

As She Likes It: Shakespeare's Unruly Women by Penny Gay. London: Routledge, 1994.

In her fascinating study of Shakespeare's mature comedies, Penny Gay takes a novel approach. She tackles the question of how the "unruly women" in Shakespeare's comedies have been portrayed in performance by examining the role of gender politics in productions of these plays since the 1950s. Focusing on five "woman-centered" comedies—*Twelfth Night*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Measure for Measure*—Gay thoughtfully scrutinizes the relationship between a largely male English theatrical establishment and a flourishing feminist approach to performance.

Essentially, Gay's book is a set of case studies. First, she traces the way actresses have approached these roles (Viola, Kate, Beatrice, Rosalind, and Isabella) over the past fifty years. Then, quoting assorted newspaper critics' reviews, she documents how these performances were generally received. Finally, Gay analyzes how actresses performing these classic texts have reinforced or challenged gender divisions. Many of Gay's observations are firsthand accounts of productions she has seen. Other valuable information comes from interview excerpts Gay has collected from actresses discussing their performances.

Gay has wisely chosen to limit her focus to the productions staged by the Royal Shakespeare Company and its immediate predecessor, the Shakespeare Memorial Theater. From its fledgling years under the leadership of Peter Hall, through the 1970s, the RSC pursued an essentially left-wing agenda. Vanessa Redgrave's Rosalind in 1961, Trevor Nunn's ground-breaking *Much Ado* in 1968, and Peter Gill's 1974 bisexual *Twelfth Night* all explored the previously ignored subtext of these apparently lighthearted comedies in ways that signaled a period of intellectual and political adventurousness. Gay parallels this activity with the social restructuring and upheaval occurring in Britain at the same time.

But the 1980s and Thatcherism had a chilling effect on the RSC's sense of daring, according to Gay. The prevailing political climate "tended to produce an image of woman as either aggressive bitch or vulnerable outsider" (179). Gay's point is that these historical shifts are reflected—either consciously or reactively—"in the performances of gender and sexuality, and of the idea of community which audiences are willing to pay to see . . . (But) productions only succeed in wooing and winning the audience if they tread the always perilous path between boredom and outrage—and if they allow space for the unique power of the performer to work its magic" (14).

Gay argues that Shakespeare's fascination with codes of gender make it necessary for an actress and/or director to empower these women characters in ways that speak to modern audiences. Shakespeare's comedies, more than any

other group of his plays, "offer the actress the potential to put forth (an) extraordinary transgressive energy, to assume power, whatever the ultimate containing pattern of the play may be" (15).

Viewing Shakespeare's comedies in light of recent social history is not new. Sue Ellen Case's *Feminism and Theatre* (London, Macmillan, 1988) and Susan Carlson's *Women and Comedy: rewriting the British theatrical tradition* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1991) both examine Shakespeare's plays in light of recent feminist theory. Gay acknowledges the pioneering work of these and other feminist scholars, but concludes that feminist scholarship has failed to take into account the coercive, disruptive possibilities that an actress can bring to a performance. The real significance of Gay's contribution is her ability to articulate how contemporary actresses have chosen to embody—or refuse to embody—their culture's idea of femininity within a male-dominated society (Great Britain) and structure (the RSC). By studying the variations in production styles of the same plays by the same theater company, Gay succeeds at identifying what makes theater speak for the culture at large.

Michael Abbott
Wabash College

The Other American Drama by Marc Robinson. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

The title of Marc Robinson's monograph *The Other American Drama* does not divulge the strong dramaturgical and critical tool the author offers to the scholar and artist interested in a specific group of playwrights often ignored or minimally noted: Gertrude Stein, Tennessee Williams, Sam Shepard, Maria Irene Fornes, Adrienne Kennedy, and Richard Foreman.

Robinson claims that as Americans our critical discourse too often focuses upon the art's artifice or plot. He examines how this group of playwrights turns away from plot and discovers through their writing, alternative theatrical expressions that in production often redefine the plot's importance. He then explores how each of the six playwrights theatrically rediscovers elements of dramatic form such as language, gesture and presence.

Robinson classifies his work as an old-fashioned book and refers to himself as a critic in thrall to ideas of aesthetic mystery, spirituality, beauty and humanism. The book as a whole is interested in discovering how six very

different writers answer perpetual challenges such as how one represents emotion without slipping into sentimentality. The reader is presented with a collection of essays that offers a response to Roland Barthes' quandary about romantic song: 'Once again I realize how difficult it is to talk about what one loves. What is there to say about what one loves except, *I love it*, and to keep on saying it'(6)?

Robinson continually attempts to answer Barthes' question. In a counter attack to other critics who imply that emotion in criticism is equivalent to naivete, Robinson boldly asks, why can't we demand emotional pleasure from a drama that is also ingenious about structure? Robinson's fresh discussions about emotions within critical dialogue or analysis bring an edge of honesty, if not sensitivity, to the monograph.

One delight or advantage to this "old-fashioned" book is that Robinson's writing style is straightforward and steers away from metatheatrical jargon or critical thinking that is penumbral in nature. Robinson states, "In general, I'm suspicious of blanket terms . . . believing that the yoking of writers to a trend dissolves what makes them most compelling: their very distance from trends" (3).

The Other American Drama claims that if theatre historians acknowledged Gertrude Stein as a major figure in American drama and placed her alongside Eugene O'Neill, another world would open in which other American drama would acquire a history, a context, rather than being considered a digression from the mainstream or an abnormal art form. While *The Hairy Ape* played in New York, Stein lived in Paris with other expatriates. Robinson thinks that in exile, Stein was left unimpeded by the protocol of American literary circles. Stein should be recognized for the development of American dramatic language. Stein is quoted as stating that "I caressed completely caressed and addressed a noun" (12).

