

Book Reviews

***Crossroads: Performance Studies and Irish Culture* ed. by Sara Brady and Fintan Walsh.**

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 255 pp. (hardback)

SHONAGH HILL

Crossroads: Performance Studies and Irish Culture offers a compelling argument for the application of performance paradigms to Irish culture. Not only is it an interesting and engaging volume but it marks an important contribution to both theatre and cultural studies in Ireland as it stands at the crossroads of several disciplines: a metaphor invoked in the introduction by the editors who propose 'taking up unmarked roads with no predetermined direction or obvious destination' (2). The 'unmarked roads' productively travelled in this collection of eighteen essays broaden the scope of 'Irishness' by interrogating its construction and perpetuation through a breadth of performances, including Gaelic Athletic Association sports, storytelling, pageants, parades, and more 'traditional' theatre.

Irish theatre, and in turn Irish theatre studies, has traditionally focused on text: the legacy of a national literary theatre. This collection indicates the shift in more recent academic discourse to performance practice and *Crossroads'* key contribution is its discussion of performance through both text and the body. In 1996, as quoted in the introduction, Anna McMullan noted the emerging emphasis on 'the visual, kinesic and the corporeal as major means of expression and signification' (3) and this approach is fruitfully appropriated in this collection. Tellingly, Joseph Roach's concept of 'genealogies of performance' from *Cities of the Dead* is referenced in several of the essays. Genealogies of performance highlight repeated or reperformed behaviour which is remembered through the body as living memory, drawing 'on the idea of expressive movements of mnemonic reserves' (Roach 26).

Roach suggests that these genealogies focus on 'counter-memories' and highlight 'the disparities between history as it is discursively transmitted and memory as it is publicly enacted by the bodies that bear its consequences' (26). Attendance to these counter memories is evident in essays on the embodied experience of roads as movement and memory (J'Aime Morrison), fictional, theatrical and televisual revisions of the story of Bridget Cleary who was burnt to death in 1895 on suspicion of being possessed by a fairy spirit (Charlotte McIvor), and in the enactment of Irish cultural identity in the annual Dublin St Patrick's Day Festival Parade (Holly Maples). Examination of the ways in which cultural memory is enacted on and through bodies enables the book to offer fresh critical interventions into the study of Irish culture and performance.

Until recently, Irish cultural and theatre studies have largely focused on post-colonial constructions of national identity to the detriment of discourses such as gender. This collection is particularly strong in its offerings on gender and queer performance and I would like to highlight two essays: the aforementioned Charlotte McIvor's 'Ghosting *Bridgie Cleary*: Tom Mac Intyre and Staging this Woman's Death' and Fintan Walsh's 'Homelysexuality and the "Beauty" Pageant.' McIvor's essay examines the memorialization of Cleary's death through re-enactments which fuse myth and history as well as interrogating Ireland's post-colonial status and gender politics. McIvor argues that following fictional and televisual interrogations of Bridget's story, Tom Mac Intyre's 2005 play *What Happened Bridgie Cleary*, returns Bridget's voice and body to the centre of these critical discourses. Bridgie's ghostly resurrection engages in contemporary critical discourses concerning her death and her dialogic intervention grants her authority. The cultural memory of an Irish 'homelysexuality,' as perpetuated and disrupted through beauty pageants, is the focus of Fintan Walsh's essay. Walsh outlines the performative construction of Irish women's sexuality in the *Rose of Tralee*, *Calor Housewife of the Year* and *Miss Ireland* pageants which domesticated and idealized femininity to reaffirm nostalgic tropes of Irish cultural identity. The normative performances of female sexuality marked woman's body as passive and Walsh traces the move towards the expression of an *unheimlich* sexuality in the *Alternative Miss Ireland* pageant. Though these pageants queer the homelysexuality of traditional gender identities, Walsh warns of 'the risk of commodifying homosexuality or playing it as cosmopolitan affect' (206). Walsh points to the role of global

economics in his consideration of the regulation of sexuality through the pageant: a discourse which enables him to reflect on the ways in which the pageant's appropriation of gender does not simply repress but can also be manipulated and exploited. As Walsh's conclusion highlights, invigoration of the discussion of identity politics depends upon a move from post-colonial constructions of 'Irishness' to consideration of discourses of globalization.

