

Book Reviews

Rewrites: A Memoir. Neil Simon. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.
ISBN: 0-6848-2672-0.

In his introduction to *Rewrites*, a memoir of his first 46 years, Neil Simon stakes claim to the “small piece of property” that lies behind the last row of seats in the back of the Shubert Theater, the Imperial, the Plymouth, and countless others he has paced on opening nights throughout his astonishingly successful career in the American theater. “This book is about the eighty-nine-odd thousand miles that I have paced, fretted, smiled, frowned, sulked, sworn, beamed, gleamed, and moaned.” As one might expect from so expert a writer, Simon’s chronicle of this journey makes for entertaining reading. What may be less expected is Simon’s frankness regarding the details of his personal life and the candid observations he makes about numerous peers and colleagues, including Jerry Lewis, Mike Nichols, George C. Scott, David Merrick, Bert Lahr, Walter Matthau, James Coco, Peter Sellers, and Maureen Stapleton.

Rewrites is not a supermarket tabloid tell-all, but Simon does not pull his punches. While expressing respect for Jerry Lewis’ ability to make almost anything funny, he calls Lewis, for whom a young Simon wrote television sketches, an egomaniac and “a demented adolescent.” Hardly a revelation, but Simon’s account of his work for Lewis goes further to reveal a deeply insecure man/child who showered Simon with gifts, each bearing Lewis’ comic caricature. Simon considers Lewis a “dishonest” comic who plays the juvenile buffoon one minute, then slips into his lizardy Vegas persona the next, “making us feel as if we’ve all been had.” Tellingly, Simon prefers Jack Benny, whom he considers a genuine comic genius.

Simon begins *Rewrites* by describing the arduous, but enlightening process of writing his first play, *One Shoe Off* (which later became *Come Blow Your Horn*) in the spring of 1957. As Simon winds his way through numerous potential producers, including Max Gordon (“I read your script, kid. Good dialogue. Some day you’re going to write a great play. This isn’t it.”), directors, investors, and twenty-two rewrites, what becomes clear is just how unprepared Simon was to write for the theater. In his typical self-effacing manner, Simon admits that “The play took one year to write and two-and-a-half years to rewrite . . . [It] was so primitive in its earliest versions, it bordered on Neanderthal.” He goes on to recount in marvelous detail how he made the transition from a television sketch writer to a Broadway playwright. As his confidence and craftsmanship grew, Simon required less help from outsiders like Reginald Rose, Billy Friedberg, and Herman Shumlin.

Simon remains, despite his success, somewhat insecure in his abilities as a writer. This may at least partially explain Simon’s tenacious work-ethic,

which emerges as a through-line in his memoir. Few American playwrights, besides Tennessee Williams, can match the steady, prolific pace that Simon has maintained throughout his career as a playwright. While his craftsmanship as a writer has long been admired, *Rewrites* makes it clear that from the beginning Simon has always worked very hard on his plays, honing and refining throughout the production process. Simon's account of his work with Mike Nichols, a subject of high praise in *Rewrites*, reveals a playwright striving to please his collaborators, long after his own reputation as a writer is established. One of the funniest episodes in the book is when Simon describes Nichols and himself sitting in a hotel lobby at 12:30 in the morning struggling to come up with a new ending for *The Prisoner of Second Avenue*. "Who comes up with the ending of a play at twelve-thirty at night in the lobby of a hotel?" I protested. 'Maybe we'll be the first,' Mike said, as if we would be the first two Jews to climb Mount Everest from the south slope, or whichever slope was the hardest." Simon's apparent lack of ego and his eagerness to rework his plays in rehearsal owes much to his early days as a staff writer on Sid Caesar's *Your Show of Shows*. My one lament is that Simon does not devote more attention to this period of his early career.

