Othello. New Critical Essays edited by Philip C. Kolin. New York: Routledge, 2002. 458 pp. ISBN 0-8153-3574-1. $90.00.

What *Newsweek* once called "the Shakespeare industry" is thriving. Library shelves continue to groan with the yearly bounty of books written on Shakespeare as well as new critical editions of the plays. Given this plethora it is with a bit of trepidation that one sits down to yet another volume, hoping that it will not simply revisit the well-ploughed ground of Shakespeare scholarship.

Philip C. Kolin's new book, however, is a welcome addition to the field. The volume, containing twenty essays and an interview with Kent Thompson, artistic director of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, is clear and pertinent. Perhaps equally valuable is that it finally provides what is needed in the field by combining criticism with production concerns and staging, confirming that both these worlds are complementary and mutually enriching. Given space restrictions, it would be impracticable to attempt a full review of each of the essays. Examining a selected series may, perhaps, prove of more value.

Professor Kolin's introductory essay, "Blackness Made Visible," is a coherent and intriguing history of salient productions as well as varied critical approaches. He suggests that perhaps most central to a more complete understanding of the play is the focus on Othello's occupation as a soldier and a commander of troops. In those capacities, his world and his effectiveness are clear and confident. But beyond the battlefield, Othello is a virtual innocent. His assurance to the Senate of the love Desdemona had for him is ample indication of the weak foundation on which the relationship was built: "She loved me for the dangers I had passed,/ And I loved her that she did pity them."

Quite rightly, the times redefine the character of Othello. The issue of race, looked on romantically in pre-twentieth century production and criticism, can all too easily obscure the tragic implications of two innocents caught in the web of their own obsession. However, as Professor Kolin summarizes his survey of critical reactions to the play, it becomes abundantly clear that Othello's sophistication as a soldier and a general could not serve him in a marriage based primarily on Desdemona's child-like worship of his past adventures. Rather, Othello attempts to move his bride into his world so that his legendary warrior prowess can be further witnessed by her and thereby increase her adoration.

Kolin's summary of critical responses to Desdemona, seen in the light of cited productions gives her a credence and a wild innocent courage which mitigates against "allegorizers," "psychoanalyzers," and "anti-feminists," quoting Adamson. Kolin equally reflects on her past critical history which refers to her as "a holy presence," "a courageous, charitable and obedient wife," as well as those

perspectives which idealize Desdemona, demonstrated by Cassio's reference to her as "a prayer to the Virgin," or Hunter's, "a natural embodiment of grace apparently untainted by original sin;" these viewed in contrast to those characterizing her as "reprehensible" and "foolish." To accept these monochromatic appraisals is to deny Desdemona's clear sexuality and the tragic implications of her worship of Othello. Ruth Vanitas' point that Desdemona's death is a shared responsibility of her public abuse and humiliation is keyed to a perceived difference between public and privately permitted violence. The fact that there is no real intervention promulgates "a continuation of violence that escalates from abuse to beating to killing."

Iago, who all too frequently becomes the magnetic center of the play is more clearly and accurately delineated here as a limited man whose skills for survival and lack of a moral core energize his destructive drive. Kolin quotes A.C. Bradley's premise that "perfectly sane people exist in whom fellow-feeling of any kind is so weak that an almost absolute egoism becomes possible . . . " Kenneth Muir's assessment is also pertinently quoted: " . . . The two main characters exemplify opposing principles which together constitute the human psyche."

Intriguingly, in Kolin's complementary section devoted to stage production and production concepts, a number of instances are referred to in which both Othello and Iago were played by black actors. Given their shared racial pasts the effect is to make the bonds between the two men far stronger and the preferment of a white Cassio for promotion more searing a blow for Iago. The consequent casting of a black Emilia and her devotion to Desdemona, is consistent but further complicates and distorts the play.

Professor Kolin's summary of *Othello* on film is a needed and valuable addition to his critical and production sections. Having all three components as well as reference to other media allows for a much wider readership inclusive of academics as well as theatre artists. The discussion of Orson Welles' film version of the play, much admired as it is, points out its mixed blessings. Admittedly adapted, Welles' power and filmic imagination is readily apparent but a good deal of text that was cut is very much missed, particularly Desdemona's Willow Song and Iago's last speech. Of equal value here is Kolin's balanced critical view of Welles' version as well as that of Laurence Olivier's film, perhaps the best known and most widely reputed. More peripheral, perhaps, is the discussion of television and opera renditions. Appropriately, these are dealt with briefly.

David Bevington's, "Othello: Portrait of a Marriage," very soundly focuses on Othello's possessiveness. His assumption of Desdemona as a property after assurances of his total confidence in her, leads to the inevitable disintegration of a marriage based largely on control and sexual passion. Bevington is persuasive in arguing against the theory that the marriage is built on weak foundations. He states that both partners risked a great deal in marrying but that each brought to the

other a world separate from their individual experiences and thus strengthened their bond.

