

The Theatre of Heiner Müller by Jonathan Kalb. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. ISBN 0-521-55004-1.

Both theatre scholars and practitioners will find Jonathan Kalb's *The Theatre of Heiner Müller* a valuable resource. The most comprehensive study in English to date of the prolific East German theatrical figure, Kalb's text chronicles Müller's both from the standpoint of his work as a writer and as a stage director. Key to the structure of this book is the comparison of Müller to several *alter egos*—playwrights, poets and theatre personnel with whom he evidenced similar traits. By exploring the multidimensionality of Müller, including his myriad influences (both German and otherwise), Kalb is able to isolate perhaps the primary characteristic of Müller's work—his continual rejection of a singular definable identity or style.

The text is broken up into ten chapters. Chapter one, "Müller as Müller," discusses certain aspects of Müller's personal life, beginning, appropriately, with his death in 1995. The introductory chapter focuses on several major points of Müller's life and career, including his family, early plays, dealings with GDR authorities and other pertinent biographical data which, as Kalb points out, are only partially helpful in determining who Müller was. With chapter two, "Müller as Brecht," the text explores the first, and perhaps most recurring of Müller's many alter egos, Bertolt Brecht. Considering Müller's diametric use of the Brechtian *Lehrstück* (or teaching play), Kalb selects *The Horatian*, the second of a trilogy of short pedantic works written by Müller during the period from 1969-1971. Like several of Brecht's plays (most notably *The Measures Taken*), *The Horatian* explores the themes of necessary killing and political "doublespeak," utilizing the Roman "Horatian-Curiatian" legend as its primary source. By comparing *The Horatian* with Brecht's *The Horatians and the Curiatians* (based on the same legend), Kalb explores the manner in which both writers were critical of "historical falsehoods." Appropriately, the Brecht chapter is included first, since Müller stood in Brecht's shadow (at least with the general public) throughout most of his career.

Chapter three, "Müller as Kleist" considers Müller's use of war related scenarios which, like Kleist, provided him an ample landscape for the portrayal of "extreme cases." (46) discussing four shorter works—*Volokolamsk Highway*, *Gundling's Life*, *Frederick of Prussia*, *Lessing's Sleep or Dream Scream*, and *Mauser*—Kalb explores the "Homburg Syndrome," a term derived from the events surrounding the leading character in Kleist's *The Prince of Homburg*, who commits unauthorized actions and is thereby sentenced to death. Kalb then traces the Homburg Syndrome to all four plays, particularly *Mauser*, which espouses the clearest evidence of Müller's "tendency to dramatize surface rationality charged with a high degree of internal emotionalism," thereby reflecting the influence of the German romantic writer.

Chapter four, "Müller as Mayakovsky," discusses three of Müller's early

social realist dramas and the political implications of their production in the German Democratic Republic. *The Scab*, *The Correction* and *The Resettler* are examples of a type of drama written by Müller during the 1960s which explores the relationship of personal integrity to state mandated policies. Throughout this early portion of Müller's career, his plays and poems were replete with quotations and paraphrases of Mayakovsky, whose influence can also be seen in the content of Müller's works as images of violence, violent acts and the juxtaposition of human and industrial images pervade. Müller's devotion to the work of Shakespeare is explored in chapter five, "Müller as Shakespeare." By looking at two of his many adaptations of the bard's work, *Macbeth* and *Anatomy of Titus Fall of Rome*, Müller's GDR adaptations are considered both from the standpoint of their inherent political implications and from their performance style. This was particularly evident in Müller's 1971 production of *Macbeth*, which reflected a "disappearance of the individual" as a handful of actors portrayed forty-three different roles (97). In considering Müller's translations of Shakespeare, Kalb explores the destructive relationships Müller established with works of the classical canon which he felt "disguised barbaric historical realities" (88).

Chapters six and seven, "Müller as Artaud" and "Müller as Genet," take a look (respectively) at two of Müller's most heralded works: *Hamletmaschine* and *The Mission (or The Task)*. It is well known that Müller and Artaud shared many common beliefs, including the distancing (if not outright disappearance) of authorial presence, the substitution of drama by its means of enactment (theatre), and the loss of rationality in communication. *Hamletmaschine*, with its lack of imitative qualities, presents the ultimate modern example of the death of a "masterpiece," and is Müller's best example of a play in which "drama fails to take place" (107). Kalb's comparison of Müller to Genet is excellent, clearly noting similarities between Genet's *The Blacks* and Müller's *The Mission* which is, at least structurally, virtually identical to Genet's play. As Kalb notes, both Müller and Genet shared a secret pleasure for catastrophes and societal taboos as both dealt with black-black betrayal and third world uprising in the two works cited. *Germania Death in Berlin* is the subject of chapter eight, "Müller as Wagner." Given his lifelong focus on "all things German," Müller's debt to Wagner was considerable. *Germania Death in Berlin* presents ordinary GDR characters and scenarios which, like those of Lohengrin are, though the act of dramatization, raised to the level of Teutonic myth. Chapter nine, "Müller as Beckett" discusses Müller's curious relationship to Samuel Beckett. Though Kalb cites quotes that indicate an indifference to and (occasional) disdain for Beckett's work, he also notes the considerable use of "Beckettian" material in his plays. Utilizing *Description of a Picture* as an example, Kalb notes the use of "silent, trapped figures," and clownlike activities reminiscent of Beckett's *Act Without Words I*, and characteristic of the "post-dramatic" theatre of which Beckett was primary

author. “Müller as Proteus” the final chapter of the text, centers on *Quartet*, Müller’s adaptation of Choderlos de Laclo’s 1782 *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. In chapter ten Kalb compares nine professional productions of *Quartet*, seen by the author between 1985 and 1996, at locales throughout Europe and America. By comparing Müller with the protean character (the chameleon or changeling), Kalb demonstrates the true malleability of Müller’s work. The nine productions of *Quartet* selected for discussion varied markedly in approach and resultant message, yet each remained “letter perfect” in its presentation of Müller’s text. Like the majority of Müller’s works, the text is flexible with regard to gender, assignment of lines and setting, thus making it an excellent vehicle for an exploration of the sexual politics of any epoch, group or environment.

Through well-drawn comparisons with major literary figures the text is successful in placing Müller’s work within the canon of western literature. Perhaps even more importantly, the text is valuable through its documentation of important performances of Müller’s plays—many of which are now considered legendary (especially by Müller aficionados)—directed by the author and others. *The Theatre of Heiner Müller* far exceeds its stated objective of “introducing Müller to an Anglophone public largely familiar with him,” by becoming the seminal work concerning Müller in the English language.

Steve Earnest
California State University, San Bernadino

The Plays of W. B. Yeats: Yeats and the Dancer by Sylvia C. Ellis. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

In *The Plays of W. B. Yeats*, Sylvia Ellis explores the use of dancing and the role of the dancer in Yeats's dramatic work, by examining the social and artistic phenomena in which Yeats's dance work culminated. This work is extraordinary in Yeats criticism because its intellectual archaeology reaches beyond the obvious contexts of the Irish literary revival and Yeats's elite coterie to explore the roots of his art through a rigorous reconstruction of seemingly disparate nineteenth-century intellectual, social and artistic paradigms. Moreover, Ellis's book is the first major full-length work on Yeats's use of dance.

Before analyzing dance in Yeats's dramatic works, Ellis reconstructs the dance of Salome in the *symboliste* tradition, the social propagation of *Japonisme* and Yeats's knowledge of the Noh, and the history of popular dancing and the cult of the dancer in nineteenth-century Paris and London. The first section, "The Figure of the Dancer: *Salome*," is a fine close reading of the Salome figures in Mallarmé, Flaubert, and Laforgue, looking at these renderings of the dancing princess as a dialogue on semiotics, symbols, and the morality of aesthetics. Yeats comes up only in the end of the section, however, when Ellis posits the Queen of *A Full Moon in March* as the antithesis of Wilde's Salome.

