Evreinov: The Theatre of Paradox and Transformation. By Spencer Golub. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984. xx + 307 + illus.

The Theatrical Instinct. Nikolai Evreinov and the Russian Theatre of the Early Twentieth Century. By Sharon Marie Carnicke. New York: Peter Lang, 1989. xii + 247 + illus.

The theatrical career of Russian playwright and director Nikolai Evreinov (1879-1953) has for too long been obscured by the long shadows of his countrymen, Constantin Stanislavsky and Vsevolod Meyerhold. But this oversight has been largely rectified by two recent books: Spencer Golub's *Evreinov: The Theatre of Paradox and Transformation* and Sharon Marie Carnicke's *The Theatrical Instinct. Nikolai Evreinov and the Russian Theatre of the Twentieth Century.* Best known to international audiences for his play *The Main Thing*, produced in many languages since the 1920's, Evreinov's other plays (including *The Fourth Wall*, *A Merry Death*, and *The Theatre of the Soul*), and his significant contributions as a director, have been much less known.

Active in the pre-Revolutionary theatres of St. Petersburg, Evreinov viewed theatre as "illusion (lies like truth) and theatre as an event (a present-tense reality transcending the boundaries of art)" (Golub xviii). In his own plays, and as a director of works by other authors, he used highly theatrical elements from carnival and *commedia dell'arte*. In fact, he identified strongly with his own central characters in whom he combined "the trickster and the saint in the person of the Harlequin-Christ" (Golub 77). As Evreinov himself wrote, "even from childhood the image of Harlequin became mine" (Carnicke 95), and the traditions and characters of the commedia, a prevalent source for many early twentieth century artists, especially in Russia, had a profound impact on Evreinov's work. His drama, which he called Commedia of the Soul, was especially influenced by Evreinov's unique sense of commedia and propelled by "the spirit of anarchic play" (Golub 11) that was central to the form. Inspired also by Gordon Craig's theory of the über-marionette, Evreinov transformed his vision of Harlequin into an über-clown, "who laughs at the meaninglessness of life" (Carnicke 96). This focus on the über-clown could yield "new revelations to man about the self, allowing him to trade in self-consciousness for self-awareness" (Golub 11).

The über-clown also led to Evreinov's most significant contribution to drama: monodrama. With monodrama, Evreinov hoped to bring his audience

out of their passive role by reviving the theatrical instinct that he believed existed in each spectator. He thus presented the play through the hero's eyes "in order that each spectator identify sensually with the protagonist" (Carnicke 72).

Golub and Carnicke both contribute a full and fascinating portrait of Evreinov. Golub, however, effectively stresses Evreinov's major theories set into the political, social, and cultural context of his time while Carnicke focuses tightly on an analysis of Evreinov's dramatic literature.

In chapters entitled "Harlequinade," "The Original and the Portraitists," "Monodrama," and "The Theatre in Life," Golub astutely surveys the many influences on Evreinov, including Meyerhold, who also explored applications of commedia principles in his productions, Gordon Craig, whose monodramatic approach to staging *Hamlet* at the Moscow Art Theatre seemed to embody Evreinov's sense of theatre, Max Reinhardt, whose production of *Oedipus Rex* similarly impressed Evreinov, and Isadora Duncan, whose "free dance" seemed to Evreinov to be a revelation in the art of the performer. In these chapters, Golub also expertly examines the themes and structure of several of Evreinov's plays, although this study is not essentially a literary one. Later chapters mostly cover Evreinov's directorial work, and an entire chapter is devoted to what is arguably his most significant production, *The Storming of the Winter Palace* (1920), in which he experimented with his notion of reconstructing the spectator. This extraordinary production, perhaps the most famous of the Soviet mass spectacles, staged in the aftermath of the Revolution, was staged by Evreinov employing approximately one thousand spectators, as well as performers, in the recreation of "an event of great socio-political consequence which in its original occurrence actually involved many of the same participants" (Golub 13). Golub's work is most impressive in the way it effortlessly draws in other artists who both influenced and were influenced by Evreinov. Golub weaves together the cross-currents of Russian theatre and society and insightfully demonstrates the impact of that turbulent era on Evreinov.