In addition to the section on 'Gender, Feminism and Queer Performance,' *Crossroads* offers absorbing sections on 'Tradition, Ritual, and Play,' 'Place, Landscape, and Commemoration,' 'Political Performances,' and 'Diaspora, Migration, and Globalization.' In the spirit of expanding the scope of Irish theatre and performance studies, the collection presents a rewarding range of essays, from Bernadette Sweeney's discussion of the traditions of mumming, waking, and Wrenboys and Strawboys in 'Performing Tradition' to consideration of contemporary performance art: Carmen Szabó's 'Between the Living and the Dead: Performative "In-betweens" in the Work of Alastair MacLennan,' and Gabriella Calchi Novati's 'Challenging Patriarchal Imagery: Amanda Coogan's Performance Art.' Aptly, the collection closes with two considerations of the changing face of national identity: Eric Weitz's 'Who's Laughing Now? Comic Currents for a New Irish Audience,' and Holly Maples's 'Parading Multicultural Ireland: Identity Politics and National Agendas in the 2007 St Patrick's Festival,' which speak to emerging communities who perform a 'new Ireland.' My only quibble with what is an otherwise wide-ranging collection which opens up the parameters of identity politics is the neglect of any engagement with class politics. This aside, *Crossroads* is a gratifying collection of essays which will reward those engaged in any aspect of Irish studies and indeed those with a passing interest. The crossroads evoked by this collection certainly offer interesting new directions which open out to enriching possibilities through the intersection of performance studies and culture.

Works Cited

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New York: Columbia U P, 1996.

***Fictional Thinking: A Poetics and Rhetoric of Fictional Creativity in Theatre* by Eli Rozik**

Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2009, 323 pp. (paperback)

KAREN QUIGLEY

As university applications in the UK this year increase by 20% from 2009 figures, in a manner indirectly proportional to Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) cuts, it seems inevitable that there will be a significant number of applicants who will not receive university places for the academic year 2010-2011 (Guardian). With this in mind, it can be surmised that the need for accessible books dealing with abstract theoretical topics that can be difficult to understand without face-to-face explanation mounts, potentially increasing the chance that genuine interest in a subject will combine with the reading of such books to provoke thought and discussion, whether fuelled by the universities or not.

Eli Rozik's 2009 monograph, *Fictional Thinking: A Poetics and Rhetoric of Fictional Creativity in Theatre*, can be examined in this light as a timely contribution to the ever-growing quantity of theatre studies literature that deals with the analysis of the creation, production and consumption of dramatic works. Its structure, tone and content contribute to my speculation here. Situating himself firmly in the realm of the instructive and the pedagogical, Rozik aims 'to create a reliable methodology of fictional analysis,' claiming that, in identifying commonalities in the structures of fictional worlds as created by playwrights, it will be possible 'to understand the generative rules underlying fictional thinking' (4). For Rozik, the 'fictional thinking' of his title supports this claim, indicating that it refers to the manner in which manufacturers of fiction utilise the fictional worlds that they create, inhabited as these worlds (usually) are by fictional characters who perform fictional actions, in order to express themselves and their psyches. This assertion, borrowing heavily from the writings of Northrop Frye, leads Rozik to the notion of fictional creativity as not only the invention of the fictional world, but also its reception by the reader/spectator.

It is, of course, clear that this methodology of analysing fiction could be applied to almost any artform that involves the creation of fictional worlds. Rozik here defends his use of theatre and theatrical fictional worlds for the purpose, specifically in

relation to the experience of going to the theatre. He turns our attention to the undeniable fact that theatre so often requires 'that the imagination of a heterogeneous group of spectators be captured at once and that their response be in unison' (5), showing his choice of primary example to be one that tests his theories with more rigour than, say, an examination of the structures of novels or poems would. With this in mind, Rozik proceeds to combine the dramatic text and its performance into 'the genuine and unique theatre text' (5), exploring over 100 examples of playtexts drawn from the length and breadth of recorded theatre history, and supporting his own thoughts on theatrical fictional worlds and their creation with reference to the work of a plethora of theorists including Aristotle, Freud, Jung, Hegel and Nietzsche.

In Part One, Rozik works from a primarily Aristotelian emphasis on the notion of set principles of dramatic structure, defining six separate strata or 'layers' that, for him, underlie the organised construction or 'poetic deep structure' of any fictional world (24). For example, these layers begin with 'the mythical layer', which Rozik sees as the initial metaphorical description of the audience's psyche, identifiable by a removal of all unnecessary characterization or action until only the mythical core remains. The major example employed here is Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, in which almost every detail of Oedipus' character, from his status as a king to the scar that identifies him may be eliminated without changing the essential myth, as long as the fact that he is the son of his parents remains. Building from this, Rozik identifies the praxical, naïve, ironic, modal and aesthetic layers in a similar way, exploring both a psychoanalytic and Aristotelian approach to each layer, as well as a description of how to detect each layer, and, interestingly, how each layer can also operate as a 'fallacy.' The remainder of Part One deals with other elements of fictional creation such as characterisation, intertextuality, and the function of Aristotle's unities as laid out in *Poetics*, with clear definitions and pertinent examples in use throughout.