"Japan, *Japonisme* and *Japonaiserie*" is a long-overdue examination of the influence of popular Orientalism on Yeats's work, and a good critical examination of popular nineteenth-century Japanese Orientalism in and of itself. Where Edward Said has explored the construction of Orientalism in the nineteenth-century academy, Ellis demonstrates how romantic Orientalism was constructed in popular culture and in the arts. Ellis illustrates the tenuous balance between cultural accuracy and wild romanticism in which Yeats hung while appropriating the Noh for his Cuchulain plays. Placing popular culture alongside Orientalist scholarship in Yeats's influences, Ellis demonstrates how both Gilbert and Sullivan's version of Japan and the Fenollosa-Pound Noh translations contributed to the construction of Yeats's *Plays for Dancers*. Although Ellis is thorough in her archaeology of nineteenth-century popular and artistic Japanese Orientalism, she could have drawn some tangible connections between the Orientalism of Yeats's form and the Irishness of his subject matter. The construction of Irish culture in the nineteenth-century imagination ran parallel to that of Orient, both popularly and academically, as Shaun Richards and David Cairns have shown in *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture* (St. Martin's, 1988).

"The Dancer in Performance" is an account of the popular and classical dancing traditions of the late nineteenth-century and describes in detail the cults of various popular dancers, particularly Loïe Fuller, whose impersonal drapery dance

Yeats admired. This section is more helpful, perhaps, for understanding Yeats's rejection of popular dancing traditions than it is his appropriation of these traditions.

"Dialogue into Dance," the final chapter of the book, draws together the traditions which Ellis has explored in the rest of the text and focuses on a close reading of Yeats's *Plays for Dancers* and other plays employing the medium of dance. In this section, Ellis explores not only Yeats's writing, revisions, and productions of his plays but also how dancing has been adapted in more recent productions of Yeats's plays, where the nineteenth-century contexts she has explored are less immediate. One problem with this section, and in the work as a whole, is that the various contexts upon which Ellis has drawn do not seem to draw together coherently in her readings of Yeats's plays. Perhaps, though, this is due more to the fragmentary nature of history itself rather than to any flaw in scholarship. Yeats drew from a variety of social and intellectual paradigms, and his art was created through a dialogue between these paradigms rather than through any resolution of antinomies. Despite the problems of historical fragmentation, Ellis's work is a valuable contribution to the field of Yeatsian dramatic criticism and to historicist dramatic and dance criticism in general.

Anne M. Enenbach
University of Notre Dame

Eugene O'Neill. Beyond Mourning and Tragedy by Stephen A. Black. New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2000. ISBN 0-300-07676-2. \$29.95.

In *Eugene O'Neill. Beyond Mourning and Tragedy*, Stephen A. Black has attempted—and largely succeeded—the daunting task of creating a psychoanalytic study of the life of Eugene O'Neill, America's first important dramatist, who, in over sixty one-act and full-length plays reaped four Pulitzer Prizes, a Nobel Prize for Literature (1936), and radically transformed American theatre from the quaint melodramas and entertainments of the nineteenth century into a probing drama of international significance. Examining O'Neill's life and theatrical achievements from a psychoanalytic viewpoint is an entirely appropriate approach for a writer whose emphasis was typically and, over the years, increasingly, focused on his own personal demons and familial history. The dysfunction of his family was the well-spring of O'Neill's towering dramas and, in the process of examining connections between O'Neill's family and his plays, Black finds the opportunity to draw some conclusions about the relationship between mental illness and creativity. In a reasoned, well-researched study, Black, in the multiple roles of biographer, literary critic, and psychoanalyst, has made a plausible and moving case that is original in its approach and in its reassessment of many long-held beliefs about O'Neill and his family.

O'Neill's dramatic output falls into three distinct categories: (1) one-act plays, written between approximately 1913-18, typically depicting the lives of seafaring men, the wharfside denizens of saloons and the street, and troubled relations between men and women; (2) full-length dramas (1918-1934) ambitiously experimenting with new and old dramatic devices including expressionism, masks, and spoken asides to depict a modern battle of man versus fate; and (3) highly emotional, psychologically complex, and deeply personal dramas (1934-50) for which he is most celebrated. Within this last category, O'Neill attempted a planned eleven-play cycle, *A Tale of Possessors, Self-Dispossessed* (of which only *A Touch of the Poet* [1935-42] was completed, along with a lengthy draft of *More Stately Mansions* [1935-40]), a generation-by-generation chronicle of a family tragically entrapped by their possessions and the frailties of the previous generation, and a projected cycle of one-act character studies, *By Way of Obit*, for which he completed only *Hughie* (1942). Black argues that after suffering the deaths of several close friends, as well as those of his parents and brother, within the space of only three years, O'Neill spent the rest of his writing life in mourning for his dead. Black posits that O'Neill found within the tragedies of his life an "aesthetic coherence" similar to that which he put into his plays, and that he "probably did not often recognize the internal psychological structures gradually evolving in himself," but instead "found a way to use the writing of plays as a form of self-psychoanalysis. The analysis was successful to the extent that it allowed him to mourn his dead and to create in

his last plays work that must have come very close to fulfilling even so large a talent as his" (p. xviii).

Black's study does not deal in depth with O'Neill's plays or the productions beyond their role as illustrations of his psychological struggles and as they illuminate aspects of his persona and those of the particular individuals close to him. In those cases where he does look closely at a particular work, Black offers a subtle and insightful reading of the play, but those who admire O'Neill's drama may be somewhat disappointed. Perhaps they should not be, since literary and performance-oriented studies of O'Neill's plays are numerous, including Doris Alexander's *The Tempering of Eugene O'Neill* (Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962), Judith E. Barlow's *Final Acts. The Creation of Three Late O'Neill Plays* (University of Georgia Press, 1984), Normand Berlin's *Eugene O'Neill* (Grove, 1982), Frederic I. Carpenter's *Eugene O'Neill* (Twayne, 1964, rev. 1979), Jean Chothia's *Forging a Language. A Study of the Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), Edwin A. Engel's *The Haunted Heroes of Eugene O'Neill* (Harvard University Press, 1953), Doris V. Falk's *Eugene O'Neill and the Tragic Tension* (Rutgers University Press, 1958), Horst Frenz's *Eugene O'Neill* (Ungar, 1971), Donald C. Gallup's *Eugene O'Neill and His Eleven-Play Cycle: "A Tale of Possessors Self-Dispossessed"* (Yale, 1998), Clifford Leech's *O'Neill* (Barnes & Noble, 1965), Marc Maufort's *Songs of American Experience. The Vision of O'Neill and Melville* (Peter Lang, 1990), Michael Manheim's *Eugene O'Neill's New Language of Kinship* (Syracuse University Press, 1982), Laurin Porter's *The Banished Prince: Time, Memory, and Ritual in the Late Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (UMI Research Press, 1988), John Henry Raleigh's *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), Richard Dana Skinner's *Eugene O'Neill. A Poet's Quest* (Longmans, Green & Co., 1935), Egil Törnqvist's *A Drama of Souls. Studies in O'Neill's Super-Naturalistic Techniques* (Yale, 1969), Gary Vena's *O'Neill's The Iceman Cometh. Reconstructing the Premiere* (UMI Research Press, 1988), Barbara Voglino's *"Perverse Mind": Eugene O'Neill's Struggle With Closure* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999), Ronald H. Wainscott's *Staging O'Neill: The Experimental Years, 1920-1934* (Yale, 1988), and Sophus K. Winther's *Eugene O'Neill: A Critical Study* (Russell and Russell, 1961), among others, as well as several collections of essays including Margaret Loftus Ranald's *The Eugene O'Neill Companion* (Greenwood, 1984) and John Stroupe's *Critical Approaches to O'Neill* (AMS Press, 1988), and bibliographies including Richard Eaton and Madeline Smith's *Eugene O'Neill. An Annotated Bibliography* (Garland, 1988). Standing out from among all of these are the works of two O'Neill scholars, Travis Bogard and Virginia Floyd. Bogard's essential *Contour in Time. The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (Oxford, 1972), along with *The Unknown O'Neill: Unpublished or Unfamiliar Writings of Eugene O'Neill* (Yale, 1988), are among the most lucid examinations of O'Neill's plays, and Floyd's *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill. A New*