Carnicke's book makes little attempt at broad political, social, and cultural connections, focusing instead on a literary analysis of Evreinov's most significant plays. Following an introduction that surveys recent interest in Evreinov's plays and productions, Carnicke divides her book into three parts. The two chapters in Part I focus on influences on Evreinov and the ways in which his view of life informed his plays. Part II, also in two chapters, examines Evreinov's theories, especially monodrama. In Parts I and II, Carnicke successfully surveys much of the same ground that Golub covers, but in Part III Carnicke superbly examines Evreinov's two finest plays (*A Merry Death* [1909] and *The Main Thing* [1921]), and the major influence of commedia, which she argues Evreinov viewed as

> precisely buffoonery, and not poetry and not art in the aesthetic sense of the word. On the other hand, it was indeed art, but the art of actors, and of the rather vulgar kind which is that of the actor as comedian. (Carnicke 104)

Carnicke pays little attention to Evreinov's directorial work, and although Golub offers a few insights in this area, he has elected to focus solely on Evreinov's Russian work, omitting his later productions outside Russia. Carnicke offers some commentary of later productions of Evreinov's plays in other cultures, but she and Golub both put most of their emphasis on Evreinov's best known works and his involvement in Russian theatre before 1930. Both works are a rich source of material on Evreinov and this watershed period in Russian theatre, but the reader hungers for information about Evreinov's unfortunately obscure later career. Both books are precise and impressive in their scholarship, but Carnicke's especially profits from her interviews with Evreinov's widow, Anna Kashina Evreinov, who closely assisted her husband in his work.

Golub includes useful detailed appendices such as a list of the theatres of pre-Revolutionary St. Petersburg, cast lists of productions at Evreinov's Ancient Theatre, premieres at his Crooked Mirror Theatre, and productions of plays by others staged by Evreinov at the Crooked Mirror Theatre. Carnicke's appendices include a comprehensive list of Evreinov's writings. Unfortunately, in both books, a number of interesting illustrations are marred by murky reproduction, but both include excellent bibliographies.

Visionaries are notably elusive subjects, but these two complementary studies succeed admirably in illuminating an artist whose theories, ideas, plays, and productions stand firmly beside those of the major theatrical artists of the early twentieth century.

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Actor Training and Audience Response: An Evaluation of Performance Techniques Taught at Berkeley by Shireen Strooker From the Amsterdam Werkteater. By Dunbar H. Ogden. Berkeley: The Oak House, 1984.

Professor Ogden's title says it all. In the past decade we have developed postpositive methodologies for an historiography of the theatre. This text is a much-needed resource for those researchers who recognize the limitations in the way we deal with the esthetics of the theatre.

Dunbar Ogden's study is concerned with the special power of the actor as playwright, player and director. In this text, he suggests a methodology for measuring the effectiveness of performance techniques adapted from the Amsterdam Werkteater. He compares them with the options available to students in actor-training regimens in American college and university drama departments; options that, in Ogden's opinion, "teach and train only for the recital of dramas" (21). Furthermore, Professor Ogden asserts, "this emphasis suits both their stress on the study of the literature of drama in other courses and their limitation to a few hours devoted exclusively to actor training." As a consequence, "these academic institutions tend to hire adjunct instructors for their acting courses, people with little chance to construct and carry through intense training programs over periods of years" (21).

In Ogden's view, "deep work" is not possible in America. Here, the answer to the question, "What is theatre?" is "the putting on of a play." By contrast, in some schools and conservatories in this country and abroad--the Amsterdam Werkteater in particular--the answer to the question, "What is audience?" is "the living presence of a performer in front of an audience" (21).

Turning to a possible methodology for assessing audience response to an actor-created work, Ogden's audience survey of the projects undertaken by Shireen Strooker at the University of California is thorough. He augments a summary of her qualifications and accomplishments with complimentary letters from graduate students and external observers. Presenting the *Neglect* project and the *Ondine* project from the perspective of audience questionnaires and actor's responses to the projects, Ogden notes the disparity between faculty and non-faculty answers. He includes, somewhat disjointedly, discussion of a film program and two theatre programs that apparently followed Strooker's visit to the Berkeley campus. No surveys are included and neither is there any indication that Strooker's performance studies have been continued. More's the pity.

Questionnaires were handed out to audience members on April 5, 6 and 7, 1983. Spectators were asked to identify their status and respond to three questions about the Werkteater's technique. Three questions asked for a circled response: 1. This type of group playmaking would improve the work of actors in traditional roles; 2. The performance techniques shown in *Neglect* belong in every actor-training program; 3. The performance techniques shown in *Neglect* belong in every training program for playwrights.

Two final questions asked respondents to specify the advantages and the disadvantages to this type of playmaking. A total of 212 questionnaires were completed and returned, representing about 41 percent of all audiences attending all performances of *Neglect*. The tabulated results indicated that the audience members believed very strongly in the first two questions, and split between "strongly agree" and "agree" on the third. In marked contrast, the theatre faculty agreed, 7 to 6, with the premise of the first question, divided evenly on the agree/disagree response to the second question, and disagreed, 7 to 5, on the final question.

There can be little doubt of the actor's enthusiasm in this performance situation. Without exception, students in the acting classes voiced unqualified support for their experience. The teaching faculty varied in their responses. An "extended comment" from one now deceased faculty member, a brilliant young director, made this point:

> Improvisational "play-making" and the realization of scripted drama are virtually separate activities--each of course valid, but each demanding separate skills and (almost) separate goals. (44)

Professor House, that director, further qualified his remarks by pointing to the inherent flattery of this kind of performance: "Nothing is more gratifying personally than to spend a large amount of time talking about yourself and your own daily concerns and 'being yourself' in a safe, supportive group" (45).

