

contemporary study, the book in fact offers a concise but sweeping history of key ideas and landmarks in theatre and political economy since the 1850s: nineteenth-century industrialization, the waxing and waning postwar UK welfare state, Irish peace in the 1990s, North American border panics after 9/11, and austerity politics in the 2010s. In all of these frameworks, McKinnie sees and communicates clearly how the mechanics of theatremaking make political and economic meaning as much as, if not more than, the theatrical performance.

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Dramatic Justice: Trial by Theater in the Age of the French Revolution

By Yann Robert. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019; pp. viii + 331, 1 illustration. \$79.95 cloth, \$75.95 e-book.

Cecilia Feilla

Department of Writing, Literature & Language, Marymount Manhattan College, New York, NY, USA

Yann Robert's *Dramatic Justice: Trial by Theater in the Age of the French Revolution* offers one of the most important recent contributions to the growing scholarship on French Revolutionary drama. Wide-ranging and penetrating, this ambitious study presents the case for seeing theatre and the judiciary in France as evolving together over the eighteenth century around shared questions, concerns, and debates about the performance of justice. The first comprehensive study to take this dual focus, Robert's book does for the codevelopment of stage and courtroom what Paul Friedland's *Political Actors: Representative Bodies and Theatricality in the Age of the French Revolution* (2002) did for the parallel evolution of theatre and politics in the Revolutionary era (and one notes the gesture to it in the books' similar subtitles). The trial of Louis XVI provides Robert with his opening, paradigmatic example to introduce the terms and stakes of his inquiry into the complex ways in which justice and theatre converged, and to forecast the trajectory of his argument, which will return to the trial in the final section. As Robert shows, while revolutionaries were debating every aspect of how the king's trial should be conducted—concerned not to reduce the performance of justice to “empty speech” (101)—the Revolutionary stage also intervened in the proceedings when the Théâtre Français (temporarily the Théâtre de la Nation) mounted a play by Jacques-Louis Laya, *L'Ami des lois* (1793), which reenacted the king's trial as it was taking place and, in effect, put the trial on trial (3). Robert asks how France arrived at this unprecedented moment of show trial and courtroom drama, developments that were “unthinkable only fifty years earlier” (3). He answers this question across the ensuing chapters, taking a diachronic approach to argue that the French Revolution was not a historical exception in the annals of theatre and justice but rather reflects the

culmination of a long process of mutual influence and debate between stage and courtroom as both institutions were being rethought. More specifically, Robert claims that the trial of the king represents both the coalescence of this dual development and the tipping point after which competing models of justice's performance merged into an uneasy compromise that persists to this day.

What ties together the fields of theatre and justice, and forms the major thread of the book, is the shared fear in the late eighteenth century that all performance risks slipping into theatricality. The French court system was so fearful of any association with theatre that it even warned lawyers against attending plays (94). Robert explores how the antitheatrical prejudice shaped judicial procedures, but also how reformers in the latter half of the century sought to change the secretive, ossified, and hierarchical judicial system (what Robert refers to as the "inquisitorial model" of justice [9]) by boldly embracing theatricality as the "very core of liberal justice" (11) and proposing a new "accusatorial model" of justice (10). Playwrights meanwhile employed theatre to push judicial reform as well by turning the stage into a popular tribunal (7). Robert skillfully unfolds this history across the book's seven chapters. Part I, "Theater as Justice," comprises two chapters on the emergence of theatre as a space for imagining new modes of justice. The first brilliantly lays out the book's theoretical basis in the concept of reenactment first developed by *philosophe* Denis Diderot in *Le Fils naturel* (1757). Robert's innovative insight is that reenactment provides an antidote to theatricality, a model of "nontheatrical performance" (19) that he aligns with the accusatorial model of justice seized upon by liberal reformers. Acknowledging that this type of performance manifested differently in the legal and dramatic realms, and was more goal than reality, Robert nonetheless argues for the importance of their shared ambition for a theatre-free performance. The second chapter addresses the historical emergence of a judicial theatre through focus on "aristophanic" (49) plays, such as Charles Palissot's *Les Philosophes* (1760)—which, like those of their namesake, expose the private wrongs of public figures—and the unease these plays provoked about theatre becoming a court of public opinion. Part II, "Justice as Theater," turns to developments in judicial procedure and reform. Each of the three chapters in this part focuses on a different key player in trials—lawyer, judge (spectator), and father (in domestic tribunals)—and offers fascinating parallels between changing notions of aesthetic and judicial judgment and representation, which gave rise to our modern forms of these figures. Part III, "The Revolution's Performance of Justice," examines the short-lived popularity of the first "courtroom dramas" (192)—which reenacted such cases as the Calas affair—in the early years of the Revolution as the judiciary was being restructured and new laws passed concerning the theatre and actors. The final chapter returns to the trial of the king and its aftermath, as already mentioned, to identify the compromise reached by the century's end between the rival inquisitorial and accusatory forms of justice explored throughout the book.

Robert sets out to debunk received ideas about the Revolution's plays and trials, and amply succeeds at this task. His study will be appreciated for its interdisciplinary scope, lucid writing, and stimulating polemic (and charming predilection for exclamation points!). The impressive wealth of material and topics explored both illuminates underexplored pockets of the archive and offers new insight into well-known texts by leading Enlightenment figures (Beccaria, Diderot, Rousseau, and

others). *Dramatic Justice* also constitutes an original and important contribution to the burgeoning field of reenactment studies by adding significant insight into the eighteenth-century origins of the form and its relation to the performance of justice. It is a pity the author does not engage with Rebecca Schneider's influential work on the topic, as dialogue with her main terms and ideas would have broadened the implications of his excellent analyses and arguments. One also wonders how other high-profile cases of the period, such as the trial of Charlotte Corday or the Kornmann affair, might fit into the book's narrative. In the final section, the argument occasionally becomes repetitive, and its bold claims of reversals at times mask subtler moves that are equally or more interesting for being so.

These minor points aside, Robert's book is a tour de force that will be required reading for anyone working on theatre and history of the French Enlightenment and Revolution. The book deserves a wide readership among scholars of contemporary theatre, theatre history, and performance studies as well, especially those interested in reenactment and the interconnection of theatre and justice. Revealing how judicial procedures and outcomes both shaped and were shaped by theatre in the late eighteenth century, *Dramatic Justice* also reminds us that, for good and bad, our own culture of court TV, show trials, and legal dramas has its roots in the eighteenth century.

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Scenes from Bourgeois Life

By Nicholas Ridout. *Theater: Theory/Text/Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020; pp. xii + 211. \$70 cloth, \$54.95 e-book.

James R. Ball III

Department of Performance Studies, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, USA

Nicholas Ridout's *Scenes from Bourgeois Life* sheds new light on the deleterious distances intrinsic to theatrical spectatorship. Via close readings of history and theory, Ridout argues for the emergence (since the seventeenth century) of a particular bourgeois subjectivity, closely linked to bourgeois spectatorship, fostered by experiences of watching drama on stages (and more recently on screens). This subjectivity is characterized by placing "at a spectatorial distance the world in which its [the bourgeoisie's] own hegemony is the source of suffering" (12).

This argument first appears in the second of three Prologues to the book, each theatrical and reflexive in unique ways. The first Prologue is structured like a piece of imagined theatre: detailed scenic descriptions fill a page of text, supported by thrice that many pages of footnotes highlighting the bourgeois subjectivity that might inhabit there. The second finds the author watching people watching television on the television program *Gogglebox*, an experience that prompts an elaboration of the subjectivity of a spectator "in a society in which everyone is a spectator" (8). And the third places the author on