Robinson gives valuable dramaturgical information describing how Stein moved toward objects and people in her theater and space; through the plays there is an evolution toward totalities in which larger pictures become what Stein called landscapes. Robinson finds Stein's plays "invigorating."

Robinson also champions the works of Tennessee Williams, by recognizing success at creating a standard of emotional truthfulness in American theatre. He notes the cliché of Williams as the lonely outcast, but finds it useful as a parallel to the hermetic experiences of Stein. The Williams' chapter evaluates many of the playwright's central women characters, taking the position that although they are popular, they are neither really universal nor need to be. In an effort to escape the stereotype that women are all "neurotic," Robinson considers them individually, as a reaction to critics who unjustifiably point toward the women as stand-ins for the playwright himself or see the dramas as case studies with Williams himself as patient.

Periodically Robinson debates the critical writings of other theorists and scholars. During one such exchange Robinson responds to Susan Sontag's discussion of Williams' work as radical inventiveness. Robinson counters Sontag, arguing that a change of subject matter can change the form of a play. His point is that Williams' handling of subject matter, such as startling frankness about erotic attraction, changed the form, allowing sex to steer the plays. Characters no longer had only an intellectual life; they had bodies as well that demanded a dramatic structure that would not cramp them.

The Other American Drama includes delightful or insightful anecdotes about the artists such as the story about the young Williams when he won a \$100 prize from The Group Theater. Williams did not travel to New York, but took the money to rent bicycles with a friend and traveled down to Tijuana.

The chapter on Sam Shepard quotes the playwright and how he feels confined by hoary ideas of craft, and like Bacon, relies on them only for as long as it takes to eradicate and seek out the right explosive agent with which to shatter theatrical surfaces (60). Robinson contends that Shepard's characters never allow themselves to become familiar for then they would be predictable and would not hold the playwright's attention. Robinson debates Frank Rich from the *New York Times* and the scholar Bonnie Marranca on Shepard's plays. He contends that the simplest explanation for the unpredictability of Shepard's art is that Shepard has a fierce aversion to boredom. Like Shepard, many of the characters are artists that keep pace with his mercurial imagination.

Such an artist is the Cuban born Maria Irene Fornes who emigrated to New York when she was 15. After studying painting and going into business as a textile designer, she knew she would not become the visual artist she had wanted to be. When she was 30, she lived with Susan Sontag, then an unknown lecturer at Columbia, and wrote her first play. Robinson reminds the reader that because Fornes works in English as a second language, she staves off her own temptation to elicit meaning artificially. She does not take the language for granted and labors about choices, "her sentences are the products of intense pruning and paring" (91). The plays evolve from the strength of her writing and Fornes often speaks about how words can only evoke experience, never capture it, much less re-create it (92).

This book will help fill a dramaturgical void on Adrienne Kennedy, whose work is rarely produced today and has been neglected by most serious critics. Robinson notes how many theatre reference sources have dismissed this playwright's work including *The Oxford Companion to American Theatre* or Errol Hill's *Theatre of Black Americans*.

Robinson finds that Adrienne Kennedy's approach to her work is to negotiate the relationship between characters and their environment: "one

remembers her plays best by the rooms they inhabit" (115). Step by step the author helps the reader recognize Kennedy's dramatic use of space where the rooms are linked to memories and her characters spend most of their time remembering "unknowable events of their pasts" (116). Robinson implies that the dramatic action then examines how memories of the past can't be separated from hallucinations about the present, nor from dreams of the future.

The chapter on Richard Foreman begins by recognizing the difficulties surrounding an analysis of his theatre work. Robinson classifies Foreman as a writer, foremost, in spite of all the mesmerizing splendor of his productions. "The staging that comes later, as he has said, is really an extension of the writing process" (150-1). However, he believes that Foreman's plays are not just about writing, for Foreman is a humanist whose speakers have the makings of characters in stories. The chapter notes that Foreman rarely attends current theatre, but expects his audience to bring to his theater an understanding of modern poetry and respect for Gertrude Stein.

As a whole, Robinson's book reminds us that theater exists in time. However, he has woven successfully the links between these playwrights of different times. Nothing ever stands still in Gertrude Stein's work. Stein's plays are collections of verbal turns in what she called the continuous present. Williams adapts this approach to his interest in the emotional life. By the 1960's, Shepard, Fornes, Kennedy and Foreman extend these innovations and create a supercharged gestural vocabulary in which a single move takes precedence over an entire action. The author points that the playwrights follow the instincts of the imagination even when the intellect demands more orderliness (179).

Robinson firmly wants the reader to understand that this monograph is describing a loose cluster of playwrights rather than creating dogma or theater traditions and "aims to demonstrate a way of looking at drama more than a way of classifying it" (3). To the scholar, his notes and bibliography are invaluable. Few sources on alternative American drama contain such a strong bibliography which builds upon prior works such as C.W.E. Bigsby's *Modern American Drama: 1945-1990*.

The monograph concludes with reflections on the work of four playwrights who continue to epitomize theatrical explorations and strong creative writing: Wallace Shawn, David Greenspan, Suzan-Lori Parks and Mac Wellman.