Strooker's emphasis, and by inference Ogden's, was to create the living presence of a performer in front of an audience. The two trends of theatre since the 1970's--spectacle theatre and actor's theatre--have given way, in the Werkteater, to an actor-playwright's theatre. In general, the spectators at these productions agreed with the actor's assessments of the Berkeley experiment. Professor Ogden's creative approaches to the evaluation of performance, and by inference the creation of performance material, were instructive and illuminating. In this regard, possibly the most intriguing commentary in this study came from a remarkably perceptive student, Peter Neer, who noted: "The continuous incidents of neglect in *Neglect* seemed inevitable and uncomfortably disjointed until the idea of overlapping scenes was tried. . . . These overlapped scenes provided simultaneous action, echoing and/or reflecting each other while never entirely meshing."

The problems of stage space in this age of Ibsen--still--have been with us for a hundred years. We live theatrically with Galilean space, constricted by an objective, measured reality. How to break this container space and find a measure of twentieth century Einsteinian time-space within a theatrical setting (a major theoretical problem of the '80s), is the unstated subject of many creative artists. As Ogden noted, there is inherent in this actor-playwright process a communicative gesture that transcends "drama recitals." Neer provided a glimpse of how this might be achieved from the perspective of the actor-playwright, an equally valuable insight into the formidable workshop performances of Stricker's two student companies at Berkeley.

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The Theatrical Designs of Charles Ricketts. By Eric Binnie. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985. xii + 185 + illus.

Eric Binnie's *The Theatrical Designs of Charles Ricketts* is a useful survey of the early twentieth-century scene designer and painter, focusing on several of Ricketts' most important productions. Although Ricketts was devoted to his painting, he often returned to scene design. Gordon Bottomley has written admiringly of Ricketts' theatrical work:

> The main body of Charles Ricketts' life-work is permanent media which will ensure his fame lasting as long as any fame can last in this world, but his work for the theatre was considerable and important, and he put his wonderful powers into it as wholly as into any other branch of his art, so that as complete a record of it as possible is most desirable in all its supreme beauty. (vii)

But others have found Ricketts a pale imitator of some of his contemporaries. Much of Binnie's study is given over to selected productions designed by Ricketts between 1906 and 1924. These include his first important designs for Oscar Wilde's *Salome* in 1906. Binnie has identified several unattributed designs by Ricketts as belonging to *Salome*, and these well-reproduced drawings (in black and white) suggest the influence of Craig and Appia in scene design, while the costumes seem to owe much to Bakst.

His later designs for *The Death of Tintagiles* (1912) and *The Judith Plays*, for Lillah McCarthy in 1916 and 1919, treated in separate chapters, demonstrate greater originality in the scenery, although the costume designs feature "the avoidance of realistic shadows and relief" (16), and presumably the sense of color exemplified by Bakst's designs.

Binnie offers an excellent account of Ricketts' designs for several productions in Ireland between 1908 and 1915, resulting from Ricketts' long friendship with William Butler Yeats that began in the 1890's. Yeats had begun experimenting with non-realistic visual schemes for his plays as early as the turn-of-the-century, although the execution of these ideas remained fundamentally amateurish until Yeats came into contact with Craig's early London productions. Some years later Craig presented Yeats with a set of his variable moving screens which were used often at the Abbey Theatre and occasionally on the same bill with Ricketts' designs. The combined work of Craig and

Ricketts was, unfortunately, seen only in Ireland, but Yeats recorded that "all that these artists have done has been beauty, some of it magnificent beauty" (63).

Binnie uses such quotes to perhaps unduly inflate Ricketts' importance. For example, although he quite appropriately acknowledges the influence of Craig on Ricketts, and the similarity of their designs, Binnie credits Ricketts' 1924 *Saint Joan* production with popularizing "the simplified historical method of presentation with which he had experimented as early as his *King Lear* at the Haymarket Theatre in 1909" (136). But simplified historical scenery could hardly be described as a Ricketts innovation, or anything new, even in 1909. Craig's English productions, as early as 1900, but especially in his 1903 *Much Ado About Nothing* for Ellen Terry, featured a similarly simplified visual scheme. Rickett's designs for *King Lear* are extremely reminiscent of Craig's well-known designs for a range of Shakespearean and classical tragedies.

In his introductory chapter, "Ricketts and His Times," Binnie does touch on the influence of Wagner, Appia, and Bakst, as well as Craig, on Ricketts and is careful to point out Ricketts' differences with them. But these differences are relatively minor and it becomes apparent that Ricketts was, in most respects, an effective purveyor of theories expounded by his forerunners.

