Book Reviews
Edited by Mark Fearnow

This Is My Body: Representational Practices in the Early Middle Ages. By Michal Kobialka. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999; pp. 328. $49.50 cloth.

Reviewed by Andrew Sofer, Boston College

Like other postmodern historians in the line of Foucault and de Certeau, Michal Kobialka treats surviving documents not as markers of historical facts but as traces of discursive fields. *This Is My Body: Representational Practices in the Early Middle Ages* takes four "epistemological fragments" of the period, some of which have been read by theatre historians as evidence of the origins of medieval drama and theatre, and analyzes the heterogeneous "representational practices" they embody. According to Kobialka, a representational practice determines "what is possible to be thinkable and expressed" within a given discursive field (282). As an antidote to the homogeneous notion of representation in the Middle Ages frequently construed by traditional theatre historiography, Kobialka lays bare the power relations and discursive instabilities that underlie a network of such practices in the early Middle Ages (970–1215).

The fragments Kobialka chooses are the *Regularis concordia*, the Berengar–Lanfranc Eucharistic controversy, the ternary mode of the Eucharistic sacrament in the twelfth century, and the Fourth Lateran Council. Kobialka reads each of these practices as seeking to redefine the Eucharistic formula "This is my body" (*Hoc est corpus meum*), a doctrine that remained in flux until stabilized by the Council, which imposed a unitary understanding of the visible body of Christ in the sacrament. Since, for Kobialka, representation is nothing other than the collection of practices that determine what can be seen as real at a given time, the body of Christ functions as an absence that could be made visible by authorities, in different ways, at different times, and for disparate ideological and political purposes. In the Middle Ages, "*Hoc est corpus meum*" was appropriated, articulated, and disseminated by various representational practices that camouflaged a truly heterogeneous discourse.

Kobialka's richly contextual readings illuminate how documents, stabilized by theatre history, perform differently within different discursive formations. Thus, while the tenth-century *Regularis concordia* called a particular, disciplined, transparent monastic self into being (Chapter One), the eleventh-century *Regularis concordia*, together with other practices, "disclose[s] an epistemic break in the concept of representation" itself (Chapter Two). Similarly, by introducing Mary Magdalene's grief over Christ's missing body and her mistaking of Christ for a gardener, the twelfth-century Ripoll text of the *Quem quaeritis* "alters the terms of sacramental theology" contained in various earlier versions of the trope (167). Here, Christ's body is actually given physical or material shape outside the theological text.

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In the twelfth century, a "ternary mode of thinking" about the Eucharist—corporeal, spiritual, and institutional—"regulated and determined representational practices within the entire theological field" by conditioning how the body of Christ could be produced and understood (182). In this complex discursive formation, the Church tried to rein in and institutionalize a disturbing privatizing tendency in devotional practice by displaying the sacramental body. The "Real Presence" of Christ in the Host became a visible reality holding ecclesiastical practices in place, and this forceful visualization of clerical power was then consolidated by the constitutions of the Fourth Lateran Council, which "created a singular standard that curtailed the ongoing debates around the mode of perception of the Eucharist" (202). From 1215 on, claims Kobialka, everyone had to see the same body in the same way.

While admiring Kobialka's amply historicized readings, I was less swayed by his polemical introduction, which warns us "not to fall prey to countless practices of rearranging an aspect of a past reality . . . to give it an autonomy and independence that it never had" (27). In order to defend the thesis that representational practices were heterogeneous before 1215, Kobialka must himself create a straw man, "*the* medieval concept of representation" (my italics), neither Aristotelian nor Platonic but "enshrined in the interpretation of *Hoc est corpus meum*" (1). Yet, presumably, sites other than the Eucharist were available for arguments about representation in the period, and the fact that medieval thinkers and mystics disagreed about what *Hoc est corpus meum* meant before (if not after) 1215 is not in question, even amongst die-hard traditionalists. Consequently, the payoff of Kobialka's insistence on flux and heterogeneity is not always evident.

Moreover, the "open, dynamic field of specifiable relations and potentialities" championed by Kobialka might be as much a chimera of the postmodern historiographer as "the origin of medieval drama" is of the unreconstructed theatre historian (28). In Kobialka's account, historiography becomes a disembodied theatre of the mind, an abstract space in which ghostly "enunciative possibilities," animated by "technologies of power," collide and compete for dominance. This focus on "the mode of historicity, rather than on history itself" threatens to collapse into abstract jargon:

> There is only a dynamic field of specifiable relationships, which reveals diverse practices in their complexity and density. In this sense, the analysis of representational practices operates within the space occupied by discourse. It does not explain or describe this space by contextualizing it, but it enunciates the systems of its formation as well as its modes of effectivity and action without destroying their materiality (30).

Such opacity is absent when Kobialka engages in a straightforward history of devotional practices. His close readings of Lanfranc's *Constitutions*, Anselm's

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meditations, and Hildegard's *Scivias* are indispensable for those seeking to understand the ideological undercurrents of medieval religious controversy.

When staking broader claims, however, Kobialka produces the effect of having made visible a pre-existent historical phenomenon (representational practice, enunciative possibility, discursive formation) that the skeptical reader may suspect is summoned into being through the power of the author's dense, figurative language. Yet, despite the performativity of its prose, *This Is My Body* firmly establishes its four fragments as crucial sites in the medieval struggle over the meaning of the Eucharist, and the book's account of their shared objectives is persuasive. Thanks to Kobialka, we can never again read endlessly anthologized documents such as the *Regularis concordia* merely as static monuments that record something we choose to call "the origin of medieval drama." *This Is My Body: Representational Practices in the Early Middle Ages* is required reading for all those interested in issues of representation in the Middle Ages.

Performing Shakespeare in Japan. Edited by Minami Ryuta, Ian Carruthers, and John Gillies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; pp. 259 + illus. $74.95 hardcover.

Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage. Edited by Takashi Sasayama, J. R. Mulryne, and Margaret Shewring. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; pp. 357 + illus. $74.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by Wesley Savick, Suffolk University

The first significant wave of Western scholarship about Japanese theatre came after World War II in the combined efforts of Brandon, Ernst, Keene, Scott, Bowers, Maim and others, who provided an encyclopedic introduction to the histories, practices and aesthetics of traditional Japanese theatre. The scope of this collective undertaking (no less than the [re]construction of a cultural legacy pre-dating Shakespeare) was, and remains, a stunning achievement in terms of its sheer exuberance as well as in its revelatory contribution to Western knowledge. Yet, in spite of such an auspicious beginning (as well as the excellent contributions of subsequent scholars), extant studies of Japanese theatre in English remain scarce and new ones, scarcer still. Even now, more than a half-century after the war, the emphases of these examinations often privilege the study of traditional practices over contemporary ones. A near-absence of translated studies by Japanese scholars further compounds this imbalanced perspective.

Both *Performing Shakespeare in Japan* and *Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage* are invaluable in correcting this imbalance. The Cambridge volumes chart

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a course through the tricky waters of current theoretical and methodological orthodoxies toward what may be, for many, a distant shore of understanding contemporary Japanese theatre. The collected essays are not (and most likely cannot be) immune to isolated charges of orientalizing, essentializing and possibly even Japanizing their respective topics. Nevertheless, their larger aim is an attempt, however prismatic, to articulate a theory of interculturalism specific to Japan. Shakespeare is the unifying figure in these examinations, though his role may be more antagonist than principal. The premise of the volumes implicitly draws on post-colonial theoretical strategies that examine the multifarious processes Japanese theatre artists have employed (and resisted) in attempting to engage a Western master narrative, a premise that produces its own problems and rewards.

The volumes share many basic attributes. Both address the phenomenon of Shakespeare in Japan, and recognize in this intersection a burgeoning field for the generation of artistic innovation, cultural capital and theoretical implications. Both incorporate the intercultural theory they espouse; eleven of the eighteen articles in *Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage* are by Japanese scholars, as are nine of the fourteen articles in *Performing Shakespeare in Japan*. Only Takahashi Yasunari of the University of Tokyo appears as a contributing scholar in both volumes. *Performing Shakespeare* also features the transcriptions of five interviews (with four directors and one actor) conducted by a panel comprised of a majority of Japanese scholars. While these percentages reflect a welcome balancing of the scholarly voices in the field, it is problematic that the editorial tribunals for each volume consist of a two-to-one Western majority.

The crucial difference between these volumes is less obvious than their apparent similarities. In *Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage*, the primary site of the cultural encounter named in the title is the intersection of Shakespeare with traditional Japanese theatre practices. *Kyogen, kabuki, noh*, and *bunraku* experiments with Shakespeare adaptations/assimilations/appropriations are documented, along with compare/contrast articles pairing the Bard with Zeami and Chikamatsu, respectively. By following this line of inquiry, the book expands the body of knowledge provided by the "first wave" of traditionalist scholars mentioned earlier. It also revisits the history of a negotiation between two cultural pasts that began in the Meiji period, the complexity of which, implied but far from exhausted in the book, lies in the ever-renascent capacity of some traditional forms to be recuperated as signs of modernity. Shakespeare's future as a contemporary, in Kott's sense, appears to be all but assured in both Japan and the West. Yet, while traditional Japanese theatre practices have been widely appropriated by Western avant-garde practitioners as tools to illuminate a modern or postmodern Western aesthetic, is this the way such experiments with Japanese traditions are perceived in Japan? What are these intercultural, *intertemporal* experiments intended to illuminate? Traditional Japanese theatre practices? Shakespeare? Japan? The West? The past? The future? *Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage* generously provides both material to raise potent

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questions for further inquiry and a rich sociohistorical context in which to do so. (Ryuta Minami's exhaustive "Chronological table of Shakespeare productions in Japan, 1866–1994," pp. 257–332, provides a mother lode of leads for scholars researching these questions.)

Performing Shakespeare in Japan, as recommended by its editors in the introduction, is an extension of the project set in motion by *Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage.* What distinguishes *Performing Shakespeare* from its predecessor is its emphasis on post–World War II Shakespeare productions and the subsequent rise of the Japanese *auteur* director. Whereas *Shakespeare and the Japanese Stage* attempts, with varying degrees of success, to locate points of vital intersection between parallel traditions, *Performing Shakespeare* identifies compelling examples of the postwar, postmodern break with traditional performance practices. Through a survey of the work of Akira Kurosawa, Norio Deguchi, Tadashi Suzuki, Yukio Ninagawa, and Hideki Noda, as well as interview transcriptions with the latter four, *Performing Shakespeare* accords a large degree of autonomy to the individual, subjective Japanese creator who, while drawing on a specific cultural context, is no longer drawing on a cultural context that ended with the Edo period. The book may actually contribute more to the project of dispelling the Eurocentric stereotype of the Japanese artist as a slavish imitator of things Western than it contributes to an intercultural (re)consideration of Shakespeare.

Considered as companion volumes, these books are less contradictory than complementary. They both use Shakespeare as a mirror, held up to the as-yet undertheorized nature of Japan and its unique role in contemporary intercultural economies. More important, the books provide a compelling new way to look at Japan, through an emerging history of indigenous Shakespeare productions as ambivalent responses to the West. The ascendance of Shakespeare in Japan coincides eerily with periods of Japan's extranational domination, first as an imperial military power in Asia and later as an economic superpower throughout the world. One hopes that the ideas in these noteworthy volumes will stimulate more scholarship that illuminates Shakespeare's role as a supporting player within the larger drama of Japan's ascendant role on today's international, intercultural stage.

Staging in Shakespeare's Theatres. By Andrew Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000; pp. vi + 181, illus. $39.95 hardcover.

Reviewed by Jonathan C. Smith, Hanover College

This study is part of Oxford Shakespeare Topics; a series of short, accessible books addressing "important aspects of Shakespeare criticism and scholarship." It aims to reconstruct the conditions of performance in

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Shakespeare's own time. The relatively meager supply of hard historical evidence is supplemented by interpretive speculation, with the latter occasionally overbalancing the former.

The first three chapters discuss physical features of the playhouses, including audience conditions, stage structure, costumes, and props. Chapters Four through Six deal with stage movement, with an explicitly announced (but inadequately justified) narrowing of that topic to routine entrances and exits. The seventh and final chapter theoretically applies the findings of the first six to an imaginative reconstruction of a complete production of *Hamlet*, as it might have been in the Globe of 1601.