Mary Jo Sodd
Susquehanna University

Looking at Shakespeare. A Visual History of Twentieth Century Performance by Dennis Kennedy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Dennis Kennedy contributed significantly to the revival of interest in the oft-neglected, but essential, plays and productions of the Edwardian iconoclast Harley Granville Barker with his award-winning book, *Granville Barker and the Dream of Theatre* (Cambridge, 1985). Barker's simplified visions of Shakespeare's plays have now led Kennedy to another important contribution to an appreciation of modern Shakespearean production practices in *Looking at Shakespeare. A Visual History of Twentieth Century Performance*, a study certain to fascinate both scholars and students of Shakespeare and the contemporary stage.

In an introductory chapter, Kennedy offers a vivid explication of the values and problems of evaluating the visual evidence of Shakespeare's plays, beginning at the beginning with the Longleat Manuscript drawing of *Titus Andronicus*, c. 1595. Kennedy stresses that although the theatre historian often works with imperfect tools in recreating the theatrical event, it is his job to "reimagine the moment of past performance and to contextualize it with a narrative about its social meaning" (16). He then examines the roots of twentieth century productions of Shakespeare found in the musty traditions of the Victorian stage: pictorialism and Elizabethanism. With this foundation, Kennedy's focus sharpens as he traces the turn-of-the-century scenographic revolution led by Appia and Craig, both of whom found illusionistic pictorialism aesthetically bankrupt. With particular emphasis on Craig's achievements, Kennedy traces the new concepts of Shakespearean production offered by Craig's controversial theories and designs. Craig's innovations, widely disseminated in his numerous books and articles, moved the revolution forward with great speed, as becomes clear in the remaining six chapters which trace a fascinating and diverse collection of European and American Shakespearean productions down to the very recent present. The work of designers and/or directors like Barker, Copeau, Jones, Reinhardt, Schiller, Komisarjevsky, Welles, Gielgud, Brook, Aronson, Piscator, Bury, Svoboda, Bjornson, Strehler, Lee, and numerous others are penetratingly analyzed by Kennedy in a well-organized and thoughtfully evocative analysis. In the process, he revives a few other dimly understood artists, including Barry Jackson and Terence Gray, whose treatments of Shakespeare seem to have effectively combined Victorian and Craigian ideas with their own highly individual approaches. Along with these two British artists, Kennedy has also shown a bright light on a wide spectrum of European, Russian, and American productions while stressing the varied meanings brought out in diverse directorial and visual interpretations.

The text of this handsome volume is accompanied by a useful table of productions cited, copious notes, and a select bibliography. Kennedy's lucid and scholarly prose is enhanced by 171 illustrations (including 21 full-page color plates) wisely chosen to forcefully demonstrate the remarkably varied approaches that have defined the history of Shakespearean performance for the past ninety years. His superb study may well provide theatrical artists, critics, and scholars with an appropriate place to begin the next ninety years.

James Fisher
Wabash College

Renaissance Drama: Essays on Epistemological Transformations and Theater History. Mary Beth Rose, Editor. New Series XXII. Evanston: Northwestern University Press and The Newberry Library Center for Renaissance Studies, 1991.

This recent edition of *Renaissance Drama* offers a collection of insightful readings of familiar texts. The essays examine the cultural *metissage*, the interweaving of drama and conflicting thoughts that arose from contemporary, oftentimes competing religious, political, and scientific epistemological systems. Changes in modes of thought ultimately led to changes in the drama as evidenced in this collection of readings. Although Mary Beth Rose has laid out the text in three distinct sections, the order in which the articles appear suggest distinct groups or clusters. A common thread—a particular system of thought—ties each of these "essay clusters" together. For instance, the first three essays focus upon the relationships between drama and scientific and historical modes of thought, while the fourth and fifth essays examine texts in light of contemporary religious crises. The final three essays reconsider, and in one instance refute, accepted notions of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century theatrical practice.

The first essay, Julie Robin Solomon's "Going Places; Absolutism and Movement in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*" asks how the idea of physical mobility, in the age of exploration, defines monarchs and aristocrats. Her readings of Bacon and James's political treatises juxtapose the absolutist, who treats knowledge as a magical imposition of self upon the world, and the empiricist, who conceives of knowledge as the product of a self-effacing traveler, one who is open to the impresses of the world (12-13). Such a conflict, she argues, eventually leads to an intellectual takeover, a subsuming of the former by the

latter during the early seventeenth century. This conflict comes into play in her examination of the characters of Prospero and Alonso, and Solomon argues that Shakespeare rewrites Jacobean absolutism in the language of empiricism. To sustain itself, she contends the absolutist model had to undertake strategic transformations, transformations such as those evidenced by the changes of Prospero (18).

Martin Mueller's "Plutarch's 'Life of Brutus' and the Play of Its Repetitions in Shakespearean Drama" argues that Shakespeare's primary source for many of his history plays was the work of Plutarch and, in particular, the relationship of Brutus and Portia. Although Holinshed is believed to be the source for *Henry IV* and *Macbeth*, Mueller affirms that the playwright reads the English chronicler through "Plutarchan eyes." *Julius Caesar* is the predominant text examined, but *Henry IV*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Hamlet* (the death of Ophelia) are also explored for their Brutus-Portia variations. He reconfirms Paul Dean's argument that Shakespeare's culture saw the parallel between the Roman Civil Wars which led to the formation of the Roman Empire and fifteenth-century English history as a movement away from the medieval state to the nation-state of Tudor monarchy.