What is equally clear and carefully discussed is Othello's ruling egoism which fuels the engine of the tragedy. Desdemona's fate is tied to her apparent yearning for something other than a narrow domestic life and is set into action by her following Othello to Cyprus thus leading to her ultimate fate. Bevington quite rightly points out the narcissistic core of Othello's relationship with women (a common trait of both Cassio in his relationship with Bianca and Iago with Emilia). Further contributing to the tragedy is this society in which men, Othello and Iago certainly, are subject to their fantasies concerning the women in their lives and their inability to exercise control over them. This also relates to Brabantio's willingness to believe Iago's and Roderigo's fantasy of Othello and Desdemona's wild coupling. Bevington's conclusion is clear and apt: that Desdemona " . . . must be murdered because she represents to him the image of his own insufficiency as a man." The essay is a focused and viable approach to the play from a critical perspective and provides as well a useful interpretative guide for the director. The anguish that is inherent in Othello's journey and, in well-defined productions, equally experienced by audiences is the focus of John Gronbeck-Tedesco's illuminating essay, "Morality, Ethics and the Failure of Love in Shakespeare's *Othello*."

One of his major concerns is that in the promotion of Cassio over Iago a choice is made of merit over loyalty, pragmatics over seniority. Equally, Gronbeck-Tedesco suggests that an ingrained set of moral values can be vulgarized as seen in Roderigo and Iago's accusation to Brabantio of Othello's and Desdemonona's presumed fornication. Interestingly, in the same scene Roderigo constructs a clear moral appeal to the outraged father (I,i, 119-38) and proposes action on ethical grounds. What is intriguing in this analysis of the first scene of the play is that Roderigo, most frequently played as solely Iago's dupe, counters his awkwardness as well as his crudeness with this persuasive argument based on moral precepts. However, while ethics and morality are central to his argument, Roderigo stands to profit which, ironically, renders the action unethical. As is quite rightly pointed out, one may indeed betray one's ethics by virtue of misuse. Violence is central to the play. Characters frequently make frenzied choices that are not based on evidence of betrayal but by its presumed occurrence. Therefore, no true moral or ethical support can be offered for the actions taken.

Oddly, as the essay points out, the Senate, in considering Brabantio's accusation that Othello and Desdemona may be accused of subverting "the moral principles of a father's rights," operates on the basis of love (perhaps because of their urgent need for Othello's services), rather than hard evidence or moral law. One may consider the Cyprus scenes, as Gronbeck-Tedesco suggests, as another example of subversion of structured law. The island is at a far remove from the governing

structure of Venice and total authority is ceded to Othello whose law is personal and supreme. Evidence is neglected or frail at best in the heat of presumed or consequent betrayals. The argument is made here that Iago's subversion of a moral or ethical contract is essentially where his power lies. And when, in the final scene, he is asked to justify his actions on these grounds, he remains silent because there is nothing left to say.

The remaining essays in the volume cover an intriguing spectrum, from divining parallels to the play in the sonnets (given the continuing debate on when the poems were written) in James Schiffer's "*Othello* Among the Sonnets," to "My Cue to Fight—Stage Violence in *Othello*," which couples studies of the text to the realization on stage of its indicated combat and brutality. The author appropriately refers to the Elizabethan appetite for violence both in plays as well as well as in such spectacles as bear baiting and lethal punishment. As Kuhn points out, contemporary productions of *Othello* tend to set the play in societal environments where violence is a currency of the time, hence bonding the audience in a primal but potent way.

Professor Kolin has given us more than yet another addition to Shakespeareana. This volume of essays is stimulating and sound both in its scholarly conclusions as well as in its noteworthy considerations of both the critical and the theatrical. These complementary assessments increase its value as a resource to both critics and producers of Shakespeare.

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A Century of Irish Drama: Widening the Stage edited by Stephen Watt, Eileen Morgan, and Shakir Mustafa. Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000. xxvii + 332 pp. ISBN 0-253-33812-3. $19.95.

This volume is a book of papers given at a conference entitled, "Nationalism and a National Theatre: 100 Years of Irish Drama," at Indiana University, Bloomington in May 1999 that commemorated the centennial of the first official performance of the Irish Literary Theatre. The conference itself sought to capture the tension between the commemoration and the reevaluation of the Irish National Theatre and between the evanescence of performance and the permanence of print culture, through theatrical performances, conference panels, and the publication of this book. The conference and this volume were and are forms of "radical memory"—to borrow a term from Irish cultural studies theorist, Luke Gibbons—in the sense that they do not just relive or remember the past but seek to use the memory of the past to engage with the present and to inform the future of Irish theatre.