Chapter One and the first twelve pages of Chapter Two give a succinct overview of the theatre venues during Shakespeare's career, sorting out exactly which company was where and when. There is nothing particularly new here (the momentary speculation that some important scenes might have been played facing the rear of the stage is quickly withdrawn), but this crucial bit of theatre history is often so easily muddled or oversimplified that this book might be worth having on the shelf for these pages alone. Every high school graduate likely knows that Shakespeare's plays were performed in the Globe, and conventional teaching often refers to that setting, even for earlier and later plays that may well have been produced elsewhere. The radically different Blackfriars is an influential Shakespeare venue to which we should pay more attention, and some of the significant differences are spelled out here. But the authors miss an opportunity in the final chapter by addressing only Globe staging, rather than offering at least two reconstructed stagings in order to contrast indoor and outdoor performances in the heyday of Shakespeare's career.

The final two-thirds of the second chapter reveal the book's most general flaw: the failure to exploit its historical focus for new interpretive insights. The chapter ostensibly mines the texts of the period for specific verbal evidence on playhouse conditions, but in fact there are large areas of overlap with the discussions in the first chapter, and the evidence is no more extensive than before. The third chapter, by contrast, uses Henslowe's *Diary* to put together a useful and well-documented inventory of costumes, hangings, and properties in Shakespeare's theatre.

Chapters Four and Six focus narrowly on entrances and exits, and offer much ado about little. A ponderous analysis produces such "important" findings as "exits may be interrupted" and the single stage direction for these "indicates the beginning of a process rather than a single action which is completed immediately." A seemingly scientific analysis of "How Much Time Is Allowed for Exits" (using line counts and a taxonomy of exit patterns) is so heavily qualified as to be self-unraveling. A few discussions of individual cases would have been both more helpful and more convincing. The things that "it seems reasonable to conclude" or "it makes sense to conclude" (both phrases referring

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to intuitive judgments) are as persuasive as the mathematical portion, perhaps more so. Not surprisingly, when the methods of these chapters are turned to critical use (e.g., for *King Lear* or *Merry Wives*), the readings are naïve and obvious, offering no new substance to an experienced interpreter/producer of Shakespeare.

The fifth chapter focuses exclusively on "The Three Openings in the *frons,"* and mainly on the symbolic potential of the central, curtained one. It is more interesting reading than the two chapters that surround it, but it also frustrates in a manner emblematic of the whole book. The summary paragraph recapitulates six "likely tactics" for use of the central opening. The second of these, "that the action of hiding behind the hangings could have been regarded as an exit" (113) differs from all the others in being supported by hard evidence, and also in being trivial. The other five items make up an important catalog of plausible conventions for the use of the central opening, but these are based on nothing more than the same intuitive judgments any director (or other interpreter) would make while matching the script with the set; no historical "authority" is added.

Finally, the imaginative description of *Hamlet* also mixes well-documented details with interpretive speculation, requiring the reader (much like the audience member at today's London Globe) to sort out historical reconstruction from mere conversation with a fellow interpreter. Much of this is good conversation—as in, for example, the discussion of the aural irony in using Claudius's carousing cannon for the funereal sounds at the end. Some of it is not so good—for example, dismissing the likelihood that a movement or sound would prompt Hamlet's "Where's your father?" in 3.1, and then immediately entertaining the possibility that Polonius would draw laughs in the scene by sticking his head out through the curtains. Helpful or not, most of this chapter's "reconstruction" is artistic rather than historical. There is nothing wrong with this line of conversation; it is the lifeblood of Shakespearean directors, and especially, for this book's purposes, touches an area wherein the historical record is nearly blank. However, in this examination, speculation seems to occupy space that a more intensive research could have filled, and it belies the premise on which the book began.

The Economics of the British Stage, 1800–1914. By Tracy C. Davis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; pp. xviii + 506. $74.95.

Reviewed by Cary M. Mazer, University of Pennsylvania

Tracy Davis's monumental study of the economics of British theatre (and allied entertainment) in the nineteenth century is breathtaking in its scope, incessantly informative, frequently eye-opening, repeatedly assumption-

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shattering, and astonishingly well-researched. It is arguably one of the most important contributions to scholarship in Victorian theatre for at least a decade. It is also, for the first 150 of its 362 pages of text, difficult to read and almost impossible to digest.

That it is so is a telling reflection of the state of theatre-history scholarship in our times, and the ways that scholarly breakthroughs (such as this) are made. Innovative theatre-history research has, arguably, often sprung from three impulses: the desire to examine previously neglected bodies of evidence once thought peripheral to the art of the theatre; the desire to apply to existing data the theories, methods, and vocabulary of other disciplines; and the desire to interrogate the accepted narratives of the field in the light of new, often ideologically inflected, agendas. These impulses frequently work in combination with one another: for example, the methods of another discipline may teach us to pay particular attention to a previously neglected body of data; an interpretive agenda (whether political or theoretical) may have been inspired by developments in a sister scholarly discipline; or, conversely, the methods of the other discipline may suddenly be appealing because that discipline has succeeded in addressing questions raised by new interpretive agendas. Davis's remarkable debut monograph, *Actresses as Working Women* (Routledge, 1991), clearly arose from all three impulses. Inspired both by statistical studies of social groups by the New Social History and by feminist theory, Davis uncovered a previously neglected body of data and persuasively demonstrated the cultural and historical meanings generated by the new materials.

And so it is with this volume, which looks at theatre regulations, expense books, box-office receipts, payment stubs, salary rates, and other documents of theatre and related industries, both to paint a comprehensive picture of how theatre events could actually be created in the public marketplace, and to raise broader questions about industry in relation to the national culture. But Davis is several steps (perhaps too many steps) ahead of her readers, especially in the first few chapters, where she not only assumes the role of an economic historian amid theatre historians, but seeks to take her place as an economic historian among economic historians. How, she asks, do the changes in the theatre industry over the "long nineteenth century" relate to contemporary changes in manufacturing, finance, and state regulation, and to the articulation of economic principles by contemporary political economists and polemicists? And so, in her first chapter, she discusses the dilemma facing the managers of London's two remaining patent theatres in light of laissez-faire economics and the articulation of Britain as a free market. Davis is more likely to quote Adam Smith and David Ricardo, and to discuss the Chartist movement and the Reform Bill, than to rely solely on the Parliamentary debates when discussing the Theatre Reform Act of 1843, which, she argues, was more a reflection of emerging economic systems than a singular theatrical cause. In the first third of the book, she narrates specific cases and issues, not for their own sakes, but as illustrations of larger

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economic principles. A discussion of the Anti-Corn-Laws movement leads to a lengthy narrative about whether the City Theatre in Glasgow could be built of brick; a discussion of theatrical regulation and the government's obligation to intrude into a free-market economy to protect public safety leads to a narrative about theatre fires; the shift in auditorium architecture from private boxes to an open-plan dress circle is viewed, not in terms of theatre demographics, but in terms of the mechanics of ventilation and the miasma theory of disease; and the flesh-colored tights of Ada Isaacs Menken's Mazeppa and the undergarments of can-can dancers are analyzed in context of the utilitarianism, the commodification of desire, and the economics of value.

These arguments are always fascinating and often convincing, and they almost always serve to interrogate received wisdom about conditions and events that have long been viewed as historical watersheds. But what makes all this hard to read and even harder to digest is the fact that Davis attempts to reframe our understanding of the data before the data have been presented; she is ready to knock down assumptions before we have been given the chance to assume them.

Things improve in the next cluster of chapters, when Davis finally explains how theatre management actually works. She usefully navigates among all of the overlapping terms for various functionaries in the theatre business, redefining Victorian terminology (manager, impresario, entrepreneur, lessee/proprietor, and lessee/entrepreneur) so that the roles are clear, and their relative financial risks, potential gains, and managerial authority can be parsed. Countless test cases are used to illustrate how managements can grow from family businesses to partnerships to limited-liability companies to publicly traded corporations. (She also shows how an individual's investment was liable in bankruptcy proceedings, dependent on whether the individual was involved personally, entrepreneurial, or managerially.) Some accounts (Irving, the Bancrofts) are familiar; others—like the Gatti family's ascendancy from supplying theatres with ice to Music Hall management—are refreshingly informative. As each chapter progresses, the reader becomes more accustomed to Davis's economic terminology (e.g., she labels the preparation work for a new production, and the costs of designing and constructing the physical production, as "research and development"). Before long, we can understand, for example, how the return on Irving's investment differed from Tree's, whose productions were more elaborate but less expensive ("Spectacularism is," she observes, "partly the result of business decisions based on the balance sheet" [213]); how Irving regarded his Lyceum seasons as a loss leader for his higher profits from years of provincial and American touring, while Tree used Her Majesty's as the "financial lynchpin" of his business, and subcontracted out provincial tours of his London productions to maximize the profits of "quickly expiring commodities" (228–29); and how Tree's system of bookkeeping enabled him to write off production expenses as depreciation, and so count research and development on the credit side of the ledger book.

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Once the parameters of theatrical finance, risk, and profit are established, Davis can write more persuasively about the position for the art form in the larger culture: what impelled late-Victorian and Edwardian schemes for not-for-profit theatres (such as the National Theatre), and why they couldn't succeed; how managers "branded" their art for mass-market consumption; how colonial and commonwealth touring constituted a commercial exploitation of theatre as an "intellectual product"; and how theatrical art could be turned into "cultural capital." As with *Actresses as Working Women*, she has much to tell us about women, especially how women managers—both the pioneers like Eliza Vestris and Marie Wilton, and the many "wo-managers" who followed—were denied access to the "gentlemanly capitalism" of all-male clubs, and so were more likely to become managers and entrepreneurs rather than assuming the more capital-intensive roles of owners or impresarios.

Reading *The Economics of the British Stage* is as labor intensive as owning it is capital intensive. However, the bottom line is this: Davis's research and development yields enormous profits in both the short term and (I predict) the long term.

O'Neill: Life with Monte Cristo. By Arthur and Barbara Gelb. New York: Applause Books, 2000; pp. 758. $40.00 hardcover.

Reviewed by Yvonne Shafer, St. John's University

The names of Arthur and Barbara Gelb have been connected with Eugene O'Neill ever since their 1962 biography of the playwright became a surprise bestseller. Since that time, they have written numerous articles and reviews, and their biography has become an unavoidable landmark in O'Neill scholarship. In the introduction to their new book, the Gelbs write that, following the publication of the earlier biography, "countless studies of O'Neill's plays [were] published, along with chronicles of his life and times." Many of these texts used the Gelb book as a guide, some of which "surpassed segments of our own research, elaborated on our early discoveries and caught us in errors" (xiv).

Given the detail of the original 970-page book, not to mention the further elaboration in the countless studies that followed, Arthur and Barbara Gelb are frequently asked what inspired them to engage in the labor of rewriting the book and publishing it in three volumes. They address the question with honesty and clarity in their introduction. They were very young when they began the first book—too young, they now feel, to have had a full comprehension of the material. The positive side of their youth was their daring and audacity in undertaking such a difficult endeavor at a time when many theatre professionals and critics dismissed O'Neill as overrated and old-fashioned. More important, Carlotta Monterey, O'Neill's third wife, was still alive at the time, and open to

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numerous interviews, as were five hundred other relatives and friends of O'Neill, who gave the Gelbs both interviews and documents.

Nevertheless, they were not able to use all the existing materials on O'Neill, a large portion of which was in Yale University's Beinecke Library and unavailable for examination due to Carlotta Monterey's control. After her death, these papers were made available to scholars, giving new insight into O'Neill's career, his working methods, and his personal life. Further, the Gelbs were now able to use material given to them in the earlier interviews by friends of O'Neill, who had been reluctant to upset or incur the wrath of Carlotta Monterey when she was alive. Arthur and Barbara Gelb were also aware of the sixty love letters and thirty poems that O'Neill had sent to Beatrice Ashe when he was passionately in love with her. Although Ashe had spoken to the Gelbs, she kept the correspondence from them until 1974, when she sold the letters to the New York Public Library.

