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JOAN LITTLEWOOD AND HER PECULIAR (HI)STORY AS OTHERS TELL IT

> Joan Littlewood is a genius, a Cockney bastard who transformed British drama. Her Theatre Workshop was one of the boldest attempts to create a people's theatre, the first of its kind since Shakespeare. . . . The authorities feared her, the Arts Council snubbed her and the BBC banned her as a communist and refused her entry when she arrived to record a radio play. Now she is 80 and they all revere her.
>
> —London *Times,* June 1995

The theatrical map in London during the 1960s consisted of four notable theatrical companies: the English Stage Company, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre Company, and the Theatre Workshop. The first three companies, although somewhat transformed, fill major roles in British theatre to the present day. What happened to the fourth company, the Theatre Workshop? This question is all the more intriguing in light of the tribute current historical and critical accounts pay to the founder-director of this company, Joan Littlewood. Theatre critics and historians today view Littlewood as a major representative of radical theatre in the 1960s. Littlewood's position during her era, however, was quite a different story, and the tale of then versus the tale of now is a primer in theatre historiography. I will trace that tale in this essay by juxtaposing the diverse receptions she and her works have received during the past forty years.

In re-examining the various accounts of Littlewood's theatrical career, I want to argue that her story exhibits a *synchronic* split (a state of conflicting attitudes toward her work) among cultural authorities of the 1960s (critics, journalists, financial bodies, and established institutions), which laid the groundwork for a subsequent *diachronic* split (incompatible historical views) in histories investigating Littlewood's role and position during the 1960s. Within the context of theatre history, the story of Littlewood's company presents an especially interesting case, since it differs from those simple examples of belated recognition in which a transformation of historical views can be attributed to sociopolitical and cultural changes taking place over the decades. In

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Littlewood's case, the dynamics motivating the transformation of historical views is rooted within her contested position during her era, a position that sheds light on the cultural divisions of the 1960s.

Littlewood and Ewan MacColl founded the Theatre Workshop in Manchester in 1945. Most of the members of this company were survivors of the Theatre Union (which began as the Theatre of Action in 1934). The company toured extensively throughout Britain, mainly one-night stands, "taking theatre to the people." Between 1945 and 1953, the company also toured outside Britain, where its work was acclaimed, though the Workshop remained relatively unknown in Britain. In 1953, the company moved to the Theatre Royal, Stratford, in the East End of London, with Gerry Raffles, Littlewood's companion, as the general manager. The company performed classical productions that attracted critical attention, leading to a growing nonlocal audience. During the Theatre Workshop's most noted period (1953–1963), the company performed new plays, such as *The Quare Fellow* (1956) and *The Hostage* (1958) by Brendan Behan, *A Taste of Honey* (1958) by Shelagh Delaney, *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be* (1959) by Frank Norman and Lionel Bart, and the musical *Oh What a Lovely War* (1963).[1] The two latter productions received the Evening Standard Award. The company participated in five International Theatre Festivals in Paris (1955, 1956, 1959, 1960, and 1963). In 1959, the company's production of *The Hostage* won first prize at the Paris festival and Littlewood received the International Olympics Prize for theatre. In 1963, its production of *Oh What a Lovely War* shared the prize for best production at the Paris festival with the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *King Lear*, directed by Peter Brook.

Littlewood's first departure from the company occurred in 1961, but she returned to direct *Oh What a Lovely War* in 1963. Following this last production, Littlewood withdrew from the theatre and concentrated instead on an idea she had conceived and named the Fun Palace. Intended as a popular center of activities revolving around the arts and sciences, the Fun Palace was in many respects an extension of Theatre Workshop's social/cultural agenda. Due to funding difficulties, however, this project was abandoned in 1970.[2] In 1973, Littlewood, frustrated and disillusioned, left Britain and moved to France. In 1974, Gerry Raffles resigned from the Theatre Workshop and joined Littlewood (he died in 1975). Finally, in 1978, the title "Theatre Workshop" was dropped from the Theatre Royal. Littlewood never resumed her theatrical career, but returned to Britain for a visit in 1994, following the publication of *Joan's Book: Joan Littlewood's Peculiar History as She Tells It,*[3] a provocative memoir that received massive media coverage and provided critics and scholars an opportunity to review Littlewood's theatrical career.