This book of essays—which is its own radical commemoration of the conference—offers an excellent complement to the monologic and linear histories of Irish theatre that tend to only address the works of canonical male playwrights (W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge, Samuel Beckett, Brian Friel, and so forth) and the work of canonical theatre companies such as the Abbey. *A Century of Irish Drama* offers essays that explore the work of less canonical playwrights and theatre companies, expanding the canonical base and the definition of a "national theatre" through a radical interrogation of the existing canon and its historical formation.

The first section, "Challenging the Received View of Early-Twentieth-Century Irish Theatre," troubles the common misconception that the theatre of the Irish revival consisted solely of peasant plays at the Abbey Theatre. John Harrington's essay exposes the cosmopolitan roots of the Irish Literary Theatre and demonstrates the tension between national goals and international methods which the company fostered, as they depended on the work of continental theatrical practice and international actors in their theatre company. Departing from the Abbey altogether, Nelson Ó Ceallaigh Ritschel's essay revives the paradigms of urban drama performed at the Theatre of Ireland and the Irish Theatre Company that provided an alternative more relevant to Dublin than the pseudo-Gaelic peasant plays of Yeats and Gregory. Laura E. Lyons offers further possibilities by challenging the canonical exclusion of the Ulster Literary Theatre to explain the impossibility of establishing a direct analog to the Abbey in Ulster. While Dublin nationalists attempted to establish a unified "Irish" theatre, the ULT had to address the sectarian divisions and institutions peculiar to Northern life. Quite originally, Lyons suggests that the formation of the ULT was a cultural foreshadowing of the political partition

that would separate Ulster from the rest of Ireland in the 1920s. Although the essays in this section cannot represent every theatre company in operation in Ireland from the 1890s through the early 1930s, they do provide a more balanced view of Irish revival theatre, in which the Abbey Theatre becomes part of larger national—and international—theatrical map rather than being synecdochic for the entire map.

The second section, "Theorizing and Historicizing Theatre Controversies," speculates on the poetics of "controversy" as political performance. Lucy McDiarmid's essay uses the controversies surrounding Shaw's *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet* at the Abbey and Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* in the Abbey's touring production in America to outline an international paradigm of controversy-as-performance where the interplay of dual traditions or laws creates symptomatic microcosms of larger socialrifts. Susan Harris picks up on this theme by providing an insightful reading of the controversies surrounding the 1907 production of *Playboy* at the Abbey. While many critics have examined the riots in terms of their being an exercise in defense of *cultural* purity, Harris convincingly argues that the riots were in fact about *bodily* purity and its importance in the construction of an Irish Ireland. Shakir Mustafa continues on the path of arguing for political redefinition in his essay on the controversial politics of Sean O'Casey's Dublin trilogy. The essay reads the exclusion of nationalist narrativity in the trilogy and avers that O'Casey's subordination of nationalist politics to the domestic problems of tenement life ignores the function and complicity of colonialism in perpetuating these problems. Each of these essays underscores the difficulty of trying to foment a revolutionary "national" theatre with too many competing essentialist visions of the nation, the same problem articulated by Harrington in the first section.

The third section, "Reconstructing Drama during the 'Fatal Fifties,'" looks at how drama responded to the censorship of the early Irish Republic and its watchdog archbishops. Christopher Murray continues with O'Casey where Mustafa left off, scrutinizing the censorship of and controversy surrounding *The Drums of Father Ned*. O'Casey's exclusion from the Dublin's 1958 International Theatre Festival because of the antiauthoritarian Catholicism of his play evokes a moment in Ireland's history where original voices were persecuted by a conservative theocracy, an institutionalized version of the nationalism that decried Synge and O'Casey earlier in the century. In light of this, Stephen Watt uses the next essay to discuss postwar subjectivity, British and Irish, and sexuality in Brendan Behan's work, using the absurdist theatre of Jean Genet for comparison. Watt argues that Behan's drama calls for an understanding of difference amidst the possibilities of mass destruction demonstrated in the Second World War, offering an alternative to the insularity of an Ireland which remained neutral in the war and persecuted its own citizens for artistic and political dissent. Judith Roof also engages with this theme of anti-insularity in her analysis of Samuel Beckett's poetics of exile. In Beckett's work,

Roof formulates, Ireland is an important constitutive absence, since Beckett's exile enables the creation of an aesthetic, formal theatre while the nation remains behind the scenes as an "archetypal spatial locus" (158). This section of the book makes steps towards an intervention since, as Stephen Watt points out, this period in Irish drama has been overlooked in most histories of Irish drama; however, this section only discusses the works of playwrights well known in other contexts and excludes deserving lesser known playwrights such as Paul Vincent Carroll and Denis Johnston.