Parts Two and Three of *Fictional Thinking* are devoted to an exploration of different elements of dramatic structures, from allegoric to absurdist, with an emphasis in Part Two on audience reception of the fictional world being presented, and an emphasis in Part Three on types of 'surface structures' as distinct from the 'deep structure' discussed in Part One. For Rozik, surface structures emerge from the deep structure, with each surface structure following specific rules in order to engender a certain response in the spectator, usually as a result of presupposing their

archetypal expectations and then fulfilling or frustrating these in some way. For example, he discusses absurdist structure in terms of its attempt to shock the spectators and avoid the possibility of their catharsis. This third section in particular provides some penetrating analysis of plays including *Antigone* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, as well as including a generous examination of the notion of an anti-Aristotelian viewpoint, despite a frank acknowledgment of its ambiguous function in the context of a discussion examining fictionality.

Part Four of Rozik's book explores specific case studies of fictional worlds in order to test his theory that fictional creativity can be explained formulaically. He looks at the Hippolytus/Phaedra myth; he shows how Calderón could have written *Life is a Dream* as an adaptation of *Oedipus the King*; he examines Jungian archetypal characterization in *Medea* and *The Seagull*; he analyses an Israeli production of Ionesco's *The Chairs* in order to compare the different fictional worlds set up by the playtext and the specific production. This fourth and final section provides a useful illustration of Rozik's thoughts so far, and, as with the rest of *Fictional Thinking*, the positive and assured tone of his prose leaves us in no doubt as to his command of this subject.

However, it is clear here that, despite Rozik's clarity of structure and evident desire to comprehensively explain his theory of fictional worlds, he occasionally expects too much of his readers, while simultaneously using techniques such as short, subdivided chapters, and chapter summaries in order to allow the reader to gradually accumulate the information he is imparting. These expectations, comparable to his own observation that the spectators' expectations on entering the theatre mingle the wishful and the fearful, the hope 'that something desired will succeed' and the fear 'that something undesired will prevail' (21), mostly centre around an assumption of prior knowledge of his work, both in this area of 'fictional thinking,' and in theatre studies more generally. There are many points in the writing where Rozik directs us to another of his books or articles, which allows him to avoid a number of potentially knotty questions. For example, because of his assertion that he is acknowledging the combination of the written and performed text as 'theatre' here, the obvious absorption in the verbal and the textual while paying very little attention to the visual jars somewhat. The book is replete with images of various productions of the playtexts to which Rozik continually refers (*Hamlet*, *Yerma*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Chairs*) but he does not discuss the specific productions shown in many cases,

except the chapter (one of 27) devoted to a production of *The Chairs* as outlined above. While it cannot be denied that the original creator of the fictional world is (usually) the playwright, the role of the theatre director and designers cannot be underestimated, particularly as Rozik constantly returns to the notion of going to the theatre, and the theatre audience's response to the fictional world presented to them, which would seem to indicate the necessity of an augmented discussion of individual productions rather than just the playtexts.

That said, the value of *Fictional Thinking: A Poetics and Rhetoric of Fictional Creativity in Theatre* lies, as mentioned above, in its pedagogical impulse. Rozik clearly loves to teach, and the helpful structure and tone of this book confidently leads the expert and uninitiated alike through the potentially difficult terrain of the ways in which fictional worlds are created and presented to the spectator, and how a variety of theoretical approaches can enhance understanding and analysis of the oft-contested questions of dramatic structure and audience response.

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Theatre & the Body by Colette Conroy

London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 86pp. (paperback)

NICHOLAS HAMILTON

Theatre & the Body is part of a series of short studies exploring the relationship between theatre and a variety of other disciplines, including politics, human rights and globalization. The book is designed to be read in one sitting and will be of interest to academics, students, theatre professionals and curious amateurs. Despite its brevity, *Theatre & the Body* is impressive in its scope, charting key ideas within its subject area from Descartes to Auslander.

