Radical Stages Alternative History In Modern British Drama


Partners of the Imagination is the first in-depth study of the work of John Arden and Marguerite D'Arcey, partners in writing and cultural and political campaigns. Beginning in the 1950s, Arden and D'Arcey created a series of hugely admired plays performed at Britain's major theatres. Political activists, they worked tirelessly in the peace movement and the Northern Ireland 'Trouble', during which D'Arcey was gaoled. She is also a veteran of the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. Their later work included Booker-listed novels, prize-winning stories, essays and radio plays, and D'Arcey founded and ran a Woman's Pirate Radio station. Raymond Williams described Arden as 'the most genuinely innovative' of the playwrights of his generation, and Chambers and Prior claimed that 'The Non-Stop Connolly Show', D'Arcey and Arden's six-play epic, 'has fair claim to being one of the finest pieces of post-war drama in the English language'. This study explores relationships between art and life, and between the responsibilities of the writer and the citizen. Importantly, it also evaluates the range of literary works (plays, poetry, novels, essays, polemics) created by these writers, both as literature and drama, and as controversialist activity in its own right. This work is a landmark examination of two hugely respected radical writers. Within this landmark collection, original voices from the field of the drama provide rich analyses of a selection of the most exciting and remarkable plays and productions of the past twenty-first century. But what makes the drama of the new millennium so distinctive? Which events, themes, shifts, and paradigms are marking its stages? Kaleidoscopic in scope, Twenty-First Century Drama: What Happens Now creates a broad, rigorously critical framework for approaching the drama of this period, including its forms, playwrights, companies, institutions, collaborative projects, and directors. The collection has a deliberately British bent, examining established playwrights – such as Churchill, Brenton, and Hare – alongside a new generation of writers – including Stephens, Prebble, Kirkwood, Bartlett, and Kelly. Simultaneously international in scope, it engages with significant new work from the US, Japan, India, Australia, and the Netherlands, to reflect a twenty-first century context that is fundamentally globalization. The volume's central themes – the financial crisis, austerity, climate change, new forms of human being, migration, class, race and gender, cultural politics and issues of nationhood – are mediated through fresh, cutting-edge perspectives. The 'in-yer-face' plays of the mid-1990s announced a new generation shaped by Thatcherism and defined by antipathy to social ideals and political involvement. They have generated thoughtful and lively responses from playwrights. The resulting dialogue has brought politics to the forefront of British drama and reinvigorated British theatre. An annotated world theatre bibliography documenting significant theatre material published worldwide since 1945, plus an index to key names throughout the six volumes of the series. Verse Drama in England, 1900-2015 provides a critical and historical exploration of a tradition of modern dramatic creativity that has received very little scholarly attention. Exploring the emergence of a distinctly modern verse drama at the turn of the century and its development into the 20th century, the final volume of this series considers the form as a whole, surveying its metatheatrical and self-conscious qualities. The volume surveys the history of verse drama in Britain from the 19th century to the early 20th century and includes works by William Morris, W. H. Auden, Ronald Duncan, Christopher Fry, John Arden, Anne Ridler, Tony Harrison, Steven Berkoff, Caryl Churchill, and Mike Bartlett. The book explores the negotiation of these dramatists with the changing position of verse drama in relation to constructions of national and communal audience, aesthetic challenge, and dramatic heritage. Key to the study is the self-conscious positioning of many of these dramatists in relation to an assumed mainstream tradition – and the various critical responses that that positioning has provoked. The study advocates for a scholarly revaluation of what must be identified as an influential and overlooked tradition of aesthetic challenge and creativity. A prescient "protofeminist" dramatic treatment of gender, Gabriel makes a passionate plea for female equality in education and opportunity. Available for the first time in an English translation, the script is supplemented by an introductory essay that examines questions posed by the play with regard to conventional gender representations and how the protagonist contrasts with other cross-dressed heroines, such as Shakespeare's Rosalind in As You Like It. The introduction also recounts George Sand's struggle to get the play accepted for production on the Paris stage, and an appropriate comparison with women's rights revision, "G. Sand's Marion Foss", in which the director provides the perfect introductory text for students of theatre, music and cultural studies. It traces the history and development of the industry and art form in America with a particular focus on its artistic and commercial development in New York City from the early 20th century to the present. Emphasis is placed on