"Contemporary Theatre Companies and Revivals" is the most unwieldy section of this book by far. The first three essays address the issue of women's exclusion from Irish theatre and Irish politics, but while the first two concern contemporary drama, the third essay, Christie Fox's rehabilitation of 1930s playwright Teresa Deevy seems out of place temporally. Had the editors wished to create a separate section on women in drama, this might have worked, but in its current context the essay is, as its title indicates, "Neither Here nor There." This essay would have worked better alongside O'Casey, Behan, and Beckett and that section renamed to account for "Irish Drama of the Early Republic" rather than just the 1950s. Mary Trotter's and Carla J. McDonagh's essays on Marina Carr, Christina Reid, and companies such as Charabanc deserve their places in a section on contemporary Irish theatre, as female Irish writers and artists are so often relegated by academics into their own artistic and political snugs, as McDonagh points out in her essay. Both authors situate their subjects within a broader historical discourse of theatre, Trotter examining how women have used the genre of the family-memory play to write themselves and their matrilineal forbears back onto the stage, and McDonagh using the drama of Christina Reid to demonstrate how women have been systematically excluded from Irish theatre and Irish public life. Departing from women's theatre, José Lanters articulates her theory of a "Western" theatre tradition in Ireland—where the West of Ireland represents not national idyll but an eccentric perspective from which to debate the question of identity—to which Martin McDonagh is the most recent heir. Lauren Onkey also intervenes with a much-needed examination of the Passion Machine Theatre Company and its politics of the "everyday." This section, if a bit heavy-handed in terms of organization, demonstrates the range of theatre projects going on in Ireland since the 1980s.

The last section, "Irish History on the Contemporary Stage," evaluates where Irish theatre stands today in relation to Irish history. This section is vital in pulling the rest of the book together as a metacommemoration of radical memory. Kathleen Hohenleitner examines how the question of Hugh O'Neill's biography, as it is presented in Brian Friel's *Making History*, informs the issues of canon formation surrounding the Field Day Anthology controversy. Marilyn Richtarik formulates Stewart Parker's "working model of wholeness" (274) that uses the heteroglossic voices of both Protestants and Catholics to understand the contemporary Northern

Irish Troubles through the lens of history. Continuing in this vein, Jim Hurt suggests that Frank McGuinness's theatre is a Benjaminian materialist historiography that presents the "ruins of history." Appropriately ending the book, Scott Cummings theorizes what he calls "millennial urge" that pervades the work of Sebastian Barry in the dramatization of characters' memories and desires to blur the lines between past, present, and future.

Overall, the authors and editors did an excellent job editing the papers for a book format, and the essays frequently refer to each other, drawing the collection together and making it a coherent, thoughtful, book with a purpose rather than a scattered collection of isolated readings, which is often the case with books-of-the-conference. For the most part, the essays are well organized and clearly written. *A Century of Irish Drama* is a well done and much needed addition to the canon of Irish theatre history.

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Dario Fo and Popular Performance by Antonio Scuderi. New York: Legas, 1998. 134 pp. ISBN 0-9212-5280-3. $17.95.

Dario Fo. Revolutionary Theatre by Tom Behan. London/Sterling, WV: Pluto Press, 2000. 170 pp. ISBN 0-7453-1357-4. $17.95.

Dario Fo. Stage, Text, and Tradition edited by Joseph Farrell and Antonio Scuderi. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000. 222 pp. ISBN 0-8093-2335-4. $40.00.

Dario Fo & Franca Rame: Artful Laughter by Ron Jenkins. New York: Aperture, 2001. 211 pp. ISBN 0-89381-947-6. $45.00.

Prior to winning the 1997 Nobel Prize for Literature, the extraordinary and unique career of Italian playwright/actor Dario Fo was comparatively little-known in the United States. Aside from a highly publicized battle staged by a band of American artists against the United States government, who, for a time during the Reagan administration, had barred Fo from entering the country, he was known only to aficionados of contemporary European drama. Controversy, which has often attended performances of Fo's plays, similarly emerged in the wake of his Nobel win. The Vatican, frequently the target of Fo's satire, condemned the choice for this prestigious award, as did some who felt that Fo's "throwaway farces," as he has frequently describes them, are not worthy of a *literary* prize. Since the award, however, publishers have scrambled to offer editions of Fo's plays in English and rushed studies of various aspects of his work into print. In fact, since 1997, a veritable flood of material on Fo's achievements has appeared.

Although American publishers paid little attention to Fo prior to the Nobel Prize, British publishers have consistently made his work available in English since the early 1980s, in part because Fo plays, like *Mistero Buffo, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, Can't Pay? Won't Play, The Pope and the Witch, Elizabeth*, and *A Woman Alone*, among others, have been well-received in English productions. Studies by English scholars Tony Mitchell (*Dario Fo. People's Court Jester* [London/NY: Methuen, 1984; updated and expanded 1999] and *File on Fo* ([London: Methuen, 1989]) and David L. Hirst (*Dario Fo and Franca Rame* [NY: St. Martin's Press, 1989]) have been, along with Fo's own book, *The Tricks of the Trade* (translated by Joe Farrell [NY: Routledge, 1991]), published in Great Britain and have until the Nobel Prize been the only reliable critical sources on his work in English. Since the Nobel Prize, several new works have, in part, expanded on or supplanted these studies, offering a somewhat broader critical accounting of Fo's impressive creative output as a playwright, actor, director, and visual artist.

