The Theatrical Public Sphere is a masterful and vital contribution that provides a theoretical linkage between theatre studies and the public. It refines the public sphere in the context of performance—how it has functioned historically and how it continues to be transformed by changing practices of spectatorship and production. It will prove essential to researchers seeking rigorous theorizations of the public sphere in many contexts, and its implications for theatre studies demands serious consideration. If performance in its modernist manifestations "and more so in disciplinary theorizing" (174) has excluded the public sphere from its analytical framework, then theatre studies must also have a major role in a rectification.

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Stanislavsky: A Life in Letters. Selected, translated, and edited by Laurence Senelick. London and New York: Routledge, 2014; pp. xvi + 653, 82 illustrations. $178.95 cloth, $44.95 paper, $43.95 e-book.
doi:10.1017/S0040557415000654

Reviewed by Valleri Robinson, *University of Illinois*

Stanislavsky: A Life in Letters exceeds the promise of its title. Although the bulk of the book consists of Stanislavsky's personal letters from his adolescence to days before his death, these epistles are supplemented with Laurence Senelick's sophisticated commentary and insightful contextual analysis. The result is not only an examination of the (globally significant) life and work of Stanislavsky through primary documents, but a rich and complex presentation of the most significant theatrical and political events of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Stanislavsky's letters and diary entries, full of descriptive commentaries on performances inside and beyond the Moscow Art Theatre, reveal the vast and diverse theatrical history he helped shape. Additionally, his perspective provides insight on living conditions and personal threats during World War I, the Russian Revolution, the global Red Scare, and Stalinist Russia. The letters reveal an artist struggling to live (and archive) a meaningful, ethical creative life. Stanislavsky emerges not as a domineering eccentric or no-nonsense high priest of Art, but as a practical, impassioned, disciplined, and generous artist, father, businessman, and diplomat.

Senelick adeptly guides the reader through this mass of letters with concise chapter introductions and occasional commentary. He usefully divides the book into twelve chapters marking the greatest transitions in Stanislavsky's artistic life. The book covers his earliest impressions and work as an amateur, his foundation with Nemirovich-Danchenko of the Moscow Art Theatre, experimentation with forms and development of the studio theatres, a response to the Russian Revolution and Civil War, and a view of Stanislavsky's work in the theatre at home and abroad under shifting Soviet policies. Because Stanislavsky was associated with leading artistic, political, and economic figures during his lifetime, the letters provide a perspective on the predominant changes in European and

Russian theatre and history at the time. He not only connected with the major figures of Russian theatrical performance and dramatic literature (including Anton Chekhov, Lev Tolstoy, Maxim Gorky, and Vsevolod Meyerhold), but also developed relations with leading theatrical figures in Europe and America through extensive travel. In his letters, he comments on performances and work by such figures as Georg II, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, Gordon Craig, Isadora Duncan, and Max Reinhardt. Well versed in the theatrical trends in Russia, Germany, France, Italy, and later America, he held strong opinions regarding theatrical traditions as well as modernist experimentation, criticizing practices that impeded an actor's creative expression.

Among the recurring themes in Stanislavsky's letters is a view of theatre as a sphere for ethical and aesthetic enlightenment, a space where artists and audiences could educate and improve themselves (though he recoiled from overtly didactic performances). He sought an understanding of certain natural laws of creativity that might enhance an actor's effectiveness as a performer and emphasized the significance of the creative process, fearing any attempt to codify the process in a way that might limit an actor's potential. He often complained about those who wrote about or taught his so-called system in a rigid or simplified way. Throughout his life, he also disdained a lack of discipline, railing against actors who arrived late, drunk, unprepared, and unfocused. If the theatre would fulfill its mission of enlightenment (and he often doubted it would), he believed it would require educated, creative, and disciplined leadership.

Another recurring concern for Stanislavsky represented through his letters is censorship, which was escalating under Stalin and the requirements of socialist realism. The letters are full of worries that a play in rehearsal (from *Foma,* based on a Dostoevsky novella, in 1890 to *Armoured Train 14–69* in 1927) would not be permitted. The repertoire was a constant concern. His letters make it clear that he was frustrated through his artistic life about finding plays that could be affordably produced with the actors available, meet the artistic mission for the two sometimes combative MAT founders, and pass through varying censorship requirements.

