

## **Book Reviews**



*Bernard Shaw: The Ascent of the Superman.* Sally Peters. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996. xvi + 328 + illus. ISBN 0-300-06097-1. \$28.50.

Who knew? Who knew Bernard Shaw was a homosexual? Although Shaw may have struggled with doubts about his sexual identity and found comfort in the company of men, he never called himself a homosexual. Sally Peters' biography, however, works rather diligently to bring Shaw out of the closet. Unfortunately, she neglects to present this thesis forthrightly. Rather, her preface promises the reader an answer to the question, "what did it mean *to Shaw* to have lived his life?"(x). Forging her own methodology ("using everything from existential phenomenology to popular culture to track[ing] down clues"), Peters claims that this biography "is his story"(x). Exploring the chronology of Shaw's personal life proves to be a fascinating exercise, but for the seemingly sole purpose of "outing" him? Yet, that is the direction the biography takes. Peters isolates and sheds light upon events in Shaw's early life with a Freudian vengeance (troubled childhood and strong mother/weak father equals homosexual tendencies). Coupled with analyses of particular dramatic works, her biographical commentary leads her to conclude that Shaw was "born before his time" and claimed to be "an artist/genius/homosexual" (259).

Peters's methodology tends to be haphazard (as other reviewers have noted). On the one hand, she includes evidences that counter her overarching Freudian construct. For example, her claim that eating meat is traditionally associated with the masculine realm leads her to conclude that Shaw pursued "the vegetarian landscape at the feminine pole," (72). Given Shaw's preoccupation with hygiene and disgust with the commercial butchering practices of Victorian England, however, it is only logical that he would pursue a vegetarian diet. And, ironically enough, Peters provides Shaw's telltale statement about defecation and vegetarianism (73), a statement that dismisses her reading of Shaw's vegetarianism as a decidedly "feminine" choice completely. On the other hand, Peters conveniently omits documentation that would support her assertions (yet offers the reader the opportunity to examine it as well). For example, her discussions of an 1891 photograph by Emory Walker and another by Alvin Langdon Coburn present Shaw's "feminine pose . . . [his hands] a woman's hands, displayed in womanly fashion" (196) and the hand "defenseless and feminine" (236). Shaw was six feet tall and weighed 160 pounds (on heavy days). His bones were long and thin. Feminine or, quite simply, gangly? So preoccupied is Peters with arguing that Shaw struggled with homosexual proclivities that her inclusions (and omissions) of evidences prove problematic.

What surfaces from all of this tantalizing material is a picture of Shaw as a “when-then” personality. Peters presents Sonny Shaw as an emigrant who can never find social acceptance, but her recovery of Shaw’s hidden, feminine side supplants this equally important theme. *Bernard Shaw* is a chronicle of the artist’s writing habits and his many journal entries, but it lacks an analysis of what that prolific process suggests. Shaw lived his life with an eye on tomorrow and worked for fame and acceptance, always elusive, always just a little out of his grasp (in his mind). He desired acceptance as a genius worthy of keeping company with Shakespeare, Goethe, and Shelley (all of whom Peters labels gay). The irony of Shaw’s pursuit, however, is his reluctance to accept the kudos once he attained this goal. A true “when-then” personality, Shaw lived for the pursuit rather than the prize. He focused upon what lie ahead, for he continually harbored doubts about the public’s acceptance as well as a self-image of homely immigrant. Shaw the outsider is a theme that Peters pursues only cursorily, preferring to assist the artist in finding a community in which he is comfortable, namely the Victorian and Edwardian “Uranian” males.

*Bernard Shaw* also falls short of the promise of ascending to the height of the superman. Superman as homosexual, perhaps, but superman as the creative genius and role model never comes to fruition as promised. *Misalliance*, *Man and Superman*, and *Saint Joan*—the plays that either openly discuss Shaw’s theories about the life force or offer representations of potential super(wo)men—are merely treated as evidences of Shaw’s ambivalence and anxieties about women and heterosexual relations. Such commentary reduces the scope of these works.

Peters offers us a portrait of a young man who pursues his art voraciously, moving from one fad or philosophic camp to another. She admires her subject greatly and has worked assiduously to weave together late nineteenth-century cultural history, trends, and ideologies, and Shaw’s fascination and involvement with them. Unfortunately, it is the final product that one finds so difficult to accept. Like the Jaeger wool that Shaw sported throughout his life, *Bernard Shaw: The Ascent of the Superman* contains dropped stitches, spots shiny from wear, and a few gaping (documentary) holes.