Ricketts is perhaps best remembered as the scene designer of a number of Shaw's plays, most memorably *Saint Joan*, but also including *Don Juan in Hell*, *The Man of Destiny*, *Arms and the Man*, *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets*, and *Fanny's First Play*. As Binnie points out in the study's most interesting chapter, Shaw greatly admired Ricketts' designs, and despite his distress with certain aspects of the original production of *Saint Joan*, he felt that "Sybil Thorndike's acting and Charles Ricketts' stage pictures and costumes have carried everything before them" (135).

The text is well-written and the ample quotes from a wide variety of sources are wisely selected and often fascinating. Although Ricketts as a scenic artist may be little more than a highly effective imitator, his involvement with Shaw and Yeats, as well as a number of other significant artists and actors, merits the attention Binnie has given it.

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Vsevolod Meyerhold. By Robert Leach. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. 75 ills. xiv + 223 pp.

With his volume Robert Leach adds Meyerhold to the series "Directors in Perspective," which includes a dozen-and-a-half greats of the nineteenth century like Appia and Antoine and of the twentieth like Peter Brook and Robert Wilson. Himself a director in educational theater and teacher of theater arts at the University of Birmingham, England, Leach brings theater professionalism to his task. However, he lacks the command of Russian and connoisseurship of Russian theater to be expected of specialists on his subject. He has tried to bridge the gap by the study of Russian and much theater-going during a semester in the USSR under British Council auspices and by assiduous use of material, above all in English. Despite his effort, his monograph shows the superficiality inherent in his insufficient preparation.

The topics of Leach's nine chapters do not represent any logical structure, for some pertain to history like the first "A Life," and others with metaphysical titles like "The fourth dimension" and "Meanings" convey little sense of their content. Apparently Leach intended the biography chapter to give an understanding of the man Meyerhold and his time. Instead, he has simply taken over blocks of irrelevant information as if from an encyclopedia, for example the paragraph beginning: "The expansion of Russia since about 1890 had been at a rate of something like eight per cent per annum. Coal production had doubled between 1890 and 1900, iron and steel production had increased five- or sixfold . . ." (5) Equally unrelated facts are tabulated in Appendix 1, "Chronology" in four columns headed: "Meyerhold," "Theatre," "Art and culture," "Politics and society." A first bald fact is listed under "Politics" for Meyerhold's first year of babyhood: "Telephone invented." Since Leach makes no comment to relate the invention of the telephone particularly to Meyerhold or to justify the many similarly extraneous facts tabulated in Appendix 1, his whole "Chronology" should have been dropped.

But then Leach sets down facts in the text of "A life" without explaining their significance. Or he infers a wrong meaning; for instance, of the father's death at the sons's age eighteen, Leach writes: "He [his father] seems to have been something of a weight around his son's neck" (2). Not so, according to Nikolai Volkov, the first two volumes of whose biography were written with Meyerhold's co-operation. Volkov describes Meyerhold's father, a German, owner of a cognac distillery and a music and theater lover, as keeping open

house for actors and musicians who came on tour to the provincial town of Penza, where they boy spent his youth. So Meyerhold not only frequented theater and concerts, but also met the artists in his father's house.

Just for the first half of Meyerhold's life, again for the post-1917 decades Leach peppers his biography with facts, even speckling his pages with the ever-changing acronyms of the theaters, workshops and drama workshops with which Meyerhold was associated (GVYTM, GITIS, GEKTEMAS, GosTIM). Leach's book was finished too soon to include in "A life" the full detail of the inhumanly cruel torture Meyerhold underwent before his execution, for they were published in the Soviet press only in 1989. (See my summary statement and translation of Meyerhold's unanswered petition to Molotov, *Soviet & East European Performance*, Summer 1989, 14, 19-22).

The longest chapter of the book, "The actor's business," is the best, doubtless because it concerns Meyerhold's teaching of actors, which is also the author's specialty. Leach covers the history of Meyerhold's Petersburg studios, his use of music, improvisation, movement, even the curriculum in three successive terms. He continues with the translation to quasi-scientific terminology and the expansion of much the same teaching in the new Communist era. He relates Meyerhold's methods to Oriental theater and the commedia dell'arte, as well as to then current American psychology and training for industry, and he describes Meyerhold's system of physical exercises, called "biomechanics" in the new age. Four excellent photo illustrations show that Leach practiced them with his British students. He exemplifies key Meyerholdian concepts, "pre-acting," the "silhouette" and "multiple uniformity" by continuing the history of the director's productions. He quotes the "set roles" or masks Meyerhold listed in a workshop handbook and reports on his work with speech. In chronological back-and-forth he describes moments from Meyerhold's productions to illustrate these concepts, but judges their success by quoting estimates by others from the early critic Oliver Sayler to the more recent Laurence Senelick. Even after re-creating some of Meyerhold's work with students, Leach ventures no summary judgment of his own.