Assessment (Ungar, 1985), *Eugene O'Neill. A World View* (Ungar, 1979), and especially *Eugene O'Neill at Work. Newly Released Ideas for Plays* (Ungar, 1981) are of similar worth. The strictly biographical aspects of O'Neill's work have received less attention, but two titanic works of pre-Black biography have dominated: Arthur and Barbara Gelb's *O'Neill* (Harper and Row, 1962) and Louis Sheaffer's *O'Neill. Son and Artist* (Little, Brown, & Co., 1973) and *O'Neill. Son and Playwright* (Little, Brown, & Co., 1968). Black depends heavily on both the Gelb and Sheaffer books and carefully notates material drawn from these volumes (particularly interviews with now-deceased O'Neill intimates). He also draws from less reliable sources, including biographical portraits of O'Neill by his second wife Agnes Boulton in *Part of a Long Story: Eugene O'Neill as a Young Man in Love* (Peter Davies, 1958) and, with an assist from O'Neill's son Shane, Crosswell Bowen's *The Curse of the Misbegotten. A Tale of the House of O'Neill* (Rupert Hart-Davis, 1960). Black is careful to note faulty aspects of these and other compromised sources, and he goes some distance to correct various myths that have been taken as fact about O'Neill, from the amusing, but undoubtedly apocryphal tale that O'Neill was expelled from Princeton for throwing a whiskey bottle through Woodrow Wilson's window, to other rather more serious misconceptions.

O'Neill's interest in creating classically-inspired heroes whose psychological turmoil reflects the theories of Freud and Jung, and the intense dramas of family relations inspired by European dramatists Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg, is well-chronicled by Black. His emphasis, however, is on O'Neill's struggle with his own psyche and with his father, James O'Neill, the nineteenth century actor who scored a great commercial success in a melodramatic stage adaptation of Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo*; his mother, the morphine-addicted Ella Quinlan O'Neill; and his alcoholic older brother, James O'Neill, Jr., known familiarly as Jamie. Although as a young man O'Neill admired his father's art, he ultimately came to see his father's theatre as artificial, vulgar, and mindless as his own artistic and intellectual horizons expanded. Following expulsion from Princeton University, a half-hearted stint as a newspaperman, an ill-advised and short-lived marriage, and a dissolute period as a seaman and as a prospector in Honduras, O'Neill suffered from a bout with tuberculosis which allowed him the leisure to further educate himself through study of literary and dramatic classics and the ideas and techniques of important modern writers and thinkers. It is in this period that he began writing himself.

In the finest of O'Neill's works, he captures moments of deep psychological resonance through the use of the Ibsenesque device of the "saving lie" that allows his richly human characters to survive life's vicissitudes. On this foundation, O'Neill sought to expunge the shallow melodramatic plays of his father's outmoded popular theatre, but, as Black makes painfully clear, he could never

expunge the images of his parents and brother, all of whom take their place in diverse guises throughout O'Neill's drama. O'Neill aimed—and often achieved—a tragic vision borne out of his study of the classics and the profound pain of his personal life. Relationships with parents and children, among siblings, between spouses and lovers, as well as the isolation of the individual, all directly resulted from the pain of O'Neill's life and family. This is seen most vividly in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1939-1941), arguably O'Neill's greatest dramatic achievement, but also in other works, even in the sunnier depiction of family life in O'Neill's sole comedy, *Ah, Wilderness!* (1932). O'Neill's brother is given an extended dramatic treatment in *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (1943), a requiem for the wasted life of his self-destructive older sibling (also featured in *Long Day's Journey*). Other O'Neill plays, including *Beyond the Horizon* (1918), *Desire Under the Elms* (1924), *Strange Interlude* (1926-27), *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1929-31), and *The Iceman Cometh* (1939), also delve into the tragedies within the family that Black convincingly portrays as inspiring O'Neill's most characteristic work. O'Neill's characters, whatever their individual attributes, see themselves as god-forsaken, longing for some sort of salvation and more satisfying human connections, even as they demonstrate their inadequacy at forging such bonds. As the down-and-out Broadway bum Erie Smith, a character who could easily be O'Neill's brother, cries out in grief for his dead pal in *Hughie*, "Christ, it's lonely. I wish Hughie was here," and his inarticulate existential longing reveals the bruised soul that is inherent in all the lost men and women of O'Neill—and within himself.

Most interestingly, Black provides considerable background on the senior O'Neill's, from details about James' Dickensian childhood to Ella's sheltered Catholic upbringing which nearly led her to the life of a nun, and he movingly recounts the struggles of their marriage—capped by the death of their second child Edmund—and the complex mixture of love and resentment that characterized their lives together. One can certainly imagine Black's study as an invaluable document for actors preparing to play James and Mary Tyrone of *Long Day's Journey*, as well as Jamie in that play and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. For example, Black reports on the death of Edmund from measles while in the care of his maternal grandmother at a time when his parents were away on a theatrical tour. Edmund was buried in New London, Connecticut, where the O'Neill's had recently purchased Monte Cristo Cottage, the setting for *Long Day's Journey*, and Black notes that "Even before the O'Neill's ever spent a night in their new home, Monte Cristo Cottage and New London represented to them a loss that compounded older losses still not accepted" (p. 38). Later, learning of his mother's addiction to morphine, O'Neill "gradually understood what he had learned on a single day. When he finally found himself, he began to develop himself around a sense of the tragic that would eventually be Sophoclean" (p. 75). Black proceeds with similar insight to illuminate

O'Neill's early life as a slow evolution toward an understanding of the self that he gleaned partially from his painful adolescence and partially through other writers. The influences were many, but Black suggests that "If Whitman showed him that the self should be a legitimate literary subject, Nietzsche and Stirner helped Eugene begin to think about what the self was" (p. 89). Black shares the view of other O'Neill biographers and critics, who believe that O'Neill steadily shed the influences from these diverse literary and theatrical movements, peeling them away as he drew closer to his own core. O'Neill moved, as the book's title suggests, beyond the mourning and tragedy of his family to an understanding, synthesis, and dramatic clarity resulting in his masterworks, *Long Day's Journey*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Hughie*, and *The Iceman Cometh*.

There are some small errors in the text—for example, actor Joseph Jefferson, who became legendary in the role of Rip Van Winkle, is misidentified as James Jefferson on page 26—but this is otherwise a carefully-researched and lucidly-written text. Black manages to avoid the pitfalls of excessive psychoanalytic jargon and clinical terminology, providing just enough to assist the reader unfamiliar with the language of psychoanalysis. Some good illustrations are included (although more would have been welcome), and a useful bibliography of sources, as well as scrupulous notes, are also included in this otherwise handsome volume. The result is a thorough, absorbing, and intelligent biography of the remarkable life and creative vitality of a theatrical genius who found his voice in the crucible of family, addiction, and loss.

James Fisher
Wabash College

Staging Shakespeare at the New Globe by Pauline Kiernan. *Early Modern Literature in History*. General Editor: Cedric C. Brown. New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1999. ISBN 0-312-22274-2.

