearly a foreign one—somebody else's classic" (315). Kennedy demonstrates care in describing Ninagawa's various approaches to appropriating and adapting Shakespearean source material to produce an intercultural hybrid with "primarily visual" appeal. Kennedy reaches back to the 1980s for background, offering detailed accounts of Ninagawa's treatments of *Macbeth* (1980) and *The Tempest* (1987), and then describes salient features and ideas reflected in his stagings of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1994), *Hamlet* (1995), and *King Lear* (1999). Ninagawa's work overlays Shakespeare with Japanese imagery and traditional theatre practices (the Witches in *Macbeth* were played by *onnagata*, Kabuki female impersonators, for example), and Kennedy encourages readers to relish other cross-cultural conceits (Bottom cooking noodles, for example, or a Sumo wrestler playing Snug). Kennedy links aspects of Ninagawa's work to the practices of Jessner, Strehler, Mnouchkine, Brook, and others, interweaving strands of theatrical vision examined earlier in the book into this second-edition chapter.

The fact that a third of this added chapter is devoted to incursions into the canon by Ninagawa and other Eastern directors may seem like a disproportionate allocation, but, other than a passing reference to Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood,* Kennedy did not address Asian interest in Shakespeare in the first edition. Kennedy's compensation here reflects the escalation in Japanese productions of Shakespeare: "[I]n 1964 there were four Shakespeare productions or adaptations in Tokyo, in 1994 there were thirty-three, more than in London" (314). Japan warrants special attention as a vibrant site of fresh interpretive vision.

Shakespeare productions in non-Anglophone settings and outside conventional familiarity with English literary culture are targets of this second edition. Foreign appropriations of the canon require "linguistic and narrative alterations to the text" in translations that often suppress representation of Shakespeare's literary genius, producing performances that may not sound like eloquent verse drama. Mediations of dramatic text are complemented by "unusual scenographic inventions" that restore poetic power, helping non-English-speaking audiences "naturalize the plays and create new meanings for them." Foregrounding a dominantly "ocular" rendition of the source drama, especially one using iconography indigenous to the culture producing the play, may generate "a Shakespeare that, under Western eyes, does not look like Shakespeare" (326). Kennedy's proposition, here and those elsewhere in the book, prompt a delectable set of issues related to the central question: "When do productions of 'Shakespeare' cease to be *Shakespeare*?"

Kennedy resists articulating hypotheses about "ocular" Shakespeare as a kind of lingua franca for intercultural appropriations (332), but he does present an interesting array of examples. "The most intriguing effort to place Shakespeare in a global frame," Kennedy states about the 1990s, "came from a



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young German director, Karen Beier, in a multilingual *Midsummer Night's Dream* in Düsseldorf in 1995" (329). Beier's cast comprised fourteen actors from nine countries, performers who did not share a common language. Kennedy observes that, although "the normalized assumption of a language shared by actors and audience was subverted" in Beier's staging, "the production carried substantial meaning, and at least some of it derived from Shakespeare" (331). Kennedy also provides an account of the 1992 rendition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the National Theatre in London by the innovative Québécoise director Robert Lepage, for which Michael Levine designed an enormous shallow pool on the commodious Olivier Theatre stage floor and a murky-matrix background. Kennedy's appreciative account both details features of the scenography—"at the center a single light bulb dangled on a cord above the pool," in which, at times, "[a] marvelous floating bedstead was dry land more or less"—and interprets the pool as "the wood, sexuality, and the slime of creation" (326). Kennedy selects Peter Sellars's 1994 production of *The Merchant of Venice* for Chicago's Goodman Theatre as the sole representative of American Shakespeare in the 1990s, a staging conceived in the wake of the Rodney King incident in Los Angeles. Casting African-Americans in the roles of the Jews, Asian actors as Portia and the court at Belmont, and Latinos as the Venetians, enabled Sellars " 'to touch the life in contemporary America; the metaphor and reality of anti-semitism is extended to include parallel struggles and their related issues' " (328). Scenographically, Sellars's stark imagery featured office furniture, electronic equipment, and cables, a world of data domination and media monitoring. Chapter 10 includes notes on seventeen remarkable and varied productions from the 1990s, plus three flashback commentaries on 1980s' stagings absent from the first edition (Ninagawa's *Macbeth* and *The Tempest* plus Deborah Warner's 1987 landmark *Titus Andronicus* for the RSC).