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*Peter Shaffer. Theater and Drama.* Madeleine MacMurrough-Kavanagh. London and New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998. ISBN 0-333-68168-1. \$55.

Peter Shaffer's plays are difficult to categorize within tidy and familiar literary or theatrical designations. A playwright who has called Shakespeare his god aims for a combination of theatrical and realistic drama set against an epic historical scope, probing characterizations pitting man against man's ideas of God, and bits of autobiography. He is a playwright whose significance reaches well beyond both his native country and matters of technique and theme. As a dramatist Shaffer has experienced considerable commercial success (as well as occasional failure) while raising issues unlikely to find appeal on the popular stage.

Unfortunately, Shaffer's work has received comparatively little scholarly attention thus far. The only significant study, C. J. Gianakaris's *Peter Shaffer: A Casebook* (Garland, 1991), provides eleven interesting essays on various facets of Shaffer's themes, with particular emphasis on the development of character and literary issues. MacMurrough-Kavanagh extends well beyond these aspects to address not only Shaffer's entire canon, but to grapple with his place among other late twentieth century dramatists. In nine concise, well-written chapters she surveys common themes, character conceptions, and dramaturgical devices beginning with Shaffer's 1955 television drama, *The Salt Land* through his most recently produced play, *The Gift of the Gorgon* (1992).

In a discussion of Shaffer's earliest plays, MacMurrough-Kavanagh explores themes and characters (alienation, identity, and dysfunction), as well as Shaffer's stylistic indebtedness to Artaud and Brecht. Chapters 5 and 6 feature a dense analysis of Shaffer's most significant plays. She groups *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* (1964), *Equus* (1973), and *Amadeus* (1979) in order to examine Shaffer's use of religion and myth and the "Apollonian-Dionysian impulses" (p. xi). Chapter 7, focusing mostly on *Letice and Lovage* (1987), as well as Shaffer's little known radio play, *Whom Do I Have the Honour of Addressing?* (1989), effectively introduces a rarely examined development in Shaffer's plays: the role of women protagonists. Chapter 8 will be of most interest to Shafferites since it is devoted exclusively to *The Gift of the Gorgon*, which has received scant attention from other scholars. In her concluding chapter, MacMurrough-Kavanagh focuses on film adaptations of Shaffer's plays and, moving to closure she stresses that Shaffer "allows entry into an imaginative realm in which dramatic craft and theatrical skill conspire to elevate an audience from the daily and into the transcendent." (p. 167) This valuable volume provides a strong introduction to a playwright John Russell Taylor described as a "theatrical thinker" (p. 3).

*Rachel Rosenthal*. Ed. Moira Roth. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

First impressions are important. Significantly, the first impression the reader has of Moira Roth's book *Rachel Rosenthal* is an image. It is a black and white picture of Rosenthal with arms outstretched towards the camera, body wrapped in layers of tulle, the pair of large feathered wings attached to her shoulders filling the frame. Interestingly, the wings, beautiful in their realism, seem to fade into the background as the eye is drawn again and again to Rosenthal's remarkable face. Her strong features are sculpted with light which serves to erase the markings of time and enhance her beauty. This picture, the initial image, seems to imbue Rosenthal with a sense of reverence and higher purpose.

This picture has been chosen with great care. It marks the beginning of a book which is a deeply personal account of the life and art of one of the "grande dames" of performance art, Rachel Rosenthal. Yet, this book is not a conventional profile of an artist. Instead Roth has gathered an astonishing collection of essays, letters, interviews, reviews, and descriptions of Rosenthal's work. Contextualized with an introduction by Roth, the book is organized in such a way that the full impact of Rosenthal's extraordinary life and her influence on other artists becomes visible only through the accumulation of layers of writing by and about Rosenthal. The reader is free to draw his/her own conclusions and to engage with the material on many levels. Of course, that first impression lingers in the reader's mind.