Michael Neill's "'Hidden Malady': Death, Discovery, and Indistinction in *The Changeling*" begins with the supposition that the drama can be read as a late Jacobean treatment of *Othello*. By reconfiguring elements of the Shakespearean model to create an eerie sense of strangeness and familiarity, De Flores, the villain, becomes the hero. Neill, however, does not appear to be terribly concerned with close textual comparisons with and contrasts to *Othello*, for his essay quickly moves into the physical realms of the world of the drama. *The Changeling* is a study in the penetration and display of hidden secrets, secrets which are believed to be protected by the interworkings of the medieval systems of hierarchy (the body as a great house, and the body as a tall *donjon*). By linking this medieval system to the Bakhtinian body, Neill argues persuasively that the body becomes a shaky garrison given over to passion and shameful betrayal (102-03).

These three essays offer marvelous directorial, dramaturgical and scenographic insights into the dramas they discuss. Solomon's essay challenges the clichéd Prosperos who have stormed the stage too many times; it cogently explains Prospero's (and Alonso's to a lesser extent) changes in self-perception and willingness to return to Milan, to forego his absolute, magical powers. Such subtleties of character add wonderful dimensions to an actor's creation of this complex character. Mueller's reading of how Shakespeare read history is an invaluable dramaturgical tool, particularly in this postmodern age of relocating Shakespeare in time and place to satisfy a political agenda that may have precious

little to do with the original work (as critics of Peter Sellars' recent production *The Merchant of Venice*, set in present-day Venice, California have lamented). Understanding the interconnections between early seventeenth-century culture's perception of history and Shakespeare's dramas enables a dramaturg (and director) to remain faithful to the intentions of the drama, a desired end in itself. Neill's essay, on the other hand, provides the scenic artist with a fine textual analysis which explores text-image relationships, contemporary physical metaphors that represent the world of the play.

Whereas these three insightful essays rely upon philosophical and scientific systems of thought, the following two essays move into the realm of religious knowledge. Marie-Florine Bruneau's "Racine's *Phedre* or the Labor Pains of Modernity" examines this drama through a lens of modernity as posited by Hans Blumenberg (*The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*). Reading French seventeenth-century culture as a battleground between Jansenist absolutism and secular thought which worked to subvert this religious mode of thought, she argues that Racine intentionally creates female protagonists within the realm of political theatre enabling him to reveal the "mechanisms of political oppression," although such oppression tended to represent itself as the universal order (130).

Huston Diehl's "Observing the Lord's Supper and the Lord Chamberlain's Men: The Visual Rhetoric of Ritual and Play in Early Modern England" employs the theories of Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner to discuss how Protestant ritual and theatrical practice were negotiated as cultural performances, performances which subsumed the rites of Roman Catholicism, particularly the Catholic Mass. The popular stage offered playwrights a site at which this disruptive theological crisis could be articulated and played out, perhaps even reconfigured, through the use of spectacle, literalized mimetic action, and displays of "real" bloodied sacrifices. Diehl contrasts the use of such theatricals in the play-within-the-play in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Hieronimo mystifies images and decenters words, while Hamlet treats text and image as a reflection of the world beyond the stage. Whereas Kyd offers a mode of sight that is inherently Catholic (mystical, literal), Shakespeare, Diehl argues, fosters one that is skeptical, self-reflexive, analogical, and distinctly Protestant (168).

Both essays provide alternative readings of character for the director. Bruneau's reading of *Phedre* posits a representation of Phedre as postmodern alien who is neither victim nor heroine. Diehl's study of religious/cultural performances compels new ritualistic stagings of these plays-within-the-plays.

The last three essays examine contemporary documents to clarify certain dramaturgical and theatrical practices. Alan H. Nelson and Iain Wright's "A Cambridge Playhouse of 1638?: Reconsiderations" refutes nineteenth- and twentieth-century arguments that a new stagehouse was erected at Queen's

College in 1638. Using contemporary topographic evidence, workmen's invoices, and the history of college drama at Cambridge (which was in steady decline since 1600), the authors posit that the "new" stagehouse was, in reality, a storage space, a place to house the College's stage timber for future use.

John Jowett's "Middleton's *No Wit at the Fortune*" lays the foundation for his edition of the drama (Oxford University Press). It is his intention to produce a text that resembles the drama as it was originally performed on the Fortune Stage by expanding the title, omitting the references that James Shirley makes to it in his 1638 Prologue, and doing away with the act divisions.

Leo Salinger's "Jacobean Playwrights and 'Judicious' Spectators" discusses the change in the composition of the London theater-going public. An examination of the prologues and prefaces of Shakespeare's contemporaries and successors reveals a "zigzag" from the playwrights' uncertainty about the public's changing taste and their own professional skill and ability to satisfy that taste. The essay is an insightful reading of the rise of the playwright whose livelihood depended upon the public. The eight essays offer informed readings of both epistemological and literary materials which are of great value to dramaturgs and directors, as well as Renaissance scholars. The topics—how changes in modes of thought were negotiated through public and private theaters, the evolving tastes of the audiences, and text-image analyses—are both engaging and provocative. A well-organized collection of essays, *Renaissance Drama* evidences the interdisciplinary direction in which the field of Renaissance Studies has been moving for the last fifteen years, a direction which both embraces seemingly disparate modes of thought (such as cultural anthropology) and generates scholarship which furthers other fields of study and practice such as dramaturgy, history of scenography, and scenic design.

Ann Marie McEntee
Illinois College

Henry Irving's Waterloo, Theatrical Engagements with Arthur Conan Doyle, George Bernard Shaw, Ellen Terry, Edward Gordon Craig, Late Victorian Culture, Assorted Ghosts, Old Men, War, and History by W. D. King. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993.