Simon writes engagingly about his growing awareness of the intimidating presence he began to acquire among actors and directors by the early 1970s. Robert Moore, the director of *Last of the Red Hot Lovers* felt that the play needed some changes, but was hesitant to tell Simon. So he transmitted his ideas through Simon's wife Joan. As Simon writes, "I was beginning to find that success breeds intimidation. It happened with most, but not all of the directors I eventually worked with and a great many actors. They thought since I had so many hits, I must know what I'm doing and who were they to tell me they felt some things were wrong?" However, as the title of the book suggests, Simon loves rewriting and considers it a natural and necessary part of the playwriting process.

Interestingly, Simon pays homage in *Rewrites* to Moss Hart, whom Simon considers a personal hero. This tribute is well placed in a memoir that successfully attempts to do what Hart accomplished so effectively in his classic book, *Act One*. Like Hart, Simon is uniquely qualified to observe and critique the behind-the-scenes process of writing a hit play. And, as Hart did, Simon provides an insider's account of a vital period in American theater history. While Simon does not attempt to account for the seismic shifts that have occurred in the American theater since the 1960s, his account of his own career—arguably the preeminent playwright of his era—cannot fail to provide valuable insights on the evolution of the theater over the last thirty years.

The book ends with the untimely death of Simon's first wife Joan in 1973. Several Simon-penned plays (e.g., *Chapter Two*, *Jake's Women*) have

rendered insight into the personal devastation Simon experienced during this dark time in his life. In *Rewrites*, Simon's account is moving and self-reflective. During this period, Simon began to experience panic attacks and suffered from high blood pressure. Psychotherapy helped, but, perhaps not surprisingly, it was Simon's writing that kept him afloat—or at least distracted—during this difficult time. "I picked up the script of *The Sunshine Boys* and let it swallow up all my other thoughts. Writing has always done that for me." The last pages of the book, in which Simon describes the death and burial of Joan are poignant and powerfully written. Simon wisely ends the book with this episode, leaving the last twenty-three years for another tome. "My life had reached both a zenith and at the same time, come to a crashing halt. That story was the one I wanted to tell. The aftermath and what came in the ensuing years can wait their turn." Simon is reportedly at work on a second volume.

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Contemporary American Dramatists. Editor: K. A. Berney. Introduction: Holly Hill. Associate Editor: N. G. Templeton. London: St. James Press, 1994. ISBN 1-55862-214-4.

In her introduction to the St. James Press's *Contemporary American Dramatists*, Holly Hill surveys the twentieth-century history of the American stage and stresses the problems that have hampered the development of new plays and the survival of theatres that promote them. However, the works of the 197 dramatists catalogued here offer more hope. This solid reference work provides not only an important resource, but a welcome accounting of the remarkable dramatic legacy of the United States. *Contemporary American Dramatists* is not without its problems, but it is the best resource on its subject currently available and, as such, it will be a necessary addition to any serious theatre collection until a more expansive and inclusive volume (or set of volumes) is created.

The editors have done a good job of including the most important and prolific mainstream American dramatists, from Eugene O'Neill (who contributor Margaret Loftus Ranald writes displayed "a unique sense of the tragic human condition" [448]) to the present. However, many secondary dramatists who have not been well-chronicled elsewhere are unfortunately omitted. Significant women playwrights from Lillian Hellman to María Irene Fornés are featured with twenty-eight other women writers, but the editors do less well in selecting African-

Americans and writers of various ethnic persuasions whose works are often produced away from Broadway and the major regional theatres. Collectives are omitted (although the San Francisco Mime Troupe is represented by that troupe's resident playwright, Joan Holden), while such comparatively insignificant commercial dramatists as George Axelrod, a forgettable boulevard comedy writer of the 1950s (*Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* and *The Seven-Year Itch*), is featured.