However metaphysically labelled, the chapters "The fourth dimension" and "Meanings" consist of further theater history in somewhat jumbled chronology. Under "Meanings" Leach takes up the Meyerholdian concepts "estrangement," the "key idea" and "devices" from street theater, but discusses also the part played in remote theater history by Carnival and ritual, as well as the relation to Meyerhold's work of Eisenstein's "attractions," Marxism and Victor Shklovasky's Formalism.

The chapter "*Masquerade*" concretely concerns one work, Meyerhold's perhaps greatest (1917) and through many revivals, longest lasting production. As a novice Slavist, Leach avoids discussing Mikhail Lermontov's highly problematic play, only giving an elementary résumé. He takes his description of the production chiefly from the charming monograph in which without

mention of Meyerhold's name Alexander Golovin's designs for curtains, backdrops, costumes and properties are reproduced. This chapter is better organized than most, since it describes a single production, but Leach makes a serious misstatement in it: Golovin did not emigrate after 1917 and indeed could not even be lured as far away as Moscow from his house and flower garden in Pushkin near Leningrad, as Leach would know, had he read Meyerhold's proposals for their continued collaboration in the correspondence.

Leach seems actually to have read little Meyerhold material in Russian, certainly not all of the basic works listed in his Select Bibliography. Furthermore, however selective, it should include two pioneer Italian works on Meyerhold, an anthology of his pronouncements, *La rivoluzione teatrale* (1962), and the account of Meyerhold, Tairov and Vakhtangov by the professor of Slavistics Angelo Mario Ripellino, University of Rome, in his *Il Trucco e l'anima* (2d ed. 1965). Also the two-volume Russian edition of Meyerhold's writings (1968) was published in German and so is available in that Western language, though it has not been translated into English. But Leach does not cite German works on his subject either. Instead, Leach has relied chiefly on English material and, above all, on Edward Braun's translated excerpts in *Meyerhold on Theatre* (1969).

Leach and his publisher have achieved a text quite free of errors, though some occur, mostly in Russian words and names and mostly in the back matter, which is unfortunately not included in the index. Appendix 2, the list of Meyerhold's productions, should have been designed with the same large space and readability as the unessential Appendix 1. The worst blooper appears in the tabulation of Meyerhold's productions, where Golovin's and his only ballet, an Aragon jota (Spanish dance) at the Imperial Mariinskii Theater (1916), is mistranslated as *Argon's Desire*. The generously large number of seventy-five black-and-white illustrations include some which are not all too familiar and others which are unusually large and clear. In one, though, of a group of theater people the fourth-from-left face is not Tsetnerovich and could be Bertolt Brecht (171), who made his second trip to Moscow that year (1935).

Thanks to its triple base of operations Cambridge University Press has in this volume made Meyerhold available along with other great directors for the English-speaking public in the U. K., U. S. and Australia, and one should hence be grateful for Leach's monograph despite its faults. As the playwright Brecht said of the wrongly interpreted production of his *Threepenny Opera* at the Moscow Kamerny Theater in the 1930s: "Better that it should produced badly than not at all."

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Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre. By Sue Ellen Case, Editor. Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press. 1990.

Performing Feminisms is a collection of articles which first appeared in *Theatre Journal* (1984-89). Sue Ellen Case has arranged them effectively: whereas the first two sections present issues central to feminist critical theory (Sexual Marginalization and the Intersection of Class and Ethnicity with Gender), the latter two offer contributions to the fields of New History and Gender as Performance. As a whole, *Performing Feminisms* demonstrates how feminist critical theory has expanded significantly during the last decade. This field of critical study is a synthetic one which both examines the theories of Foucault, Lacan, Derrida, the Franco-Feminists (Cixcous, Irigarauy, and Kristeva), and Marx, and applies such theories to the subject of gender. Teresa de Lauretis ("Sexual Indifference and Lesbian Representation") relocates the homo-/heterosexual identity to a historically and socially specific position. Jill Dolan ("'Lesbian' Subjectivity in Realism: Dragging at the Margins of Ideology and Structure") explores lesbian positions as constructions, products of ideological constraints. Judith Butler ("Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory") argues that gender is a performative strategy contingent upon historical and social conditions. These three authors thus bring to light the perception of gender as a malleable construction, one that is fluid and transforms itself in response to the needs and demands of the culture that produces it. As Case explains in her Introduction, " . . . [Gender cannot] and does not inhabit a changeless, self-enclosed, essentialist positional model" (7). These articles thus broaden significantly the theoretical studies of gender.