In *Henry Irving's Waterloo*, W. D. King presents a provocative and superbly crafted examination of what he persuasively argues as the watershed event in the

move from the Victorian theatre of romanticism to the modern realistic movement. Irving's appearance as eighty-nine-year old Corporal Gregory Brewster, a fictional veteran of the Battle of Waterloo, in Arthur Conan Doyle's one-act play *A Story of Waterloo* may seem a marginal episode in theatrical history and Irving's celebrated career. Even George Bernard Shaw's scathing assault on the play (and especially Irving's acting of it) is only one such Shavian attack on the late nineteenth century English stage. For King, however, this is not an obscure theatrical moment, for its two main protagonists represent the opposing poles at the defining moment of twentieth century theatre and drama.

The prophetic title of this book relates Irving's symbolic defeat by Shaw—and, in playing Corporal Brewster's stage death three hundred and forty-three times, Irving presages both the demise of his own preferred brand of drama and style of acting and his actual death less than a decade later. Shaw—King's "supreme critic"—and Irving's slayer, vehemently rejects Doyle's quaint play and Irving's picturesque acting which he succeeds in replacing with his own socially-conscious realism in plays which include another Napoleonic one-act, *A Man of Destiny*, begun six days after Shaw saw Irving in *A Story of Waterloo*. Shaw sets the stage for many changes, including the new non-pictorial stagecraft of Irving's theatrical off-spring, Edward Gordon Craig, the son of Irving's long-time co-star Ellen Terry. Irving remains for King an "inspired actor," but one whose day is done and whose very being symbolized death. King writes that

What the next generation remembered of Irving's productions was less the play than the picture, less the minute detail than the grand display, less the "flesh-and-blood life" of realistically depicted characters than the superhuman figure of Irving, powerfully present and repeatedly dying. Death figured larger than life in the final phase of his career, especially when the outright failures began to overtake the successes. [. . .] Craig, looking back on Irving's theatre, his chief model of an artistic theatre, as well as of paternal influence, had good reason to see it as a theatre of death, in stark contrast to the "life" school of the prose of Ibsen and the early Shaw. (236)

King generates considerable sympathy for Irving and his stage world, but the text is suffused with the inevitability of the changes which would transform England's outstanding Victorian actor—and first theatrical Knight—to a mere touring player consigned to act his past successes for provincial audiences. To Shaw, the radically dissenting voice, falls the task of finally bringing Irving and England's theatrical Old Guard to heel when he proclaims of Irving's Corporal Brewster that "there is absolutely no acting in it—none whatever"(260) and that

the play itself is only a clever device which "requires from the performer no qualifications beyond a plausible appearance and a little experience and address in stage business." (260) King portrays Shaw as a derisive court jester, who, even in the face of the otherwise solemn gravity surrounding Irving's death, "provides a burst of laughter, of anticonventional enormity, at the whole, superegoistic pretense of the thing—an impulse of the id, deviated through Freud's Vienna into the English ego." (234) After Irving's comparatively early death, both Shaw and Craig would live on into their nineties to fight again the battle of Irving vs. Shaw in the early 1930's, with, as King puts it, Craig working "for the immortality of his [Irving's] memory or effect, Shaw for its transience." (217) To Craig, Shaw desecrates Irving's grave. To Shaw, Craig is the "thwarted genius" (217) of *fin de siècle* European theatre, attempting to create a theatre of pictures with a human actor who would be replaced by an übermarionette. Shaw believed that "Such theatres are not to be had; that is not what a theatre is for." [216] And in arguing against Craig's theories, Shaw paradoxically takes up the cause of the importance of actor—the very cause he had used to batter Irving forty years before.

King's defining context—the larger-than-life opposing forces of Irving and Shaw—and the battle between actor and playwright—is always paramount in his text, no matter the necessary digressions into Napoleonic history or British cultural life of the Victorian period. King's cast of characters includes not only the figures of Irving and Shaw, but also such diverse contemporaries as Sigmund Freud, John Ruskin, William Archer, the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, Constant Coquelin, Bram Stoker, Richard Mansfield, Victorien Sardou, Oscar Wilde, Max Beerbohm, Clement Scott, and Henrik Ibsen. Within his effective framework, King's prose is remarkably vivid, serious and scholarly, but readable, and sharply evocative of this extraordinary era of the English stage. This is theatrical history as it should be—infusing what might otherwise be seen as mere ephemera with the defining issues of cultural significance while exploring diverse aesthetic sensibilities from the standpoints of both the artist as well as those who observe the artist at work. *Henry Irving's Waterloo* is likely to liberate the often constraining methodology of theatre history study—offering King's erudition combined with a broad intellectual and aesthetic awareness which illuminates the theatre of the 1890's and the rise of the modern era.

King has included two valuable appendices: the complete text of Doyle's *A Story of Waterloo* and Shaw's essay "Mr Irving Takes Peregoric," along with a chronology beginning with the fictional birth of Corporal Brewster and concluding with Craig's death in 1966. For either the discerning theatrical

scholar or the general reader, *Henry Irving's Waterloo* is an essential document of an extraordinary age—and an equally extraordinary actor and his nemesis.

James Fisher
Wabash College

Confronting Tennessee Williams's "A Streetcar Named Desire": Essays in Critical Pluralism edited by Philip C. Kolin. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993.

Tennessee Williams. Everyone Else Is An Audience by Ronald Hayman. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993.

"I don't want realism. I want magic! Yes, yes, magic! I try to give that to people. I misrepresent things to them. I don't tell truth. I tell what *ought* to be truth. And if that is sinful, then let me be damned for it." This desperately romantic cry from the troubled heart of Tennessee Williams's Blanche Du Bois serves as her tragic credo, but these are also heartfelt words from the equally troubled heart of the author himself. In two important new books, Williams and his tragic heroine are given a chance to work their magic once more. Ronald Hayman's *Tennessee Williams. Everyone Else Is An Audience* provides a balanced and compassionate revelation of the dramatist's turbulent life while *Confronting Tennessee Williams's "A Streetcar Named Desire": Essays In Critical Pluralism*, edited by Philip C. Kolin, illuminates Blanche's fractured world and what is arguably Williams's finest play.