commercial, artistic and cultural influences that featured the Broadway musical for an ever-renewing, increasingly broad and diverse audience: the Gilded Age, the Great Depression, the World War II era, the British invasion in the 1980s and the media age at the turn of the twenty-first century. Supplementary essays by leading scholars provide detailed focus on the American musical's production and preservation, as well as its influence on daily life on the local, national, and international levels. For students, these essays provide models of analyzing approaches and interpretation, equipping them with the skills and understanding to develop their own analysis of key productions. The book is one of the oldest archetypes in human civilization, and, in the past, was a representation of an idealized woman – blessed with beauty and creativity and exerting irresistible attraction for many a man. Nowadays, in the wake of feminism, the idea of the Muse seems a bit obsolete, quaint or downright sexist, and is said to enhance a vicious stereotype of the creative, productive and active man and the passive, submissive and docile woman. However, this book shows that this, in a fashion-wide-ranging Companion to Modern British and Irish Drama offers challenging analyses of a range of plays in their political contexts. It explores the cultural, social, economic and institutional agents that readers need to engage with in order to appreciate modern theatre in all its complexity. An introductory guide to modern and contemporary British and Irish drama. Engages with theatrical discourses challenging a canon that has privileged London as well as white English males and realism. Topics covered include: national, regional and fringe theatres; postcolonial stages and multiculturalism; feminism and queer theatres; sex and consumerism; technology and globalisation; representations of war, terrorism, and trauma. Essential for students of theatre studies, Methuen Drama's Decades of Modern British Playwriting series provides a comprehensive survey and study of the theatre produced in each decade from the 1950s to 2009 in six volumes. Each volume features a critical analysis and reevaluation of the work of four key playwrights from that decade authored by a team of experts, together with an extensive commentary on the period. A Critical Companion to the American Stage Musical provides the perfect introductory text for students of theatre, music and cultural studies. 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haven’t had”. This book will appeal to students and scholars of theatre and cultural studies as well as theatre practitioners and enthusiasts. Essential for students of Theatre Studies, this series of six decade volumes provides a critical survey and reassessment of the theatre produced in each decade from the 1950s to the present. Each volume equips readers with an understanding of the context from which work emerged, a detailed overview of the range of theatrical activity and a close study of the work of four of the major playwrights by a team of leading scholars. Chris Megson's comprehensive survey of the theatre of the 1970s examines the work of four playwrights who came to prominence in the decade and whose work remains unfinished today: Caryl Churchill (by Paula Botham), David Hare (Chris Megson), Howard Brenton (Richard Boon) and David Edgar (Janelle Reinelt). It analyses their work then, its legacy today and provides a fresh assessment of their contribution to British theatre. Interviews with the playwrights, with directors and with actors provides an invaluable collection of documents offering new perspectives on the work. Revisiting the decade from the perspective of the twenty-first century, Chris Megson provides an authoritative and stimulating reassessment of British playwrighting in the 1970s. This book defines and exemplifies a major genre of modern dramatic writing, termed historicized metatheatre, in which self-reflexive engagements with the traditions and forms of dramatic art illuminate historical themes and aid in the representation of historical events and, in doing so, formulates a genre. Historiographic metatheatre has been, and remains, a seminal mode of political engagement and ideological critique in the contemporary dramatic canon. Locating its key texts within the traditions of historical drama, self-reflexivity in European theatre, debates in the politics and aesthetics of postmodernism, and currents in contemporary historiography, this book provides a new critical idiom for discussing the major works of the genre and others that utilize its techniques. Feldman studies landmarks in the theatre history of postwar Britain by Weiss, Stoppard, Brenton, Wertemburgh and others, focusing on European revolutionary politics, the historiography of the World Wars and the effects of British colonialism. The playwrights under consideration all use the device of the play-within-the-play to explore constructions of nationhood and of Britishness, in particular. Those plays written within the framing works are produced in places of exile where, Feldman argues, the marginalized negotiate the terms of national identity through performance. Contemporary British historical plays demonstrate different forms of historical playwriting: British-Maoist plays, for example, illustrate an assault against the myths of Communism, while feminist histories examine the fall of male dominated hegemony and