In the two years since the opening of the new Globe Theatre, a reconstruction of Shakespeare's playhouse based on surviving and mostly circumstantial evidence, it has operated on London's South Bank with mixed success. Situated near the actual archaeological remains of the two recently uncovered Elizabethan theatres, the Rose and the original Globe, the reconstructed Globe offers a unique opportunity for scholars and general audiences to examine Elizabethan performance traditions and the ways in which a greater understanding of those practices may illuminate Shakespeare's oeuvre. Audiences have flocked to the theatre since its opening in 1997, but critics remain decidedly lukewarm. A few have even suggested that Shakespeare's Globe, the dream of the late Sam Wanamaker, is little more than an Elizabethan-Jacobean theme park featuring a quality of production that is, at best, inconsistent, and, at worst, substandard.

The Globe certainly provides support facilities one might expect of a theme park: two restaurants, gift stalls, exhibits, a modern box office, and other amenities are attached to the theatre by a pleasant open-air courtyard overlooking the Thames, with St. Paul's Cathedral looming over the city across the river. The Globe's environs are attractive, despite being surrounded at close quarters by warehouses and businesses. Aside from its obvious emphasis on Shakespeare's plays, the Globe has committed itself to productions of other Elizabethan/Jacobean dramatic works, and the theatre has already presented plays or staged readings of plays by Thomas Middleton, Ben Jonson, and John Fletcher, as well as visiting international productions related to the era such as a recent presentation of a Kathakali version of *King Lear*.

Is the Globe an avant-garde experiment or merely a pedantic scholarly exercise? According to Pauline Kiernan, author of *Staging Shakespeare at the New Globe*, it is apparently something of both. Kiernan's study focuses exclusively on the Globe's "prologue" season in 1996, which consisted solely of a staging of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and the Globe's first full season in 1997, opening auspiciously with *Henry V*, followed by *The Winter's Tale* and productions of Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and John Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy*. The Globe's wonders for Shakespearean scholars and audiences are significant as reported by Kiernan. As much as possible, the Globe has been reconstructed not only to look like what we assume the actual Globe looked like, but construction methods and materials utilized are closely approximate to what they would have been in Shakespeare's day. Wooden beams are pegged into place (no nails are visible) and the tops of the galleries of this "straw-thatched house," as Swiss doctor Thomas Platter who visited the original Globe described

it, features the first thatched roof in London since the seventeenth century (the addition of a sprinkler system over the roof is a nod to contemporary concerns for safety). Plaster walls inside and out are made from the same recipe used in Elizabethan times, although goat hair replaces cow hair (modern cows apparently do not grow coats hairy enough as a result of changes in their diet from four-hundred years ago). The stage pillars are elaborately painted to resemble marble columns, and other painted decorative embellishments are in accordance with the sketchy historical evidence. The overall effect is similar to that of the charming depiction of the Rose Theatre in the hit film of last year, *Shakespeare in Love*. The spectator has stepped into another time and place. It is Shakespeare *al fresco*; and its success or failure as a living performance space depends completely on the audience's ability to adapt itself to unfamiliar conventions. Audience issues predominate this discussion as well, and a number of participants comment on the stoicism necessary for the Globe's spectators. *Is it worth the resultant sore back from standing in the pit, or the sore bottom from sitting on hard and backless benches, or getting wet when it rains, for a few hours of drawing a bit closer to Shakespeare?* Apparently, based on the enthusiastic response of audiences, the answer is yes.

Kiernan's well-organized and useful book is divided into three distinct parts. Part One describes the "space of the audience" (p. 36), focusing on the effect the close presence of the audience (especially the "groundlings" in the pit) has on the actors and how spectator interaction impacts pre-planned staging and business. Actors who have played in the Globe confirm Kiernan's opinion that although the audience is more intrusive, elements of improvisation resulting from this provide a certain excitement and fluidity that is greater than that typically achieved in performances of Shakespeare's plays in modern theatre spaces. With daylight illuminating the audience as clearly as the actors and no "artistic" lighting effects, it becomes obvious that in Shakespeare's day greater expectation of audience involvement was expected in contrast with decidedly more passive audiences for contemporary productions. Kiernan also addresses the problems of creating "dramatic illusions" in an open-air theatre without the aid of modern stage technology (pp. 37-59), and continues with an examination of issues of "dramaturgy, 3-D staging, and daylight space" (pp. 60-90). Thus far, Globe productions have eschewed any visible use of contemporary scenic, lighting, or sound effects, preferring instead to keep the productions rough and simple in an approximation of staging practices in the Elizabethan-Jacobean period. Kiernan's discussion of "3-D" staging is particularly intriguing as she focuses on how the pit and galleries are incorporated into performances that literally come off the stage platform into the audience. These dramatic incursions into the spectator's space certainly occur in modern theatres, but, as becomes clear, the Globe is particularly inviting to staging scenes in this manner.

In Part Two, Kiernan focuses exclusively on the theatre's official opening production of *Henry V*, which starred and was staged by the Globe's artistic director, Mark Rylance. Kiernan painstakingly traces preparations and the rehearsal process through the initial performances of *Henry V*. Rylance has stated that "Shakespeare must have wanted you to look at each other sometimes while you listened," and this becomes especially evident from response to the first Globe production. The production of *Henry V* demonstrates that the Globe's permanently fixed structure calls upon skills actors, directors, and designers have rarely needed to call upon in the centuries since most brands of western theatre moved permanently indoors and adopted various forms of stage technology. The actor must project his unamplified voice over the continual external noise of everything from jets flying overhead to boats floating down the Thames, and to maintain concentration despite continual movement of the groundlings in the pit, while also reaching the highest of the Globe's three tiers of benches. This is a definite disadvantage in creating subtle effects of voice and movement, but other aspects of the actors art are liberated. A thorough understanding of how this theatre functioned in Shakespeare's day, and what that understanding can lead to in terms of illuminating the plays for both actor and audience, begins to emerge. The Globe demands a lack of subtlety in acting that inspires a bold clarity. It is essentially a populist theatre that offers the opportunity for a rougher, more direct communion between actor and audience. As a result, it unleashes the viewer's understanding of Shakespeare's unparalleled skills as a storyteller. Even with the constant movement and noise of the too-evident audience and exterior sounds, the loss of the actor's subtleties due to the size of the theatre itself and the lack of electronic amplification, and the dwarfing of the human figure on the tall stage, Shakespeare's characters, language, and plots come through with not only clarity, but with significant vigor.

The Globe in production, as described by Kiernan, eliminates the phoniness inherent in twentieth century naturalism. Modern productions of Shakespeare tend to shrink his plays down from the great poetic theatrical dreams that they are to the often prosaic size of realism. The characters become smaller in naturalistic productions, but the Globe simply does not invite such an approach and the plays and characters retain their intended size. The Globe's stage is a blank cube of raw theatrical space that demands an artifice that is blatant and unapologetic, as it almost certainly was in Shakespeare's day. It requires the audience to listen in a different way and the elimination of all but minimal stage props and scenic effects places the emphasis squarely on *the actor* and *the word*. As well, it demands an unpretentious audience; spectators stand and sit uncommonly close to the action, and there is a constant feeling of motion that animates the geometries of the theatre's space. There is no art-house elitism at the Globe, instead there is a fusion of actor and audience.

In Part Three, Kiernan has gathered reflective statements from various

actors involved in the Globe's first productions. They discuss not only issues involved in performing in the space, but also various aspects of Shakespeare's plays themselves. Kiernan has put together an interesting combination of theatrical history, literature, and performance practice while providing an historically significant account of the initiation of the Globe reconstruction experiment.