Neither the contents of the original volume nor the supplementary chapter endeavors to index all the Shakespearean productions that readers may regard as worth "looking at" and commenting upon. Kennedy's gestures at interculturalism, for instance, lack a truly global scope. His selection of examples ignores abundant and worthwhile productions in the Antipodes, omits inclusion of Africa (overlooking, for example, Welcome Msomi's *Umbatha: The Zulu Macbeth* in its multination tour during the 1990s), and neglects illustrations from Latin America and India. Kennedy's chronicle of significant 1990s' productions includes none from Canada or Russia; even his choices of works from the United States, continental Europe, and the U.K ignore many that passionate theatregoers may value as visually noteworthy. Acknowledging what is absent, however, does not diminish the worthiness and value of what is present. Kennedy's selections profile a range of scenographic and conceptual treatments, and the scope of issues that he draws into play is invigorating. The new and improved edition of this book will continue to earn a position in ready reach of readers and on course syllabi. Kennedy's work not only informs our knowledge and skills in "looking at Shakespeare," but also stimulates broader perspectives in thinking about theatre.



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***The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare.*** By Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001; pp. 608, 100 photos. $45 hardcover.

Reviewed by Michael Flachmann, California State University, Bakersfield

The very best in a long line of "Shakespeare Companions," this latest entry from Oxford University Press is substantial in both a literal and figurative sense. Boasting over 3,000 entries, 608 pages, 100 illustrations, and more than a half-million words, it is the longest and most exhaustive volume of its kind ever produced. In addition, it carries the weighty authority not only of its highly respected editors, Michael Dobson and the venerable Stanley Wells, but also of a wide range of first-rate scholarly contributors, such as Helen Vendler, Stephen Orgel, Jonathan Bate, R. A. Foakes, and James Shapiro. Although the book is brilliant in many respects, it does have a conceptual flaw that somewhat limits its usefulness in the United States.

Shakespeare "companions," which began with the work of Charles Knight in the mid-1800s, have proliferated in the twentieth century: several editions of the *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*; the *Penguin, Everyman, Bedford,* and *Blackwell* "Companions"; and such later peripheral titles as *The Companion to Shakespeare on Film* and *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*. These generic works fall basically into two broad categories: the "Cambridge" model, which provides a series of scholarly essays on the playwright's drama and the times in which he lived, and the "Oxford" model, which is an alphabetical collection of shorter, more factual encyclopedic articles on names, terms, critical approaches, topics, and specific plays.

The *Oxford Companion* is an alphabetical listing that moves gracefully from "Aaron the Moor" to "Federico Zuccaro" (an obscure sixteenth-century Italian painter), featuring in between a stunning profusion of entries on well-known critics, classical allusions in the plays, prominent actors, dramatic characters, figures of speech, and other topics of special interest to literary and theatrical scholars and students. Longer articles on each of Shakespeare's works and on such seminal subjects as censorship, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and Shakespeare's birthplace are sprinkled throughout, while the appendix contains a chronology of Shakespeare's life and work, plus suggestions for further reading in a variety of important topic areas.