At this point in time, another biographical study of Williams might seem superfluous. Along with the playwright's own memoirs, there have been numerous biographies by friends and family, many sensationalizing and self-serving. What is most welcome about Hayman's biography is the delicate balance he strikes between Williams's work and personal life. He does not shy away from Williams's many foibles and personal tragedies, but he effectively brings them together with the plays and the unforgettable characters in them, demonstrating that they emerged from Williams's real life and densely complex personality. In attempting to peel away the myths and distortions surrounding Williams (many created by the dramatist himself), Hayman notes that Williams's "flamboyant life-style was part of the drama in which he dressed up his everyday self" (xviii). Emphasizing Donald Windham's notion that Williams's "art sprang

from his repressed self-knowledge and the resulting ingenuity his sense of self-preservation used in presenting these too-upsetting-to-face revelations to him in an acceptable way,"(xiii) Hayman poignantly traces the dizzying ups-and-downs of Williams's life and work and makes plain Elia Kazan's view that everything in Williams's life "is in his plays, and everything in his plays is in his life. He was so naked in his plays."(xiii) Hayman also explores the significance of Williams's homosexuality when he writes that like Jean Genet, Williams "created male characters corresponding to the figures in his sexual fantasies" (xiii). It has often been assumed that Williams was presenting aspects of himself in his female characters, particularly Blanche, but Hayman persuasively argues that characters such as *Streetcar's* Stanley Kowalski and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof's* Brick are objects of desire for Williams. Most importantly, however, Hayman insists that Williams was a compulsive, driven man lurking beneath the repressed, passionate, pained and violent characters of his poetic and emotionally-charged dramas with the "ability to empathize became inseparable from a need to dramatize" (xv).

Williams never empathized more completely with a character than with Blanche Du Bois. *Confronting Tennessee Williams's "A Streetcar Named Desire."* *Essays in Cultural Pluralism* presents the play from a variety of critical and theoretical perspectives. Editor Philip C. Kolin stresses that the essays are not meant to offer an homogenous view of the play, but "as polyphonic voices, quarreling with, advancing, complementing, subverting, extending, modifying each other"(x) expanding "our understanding of *Streetcar* and its place in American (world) culture"(16). Kolin has not overstated the case: this collection of generally distinguished essays does indeed invite a deeper understanding and reassessment of a play Martin Gottfried has astutely described as "art and its art will endure. For it is an exquisite play—perhaps the most romantic, poetic sensitive play ever written for the American theatre" (6). Despite the availability of two earlier collections of essays on *Streetcar*, Jordan Y. Miller's *Twentieth-Century Interpretations of "A Streetcar Named Desire"* (G. K. Hall, 1971) and Harold Bloom's *Tennessee Williams's "A Streetcar Named Desire"* (Chelsea House, 1988), this significant collection presents wholly original essays which extend the reader's view of the play into new approaches of analysis. Although its historiography is ample and scholarly, *Confronting Tennessee Williams's "A Streetcar Named Desire"* provokes distinctly contemporary notions of the play and should provide fertile material for future productions and some fresh ideas about the entire Williams canon.

The essays are generally as provocative as they are diverse in their approaches to the play. Herbert Blau's penetrating essay, "Readymade Desire," sets the scene for the entire volume as he focuses on the play as a social text within the context of postmodernism. The majority of the essays examine the

play in light of various theoretical studies: William Kleb sees *Streetcar* via Foucault's concepts of the struggle to control by the power of knowledge and the manipulation of truth; Calvin Bedient makes use of Julia Kristeva's essay "Powers of Horror: An Essay in Abjection and Black Sun" to comprehend the play's cathartic elements; Laura and Edward Morrow offer an holistic reading by using the recent theoretical constructs Chaos and Anti-Chaos Theory in the text's most obscure essay; June Schlueter argues for a dual reading of the play based on the theories of Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss; Laurilyn Harris, using perception theory, calls *Streetcar* "a tragedy of misperception, thwarted creativity, and misplaced priorities"(98); Mark Royden Winchell focuses on the mythic aspects of the play (inspired by Leslie Fiedler), drawing distinctions between popular and elite culture; and Robert Bray presents a contemporary Marxist reading of the play. Two essays deal with feminism and the play: Kolin's own contribution incisively applies feminist thematics to Eunice Hubbell, a character he believes has been inappropriately marginalized as a secondary comic figure, and Bert Cardullo argues against what he calls superficial readings of the plays—feminist and sociopolitical interpretations—stressing that Blanche and Stanley are two individual human beings, not political or social symbols. The collection is rounded out by W. Kenneth Holditch's well-argued interpretation of *Streetcar* in light of two Southern novels, Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and William Faulkner's *The Wild Palms*, as a way of understanding Blanche's dilemma; Lionel Kelly provides an interesting examination of ethnicity in the play; Jürgen C. Wolter surveys the influence of *Streetcar* on German culture; and, Father Gene D. Phillips traces the history of the play and its translation to film.

The essays vary in quality and ultimate significance, so it is perhaps the text's outstanding weakness that the essays receive equal attention suggesting that they are of equal merit. However, the general tenor of the essays is high and there are many riches for admirers of Williams's art and the play itself. The volume includes a useful bibliography of scholarship on the play. A mere three illustrations of Bulgarian, Chinese and German productions of the play are included; more production photos or designs would help illuminate several of the articles. It may only be hoped that while the reassessment of Williams's art continues, that his other major plays receive the quality of attention Kolin and his contributors have lavished on *Streetcar*.