The Theatre Workshop performed highly provocative and unconventional theatre. As a director, Joan Littlewood rejected the standardized form and innocuous social content of the commercial theatre in favor of experimental productions of both "classical" and contemporary plays concerned with political and social issues. Influenced by Brecht, Littlewood encouraged audience participation, allowed onstage improvisation, and used techniques originally developed in the music hall. She is known for her unconventional auditions for recruiting actors and for the unique training programs she developed for her cast.[4] Her collaboration with playwrights often led to rewriting the text during the company's rehearsals,[5] and her belief in a collective experience derived from the teamwork of all the participants in the theatrical production.

Theatre Workshop's productions of the "classics" rejected the star-vehicle approach, stressing ensemble work instead. The company revised texts so as to highlight the plays' contemporary relevancies and used minimal settings rather than historical ones. The new plays performed by the company represented the life of the working class and of those economically and socially deprived. These new plays presented contemporary, "real" settings; the scripts employed dialects and foul language. In fact, the company's commissioning policy embraced playwrights such as an eighteen-year-old factory worker (Shelagh Delaney), a member of the IRA (Brendan Behan) sentenced to imprisonment for political offences and attempted murder, and an ex-convict (Frank Norman). The company's policy insisted on maintaining cheap seats to attract working-class audiences. The Theatre Workshop's location in Stratford East, an unfashionable, working-class area, put Littlewood's company on the metropolitan margin.

Though a seemingly straightforward and often-told story, historical accounts of Littlewood's theatrical contributions offer narratives that are far from simple or uninflected. Rather, they reflect (or deflect) contradictory attitudes that cultural authorities displayed toward her radical work during the 1960s. These divide into three historical narratives (to which this examination of historical reception adds a fourth) presenting very different—and, ultimately, incompatible—views not only of Joan Littlewood and the Theatre Workshop, but of the theatre of the 1950s and 1960s in Britain as well.

Critic John Russell Taylor, the author of *Anger and After*, is a (perhaps the) key figure in this battle of narrative. The first and second editions of his study (1962 and 1969) were published during the years of Littlewood's theatrical activity.[6] Taylor sought the role of cultural mediator, acting to introduce, represent, and advance a view regarding new figures (primarily playwrights and directors) in the theatrical arena; indeed, his book is subtitled *A Guide to the New British Drama*, and is self-described (on its cover) as "the first comprehensive study of the new British drama."[7] *Anger and After* established the idea that the 1956 production of *Look Back in Anger*, performed by the English Stage Company (Royal Court), was the significant turning point marking a new era (or "New Wave") in British theatre. Even on the threshold of a new millennium, historians of British theatre in the 1950s were still confronting "the hegemony that has built up around John Russell Taylor's hugely influential work of the sixties, *Anger and After*, the bible of the Angry Young Men Fan Club."[8]

Presenting Littlewood within the context of what he perceives as the transformed era of writing in Britain, Taylor recounts: "If the Royal Court unmistakably took the lead in the field of new drama with *Look Back in Anger*, it was not long before a rival appeared on the scene." This "rival" is the Theatre Workshop company and its director Joan Littlewood. Since his main topic is new dramatic writing, Taylor deals primarily with the new playwrights Littlewood encouraged and her unique, "free" approach to texts: "[O]f all the producers and directors intimately connected with the staging of the new dramatists, Joan Littlewood has had the most far-reaching effect on the actual texts we know on the stage and in volume form."[9]

Although Taylor presents Littlewood as a new force in the theatrical arena, true to his focus on "the new," he pays scant attention to Littlewood's theatrical innovations as a director, clearly reflected in her productions of the "classics." Taylor's perspective about what endures is clear in his view of Littlewood as a short-lived phenomenon in British theatre: "Her actors are dispersed, her theatre taken over by others, and only some uniquely exciting memories and a couple of, after all, rather remarkable plays remain to commemorate the splendours of Stratford E."[10] Because new dramas and authors are the things that matter, Taylor's account suppresses Littlewood's radical left-wing orientation, her unconventional theatrical approach, her visits to the Paris International Festival, and the critical acclaim she won outside Britain (elaborated in the press),[11] and (significantly) omits the ongoing financial struggle of her company, especially with respect to Arts Council subsidies.

