The Cambridge Companion to the Actress. Edited by Maggie B. Gale and John Stokes

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Theatre Survey, Volume 50, Number 2, November 2009, pp. 378-380 (Review)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/tsu.2009.a986303*

exercises to train the actors in the eight states of tension the body can manifest; an actor who moves the body from "exhausted"—the first state of tension—all the way through "The bomb is about to go off!" learns to shift his or her center of gravity, the speed of movement, and the directional flow of energy.

If the first half of the book is a tool kit for comic actors, the second half categorizes the structural elements of comedy: the distinct comic personalities, which he identifies as clowns, and the subgenres within comedy. Wright devotes a chapter to clowning because this role is the most elemental position from which to develop a relationship with the audience, and the exercises in this section help the actor "read" an audience and respond to their approval or boredom. Wright draws perspicacious distinctions among kinds of clowns; Pathetic Clown, for example, with his optimism and ridiculous naïveté, differs from the dignity of Tragic Clown, who earns our admiration. Clowning, more than any other performance role, captures the human condition in a nutshell; the perplexity a clown experiences by his surroundings is a metaphor for the human condition.

In his final part, "The Gentle Art of Ridicule," Wright categorizes the components of parody—caricature, satire, pastiche, burlesque, and buffoonery—not according to the literary sense by which they are typically understood, but rather according to how they are performed. They all incorporate imitation, analysis, and attack, but to varying degrees, and Wright identifies the differing levels of mimetic exaggeration and the specificity of the satirical target in performance. Parody and its concomitant forms, come from a deep human desire to misbehave as well as to assail institutions, and the actor must maintain a balance: a "gamble between giving pleasure and causing offence" (262). While parody is not an acting style, Wright teaches it because it comprises a great deal of physical comedy. Games such as the Exaggeration Game or the Nationalities Game, which focus on mimicking an individual's movement or alignment, or a country's spoken language, compel actors to identify and imitate personal idiosyncrasies in others.

Wright does not draw upon many comic theorists; his primary references for directing comedy are Jacques Copeau, Jacques Lecoq, and Philippe Gaulier. His study is less about the tradition of comedy and more about managing the crucial dynamic between actors and audience. Wright's own careful attention to the psychology of human relations translates well into the theatre, and his exercises capture the comic interactions between people and the serious games they play.

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The Cambridge Companion to the Actress. Edited by Maggie B. Gale and John Stokes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007; pp. 348. $95 cloth, $33.99 paper.

doi:10.1017/S0040557409990524

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In their edited collection *The Cambridge Companion to the Actress*, Maggie B. Gale and John Stokes guide us through the "unique and turbulent

history" (12) of the actress; they have put together sixteen new essays detailing this history across several centuries and two continents (Europe and North America). From an impressive group of scholars, the essays are distinguished by a consistent effort to move beyond traditional critical and artistic boundaries and offer original investigations of the actress and the systems, conventions, and communities that contributed to a career. The essays are grouped into three well-conceived parts that facilitate these synthetic goals: "Turning Points," "Professional Opportunities," and "Genre, Form and Tradition." The best essays offer archival research and original critique; all approach the issue of gendered performance with an understanding that the construction of gender must be understood in the context of other issues of identity—sexual orientation, class, race, age, nationality.

The seven essays in "Turning Points" concentrate on key historical moments "driven by widespread uncertainties" about what the actress might represent under changing circumstances (3). The historical moments include some necessary and predictable topics—initial appearances of actresses on European stages, increasing respectability and authority on the eighteenth-century stage, and training schools of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Less predictable topics include the importance of international touring in the nineteenth century, the role of photographic and filmic images in the creation and promotion of acting careers, and the dangers of pursuing high-profile politics in the twentieth century; John Stokes's reading of suppressed sexuality on the postwar English stage is a treasure. Common in this section are the authors' assertions that in each of these "moments" actresses have been agents in expanding the role, authority, and influence of women in theatrical practice. In writing of the first actresses, Gilli Bush-Bailey notes that from the beginning the actress has posed a "threat to the stability of male/public, female/private construction" (19); this threat constitutes a theme that threads through each of the pieces as the authors detail how actresses develop their skills (and fame) by negotiating their visibility, sexuality, and social standing. As the role of the actress mutates to fit the social and political conditions of the day, new skills and expectations come to the fore. What worked for Sarah Siddons (who took care to protect the fragility of her unblemished reputation, refusing association with actresses of more "ambiguous fame" [43]) would not work for those acting in the late nineteenth century, caught up in the frenzy for *cartes de visites*. The vilification of a political Jane Fonda is an exaggerated version of the suspicions about Charlotte Cushman's cross-dressing. Cumulatively, the essayists are in concurrence that there has been demonstrable "progress" in the role of the actress on the Western stage.

The concept behind "Professional Opportunities," Part II of the collection, is to investigate "matters of status" and the strategies women have used to advance their theatre-based influence (6). The four essays collected here provide a compendium of details on the empowerment of the actress; they cover the actress as manager, the actress and the autobiography, the actress and early film, and the actress and her race. The details are most compelling when carefully selected and researched; Viv Gardner's essay on actresses' autobiographies

exposes the "liminality of the actress-autobiographer" (176) and the elusiveness of the self for those whose profession is taking on and masking selves with conviction. Christine Gledhill's investigation of major changes in early screen acting offers several well-chosen narratives to make her point that nation and class were powerful factors for "screen womanhood" (209) as actresses negotiated the "discursive clashes and shifts around gender roles and definitions of femininity" (211). Other pieces in the volume take up the racial inflections of acting, particularly for women of color, but Lynette Goddard's examples in this section are the most extensive.

The third and final part, like the first, defines a fresh perspective on the expansive topic of the actress, one that enables insightful scholarship. Each of the five essays in "Genre, Form, and Tradition" focuses on theatrical conventions and practices and the determining role of the actress—not the playwright, the director, or the text—in each. The critics deliver impressive examples of the transgressive power of the actress on French-, Spanish-, and English-speaking stages. The first essay, by Jacky Bratton, demonstrates that through the development of hypersexuality and "boy" roles, women in drag in the nineteenth and early twentieth century explored ways of "temporarily entering the culture of physical enjoyment and relative sexual freedom" otherwise off limits for women (241). Both Elaine Aston's study of key roles by Sarah Bernhardt and Mrs. Patrick Campbell and Maggie B. Gale's historical account of the actress and the monologue offer analysis of the slippery relationships among the "self, the script, the character, the audience, the locations and space for performance" (309). Maria M. Delgado's work on the Spanish actress as collaborator focuses on politics and texts, a strong companion to Tony Howard's earlier piece (in Part II) also detailing both overt and subtle political dimensions to women onstage. The collection ends with Penny Gay's account of women acting Shakespeare in the past two decades; she offers a sobering reminder that "progress" for women onstage is fragile, that ground gained can also be lost.

The apparatus of this collection is familiar from other Cambridge Companions; each essay is well footnoted and ends with "Further Reading," a collection of key primary and secondary texts. Throughout the collection there is consistency in the attention to well-chosen examples, thorough research, and wide-ranging contextual material—from production reviews to publicized research, from archival manuscripts to diaries and the popular press. A few of the essays sag under the weight of detail that is not sufficiently shaped or synthesized; most offer original scholarship that will be essential to researchers and welcome to those teaching advanced courses in performance.