The Gelbs also traveled to the University of Texas at Austin to re-examine their own collection of O'Neill material, as time and circumstance had changed their attitudes toward some of the evidence about O'Neill. They write that, as young persons, they had felt a bias toward the sons (Eugene and Jamie) in the O'Neill family. Now that they themselves had children and grandchildren, they were more sympathetic to the parents, James and Ella O'Neill, and in the new book, aimed at a more mature balance in the depiction of both parents and children.

This first volume interweaves background material for the plays, stories from O'Neill's personal life, and the plays themselves in a very readable narrative that begins in 1939, with O'Neill's struggles to continue writing despite increasing debilitation from a wrongly diagnosed disease. Carlotta Monterey describes O'Neill's suffering as he delved into his past to write the plays that failed initially, yet are now performed all over the world. The Gelbs then re-examine O'Neill's parents, presenting a revised portrait of O'Neill's mother, based in part on letters and diary entries of the young actress Elizabeth Robins. They continue through O'Neill's involvement with the Provincetown Players, an event the Gelbs describe as "a step that probably saved his life" (547), and end the volume with O'Neill's first attempt at a full-length play, *Beyond the Horizon*.

A particular benefit of this volume is the Gelbs' clarification of the misrepresentations, exaggerations, and falsifications of previous studies. Having had some of their own errors pointed out by subsequent writers, they are now "not displeased" to return the favor (xiv). For example, the Gelbs document the circumstances of O'Neill's expulsion from Princeton University (not due to his throwing a bottle through Woodrow Wilson's window, as George Jean Nathan claimed), his introduction to Provincetown, and other inaccurately reported events in his life.

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The book is lavishly illustrated, has a thorough index, and, in response to academic criticism of the previous biography for its lack of endnotes, includes sixty-five pages of notes. Through their many public presentations at conferences on O'Neill, the Gelbs have given tantalizing indications of the wealth of new material in the upcoming volumes. In the meantime, this present work serves as a major contribution to the re-evaluation of O'Neill, and the continuation of the Gelbs' own labor of love. (Barbara Gelb's first Christmas present to her husband was the collected plays of Eugene O'Neill.)

George Jean Nathan and the Making of Modern American Drama Criticism. By Thomas F. Connolly. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press (Cranbury, NJ: AUP), 2000; pp. 172. $35.00 hardcover.

Reviewed by Philip Zwerling, University of California, Santa Barbara

According to Thomas F. Connolly, George Jean Nathan (1882–1958) stands as "the first modern American drama critic" (13). Nathan's career spanned the early half of the twentieth century, beginning in 1905 as reviewer for the *New York Herald*, followed by a position as coeditor with H. L. Mencken of *The Smart Set* (1914–1924) and, later, as cofounder with Mencken of the *American Mercury* (1923–1932), and concluding as a contributor to *The American Spectator, Newsweek*, and *Esquire.* In addition to his magazine and newspaper work, Nathan authored thirty-four books of theatre criticism and dramatic theory, becoming the most widely read theatre critic in the nation.

In *George Jean Nathan and the Making of Modern American Drama Criticism*, Connolly asserts that Nathan rescued the profession from the "two sorts of drama critics" typical of the time, "anonymous puffsters and scholarly genteel types" (47). In contrast to the previous generation's gentility and its emphasis on actors as stars, Nathan cultivated a "destructive criticism" that concentrated on playwrights and texts, and he is particularly remembered today for championing the early careers of such struggling playwrights as Eugene O'Neill, Sean O'Casey, and William Saroyan. Nathan achieved a new intellectual respectability for the American drama critic and, by 1924, he was the best known and highest paid drama critic in the world. Still, Connolly writes, Nathan's "legacy is not as important as his contemporary success" (17), because Nathan lacked any aesthetic creed or vision for the future of theatre. Nathan "knew what he liked," and he wrote intelligently and entertainingly from his wide store of theatre knowledge, but, Connolly notes, "Nathan's critical method is difficult to describe because it [was] essentially amorphous" (99). In addition, Nathan's prejudices sometimes outran his critical faculties, as when he wrote that "to argue that [the actor] is an artist is to corrupt the concept of the word *artist* with half-meanings" (94). Further, Nathan demonstrated no appreciation for the efforts of either the Group Theatre or the Federal Theatre Project,

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dismissed committed left-wing playwrights like John Howard Lawson and Clifford Odets as "little red writing hoods" (14), and opposed the work of Bertolt Brecht and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, which he called "the little play that wasn't there" (137).

Publicly, Nathan cultivated as much of a "persona" as that of any actor. Connolly describes him as "elegantly dressed, escorting a fetching ingenue toward two-on-the aisle, row E seats" followed by "midnight suppers at the Stork Club" (13). A self-conscious theatrical icon, Nathan used a cigarette holder stuck at a jaunty angle and a slender walking stick during his daily visits to "21." His sexual affairs, with actresses such as Lillian Gish and Julie Haydon, were public knowledge, and his exploits inspired fictional renderings in the acerbic wit-about-town characters of Hollywood films, such as Addison De Witt in *All About Eve* and J. J. Hunsecker in *Sweet Smell of Success.*

Nathan also undermined the vocation he claimed to cherish by using his power in self-serving and unethical ways. Overstepping the bounds of objectivity or professional detachment, Nathan read unproduced plays, suggesting (and sometimes insisting upon) revisions by their authors. Nathan then passed on revised scripts to producers, with his personal endorsement. He would lobby directors in an attempt to convince them to cast actresses whom he was pursuing sexually. Connolly relates the case of actress Julie Haydon, whom Nathan eventually married. Nathan pressured William Saroyan to choose Haydon over Lillian Gish (who had broken off an earlier and long-running affair with Nathan) as Kitty Duval in the original cast of *The Time of Your Life*, a maneuver he repeated with Tennessee Williams, who had written the role of Laura in *The Glass Menagerie* with Lillian Gish in mind, persuading Williams to cast Julie Haydon instead.

While hardly a sympathetic figure to the contemporary reader, Walter Lippmann's assessment of Nathan, written for *Vanity Fair* in 1928, speaks to the equivocal complexity of the man: "[H]e has created a character called George Jean Nathan that is as interesting as any I have ever seen. . . . He is not a man of the world, but at least a man of his own world" (97). Connolly succeeds in illuminating this conflict within Nathan and within his life, though the book may be faulted on two counts. First, Connolly makes it difficult for the reader to form his or her own opinion about Nathan's aesthetic judgment and insight because he quotes primarily from Nathan's books, while providing little from his magazine and newspaper reviews of particular productions. Second, Connolly's chapters are sometimes repetitive and occasionally cause confusion through abrupt shifts in subject matter and chronology, perhaps due to a too-faithful adherence to the outline of the dissertation upon which the book is based.

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Reading Stephen Sondheim: A Collection of Critical Essays. Edited by Sandor Goodhart. New York: Garland Publishing, 2000; pp. 280. $24.95 paperback.

Stephen Sondheim: A Casebook. Edited by Joanne Gordon. New York: Garland Publishing, 1997/2000; pp. 272. $24.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Ben Fisler, University of Maryland, College Park

In *Reading Stephen Sondheim: A Collection of Critical Essays*, editor Sandor Goodhart interrogates an incongruity between Stephen Sondheim's reputation as one of the most important artists of the musical stage and the simultaneous paucity of serious academic attention to his work. Two recent collections from Garland Publishing, Joanne Gordon's *Stephen Sondheim: A Casebook* and Goodhart's own *Reading Stephen Sondheim*, attempt to illuminate Sondheim's works by examining them through a wide array of critical lenses. Gordon, an acclaimed Los Angeles stage director and accomplished scholar, includes fourteen essays by directors, acting coaches, designers, and scholars in her book (an eclectic collection oriented toward theatrical practice). Goodhart's volume presents an assortment of literary studies representing current trends in critical theory.

In her introduction to *Stephen Sondheim: A Casebook*, Gordon simultaneously affirms the "profound commitment of those . . . who are awed and enthralled by [Sondheim's] work [and bemoan] the neglect that his work suffers from in the . . . national consciousness" (2). Gordon holds Sondheim responsible for leading the American musical beyond the bourgeois values and naivete of its "golden age," for choosing instead to confront audiences with serious philosophical and moral questions. Indeed, the main organizing theme in *Stephen Sondheim: A Casebook* is the principle that Sondheim's work is unique among American musicals. This belief does, unfortunately, inspire several articles that reveal little more than Sondheim's artistic excellence or the structural integrity of particular musicals. Others, however, present analytical and pedagogical models that could enrich contemporary musical-theatre scholarship.

Of most general interest, perhaps, are the *Casebook* essays that comment on the wider field of musicals. Among these are Laura Hanson's broad discussion of women in Sondheim's *oeuvre*, which contrasts the innocent ingenue of the traditional musical, whose sole purpose is to provide a love interest for the male hero, with the heroines in Sondheim shows. While Hanson demonstrates mature characterizations of female roles in several Sondheim pieces, she also cites passages where female characters comment directly on the position of women in both theatre and society, suggesting that the musical's antirealistic qualities can transcend traditional theatre to support a feminist

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ideology. Lois Kivesto's study of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum,* as well as the assorted Plautine comedies that provided its source, attempts to show how Sondheim and his coauthors deviated from the traditions of the "book musical" and musical comedy to produce a new kind of theatre. Kivesto's analysis is valuable to theatre history in its suggestion that *Forum*, by blending multiple dramatic sources, bridges the gap between the book musical and the appearance of the concept musical. James Fisher offers a provocative, new-historicist account of *Follies*, revealing how the Sondheim–James Goldman musical tapped into political dissent in America under Richard Nixon. Fisher maintains that the popular failure of the show was a consequence of its active assault on the escapist myths of the traditional musical. Barbara Means Fraser positions the chorus as one of Sondheim's major contributions to the maturing musical theatre. Whereas the Ancient Greek chorus served as an objective judge, upholding the interests of the community and guiding the spectator's perception, and the traditional American musical chorus functions as local color and living scenery, Sondheim's choruses, Fraser argues, act simultaneously as characters in the narrative and as commentators.

Two articles in *Stephen Sondheim: A Casebook* cultivate theoretical models for the musical as a unique theatrical form. David Craig, through his examination of the compositional techniques employed in *A Little Night Music*, shows how the piece operates not merely on the strength of its story, but on a musical system that binds the events together, thus encouraging theoretical treatment of the musical as a theatrical event within which music, dance, and text are interdependent. The sharpest musicological analysis is provided by Gary Konas, who shows how Sondheim's thematic use of character-specific melody, harmony, and rhythm in the "dream structure" of the Sondheim–Lapine *Passion* illustrates the shifting of Giorgio's affections from one lover to another. In a field where studies (from Tom Jones's *Making Musicals* to Mark Steyn's *Broadway Babies Say Goodnight*) continue to prefer plot-driven musicals to those that emphasize the form's other aspects, these music-based critical models are of considerable value to musical-theatre research.

Other contributors present tenable pedagogical models for musical theatre's history. Andrew Milner compares the unsuccessful work *Allegro* (1947), by Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein, to the Sondheim–George Furth flop *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981). Basing his research on primary source testimonials and interviews, Milner deepens our knowledge of the artistic connection between Hammerstein and Sondheim, while explicating the autobiographical relationship of both shows to their respective authors. Milner demonstrates that, while both musicals grapple with the question of personal artistic integrity, *Allegro*'s protagonist "selects the right path," whereas *Merrily*'s Frank Sheppard abandons his art and consequently loses track of himself. By contrasting the optimistic ending of *Allegro* to the tragic conclusion of *Merrily We Roll Along*, Milner proposes a developmental model for nearly thirty years of musical theatre. In a similar way, Scott Miller uses the conventional term

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"concept musical" to contextualize *Assassins*. While traditional theatre history identifies *Hair* as the first "concept musical," Miller traces its variations back to the 1948 *Love Life*, arguing that the struggle between experiments in idea-based structure and the conventions of linear structure and traditional plot have informed the production of musical theatre for over half a century. As in his own *From Assassins to West Side Story* and *Deconstructing Harold Hill*, Miller uses his dramaturgical analysis of *Assassins* as a template for seeing the Sondheim–John Weidman work as an experiment wherein several approaches are inscribed.