Dozens of volumes on the questions raised and answered by the Globe's space will certainly be forthcoming and while it is impossible to completely recreate the experience of attending Shakespeare's Globe centuries ago, it is possible to capture a glimpse in productions that attempt to use the space as intended. *Staging Shakespeare in the New Globe* is an admirable introduction to this remarkable theatrical experiment and the detail with which Kiernan recounts its initial productions provides a valuable resource for future scholars. Despite flaws in any particular production, it is obvious that the Globe is far more than an academically dead venue. As Kiernan makes clear, it has many marvels to inspire and teach artists, scholars, and its audience about the seemingly endless depths of theme, character, and language of the wondrous and often mysterious world of Shakespeare's plays and the vigorous stage of his age.

James Fisher
Wabash College

Silent Shakespeare, 1899-1911. Milestone Film and Video [275 West 96th Street, New York, NY 10025. Phone: (800) 603-1104. E-mail: MileFilms@aol.com]. 88 minutes. \$29.95.

The Broadway Theatre Archive. [9 West 57th Street, Suite 4220, New York, NY 10019. Phone: (800) 422-2827. Website: <http://www.tbta.com>].

The preservation of theatre on film is a twentieth century phenomenon that, for the first time in recorded history, has allowed those in the present to see the great actors of past generations. Over one hundred years of filmmaking and over fifty of commercial television broadcasts allow glimpses of the art of several generations of actors and the staging and design practices of earlier eras. Although theatre is inherently a form requiring the live communion of actor and audience, the “canned” mediums of film and television make it possible in the best of circumstances to experience the greatest actors at their peak, often in roles in which they made their reputations, and as a benchmark against which new performers and reinterpretations of the plays will be tested. Unfortunately, many of these preserved theatre productions are difficult for interested viewers to locate. Considered to lack marketing viability, as a rule, films, kinescopes, and videos of plays languish out of sight, buried in archives or in private collections. Two recent developments have allowed some rare and most welcome theatrical material to become available to students and scholars.

The first development is the burgeoning field of cinema preservation. As archivists struggle to unearth missing films, particularly from the first half of the twentieth century, many sad tales of missing or damaged films have emerged. But there is a little good news, too. The British Film Institute recently released seven lovingly restored silent features (one is only a fragment) made from William Shakespeare’s plays between 1899 and 1911, the Stone Age of filmmaking. Preserved for the BFI’s National Film and Television Archive in the finest available quality, these rare gems, made by several forgotten U. S. and European film companies of that period, are surprisingly eloquent. The visual elements and acting offer only the essence of plots and characters from Shakespeare; boiled down to the most significant scenes, all offer—with various degrees of success—a raw flash of the Bard’s work in rough but surprisingly evocative and profoundly moving images. In all these films except one (*Richard III*—which includes a few snippets of Shakespeare’s verse on title cards), Shakespeare’s unparalleled dialogue is necessarily omitted. Only employed to establish location and to sketch in plot elements and scenes not depicted, title cards are used minimally with the result that the emphasis remains on the visual image supported by some unobtrusive and appropriately lyrical musical compositions by Laura Rossi.

Each of these films was made before the language of the cinema had

evolved beyond its most primitive phase; there are no close-ups, the camera never moves, there is minimal cutting, and all of the films—even those shot in outdoor locations—are photographed like stage productions from one angle as if through an invisible proscenium. To some extent, early cinematic progress can be gauged through these films, from the first, a short fragment of an 1899 view of Shakespeare's rarely produced *King John* starring Herbert Beerbohm Tree, to the last, a theatre-bound rendering of *Richard III* (1911) with Frank R. Benson in the title role. Tree—looking remarkably like Nicol Williamson—is seen writhing maniacally on a throne while three supporting players stand by with little to do. Made for British Mutoscope and the Biograph Company, this tiny bit of the film is sadly all that survives of *King John*, but it is still interesting to see, if for no other reason than the passing impression of the legendary Tree in his only known screen appearance. It is difficult to access either the film's overall quality as an early cinematic effort or Tree's potential as a screen actor, but fortunately the other six films, seen here in their presumed entirety, offer more satisfying virtues. Although the results are decidedly mixed, all offer at least a few intriguing qualities. The final film among the seven is the aforementioned Co-operative Cinematograph Company production of *Richard III* which, despite effective performances by Benson and his wife (as Lady Anne), is a throwback in that it returns to an obvious stage setting (it appears the film may well have been shot on a theatre stage) and makes little or no use of any of the slowly evolving cinema techniques. Progress is most evident in the five films made between the Tree and Benson efforts.

A 1908 Clarendon Film Company presentation of *The Tempest* offers an odd mixture of obvious one-dimensional painted stage settings mixed together with actual exterior interludes. Those scenes on the sets prove to be the most fascinating in that they demonstrate typical turn-of-the-century scenic techniques, including a theatrically convincing and highly amusing depiction of a ship sinking in a storm viewed through a one-dimensionally painted frame of rocky cliffs. *The Tempest's* director, Perry Stow, demonstrates no particular affinity for the potential of cinema, although he does make Ariel vanish by using one of film's earliest tricks of freezing the action, stopping the camera, removing the character, and starting the camera again. It is a crudely effective device and Stow's staging is otherwise efficient, fast-paced, and vividly alive.

The 1909 Vitagraph Company of America's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* features Maurice Costello, as Lysander, leading an otherwise unknown cast in an amusing abridgement of Shakespeare's fantastical comedy. This version makes convincing use of outdoor locations and emphasizes the comedy inherent in the confusions of identity among the young lovers, as well as in the slapstick rehearsals of the rustics for their play-within-the-play. One footnote: watch for Costello's young daughters Helene and Dolores as fairies; both later became silent film stars and Dolores was, for a time, Mrs. John Barrymore, and had a memorable role in

Orson Welles's 1942 RKO masterpiece, *The Magnificent Ambersons*. Vitagraph also produced a 1910 version of *Twelfth Night* with Florence Turner (Viola), Charles Kent (Malvolio), Julia Swayne Gordon (Olivia), and Tefft Johnson (Orsino), all giving droll performances in a surprisingly elaborate production studded with lavish Elizabethan costumes and surprisingly realistic interior scenes combined with well-selected exterior locations.

Despite solid efforts by early British and American filmmakers, the outstanding achievements among these films are, without a doubt, two superb Italian productions from 1910: *The Merchant of Venice* and *King Lear*. Both are marvelously hand-color tinted, handsomely produced, and epic in scope without ever losing the required intimacy of the key scenes from the plays depicted, and well acted within the melodramatic traditions of the era. The casts for both of these Film d'Arte Italiana films are led by Ermete Novelli (Shylock, Lear) and Francesca Bertini (Jessica, Cordelia), both of whom emote with depth and brio. Here the best of dramatic silent film acting can be experienced—emotions are sensitively evoked through carefully modulated gestures and expressions. Although in most cases these films are as stagey as the others, each is richly and strikingly composed as if painted by a Renaissance artist. Audiences still accept and enjoy pre-talkie film comedies today, but dramatic movies from the silent era are generally less seen or appreciated. These two mini-classics make a strong case for the power of silent drama. They are central to making *Silent Shakespeare* a rare treat and it can only be hoped that other treasures like the seven films it contains will be found and so carefully preserved.

The other significant development in theatre on film is the 1999 establishment of The Broadway Theatre Archive, a company dedicated to the preservation of theatre performances preserved on film, kinescope, and videotape originally broadcast on television from the 1950s to the present. Fearing the potential for the permanent loss of these rare television productions, the BTA's founders, Basil Hero, Andrew Greenspan, and Michael Fuchs, have endeavored to clear the complex web of rights to a vast library of WNET, PBS, and other television plays in order to digitize the deteriorating master tapes and films in order to make them available to viewers at reasonable costs (most of the tapes retail for between \$29.95 and \$39.95). An impressively valuable resource for those who teach theatre history, literature, performance, theory and criticism emerges.