James Fisher
Wabash College

Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642
by Laura Levine. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Transgendered representation in the early modern theater has been the subject of increasing attention since Phyllis Rackin argued in 1987 that the ultimate effect of the Elizabethan boy heroine's performance was the transgression of ontological categories, rather than an illusory masquerade. Rackin was persuasive in her contention that transgendered representation, precisely because of its overt qualities of ambiguity and *mis*-representation, had profoundly subversive implications for the emergent masculinist ideology of early modern culture. A period of backing-and-filling has followed as Lisa Jardine, Stephen Orgel and others have pursued this line of inquiry in ways that dovetail with feminist and New Historicist perspectives. Laura Levine's *Men in Women's Clothing* is the most important development to date in the discussion of transgendered representation. This is the case primarily because Levine has solidly positioned her consideration of theatrical transvestism in the context of 16th and 17th century anti-theatricality. The result is an analysis of transgendered representation that stands on its own merits, while it simultaneously forces a reassessment of both our prevailing notions of anti-theatricality itself and some widely-accepted assumptions of New Historicism.

Levine begins by pointing out that plays by Tudor and Stuart playwrights unexpectedly tend to be contaminated themselves by anti-theatricality. Moreover, these plays often replicate the anxieties that were at the core of the kinds of attacks on the theater that were written by Gosson, Stubbes and Prynne—most particularly, a prevailing anxiety about the instability of the self. Levine's treatment of Jonson is particularly noteworthy in this regard, and should provoke a reconsideration of Jonson's own anti-theatricality, specifically as it has been defined by Jonas Barish. Levine contends that both Morose in *Epicoeone* and the puppet Dionysius in *Bartholomew Fair* critique anti-theatricality by staging it in evident epistemological crisis—Morose because of his obsessive essentialism and Dionysius because he forecloses the possibility of referentiality when he raises his skirt to confront the anti-theatrical Busy with the absence of any gender at all.

Levine argues that it is in regard to the anxiety about the instability of the self that both the essentialism that Barish discovered at the core of anti-theatricality and the improvisational self described by Stephen Greenblatt need to be reassessed, because both rely upon a presumption of an operative will. And an operative will is precisely the element of the self that is absent in the anti-theatrical paranoia that sees the self as radically vulnerable to "malevolent forces beyond its control" (12). As it belies the possibility of an operative will, this

paranoia simultaneously finds release in a morbid fantasy that costume and behavior have the magical power to materially alter the self. Levine establishes that this fear of the destabilization of gender and self—the fear evident in Antony's "Here I am Antony/Yet cannot hold this visible shape" (*Antony and Cleopatra* 4.14.13-14)—betrays "none of the liberating associations we have come to identify with performative notions of gender, but is highly codified, culturally rigid, externally defined" (55).

If the self is indeed so vulnerable, and if costume and action are constitutive, then the transvestite boy actor becomes monstrous—a kind of walking horror that embodies a crisis of both representation and spectatorship, a threat to any secure idea of gender, individual identity and will. The result, which Levine finds climaxing in Prynne's *Histrion-mastix*, is "an unmanageable anxiety that there is no such thing as a masculine self" (24)—that masculinity exists only in the *enactment* of itself.

What is not adequately accounted for here is the fact that this monstrosity of the "wanton female boy" was still powerfully erotic for the male spectator (if we are to credit Jardine). Levine engages this point on the basis of Gosson's anxiety about the "coercive" power of the theater to cause the spectator to imitate the actor, and goes on to discover a "profound contradiction" in the anti-theatrical formulation of homosexual lust (13; 96-97). For all that, what remains unresolved is how a boy actor could remain the object of the intense homoerotic desire described by Rainolds and other anti-theatricalists, if his masculine self had been subject to even metaphoric annihilation by his female clothing. If the anti-theatricalists dread that masculinity exists only in the enactment of itself, how can masculinity sufficiently persist in its enactment of *femininity* to provoke what the same writers unquestionably describe as homoerotic desire?

Nevertheless, it is most interesting to follow Levine's discussion of how, in the Stuart era, these notions of gender monstrosity and the "fear that representations have the power to alter the things they should only be able to represent" (134) provoked increasingly radical efforts to contain them. The results are evident in the violence and epistemological hysteria of the witchcraft texts *Daemonologie* and *Newes from Scotland*. These texts lend themselves to anecdotalism, and Levine is quite ingenious in her discussion of how representation becomes retrogressive as James and his inquisitors attempt to control witchcraft by controlling referentiality. She arrives at the conclusion that representations that are constitutive are "a kind of mimesis in reverse" (120) and that, as such, they challenge the very capacity for knowledge. I am reminded at this point of Marjorie Garber's suggestion that transvestite theater is a critique of the very possibility of representation. And perhaps it is this fundamental epistemological crisis that ultimately held the theater and the anti-theatricalists in

the kind of symbiotic embrace for which Levine argues persuasively earlier in the book. It is in part because of its capacity to open such productive lines of inquiry that *Men in Women's Clothing* is a book that merits the attention of anyone who is interested in the early modern theater in its cultural context.

Thomas Akstens
Siena College

Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character by
Jonathan Shay. New York: Atheneum, 1994.