Geared to the *Oxford Shakespeare*, a modern-spelling edition of the complete works edited by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor in 1986 (which was also the textual basis for Stephen Greenblatt's *Norton Shakespeare* published in 1997), *The Oxford Companion* follows the act, scene, and line references of its predecessor, along with information about dating, sources, and publication



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history. This generally admirable devotion to a specific literary source makes, however, for some strange semantic bedfellows. In its attempt to return to "the texts of Shakespeare's plays as they were produced in Shakespeare's theatre" (vii), *Henry VIII* is cross-referenced under its original title, *All Is True*, while *Henry VI, Part 3* becomes *Richard, Duke of York*. Similarly, some of the characters' names have been changed to confuse the innocent. In *Cymbeline*, for example, "Iachimo" becomes "Giacomo," and "Imogen" turns to "Innogen," although later, in a review of actress Ellen Terry's portrayal of the role, the name returns abruptly to "Imogen."

The same Oxfordian chauvinism surfaces in other areas as well. Of the ninety-seven scholarly contributors, for instance, only sixteen are from America. More distressingly, out of thirty-five production photographs, only one depicts an American performance—Verdi's *Falstaff* produced at the Metropolitan Opera in New York (1964). In addition, most of the photos are quite dated, with only four more recent than 1980. Although two modern films are featured—Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet* and John Madden's *Shakespeare in Love*—the book does not contain a single photograph from an American stage performance of any Shakespearean script. In fact, American productions of Shakespeare are unceremoniously marginalized in a relatively brief, three-page segment toward the back of the book entitled "The United States." Despite the fact that this section (written, inexplicably, by a Canadian scholar) has enough space to commemorate the 1940 Popeye and Olive Oyl animated-cartoon version of *Romeo and Juliet*, the 1959 Bugs Bunny and Witch Hazel pastiche of selections from *Macbeth*, and the infamous *Moonlighting* episode based on *The Taming of the Shrew*, it makes absolutely no mention of recent Shakespearean productions at such prestigious American theatres as the American Conservatory Theatre, the Guthrie, the Hartford Stage, Washington's Shakespeare Theatre, or the Oregon, Alabama, Utah, or Colorado Shakespeare festivals. Although the book's preface apologetically confesses to a "small bias" (viii) in favor of London and Stratford-upon-Avon productions, this admission appears, in retrospect, to be a considerable understatement.

This manifest Anglo-centrism aside, *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare* is a handsome, thorough, generally useful reference tool that belongs on the shelves of every serious theatre scholar. One can only hope that future books of this sort will pay serious and well-deserved attention to the excellent Shakespearean work being done in the "colonies."

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***The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film.*** Edited by Russell Jackson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; pp. xiv + 342. $54.95 hardcover, $19.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Margaret Knapp, Arizona State University



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Ever since films of Shakespeare's plays have been available, first on cumbersome sixteen-millimeter celluloid reels, and more recently on inexpensive videotape and DVd, they have found their way into theatre classrooms and theatre scholarship. Whether viewed as records (albeit inadequate ones) of great stage performances, as examples of the differences between the theatrical and cinematic arts, or as evidence of Shakespeare's iconic position in high culture (and more recently in popular culture as well), the increasing availability and growing accessibility of Shakespeare films have expanded their usefulness far beyond the "Introduction to Theatre" course or articles in *Shakespeare Quarterly*. This has been particularly true in the past dozen or so years, as several major Shakespeare films, and even a purported biography (*Shakespeare in Love*), have appeared in the wake of Kenneth Branagh's 1989 film of *Henry V.*

This volume of seventeen essays, edited by Russell Jackson, serves as a useful introduction to the major Shakespeare auteurs and their work, as well as to some of the aesthetic and cultural issues connected with the films. The focus is on feature films created on celluloid stock for theatrical release (though Michèle Willems provides a valuable essay on the varied aesthetics of theatrical film, television broadcast, and video), and thus the subject matter is limited to about forty films. As is the case with most volumes of essays, the book has both strengths and weaknesses. Approaching a film from the perspectives of several authors provides the reader with a more layered understanding of the work, as, for example, Orson Welles's film of *Othello* is examined in the context of other *Othello* films in one essay, and of other Welles films in another. On the other hand, the reader might wish that the essayists had been able to read and comment upon one another's essays, when, for example, the treatment of female characters in a few of the essays would have benefited from the insights provided by Carol Chillington Rutter in her study, "Looking at Shakespeare's Women on Film."