The selection of letters provides a view of Stanislavsky beyond his work as an artist. Letters to his mother, wife, siblings, daughter, and son expose intriguing aspects of the man, his colorful sense of humor, his ethical and spiritual sensibility, his discomfort with excessive physical display, and his delight in children. Additionally, through his animated descriptions of his travel, Stanislavsky also reveals, and Senelick doesn't avoid showing, the famous actor's prejudices. Occasionally, Stanislavsky refers pejoratively to Jews and suggests his distaste for the black servants in his American hotel. He sometimes expresses disgust for the female body on display, as when he sees women in bathing suits for the first time or Ida Rubinstein's nude body in performance.

The volume captures the passage of time and, as Senelick aptly notes, a sense of loss for the era in which Stanislavsky thrived. Stanislavsky's letters evoke the exceptional pain he felt at the death of Chekhov, and later Tolstoy, whose passing truly marked the end of an important historical moment for the Russian actor-director. The next era begins for Stanislavsky in captivity in Munich and an urgent, frustrated attempt to return to Russia at the beginning of

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World War I. The letters from this time communicate the frenetic pace and uncertainties of twentieth-century life, showing Stanislavsky's attempts to negotiate the tumultuous era as an individual, an artist, an arts administrator, and a father. Letters to Soviet leaders, including Josef Stalin, in the 1920s and 1930s testify to his struggles to support and defend his family and colleagues, to maintain the records of the theatre and his life's work, and to remain an essential artist.

This rich collection of letters, so carefully selected and translated by Laurence Senelick, is a bountiful contribution to the field of theatre studies. Senelick's efficient instructional notes, commentaries, explanations on translation choices, and introductions provide readers with easy access to the world in which Stanislavsky wrote his letters and developed his important writings on theatre. This remarkable edition will prove essential reading to theatre scholars and students both as a reference guide and comprehensive study.

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Bernard Shaw and Totalitarianism: Longing for Utopia. By Matthew Yde. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013; pp. x + 247. $90 cloth, $90 e-book.
doi:10.1017/S0040557415000666

Reviewed by Patricia Gaborik, *The American University of Rome*

With *Bernard Shaw and Totalitarianism: Longing for Utopia*, Matthew Yde provides an overdue look at the more perplexing aspects of Shaw's political thought. He makes a solid case for admitting Shaw to the club of utopian writers from which he is typically excluded and takes seriously the author's self-positioning as a revolutionary. But whereas the vast majority of scholars ignore or dismiss Shaw's support for the twentieth century's totalitarian regimes, Yde takes this seriously as well, insisting that we will do ourselves and the "iconoclast" playwright a "disservice" if we fail to recognize "the totalitarian side of his work and personality" (9). Thus, following in the footsteps of Kimberly Jannarone, whose important work *Artaud and His Doubles* (Michigan, 2010) sets out to explore what Susan Sontag called the "fascist longings in our midst," Yde tackles Shaw and what we think we know of his political thought.

Yde's premises are straightforward: it was Shaw's "deep need to believe" (145) in a coming utopia that led him to Fabian socialism and to support the Communist, Fascist, and Nazi dictatorships. His revulsion for waste, need for order, and disdain for the supposedly undisciplined proletarian masses caused him to identify with the Nietzschean supermen Stalin, Mussolini, and Hitler and to defend their right to eliminate undesirables from the body politic. Accordingly, Yde's analyses of two essays and eight plays focus on the themes of Creative Evolution and the Superman, eugenics, and how these were joined in Shaw's quest for utopia. Yde rightly asks: Why would Shaw talk so often about these issues if he did not care about or believe in them? The strength of Yde's study lies in this question, and his readings lend complexity (and seriousness) to Shaw's plays. But, more important, the many uncomfortable questions Yde asks—and Shaw's callous