Four new books, published between 1998 and 2001, to some extent exemplify the strengths and weaknesses of Fo scholarship in English. More works are certainly to come, but significant gaps in accounting Fo's achievement continue to hinder scholars, artists, and a theatre-going public still relatively unfamiliar with an acclaimed artist whose particularities may still seem frustratingly inaccessible to American audiences.

The first among these new studies, Antonio Scuderi's *Dario Fo and Popular Performance,* emphasizes the roots of Fo's theatre found in the traditions of earlier eras of popular culture and in those iconic figures of the comic tradition—jesters, harlequins, clowns, minstrels, tumblers, and a wide range of street entertainers—which have inspired generations of stage and screen artists in the realm of comedy. In four tightly constructed chapters, Scuderi emphasizes Fo's exploration of actor-centered techniques drawn from ancient comic traditions, with particular emphasis on such early Fo works as *Mistero Buffo*, but also more recent works including *The Pope and the Witch* and *Johan Padan Discovers America*. Scuderi makes most effective use of *Johan Padan*, essentially a one-man show, in illuminating Fo's singular techniques as a storyteller. A tour-de-force like *Mistero Buffo*, *Johan Padan* demonstrates that Fo's skills as both playwright and actor that are so closely connected as to defy attempts to separate them, emphasizing Fo as an oral folklorist profoundly indebted to the traditions of the minstrel, *commedia dell'arte,* and carnival. Scuderi does not indulge in much literary analysis of Fo's texts—this is clearly not his intention—he instead attempts to conjure up, in comparatively few words, the image of Fo as performer. Although the text is relatively brief (barely exceeding one hundred pages), Scuderi does succeed ably in illustrating Fo, the comic actor. Scuderi's text is lightly illustrated with a few performance photos and some black-and-white reprints of Fo's paintings of posters and scenes from his plays, but it is in Scuderi's occasionally passionate descriptions that Fo's work flickers to life. A brief listing of references is included, along with some helpful notes with each chapter. Far from a definitive source, Scuderi's work instead provides an introductory gloss of Fo's performance style and its historical roots.

Dario Fo. Revolutionary Theatre by Tom Behan is a useful biographical portrait of Fo, emphasizing those aspects of Fo's life, training, political interests, and theatrical techniques informing his plays. In individual chapters, Behan focuses on what are perhaps Fo's three best-known plays, *Accidental Death of an Anarchist, Can't Pay? Won't Pay!*, and *Mistero Buffo* (with a large chunk of another chapter devoted to *Trumpets and Rasberries),* along with three catch-all chapters, "The Bourgeois Period," "The Revolutionary Period," and "The Downturn Period," in which he attempts to survey the rest. On the positive side, Behan offers more biographical information than most other English-language works on Fo, with particular emphasis on the background of Fo's political interests, his difficulties with the Vatican and Italian television (from which he has frequently been banned),

and his theories of dramatic art. The chapters on the three major plays are well-written and researched, but these works have been thoroughly chronicled in other books and numerous essays. Behan's book disappoints in what is not included—there is too little on the lesser-known plays, some of which are worthy of greater attention. *The Pope and the Witch*, for example, may be more useful in understanding the controversy surrounding Fo's work than some of his more familiar plays. Behan effectively identifies key themes in the representative plays featured. For him, Fo's central interests are those frequently identified in Fo studies: the inherent corruption of the powerful and state repression of the working class, the human propensity for rebellion, the human tragedies resulting from both right and left-wing terrorism, and anti-Catholic Church satire. Behan includes a very brief chronology and three short appendices documenting some key political adventures in Fo's theatrical past, but as with the rest of the book it tends to whet the reader's appetite without providing the much-desired fuller feast.