John Russell Taylor explains Littlewood's sudden departure from her company in 1961, and the massive coverage this move received in the press, as a policy matter: "[T]o understand precisely why Joan Littlewood's departure should set up such a violent reaction, one must look a little more closely at her company and its policy."[12] By deflecting attention to the company's policy, Taylor avoids, from the start, any consideration of the financial difficulties that played a crucial role in the development and demise of Littlewood's theatrical career. To ignore these difficulties required a certain amount of selective hearing, since, before leaving the Workshop, Littlewood pointed out in a television interview with Malcolm Muggeridge, that the reasons for her departure related directly to the company's financial struggles:

> [F]or the past few years I have had dozens of West End managers breathing down my neck. The money from the West End was put into Stratford but we can pack the Theatre Royal to the roof and still cannot make it pay. I cannot accept any more a situation where I am unable to work with a company freely.[13]

Moreover, Taylor also deflected the *Daily Telegraph* article referring to this interview, stating: "Joan Littlewood, the Theatre Workshop producer, fired a parting shot on television last night, before she goes abroad, at the people she said were 'the old ladies' of British culture who have driven her from the British theatre."[14] Lost on Taylor as well was the *Daily Mail* headline announcing: "Curtain Down! Joan Littlewood quits Theatre Workshop and blames 'the enemy with money.'"[15]

The coverage of Littlewood's departure, exemplified by the television interview and press articles on the one hand and Taylor's "guide" on the other, suggests a division within the cultural arena. Though recognized by major critics and dominant theatrical figures as an innovative and influential theatre director, cultural authorities, such as the BBC and the Arts Council, denied Littlewood formal recognition, and, thus, their financial support. John Russell Taylor's account reflects these official attitudes, while reinforcing (and perhaps influencing) their views. In fact, Taylor's view of the English Stage Company, established in the mid-1950s and operative during the same time as the Theatre Workshop, similarly corresponds to official attitudes. Lionized by Taylor in his book, no less than in its title, the English Stage Company was held to be the theatrical company that revolutionized British theatre and won the establishment's consistent support.

Other cultural mediators, major critics, and dominant theatrical figures throughout the 1960s recognized Littlewood's radical work as an essential and far-reaching theatrical contribution. They hailed Littlewood's theatrical innovations and sought to change the fate of her company. They published favorable reviews of Theatre Workshop's productions, wrote articles about her work,[16] published press interviews with Littlewood and members of her company,[17] reported the company's success outside Britain,[18] and sent protest letters to the Arts Council.[19] Critic and director Charles Marowitz, for example, was also the editor of the influential theatre magazine *Encore* (1954–1963), in which he wrote glowing reviews of Littlewood's productions.[20] In addition, Marowitz published highly favorable accounts of her unique theatrical methods, and continuously promoted Littlewood's unconventional theatrical practice. Reviewing her production *Oh What a Lovely War*, for example, he asserts:

> Joan Littlewood's company is the only experimental aggregation in the country. And it is the healthiest kind of experiment because it is not exploring, in the abstract, questions of technique and style, but devising forms to suit the practical need of conveying its intentions. Littlewood is finding the really creative way of saying things because, of all English producers, she is the one with most to say. The equation here is obvious, but it can never be said too often.[21]

Kenneth Tynan, a major figure in British theatre, also weighed in on behalf of Littlewood's work.[22] In his review of *The Hostage*, for example, Tynan writes:

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> Mr. Behan's new (careful now)—Mr. Behan's new play. I use the word advisedly, and have since sacked my advisers—for conventional terminology is totally inept to describe the uses to which Mr. Behan and his director, Joan Littlewood, are trying to put the theatre. The old pigeon-holes will no longer serve. . . . Nor can one be sure of how much of the dialogue is pure Behan and how much is gifted embroidery; for the whole production sounds spontaneous, a communal achievement based on Littlewood's idea of theatre as a place where people talk to people, not actors to audiences.[23]

In his many reviews of the company's productions, throughout the active years of the Theatre Workshop, Tynan continuously highlighted and praised Littlewood's overall radical approach, predicting that "when the annals of the British theatre in the middle years of the twentieth century come to be written, Joan's name will lead all the rest."[24]

Tynan's most influential years (1963–1973), while acting as dramaturge (or Literary Manager) of the National Theatre, were the same years during which Taylor's two editions dominated scholarship concerning the "new British drama."[25] It was Taylor's view, not Tynan's, that became "the story" of British theatre in the 1950s and early 1960s. Its dominance is apparent in histories of British theatre published in the 1970s and 1980s, such as those of Ronald Hayman (1979), Richard Courtney (1982), and John Russell Brown (1984).[26]

Hayman's reassessment of postwar British theatre since 1955 adds to the "new" dramatic writings upon which Taylor focused the experimental forms of theatre that attempted to create "new relationships" within the theatre. Among many such attempts, Hayman singles out Littlewood's efforts "to create a theatre for the people" and relates that effort to the insufficient funding of her company by the Arts Council. Focusing in particular on her production of *Oh What a Lovely War*, Hayman, like Taylor, omits other crucial components of Littlewood's career, such as her notable productions of the "classics" and the acclaim her productions enjoyed outside Britain. More significantly, Hayman does not recount Littlewood's continuous struggle with the establishment and its disastrous aftereffects on the fate of her company.[27]

The reigning influence of John Russell Taylor on later histories is even more apparent in Courtney's study, which, in line with Taylor's, highlights the new plays done by the Theatre Workshop, while suppressing Littlewood's radical approach in producing them. Moreover, Courtney claims that "although Littlewood's plays contained direct social criticism, more often the criticism came from antisocial characters (as with Osborne) or was oblique (as with Pinter)." Associated with the English Stage Company, Courtney suggests, by the very references in terms of which he judges Littlewood's plays (Osborne and Pinter) why Littlewood's struggle with English cultural authorities is entirely missing from his account.[28]

Though John Russell Brown credits Littlewood with "giv[ing] post-war British theatre a renewed sense of the pleasures of performance," it is a pleasure that "owed more to vitality of performance than to the individual originality of a writer."[29] Like Courtney, and Taylor before him, the productions of new plays Brown discusses, such as Delaney's, Behan's, and the musical *Oh What a Lovely War*, reinforce the perception of the 1950s and 1960s as a new era of writing. Absent among the pleasures of performance are Littlewood's "classics" that clarify the extent of her innovation as a theatre director, shaping the old as well as the new. Denied the central position within her era enjoyed by colleagues like Peter Brook, noted for his direction of "classics," Littlewood's role during her era is downplayed in Brown's map of the beginning of modern British drama, which locates Littlewood only as "at very much the same time" as several other (more) significant theatrical figures.[30]

The overall influence of John Russell Taylor's study on later critical and historical accounts makes clear the extent to which the image of a theatrical figure can be determined by dominant cultural mediators whose views correspond to official attitudes, even when contradicting voices (such as Marowitz's and Tynan's) have been raised. Nor was theirs the only contravening evidence offered scholars. In 1981, Howard Goorney, a member of Littlewood's company for thirty years, and (in 1985) Mike Coren, a freelance journalist, offered different stories about the Theatre Workshop's struggle for existence. Their histories supply information omitted, or suppressed, in earlier accounts—significantly, the company's innumerable confrontations with censoring authorities and its continuous battles with funding agencies.[31]