Garland produced *Reading Stephen Sondheim* in 2000, to capitalize on the positive critical reaction to Gordon's *Stephen Sondheim: A Casebook.* Sandor Goodhart's introduction reaffirms the argument of his 1996 *Sacrificing Commentary: Reading the End of Literature*, namely, that great works of literature comment on their own traditions. The twelve essays in *Reading Stephen Sondheim* participate in the critical notion that the works of Sondheim and his collaborators comment on the myth "happy ever after," the theme of Goodhart's closing essay about *Follies* as well. The book is structured into two sets of chapters—one concerning "Sources, Institutions, Themes" and the other "Plays"—connected by a series of thematic strains, for example, the association of maternity with oppression or the similarities between Shakespearean texts and Sondheim musicals. These themes are explored in the contributions of ten scholars, who—with the exceptions of Ann Marie McEntee, a specialist in early-twentieth-century American theatre, and composer Allen Menton—focus on the literary value of Sondheim musicals. Indeed, the first chapter, Thomas P. Adler's "The Sung and the Said," argues for the dramatic value of lyrics, comparing Sondheim's verses to themes in plays by Tennessee Williams and Harold Pinter.

While an unusual critical approach, the examination of one theme ("happy ever after") through the multiple lenses of the essays in *Reading Stephen Sondheim* demonstrates both the ability of Sondheim's work to support serious study and the complexities of the musical form itself. Allen Menton examines the recurring figure of a "domineering or repressive mother" and the adult child who is driven to madness at "climactic moments . . . often rooted in that troubled mother–child relationship" (61). Menton's account of oppressive matriarchs, such as Madame Armfeldt in *A Little Night Music* and the Witch in *Into the Woods,* seems disturbingly misogynist in its focus on the "unrealistic expectations [of mothers who] teach children to disregard their own subjectivity" (75). Sandor Goodhart's essay suggests an alternative: that *Passion* may represent Sondheim's emotionally abusive treatment by his own mother. While it is somewhat reductive to read works as symbolic autobiography, Goodhart helps redirect the misogynist implications in Menton's article by showing how the solution to the troubled relationship is not separation, but reconciliation and closure. Shoshana Milgram Knapp completes this strain of investigation by comparing the novel, film, and musical versions of *Passion*. The novel and screenplay focus excessively on the male character's story and present simplistic comments on the stereotype of beautiful heroines. Knapp demonstrates that the

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complexities of the musical form allow the gender politics that *Passion* raises to be mediated. Taken together, these essays demonstrate that no work of art is mere autobiography or unmediated misogyny; rather, that the musical, a performative work that combines multiple source materials and adapts them through a variety of storytelling methods, presents further difficulty for the identification of pure meaning.

Reading Stephen Sondheim furthers consideration of the musical's complexity by detailing the use of musical and structural duality. In a dueling conversation, Paul M. Puccio and Scott F. Stoddard explain Sondheim's duets as a kind of Hegelian duality in which two seemingly opposing views are played simultaneously until they are resolved, both textually and musically, into harmonic complement. Thus, when Sweeney Todd sings of mass slaughter in "Have a Little Priest," while Mrs. Lovett sings of capitalizing on the free meat, the symphonic resolution suggests that murder and capitalism are "compatible, even congenial, bedfellows" (125–6). Kay Young, analyzing marriage in *Company*, *A Little Night Music*, and *Into the Woods*, demonstrates that Sondheim musicals operate on dualities both within songs, where couples sing in unison but are deaf to each other's verse, and in the structure of these plays' second acts, which, though prepped for happy endings, conclude in ambiguity. Young sees the disrupted happy endings not merely as critiques of marriage, but of the ideology of both traditional musicals and comic theatre from Plautus to Noel Coward. Promises of the "repetition, return, and renewal" (87) that come with a happy marriage, she argues, are essentially hegemonic factors in both traditions. The emotional boundaries between characters in Sondheim's musical juxtapositions, on the other hand, persist to the end, denying his characters a blissful reconciliation. While Young's analysis depends on a structural and textual examination of songs and does not consider how rhythms, melodies, and harmonies support Sondheim's critique, and, though Puccio and Stoddard fail to contextualize the duets they examine, the two essays complete one another in informing the reader of the creative possibilities of the musical, namely, that its multiple performative layers can be manipulated to moral and political ends.

Both *Stephen Sondheim: A Casebook* and *Reading Stephen Sondheim* help fill gaps in the serious academic study of Sondheim's work. At the same time, these sources perpetuate a tradition of "Sondheim worship" in the scholarly and theatrical community, particularly in essays that position his work against other musicals, which are portrayed as superficial and populist. In the field of musical-theatre scholarship, regional experimental works by such authors as Ruth Margraff are ignored, while mainstream musicals by other composers, such as *Rent* or *Titanic*, are treated with condescension by these Sondheim aficionados. Even so, the essays succeed in cultivating critical models that particularly apply to the musical form and benefit theatre research in offering scholars critical insights that combine musicology, historical study, and textual analysis.

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Contours of the Theatrical Avant-Garde: Performance and Textuality. Edited by James M. Harding. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000. $22.95 paperback.

Reviewed by S. I. Salamensky, Williams College

This vivid, inspiring collection of essays explores the general outlines, the retrospective guidelines, the facts, the falsehoods, and the possible future of experimental performance from the *fin de siècle* onward. It asks less what the "avant-garde" is than how it has been considered, and in so doing, suggests a preliminary structure for a long-needed genealogy of ideas of the groundbreaking, anarchic, and simply the "new," in performance history.

Today's avant-garde, by obvious logic, is tomorrow's old hat. And yet some types of performance remain resistant to mainstream incorporation, while others so successfully foster future movements as to merely footnote their own histories. Experimental production is misunderstood, often by design, in the artistic marketplace, yet it suffers as well (as contributors illustrate) in the marketplace of ideas, where it is underhistoricized, undertheorized, undervalued, and/or fetishized for underdeveloped reasons.

In particular, editor James Harding explains that the hybrid (theatrical, visual, musical, social) genre characterized as performance art has been at once derogated and lionized in respect to governing tropes of "the text." As Bonnie Marranca (whose work sparked this volume, but is absent from it) has influentially argued, the privileging of "textuality" has relegated scholarship and teaching on performative genres to underrecognized, ghettoized quarters. At the same time, as W. B. Worthen has demonstrated, relations of performance to the textual are too multiplicitous and complex to simplify into neo-Foucauldean power dichotomies. Most of the pieces in this volume (e.g., Philip Auslander's lucid, intriguing explication of the relation of the musical score to performance in Fluxus and other experimental musical contexts, Christopher Innes's critically invaluable parsing of notions of theatrical language in work from Shaw and Marinetti through the current day, and Erika Fischer-Lichte's intensive, challenging survey of "antitextual gesture") tackle this text-versus-performance debate. Others (e.g., Sally Banes's incisive research presentation on the historical role of the university in underwriting avant-garde performance) examine the avant-garde in material and cultural context.

The articles in the volume take two general shapes. Many of the essays (e.g., Laurence Senelick on the avant-garde in early modernist Europe, David Graver on Artaud, and the Auslander piece) begin with close readings of artists and movements, with broader theory arising from the specific. These, without exception, are energetic and engaging, both greatly informative and a pleasure to

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read. Others (e.g., Michael vanden Heuvel on intratheoretical conflicts, and Kristine Stiles on Euro-American feminist divides) take up more purely theoretical investigations from the first. These are somewhat more speculative in tone, and denser; from a point of view of scholarship as performance, these might be better positioned had the volume been organized by approach rather than subject matter.

For example, finishing a largely historical essay, like Laurence Senelick's tracing of notions of text from the European *fin de siècle* through interwar periods, I grew eager to learn more about specific avant-garde movements' constitutions-as-such, strategies, and receptions. Several such examinations, satisfyingly, did follow. Midvolume, however, I came across Patrice Pavis's thorough, semiotically oriented book excerpt on negotiating interpretive practices in performance studies. While Pavis's work is extremely vital in itself, the excerpt feels out of place, and perhaps slightly forced into this context. One might, in fact, prefer two volumes: one tracing a critical history of the avant-garde, the other purely theoretically oriented. Overall, the volume is a great success. All pieces strive beyond worn cliché to examine the avant-garde in rigorous theoretical depth. The result is sharp and rich, and will optimally inspire similar work in the discipline.

If performance in general is unmarked, ephemeral, and fleeting, then avant-garde performance is more so. Its history and theory, to date, are far from realized. The presentation of this attractive but modest-looking volume is deceptive. *Contours of the Theatrical Avant-Garde: Performance and Textuality* is a foundational installment in a fledgling field where intelligent and respectful, but antisentimental and tough-minded, studies are rare.

Modern Theories of Performance: From Stanislavsky to Boal. By Jane Milling and Graham Ley. New York: Palgrave, 2001; pp. 198. $47.50 hardcover.

Reviewed by Elizabeth C. Stroppel, William Patterson University

One of Stanislavsky's most frequently quoted directives to actors is to play the specifics of life and to avoid the enemy of generalities. If this guideline can be applied to the composition of texts, then authors Jane Milling and Graham Ley of the University of Exeter have succeeded in disarming that enemy in print. Their detailed analyses of the writings of an illustrious group of twentieth-century theatrical figures is solidly grounded in sociocultural and artistic specifics and illuminates the theoretical trails blazed by these practitioners.

The purpose of this text is to trace the evolution of the performance theories proffered by Konstantin Stanislavksy, Adolphe Appia, Edward Gordon Craig, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Jacques Copeau, Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski, and Augusto Boal—a daunting task to say the least. The authors extrapolate

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evidence from the practitioners' texts and records of their theatrical productions, some of whom wrote more copiously than others. Milling and Ley imbue each with importance through a complementary pairing of four of the practitioners, as well as the use of corollary sources that help to fill in textual gaps. In a broad sense, this book lays out visions of the actor theorized from the previous century in a cogent, condensed manner, as the actor journeys from subject to object to glorified nonsubject to unglorified subject. Milling and Ley offer insight into the content of these practitioners' visions as well as the motivations and processes from which their visions emanated.

Stanislavsky is an appropriate starting point, in light of his unparalleled impact on performance. The authors situate Stanislavsky as an actor-director-pedagogue for whom the studios and rehearsals of the Moscow Art Theatre served as proving grounds for "finding an alternative performance text for acting in changing circumstance" rather than for formulating a manifesto. The initial writings of his system exist in the first part of *Creating a Role*, written in 1916, when Stanislavsky devised "a fantasy role in a fictional production" for the character Chatsky from Griboyedov's *Woe from Wit.* Milling and Ley sort through the text of *Creating a Role* (which was not released in the United States until 1961) and extract from it elements of his performance system. This same process occurs with *Stanislavsky on the Art of the Stage, My Life in Art, An Actor Prepares*, and *Building a Character*, as the authors continue to elucidate the theoretical tenets and contradictions embedded in Stanislavsky's writings.

The legacies of Adolphe Appia and Edward Gordon Craig may rest more solidly in design than in performance, yet Milling and Ley mine this work as well to bring out its contribution to the pattern of performance. They emphasize how Craig and Appia viewed one another in their quest to broaden theatricality and lessen the hold of realism. The authors point out Appia's paradoxical words about acting: first, as only one element of the stage and, later, "the center and source of all design" (*The Work of Living Art*). They analyze Craig's difficult text, *The Art of the Theatre*, and the articles in his journal *The Mask*, particularly his controversial "The Actor and the Übermarionette" in which Craig argues for puppetlike replacements of performers. Although Craig suggests that the actor cannot create art, "for at root the actor can never remove his or her own body as material," Milling and Ley point out that complete reliance on this famous text is misleading, as Craig's writings also contain contradictory visions of the actor in performance.

The section following couples Vsevolod Meyerhold with Jacques Copeau and offers a meticulous reading of their texts (most published posthumously). Milling and Ley identify "ideological re-positioning" in the work of Meyerhold and Copeau, as these director-theorists sought to put the actor center stage through the reclaiming of antique spatial arrangements.