Scuderi, author of *Dario Fo and Popular Performance*, and Joseph Farrell, a distinguished Fo translator, have co-edited a volume of essays about facets of Fo's work called *Dario Fo. Stage, Text, and Tradition*. This is an outstanding collection by an array of scholars, several of whom have long connections with Fo. For example, longtime Fo scholar Tony Mitchell's "'The Moon Is a Light Bulb' and Other Stories: Fo, the Songwriter" provides, in impressive detail, a chronicle of songs Fo has written for his plays and the role of music in his productions. Individual Fo plays are addressed by Jennifer Lorch, who tracks various English productions of *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, and Constantino Maeder, whose unfortunately dry overview of issues of text, the individual, and time in *Mistero Buffo* reduces this masterful play to a collection of academic clichés. Sharon Wood's cogently written and thoughtful "*Parliamo di donne*: Feminism and Politics in the Theater of Franca Rame" offers some appropriate attention to the incalculably important contributions Rame has made to her husband's work—and as an artist/activist in her own right. Paolo Puppa and Walter Valeri, in two separate essays, ably deal with performance traditions and acting techniques employed by Fo, while Fo's American translator, Ron Jenkins, recounts his experiences working onstage with Fo. This short piece that stands out, in part due to Jenkins's charming personal anecdotes about working with and spending private time with Fo and his family, as well as the illumination he provides from the unique vantage point of sharing a stage with this remarkable talent. Co-editor Farrell contributes two essays, "Fo and Ruzzante: Debts and Obligations," a penetrating explication of Fo's debt to Ruzzante's plays and perceived performance techniques, and "The Actor Who Writes: Dario Fo and the Nobel Prize," which defines Fo's significance in the wake of the controversy over his Nobel victory. Co-editor Scuderi's contribution, "Updating Antiquity," surveys the familiar realm of ancient influences on Fo, from Plautus to *commedia dell'arte* and beyond, while Farrell and Scuderi team up to

provide an introduction in which they posit Fo's "poetics," emphasizing the Marxist roots of his politics and the ancient comic influences on his techniques. The book is handsomely bound and includes a few well-chosen illustrations. Its strength is in the quality and diversity of its contributors and the resultant differing perspectives on Fo which emerge.

The most recent of this spate of Fo books is also the most outstanding. Ron Jenkins's ambitious *Dario Fo & Franca Rame. Artful Laughter* is a coffee table-sized book rich with beautifully reproduced, often full-page color illustrations of Fo's paintings, drawings, and posters accompanied by Jenkins's penetrating text. Although Jenkins devotes individual sections to those most significant of Fo's plays, *Mistero Buffo* and *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, he also delves into less familiar plays and productions, offering a broader overview of Fo's achievement than prior studies have attempted. Jenkins also underscores the importance of Franca Rame to Fo's work, both as a performer and as a powerful voice of political conscience. Particularly interesting chapters are devoted to *The Story of the Tiger* and *Johan Padan Discovers America*, featuring excerpts of play text along with Fo's illustrations and performance photographs. Jenkins is well-prepared to serve as a critic of Fo's work—not only as the result of his on-stage experiences with Fo, but because he has spent his career traveling the globe to explore and chronicle ancient and contemporary comic traditions, from legitimate stages to tribal rituals. His previous books, *Acrobats of the Soul* and *Subversive Laughter*, examine the achievements and techniques, as well as the theory and practice, of a remarkable individual artists and groups, past and present, for whom the stage is inherently a carnivalesque, anarchic realm where issues of survival and basic human hungers meet politics and cultural reality. Fo's unorthodox approach to the stage—a mixture of his leftist politics with the extraordinary traditions of the comic stage—make him the definitive example for a scholar like Jenkins, whose quest is a full understanding of the immeasurable cross-cultural worth of this nearly lost stage tradition. *Dario Fo & Franca Rame: Artful Laughter* is buoyed by the depth and breadth of Jenkins familiarity with this brand of theatre and his obvious passion for Fo's rare gifts. For a performer and playwright who envisions his plays in visual terms and who, as an actor, is himself a visual feast, *Dario Fo & Franca Rame: Artful Laughter* opens up Fo's oeuvre in ways previously unavailable in English-language publications. The numerous illustrations included are vividly alive and, coupled with Jenkins's vibrant prose, bring Fo's style and substance to full life.

A common problem with all four of these books, regardless of their individual angle on Fo, is that none offer what is most sorely needed—a full and accurate accounting of *all* of Fo's plays and productions and a serious and comprehensive biography. These are long overdue, as are a thorough bibliographic resource. In the meantime, however, each of these four studies, in their varied ways, contribute

to a fuller appreciation of perhaps the most unique and useful artist of the second half of the twentieth century.

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The American Musical Landscape: The Business of Musicianship from Billings to Gershwin by Richard Crawford. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1993/2000. xix + 381 pp. ISBN 0-520-07764-4 (Hardcover)/ ISBN 0-520-22482-5 (Paperback). $55.00/$19.95.

Complimenting the publication of his 2000 *America's Musical Life: A History*, Richard Crawford presents an ostensibly "updated" paperback edition of *The American Musical Landscape* (though his only visible change is the addition of new preface). From 1969 to the late 1980s, Crawford, along with Allen Perdue Britton and Irving Lowens, sought to establish a comprehensive index of the first indigenous American composers. This pioneering bibliographical work provided the source materials for several important histories of American music, though *Landscape* is more "historiography" than history. Crawford's reading of early American music as formed in a market-driven industry offers a refreshing, if unexpected contribution to theatre and performance studies.