Most of the essays in this volume are close readings of a set of films. A few, such as Jackson's Introduction, "Shakespeare, Films and the Marketplace," Barbara Freedman's study of three films and one filmed segment of *Richard III*, and Mark Sokolyansky's examination of Grigori Kozintsev's *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, deal with the material conditions under which the films were produced. Some of the essays demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the mechanics of filmmaking, while others seem to employ reading strategies more suited to printed texts or theatrical performances. All of the essays grapple to some extent with the myriad of problems and opportunities associated with translating a play to film. Recognition of the fundamental differences between the two media underlies many of the analyses of directorial choices, whether to "open up" the play to the more visual medium or to substitute visual cues for spoken dialogue. Jackson introduces this subject in his essay "From Play-Script to Screenplay," and the theme is taken up by most of the subsequent writers, particularly in the instances where a stage performance preceded a film, as in the *Richard III* films of Laurence Olivier and Ian McKellen.

Whether intentionally or not, most of the essays in the book are devoted to considerations of what might be termed a canon of Shakespeare auteurs: Laurence Olivier, Orson Welles, Grigori Kozintsev, Akira Kurosawa, Franco Zeffirelli, and Kenneth Branagh. Also canonized, though at a slightly less hagiographic level, are certain films that are of interest because of their success as films or because of the hints they give of a previous stage performance: Peter Brook's *King Lear*, Max Reinhardt's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Loncraine/McKellen *Richard III,* Al Pacino's *Looking for Richard,* and Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*. The more idiosyncratic work of such directors as Derek Jarman, Peter Greenaway, and Christine Edzard receives some notice, but not much in the way of analysis, and the numerous films that adapt Shakespeare's plots and characters to other periods and places are tidied into a single essay at the end. This emphasis on the Shakespeare-film canon is not surprising, given that film is an expensive medium controlled, for the most part, by powerful studios and producing companies. In the course of the twentieth century only a handful of directors were able to convince producers to bankroll a Shakespeare film, and only an even smaller number were able to make more than one. While it is not surprising, therefore, that most of this volume is devoted to the films of a few canonized auteurs, more attention to the work of marginalized directors might have provided a completer picture of the wide range of filmed Shakespeare.

Readers will find the Bibliography and Filmography at the end of the book useful compendia of information on Shakespeare films.

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***Shakespeare, Brecht, and the Intercultural Sign.*** By Antony Tatlow. Durham and New York: Duke University Press, 2001; pp. 298. $59.95 hardcover, $19.95 paperback.

Reviewed by W. B. Worthen, University of California, Berkeley

Antony Tatlow's *Shakespeare, Brecht, and the Intercultural Sign* is a sprawling, illuminating, and, finally, frustrating book. Tatlow opens with a challenging, though slightly misleading assertion: "Every engagement with a Shakespearean text is necessarily intercultural" in that the borders between "inter- and intracultural" performance are themselves questionable, not merely as a result of the insistent globalization of performance texts and practices, but—at least as important—because the past itself "is really another culture" (5). Nonetheless, Tatlow retains a use for "intercultural performance in the older anthropological sense of employing, in whatever way, material from one culture within the context of another. Defamiliarizing the conventions of representation, the intercultural sign facilitates access to what has, on various levels, been culturally repressed" (6). Intercultural performance, then, frames an essentially Brechtian purpose: to render the ideological tissue of theatre visible to its audiences.