The 126 titles currently available (with more than 300 planned) include a wide range of international classics (the dates included with each title mentioned herein denotes the year each was first broadcast), including two Greek tragedies, Sophocles's *Antigone* (1974) starring Genevieve Bujold and Fritz Weaver, and a remarkable 1959 production of Euripides's *Medea*, based on Robinson Jeffers's translation/adaptation, starring Judith Anderson, Colleen Dewhurst, and Morris Carnovsky. Shakespeare is represented by three fine productions: *King Lear* (1974)

starring James Earl Jones, Kevin Kline's *Hamlet* (1990), and the American Conservatory Theatre's memorable 1976 *commedia dell'arte*-style staging of *The Taming of the Shrew*, as well as John Gielgud's masterful *Ages of Man* one-man show made up of choice selections of Shakespearean poetry and dramatic monologues. The only Molière thus far is a solid 1970s production of *Tartuffe*, featuring a superlative cast headed by Donald Moffat, Tammy Grimes, and Geraldine Fitzgerald. The sole Restoration comedy is Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* in an average 1975 production with Blair Brown, but the dawn of the modern theatre is well-represented by Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* (1963), starring Ingrid Bergman, Michael Redgrave, and Ralph Richardson; Chekhov's *The Sea Gull* (1975) with Lee Grant, Frank Langella, Blythe Danner, and Olympia Dukakis, and *The Cherry Orchard* (1959) with strong performances from Helen Hayes and E. G. Marshall (other Chekhov-related productions include a fine 1978 version of Neil Simon's *The Good Doctor* drawn from Chekhov's short stories and featuring Marsha Mason and other members of the original Broadway cast); Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1976) in an effective staging starring Alec Guinness and Genevieve Bujold, and a rare performance of Pirandello's *Rules of the Game* (1975). Contemporary plays of the European stage include memorable performances of Beckett's *Happy Days* (1980), with Irene Worth and George Voskovec, and David Storey's *Home* (undated from the 1970s) with John Gielgud and Ralph Richardson recreating their impressive original West End and Broadway performances.

Among American classics, O'Neill is perhaps the best represented of all with uniformly excellent productions of his plays *Beyond the Horizon* (1975), *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1979), *Ah, Wilderness!* (1976), *A Touch of the Poet* (1974), *The Iceman Cometh* (1960), and *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (1975). The last two are of particular interest since both feature Jason Robards, the outstanding interpreter of O'Neill's characters, in two of his most acclaimed performances. *The Iceman Cometh* is taken from a fine, raw black-and-white television production; what it lacks in visual values is more than compensated for in the superb performance of Robards, as well as those of Myron McCormick, James Broderick, Julie Bavasso, and others. *A Moon for the Misbegotten* is, like many of the productions offered by BTA, a PBS "Theatre in America" production based on the acclaimed 1973 Broadway revival of the play with its irreplaceable original cast: Robards, Colleen Dewhurst, and Ed Flanders.

Odets's *Paradise Lost*, in a fine 1974 production with Bernadette Peters, Eli Wallach, Fred Gwynne, and Jo Van Fleet, is one of the few 1930s plays available in the series thus far, but hopefully more are coming from this golden era of American drama. Williams is most effectively represented by a fine 1976 production of his *Eccentricities of a Nightingale*, a revision of his earlier play, *Summer and Smoke*. Featuring strong performances by Blythe Danner and Frank Langella, this fine production is the only available filmed version of this Williams

classic. The only other Williams production in the BTA catalogue thus far is a solid 1966 version of *The Glass Menagerie* starring Shirley Booth, Hal Holbrook, Pat Hingle, and Babara Loden. Among other major American dramatists, Albee is represented by a 1976 production of his meditation on death, *All Over*, and Miller by *A Memory of Two Mondays*, the only work representing him thus far, although a 1966 production of *Death of a Salesman*, with Lee J. Cobb and Mildred Dunnock recreating their legendary 1949 Broadway performances, is announced as forthcoming. Lorraine Hansberry's work is present through a fine 1974 production of *To Be Young, Gifted, and Black*, a patchwork theatre piece taken from her writings performed by a strong cast including Ruby Dee, Roy Scheider, Estelle Parsons, and Barbara Barrie. Other American classics range from William Gillette's late nineteenth century melodrama, *Secret Service*, in a good 1977 production featuring a bright young cast of newcomers including Meryl Streep and John Lithgow; a 1976 production of William Saroyan's *The Time of Your Life* with Kevin Kline and Patti LuPone; an all-star (Robards, Dewhurst, George Rose, Elizabeth Wilson, etc.) 1984 production of Kaufman and Hart's *You Can't Take It With You* directed by Ellis Rabb; and, a similarly strong cast led by Eva LeGallienne, Sam Levene, and Rosemary Harris in Rabb's lovingly staged revival of Kaufman and Edna Ferber's *The Royal Family* from 1977. More recent American works include the PBS documentary of the concert version of Stephen Sondheim's *Follies* (1986), Lanford Wilson's *Fifth of July* (1983), Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls*. . . (1982), and George E. Wolfe's *The Colored Museum* (1986). The potential for more releases of filmed and television plays seems endless—perhaps BTA can also acquire and release the “American Film Theatre” films shown theatrically in the early 1970s, but lamentably unavailable on video since then, as well as other rare gems.

For most theatregoers and theatrical practitioners, filmed performances can never replace live theatre, but the preservation of these great performances of the past are treasurable resources for students, teachers, and those who cherish the great actors, plays, and productions preserved in these videos.

James Fisher
Wabash College

Deconstructing Harold Hill: An Insider's Guide to the Musical Theatre by Scott Miller. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000. ISBN 0-325-00166-9.

Broadway Babies Say Goodnight: Musicals Then and Now by Mark Steyn. New York: Routledge, 1997. ISBN 0-415-92286-0 (hc) / 0-415-92287-9 (pb).

An abundance of sources on the musical theatre, from Tom Jones' *Making Musicals* to Alan Jay Lerner's *The Musical Theatre: A Celebration*, are, to varying degrees, reminiscences of the musical's glory days. Both Scott Miller and Mark Steyn approach the field with a significant affection for traditional, plot-driven shows. Their faith in those traditions, in the mechanisms that made "Broadway Musicals" the envy of the world in the forties and fifties, is both the strength and limitation of their books.

Scott Miller is the artistic director of New Line Theatre in St. Louis, with over two decades of experience directing musicals. *Insider's Guide* is a continuation of his popular *From Assassins to West Side Story*. His new work, as the first, is a dramaturgical and directorial analysis of various musicals. This time, he concentrates on eight American works stretching from the musical's heyday to the present: *The King and I*, *The Music Man*, *Camelot*, *Chicago*, *March of the Falsettos*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Passion*, and *Ragtime*. Mark Steyn is an international journalist and critic of the theatre. His slightly less recent work is a critical discussion of the musical's history, from *Showboat* to today. Both authors chose a frank, conversational style for their texts. Miller's organizational form is more readily comprehensible; Steyn's is arguably the more provocative read. Nonetheless, both sources succeed on their own terms.

Insider's Guide is an indispensable source for the director or dramaturg of a production that shares Miller's concept. He first reviews the development of each original production, interpreting its strengths and liabilities. If a director agrees with Miller's belief that Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe's *Camelot* is about the aspirations of humankind, or that Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's *Passion* is of love that can destroy a person's life, Miller has already finished much of that artist's interpretive work. A compatible theatre maker will find his book vital, since it goes beyond a theoretical examination of themes and characterization, suggesting performance mechanisms that will bring out a musical's strengths and deal with its handicaps. Often, he recommends returning to its inceptive production design. He maintains that *Chicago* is a statement of the American media's ongoing disposition to make celebrities out of criminals; he consequently criticizes the 1996 New York revival for transferring it from its 1920s period setting, which, as he sees it, "lost the irony of how much America today is like America in the '20s" (28). Perhaps it is important to occasionally remind those working on musicals, and those in theatre as a whole, that traditional

interpretation can be as challenging in production as setting *Cabaret* on an interstellar cruise ship.