Upon reading the introduction, the reader realizes why Roth placed the striking picture of Rosenthal as an angel at the beginning of the book. Roth takes a very respectful stance as editor. In no area of the book is this more clear than in her introduction. Roth's introduction is her attempt to articulate why and how this complex artist developed. By juxtaposing Rosenthal's "methodical, disciplined life" and her "legendary, glamorous biography" Roth uncovers Rosenthal's progression towards a unique form of art-making (2). As this juxtaposition reveals, Rosenthal's art-making is intimately tied to her life experiences. Present in her art are images of her privileged childhood in Paris before World War II and her family's terrifying flight to escape the Nazis in 1940. Resonances of her exposure to the New York avant-garde artists and her development of Instant Theatre remain visible in her work. Rosenthal's art has alternately grown wings and flown, lost feathers and struggled, yet it always reveals the depths of Rosenthal's inner vision of what art should be.

The introduction itself is a complex account which is part diary entry, part analysis, part description, part challenge, and part testimony to the career of this very unique artist. Roth constructs a detailed, chronologically structured biography

made richer by the care she takes to describe and explain the influences at each stage in Rosenthal's career. In particular, the sections which deal with Rosenthal's childhood, friendships with the New York avant-garde artists, move to California, and subsequent development of Instant Theatre are revealing. Perhaps because of Roth's relationship with Rosenthal and free access to her, these sections are characterized by a more personal slant. Comments by Rosenthal sprinkled throughout almost make the reader feel like this is a diary which could have been written by Rosenthal. Does this make the introduction seem more "authentic" to the reader? Yes, and no. Even with Rosenthal's comments, the introduction remains Roth's response to Rosenthal's life and career.

Roth's perspective as narrator of the introduction clearly reveals which moments Roth considers foundational to Rosenthal's career as an artist. Following the thread of Rosenthal's growth as an artist, Roth is unafraid to write of Rosenthal's struggles as well as her triumphs. In fact, Roth seems to privilege the transitional moments of Rosenthal's life and art, the moments when Rosenthal is most human. Roth's discussion of Rosenthal's performance art work reveals these transitional moments clearly. From the years 1975 through 1996, Roth has seen many of Rosenthal's performance pieces. Indeed, from 1977 on she has systematically attended Rosenthal's performances. As a result, Roth is able to systematically contextualize these performances with published reviews, Rosenthal's comments about the pieces, and her own reading of the performances.

The final sections of the introduction deal specifically with Rosenthal's work from 1982 to the present. Roth begins by summarizing the fundamental shift from the personal to the ecological in Rosenthal's performance work. Roth mentions important scholarship by Bonnie Marranca, Suzanne Lacy, Alexandra Grilikhes, and Denise Meola. Each of these scholars contributes in exciting ways to Rosenthal's notion that humankind is tied to the earth and must protect it. Citing from reviews of many of Rosenthal's pieces from this period (*L.O.W. in Gaia*, 1986; *Was Black*, 1986; *Rachel's Brain*, 1987; *Amazonia*, 1990; *Pangaeian Dreams*, 1990), Roth carefully describes Rosenthal's convictions and concerns. At the root of Rosenthal's concern is the question "What will happen to this world in the future?" The not so cheerful reply in *filename: FUTURFAX* (1992) one of Rosenthal's more recent pieces, is unsettling. Roth reports that during one post-show discussion in 1995, Rosenthal replied to one questioner "... that, yes, she is deeply pessimistic and we are indeed an accursed species, yet one must act as if change is possible" (26). Rosenthal's special brand of shock and hope is oddly encouraging.

Roth then reports on the new trend Rosenthal's work has taken. *Zone* (1994) marks the beginning of a collaborative phase of Rosenthal's art-making process. Rosenthal explains in her program notes that *Zone*, structured around the

saga of the Romanov family with Rosenthal and five cast members in the primary roles and a “throng” composed of sixty other performers, “was conceived as ‘a metaphor for patriarchal Western civilization and its demise’” (qtd in Roth, 29). Roth suggests that this production marks a turning point in Rosenthal’s development. Always interested in teaching and after years of conducting her workshop called “The DbD Experience,” Rosenthal has formed a theatre company called the Rachel Rosenthal Company. This community of artists (many of whom acted in *Zone*) collaborate, improvise, and struggle to bring form and structure to their improvisation. The result is a montage of provocative images and sounds called *Tohubohu!*.