Studies of any of the rich traditions in American musical theatre history, from minstrelsy to musical revue, from vaudeville to rock opera, have long suffered from a tenuous relationship to the very music on which said traditions thrive. In *Approaches to the American Musical* (1996), Robert Lawson-Peebles noted the difficulties theatre scholars have in analyzing musicals. Arguing against the tendency to treat musicals as "plays with music," he promoted "cultural musicology" as a theoretical frame for American musical theatre. While the articles in *Approaches* are sophisticated studies of several productions and their dialectical relationship with human society, these still place music in subordination to text-derived storyline. Crawford's source may furnish the relationship between music proper and culture that is needed for the continued evolution of scholarly criticism of the musical stage.

Landscape establishing this historical model. Part Three details the careers of William Billings, George Frederick Root, and Duke Ellington, as well as the performance history of George Gershwin's "I've Got Rhythm."

The career of Billings provides a solid methodological foundation, as Crawford studies the dissemination of the psalmody composer's work by examining, in sequence, individual pieces on the basis of musical structure and theme, then quantifying the rate of each song's appearance in the printed anthologies, then studying the musical menu in each volume. Contrasting what he sees as a "plain" tune in "Amherst," which Billings regularly includes in anthologies, to what he sees as the more expressive and interesting "Sunday," which disappeared from the repertoire quickly, Crawford makes the claim that market demands compelled the continuation of a particular level of musical elaboration. Comparing the songs most circulated to each other, he suggests that new songs needed to fit comfortably with the themes of those already in the repertoire. Thus, the songs already distributed

helped stabilize the expectations of the choirs and families who purchased new anthologies, and thus stabilize the market.

Crawford ties the work of Root to the climate of the Civil War years, and the demand for martial songs, showing how Root shifted several tunes into major keys, differentiating between positive and negative themes through tempo and lyrics, without the traditional use of minor key variations. He deals with Ellington's "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue" as a concave "plot" where expected changes in instrumentation and expectations "warn the listener away from complacent formal expectations" (201). In such storytelling metaphors extrapolated from the music may lie the keys to reading the music in a theatrical event, as a performative mechanism distinguishable from dialogue.

Some may find Crawford's failure to discuss power relationships in play throughout cultural exchanges, particularly since he places considerable importance on material success. He does not problematize the relationship between artists and the demands of the market on any racial, gender, or even micro-cultural lines. He celebrates the success of "rock-based vernaculars" for their "lower class [. . .] black [. . .] inspiration" (107), but does not raise the consequences of mass-market appropriation and circulation of African American musical tradition. It should be maintained, however, that *Landscape* is more an approach than a self-contained historical narrative. Crawford himself notes the limitations of his study when he compares it to *America's Musical Life*, stating that while the book sometimes appears: "Incomplete to me [Crawford], though when it was published, my own thinking had not gone beyond the point of raising questions" (xv). For the purposes of developing a synthetic theoretical model of cultural musicology for theatre and performance studies, the questions he raises are important.

Theatre scholars will find immediate appeal in Crawford's study of "I've Got Rhythm" in the first production of *Girl Crazy* and subsequent audio recordings. He describes the historical moment when Ethel Merman first astonished audiences with her characteristically long notes, and how that "show-stopping" moment was not merely a credit to Merman's talent, but to the improvising of an orchestra that included Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, Glenn Miller, and Charlie Teagarden. While his analysis of dozens of recordings from the 1930s and 1940s deepens understanding of the circulation of stage music in the mid-twentieth century, more innovative theatre research may prosper in tracing the development of early musical comedy from other musical discourses, circulated in educational and artistic circles. Ultimately, Crawford's *Landscape* provides what theatre scholarship has almost entirely failed to, an historical model of the relationship between musical performance and cultural production in the United States.

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A Sourcebook on Naturalist Theatre edited by Christopher Innes. New York: Routledge, 2000. ix + 261 pp. ISBN 0-415-15229-1. $24.99.

The naturalist theatre, as theorized by Émile Zola and others, argued that environment and heredity determine character and, therefore, action. This belief in linear causality corresponded to the optimism of the naturalists: if one can see what is wrong, then one can fix it. The stage practice that followed this theory sought to show life as it really was for the betterment of society. Because of its central preoccupation with contemporary social issues, a study of naturalist theatre uniquely benefits from an understanding of its times. This sourcebook offers selections from primary documents such as original performance reviews of key plays in an attempt evoke the political, social, and aesthetic currents out of which Naturalism flowed.