If anyone is qualified to write a book which draws parallels between Homer's descriptions of the Trojan War and the testimonies of American veterans of the Vietnam War, it is Jonathan Shay. As members of the CLASSICS discussion group on the Internet will attest, he can discuss Homer with anyone; as a clinical psychiatrist and professor of psychiatry at Tufts Medical School, he has made a specialty of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), particularly as manifested in veterans of the Vietnam War. It should come as no surprise, then, that Shay has pulled together material from sources as diverse as classical scholarship, medical journals, official U. S. Army documents, and extensive interviews with his patients into a book which is both useful to and readable by a wide audience.

Shay's premise, that the *Iliad* is a story about war, and that the events portrayed show above all "the undoing of Achilles' character" (26), seems self-evident once stated, but there has been no previous attempt, let alone one so successful, to chronicle at any length the simple idea that the *Iliad* is about soldiers engaged in warfare. To his credit, Shay does not suggest that experiences of soldiers remain constant, but he does argue, convincingly, that there are some analogies between, for example, the sense of betrayal of "what's right" (*thémis*) felt by Achilles at Troy and that felt by thousands of American servicemen and women in Vietnam. Similarly, the characteristics of the berserk soldier—merciless, frenzied, reckless, solitary—were characteristic of Achilles after the death of Pátroklos and of many soldiers in Vietnam after either the loss of a special friend or an unexpected deliverance from death.

But Shay is more interested in providing the reader with information than with arguing a particular critical stance. He is quick to point out dissimilarities between Troy and Vietnam: in the relationships between soldiers and gods, in the

involvement of civilians, in the respect for enemy soldiers, in the hours of the day when fighting took place, in the ability to grieve for fallen comrades. In so doing, Shay makes a larger point: that if the war described by Homer could induce symptoms identifiable today as those of traumatic stress, then the much more complex, relentless, and therefore terrifying circumstances of the conflict in Southeast Asia necessarily contributed to an even greater incidence of combat trauma among soldiers in that war. This book has an unabashed agenda: to help to heal veterans suffering from PTSD, and to help prevent the sorts of wartime situations which generate and/or aggravate the condition. Perhaps the most telling line in the entire book comes early in the introduction: "It is my duty as a physician to do my best to heal, but I have an even greater duty to *prevent*" (xiv). Shay succeeds above all in writing a book which fulfills his hope of being "deeply opposed to war but just as deeply respectful of the soldier" (206).

This is not to say the book is flawless. More than one conclusion extends past the foundation of its evidence; jargon does occasionally creep in; both testimonial evidence and the conclusions generated by those narratives are often repeated rather more than extended. So a slightly shorter, more judiciously edited volume might have been an even greater success. And while Shay is clearly aware that there are profound differences between a fictive account concentrating on generals and real-life descriptions by enlisted men, the temptation to treat the two discourses as parallel is sometimes irresistible, and the reasons for differences between them too readily over-simplified.

Still, there is no question that each of the three specific audiences for the book: mental health professionals, veterans and their families, and classicists, can enrich their understanding of their own area of interest by adding insights from other perspectives. The book is respectful of both its subject and its readership, and there is nary a trace of condescension that a reader might not read Greek, or be a veteran, or have medical training. No special knowledge is presupposed as a pre-requisite to reading this work, although a reader who doesn't know at least the basic story-line of the *Iliad* might find some sections a bit of a difficult read.

But how does all this relate to theatre, and why is the book being reviewed in a theatre journal? The answer is more than the fact that Shay has recently been enlisted as consultant for theatre productions: a stage adaptation of the *Iliad* and a version of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* set in Vietnam. Rather, Shay shows that one of the constants in war is the psychology, the character, of soldiers. Classical characters are easier to understand and to portray if we can find modern, realistic analogues; the seemingly aberrant behavior depicted in some Vietnam plays is universalized by reference to a 3000 year old epic. And the apt analogy between the role of the gods in the Trojan War and of the so-called REMF's (rear-echelon mother-fuckers) in Vietnam provides a concrete, human, basis from which to

begin a character for Athena, Poseidon, or even (in a different context) Dionysus. Thus, a theatre practitioner might find in this book a means of access to works ranging from *The Trojan Women* and *Ajax* to *Botticelli*, *Strange Snow*, and the brief Soldier scene in *Cloud 9*. Nor is the focus limited to the two wars on which Shay concentrates his attention. One of the most fascinating sections of the book, from a theatre perspective at the very least, is Shay's citation of Lady Percy's speech to Hotspur in Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV* (II.iii.40 ff.), presented side-by-side with Shay's delineation of the way in which, in virtually every line of her description of her husband's behavior, Lady Percy describes the symptoms of PTSD (165-66). Dramatic literature teems with war plays and warrior/soldier characters; this book provides a comprehensible, literate means of acquiring a greater understanding of the specifically military aspects of those works.

At least as important to the theatre person is Shay's plea that the reader "respond *emotionally* to the reality of combat danger in order to make *rational* sense of the injury inflicted when those in charge violate 'what's right'" (11). This apparent dissonance between rational and emotional responses may cause some difficulty for some readers, but theatre people slide between the rational and the non-rational as part of their daily professional lives. In this sense, theatre scholars and practitioners may be an ideal audience for Shay's arguments. Conversely, Shay's lucid use of artistic material as a means by which to understand complex medical conditions serves as one more weapon with which to counter-attack against that burgeoning band of demagogues and politicians who would deny the legitimacy of art for its presumed impracticality.

Achilles in Vietnam is scholarly without being obtuse; it is readable without being facile; it is compelling without resorting to tabloid-style hype; above all, it is actively ethical without being judgmental. Far too few books in any field can say as much; that this work has both direct and indirect applications to our work is just another bonus to those of us in theatre.

Richard Jones
University of Kansas