This perception of gender as a fluid construction suggests an expansion of New Historicist studies. Although this school of criticism examines the interaction between the power(s) of State and cultural constructs in early modern Europe, and so concludes that the nature of such power(s) is fluid and ever-changing, it infers that contemporary perceptions of gender, for the most part, remain static. *Performing Feminisms* presents articles which challenge this inference, for Laurie Finke ("Painting Women: Images of Femininity in Jacobean Tragedy") and Phyllis Rackin ("Anti-Historians: Women's Roles in Shakespeare's Histories") argue that Renaissance notions of femininity are culturally specific. Both authors read play texts in light of nonliterary

evidence: Finke examines medical texts, while Rackin discloses the breakdown of the medieval union of history and myth. Their articles discuss the tensions created by the presence and demands of a female monarch and then the ascension of James, a male foreigner: the intersection of gender and power are located within the tensions and dissonances created by the reign of these two monarchs. Appearing alongside Carol Cook's study of *Troilus and Cressida* ("Unbodied Figures of Desire") and Lorraine Helms' reading of female roles in Shakespearean Drama ("Playing the Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism and Shakespearean Performance"), these studies of Renaissance drama demonstrate how feminist critical theory intersects and challenges certain tenets of New Historicism, thereby inviting reconsiderations of historically specific social/literary convergences.

Whereas these two sections provide positive contributions to the fields of textual and theoretical studies, "Centering Class and Ethnicity" examines intersections between class, race, and performance. Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano ("The Female Subject in Chicano Theatre: Sexuality, 'Race,' and Class") presents a well-documented historical overview of Chicano drama and theatre practice in light of that culture's perceptions of femininity; it also reveals how Chicano theatre companies have focussed upon issues of feminism to elevate the status of women within the Chicano culture. Glenda Dickerson ("The Cult of True Womanhood: Toward a Womanist Attitude in African-American Theatre") recounts her experiences as a director: this article is particularly insightful for directors, for it tracks her production triumphs and defeats, and how she has relocated her directional concerns from a male-based literary foundation to one of feminist/womanist concerns. It is unfortunate that this section of *Performing Feminisms* does not include discussions or reviews of the practice of other female directors such as Ariane Mnouchkine, Anne Bogart, and Carey Perloff. The works of these directors, I believe, support many of the theoretical and textual arguments put forth in this collection.

The final section, entitled "Performing Order," presents studies of performance which shed light on both twentieth-century performance artists (Jeanie Forte, "Women's Performance Art: Feminism and Postmodernism") and areas of theatre history (Judith Stephens, "Gender Ideology and Dramatic Convention in Progressive Era Plays, 1890-1920," and Yung-Hee Kim Kwon, "The Female Entertainment Tradition in Medieval Japan: The Case of *Asobi*"). These articles are invaluable for the theatre director and designer, for their authors move beyond textual and theoretical concerns to the area of performance, and so address issues of stagecraft. The study of western and non-western theatrical performance has been overshadowed by male contributions to the field. "Performing Order" offers alternative, yet equally valuable studies which challenge that body of male-dominated contributions, and so, invites more studies of the same.

Performing Feminisms provides a well-organized overview of feminist critical theory as it relates to the studies of drama and gender as performance.

Its one shortcoming, however, as Case explains, is that "few articles consider theories of performance, or performative elements and those, in particular the articles by Lorraine Helms and Glenda Dickerson, continue to develop in regard to texts" (2). This omission of performance/theatre history studies makes *Performing Feminisms* less than satisfactory, for it reinforces, rather than diminishes, the division that exists between dramatic theory and theatrical practice. For feminisms to perform, they must traverse this division and found a collaboration by which both fields may benefit.

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Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture. By Marvin Carlson. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1989. p. 212.

As Marvin Carlson points out in his introduction to *Places of Performance*, historically there has been only the narrowest focus in the study of theatre architecture. Theatre historians have concerned themselves almost solely with the stage. Not only has the rest of the building and its exterior appearance been neglected, but generally the stage has been read only in its relevance to printed playtexts and especially those of the established dramatic canon. Carlson's book aims to broaden this approach by looking at the theatrical event in a wider sociocultural context: "The entire theatre, its audience arrangements, its other public spaces, its physical appearance, even its location within a city, are all important elements of the process by which an audience makes meaning of its experience" (2). And, indeed, a book which foregrounds the performance space seems long overdue.

Carlson puts forward a persuasive reading of many different types of theatres from the earliest Greek stages to Vidlak's Family Cafe in Omaha, Nebraska, and this is considerably enhanced by over a hundred illustrations which give the reader visual evidence of the considerable semiotic impact of location, facade, interior design and so on. The first four chapters deal with theatre's participation in the urban text, its development and function within a cityscape. Types of theatre architecture are usefully categorized and Carlson's divisions often lead to suggestive cross-historical parallels such as the similarity of audience position in theatre created for the approval of the Renaissance prince and in recent experimental theatre which has made the event available to only one spectator at a time.