"Artaud and the Manifesto" questions the relevance of Artaud's madness to his accomplishment as the one most responsible for "providing the modern

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theatre with a sense of itself as something sacred." Through his complex, diverse writings, densely built of analogies and metaphor, the actor emerges a mystical symbol, more than human.

In "Grotowski and Theoretical Training," Milling and Ley reread *Towards a Poor Theatre* and Jerzy Grotowski's other theories, developed as he travailed from his production work to paratheatrical stages, where he was deeply influenced by the changing contexts in which he found himself. Although Grotowski himself did not write much of the text, he maintained a strict hand in editing the final publications. Grotowski's ideas of actor training vacillated from ritualized self-improvement methods to action-oriented ones that kept with more traditional notions of the actor's art, and the authors conclude that Grotowski had difficulty reconciling his rhetoric with his own contradictory impulses.

In the final section, "Boal's Theoretical History," Milling and Ley demonstrate how Augusto Boal's often convoluted writings in *Theatre of the Oppressed* and other works served to manipulate theories (Aristotelian mimesis and reception, for example) for political purposes. Boal adds a dimension to twentieth-century performance theory "predicated on a condemnation of the role of the spectator, and on a correspondingly extremely high valuation of the actor" as an agent of social action.

Although Milling and Ley intend this text to serve as a starting point for studying modern performance theory, the intricacy with which they foray into each artist's work can be overwhelming, especially given the brevity and concision of the text. The book serves as a valuable accompaniment to primary source materials. Recent texts, such as *Acting (Re)Considered*, edited by Phillip B. Zarrilli, provide a basic understanding of most of these practitioners, while others—such as *Stanislavsky in Focus* by Sharon Marie Carnicke, *Antonin Artaud: The Man and His Work* by Martin Esslin, and *Jacques Copeau: Biography of a Theater* by Martin Kurtz—focus on artists individually and at length. Milling and Ley remain aware of the dangers of condensing and comparing, and they attempt to avoid confusion by keeping the text narrowly focused. Still, given the complexity of the subjects that they have chosen, some readers may retain the generalities and give up on grasping the specifics.

The Theatrical Event: Dynamics of Performance and Perception. By Willmar Sauter. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000; pp. 272, illustrations. $42.50 hardcover.

Reviewed by Klaus Van Den Berg, University of Tennessee

Since theatre emerged as an academic discipline, scholars and artists have argued over how to define it. These debates have had various motivations: the

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desire to capture the full dimensions of their object of study, the search for appropriate methods of analysis, and the fight for intellectual ground in academic power struggles. The increasingly popular term "performance," which arose out of dissatisfaction with the narrow aesthetic and cultural limits that the concept of "theatre" seems to impose, has been likewise much debated (as demonstrated in Marvin Carlson's 1996 survey).

In *The Theatrical Event*, William Sauter contributes to this ongoing debate, proposing the "theatrical event" as a conceptual frame. Sauter systematically explores the relationship between performer and spectator in the theatrical event with the aim of making the historical meaning of this dynamic readable. He also uses it to describe another kind of "theatrical event," the one created through the interaction between the historical performance and himself as historian.

Sauter has organized his argument into two parts: a theoretical section situating his definition of the theatrical event within contemporary theatre theory, and a historical section whose eight chapters cover topics ranging from the work of diverse individual artists (Sarah Bernhardt, August Strindberg, Dario Fo, and Robert Lepage, among others), to cultural performances such as museum exhibitions, to the issue of Jewish stereotyping in performances in 1930s Sweden. He includes two chapters on audience research, in support of his opening assertion that audiences come to the theatre to watch actors and are only secondarily interested in content, ideology, or ideas. (The fact that many of these chapters have been published previously in other contexts accounts for a noticeable repetition in the historical section.)

In his theoretical chapters, Sauter presents his argument that theatre must be understood as an event that unfolds over time, through the interactions between the performers and spectators within specific cultural contexts. Sauter identifies three levels of interaction between performers and spectators: first, the sensory level (audiences respond to the actors' physical presentation and exhibition of skill); second, the artistic level (audiences appreciate the performance as an enactment of a set of rules, or "encoded actions"); and third, the symbolic level (audiences assign meaning to the presentation, reading the embodied actions as symbolic ones). Rejecting the traditional one-way model of communication (in which a sender transmits a message to a receiver who decodes it to complete the communication), Sauter treats communication as an open process, characterized by multidirectional and simultaneous exchange. Although referred to only in passing, Jürgen Habermas's model of a perfect communication pervades this argument. Much like Habermas's interlocutors, who seek consensus in an ongoing exchange, performers and spectators in Sauter's model engage with each other at whatever level is possible depending on the circumstances.

Sauter situates his concept of the event within contemporary theory by noting how his concept addresses the strengths and weaknesses of other

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approaches. Applauding semiotics for saving theatre studies from the "fetishization of historical documents" and restoring performance analysis to the center of theatre study, he chides it for assuming a too conventional idea of theatre analysis and for sometimes being overbearing in "over-sign[ing] everything" to a "grammar of theatre." Praising hermeneutics as a science of interpretation well suited to analyzing the theatrical event, he charges that few scholars have applied hermeneutics to performance analysis or theatre historiography. Acknowledging insights from cultural studies regarding how the cultural context shapes and is shaped by performances, he nevertheless shuns a comprehensive application of methods developed by Bakhtin, Geertz, Caillois, and Turner. Sauter recognizes the usefulness of the cultural-studies concept of "playing," but he uses a broadly philosophical version of the concept, drawn from the phenomenology of Hans Georg Gadamer. The social and political aspects of playing interest Sauter much less than Gadamer's views on the philosophical value of playing as an open exchange without practical gain, serving no purpose but itself. Sauter touches only briefly on several potentially relevant points that others in cultural studies have made about the social and cultural functions of playing, and he does so only to lend authority to his own philosophical perspective. For example, he refers to Bakhtin's investigation of the carnival as an open form of cultural exchange, but chooses not to pursue Bakhtin's central insight that the instability of the carnival creates opportunities for subversion and social change.

Gadamer's philosophy is also a source of one of Sauter's most intriguing ideas—the move to place the historian in a similar communicative relationship with the historical performance as the spectator had with the original performance. Sauter endorses Gadamer's notion ("the fusion of horizons") that historical understanding is a process of blending past events and present perspectives in a conscious and constant effort to construct a forthrightly historical understanding of past events. Sauter asserts that "through a series of interpretations, the historical event is kept 'alive,'" in that it exists in the discourse of one or several scholars. In this way, the historian's conscious engagement with the historical event is analogous to the dynamic of the theatrical event itself.

In the second section of the book, Sauter employs his theory to address a number of different historical questions. The social and political aspects of the theatrical event, which were not well accounted for in Sauter's theoretical discussion, emerge as a stronger force in his analysis of actual theatrical events. Sauter includes two essays on actors, one on the quintessential performer Sarah Bernhardt and another on Strindberg's actresses Fanny Falkner and Anna Flygare at the Intima Teatern. In the Bernhardt chapter (the most exhaustive and, in many ways, the most productive in the book), Sauter describes how Bernhardt used encoded actions—genre conventions such as the well-made play, opera, and dance—to enhance her sensory appeal. Tracking Bernhardt's savvy exploitation of the emerging mass media and transportation infrastructure of

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the late nineteenth century, he explains Bernhardt's hold on the public, not in romantic terms but, rather, as a case study of the changing relationship between performers and audiences in this era. In a more limited context, Sauter's chapter on Strindberg's actresses explores how they succeeded with audiences (according to critics) on sensory and encoded levels, despite Strindberg's insistence that theatre should engage audiences primarily on a symbolic level. While both chapters offer a refreshing perspective by tracing acting as a relationship rather than as a simple act of a genius, the section is also symptomatic of the difficulty of Sauter's approach. Because working systematically and sequentially through three levels of communication makes it difficult to capture simultaneous and multidirectional exchange, Sauter reverts to an undeveloped image theory (for example, describing how Bernhardt became an image of sexual desire for male spectators and of liberal womanhood for female spectators) to explain the convergence between the performer's projection and the spectator's perception of a fictional character.

Sauter's method yields less striking results in the chapters on the dynamics of cultural contexts and the significance of intercultural transfers. Sauter's chapter on the negotiations of Jewish stereotypes on the Swedish stage in the 1930s provides only few insights, especially compared to the more thorough recent investigations of performer–spectator relationships by Feinberg, Schumacher, and Patraka. Similarly, Sauter's reading of Björn Granath's adaptation of Dario Fo's *Mistero Buffo* offers little that is new regarding the theory and method of intercultural theatre. Instead, Sauter's analysis seems to be a restatement of Pavis's analysis of how original material is transferred from a source culture (Italy, Catholicism) to a target culture (Sweden, Protestantism).

As noted above, the book offers several chapters in which Sauter situates as a conspicuous spectator on the theatrical event. In addition to Sauter's experiments in audience research, these reflections include an analysis of a 1992 Danish production of Strindberg's *Miss Julie*. Here, instead of working sequentially through the three levels of communication to capture an image of the event, Sauter begins with a single image—one moment of the performance, captured by a photograph—and moves from his own sensory experience to a perceptual reading. With this approach, he demonstrates how historians may position themselves toward past performances and engage with the ongoing historical theatrical event.

To draw such broad theoretical parallels between the spectator attending an event and the historian regarding an event from a historical distance is, as Sauter acknowledges, a complex methodological step, and requires a more rigorous commentary than he provides. It is unfortunate that in his final chapter on the inscription of scholars and critics into performance, Sauter only briefly touches on the many questions that his method raises. Here a critical rereading of Foucault on the relationship between researcher and event and of cultural theorists who address status of performer and audience in complex playing

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situations might have been useful. Sauter admits his formalistic leanings, stating that he is more interested in the theoretical argument ("how") than in the specific cultural politics ("what") of the event. Another problem is Sauter's assumption that audience and performer understand each other. What can Sauter's theory of the theatrical event contribute to our understanding of performances wherein artists consciously work against audiences, or to historical studies in which scholars, in Walter Benjamin's terms, read history against the grain? Even in light of these issues, Sauter has made a valuable contribution by providing concrete examples of how the spectator may be accounted for in the dynamics of performance, and by offering a stimulating rethinking of the position of historians in relation to their objects of study.

Space and the Postmodern Stage. Edited by Irene Eynat-Confino and Eva Sormova. Prague: Divadelni ustav (Theatre Institute), 2000; pp. 182, 31 illustrations. $14.50 paperback.

Reviewed by Joseph Brandesky, Ohio State University, Lima

Since its inception in 1967, the Prague Quadrennial, an international exhibition of stage design and theatre architecture, has been a focal event for the world's best theatre practitioners, historians, and critics. Held every four years, the Quadrennial features exhibits from around the world that exemplify the breadth, depth, and variety of approaches to theatrical practice. The 1999 Quadrennial provided a forum for discussing the topic "Theatrical Space in Postmodern Times: Contemporary Concepts and Methodologies," and was hosted by the Theatre Institute in Prague and the Scenography Working Group of the International Federation for Theatre Research. In *Space and the Postmodern Stage*, select essays from this Quadrennial's presentations suggest, as coeditor Irene Eynat-Confino remarks, "the many facets of postmodernism on the stage and in theatre sites" (9).

The book is organized into sections focused upon a postmodern use of space from three perspectives: "Constructing the Space," "Music, Lighting and Costumes," and "Sites, Performers and Spectatorship." Half of the book's eighteen essays are found in the first section, which "considers space as a mental or a visually concrete construct in various dramatic or theatrical works, and demonstrates the various techniques and methodologies by which postmodern space is constructed" (9). The section begins with "Theatrical Space in Postmodern Times: Concepts and Models of Space Analysis," an essay by Czech scenographer Jaroslav Malina, who traces modernism in Czech design, the decline of Action Stage Design in central Europe, and the changing significance of space in contemporary stage design and its relation to playtexts. Concerning Action Design, Malina states that "real, truthful" objects have lost their significance in the "supermedia merry-go-round," and that "[h]uman content has

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evaporated and a new formalism is becoming an aesthetic idol" (17). Malina's brief but thought-provoking essay serves as apt preparation for the varied perspectives that follow.

