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### Jannarone Kimberly *Artaud and His Doubles* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010. 272 p. £26.95. ISBN: 978-0-472-11736-9.

Simon Ferdinand

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to time. This is a lucid and well-researched book that is brimming with charming anecdotes (such as Des O'Connor's *faux* faint), curious detail (such as the barring clauses), and engaging passages of analysis (such as the choreography of glances between Morecambe and Wise).

The book charts the rise, fall, and legacy of variety with skill. Double attempts to counter the 'misty-eyed nostalgia' for Victorian music hall, that regularly casts variety as the poor cousin, with an argument for variety's historical and cultural significance. The work in this way offers a valuable contribution to this underdeveloped area of study. The short chapters offer a rich survey that collectively depicts the people, places, practices, and performances in fine detail. The emphasis of the study falls on the singers and comedians, but this appears again to replicate the form. There is a wealth of material here, but this never overwhelms the clarity or cohesiveness of the book.

There are, however, moments that would have benefited from further elucidation. Issues regarding authenticity, censorship, and liveness, for example, were not as keenly explored as they might have been. Alongside the breadth of material there are several key refrains that echo through the text. I was particularly struck by the implication that for both comics and other artists the content of the act was less paramount than one might imagine; rather, one hears how comics rarely wrote their own gags, while the rope-spinners' technical skill was but one small aspect of their success.

Double explores this question of precisely what constitutes the 'performance' in variety through key notions such as personality and participation. The book concludes with a suggestive, if perhaps somewhat fleeting, account of variety's legacy.

Though there is much to recommend this book, two key aspects are marginalized. The relationship between variety and theatre is frequently implied but not fully addressed. This would not have been a conspicuous concern were it not for both the striking potential of this conversation and the occasional glances in theatre's direction that the book does make. The nods to Stanislavsky expose more than they reveal. Similarly, the question of politics is largely overlooked in ways that, for this reader, undermined the critical bite of the study. Multiple questions with respect to class, nation, gender, and disability (amongst others) are luminous in the book yet are not interrogated. However, while there was definite room to wrestle with the politics of the form more fully, this remains an excellent resource in the field. It is bursting at the seams with fascinating research, and this wealth of variety content is executed with assured delivery.

ANNA HARPIN

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Kimberly Jannarone

### Artaud and His Doubles

Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010.

272 p. £26.95.

ISBN: 978-0-472-11736-9.

In *Artaud and His Doubles*, Kimberly Jannarone presents an arresting and clear-sighted revisionist reconstruction of Antonin Artaud's prospective stagecraft, as well as the rhetoric and world view that conditioned and infused it. That reconstruction has had to work against a profoundly fetishistic academic field. Indeed, Artaud's name has developed a quasi-religious gravity such that even a thinker so uncompromisingly critical as Jean Baudrillard (2005) could warn against succumbing to 'the delusion of assuming that talking about Artaud is possible'.

It is in refreshing opposition to this received belief in Artaud's profound exceptionalism that Jannarone, *contra* Baudrillard, dares not only to talk about Artaud, but also to undertake the task of grounding his theatrical work firmly in the requisite historical contexts.

The monograph's thesis is strikingly bold: Artaud's proposed 'Theatre of Cruelty' was, in terms of its historical and phenomenological sources, formal programme, and broader social intent, deeply interwoven with the moment of fascism in interwar European aesthetic and political culture. The book situates Artaud's theatre, so often characterized as a liberating revolt or tragic promulgation of an impossible vitality, at the nexus between two seismic developments that defined the history of modern theatre: the emergence of newly passive bourgeois theatre audiences and the parallel rise of the figure of the theatre director with increasingly absolute power over the theatrical event.

Jannarone shows how Artaud fused these developments into a spectacle in which an exalted and omnipotent director would captivate and compel an arrayed mass of physically elated but intellectually docile bodies.

While the sheer extremity of that spectacle was largely unparalleled in the discourse of modernist theatre, it was matched by the surrounding politics. Indeed, a diffuse but very palpable historical unity emerges between the 'organized anarchy' of Artaud's theatre and a range of popular fascist theatres in Italy, Germany, and elsewhere, if not the simultaneous discipline and euphoria of the Hitlerite rally itself. By framing Artaud's writings and theatrical productions in the tumultuous context of interwar fascism, Jannarone ultimately overturns the longstanding and habitually uncritical leftist investment in the political radicalism of Artaud's work and world view at large.