Carlson's study is, however, somewhat Eurocentric. Although theatre in New York City (mostly Broadway) is given considerable attention, only cursory references are made to elsewhere in the Americas and even less attention shown to other non-European locations. As the first full-length book on semiotics and theatre architecture, Carlson's concentration on mainstream geography is perhaps understandable and, indeed, the discussions of developments in Western European theatre building are fascinating and provocatively informed by architectural, rather than dramatic, theory. (It is, for this reason, that the lack of a bibliography is particularly irritating.) The accounts of actual historical practice such as the controversies surrounding the building of the first freestanding theatre in Paris or the evolution of Wagner's *Festspielhous*

are of much interest as Carlson makes clear the participatory role of such architecture in prevailing cultural politics. How theatres were incorporated into (or rejected by) the urban text in different periods of history is central to his discussion, as is the relationship between the various European countries' notions of appropriate theatre building.

The last two chapters of the book concern themselves with internal spatial and decorative elements and, as is the case with the earlier discussions of external elements, show clearly how the audience's experience of the fictional on-stage world is always and necessarily mediated. Carlson includes some rarely considered aspects of the theatre interior such as those he interestingly designates the "separate support spaces" (133). These "support spaces" are the actors' backstage areas and the lobbies and foyers available to the audience. Both, he argues, have distinct populations, and are not generally available to the other population except on rare occasions which carry "an aura of transgression" (133-4). This separation of activity which frames performance indicates, amongst other things, the limited (and limiting?) nature of the encounter between actors and audience in performance. It reminds us of the coded practices which inform the actual encounter with the stage. Carlson's attention to all these aspects of theatre as event stimulate a wealth of questions in the reader as well as application of such semiotic components to the reader's own experience of theatre.

As might be expected in such a sweep through histories and countries, the reader is occasionally left hanging. Some changes are stated rather than accounted for. In one such case, Carlson writes: "The Russian private theatres remained an important part of the cultural life of that country through the first quarter of the nineteenth century, after which they gradually gave way to municipal and stage houses" (55). This begs the question "why?" and in a text which is generally so accessible, it is a particular frustration. Other, larger questions are posed by some of the areas Carlson notes but doesn't develop. He draws attention to the development of the Arts Centre as a cornerstone in urban renewal programmes (92), and looks particularly at the commercial motivations behind New York's Lincoln Center and London's National Theatre. Certainly, in the last 20 years, the arts complex has played a major role not just in these two theatre cities but throughout North America and Britain and its function in such urban renewal projects as well as the semiotic relationship to surrounding communities deserves a much fuller theorization. Earlier Carlson refers to the desirability to the colonized world of "European-oriented cultural credentials" (83), with references to the opera houses in Manaus and Sydney. Here we might expect (or, at least, desire) some considerable discussion of the theatre building's participation in colonial discourse and perhaps some consideration of theatre buildings in the post-colonial period.

Such shortcomings are, however, also part of the strength of Carlson's book. As he states on the second page of the book, "this inquiry will be

oriented toward specific historical illustration rather than theoretical discussion" and many of those illustrations, such as the ones cited above, provoke further interest. Thus Carlson's book offers an exciting twist to the usual perspective of theatre history, and his examples offer suggestive approaches for the teaching of both theatre history and dramatic texts, but most of all *Places of Performance* provides a comprehensive outline of what might be undertaken in future *theories* of theatre architecture.

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Text and Performance Series. By Michael Scott, General Editor. New York and London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd.

Volumes reviewed:
Macbeth by Gordon Williams
A Midsummer Night's Dream by Roger Warren
Henry IV, Parts 1 & 2 by T. F. Wharton
Antony and Cleopatra by Michael Scott
Othello by Martin L. Wine
The Tempest by David L. Hirst
The Winter's Tale by R. P. Draper
King Lear by Gamini Salgado
Richard II by Malcolm Page
The Merchant of Venice by Bill Overton
Hamlet by Peter Davison
Measure for Measure by Graham Nicholis

According to Michael Scott, the General Editor of the *Text and Performance* series, the basic focus of this series designed for undergraduate students is to bring a critical vitality to dramatic literature. Based on the too often ignored premise that plays are written to be performed, Scott contends that literary critics and theatrical directors:

> now increasingly recognize the significance of each other's work and acknowledge their growing awareness of interdependence. Both interpret the same text, but do so according to their different situations and functions. Without the director, the designer and the actor, a play's existence is only partial . . . [while] the academic critic investigates the script to elucidate its textual problems, understand its conventions and discover how it operates. (Preface)

Thus, the vitality which Scott hopes his series will promote is a "fuller recognition of how both [academic critics and theatrical artists] enhance our enjoyment of the play" (Preface). This is a most laudable ambition and one that obviously must be filling a need as the number of volumes, both published and in preparation, has increased considerably since the first four volumes were published in England in 1983. Initially concentrating almost exclusively on Shakespeare, recent and future volumes will study works of both Shakespeare's contemporaries (Jonson, Webster, and Marlowe) as well as major modern playwrights (Ibsen, Pinter, Beckett, Eliot, Stoppard, and Miller).