In "The Early Career of Robert Edmund Jones: Forerunner of Postmodernism in American Stage Design," William Green makes a compelling argument for Jones's place as an incipient postmodernist, based on Arnold Toynbee's concept that the Modern era dates from 1474 to 1875, and that what follows is the postmodern age (19). Jarka Burian, on the other hand, carefully considers the evidence for and against postmodern influences in "Josef Svoboda's Scenography for the National Theatre's *Faust*: Postmodern or Merely Contemporary?" In addition to citing examples from *Faust*, Burian traces the development of Svoboda's working methods in order to place the designer as a reluctant proto-postmodernist.

Jean M. Ellis D'Allessandro explores the construction of postmodern space in "Searching for Eurydice: Space in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*." Danuta Kuznicka's essay focuses on contemporary artists and companies in "Deconstructionist Strategies in Contemporary Polish State and Costume Design," as do essays by Valerie Lucas ("Re-visioning the Victorian Stage: Postmodern Elements in the Work of Julian Crouch and Phelim McDermott") and Stephen Di Benedetto ("Concepts in Spatial Dynamics: Robert Wilson's Dramaturgical Mechanics and the Visible on Stage"). The search for a distinctively feminist performance space is the subject of Kimberley Solga's "Violent Imaginings: Feminist Performance Spaces in Tomson Highway's *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*," and the section closes with "Simulation Onstage: Reflections of the Metaspace De-placed," Katriina Ilmaranta's musing on the future of digitized, virtual-reality settings.

The varied approaches and subjects in the first section provide a broad context for the more confined discussions that follow in the second. Coeditor Eynat-Confino's essay, "A Stage upon a Stage: Postmodern Design and Opera," poses a number of questions about the future of opera as a result of the primacy of visual over aural elements in postmodern design. In "Re-dressing the Renaissance," Eileen Cottis addresses the use of authentic costumes, and evaluates their place in productions staged at the reconstructed Globe Theatre in London. (A valuable practical aspect of this essay is the detailed description of current costume construction practices at the Globe, where costumes, arguably, constitute the major scenic element.) Christine A. White passionately argues that the rise in technological innovation in lighting has led to a diminution of the active role previously enjoyed by light operators in her essay, "New Technologies of Theatre Lighting Design and Their Influence." White states that the pervasive use of computer-controlled boards has resulted in a "level of detachment and lack of play with the plethora of texts involved in performance [that] is the apotheosis of the postmodern" (106). White goes on to suggest that there is a gulf between postmodern aesthetics and new technology that can be bridged by

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re-evaluating the use of lighting-control equipment, and by finding ways to reintegrate the playful possibilities of human interaction into the lighting process.

The final section of the book features both practical and theoretical insights on "Sites, Performers, and Spectatorship." Cordula Quint ably posits a point of access into Robert Wilson's "heterotopias" in "*Ohne Warum*: Spectatorship and Postmetaphysical Reconciliation in Robert Wilson's Early Theatre." Michael Cramer suggests that theatre architecture reflect postmodern aesthetics in "Theatre Building in Postmodern Times," while Robert Cheesmond describes the pleasures and pitfalls of postmodern collaboration in his essay, "Here, There and Everywhere: Past, Present and Presence." A comparison between Cheesmond's essay and that of Eileen Cottis reveals interesting parallels and points of departure on the subject of postmodernism and costume design.

Three of the essays from this section deal with site-specific performances, and they collectively comprise one of the strongest aspects of this book. Early in his essay "42nd Street, a Disco and Raincoat Factory: Contexts for a Postmodern American Theatre," John M. Clum asks, "What sort of theatrical space reflects the place of American theatre in our society at the turn of the twenty-first century?" (117). Clum's answer embraces current definitions of Broadway, the reappropriation of Studio 54 as a performance space, and a former factory-cum-theatre in Baltimore. Brian Singleton's essay focuses on the multiple transformations wrought in a former munitions factory in "The Cartoucherie: The Theatre du Soleil Performative Site," in which he carefully describes the history of the site and its use by the *acteurs-bricoleurs* of Theatre du Soleil since 1970. The last of the essays directed at site-specific performance is "Layering the Space—Speaking from Place" by Kathleen Irwin, whose performance examples include those at the decrepit Midland Grand Hotel and the Kingsway Tram Tunnel in London, as well as at a formerly "splendid" house in Belgrave. Notes Irwin, "A profound lack of stable signification and a polyvocality of representation seemed to me to articulate the strength of many *in situ* performances I had seen and this reflected, for me, the essential pluralistic stance of postmodernism" (155).

Included in the text are thirty-one black and white illustrations that supplement the descriptions contained in the essays. *Space and the Postmodern Stage* is a worthy contribution to the ongoing discussion concerning postmodernism and the theatre, in that the diversity and quality of voices it contains reflect postmodern polyvocalism and pluralism at its playful, messy, contentious, satisfying best.

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The Changing Room: Sex, Drag and Theatre. By Laurence Senelick. New York: Routledge, 2000; pp. 540. $29.95 paperback.

Reviewed by James Fisher, Wabash College

Scholars attempting to define the myriad meanings and purposes of the theatre across the centuries have tended to avoid issues of sexuality, particularly those aspects of it that seem to veer from the generally accepted norm. In *The Changing Room: Sex, Drag, and Theatre,* Laurence Senelick makes a compelling and persuasive case for understanding the centrality of sexuality in all aspects of performance, in all its confusing complexity and glory. In this, the first major cross-cultural study of theatrical transvestism, the theatre is "the changing room," in its acknowledgment of "the essential queerness of its nature" (509). In over five hundred pages of copiously researched, cogently argued analysis, Senelick charts the role of drag in theatre from its origins to the present, shifting effortlessly through a broad range of cultures and eras. Along with the opportunity of viewing theatre history through a unique lens, drag provides an opportunity for the exploding of familiar stereotypes of gender—and Senelick comes armed with dynamite.

Many recent works on gender in theatre focus almost exclusively on breeches roles as viewed from a feminist perspective. *The Changing Room*'s greatest strength is that Senelick carries the issue to all cultural corners, not just the familiar places and usual perspectives. Traditional scholarship understands drag as little more than a quaint convention of past times, or as an obvious comic device (as in men playing Shakespeare's female roles or the title character in *Charley's Aunt*, or women the same in *Peter Pan*). Senelick goes deeper, focusing on the erotic allure of drag and exploring its way of taking the marginalized to the mainstream. He analyzes drag's unique ability to construct variations on gender roles, and he theorizes on postmodern "queering" of the stage. Often relegated to the theatrical fringe, drag, when examined across centuries and cultures, emerges as less a theatrical novelty and more a performance closely connected to spiritual issues, cultural morés, and gender expectations.

The sheer volume of manifestations of drag in every era and culture is, in itself, impressive. Pantomimists, dame comedians, principal boys, glamour drag artists, androgyne rock stars, and male and female impersonators are all here, in addition to many forgotten figures. Senelick connects drag to the very heart of each culture with clarity and skill, arguing that the roots of drag are evident in even unexpected places, from ancient tribal shamanic rituals (in Africa, Asia, Australia, the Balkans) to Christian pageantry. Senelick offers a remarkable range of perspectives, and amply demonstrates that drag, cross-dressing, and

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gender confusion are not products merely of the twentieth century or any particular culture.

Senelick's book is not the first, nor will it be the last, on this complex and fascinating subject, but nothing published to date equals the breadth, depth, and scope of Senelick's comprehensive, nearly encyclopedic work. *The Changing Room* masterfully combines the rigor of the scholarly tradition with frequently overlooked aspects of popular culture, and encompasses many aspects of the societies or eras examined. Senelick acknowledges the theatre's role as a haven for the marginalized (from social misfits to radical activists, gays and lesbians, to traditionally oppressed racial and ethnic groups), positing that drag and cross-dressing provide a liberating outlet for socially stigmatized individuals and groups. Drag proves a powerful force for the artist and a way of enriching the imagination and understanding of the audience.

In the early days of the French Revolution, Restif de la Bretonne proclaimed that a man in "pointed shoes" is a "trifler" or a "pederastomaniac" (1), establishing both the centuries-long marginalization of drag and gender difference. The greater visibility of gays and lesbians in recent decades and the constant evolution of cross-dressing suggest to Senelick that "as the lives become effaced between the mainstream and the marginal, the cross-dressed actor has to break through to yet another dimension," which he identifies as their "primeval status as shaman" plus "the concomitant role of prostitute" (509). The cross-dresser is, in Senelick's theorizing, a fallen angel, a mixture of the cross-dresser, transvestite, and homo- or bisexual. This profane seraph mingles "carnality and sanctity" (509), while transforming the stage into a realm where the combining and exchanging of traditional gender roles prevails, and where the disguise, mask, and ritual of theatre liberate sexual desire and identity.

The book is divided into five parts, each containing three or more chapters. In the first part, "Acting Out," Senelick deals with the "art of transformation" (18) he finds central to shamanism, and he traces drag and gender difference from the classical world through early Christianity, "holy whores" (25), and other images of cross-dressing found in religions from Islam to the ancient Americas. Christ imagery abounds and may shock some readers, yet Senelick cautions that despite these images, "no revival of medieval drama has yet assigned the role of Christ to a woman" (71). He continues, "The Son of Man remains that. It may take less literal types of performance to recapture the androgyny lost after so many centuries of official iconography, and to spread the rich compost of Christ's blood and women's garments to cultivate more mythic hybrids."

The book's second part, "Stages of Sodomy," explores cross-dressing in the mythic rituals and dramatic hybrids of Asian culture, and in the tradition of the boy players of the early English stage. In Japan, Senelick looks to *kabuki*

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and *noh* drama, where the long tradition of men playing women's roles predates Zeami and continues into the modern world. Chinese forms are similarly examined, with particular emphasis on Mei Lanfang, who, Senelick says, introduced "female traits he had observed in women around him" (115) and brought a renewed aesthetic power to the long tradition of Beijing Opera. In the third chapter of this section, "Playboys and Boy Players," Senelick moves from Asia to the Tudor and Stuart stage. Senelick assaults traditional conservative scholarship that, until the 1970s, pointedly obscured homosexual elements on the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British stage and repressed the "homoerotic tendencies" (130) in both the history of this tradition and scholarship about it.

Senelick continues his examination of the early English stage in Part Three, "The Mannish and the Unmanned." "Arms and the Woman" provides a fresh focus on the tradition of women in male drag. His touchstones are Mary ("Moll Cutpurse") Frith and Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*. Senelick reconstructs the history of drag from the baroque era through its appearance in such diverse realms as Harlequin plays, Goethe's drama, and a dizzying range of manifestations on the nineteenth-century stage, from popular entertainments through the career of Charlotte Cushman.

The fourth part of the book, "Subcultures Surface," focuses upon Victorian female impersonators, emphasizing both familiar and forgotten figures, including Ernest Boulton, Julian Eltinge, and the American "male soubrette" (313) Vardaman the Gay Deceiver. Senelick also examines male impersonators, via the work of Annie Hindle, Ella Wesner, Louise Rott, Gertie Millar, and Vesta Tilley, devoting attention to the influence these impersonators had on amateur theatricals of the period, from school plays to wartime entertainments.

The fifth section, "Children of the Ghetto," connects drag to contemporary popular culture and such performers as Little Richard (a mid-twentieth-century descendant of the Wildean tradition of "dandyism"), Candy Darling, Charles Ludlam, Charles Busch, David Bowie, Boy George (described by Senelick as specializing in "thrift shop drag"), RuPaul, Dame Edna Everage (the contemporary popularizer of drag in mainstream popular culture), and Eddie Izzard. Here, Senelick also considers the devastations of AIDS, the struggles for gay and lesbian rights, and the impact of feminism on drag.