Entries for each of the dramatists included feature biographical highpoints, educational background, awards won, current addresses, a listing of published plays and other writings, and a listing of other theatrical activities as applicable (directing, acting, producing experience, etc.). Each entry includes a critical essay by a scholar of note, as well as comments from some of the living writers themselves. Some of these are brief and to the point, such as statements by Amiri Baraka ("My work changes as I change in a changing world" [39]), Mark Medoff ("My work is simply a reflection of my own spirit, my fears, sorrows, and fires." [401]), Robert Patrick ("My plays are dances with words." [468]), and Megan Terry ("I design my plays to provoke laughter—thought may follow." [575]). Others are more verbose, such as Arthur Miller who describes his drive to write: "I am constantly awed by what an individual is, by the endless possibilities in him for good and evil, by his unpredictability, by the possibilities he has for any betrayal, and cruelty, as well as any altruism, any sacrifice" (410). Adrienne Kennedy sees her plays as "states of mind" (305), while Larry Gelbart notes that "If anything I've ever written in any way reflects this dream-like existence that passes for life, I can only hope that the mirror I've held up to it is sufficiently cracked" (196). August Wilson describes his specific mission to "write about the black experience in America and try to explore in terms of the life I know best those things which are common to all cultures" (643). Along with these interesting reflections by the dramatists themselves, the entries are generally well-organized and informative (despite occasional errors—Mart Crowley's entry indicates that he died in 1991, although he is still very much alive!), and the critical essays are unfailingly concise and evocative.

A second section includes thirty essays on what the editors deem the most important plays of the contemporary American stage. Although a few of their choices, particularly of very recent plays, are arguable, this is a good selection of the essential dramas from O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night* ("a beautifully constructed play, moving inexorably through recriminations, confrontations, and confessions to a stunning theatrical climax," [702]) to Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* ("in scale and ambition *Angels in America* stands alone on the contemporary stage," [675]).

A reference work that contains career information on current writers suffers from the inherent problem of being out-of-date by the time it is published. Little post-1993 information is contained for working writers, but this resource may be the only one that includes significant accounting of many of the dramatists who are still in comparatively early stages of their careers. Another problem is that by only providing a listing of published works by each dramatist, the user is frustrated by the omission of any significant production history or listing of unpublished and unproduced works, except in a few cases. The volume is handsomely bound and includes a title index, but it is not illustrated—a portrait of each writer would be a welcome addition.

The St. James Press has also published two other volumes in a similar style, *Contemporary British Dramatists* and *Contemporary Women Dramatists*, providing a reliable source of information on twentieth century playwrights. These will be the best resources until a broader and more detailed accounting is published.

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The Correspondence of Edward Gordon Craig and Count Harry Kessler. Editor: L. M. Newman. London: W. S. Manley & Son Ltd. for the Modern Humanities Research Association and the Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London, 1995. ISBN 0-901286-59-1.

L. M. Newman's valuable and fascinating collection of the thirty-four year correspondence of theatrical theorist and scene designer Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966) with his intrepid patron, Count Harry Kessler (1868-1937), chronicles a fascinating era in modern theatre and the artistic struggles of Craig, one of the most influential and disturbing figures of the period. The letters begin in 1903 when Kessler first saw Craig's stage work in London and continues until a few months before Kessler's death in 1937. Craig, who Newman describes as "an instinctive creator, but also suspicious and elusive," (224) came to depend heavily on Kessler, who Craig once referred to as "one of the very best friends of my life," (3) for income and creative inspiration. Kessler, Newman writes, "demonstrated an unshakeable loyalty towards Craig, striking in view of the latter's obdurate nature," (222). Newman does not spare Craig, a moody and often childish man who became notorious in theatrical circles for his outrageous demands and explosive temperament. However, Newman's view is also

balanced—she acknowledges Craig’s remarkable achievements and his singular importance in the evolution of the twentieth-century stage. She also gives credit where credit is due to Kessler for keeping the mercurial Craig going despite the designer’s impracticality and personal peccadilloes.