Just as the introduction reveals Roth’s perspective on Rosenthal, so do the materials Roth collected for the body of the book. Each excerpt and essay included in the book maintains Roth’s respectful tone. This is not to say these writers are not critical of Rosenthal’s work, often they are. Yet, Roth does not include any selections which might jar the reader out of his/her growing respect for Rosenthal. Included in the collection are landmark essays, performance reviews, and interviews with Rosenthal by such authors as Linda Burnham, Suzanne Lacy, Alexandra Grilikhes, Bonnie Marranca, Barbara T. Smith, Emily Hicks, Fidel Danieli, Alisa Solomon, and Erika Munk.

While it is impossible to deal specifically with the majority of the individual pieces, one section of the book deserves special attention for scholars interested in studying Rachel Rosenthal and her work. Gathered together for the first time in a section entitled “Writing and Scripts by Rachel Rosenthal,” are personal letters, excerpts from material written by Rosenthal, and the previously unpublished script of *Rachel’s Brain* (1987). In particular the letters written by Rosenthal engage the reader with their frank nature, love of detail, obvious intelligence, and humor. When these letters are read alongside the script of *Rachel’s Brain*, the images within the performance reveal the complex connections Rosenthal makes through the use of humor, parody, and juxtaposition. The reader imagines Rosenthal dressed as Marie Antoinette, Rosenthal dissecting a cauliflower which represents a brain, and Rosenthal as Koko the gorilla who knows sign language. As Rosenthal writes in one of the excerpts titled “Statement,” “I am becoming less and less inclined to think of myself as making ‘art.’ I put out ideas in a certain form. I play them out with the help of various media” (qtd. in Roth 195). These statements situate Rosenthal as both cultural critic and performer. She comments, “I want to perform in a way that will make people uneasy with the easy way out” (qtd. in Roth 195). Roth’s collection allows this uneasiness to be present by raising more questions than it answers.

This unique examination of the life, art, and influences of Rachel Rosenthal is an important contribution to the ever increasing scholarship about



performance art and its creators. First, the material presented has never been gathered together before. As such it concentrates the multiple perspectives on Rosenthal and her work and allows the reader to draw his/her own conclusions. Second, the collection includes material which was previously unpublished. Third, it presents a clear picture, through the source texts themselves, of the growth and development of Rosenthal's work. Fourth, it provides an insightful and complete examination of the many influences on Rosenthal's work. Roth's introduction is an engaging, personal, detailed, and accessible account particularly for those reading about Rosenthal for the very first time. It also contains new information and perspectives for those who have encountered Rosenthal and her work before. Lastly, it contains a wealth of biographical and bibliographic resources for those readers interested in doing further research and reading about Rachel Rosenthal.

After reading Roth's book, it is possible to understand the initial image of Rosenthal as an angel in a different way. Not only does it reflect Rosenthal's struggle to grow and develop as an artist, but it could also reveal the possibilities Rosenthal has discovered and tries to communicate in her performances. In the picture, Rosenthal's arms extend toward the reader as if offering . . . a gift? Herself? The future? Roth's collection of writings also offers something special to the reader: a wide-ranging series of descriptions, interviews, critiques, conversations, perspectives, theories, and possibilities. While these writings do not and cannot equal the woman, they do offer a multi-faceted glimpse into the life and art of Rachel Rosenthal.

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*Sleeping Where I Fall*. Peter Coyote. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint Press, 1998. ISBN 1-887178-67-8.

In his memoir *Sleeping Where I Fall*, the well-known film actor Peter Coyote attempts to come to terms with his experiences as a member of various radical communities during the 1960s. As he puts it, the book offers "neither an apologia for nor a romance of the sixties," (xi) but rather assesses both the victories and defeats of the social revolutionaries who tried to reinvent our culture in that era. Overall, Coyote deconstructs the pros and cons of the counterculture—and the role he and his peculiarly idiosyncratic circle played in creating it—with insight, wit, and unflinching candor.

In the book's early chapters, the author explains how he and his colleagues developed a set of aesthetic, theoretical, and political frames which would lead them on a revolutionary journey to transform themselves and America. He links his privileged background as the child of wealthy but emotionally abusive parents, as well as his generation's upbringing in the 1950s when "the young were bent, stretched, folded, stapled, and stressed by the social and political costs of the Cold War" (239) to their aggressive efforts in the 1960s to create a just and more equitable America. Coyote's own political awakening began when, as a young actor, he joined the newly formed San Francisco Mime Troupe in 1964. At that time, the troupe sought to remove theatre from the comfortable, socially encoded frames of private buildings and place it in the public spaces of America. Without any formal rules to identify a piece of theatre as a performance, the spectators could no longer passively hide behind these barriers and would hopefully have to engage the "play" on their own personalized terms.