To be sure, only John Russell Brown might have known even one of these alternative histories before publishing his *Modern British Dramatists*, but it is puzzling that Alan Sinfield's 1989 *Literature, Politics and Culture in Postwar Britain* so markedly recommends the view that the "legitimization" of Littlewood's work during the 1950s and 1960s reflected a change of attitudes: "[T]heatre became a place where new-left attitudes could be explored. The magazine *Encore* was founded to develop the connection, and the work of Joan Littlewood and Theatre Workshop, marginalized hitherto for its socialist policy, was celebrated."[32] Although accounts such as Goorney's and Coren's reflect a growing tendency to reassess Littlewood's theatrical contribution, Sinfield's (re)presentation of the attitude toward Littlewood's work in the 1960s as an encompassing "celebration" appears incongruous in light of her reception by Taylor and others. Perhaps his view signifies, rather, the change in official attitudes toward Littlewood that evolved during the mid-1980s and culminated in the 1990s.[33]

If Marowitz's and Tynan's assessment of Littlewood and the Theatre Workshop carried less weight than John Russell Taylor's, and if Goorney's and Coren's alternative histories passed unremarked upon by historians, events relating to Littlewood and occurring in the 1990s changed all that. Especially significant were the publication of *Joan's Book* (in 1994) and the massive press coverage it received, the BBC documentary on Littlewood that same year, the BBC's intention to serialize her memoirs, and the attempts of the National Theatre (in March 1994) and the BBC to obtain Littlewood's consent to revive her play *Oh What a Lovely War* (both vehemently refused).[34] Scholarly studies reassessing Joan Littlewood's theatre career and the Theatre Workshop's contributions were soon in press.

Stephen Lacey's *British Realist Theatre* (1995) provides a coherent and plausible account of the history of the Theatre Workshop, which, in marked contrast to the partial accounts of several of his predecessors, fills in the gaps. Although Lacey does not acknowledge the state of conflicting attitudes toward Littlewood's work during the 1960s, which can account for incompatible views of her theatrical career, his study, most significantly, sheds light on the motivations underlying official attitudes during this era. Unlike the English Stage Company, Lacey claims that the

> Theatre Workshop was not a "new" company. . . . Its structure and origins were different and unique. It started out of the workers' theatre movement and its founders Joan Littlewood and Ewan MacColl ran a series of companies linked by common concerns: a radical socialism, a commitment to perform for working-class audience, a search and application for a variety of theatrical methods and influences.

After its move to London, Lacey argues, the company received critical acclaim for several of its productions of the "classics." Lacey suggests that this "was the point at which its policy intersected with the interests of the literary critical establishment," and, indeed, it was the "classics" that brought this company, the most experimental and politically motivated of the period, to the attention of the critical establishment. Lacey further clarifies that although Behan and Delaney became the company's "new theatre," the company's "repertoire was dominated by classical drama, [and that] only one entirely new play was produced between 1956–1958." Incorporating data from Goorney's account, Lacey's history presents the Theatre Workshop as a company that was "in almost every area of its activities an alternative to the then dominant forms of commercial theatre." Lacey's Joan Littlewood sought radical theatre forms and aspired to present her theatre to a working-class audience, until crippling financial problems and the compromises they forced drove her away from formal theatre entirely.[35]

Lacey's reassessment of the Theatre Workshop is taken even further by Dan Rebellato's 1999 study, *1956 And All That* (whose title alludes to *1066 And All That*, a parody of the history of England as taught to schoolchildren). Rebellato's critique is directed at "history as fairy tale." He challenges the view that the "Royal Court to the West End is as David to Goliath," which is "the picture routinely offered to us." Rather, he argues, the reasons for the Court's

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success can be located in wider forces organizing the cultural life of the nation, such as the developing agenda of the Arts Council. So viewed, the English Stage Company "was not a break with the previous structures," but was linked to them. Indeed, Rebellato finds that the board of the English Stage Company "as a whole was made up of just the sort of people that the Arts Council liked." The Arts Council's attitude toward the Theatre Workshop, on the other hand, reflected the council's refusal to recognize and support the activities of theatre of the Left. Recounting the impossible financial struggle of Littlewood and her "too radical" theatrical company, Rebellato details the various attempts made to change the Arts Council's policy toward the Theatre Workshop, including recommendations to the Arts Council from major public figures, delegations, and "glowing endorsements in the theatre press," all of which failed to impress the Arts Council. Whereas "the Royal Court was everything the Arts Council had been waiting for in its project of national-cultural renewal," Rebellato asserts, the company's "refusal to become docile objects of the Council's gaze" determined its fate.[36]