At the same moment, Miller's faith that the beauty of a musical can be revealed by returning to its source may hold secondary utility for those who do not share his particular readings. His intention is not to tell his reader the "correct" way to direct these eight musicals, but to stimulate in the reader's mind the same serious examination of plot and theme regularly applied to drama. A reader who agrees that *The Music Man* is primarily about the villain who steals the innocence of a whole town will get more out of Miller's exploration than one who is more interested in the theme of the redemptive power of love. But a contrary artist or reader will still benefit from being challenged to deal with the play's dark side, instead of continuing to believe unquestioningly, as many do, that *The Music Man* is just another sappy love story (Miller 73).

Broadway Babies is large in scope and uniquely organized. He labels his major sections "Act One" and "Act Two," and each chapter with a clever reference to the musical's main parts, such as "The Lyrics" and "The Music," or to general categories of authors, such as "The Brits." Some titles denote more obvious subjects than others (he calls his chapter on musicals with gay characters and themes "The Fags") but all seem to fit his thesis. "The Book" is his title for a chapter on the traditional plot-driven musical, which concludes with a brief analysis of *Oklahoma!* In general, his discussion of the traditional musicals that he has particular affection for is well supported. With tenable evidence of its dark sexuality, he presents a solid argument that *Oklahoma!* is: "[Not] folksy [sic] gingham-check sentimentality, but a flesh-creeping glimpse of the darker realities of rural existence" (73). Unfortunately, he turns to sarcasm and sweeping attestation to set forth his feelings of those shows he does not appreciate. In "The Fags," he lists various lyrics from *Rent* and claims Jonathan Larson was fighting for something already won, without explaining how it is that the wars against poverty, AIDS, and capitalism that, as Steyn himself acknowledges, Larson was protesting, are over. He calls *Rent* both marginal and populist within a space of three pages, but fails to satisfactorily support either judgment.

It is clear that Mark Steyn has little interest in British musicals, rock musicals, or even contemporary musicals in general. He quotes Stephen Sondheim's own criticisms of sung-through musicals, seeming to hold the composer himself in some esteem, while also declaring Sondheim's work a series of "flawed masterpieces" (73). He condemns the makers of *Bring in 'da Noise/Bring in 'da Funk* for using the production's "celebration" concept to excuse themselves "from making drama" (191). In Steyn's paradigm, a production that is a collection of raw rhythms and dance about African American identity and history can not be deemed drama, since it is "not a joyous expression of character and situation. It [is] . . . just taps, just mechanics, just the clicketty-clacketty-click of . . . shoes"

(191). Steyn obviously prefers the plot-driven musicals of the 1940s and 1950s to more recent pieces. He is patently correct that the musical has changed; European imports are closer to opera and the vast majority of American productions are based on idea rather than plot. However, since his discussion of the last thirty years of musicals is largely superficial compared to his analysis of those he favors, he fails to provide a convincing argument that contemporary musicals are inferior to traditional, plot-driven musicals.

In general, his preference for anecdote and nostalgia from musical folklore, over penetrating investigation of the plot, characterization, lyrics, music, and dance of the entire span of the musical's history, will likely prevent his work from achieving seminal status. *Broadway Babies* is neither as sharp in its historical and textual examination as such works as Joanne Gordon's *Art Isn't Easy*, nor as rigorous a musicological analysis as the like of Geoffrey Block's *Enchanted Evenings*. Nonetheless, in spite of its shortcomings, it is a biting and always engaging review of a century of musical theatre. Some readers will delight in his often venomous indictments of the musicals they hate; others will turn purple at those same indictments.

In the end, both Miller's and Steyn's writing have the flavor of nostalgia, bemoaning the current state of American musical theatre and longing for the old days, the days before rock music and British mega-musicals, when American musicals ruled the musical theatre. Scott Miller is interested in reinstating artistic attention for American musical directors, whose theatre, as he sees it, is far less exciting than the shows British directors produce. He consequently provides research and interpretive materials that will be useful, in some manner, to any director or dramaturg working in the genre. He also, though perhaps inadvertently, offers researchers and scholars the first in depth analyses of *Passion* and *Ragtime*. Mark Steyn's agenda, unless it is merely to protest contemporary musical theatre, is unclear. Thus, it is difficult to determine the utility of *Broadway Babies* beyond the position of "coffee table book." It might serve as a supplemental text for an introductory class in musical theatre history, but otherwise, it is significantly limited as a critical source.

Ben Fisler

University of Maryland, College Park

The Politics of Reputation: The Critical Reception of Tennessee Williams' Later Plays by Annette Saddik. Madison, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1999. ISBN 0-8386-3772-8.

The most fruitful fields for research in Tennessee Williams these days lie at the beginning and end of his vast dramatic canon. Five apprentice plays from the 1930s, unavailable before, have now been published by New Directions, which will significantly extend and enhance Williams scholarship. Though Williams's later plays have regrettably been disesteemed or ignored, excluding Bruce Smith's anecdotal *Costly Performances: Tennessee Williams: The Last Stage*, but noting meritorious essays/chapters by Thomas Adler (1975), C. W. E. Bigsby (1983), and Ruby Cohn (1997), they are emerging as important scripts in several recent, energized productions. Annette Saddik's *Politics of Reputation*, which may have the honor of being the first book-length critical study of the late plays, should prompt readers to take a fresh look at the undiscovered country of Williams's post-*Iguana* (1961) work.

Received opinion has treated Williams "as if he died after *The Night of the Iguana*" (150), despite the fact that from 1961 until his death in 1983 he wrote more than 20 plays (11 of them produced, if briefly, on Broadway) of remarkable variety and complexity in style and genre. Saddik offers several reasons why Williams's later plays have been dismissed or denigrated. The most common interpretation turns them into disingenuous autobiographical allegories composed by a Williams stoned on drugs, wasted on booze. Another explanation is that, having lost the critics' favor, Williams tried to recapture his fame by ineptly imitating Beckett, Albee, and Pinter. Saddik wisely rejects such famous reasoning and seeks a clearer answer in the ideological prejudices of Williams's reviewers (in the popular press) and critics (in the academic world) who harshly judged his "later work on criteria which may have been appropriate to the earlier realistic plays, but was not compatible with the 'new' theatre he was working on . . ." (106). Williams suffered, Saddik stresses frequently, from the critics' demands for and valorization of Broadway-based theatre conventions which he had tried to put behind him. According to the critics, the late plays were bad precisely because they were not clones of such earlier works as *The Glass Menagerie*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, or *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Saddik rightly maintains that "a new set of conditions was needed to evaluate Williams's dramatic offerings" (107).

Saddik attempts to define, describe, and evaluate these "new conditions" by distinguishing Williams's early realistic plays from his later, nondiegetic, antirealistic ones and thus determine why some Williams experiments failed and why some triumphed. Admitting that "realism is a slippery term" (43), Saddik locates the hallmarks of Williams realism in representing the times, places, and characters of an external world in referential language that often included long,

poetic speeches and through storylines organized around a “strong central action” (111). These plays presented “slice-of-life illusions” (75). In contrast, Williams’s antirealistic works did not represent reality so much as create an internal psychology through minimalist language—“fragmented sentences and staccato dialogue” (82)—pointing to the instability and unreliability of language in a universe without a fixed center. Yet even though Saddik cautions that the early works displayed both “the ideological complications and contradictions of realistic presentation,” she steadfastly maintains that the differences between these two dramaturgies “are crucial in understanding the later reactions of the critical establishment which repeatedly emphasized how Williams had ‘changed’ during the 1960s” (61).