confront the role of gender in history. This book investigates how British history plays since 1956 reflect the methods and values of New History, in contrast to traditional biographical dramas that depict the lives of great men in the past. The volume discusses more than 50 British playwrights, including John Osborne, John Arden, Edward Bond, Robert Bolt, Pam Gems, Howard Brenton, Caryl Churchill, Howard Barker, and Peter Shaffer. Both playwrights and critics confront the implications of the idea that history is constructed and not simply found, and new approaches to history demand innovations in the staging and structuring of plays. This indispensable overview of modern black British drama spans seven decades of distinctive playwriting from the 1950s to the present. Interweaving social and cultural context with close critical analysis of key dramatists’ plays, leading scholars explore how these dramatists have created an enduring, transformative and diverse cultural presence. This volume explores the multiple connections between contemporary British theatre and the medieval and early modern periods. Involving both French and British scholars, as well as playwrights, adapters and stage directors, its scope is political, as it assesses the powers of adaptation and history plays to offer a new perspective not only on the past and present, but also on the future. Along the way, burning contemporary social and political issues are explored, such as the place and role of women and ethnic minorities in today’s post-Brexit Britain. The volume builds into a dialogue between the ghosts of the past and their contemporary spectators. Starting with a focus on contemporary adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays, then concentrating on contemporary history plays set in the distant past, and ending with the contributions of famous playwrights sharing their experience, the book will be of interest to practitioners, as well as students and researchers in drama and performance studies. Although now celebrated as a world-leading playwright, Caryl Churchill has received little attention for her socialism, which has been frequently overlooked in favour of emphasising gendered identities and postmodernist themes. Churchill’s Socialism examines eight of Churchill’s plays with reference to socialist theories and political movements. This well-researched and dynamic new book reframes Churchill’s work, positioning her plays within socialist discourses, and producing persuasive political readings of her drama that reflect much more of the political challenge that the plays pose. It additionally explores her uneasy relationship with postmodernism, which presents itself particularly in Churchill’s later plays. The book contains a very helpful chapter on socialist contexts, which outlines some of the key events, debates, and movements during the late 1960s up until the early 2000s. This chapter also offers an incisive critique of the easy acceptance by some academics of a postmodernist rejection of grand narratives and political theatre. An in-depth examination of the rarely explored intersections of utopianism and theatre, forms another chapter. Churchill’s Eight Shining Lights, for example, is a complex political allegory, and For Carson, the century’s ending, occupies another chapter. In a further four chapters with reference to communist historiography, the class/gender intersection, the end-of-history thesis, ecclesiastical challenges and postmodernism, History Studies is a peer-reviewed journal of theatre and scholarship published annually since 1981 by the Mid-American Theatre Conference (MATC), a regional body devoted to theatre scholarship and practice. "Corrupt and moronic though the common people are seemingly becoming only in the common people can the true work be rooted, the true tradition rediscovered and re-informed" Charles Parker, BBC Radio Producer 1959. In 1958, in his best-selling book Culture and Society, Raymond Williams identified working-class culture as ‘a key issue in our time’. Why this happened and how this subject was thought about and acted upon is the focus of this book. Paul Long investigates a variety of projects and practices that were designed to describe, validate, reclaim, rejuvenate or generate ‘authentic’ working-class culture as part of the re-imagining of Britishness in the context of the post-war settlement. Detailed case studies cover the wartime cultural activities of CEMA – the forerunner of the Arts Council - the Folk Revival, the impact of Richard Hoggart's The Uses of Literacy, broadcasting and the radio work of Charles Parker, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, the roots of modern art forms in Arnold Wesker's Centre 42 project as well as the impact of progressive education on children's writing and the politics of the English language. Only in the Common People: The Aesthetics of Working-class Britain explores the assumptions about working-class culture and the emergence of a generation of political thinkers and writers. The book goes on to introduce work on ideas and initiatives in the arts, education, local government, and community organisations. The book engages with the major debates of its day but also with the challenges of the future. Aesthetics of Class in Post-War Britain' examines the assumptions, idealism and prejudices behind these projects and the terms of class as 'the preoccupation of a generation'. This approach offers a historicisation of the broader wartime cultural activities of CEMA – the forerunner of the Arts Council - the Folk Revival, the impact of Richard Hoggart's The Uses of Literacy, broadcasting and the radio work of Charles Parker, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, the roots of modern art forms in Arnold Wesker's Centre 42 project as well as the impact of progressive education on children's writing and the politics of the English language. 