Newman divides the correspondence into four parts, each spanning distinct periods in Craig’s career and focusing on his reliance on Kessler. Newman’s excellent introductions are essential to fully appreciating the background and the content of the letters. Part One spans 1903-1910, the era in which Craig gained his first significant recognition as a designer and theorist. On a visit to London, Kessler had seen Craig’s designs for Ibsen’s *The Vikings* (1903) and felt that Craig could be the perfect designer for the plays of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, whom Kessler greatly admired. During this period, Kessler worked feverishly to help Craig promote his ideas and find managers who would permit him to realize his visions. Kessler was instrumental in leading Craig to Germany, where Craig worked with director Otto Brahm on Hofmannsthal’s version of *Venice Preserved* (1905) and negotiated—unsuccessfully—with Max Reinhardt for a series of productions. Craig also met and became personally and professionally involved with iconoclastic American dancer Isadora Duncan, designed a setting for Eleonora Duse’s production of Ibsen’s *Rosmersholm* (1906), and began a three-year collaboration with the great Russian director Constantin Stanislavsky on a ground-breaking production of *Hamlet* (1911) at the Moscow Art Theatre during this time. And on another front, Craig launched himself as a publisher and writer in the first decade of the twentieth century, most particularly through his journal, *The Mask*, which began publication in 1908 and continued until 1929. Newman makes a persuasive case that it was during this era that Kessler led Craig “to self-discovery and the foundation of his phenomenal influence” (7).

Part Two focuses on the years between 1911 and 1914 when Craig’s ideas became more widely known and accepted, although he became increasingly frustrated by his inability to come to terms with any theatre that would produce his work as he wished. In 1913, Craig opened a theatre school in Florence to advance his ideas, but it closed after a short time due to the start of World War I. Part Three covers the years 1915-1928 during which Craig published numerous books on his theories, designs, and bookplates, but only succeeded in contributing to two productions, Ibsen’s *The Pretenders* (1926) in Denmark and an unsuccessful New York production of *Macbeth* (1928). Part Four covers 1929-1937, the final years of the Craig-Kessler relationship when Craig illustrated an edition of *Hamlet*, which was published by Kessler’s Cranach Press, and during which time Kessler was beset by illness and debt. Through all parts of this collection, the letters chronicle not only Craig’s theatrical successes and

frustrations, but also focus considerable attention on their creative process in illustrating *Hamlet* (1930), which has since been frequently regarded by critics as one of the most remarkable books ever published.

Newman has done a scholarly and painstaking job of annotating the letters, which are heavily and usefully footnoted to identify the supporting players in both men's lives and to illuminate the "short-hand" that understandably occurs in the longtime correspondences of two like-minded and close friends. The book's numerous illustrations include two photos (one of Craig and Kessler examining a Craig stage model and a photo taken by Craig's son and assistant, Edward A. Craig, showing Craig, Sr., in front of Goethe's study in 1927), William Rothenstein's superb portraits of both Craig and Kessler, proofs and working sketches of Craig's illustrations for *Hamlet* and *Robinson Crusoe* (an uncompleted project) for the Cranach Press, bookplates designed by Craig for Kessler, and many thumbnail sketches in Craig's letters to Kessler through the years. Newman also includes a helpful chronology that covers the lives of both Craig and Kessler, as well as the significant others in their lives, a listing of Craig's illustrations for *Hamlet* for both the English and the German editions (for which there are variant page numbers), an index of wood-prints from *Hamlet*, an extensive bibliography for both Craig and Kessler, and an index that stresses Craig's work. All of this combines to permit the correspondence to function on several levels. It provides a close view of the creative process, a portrait of two individuals of titanic energy and artistic flair, a history of early twentieth century "cutting edge" theatre, and offers an excellent reference tool, particularly in studying Craig's life and work. Who could ask for anything more?

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Classical Acting. Malcolm Morrison. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1995.
ISBN 0-435-07179-3.