Undeniably, Artaud's proposals for a radically reinvigorated culture entail an impending transi-

tion into a wholly different future. That that future might be desirable according to any liberal or leftist standard, however, is an idea that *Artaud and His Doubles* decisively dispels and sets asunder. Thus Jannarone reproves and leaps free from the dead weight of much previous Artaud scholarship. To students and scholars concerned with Artaud's philosophical outlook, her book should prove provocative and fertile; to those engaged with his theatrical ideas it represents an indispensable portolan.

SIMON FERDINAND

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*Elaine Aston and Elin Diamond, ed.*

**The Cambridge Companion to Caryl Churchill**

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

193 p. £42.75.

ISBN: 978-0-521-72894-2.

This is a much-needed and long-awaited addition to the *Cambridge Companion* series. While the series itself is aimed at students, the volume offers much by way of summary and new perspectives from research on Churchill's work. The introduction by Aston and Diamond manages to provide the broad brushstrokes of Churchill's career, as well as giving clear and challenging pointers that draw out the themes of her work over her long and extraordinary playwriting career. Here, the themes identified are carefully contextualized in terms of practice, to allow a fluidity and flexibility in the ways in which we might define both Churchill's career and her contribution to British and international theatres.

The volume is divided into ten chapters, some of which give useful overviews of particular areas and themes of her practice – Howard's 'On Owning and Owing', Luckhurst's 'On the Challenge of Revolution', and Worth's 'On Text and Dance' will be useful starting points. Others will be more useful for those familiar with Churchill but looking for new and interesting angles, and here I am thinking of Diamond's 'On Churchill and Terror' and Gobert's 'On Performance and Selfhood'.

The volume has been conceptualized and shaped with great care, so it will be of use to a broad range of readers and researchers. The introduction provides an overview but the inclusion of three contextualizing chapters – one on sexual politics, one on collaboration and process, and one on Churchill's influences – makes a clever intervention into the field and allows for a broader understanding of Churchill as a cultural practitioner, not simply a playwright.

For readers from a younger generation, Reinelt's chapter 'On Feminist and Sexual Politics' provides a valuable contextual tool for the understanding of the genesis of Churchill's early career and the myriad ways in which her work

might be seen as embracing feminist politics. Aston's chapter on the collaborative processes which Churchill pioneered, with Max Stafford-Clark among others, is also an important intellectual marker of the relationship between the product and the context of its making. Here too Rebellato offers a witty and thought-provoking framework for understanding the huge range of influences that Churchill's work has had on playwrights and theatre makers across the globe, and moves easily and helpfully between the subsidized and the non-subsidized contexts of the theatre industry with ease.

The editors have successfully composed a non-linear, non-chronological volume in order to echo the non-linearity of so much of Churchill's work. My only complaint is that this *Cambridge Companion* could quite easily have been twice the size, in celebration of one of the most important playwrights of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries on both sides of the English speaking Atlantic.

MAGGIE B. GALE

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*Jessica Swale*

**Drama Games for Classrooms and Workshops**

London: Nick Hern Books, 2009. 182 p. £8.99

ISBN: 978-1-84842-010-6.

*Chris Johnston*

**Drama Games for Those Who Like to Say No**

London: Nick Hern Books, 2010. 206 p. £8.99.

ISBN: 978-1-84842-049-6.

*Jessica Swale*

**Drama Games for Devising**

London: Nick Hern Books, 2012. 122 p. £8.99.

ISBN: 978-1-84842-037-3.

The publication of Swale's *Drama Games for Devising* provides a good opportunity to view it alongside its two companions in this series. Swale's earlier book aimed at the drama classroom and the theatre workshop has been reprinted no less than seven times since its first publication and the other book in the series by Chris Johnston went into reprint one year after its first publication, proving, if nothing else, the popularity of the series. These are not works of scholarship and not even textbooks, but 'dip-in, flick-through, quick-fire resource' books for teachers, workshop leaders, and theatre makers.

Nevertheless, taken together, they do have something to offer to the scholar of contemporary theatre practice. Each comes with an informative Foreword, one from Mike Leigh and one from Max Stafford-Clark, and it is impossible not to warm to Ken Livingstone's Foreword in Johnston's book when he asserts that the GLC saw the advantage of the arts to counteract the