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literature about Brecht, the book is a cross-disciplinary reassessment of important aspects of his work. Included are essays on his poetry, drama, theoretical writings, Brecht's influence on American film techniques and music, his relationship to and borrowings from Japanese No theater, and a comparison between aesthetic techniques in his writings and Stravinsky's "The Little Soldier."--BOOK JACKET.Title Summary field provided by Blackwell North America, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Dana Van Kooy draws critical attention to Percy Bysshe Shelley as a dramatist and argues that his dramas represent a critical paradigm of romanticism in which history is 'staged'. Reading Shelley's dramas as a series of radical stages - historical reenactments and theatrical reproductions - Van Kooy highlights the cultural significance of the drama and the theatre in shaping and contesting constructions of both the sovereign nation and the global empire in the post-Napoleonic era. This book is about the power of performance to challenge and reformulate cultural memories that were locked in historical narratives and in Britain's theatrical repertoire. It examines each of Shelley's dramas as a specific radical stage that reformulates the familiar cultural performances of war, revolution, slavery and domestic tyranny. Shelley's plays invite audiences to step away from these horrors and to imagine their lives as something other than a tragedy or a melodrama where characters are entrapped in cycles of violence or struck blind or silent by fear. Although Shelley's dramas are few in number they engage a larger cultural project of aesthetic and political reform that constituted a groundswell of activism that took place during the Romantic period. This text examines some of the most important performance in Britain from the mid-1980s into the new millennium. It considers contemporary British theatre in relation to national and supranational identities, critical concepts like globalisation and diaspora, and contemporary contexts such as the election of New Labour. An authoritative assessment of the changing relationship between the Bible and the arts

In this unique Companion, 35 scholars, from world-famous to just beginning, explore the role of the Bible in art and of artistic motifs in the Bible. The specially commissioned chapters demonstrate that just as the arts have portrayed biblical stories in a variety of ways and media over the centuries, so what we call 'the' Bible is not actually a single entity but has been composed of fiercely contested translations of texts in many languages, whose selection has depended historically on a variety of cultural pressures, theological, social, and, not least, aesthetic. Key Features:

- Divided into 3 sections, Inspiration and Theory, Art and Architecture, and Literature
- Generously illustrated
- Covers aesthetic interpretations of specific biblical books; of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles as a whole; the transmission of biblical texts; various bindings and illustrations of Bibles - in response to pressures as diverse as Islamic craftsmanship and the English Reformation
- Includes pieces on biblical influences on poetry, painting, church architecture, decoration, and stained glass; on poetry, hymns, novels, plays, and fantasy literature
- Spans the earliest days of the Christian era to the present

This volume traces transitions in British literature from 1960 to 1980, illuminating a diverse range of authors, texts, genres and movements. It considers innovations in form, emergent identities, changes in attitudes, preoccupations and in the mind itself, local and regional developments, and shifts within the oeuvres of individual authors. This volume examines the evolution of British historical drama from John Osborne's 1956 landmark Look Back in Anger to the 1980s. Peacock illustrates how the ruling group within a society establishes a cultural hegemony by which it perpetuates its values and demonstrates how the historical drama of the period was employed as a weapon in an assault upon this cultural hegemony. Among dramatists examined are Howard Brenton, Trevor Griffiths, Edward Bond, and David Edgar. The study analyzes how the revolutionary and social movements of the period, including the women's movement, are reflected in its historical drama and speculates on the future of British historical drama in the changing political climate of the 1990s.

Marilyn Monroe, Vincent van Gogh or the victims of rendition flights - the number and variety of historical and contemporary figures represented on British stages is amazing. This book develops a new theoretical framework for the representation of real life figures on stage and examines different ways in which they can be included in performances.

Examination of one of the most influential modern theatre companies, 7:84 (Scotland), under the directorship of John McGrath.