Over one hundred black-and-white photographs support Senelick's text, and there are copious notes and a helpful bibliography. *The Changing Room* provides a thorough grounding for students of sex, drag, and theatre, while simultaneously opening new discourses in gender studies, popular culture, politics, and religion. While much has been written on and around the subjects of homosexuality, gender, cross-dressing, and transvestism, no prior study encompasses such a broad and densely detailed accounting. By taking the subject back to antiquity and through a range of eras in Western and Eastern

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culture, Senelick's study questions whether gender can be adequately (and solely) defined as *male* and *female*.

Modern Czech Theatre: Reflector and Conscience of a Nation. By Jarka M. Burian. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000; pp. 265. $37.95 hardcover, $18.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Lauren B. McConnell, Northwestern University

Jarka Burian's *Modern Czech Theatre: Reflector and Conscience of a Nation* accomplishes something important: namely, it helps theatre scholars understand why Czech theatre in the twentieth century was interesting, important, and worthy of study, in spite of the fact that Czech theatre artists were only occasionally leaders in theatrical innovation, and Czech playwrights sometimes "did not measure up to their fellow theatre artists." In his book, Burian focuses primarily on theatre productions, the history of selected theatre companies, and the accomplishments of important Czech directors. Throughout it, Burian points out the periods when Czech theatre belonged to "the first ranks of European theatre" as well as when it sank into stagnation. Burian presents these different periods within the context of Czech history and situates them within the history of Western theatrical practice as well. As his title suggests, Burian stresses the unusually close bond the Czech people had with their theatre, and the high degree of political and social relevance that theatre had within Czech society.

Burian's book covers the nineteenth-century beginnings of theatre in the Czech regions of Moravia and Bohemia, through the end of the twentieth century. He does not include the region of Slovakia in his research, claiming that Slovak theatre, for the most part, "maintained a separate existence" from Czech theatre even when it was a part of Czechoslovakia. The book comprises eleven chapters, and research is presented in chronological order. The second half of the book incorporates articles Burian wrote during repeated visits to Prague between 1965 and 1997, resulting in a stylistic shift as Burian goes from a less personal account of Czech theatre based on traditional historiographic methods in the first four chapters, to an account that includes his personal observations and firsthand descriptions of productions he witnessed.

One of the most fascinating chapters is the fourth, which deals with the period after World War II as Czechoslovakia shifted to socialism, and the following years of terror under Stalin. In this chapter, Burian writes of the pressures put on theatre artists and theatres to conform and survive in the new order. Directors were compelled to denounce their earlier, nonrealistic work; theatres were required to produce socialist-realist plays that often had little artistic merit; and a rigidly interpreted "Stanislavskian" approach to acting was

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championed. Particularly striking is Burian's account of the maneuvering that went on among the three leading directors of the period, Jiri Frejka, Jindrich Honzl, and E. F. Burian. Jarka Burian writes with sensitivity about an ugly period, when admirable and talented artists behaved less admirably than we would have hoped as they struggled to maintain their positions and prominence. As Burian points out, the stress of working during this time took its toll, even for those who were committed to the ideals of socialism. By 1956, when Khrushchev denounced the excesses of the Stalinist era, Frejka had committed suicide, Honzl had died, and Burian's health was broken.

While *Modern Czech Theatre* will be of interest primarily to specialists, there are some sections that would be useful reading for the less specialized. Burian's discussions in Chapters Three (of the Terezin Jewish internment camp during World War II and the theatre productions mounted by inmates), Four (giving an interesting and disturbing depiction of the pressures put on theatres and theatre professionals under socialism and during Stalin's "reign of terror"), and Nine (describing the crucial role that theatre played leading up to and during the "Velvet Revolution" and the fall of communism in 1989) are all notably compelling.

Several scholars have written about the positive and negative effects that censorship and oppressive regimes have on artistic creation, and Burian addresses this issue as well. He suggests that the suffering and challenges experienced by artists in the 1935–1945 era of prewar fascism and wartime Nazism, as well as during the Stalinist era in the 1950s, could be viewed as "cruel test[s]" that energized and motivated some artists while destroying or crippling others. During the artistic flowering of the late 1950s and 1960s, there was a delicate balance between oppression and controls on creative freedom, which provided "enough restriction to challenge and focus one's energies and creative talent, and yet enough relative freedom to operate within the explicit and unspoken parameters." According to Burian, the "normalization" during the 1970s and 1980s was the worst period in the twentieth century as far as censorship of the arts. During the Stalinist years, he argues, there were "powerful people in important positions who were not only committed ideologues but also artists and intellectuals with a discriminating appreciation of art. . . . On occasion, such people were able to shield certain artists and even productions from outright persecution." During the normalization, however, theatre was administered by "reliable nonentities, apparatchiks, and careerists of varying administrative competence but minimal talent or cultural interest," which resulted in the repression of "all but the most tenacious artists."

While I would give Burian's book high marks, there are aspects of *Modern Czech Theatre* that could be improved. Burian's research in the second half of the book relies almost too heavily on his subjective observations during research visits. There are gaps in his history of Czech theatre that might have been filled out with a bit more research. Moreover, Burian chooses not to spend much time

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on Czech drama, although he does devote one chapter to playwrights during the 1960s and mentions other playwrights from time to time throughout his book. Generally, this is not too serious a loss, for more extensive information on playwrights and their work can be found in Paul Trensky's *Czech Drama since World War II*, which covers Czech drama from 1945 through the 1970s, and Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz's *The Silenced Theatre: Czech Playwrights without a Stage*, which focuses on the writers of the 1960s who were subsequently banned in the 1970s. (Both of these books are now out of print, but can be found in libraries.) It is a shame that the works of the normalization period playwrights such as Daniela Fischerova, Karel Steigerwald, and Arnost Goldflam were not discussed more thoroughly, precisely because there are no other books in English that focus on these writers. Fischerova and Steigerwald, as well as the older playwright Pavel Kohout, had new plays produced in the 1990s that Burian fails to mention, giving the impression that there was less continuity from the communist period into the postcommunist period than there actually was. In conclusion, however, I would say that the weaknesses in Jarka Burian's *Modern Czech Theatre* are outweighed by its strengths. The information he provides on significant directors, productions, and general theatrical trends in Czech theatre is invaluable, and I am grateful to Burian for sharing his lifetime of research and scholarship in this book.

South African Theatre as/and Intervention. Edited by Marcia Blumberg and Dennis Walder. Amsterdam & Atlanta: Editions Rodopi B.V., 1999; pp. 293 + illus. $25.50 paper; $83.00 hardcover.

The Drama of South Africa: Plays, Pageants and Publics since 1910. By Loren Kruger. New York: Routledge, 1999; pp. xi + 277. $25.99 paper; $85.00 hardcover.

Reviewed by Peter Ukpokodu, University of Kansas

African theatre and theatre artists have a long history of playing interventionist roles in the sociopolitical climate of the continent. *Al-Zalum* (The Tyrant) brought about the expulsion of Yussuf Khayyat from Egypt in 1878. Wole Soyinka was incarcerated during the Nigerian Civil War of the 1960s and helped end military dictatorship in that country in the 1990s. Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Kamiriithu Theatre was razed in the 1970s and the playwright incarcerated by Kenya's political leadership for allegedly using the theatre to "teach" politics. South Africa, because of its long years of apartheid, produced an impressive list of interventionist theatre practitioners—Athol Fugard, Mbongeni Ngema, Barney Simon, John Kani, and many more. The latter half of the 1990s ushered in a new way of life in South Africa, and theatre that had vehemently protested the evils of apartheid sought new ways to be relevant. *South African Theatre as/and Intervention* continues the trend of interventionary

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theatre, gathering intellectuals and practitioners to discuss how theatre should engage itself in future interventions. Blumberg and Walder's is the first book entirely devoted to the subject of theatrical intervention in an African country, and, whereas past interventions have often been reactive, their approach is proactive. By looking at the present, they boldly predict the future and set the pace for a productive, meaningful intervention, not only in South African theatre, but in theatre through out Africa and the world. Though focused on South Africa, the ripples extend to African and world theatres.

South African Theatre as/and Intervention is the product of a conference, convened in London in August 1996 by the Open University as part of a project that attempted to answer key questions about theatre in a postapartheid South Africa: " . . . where is this extraordinary cultural form going? Will its historic contribution to world theatre cease? Or how will that contribution change?" The book explores how South African theatre would continue to "intervene" in a country that seems to have changed irrevocably since April 1994 (when democratic elections were held), and yet has material conditions that, for the majority, remain "the same."

The book is divided into eight main sections, beginning with the "Keynote Address" by Ian Steadman, one of South Africa's foremost theatre scholars. Steadman's address encourages extending interventionist theatrical exegesis to "notions of race and nationalism . . . as scholarship moves from a focus on apartheid to a focus on the legacy of apartheid." He cites convincing examples from Henry Louis Gates Jr., Kwame Anthony Appiah, and Valentin Mudimbe to warn against an "unconscious conflation of the expressions 'black and African'" in postapartheid theatre scholarship. He cautions against forgetting that theatre in any society is both sociohistorically and epistemologically intertextual.

The second section, "Physical Theatre," presents two articles that examine new trends in South African theatre. Yvonne Banning's discussion of *Medea* illuminates an emergent "rainbow" theatre in which cultural and gender images in production and reception are addressed. She argues that a true cultural intervention is effective only when it also engages in gender interventions. Without this, "the hegemony of male dominance would fuse with cultural dominance as one and the same thing." Taking its cue from the developing cross-cultural performance in which black theatre styles and European dominant forms have enriched South African theatre, David Alcock introduces the field of "physical theatre," as practiced by Andrew Buckland, the First Physical Theatre Company, Theatre for Africa, and others. Physical Theatre challenges "accepted forms and structures of theatre performance" and intervenes as a "powerful mode of expression" by liberating theatre from "literariness."

Section Three, "Early Fugard," features Errol Durbach's reading of Fugard's *Boesman and Lena* and Robert Leyshon's account of directing *The Island* at a university campus in Barbados. Arguing against Robert Kavanagh,

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Martin Orkin, Michael Billington, and Dennis Walder's "Liberal-left" and "neo-Marxist" interpretations of *Boesman and Lena*, Durbach affirms that the play is a "powerful interventionist" one that "changes the situation without violating the liberal/humanist values that shape" Fugard's politics. Leyshon's position is that directing is essentially interventionist, and that his experience as a white man, directing *The Island* with a black cast in a black country, shattered his innocence about the director's neutral role. He acutely experienced a collision of cultures and learned how naïve and irresponsible the assumption that is a "meaningful confrontation of any culture can transcend the immediacies of its history."

In "*Valley Song* and Beyond," four scholars draw attention to Fugard's first play since South Africa's truly democratic 1994 elections. Kristina Stanley proposes an interventionist theatre whose function is essentially reconciliatory, "bridging the colonial and post-colonial division between the races." She argues that *Valley Song* depicts theatre's capacity for personal and group change. Toby Silverman Zinman does not share Stanley's optimism. She sees *Valley Song* as "preachy and saccharine" and points out that Fugard's attempt at playing two roles instead of collaborating with another actor is itself a "rejection of intervention," for which his "art and his audience have suffered." Dennis Walder's stylistic approach to *Valley Song* is one of interrogation. Raising questions about land ownership, maintenance of white hegemony, the concept of historical and theatrical representations, and space, Walder opines that the play "raises important questions about the present and the past, about the past in the present." Its interventionist quality is that it includes the hitherto excluded and gives voice to the voiceless. Jeanne Colleran compares *Valley Song* to John Robin Baitz's *A Fair Country*, analyzing its portrayal of South Africa as place and history, and discusses postcolonialism and liberalism. While the latter mourns losing the power "to forge a new, geopolitical theatre," she observes, the former places value on "charity, personal reconciliation, and benevolence over political solutions," ironically reinscribing the "liberal/colonial paradigm."