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Intercultural performance engages "the politics of meaning" in a particularly acute manner and so sustains Tatlow's opening gambit: to take Brecht as the master theorist of "the intercultural sign" in the theatre (8). It is here, I think, that the book's problems begin, in part because Tatlow resists shaping his polyvalent interests—in Brecht, in Shakespeare, in contemporary Chinese and Japanese performance, in semiotics, and in the history of contemporary literary and cultural theory—into a single line of argument. The first chapter, "Reading the Intercultural," seems to have several agendas: to "defamiliarize" Brecht as merely the playwright of a discredited and tendentious Marxism (does anyone really see Brecht this way?) in order to render Brechtian *Verfremdung* as an index of the deconstructive potentiality of intercultural performance. This conjunction is less self-evident than it might appear. Tatlow begins the excavation with Nietzsche and follows it through Derrida, Foucault, and Geertz, to help "explain how Brecht's interests in East Asian aesthetics and ritual forms, which he historicized, in turn enable the quality of response that results in a Japanese or Chinese Brecht, but also in an East Asian Brechtian Shakespeare. Meeting an East Asian lack, the Western writers are then reimaged in terms that would not occur within their home cultures" (29). This is a sweeping claim, deserving our full attention. Instead, Tatlow plunges into a series of connections, first into a closely observed discussion (of Nietzsche's use of Euripides), surfacing from this reading to swerve into another nearly accidental conjunction of interests. In one brief paragraph, for example, Tatlow takes Nietzsche's "active nihilism" as the link between Nietzsche, Brecht, and "East Asian culture. It becomes part of that restless, driving, de-essentialized dialectic, evident in the Nietzschean 'stream of happening' that Brecht quotes in his 'autobiographical' poem, *The Doubter*. There it forms the basis for deconstructing Marxist ontology, as part of the only possible development of a more productive Marxist project, probably the main purpose of Brecht's *Coriolanus* and of much else within his work. Ontological deconstruction delineates territory compatible to both Derrida and Brecht, helping to resituate his work, which is also haunted by ghosts" (13).

I suppose the connections are, or should be, clear: Brecht and Derrida are haunted by the specter of Marx; Brecht and Nietzsche frame dramatic ideology in dialectical terms that undo (Euripidean) realism; the theory and practice of Brechtian theatre is erected on Brecht's dialectical reflection/distortion of "Asian" theatre; Eastern and Western theatres have held Shakespearean drama and Brechtian stage practice in a productively dialectical tension since the 1930s; and, in the sphere of "intercultural performance" today, the varied practices of Asian theatre have gained a potentially "Brechtian" force through the performance of Shakespeare's plays. Yet the collision of Brecht, Shakespeare, and intercultural performance remains just that here, since each chapter takes what might charitably be called a new perspective on the central problematic of the study.

"Reading the Intercultural"—ostensibly a survey of intercultural reading that resituates Brecht as the center of a new conception of intercultural



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performance—gives way to "Intercultural Signs: Textual Anthropology." Here, Tatlow contends that "if we reject [conventional narrow readings of Brecht], no matter how widely held, we can discover in Brecht's work examples of an intercultural practice that at the very least questions and mostly contradicts those readings and whose analysis contributes to that as yet uncomplicated theory of intercultural theatre with arguments one might not anticipate" (32). In many respects, this is the central chapter of the study, in which Tatlow outlines what he terms "textual anthropology," a phrase that seems to embrace Brecht's use of Asian dramatic settings and fascination with Asian performance, Mnouchkine's orientalized Shakespeare, and several Shakespeare productions by Asian companies, notably the Mansaku Company's *The Braggart Samurai* and the work of Yukio Ninagawa. This chapter does provide several emblematic instances of contemporary East—West Shakespeare and raises a number of familiar issues, notably the relation between narrative and performance practice. At the same time—swerving this time into Antonin Artaud, Eugenio Barba, and Erich Fromm—what we might take to be the cultural specificity of intercultural signification (which "cultures" are at stake?) appears to drive intercultural performance in a different direction: toward the possibility of a transpersonal and "universal" meaning.