Coyote's colleague, Peter Berg, coined the phrase life-actor to describe a person who could abandon socially imposed restrictions in order to create his/her own life-role on a daily basis. This increasing interest to live "*in the art*" (20) prompted Coyote, Berg, and some other Mime Troupe members to join a radical San Francisco-based group called the Diggers. According to Coyote, the Diggers perceived all theatrical product, if not the style of the counterculture as a whole, as having been co-opted by the larger economic consumer system. If this was true, then the alternative for the Diggers was to create life-performance events for *free* which could not be co-opted. Interestingly, other more high-profile artists of the 1960s eventually reached the same conclusions, as when The Living Theatre renounced performing in traditional theatrical spaces at the end of the decade.

In order to achieve their goal of dissolving the boundaries between art and life, the Diggers advocated that each individual in society should imagine his/her own societal ideal, and follow these "inner dreams and directives" regardless of personal, social, or economic consequences. These life-actors would create a persona character which embodied this ideal and then act it out in their everyday existence. In Coyote's words, "in this way, each of us might *become* his or her own hero, as well as an engine of social change" (65). By committing to this notion of personal authenticity, the group hoped to create an alternative, more enlightened culture which could offer its members possibilities beyond such roles as consumer or passive spectator.

Coyote observes that the Digger's freewheeling activities (e.g., creating a "free store" in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district) eventually created an impulse to leave the city and start a web of self-sustaining communities which could further model and spread the gospel of personal authenticity and life-acting. Thus, while the first third of the book defines the theoretical underpinnings of these

groups's early social experiments, the bulk of Coyote's successive chapters chronicles his travails and triumphs as a member, and sometimes leader, of various communal groups which were known collectively as the Free Family. This loosely interconnected "family" of revolutionary artists represented the final evolution of the Mime Troupe/Digger aesthetic, in that its members were no longer interested in staging performances of any kind, but rather embodying them through their daily communal living. The Living Theatre also lived together communally in order to blur the perceptual boundaries between art and life, and notable avant-garde productions such as *Paradise Now*, *The Mutation Show*, and *Dionysus in 69* (produced by The Living, The Open Theatre, and The Performance Group respectively) privileged the presence of the actor over traditional dramaturgical conceptions of character. They did so, however, within the confines of performance spaces, albeit non-traditional ones in many instances. In contrast, Coyote's book illuminates the work of those who attempted to explore life and art in the "perpetual present" (16) beyond the context of any formal theatrical or performative framework.

Coyote's final chapters examine the consequences of acting out one's dreams, and in retrospect he admits that many of these experiments failed due to self-indulgence and failure to take responsibility for maintaining their self-sufficient communities (i.e., how could such self-perceived heroes bother with cleaning dishes or scrubbing toilets?). Ultimately, he tallies both the gains and losses which resulted from the excesses of the period, although he argues convincingly that many of the social liberties which we value today are a result of the battles fought in the 1960s. Coyote's accounting of the long-term social impact of the counterculture is well-balanced, but the book's greatest strength lies in his ability to articulate the theoretical premises which created the cultural revolutionary agendas of the larger Free Family network. In this regard, *Sleeping Where I Fall* offers a particularly unique and insightful perspective on the ways in which acting, performance, and theatre were reconfigured by many activists in the 1960s to create tools which could forge a crucible of change around a number of vital social, economic, and political issues. Lastly, while Coyote avoids the self-aggrandizing tone which has weakened other personal recollections of the era (e.g., David Crosby's *Long Time Gone*), the book mostly ignores the work of significant 1960s collectives such as The Merry Pranksters and The Hog Farm which, like the Free Family, pursued life-acting outside of formal theatres or performing spaces. The activities of the Free Family did not occur in quite the creative vacuum that Coyote suggests, then, but the efforts of these more high-profile groups has been written about previously in great detail. Thus, Coyote effectively accomplishes his intention that the book serve as a recovery project of sorts to document the equally courageous and influential work of his West Coast "free" tribes. His book

preserves this important slice of American cultural and social history by recording the exploits, failures, and successes of the individuals who dominate this narrative. And considering the atypically sophisticated and multi-layered theoretical context within which Coyote's biography operates, *Sleeping When I Fall* stands as a welcome addition to the numerous anecdotal memoirs of this turbulent era in our recent past.