Section Five, "Performing Race, Gender, and Sexuality," opens with Anne Fuchs's focus on fragmentation and syncretism in the work of South Africa's Junction Avenue Theatre Company. Her examination of these notions, in terms of "the body politic and of the 'speaking body' in performance," draws examples from workshop productions of *The Fantastical History of a Useless Man, Randlords and Rotgut, Tooth and Nail, Sophiatown*, and *Marabi*. These productions showed a gradual displacement of the dominant white male character in gender representation that was itself a prelude to the "enormous step towards the [political] 'body of change'" in the nation. That critical change was also manifest in the company itself. Marcia Blumberg directs attention to Gcina Mhlophe's (and her Zanendaba group's) use of storytelling as a means of intervention. In a colonial structure of "written" stories, the oral tradition of storytelling not only bears "personal and community histories" that improve cross-cultural/intercultural understanding, but also redresses "distortions to African history," provides a valuable learning experience for "young children

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who cannot read," and gives women the means to communicate in a stifling patriarchal system. Blumberg offers a lucid interpretation of Mhlophe's *Have You Seen Zandile?* as evidence of the empowerment of oppressed and silenced voices in the "community and its politics." Michael Arthur discusses the gay theatres of South Africa championed by Peter Hayes, Pogiso Mogwera, and Jay Pather. Though South Africa is the "only country in the world" with homosexual rights enshrined in the constitution, gay theatres are still marginalized. By combining art, life, and activism, homosexual artists intervene socially to make the "gay presence visible."

Michael Carklin opens "Theatre in/and Education" by exploring learning *about* and learning *through* drama and theatre. He suggests that theatre be made part of the school curriculum, that dramatic techniques be part of teaching methodology, and that the interventions of theatre projects outside the schools (such as the DramAidE Project) be invited inside. Hazel Barnes examines how her production of David Lan's *Desire* provided an interventionist vehicle for reconciliation by and for students and audiences at the University of Natal. Issues of violence, culture, democracy, religion, gender, justice/injustice, truth, and reconciliation were discussed to restore group and communal cohesions ruptured during the apartheid years. People were able to "find a common purpose and a shared humanity" in this "experience of community-building." Bernth Lindfor critiques on Mbongeni Ngema's "financial mismanagement, . . . artistic incompetence and egomania" in producing *Sarafina II* (about AIDS education), in Lindfor's view a "flagrantly wasted opportunity to save and protect human life through effective theatrical intervention in a national health crisis."

In Section Seven, "Theatre Festivals," Annette Combrink discusses the importance of festivals as a "force for national reconciliation" and the "future life blood of smaller theatrical companies and individual performers." Attention is focused on the Grahamstown Festival and the Klein Karoo Kunstefees as interventionary structures, where "local talent can be honed." Eckhard Breitinger examines the European, especially German, classics that have been adapted by South African playwrights for festival productions. He points out that while some experiments, such as William Kentridge's and the Handspring Puppet Company's *Faustus in Africa* and *Woyzeck*, have been successful, other adaptations, such as Suzman and Mhlophe's *Good Women of Sharkville*, do not promise a successful theatrical intervention for South Africa because they are bereft of the "ideological battle" and "class conflict" of their originals.

South African Theatre as/and Intervention ends with "Interviews" with Athol Fugard, Janet Suzman, Fatima Dike, and Reza de Wet, which help readers understand the particular role each has played in South African theatrical intervention. Useful notes and bibiography conclude the work. The book is so intelligently edited by Blumberg and Walder, and the discussions so frank and engaging, that typographical and punctuation errors are intellectually

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unobtrusive. (The same cannot be said of "KKK," which appears in the text [p. 196] without any warning that it stands for "Klein Karoo Kunstefees," not the American Ku Klux Klan.)

"Laat ons die verlede vergeet. Wat verby is, is verby" (Let us forget the past. Bygones are bygones), Nelson Mandela urged of South Africans (in Afrikaans, the language of apartheid). To forget, instead of forgive, the past, however, would have rendered impossible not only the assignment given to the landmark Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but the subject of history itself. How could a people turn their back on memory, no matter how painful and inglorious? The spate of writing about South African performance history since 1985 alone would seem to prove the point: T. Couzens, *The New Africans* (1985); R. Kavanagh, *Theatre and Cultural Struggle in South Africa* (1985); A. Fuchs, *Playing the Market* (1990); V. Erlmann, *African Stars* (1991); M. Orkin, *Drama and the South African State* (1991); C. Ballantine, *Marabi Nights* (1993); K. Grundy, *The Politics of the National Arts Festival* (1993); Z. Mda, *When People Play People* (1993); L. Schach, *The Flag Is Flying: A Very Personal History of Theatre in the Old South Africa* (1996); S. Govender, *Interculturalism and South African Fusion Dance* (1996); and T. Hauptfleisch, *Theatre and Society in South Africa* (1997), among others. Loren Kruger's *The Drama of South Africa* is one of the latest, and one of the most comprehensive, of these histories. Beginning with the 1910 union of British and Boer territories that formed the Union of South Africa (1910–1961), through the apartheid Republic (1961–1994) to the establishment of democracy and the Mandela years (1994–1999), the book critically examines the progress of drama in its various manifestations in South Africa. Its inclusion of what some theatre historians exclude in their narrow definition of theatre establishes Kruger's work as an important asset to theatre historiography and performance studies.

The Drama of South Africa comprises eight chapters. The introductory chapter discusses the theatrical nature of the ceremonies marking Nelson Mandela's inauguration in 1994 as the first postapartheid president of South Africa. The ceremonies juxtaposed competing national anthems, archaic and modern elements, people and materials from various ethnicities, members of the National Party (NP), and members of the African National Congress (ANC). This alignment of contrasts and opposites in a united country ("many cultures, one nation") permits Kruger to "trace the ties and ruptures among plays, pageants and their publics" in South Africa, "whose consonant and dissonant performances" establish the boundaries of South African drama. The national drama, whether in performance space, language, history, form, content, or practice, amalgamates aural and visual diversity. Kruger convincingly and authoritatively argues that "theatre in South Africa is not *essentially* European or African; rather, it takes place between and within practices, forms and institutions variously and contentiously associated with Europe, Africa, America and—to complicate the standard oppositions—African America."

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Pursuing the idea of the drama of South Africa as one of syncretism, Chapter Two examines national pageants, such as the National Thanksgiving or Emancipation Centenary Celebration (1934) and the 1910 Pageant of Union, and the emergence of the "New African," a product of Europeanizing education. The pageants and the New African represented contradictory aspirations, and the flexible platform of variety shows and pageants allows Kruger to investigate the ways in which these contradictions were represented and negotiated.

Chapter Three uses the 1993 essay "The Importance of African Drama," by playwright, poet, critic, and impresario Herbert Dhlomo, to examine the attitudes of New Africans toward traditional and colonial theatres. Critical of attempts to commodify African tradition into "static museum-like plays" and "exotic crudities" to attract white audiences, Dhlomo had proposed the creation of an African National Theatre to "harness the best of European and African forms to the representation of the historical and present condition of Africans." Such plays as *Dingane, The Girl Who Killed to Save, Moshoeshoe, Cetshwayo, Ruby and Frank, The Workers*, and *The Pass* are discussed.

The complex relationships between English and Afrikaners, on the one hand, and between white (English and Afrikaners) and black Africans on the other, which became manifest in the colonial polarities of civilization and barbarism, Europe and Africa, modernity and backwardness, and urbanization and tribalization, receive focus in Chapter Four, in the examination of performance under apartheid. Sophiatown, an intercultural urban center that symbolized a "utopia of racial tolerance and cultural diversity" where whites and blacks found a common home, challenged these apartheid polarities, especially the notion of racial purity. Kruger argues that Sophiatown synthesized European, American (mostly African-American), and South African influences into a performance culture that "was as cosmopolitan, urbane, and postcolonial as the apartheid system would allow."

In 1961, Hendrik Verwoerd removed South Africa from the British Commonwealth, making the country essentially an Afrikaner white republic. Theatrical developments during this period of "Afrikaner ascendancy" are the preoccupation of Chapter Five. The National Theatre Organization was replaced by provincial Performing Arts Councils with partisan agendas. Afrikaans-language plays received more productions than English-language ones in all the provinces except the Cape, where Fugard's plays were produced. A Commission of Inquiry into the Performing Arts reiterated the government's "commitment to Afrikanerization." Kruger points out that the Performing Arts Councils were so successful in "promoting Afrikaners in the theatre that they completely absorbed the private groups that had been in operation since the 1930s." Afrikaans playwrights largely escaped censorship, including black Afrikaans writers.

Examining the various factors that brought different (mostly student) organizations together, Chapter Six pays particular attention to the Black

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Consciousness movement and the South African Students Association of the 1970s, under Stephen Biko. Because the Black Consciousness movement was guided by the principles of black consciousness and black empowerment, theatrical and cultural activities leaning toward these principles were sponsored, while black commercial artists, like Gibson Kente, were negatively criticized. Kruger distinguishes between institutions and performances that followed the "theatre of defiance" and "resistance" of the Black Consciousness movement, and those that did similar things, but not within the orbit of the movement.

Chapter Seven is devoted to the decade after Soweto and the Black Consciousness movement that witnessed the escalation of calls for human rights and increased economic, social, and political struggle against apartheid. In the wake of the banning of major antiapartheid forums and organizations, theatre found a way to constitute a "counter public sphere." The Space Theatre in Cape Town and the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, for example, offered such spaces for theatre practitioners and audiences. The theatre of testimony produced by the Market and Space theatres was not new; what was new was the institutional stability produced by liberal funding, and "an audience that was large enough and legitimate enough—at home and abroad—to deflect overt suppression by the state." These two theatres featured such artists as Athol Fugard, John Kani, Winston Ntshona, Yvonne Bryceland, Fatima Dike, Pieter-Dirk Uys, Barney Simon, Mannie Manim, James Mthoba, Matsamela Manaka, Zakes Mda, Maishe Maponya, Gcina Mhlophe, Mbongeni Ngema, and Percy Mtwa.

The concluding chapter of *The Drama of South Africa* discusses theatre in the new political dispensation (1994–1999). Kruger calls the period a "post-anti-apartheid," but not yet a "post-apartheid," one, a period of uncertainty about a future that must address issues of redress, reconciliation, reconstruction, and development. Performances and plays of this period, especially those at the Market Theatre and the Grahamstown Festivals, seem directed at dealing with social, cultural, and economic upheavals. Some of the productions had been collaborative and experimental, such as *Faustus in Africa* and *Ubu and the Truth Commission*. Health Education theatre projects were developed, especially for the prevention of AIDS. Of these, Ngema's government-sponsored *Sarafina II*, has been most controversial for its "exploitation of the AIDS crisis for profit, its exacerbation of the gulf between producer and consumers, and its contempt for its audience's needs disguised as a response to their desires."

The Drama of South Africa is a well-researched, comprehensive book, with useful maps, photographs, notes, glossary, references, and index. A few typographical errors will hopefully be eliminated in future editions, and the title for Amiri Baraka's play corrected to *Junkies are full of SHHH.* These are minor flaws in a book in which the scholarship is bold and unapologetic in its presentation and discussion of pageants, ceremonies, African storytelling, and praise poetry side by side with mainstream theatre forms. Kruger writes with the passion and authority of a native whose experience as an exile has generated

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an objective, truthful, and intellectually detached assessment of theatrical events, persons, and places in South Africa. Her comparison of South African dramaturgy with similar occurrences worldwide not only imbues her writing with a universalist understanding, but also enriches discussion of the small interdependent world of South African theatre. No colonized country is ever permanently isolated from its colonial overlord—even after independence—and South Africa, with its unique experience, most vividly bears the marks of colonialism, in all their ugliness and beauty. The complexity of South African relationships—white (Afrikaner) versus white (British), and white (Afrikaner and British) versus black (native) Africans—is well analyzed in relationship to theatrical developments. Kruger's use of Afrikaans, Sesotho, isiNguni, isiZulu, and isiXhosa terminologies is compelling and authoritative, and helps to open up to scholars the theatrical universe hidden in the societies that speak these languages. Her treatment of theatrical accomplishments by South Africans of various ancestries and ideologies is balanced and revealing, and her view of South African theatre as a "Theatre of Syncretism" describes it well. A lot of scholarship on South African theatre has been from one perspective, either Afrikaner, British, or black African. Kruger breaks with this approach and, by doing so, points the way for other scholars to follow to reveal the theatrical beauty, wealth, and diversity of South Africa.

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