Reframing the "universal" as the "unconscious" is the hook that suspends the third chapter, "Desire, Laughter, and the Social Unconscious." Claiming that "Psychoanalysis and ethnology, together, cover the whole domain of the human sciences" (88), Tatlow appears to be most interested in the dramatic representation of identity formation, and concludes this chapter with a reading of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (neither Brecht nor Asian performance make much of an appearance here). The unconscious is also the theme of the fourth chapter, "Historicizing the Unconscious in Plautine and Shakespearean Farce," which develops a relatively familiar reading of Plautus' implication in and transformation by Shakespearean comedy. (Tatlow's is a principally textual reading, not directly concerned with performance, intercultural or otherwise.) "*Coriolanus* and the Historical Text" reads Brecht's and Shakespeare's plays into one another, and "*Macbeth* in Kunju Opera," the final chapter, returns to the ostensible thematics of the book (*performance* among them), to make the unsurprising claim that the "kunju version of *Macbeth* interrupts the empirical and conventional readings of the play with a constructed, stylized performance" (194).

*Shakespeare, Brecht, and the Intercultural Sign* is a learned, loose-limbed book in which Tatlow's considerable insight and experience with Brecht and Asian theatre are vividly on view. Tatlow's writing is by turns hieratic and down-home, mandarin and chatty, sometimes in the same sentence: "I find the kunju musical style more interesting than jingju where the pentatonic scale and the isomorphic rhythmical reiteration produces melismatic repetition of musical phrase, too much for my taste" (199). Perhaps it's only *my* taste, but as one of the few books on theatre and performance in Duke's "post-contemporary



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interventions" series, *Shakespeare, Brecht, and the Intercultural Sign* would have been better served by a publisher less profligate with space and more profligate with postcontemporary *editorial* intervention. There are pages and pages of sustained analysis and careful observation here; there are also intrusive summaries, bald assertions, ponderous platitudes, and unexplained detours. (Plautus and Shakespeare might have illustrated Tatlow's sense of the past as "intercultural" territory, but that doesn't seem to be the focus of the fourth, mysterious chapter.)

Though the place of intercultural performance in the globalized performance economy is largely bypassed here, Tatlow's book will be required reading for anyone working on intercultural performance, and his analysis of the *kunju Macbeth* will take its place alongside other important readings of intercultural Shakespeares—Ania Loomba on the *kathakali Othello*, for example, and Joanne Tompkins on the work of Ong Keng Sen. Tatlow marks his position in triangulating Shakespeare, Brecht, and intercultural performance, yet he leaves the territory uncharted.

## Briefly Noted

***The Politics of Carnival: Festive Misrule in Medieval England.*** By Chris Humphrey. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001; pp. xiii +113. $19.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Sharon Aronson-Lehavi, City University of New York

Chris Humphrey's reading of the customs of late-medieval English "festive misrule" offers a valuable critique of how contemporary approaches influenced by (chiefly) Mikhail Bakhtin's writings about carnival tend to overlook the particular contexts of and variations in cultural activities. Humphrey discusses the "safety-valve" and the "social protest" as contradictory theoretical strategies that characterize most analyses of carnival practices in the medieval period. The safety-valve approach sees carnival as a temporary outlet for suppressed social energies, which ultimately aims to restore social order at the end of an inversion of it. Alternatively, the social-protest attitude believes that carnival has the power to affect—and, more important, the goal of affecting—social relations and class struggle. Humphrey convincingly argues that although these two attitudes have great appeal, especially when one is trying to contextualize the contemporary practices of popular culture, these theories are both too general and too prescriptive, leading to inaccurate or even false conclusions about the evidence.