Both Rebellato's and Lacey's accounts, unlike John Russell Taylor's, attribute Littlewood's defeat to a lack of financial support, not to her working methods. The Arts Council's consistent refusal to assist Littlewood's company (as opposed to its growing support for the English Stage Company) is presented in these two histories as deriving from Littlewood's socially and politically radical approach and her refusal to compromise. Reassessing Littlewood's story in the context of her own time, these two accounts challenge as well the widespread notion attributing the breakthrough in postwar theatre to *Look Back in Anger*.

A second publication in 1999, Dominic Shellard's *British Theatre since the War*, claims that, "If George Devine's English Stage Company at the Royal Court was a writers' theatre, Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop at Stratford East on the other side of town was a practitioners' one." Like other 1990s studies, Shellard's is a revision of the historical "record." In Shellard's account, because Littlewood's company predated the English Stage Company in London by three years, and, given the Theatre Workshop's broad and rich repertoire of "classics" during the early 1950s and its low-cost productions, it is the Workshop that "foreshadows George Devine's project. This offers further confirmation," he asserts, "that the reorientation of post-war drama did not begin with a 'big bang' of '*Anger*.'" Jack Reading, vice-president of the Society for Theatre Research, further argues that Littlewood's work made a bang of its own. Regarding the 1958 production of Shelagh Delaney's play, Reading observes:

> *A Taste of Honey* has been overlooked as an example of a new theatre in advance of its time—and in many ways . . . the staging of the play was equally revolutionary. Littlewood's direction methods resulted in a style, acceptable, workable, but more direct and real than any acting to be seen further to the west in London. . . . *A Taste of Honey* was being considered at about the same time as *Look Back in Anger* but reached the stage later, but it

> has an equal, if not greater, claim to be a break point of the British theatre. Alas, it had no banner-title to wave and, after all, was in the East End poor relation theatre.

Shellard uses Reading's testimony to advance the view that *Look Back in Anger* was the least radical of the plays associated with the "new era" in British theatre.[37]

Scholarly histories in the 1990s agree that the Royal Court Theatre satisfied two of the Arts Council's particular objectives in the 1950s and 1960s: first, a need for change which, second, posed the least threat to the existing system.[38] Joan Littlewood, a strong-willed and independent woman who would not bend an inch, could not be co-opted by the establishment's "measured" policy of change. Unrepentant to the last, Littlewood's multifaceted relationships with cultural authorities reached its denouement in 1998, when she finally gave her consent to the National Theatre to revive *Oh What a Lovely War.* The "National Theatre Mobile" production, directed by Fiona Laird, took place not at the Cottesloe, part of the National Theatre organization Littlewood detests, but in a tent on a hill in Milton Keynes. According to the press, Littlewood further "stipulated that the National, the RSC and the West Yorkshire Playhouse were no-go areas."[39] Her play, her rules, at last.

There are three markedly different narratives in my "peculiar history" of Joan Littlewood as others tell it. The first, distinctly exemplified by John Russell Taylor and echoed in histories published in the late 1970s to mid-1980s, advances the view that the 1960s signified a "new era" of British drama, while it avoids considering the establishment's reluctance to support Littlewood's radical work. The second narrative, exemplified by studies published in the 1990s, makes clear that the establishment's reluctance to support Littlewood's theatrical company was due to political reasons. The third narrative, evident in the quotation heading this essay, focuses on "the beginning" and "the end," the formulaic story of an artistic genius, whose radical work was banned in her own time yet recognized forty years later for its immense contribution to the theatre.