The editorial logic of the sourcebook seems to parallel Naturalism itself. Innes allows the reader to observe directly the heredity of Naturalism as it was grandparented by pre-existing theatrical forms and theories and fathered by playwrights and practitioners. Primary documents related to contemporary social issues and reviews reveal the environment of naturalist theatre and its audience conditioned by the idealistic theatre of the nineteenth century. These primary sources are organized around two plays each by Henrik Ibsen, Anton Chekhov and George Bernard Shaw—*A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler*, *The Seagull* and *The Cherry Orchard*, and *Mrs Warren's Profession* and *Heartbreak House*, respectively. By focusing on just six plays, Innes paints a fairly detailed picture of the plays' original performance and reception, the authors' stated intentions with the plays, and their linkage to their contemporary social and political climate. The selection of these plays engages the reader's sense of the wide range of theatrical practice that exists under the umbrella term of Naturalism. The plays span decades of the naturalist theatre from its height in the 1880's; in *A Doll's House* (1879) the conventions of well-made play formulae can still be seen clearly; while in *Heartbreak House* (1919), the symbolist aspect breaks through the naturalist milieu much as the outbreak of World War I suggested causal lines more complex than linear and dampened confidence in the progress of society.

With the possible exception of *The Cherry Orchard*, all the plays featured in this book center on a female character and her experience of a society inimical to her self-actualization. Innes promotes a sense of this thematic through-line in his selection of primary materials. For example, in the chapter devoted to Henrik Ibsen, Innes not only provides readings on the position of women in Scandinavia, but highlights the actress Elizabeth Robins' reception of the play when she first saw it performed by Janet Archurch. Innes' choices highlight Naturalism's affinity for women's subjective experience. To illustrate, though it is commonly known

that Ibsen changed the ending of *A Doll's House* so that Nora stays for the first German production, Innes neatly summarizes how the actress Hedwig Niemann-Raabe argued for the change on the basis of naturalistic plausibility (she would never leaver her children) and Ibsen changed the ending for her. Only later was this new ending, "with its sentimental appeal, restoration of the sexual status quo, and evasion of the moral issues raised in the preceding discussion," (84) preferred in European productions.

Throughout the book, Innes suggests connections and disconnections between the theory and practice of Naturalism. The chapter entitled, "Contemporary Theories of Naturalism" pairs the three selected playwrights with a theorist or theatrical artist essential to their development: Ibsen with George Brandes, Chekhov with Konstantin Stanislavky, Zola with André Antoine, and Shaw with himself (as he wrote so extensively as an essayist). In these pairings, one can see how the dramaturgical practice of Naturalism faces peril from at least two fronts: From one side, an overly enthusiastic desire for authenticity, as illustrated by Chekhov's protests against Stanislavky's "over-emphasis on external Naturalism" (139) (the noisy sounds of crickets making it difficult to hear the dialogue). On the other side, overvaluing the inherit social critique of the play can obscure its abiding aesthetic value. Such a tension is suggested between George Brandes' urge for socially relevant drama in prompting Ibsen to focus on contemporary subjects and Ibsen's "Speech at the Festival of the Norwegian Women's League" surprising for its demur against being seen as a political writer or a proponent of women's liberation; he states his intention as the "*description of humanity*" (74).

Curiously, the pursuit of such objective "descriptions" can lead to a heightened sense of pathos: The naturalist frame asks the audience to consider that what it is seeing is real. A strength of this sourcebook is how the source materials spark an emotional response to historical period from which these plays emerged. After reading portions of Emma Goldman's *The Traffic in Women*, alongside minutes of an legislative body investigation of child prostitution in London, with Fabian essays on Socialism, one can almost see George Bernard Shaw's mind connecting strands of capitalism and exploitation as he penned *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. One can almost feel his outrage. In his introductory chapter, Innes defined Naturalism as distinct from Realism by its intentions; Naturalism wants to remedy and reform, whereas Realism wants to look like reality. This book exposes the dire social issues that pushed the naturalists and the reader can only sympathize with Shaw when his play is kept from the public stage in London stage for twenty seven years and banned in America.

Perhaps because the realist frame dominates theatre and film today, it is easy to forget that Naturalism marked a revolution in theatrical representation. Certainly, the primary documents included reflect how this new stage practice challenged its contemporary audience's sense of aesthetic propriety while provoking political

debate. This book attempts to revive the sense of the aesthetic upheaval from the histrionic acting style and from the star system that had dominated theatre practice. Innes' sources provide details of the first stagings of the plays, including, for example, portions of Stanislavsky's prompt book for *The Seagull* with sketches of its blocking. Also provided in the first chapter are portions of *An Actor Prepares* on the super-objective, perhaps the keystone of ensemble and naturalistic acting technique. Though for a deeply probing look at the theory and practice of Naturalism, a student would need the full text of most of the materials contained, Innes gives enough material to provoke interest in the subject.

Indeed, this sourcebook opens up many lines of inquiry. It could make a fine reader for a course including a study of Naturalism in the theatre and it is a good starting point for further study as suggested by its bibliography and a longer look at the very salient sources contained.

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