Classical Acting, by Malcolm Morrison, is a practical text, appropriate for all beginning actors. Its purpose, specifically, is to guide those who are attempting to approach a classical text for the first time. The scope of the text is broad. Morrison describes a classical text as "one which is highly structured, is representative of its time and author, deals with enduring themes, often expressed in heightened, literary language, has stood the test of time and is not related to colloquial and modern experiences," (1). He further cites examples in the plays

of Molière, Sophocles, Shaw, Ibsen, and Chekhov. In studying these texts, Morrison attempts to apply a “modern sensibility” for the actor.

Once he describes his purpose, Morrison begins to defend it, explaining: “In writing this book, I have to face the uncomfortable fact that books on acting can never do justice to the topic and invariably fail to account for the heart of theatre which lies in human beings interacting with each other.” He further defends: “This is an enormous subject, which deserves many volumes, books on sociology, anthropology, the physics of sound, social history, Greek, Latin, semiotics, textual criticism - but fortunately many have been written already,” (3). The first apology is for describing the “craft” as opposed to the “art” of acting, while the second apology is for creating a text for the beginner. Neither apology is necessary. This text neither trivializes the intangible elements of acting nor suffers from a lack of context.

The opening chapter describes the modern sensibility toward classical pieces. Included are references to societal changes and changes in the meanings of words which combine to change the context of a classical piece. It is simple and straightforward. Subsequent chapters include discussions of how and with what purposes the text should be read, the balance in importance between style and content, how words combine to form thoughts, and many other practical considerations in approaching a pre-contemporary text.

The best chapters, coincidentally, happen to be the most practical. Included among them is the chapter entitled “Speaking Verse: Quantity and Sense.” In it, Morrison describes, clearly and in detail, the need for a delicate balance between metric stress or verse and sense stress or poetry. He explains, “I would define verse as relating to matters of structure, like rhythm and rhyme, whereas poetry pertains to the content, the ideas” (46). As in all of his chapters, Morrison uses many clear examples. Another chapter, entitled “Voice and Speech: Expressing Meaning, Clarifying Meaning” is also noteworthy. In it, he gives specific helpful exercises for actors. This chapter clearly draws from his previous text, entitled “Clear Speech.” Here again, Morrison underscores the need to balance technique and meaning. He states: “The overall objective in developing the voice and speech necessary to perform classical roles is to produce a responsive instrument fully capable of expressing feeling while imparting meaning” (66).

The text also serves as a reference book. A chapter entitled: “Doings, Gestures, and Demeanors” lists typical behaviors including greetings, for various periods ranging from the middle ages through the nineteenth century. Another chapter is dedicated specifically to the Greek society and its texts, which details the function of the chorus and the unique purpose and structure of the Greek play. Yet another entitled, “Now I am Alone,” gives detailed advice for those actors

preparing a speech either for performance or audition. Also, actors will find the appendixes particularly helpful. They include listings and descriptions of all the Greek and Roman deities, a chronology and description of the kings and queens of England, and the duties of the various Elizabethan household servants.

Without question, *Classical Acting* is useful to actors as well as the beginning acting teacher. However, it should be noted that as a beginning text, this book will serve actors only as a springboard to subsequent books on acting in a “style” piece. It is practical and simple to read, but lacks the necessary detail to be an actor’s only reference on the topic. Each topic receives only an introduction, albeit a thorough one. As such, it is an ideal text for a beginning course on “acting in style.” In fact, Morrison’s advice on approaching a text would be applicable for any actor, regardless of the “type” of text she is studying. Each chapter finishes with a summary of the text and a list of exercises for the actor/student. There is a complete, though not impressive, bibliography.

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Towards a Third Theatre: Eugenio Barba and the Odin Teatret. Ian Watson.
London: Routledge, 1993. ISBN 0-415-12764-5.