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*Taking It Like a Man: White Masculinity, Masochism, and Contemporary American Culture.* David Savran. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998. ISBN 0-691-05876-8.

In David Savran's well-written and thoughtful *Taking It Like a Man*, the author examines a broad range of cultural and sexual mores that have shaped the images of white men from the "Beat generation" to Robert Bly's "men's movement" and beyond. What it means to be a white male, and the ways this group has dominated social, culture, political, and economic forces since the Second World War, is a perilous field of study, but Savran provides a provocative and persuasive analysis of this complex subject.

*Taking It Like a Man* is an interesting continuation of Savran's excellent *Communists, Cowboys, and Queers: The Politics of Masculinity in the Work of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams* (University of Minnesota Press, 1992), but here he expands on the cultural base of that previous study. *Taking It Like a Man* begins with a look at the traditional image of 1940s males (which both Miller and, more obviously, Williams, significantly redefined), who, following World War II, function within a conformist corporate culture that Savran describes as "surely the most repressive period in modern U.S. history, the era that witnessed the apogee of the postwar economic boom, the Cold War, and McCarthyism." (p. 45) Savran proceeds to deal with what he considers the first major challenge to the traditional white male: the emergence of the "Beat generation." Focusing mostly on the literary achievements of the eccentrically independent and transgressive William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, and Jack Kerouac, Savran presents a compelling argument that they represent the first post-World War II male "dissidents." Despite their superficial veneer of machismo, they offered a vision of maleness that allowed them to relate to the oppressed other, most particularly women and African-Americans. Herein Savran establishes the central thesis of the book—that a continually evolving form of dissident masculinity has emerged in America since

the late 1950s, more particularly, as a direct result of the revolutionary movements of the 1960s. It is in the realms of theatre and film that Savran finds his most meaningful examples of this evolving masculinity, with particular attention paid to the terse and discordant dramas of Sam Shepard, Tony Kushner's epic two-part drama *Angels in America*, popular movies like *The Right Stuff*, *Forrest Gump*, and *Rambo*, and many others. Savran contends that the strides made by the Civil Rights movement, feminism, and gay liberation have resulted in a disturbing new "victim" ethos for white males. Men believe, according to Savran, that they have become too feminized, they are confused by their roles in society and in personal relationships, and believe they have lost much of the political and personal predominance they once considered their birthright. Extreme examples of this mentality are found in Timothy McVeigh and the militia man movement. These sort of men see themselves as "Trading places, rhetorically at least, with the people they loathe, they imagine themselves (through a kind of psychic prestidigitation) the new persecuted majority or, in the words of one zealot, 'the new niggers'." (p. 3) As white men seem increasingly threatened by the small gains made by African-Americans, women, and gays in the last three decades, the social and sexual phenomenon of the white male victim has charged contemporary moral, political, and personal American life. Savran explores the extremes of white maleness, illuminating both the real and the illusionary elements. In a time of neo-conservatism and outspoken assaults on the arts and the university, particularly in the areas of multicultural and gender studies, Savran's well-developed arguments make clear the importance of a continuing and serious dialogue on these issues.

Savran divides the book into two parts, with each part containing three cogent chapters. Part One's sections, "The Divided Self," "Revolution as Performance," and "The Sadomasochist in the Closet," deal mostly with the development of the "dissident male" chronologically from World War II, and the rise of the white male "victim." Part Two, in sections titled "Queer Masculinities," "Man and Nation," and "The Will to Believe," emphasizes more current developments, with particular attention paid to the inherent political and social issues raised by the feminist movement and the gay revolution.

For those who teach theater, film, and the complexities of post-war II American society, politics, and religion, Savran's deeply felt, tightly constructed, examination of the evolution of the American male will be an invaluable tool for approaching a deeper study of appropriate drama, film, and popular culture. The handsomely bound text is scholarly and well-annotated without being unnecessarily pedantic, and throughout Savran's prose is clear in the best sense. Visuals images might have effectively supported the text, especially in particularizing the various male icons Savran points to along the way, but unfortunately (an inexplicably) no

illustrations are featured. However, this is a very minor quibble in an otherwise important study of a potent subject.

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