None of these narratives of Littlewood's (hi)story, including Littlewood's own "peculiar history as she tells it," present a complete account. Even the recent histories that recapture the evidence relating to the split among the cultural authorities of her era, for and against Littlewood, overlook the significant role played by theatre historians in forming the view of her position within her era. My own tale, then, attempts to present a fourth narrative that encompasses the other three, a meta-narrative that displays the evolving, multifaceted (hi)story of Joan Littlewood as the outcome of conflicting mediating forces, acting synchronically to produce consequent diachronic contradictions. In this, the particular case of Joan Littlewood illustrates a more general phenomenon, namely, that the conflicting attitudes of authoritative cultural forces toward a theatrical figure during her or his era lay the groundwork for subsequent incompatible historical views of that figure's image and contribution.

Endnotes

1. Although the first program note presents the musical as based on an idea of Charles Chilton, Chilton, Littlewood, and Gerry Raffles have all been made responsible for it.

2. For a detailed account of the Fun Palace project and the financial problems it entailed, see Nadine Holdsworth, "'They'd Have Pissed on My Grave': The Arts Council and Theatre Workshop," *New Theatre Quarterly* 53 (1999): 10–12.

3. Joan Littlewood, *Joan's Book: Joan Littlewood's Peculiar History as She Tells It* (London: Methuen, 1994).

4. See, for example, Clive Goodwin and Tom Milne, "Working with Joan," *Encore*, July–August 1960, 9–20, and 12–13.

5. The issue of Littlewood's "free" attitude toward the dramatic text is much debated in accounts of her work. Whereas some, such as Russell Taylor's *Anger and After* (see next note), see her rewriting of texts as a problem (if not a defect) in Littlewood's theatrical policy, others, such as *Encore*'s (1960) "Working with Joan," present revision as an aspect of her directorial innovation. An example of Littlewood's collaboration with a playwright is provided in Goodwin and Milne, 14–15.

6. John Russell Taylor, *Anger and After: A Guide to the New British Drama* (1962; reprint, London: Methuen, 1969).

7. On the issue of critics as cultural mediators, see Yael Zarhy-Levo, "The Theatrical Critic as a Cultural Agent: Esslin, Marowitz and Tynan," *Poetics* 21 (1993): 525–43.

8. Dominic Shellard, "1950–54: Was It a Cultural Wasteland?" in *British Theatre in the 1950s*, ed. Dominic Shellard (England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 29–30.

9. Taylor, 119 and 120 for the quotes.

10. See Taylor, 119, as compared with Goodwin and Milne, 9–10, on the subject of the classics. For the quote, see Taylor, 123.

11. See, for example, "Snubbed by the Critics—but Hailed by All France," *Reynolds News*, 23 October 1960.

12. Taylor, 120.

13. Howard Goorney, *The Theatre Workshop Story* (London: Methuen 1981), 124.

14. Radio Correspondent, "'Old Ladies' of Arts Council," *Daily Telegraph*, 25 July 1961.

15. "Curtain Down," *Daily Mail*, 10 July 1961.

16. See, for example, Goodwin and Milne, 9–20; Charles Marowitz, "Littlewood Pays a Dividend," *Encore*, May–June 1963, 48–50; "Personality of the Month," *Plays and Players*, July 1959; Tom Hutchinson, "Miss Theatre Angers Playwright," *Daily Express*, 26 January 1961; David Nathan, "Why I 'Tinker' with New Plays," *Daily Herald*, 27 January 1961; and John Barber, "The Littlewood Dilemma," *Daily Telegraph*, 11 January 1971.

17. See the *Observer* Profile, "Theatre Worker," *Observer*, 15 March 1959; and Mark Cleveland's interview with Littlewood, "Littlewood and After," *Reynolds News*, 4 February 1962.

18. See, for example, Leslie Mallory, "A Kiss for Miss Littlewood," *News Chronicle*, 9 April 1959; Robert Holles, "The Woman Who Is Shaking Up the Theatre," *John Bull*, 13 June 1959; and "Snubbed by the Critics."