Eugenio Barba’s importance as both scholar and director is known to too few. Other than a few journal articles, Barba’s 1986 publication of *Beyond the Floating Islands* and the 1991 *The Secret Art of the Performer* co-authored with Nicola Savarese, little is written in English about this director. Author Ian Watson notes that though several books address aspects of his work in Italian and Danish, before this monograph, no comprehensive study of Barba’s work existed in any language. Watson’s book fills this void offering insight into Barba, his company, the Odin Teatret, and his contributions to contemporary theory.

Watson’s diligence toward his project is manifested throughout the text. To research his subject, Watson visited the Holstebro headquarters of the Nordisk Teater-laboratorium where he observed training and rehearsals, interviewed Barba and his actors, and explored the Odin archive. Watson also toured with the company through Denmark, Yugoslavia, Uruguay, Argentina and Peru. During the Latin American tours, he experienced third theatre gatherings in Bahia Blanca, Argentina and the 1988 Peruvian meeting in Chaclacay. He also attended three of the International School of Theatre Anthropology sessions mounted by Barba since 1985, the Holstebro congress in 1986, the 1987 meeting in Salento, Italy, and the session in Bologna, Italy, in 1990. Throughout the monograph, Watson

incorporates his observations. Though Watson credits the research about Barba done by scholars such as Ferdinando Taviani, Thomas Bredsdorff and Eric Exe Christoffersen, his major source of written information has been Barba's own publications (xviii-xix).

Barba began the Odin Teatret in Oslo in 1964 from a group of young actors who were rejected by the Norwegian national theatre school. Richard Schechner's short foreword states, "Barba, fresh from his own apprenticeship with Grotowski, wanted to make an off-center theatre, an organ of research that would be different from either the commercial or state theatres that dominated the European scene (and still do)" (xv). Paralleling the work of Grotowski, Barba chose to focus his company toward dedication to training, careful preparation, rehearsals as long as needed (sometimes expanding to two years), and indifference to public reaction. Schechner refers to it as a theatre laboratory and in the true sense, a place for research (xv).

Schechner fixes historical significance to Barba's work, which "mediates several Western avant-garde traditions" (xvii). Schechner states that Barba is not directly in the line that leads from Alfred Jarry through Dada and Surrealism, the Theatre of the Absurd, Happenings, environmental theatre to postmodern dance, or performance art. Nor is the Odin directly in line with group theatres or theatres of alternative lifestyles and communities. What he believes is that "Barba's Odin incorporates aspects from all these avant-garde and experimental tendencies. The result is what Barba terms the 'third theatre'" (xviii).

During the first year, Barba created the Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium (NTL) and the Odin as the main production wing of the NTL as an organization that in "addition to studying the actor in performance, researches training and rehearsal methodologies, and studies performance forms in various cultures" (3). From the NTL, Barba founded the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) in 1979.

Though a major teaching center, the NTL is more than a source for research and the ISTA, as it arranges performances for international companies, publishes and sells theatre books, rents films on theatre and is the umbrella organization for several groups associated with the Odin. A significant example is that Barba was instrumental in arranging Grotowski's first tour outside of Poland in 1966. From the NTL's involvement in publishing a journal, *Teatres Teori og Teknikk* (TTT-Theory and Technique of Theatre), edited by Barba, emerged special topic issues including the first published edition of Grotowski's *Towards a Poor Theatre*. Other accomplishments resulting from the group's endeavors were ongoing visits from companies and artists that led Odin workshops, including Dario Fo, Jean-Louis Barrault, Etienne Decroux, Jacques Lecoq, and Noh masters Hisao and Hideo Kanze.

But it is the members of the Odin Teatret who have had a major impact on the evolution of Barba's ideas on theatre. Today the Odin Teatret is located within the small city of Holstebro, in Jutland and a distance from Copenhagen. Barba continues to work with a core group of actors who do not share a common mother tongue. Though the original members were from Norway, since the early 1970s the first non-Scandinavians joined the group from Italy, Argentina, Britain, Canada, Germany, Spain, and the United States. Because the company resides in Denmark, all Odin actors are required to learn Danish; however, the Danish spoken is a combination of many foreign words and theatre jargon. Barba, who speaks six languages, does not speak Danish in rehearsals, but speaks Norwegian which reflects the group's roots and is understood by Danes and recognized as a "foreign" language (3). With these rehearsal practices and extensive touring, it is easy to understand how a linguistic mix has been the choice of languages in productions, resulting in much experimentation including "developing pieces in fabricated tongues" (3).