Humphrey instead recommends analyzing medieval events and texts through postmodern historiography. These events and texts he categorizes as "festive misrule," a term Humphrey finds wider and looser than "carnival" (which is associated with clearly defined annual rituals). Accordingly, the title



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of the book is intended to allude to the theorizing of carnival in general, but also to the specific social contexts of occasions of misrule that symbolically refer to festive topsy-turvy traditions. This double task is reflected in the structure of the book. The first chapter is a detailed account and criticism of the two existing theoretical trends about carnival, whereas the second lays out Humphrey's suggested method: to avoid preconceptions, distinguish between theatre and cultural history, check possible roles for events of misrule, relate particular events to their wider set of cultural contexts, and to apply performance theory to such events. The third and fourth chapters are case studies of texts from fifteenth-century England. The first example deals with a procession in Norwich in 1443 that echoes a Shrovetide tradition, which Humphrey sees as a performative expression of the dissatisfaction of a group of Norwich citizens with the monarch. The second example is drawn from the festive custom of vegetation-gathering in Coventry in 1480. Here, Humphrey analyzes a few incidents that caused tension between the priory of Coventry and the citizens and then relates the analysis to a wider dispute about lands and property in that period.

Humphrey correctly shows that although both these examples contain elements of social protest, it is difficult to argue for "real" social efficacy due solely to the actions of misrule. While his analysis sheds a new light on the concept of festive misrule, the book needs to use performance theory more extensively to enlighten cultural history. Failing that, theatre scholars will find the book useful both for its detailed bibliography and for its fresh and unnostalgic approach to the politics of carnival.

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***Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama.*** By Wendy Wall. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; pp. xiv + 292. $60 hardcover.

Reviewed by Frances Teague, University of Georgia

Wendy Wall's book analyzes domestic scenes in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century drama by blending the methods of recent cultural studies with the caveats of recent literary theory. Examining such plays as *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, *The English Traveller*, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, she argues that the scenes of everyday life become uncanny, shifting their meaning so that the familiar becomes strange. These moments challenge the usual associations their original audiences might have harbored regarding everyday tasks. A kitchen scene might invert class relations, blur gender stereotypes, suggest illicit sexual attraction, and so forth. The book considers such domestic activities as wet-nursing, housecleaning, food preparation, medical care, and butchering. For each activity, Wall examines contemporary

texts, especially books of household advice and manuscript collections, to understand the culture of the early-modern householder. She then considers how popular drama fits into such a householder's assumptions and beliefs, and she discusses what such scenes offered to early-modern viewers.

Wall's method can be illustrated by reference to one chapter, which asks, "Why does Puck sweep?" and answers the question by demonstrating how folk belief linked the hobgoblin to household chores and to serving maids' erotic desires. The chapter then considers why such a figure might appear at an aristocratic wedding, contrasting Puck's activities to Falstaff's adventures in Windsor. Wall provides little information about staging but does offer a wealth of material, including illustrations, about the social world in which Renaissance plays are set. Examining domestic situations enriches her reading of the plays, showing how a scene might confirm early-modern social belief, disrupt such beliefs, or perform an aporia in which what one believes is simultaneously confirmed and denied. The book is an elegant example of how social history can illuminate a dramatic text.

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***Literature, Mapping and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain.*** Edited by Andrew Gordon and Bernhard Klein. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; pp. xiii + 276. $59.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by Christopher John Wortham, University of Western Australia

Although a minority of this important book's twelve chapters focus upon theatre and the theatrical, the volume as a whole makes an immense contribution to our understanding of the milieu—or mentality—in which English plays of the early-modern period were culturally embedded.