Conroy begins with an account of French actress Sarah Bernhardt's opinions on the suitability of certain types of bodies for the theatre. In an acting manual from the 1920s, Bernhardt warned admissions staff at drama schools to turn down applicants with

unusually proportioned bodies – ‘little women with big heads or lads with long bodies supported by short and bandy legs’ (1). Bernhardt believed that only those with perfectly proportioned, ‘normal’ bodies could ever be described as actors. Her logic was that all performers should begin from a common starting point, so as to help the audience judge their ability to adopt a new guise. Of those performers with unusually proportioned bodies who achieve success, Bernhardt wrote, ‘I refuse the title of artist to those who owe their reputations to a physical deformity. I regard them as buffoons’ (1).

However, despite these strong views, Bernhardt did not live by her own rules. Instead, she continued to act after having her leg amputated. As Conroy points out, Bernhardt ‘was a disabled performer when she wrote her acting manual’ (2). Following her amputation, Bernhardt was able to continue earning a living as an actress because the public was morbidly fascinated by her as an amputee and happy to pay to see what she looked like. By her own standards, Bernhardt was no longer an actress but a ‘buffoon.’ This well-chosen example demonstrates the complexity involved in putting bodies on stage. It flags a number of key issues, which Conroy develops throughout the book. These include the relationship between actor and character, approaches to judging artistry and skill, and the body as an abstract ideal versus the body as real, physical object.

In the first chapter ‘Bodies and Meaning,’ Conroy observes that ‘[t]he different uses of the term “body” are absolutely crucial, because they carry with them assumptions and theories’ (9-10). She points out a number of revealing anomalies in the way that people use the term ‘body.’ Conroy cites Wittgenstein, who suggested that the most effective way to communicate a concept to somebody is by showing them a series of objects with a single common property. For example, in order to explain what blue means, one might point to the ink from a pen, the sky and the sea, all of which are blue. However, when the same approach is used to explain the term ‘body,’ it reveals that people think about their bodies in a different way. For example, it sounds strange to point at another person and say ‘That is a body.’ It also sounds strange to point at oneself and say ‘This is a body.’ These examples suggest that people see a distinction between themselves and their bodies. Conroy writes: ‘I can talk about “my body” in such a way that it sounds as though I own it, and as if there is such a thing as “I” without the body’ (17).

What is particularly impressive about this book is Conroy's use of illuminating cases studies from both theatre and avant-garde performance. Conroy develops the idea that there is a difference between the body and the self by using the example of the performance artist Orlan, who underwent plastic surgery in order to reconfigure her face as a hybrid of representations of classical goddesses. Orlan's project supports the idea that the self and the body are separate. However, whereas others may claim to undergo plastic surgery in order to bring their external body in line with the ideas of their internal self, the model for Orlan's surgery is external culture. Conroy cites Susan Bordo who believes 'that the body is a medium of culture – a text to be read and also written through action, clothing, dress – but also a direct locus of social control' (51). Orlan's project questions the relationship between mind, body and culture, and the way in which this social control operates.

Conroy takes her subject up to the present, outlining some fascinating recent ideas. She summarises an essay by Philip Auslander from 2006, in which he discusses the question of whether we can say that robots perform. Auslander says that spectators may be disappointed if they realise that the performers in a show are robots because robots may not appear to fulfil the criteria on which we usually judge performers – namely, 'intention, artistry, originality, self-expression and liveness' (35/6). However, Auslander argues that spectators' expectations can be satisfied if they consider the process involved in making the performance: 'the creativity of the programmer or the originality of the artist, for example' (36). Even if all of the criteria which usually define performance are not present at once in 'a single spectatorial experience' (36), this does not mean that it is not a performance.

Theatre & the Body fulfils its objective of making drama theory accessible to a wide readership. Conroy should be commended for the clarity and precision of her writing, and for managing to include so many interesting ideas in a very short book.

***Naming Theatre: Demonstrative Diagnosis in Performance Studies*
by James Frieze**

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 224 pp. (hardback)

STELLA KERAMIDA

In *Naming Theatre: Demonstrative Diagnosis in Performance Studies*, James Frieze begins his study with what he perceives to be 'an obsession with naming in recent theatrical performances and texts' (1). Frieze's specific theoretical stance is that the naming of characters, places, events, and phenomena is particularly distinctive and constitutive of the meaning of a play. Frieze illustrates how naming – of characters, space, geography, time and of events and phenomena (for example, the breakdown of communist regimes, the impact of AIDS, or globalization) – reflect on and intervene with the identity-formation of a play and its generic taxonomy (for example 'AIDS play,' 'Hispanic-American,' 'verbatim,' or 'gay and lesbian').