So far so good. But Saddik too narrowly applies these otherwise insightful criteria to the entire Williams canon and finds that few of the late plays really measure up to her ideological standards. If the reviewers and critics clamored for undiluted realism, Saddik strives for pure antirealism. She claims that only three plays—*I Can’t Imagine Tomorrow* (1966), *In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel* (1969), and *The Two-Character Play* (1969, 1973, 1976)—are “the most successful examples of the complex and interesting goals of Williams’s later phase” (79). Praising *Bar* Saddik maintains that it offers “a dialogue which has moved even further toward silence and does not even attempt to reproduce realistic communication” (86). Though her reading of these three plays is excellent, many of the other late plays suffer by contrast. In her chapter entitled “Weak Dramatic Experiments and the Reluctant Return to Realism,” Saddik labels *The Milk Train Does Not Stop Here Anymore* (1964) and *The Red Devil Battery Sign* (1975, 1979) “bizarre compromises—unconvincing and confused combinations of realism, melodramatic allegory, surrealism, and several other dramatic techniques” (111). Yet this melange of types and styles is at the heart of Williams’s experimental work. Unfortunately, Saddik devotes only passing commentary to many other significant late Williams plays, e.g. *Gnadiges Fräulein*, *Something Cloudy, Something Clear*, and says almost nothing about House or Williams’s highly experimental one-acters such as *Now the Cat with Jewelled Claws*, *The Chalky White Substance*, or *The Lifeboat Drill*. *Fräulein* is almost the quintessential experimental play, the prolegomenon to Williams of the 1960s and beyond.

In her attempt to distinguish late antirealistic plays from the earlier ones, Saddik provides intensive readings of *The Glass Menagerie*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and even *Baby Doll* as unquestionably realistic scripts. More than a third of her books is devoted to situating the early plays with a realistic tradition. Arguing that “Williams’s brand of realism made use of certain nondiegetic devices” (52), Saddik sees such expressionistic elements as the screen device, Tom as narrator-character, and the *mise en scene* in *Menagerie* and even Blanche’s hallucinations as the trappings of realistic theatre. Rather than viewing these early plays as categorically separate from the plays of the 1960s, I prefer to see more evolution

than segmentation in Williams's canon. If I can paraphrase the Church Fathers of the New Testament being contained in the Old, I think the seeds of *Fräulein*, *Two-Character*, or even *I Can't Imagine Tomorrow* were already planted in *Menagerie*, *Streetcar*, and *Summer and Smoke*.

All in all, Saddik has written a timely and challenging book that puts Williams's later plays in historical perspective. If nothing else, she has uncovered the critical conspiracy that wanted to deprive Williams of the honor due his creative genius during the last part of his remarkable career.

Philip C. Kolin
University of Southern Mississippi

Brecht and Method by Frederic Jameson. London and New York: Verso, 1998. ISBN 1-85984-249-6. \$25.00 (hardback), \$15.00 (paperback).

Since the publication of his now classic works *Marxism and Form* and *The Prison House of Language* in the early 1970s, Frederic Jameson has been not just one of the leading Marxist literary critics, but one of the foremost cultural theorists. For thirty years he has offered up work after work wherein, by way of dialectical analysis, he has scrutinized the cultural outpourings of late, twentieth century capitalism and individualism. To that end, much of his work in recent years, *Postmodernism*, or *The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* and *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writing on Postmodernism, 1983-1999*, has involved a critical reading of postmodern, consumer culture. Representative of this period of study is his landmark 1983 essay, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," which involves a fascinating and, ultimately, damning deliberation on "pastiche" and "schizophrenia." In short, for Jameson these elements are two of the key ways in which postmodernism commodities infiltrate all aspects of social and cultural life. They therefore, thoroughly express and clandestinely reinforce the "inner truth" or "deeper logic" of late capitalism.

In that he has spent the better part of the last twenty years uncovering the covert commodification inherent in the cultural production of late capitalism, it should come as no surprise, then, that with his new study, *Brecht and Method*, Jameson is interested in much more than just a simple reevaluation of the late Marxist playwright's career. To be sure, apparently alarmed by recent trends, which have sought to appropriate Brecht for various ends, Jameson has invested *Brecht and Method* with a strong sense of reclamation. Specifically, he seeks to retrieve Brecht from the clutches of postmodernists, who have endeavored to position him as something of a figurehead for that movement; the market led individualists, who have assailed the collaborative method that underpinned many of his theatrical efforts; as well as the high academics, who have theorized Brecht to the point where issues of praxis in his works become mute. Regarding these, as well as other affronts on Brechtian dramas and politics, Jameson asks,

[I]s there not something in itself profoundly unBrechtian in the attempt to reinvent and revive some "Brecht for our times," some "what is living and what is dead in Brecht," some postmodern Brecht or Brecht for the future, a postsocialist or even post-Marxist Brecht, the Brecht of queer theory or of identity politics, the Deleuzian or Derridean Brecht, or perhaps the Brecht of the market and globalization, an American mass-culture Brecht, a finance capital Brecht [?] (5)

As a way of debunking these various trends, Jameson suggests in the Prologue of

Brecht and Method that “Brecht is modern first and foremost,” that the most important feature in his work is its “usefulness,” and that his utility was realized in a “method,” which was not a recipe or roadmap that dictated style and content, but “a kind of *gestus* . . . above and beyond the ‘dramatistic’ and interpersonal framework” (6, 1, 27). As a way of further exploring the latter of these issues, Jameson “triangulates” the playwright, considering the ways that thought, language, and narrative interact and are “absorbed” in the playwright’s works (29). Correspondingly, the bulk of the study is comprised of three parts, Doctrine, *Gestus*, and Proverbs. The driving force behind these sections is Jameson’s ardent desire to show the complex ways Brecht encourages the audience to think and actively respond to what is presented. By way of this task, Jameson suggests an expanded and alternative view of Brecht, one that advances the notion that the playwright was more than a Marxist dramatist and dramatic theorist. He was also a social philosopher of the first order who displayed in his art the subtle and powerful ways society fails and exploits humanity. Jameson successfully supports this thought by skillfully weaving together rich readings of various play texts and thoughtful explications of how, at various turning points in his narratives, Brecht displays actions which lead to productive or destructive consequences, invites the audience to weigh the factors constraining the characters’ choices, and encourages the audience to imagine what other conditions would have to exist in order to produce alternative decisions and outcomes. With great passion and remarkable attention to detail, Jameson maps Brecht’s consistent application of the grand method of dialectics, successfully showing how it permeates every aspect of his thinking and gives his work a philosophical and practical unity. Thus, it is Jameson’s core contention that, when read and staged with this philosophical and practical unity in mind, Brecht’s work takes on new and enriched dimensions.

Jameson grapples with the conundrum intrinsic to balancing philosophical and practical concerns in his explication of Brecht’s V-effect, when subjected to a purely aesthetic or theatrical reading, the philosophical implications of that feature become truncated. As a result, the philosophical underpinnings of the V-effect become obscured and very difficult to see in production. However, when augmented by way of a reading that allows the philosophical to absorb and be absorbed by the practical, an approach Jameson calls “philosophical dramaturgy,” the V-effect is successful in creating cognitive dissonance in the audience.

As a final note, it should be pointed out that Jameson’s argument, while lucid, is very dense, involving extremely complex sentences and weighty theoretical terms. As a result, it will require great effort from the reader just to keep up. With that said, this is not a book for those who are new to the subject of Brecht. Even so, those who are able to endure Jameson’s complex, intricate, and, at times, maddening writing style will see why this book is one of the most important written on the subject in recent years and will come away with new admiration for Brecht.

To that end, *Brecht and Method* should be seen as required reading for graduate students and scholars interested in twentieth century theater, aesthetics, and politics.

Jonathan Chamber
St. Lawrence University