Watson delves into Barba's early years and his theatrical lineage that begins with Meyerhold rather than Stanislavsky. Barba developed a theatre in which "the performance text takes precedence over a faithful interpretation of the author's words, in which causal connections between scenes have been rejected in favor of an episodic montage" (11). As Barba explores the actor-audience relationship, the performance space is adjusted for each production; these practices are more associated with Meyerhold than Stanislavsky (11).

Following this divergence from the influences of psychological realism, Watson recounts the influence Grotowski had upon Barba as the two travelled to India to observe Kathakali. Ironically, Barba's experience became one of the first technical descriptions of the form by a European and produced an article that was published in multiple countries in Scandinavia, as well as France and the USA. It is during this time that Barba as an unofficial member of Grotowski's company published material about the Polish director's work in the West. Barba refers to the three years with Grotowski as his "'period of apprenticeship'" (16). Watson's major point about Grotowski's influence upon Barba is that Grotowski's legacy is not a model, but rather the idea of "viewing performance as an intellectual enterprise as much as a practical, creative field" (17). Watson states that Barba has followed his mentor's footsteps and his theatre in Holstebro has become a world-renowned center for performance research, and being "familiar with the most important ideas contained in these writings and lectures is the ideal point of departure for a study of Barba's work" (17).

After detailing Barba's early years, Watson confronts how the director's theories are primarily concerned with two aspects of theatre sociology and practice. Barba's ideas on the sociology of theatre are encapsulated in what he

refers to as “third theatre.” For members of the third theatre, “content and form are often less important than a group’s socio-cultural philosophy and how that philosophy is realized in its daily work and reflected in its productions” (21). This lucid chapter describes practical application of terms that Barba encapsules in his work such as: barter, cultural exchange, sats, the pre-expressive, and incultured [sic] and accultured behavior. The defining of the terminology and the examples of application are helpful to those interested in cross-cultural esthetics.

Watson’s clear writing and details in the first two chapters establish Barba as a “practical man of the theatre” and help elucidate his esthetic and sociological theories that “attempt to understand his and his actors’ work in the theatre, an attempt to come to terms with his own history” (40). Watson states that this history is connected with the Odin Teatret, the NTL, and the ISTA, since “their history is his, and his history is theirs” (40). The remainder of the book considers that history.

Other chapters consider training, rehearsals and dramaturgy, productions, and the International School of Theatre Anthropology. Included within these chapters are figures that include the ground plans, set sketches, elevation views of various productions, and discussion of the director’s process. Wonderful plates of productions from the 1969 premiere of *Ferai* are included and span to the 1988 premiere of *Talabot*. The chapters are followed by detailed notes, a select bibliography, a listing of major films and videotapes relevant to the work of Eugenio Barba, and an index.

Importantly, Watson adds a “Brief, Necessary Afterword” where he recounts recent activities through August of 1994 of Barba and the ISTA in Cardiff, Wales at the Centre for Performance Research. Watson writes about the most recent evolution of Barba’s work in relationship to the “‘festuge,’ a festival of theatre and music performances, art exhibitions, public lectures, and demonstrations by local community groups, that he and the Odin mounted in Holstebro” (179). Watson summarizes that these theatrical events are the Odin’s attempt to reach out to the community that has supported them since the mid-sixties.

As the millennium approaches, this book helps one consider the importance of the director during this last century from both the practical and theoretical position. Any scholar interested in the directing process within the international arena will want to ponder Watson’s thoughtful and colorful accounts.

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