Despite the fact that each play's essayist/dramaturg is a different literary authority, all the volumes follow a similar pattern of beginning with a very

brief one page plot synopsis and listing of possible sources for the play and ending with an Index of Names and a relatively short reading list to encourage further study. The only notable testament to the individuality of the authors in this rather strict pattern is found in the reading lists where several essayists have recognized that their focal audience of undergraduates can be more readily helped and encouraged by an annotated bibliography. Particularly helpful bibliographies are offered by Davison, Wine, Hirst, Warren, and Overton.

The bulk of these relatively short critical works (ranging from 74 to 90 pages) uniformly divides each study into "Part One: TEXT" and "Part Two: PERFORMANCE." It is in this primary focus of each volume where both the major strengths and the occasional weaknesses are most evident in engaging one uniquely individual literary critic for each play. According to General Editor Scott, "Part One: TEXT discusses certain key themes or problems," while "Part Two: PERFORMANCE examines the ways in which these themes or problems have been handled in modern productions" (Cover Page). Generally, each essayist focuses in Part One on the most widely recognized themes and problems for each play and in Part Two on four to five major interpretations of the play by primarily British productions companies. (Only six of the fifty-two productions studied were non-British and only two of those six were American productions, offered by the only essayist from the U. S., Martin Wine.) Particularly, each essayist's approach to the study of the text and its handful of modern productions emphasizes their discrete perspectives. A comparison of the approaches towards representative plays from the most common division of Shakespeare's scripts (tragedy, comedy, and history) should articulate this point more clearly.

In T. F. Wharton's analysis of the texts of *Henry the Fourth, Parts 1 & 2*, he immediately defines his main argument concerning Shakespeare's history plays as a whole and these two history plays in particular: history is a matter of time interpreting events. He then proceeds to examine this theory more fully by examining Shakespeare's textual choices to offer a "blighted reign" (18) of Henry IV and Shakespeare's characterizations of Henry, Hal, and Falstaff. In Wharton's review of the performances (three RSC productions and the BBC television production), he directly, point by point, compares each production's choices with the same issues he raises in his critical analysis of the text. His conclusion seems to affirm that just as there is no one absolute interpretation of history, there is also no one absolute interpretation of a play.

Roger Warren contends that the text of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has a distinct four-part structure with four different worlds (fairies, court, lovers, and mechanicals) that finally fuse together in the play's final act. Warren then separately examines five productions (Peter Brooks', Robin Phillips' at Stratford, Ontario, Peter Hall's at the RSC and at the Britten's Opera, and the BBC version) to determine how well they each succeed in defining and then fusing together the four worlds of his textual interpretation. While

offering no concluding or summary subchapter, it is fairly obvious that Warren prefers Hall's productions.

The examination of *Macbeth* by Gordon Williams is not nearly as methodical as Warren's or Wharton's or as Scott's definition of the series would lead the reader to expect. In his textual study, he discusses the play's connection with King James, Macbeth as a Jacobean or Machiavellian hero, the characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and the porter's scene. However, in his discussion of four productions (two at the RSC, one at the National Theatre, and the Polanski film), he only follows through with an examination of the characterizations of the Macbeths and then introduces a detailed study of the interpretations of the witches in each production. In his conclusion, he muddies the issue even further for his student readers by stating that *Macbeth*

> contains some of the densest-textured dramatic poetry ever penned. But it renders an archetypal situation with the impressionistic skill of late Titian. Paradoxically, it is this same quality which has made *Macbeth* so intractable a masterpiece to modern directors. (70)

Fortunately, William's densely textured prose is a decided exception in the series.

In retrospect, the dual focus of these essays should prove stimulating for theatre professionals as well as academics, particularly as the very brevity of the essays makes them highly accessible. This same brevity, combined with the Reading Lists and the study, in most volumes, of one readily available film or tape production, easily stimulates further discussion and research.

As successful as this series may be, future editions or new volumes would benefit considerably with more than the four to six production photographs presently offered in each volume and with more national diversity in the productions studied. In addition, the unique dual focus of this series would seem far better served by incorporating more directly the views of the theatrical artists involved in the studied productions rather than relying entirely on reviews from an educated audience perspective. Finally, future essayists would do well to consider T. F. Wharton's concluding statement:

> The performing theatre arts have an extraordinarily broad license in interpreting the plays they perform. In effect, the very marked differences of emphasis from production to production represent the working evidence of widely disparate critical interpretations. Opinions will always continue to shift, and new productions will continue to disclose new resources in the plays. (79)

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