As is to be expected of a set of essays by divers hands and diverse brains, the approaches taken are various. They are bound, however, by a carefully observed common theme, and it is this thematic consistency that makes the book remarkable. A succinct introduction by the editors, in which the scope of the book is neatly and effectively summarized, is followed by two sections. The first group of five essays, entitled "Contested Spaces," addresses perceptions of space, among them the sociopolitical and the theatrical. Philip Schwyzer's chapter, "A Map of Greater Cambria," relates the matter of Wales to Tudor ideology and thence to Shakespeare's inferences about maps, shedding new light on the contestation between Glendower and Hotspur in *1 Henry IV*. Lesley B. Cormack's "Britannia Rules the Waves?: Images of Empire in Elizabethan England" makes a valuable contribution in its examination of "the iconographic images present in many geographical works"(45). Andrew Gordon's contribution, "Performing London: The Map and the City in Ceremony," will be of particular relevance to those concerned with sites and genres of performance,

since it goes beyond David M. Bergeron's *English Civic Pageantry, 1558–1642* in its close analysis of the presentation of space, especially the space of the pageants and processions of Thomas Dekker and Anthony Munday.

The second group of six essays includes three specifically about theatre. Most notable is John Gillies's outstanding piece on "The Scene of Cartography in *King Lear*." The section also includes Nina Taunton on "Unlawful Presences: The Politics of Military Space and the Problem of Women in *Tamburlaine*" and Bradin Cormack's "Marginal Waters: *Pericles* and the Idea of Jurisdiction." Richard Helgerson contributes a masterly epilogue, "The Folly of Maps and Modernity," in which he concludes, "Maps were the undeniable makers and markers of modernity, the signs, as well as the tools, of a distinctly new age" (241).

These papers grew out of a conference held at Westfield College, University of London, in 1997. The resulting book is probably the most significant work of its kind in the field since Linda Levy Peck's wonderful editorial achievement, *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (1991).

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***Othello: New Critical Essays.*** Edited by Philip C. Kolin. London and New York: Routledge, 2002; pp. xii + 458. $95 hardcover.

Reviewed by Paige Newmark, Lincoln College

Philip C. Kolin's volume of critical essays perfectly fills the niche between the academic study and the stage practice of *Othello*. Its twenty-one essays cover a vast array of material, including the major critical issues that are pertinent to the play.

All of the essays in this volume seek to frame their arguments in terms of audiences, from the Renaissance to the present day. While other entries in Routledge's Shakespeare Criticism series include only two to three essays concerned with production, this book has five directly addressing the theatrical tradition of *Othello*—a better, but hardly strong reflection of the move toward scholarly articles about Shakespeare in performance. Hugh Macrae Richmond's "The Audience's Role in *Othello*" emphasizes how the strong sense of dramatic irony in the play empowers the audience and consequently encourages them to be complicit in the drama. Sujata Iyengar's "White Faces, Blackface" provides an intriguing history of performances of Othello by black actors and white actors in blackface and examines the cultural and theatrical ramifications of casting choices with regard to race. Francis X. Kuhn's " 'My Cue to Fight': Stage Violence in *Othello*" demonstrates how the audience's desire to see violence and bloodshed enacted onstage has not changed in the past four hundred years, and reveals how much that desire has been a key component in the success of



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productions of *Othello*. Kolin's "An Interview with Kent Thompson" presents an enlightening insight into the modern problems of producing *Othello* in a major theatre. Kolin examines the financial, cultural, practical, and racial constraints that circumscribed Thompson's bid to stage the play.

As the book's editor, Kolin also furnishes an extensive opening chapter, resulting in his work filling over twenty percent of the volume. It is a chapter that attempts to be all things to all people, though Kolin's extensive historical résumé of *Othello* in performance onstage, in film, and on television, and of the charged responses that the play elicited from various audiences, was particularly enjoyable. The volume includes an expansive bibliography, which presents a dizzying array of citations, although the level of proofreading was less precise, judging by the preponderance of errors encountered with proper names: "Gibralter" instead of "Gibraltar" (34), "Aldredge" for "Aldridge" (39), "Hodgson" for "Hodgdon" (61, 80), "Branaugh" for "Branagh" (65–67), "Oronooko" for "Oroonoko" (106), etc. In the final analysis, the success of Kolin's project lies more in the comprehensive nature of the questions raised than in the answers provided, making *Othello: New Critical Essays* a useful starting point for anyone interested in tackling this demanding play.



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