19. On this issue, see Dan Rebellato, *1956 And All That* (New York: Routledge 1999), 63.

20. Charles Marowitz (born in New York) established his reputation as a theatre director following his work with Peter Brook on the RSC 1962 production of *King Lear*, the 1964 production of Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade,* and its accompanying Theatre of Cruelty Season. Marowitz is

associated with modern adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, with the Absurd (via Artaud), with alternative theatre, and above all, with experimental theatre. The other two editors of *Encore* were Tom Milne and Owen Hale.

21. Marowitz, 50.

22. Kenneth Tynan wrote for the *Spectator*, the *Evening Standard*, the *Daily Sketch*, and the *Observer* (1954–1958, 1960–1963). In 1963 he was appointed the Literary Manager of the National Theatre. Kenneth Tynan's early review of the Theatre Workshop's production of *The Good Soldier Schweik*, in the *Observer* (14 November 1954), prophesied that the "Theatre Workshop might take London by storm." See also Tynan's *Curtains* (London: Longmans, 1961), 218–20, 235–36; *Right and Left* (New York: Athenaeum, 1967), 82–84, 170, 316–24; and *Profiles* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1989), 178–85.

23. Tynan, *Curtains*, 218–19 and 220, for the quotes.

24. Tynan, *Profiles*, 178–85.

25. Sir Harold Hobson, C.B.E., was also a champion of Littlewood and the Theatre Workshop. For many years the drama critic of the *Christian Science Monitor*, Hobson succeeded James Agate as drama critic of the *Sunday Times* (1947–1976).

26. Ronald Hayman, *British Theatre Since 1955: A Reassessment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). Richard Courtney, *Outline History of British Drama* (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams & Co. 1982). John Russell Brown, ed., *Modern British Dramatists* (New York: Prentice–Hall, 1984), 1–12.

27. Hayman, 130–32 and 134–36.

28. Courtney, 257.

29. Brown, 1–12 and 25.

30. Ibid., 3.

31. Howard Goorney, *The Theatre Workshop Story* (London: Methuen, 1981). Mike Coren, *Theatre Royal: 100 Years of Stratford East* (London: Quartet Books, 1985). For censorship and funding issues, see Goorney 106, 109–10, 118–19, 123–24, and 177–80, and Coren, 34, 51, and 56.

32. Alan Sinfield, *Literature, Politics and Culture in Postwar Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell 1989). Sinfield's reference to Littlewood follows a more detailed discussion of the English Stage Company's *Look Back in Anger*.

33. For the beginning of a change in attitude toward Littlewood, see Daniel Farson, *Sunday Telegraph*, 24 May 1981. See also Coren's observation (60) that "in the mid-1980s, Joan Littlewood's name was on everybody's lips."

34. For press coverage, see "Joan's Lovely War," *Observer Magazine*, 13 March 1994, 12–18; Peter Lewis, "Stage Prescience," *Independent Magazine*, 26 March 1994, 17; and John Peter, "The Play's the Thing," *Sunday Times*, 27 March 1994. The BBC documentary was "Omnibus," BBC-1, produced by John Hough, 19 April 1994. For the BBC's intention to serialize Littlewood's memoirs, see Suzie Mackenzie, "Oh What a Lovely Rude Joan," *Evening Standard*, 9 June 1995, 13. The BBC ignored Littlewood and filmed *Oh What a Lovely War* anyway.

35. Stephen Lacey, *British Realist Theatre: The New Wave in Its Context, 1956–1965* (London: Routledge, 1995), 48, 49, and 55 for the quotes, 6 and 50–52 for the Theatre Workshop's financial problems and Littlewood's departure from the theatre.

36. Rebellato, 38, 63, 66–68.

37. Dominic Shellard, *British Theatre Since the War* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1999), 64 and 65 for the quotes. Reading's "letter to the author" is cited on 70. Shellard argues (30) that *Look Back in Anger* should be reassessed in light of other theatrical events which occurred prior to, and at the same time as, its first performance.

38. See Sinfield, 27; Lacey, 53; and Rebellato, 68.

39. See Paul Taylor, "Oh What a Lovely Coup for Milton Keynes," *The Independent*, 4 April 1998. See also Jeremy Kingstone "Lest We Forget," [London] *Times*, 18 August 1998.