A particular strength of the book is its clear articulation of complex ideas, such as subjectivity, the effect of metaphor, the strategy of demonstrating irony, the link between medical diagnosis and theatre criticism, the authority of historical lineage (121-124), procedural methods in defining documentary theatre (docudocs), and the balance between the factual and the phatic. Other strengths include the use of unconventional examples (plays performed by experimental theatre artists that are not well known to popular audiences) and the book's comparative, almost dialogic, approach. Frieze focuses on close readings of particular theatre-makers, such as the work of Ping Chong, Anne Bogart, Suzan-Lori Parks, Theodora Skipitares, Paula Vogel, Coco Fusco, Bobby Baker, Forced Entertainment, Lightwork, Ridiculusmus and Riot Group, to provide his own firm conceptual grasp of critical naming in terms of authorship, assimilation, demonstration, diagnosis, programming, disclosure, monstrosity, and 'graphting' (i.e. when history functions as a host onto which the play grafts (161)). In that respect the contribution of the author to this area of scholarship is significant.

Frieze's main argument is that theatre can be an important factor in stabilizing grounding concepts (conceptualization) and, therefore, the process of naming fulfils an important role in the stabilization of identity. Frieze appropriately acknowledges that 'while analyses of naming have much to contribute to the study of theatre, theatre has much to contribute to the analysis of naming' (2), setting the tone for a specific homage to the value of theatre practice. But how does a thing relate to its name? Frieze suggests that 'names hide some things (objects, rules, laws) and reveal others' (1). He interestingly points out that 'the dynamics of naming are gestaltic: they entail interplay of figure and ground.'

So, the process of naming establishes something 'as a figure against a ground that may not be visible before the act of naming occurs, but which is thrown into relief *by* the act of naming' (2). For example, to show how the deployment of language (linguistics) contributes to the process of naming by performing meaning, he draws on theorists such as Julia Kristeva, in particular her definition of the semiotic trace 'as that memory to which the music of the body brings testimony' (8), and Hans-Thies Lehmann, with a focus on his notion of paratactic theatre or textscapes in which 'the "sonic" that carries the meaning and language is free to exert itself in all its sensory force' (8). After a systematic account of a range of theoretical approaches and detailed play analyses Frieze is able to convey a firm understanding of systems of naming.

The section entitled 'Supplement: Naming Critical Acts' (167) in Chapter Ten offers a thought-provoking discussion on the naming that critical readings perform. This clear and concise section will be of real value to students and academics alike, providing an inside view into the mechanisms of theatre and performance studies criticism. In this section the reader is able to see how a scholar reflects upon his own academic work. Criticism of theatre often relies on gender, style, and identity descriptors. Consequently, according to Frieze, critical discourse is constituted to a significant extent by 'naming conventions' or 'rituals' (177). 'The citation of sources and examples to endow analysis with cogency; those catalogues of previous works that often accompany academic articles about theatre companies; and the bibliographical notes on contributors or curriculum vitae that record the work of the critic. All these naming rituals are like a passport that the critic or artist must brandish' (178). Frieze further interrogates the sustained attempts by criticism to define the paradigm of postmodernism and how artists' work can be assimilated under that label. The author examines a range of academic paradigms, such as those outlined in Johannes Willem Bertens and Joseph P. Natoli's *Postmodernism: The Key Figures*, a collection of essays on postmodern artists and thinkers, to show how encompassing or otherwise a label/naming can be in academia.

In conclusion, *Naming Theatre* offers readers a comprehensive understanding of how names populate theatre and how they structure knowledge about a play. This book is an important contribution to the field, as it promotes the application of theory to theatre and performance while avoiding the usual imposition of verbalism that the reader very often finds in this type of academic writing. Furthermore, it prompts theatre scholars to

expand the discourse related to their work (something which is frequently ignored) by establishing ways of questioning it.

***Applied Theatre: International Case Studies and Challenges for Practice* by Monica Prendergast and Juliana Saxton**
Bristol; Chicago: Intellect, 2009, 224 pp. (paperback)

SOFIA APOSPORI

Macro studies on applied theatre are not published frequently. The shortage in surveys that are wider in scope is not surprising, since applied theatre is regularly re-defined by the social settings that call for the employment of theatre as praxis. Monica Prendergast and Juliana Saxton have produced a book that not only defies the challenge of presenting an overview of applied theatre, but also functions as a provocation of practice for its readers. As the promotional information on the book suggests, *Applied Theatre: International Case Studies and Challenges for Practice* is 'the first collection to assist practitioners and students in developing critical frameworks for their own theatrical projects.' With the usability of *Applied Theatre* as their main objective, Prendergast and Saxton explore the indeterminate relationship between the theories and practices of applied theatre in a resourceful manner, functioning as facilitators of information, rather than authoritative specialists in the field. Along these lines, the survey is an accessible academic source that calls for the critical engagement of its readers.

Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston have recently proposed in *The Applied Theatre Reader* that 'the (applied theatre) categories that have emerged are [...] an interlocking set of practices based upon some common principles which can, to a degree, operate across the contexts in which these processes are applied' (11). In Part One of *Applied Theatre* Prendergast and Saxton embark upon the challenging task of identifying these 'common principles' (Prentki 11) and manage to contextualise the material that follows. While Chapter One historicises and detects the boundaries of the field, Chapter Two engages with crucial practical issues that serve as a stimulating starting point for the reader. The concise arrangement of the first part of the book is indicative of the way in which the relationship between theory and practice is regarded throughout the survey. According to Prendergast and Saxton 'the most contemporary theatre strategies and techniques you will read

about in the case studies are based on the experiences of people whose own practice served as the playing space from which their understanding grew' (13). The focus is placed on the actual *application* of the theatrical form on social contexts and, consequently, the theories that constitute Part One seem to be the result of scholarly observations on a range of practices, rather than the product of meticulous academic discourse.

Parts Two and Three of *Applied Theatre* have a different format, disclosing an impressive selection of thirty case studies. In Part Two, the editors have focused on what they regard as the three underlying traditions in the field of applied theatre: Theatre in Education (31), Popular Theatre (51) and Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (69). The subject matter of Part Three is a range of (established) modes of contemporary practice: Theatre in Health Education (87), Theatre for Development (105), Prison Theatre (119), Community-based Theatre (135), Museum Theatre (153) and Reminiscence Theatre (169). Each of the nine modes is illuminated by three – in some cases four – case studies, which reveal the importance of context in the shaping and development of the creative processes adopted in the field.

One interesting aspect of *Applied Theatre* is the fact that the case studies function rather independently within the book. The brief discussion provided by Prendergast and Saxton at the beginning of each of the nine chapters aims at *introducing* each mode of practice, instead of imparting definite answers about its nature. This reinforces the polyphonic character of the collection in terms of not only the 'nationality' of the work presented, but also the personal style of practice that each of the thirty case studies endorses. Along these lines, the reader of *Applied Theatre* is given the opportunity to process Parts Two and Three quite autonomously, locate points of agreement and disagreement and, as a result, be guided towards the 'development' ('Applied') of her/his own 'critical frameworks' (Intellect).

In Part Four, Prendergast and Saxton add a number of critical provocations to their collection, as they engage with some of the most debated issues in the field: the boundaries of participation (189), the role of aesthetics (191), the relevance of ethics (193), and the significance of assessment/evaluation (195). The discussion on the centrality of participation in the process of distinguishing applied theatre from mainstream practices justifies the legitimacy of the field. The examination of aesthetics in relation to the social momentum of the work produced through applied theatre methods operates as a triumphant reminder of the

interdisciplinary nature of the expressive form. The account on ethics – possibly the *most* debatable issue in the field – links ethical behaviour to the practice of continuous reflection and, accordingly, stresses the importance of process over product. The final section recognises assessment/evaluation as an inherent part of practice, since it is the one definite phase that concretely allows for the systematic development of applied theatre as a field. The above have been – and still are – the most genuine areas of concern for both researchers and practitioners.

Perhaps the strongest aspect of *Applied Theatre* is its accessible and interactive structure. True to one of the key elements that distinguish applied theatre from mainstream practices, namely participation, the format of the book provides the reader with the space within which to examine both the theoretical and the practical proposals presented. The questions, suggested activities and lists for further reading at the end of each chapter, establish a dialogic relationship between the authors, the editors and the reader of the collection. More importantly, they clearly define the nature of the survey as an introductory course-book that not only serves as a concise induction to the field of applied theatre, but also invites the reader to define her/himself as an emerging practitioner. Along these lines, even though this macro survey aims at quite a specific target group, it is an interesting and welcome addition to the corpus of academic works that focus on applied theatre.

Works Cited

Prentki, Tim, and Sheila Preston, eds. *The Applied Theatre Reader*. London; New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.