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more firmly established, anti-theatrical attitudes began to change. The first recorded American performance of a Shakespearean play occurred in 1730 (15). While it would be twenty years before the next recorded production, performances increased with time, largely produced by amateur companies (15). The authors note that between 1767 and 1789 Shakespeare was the most popular playwright in the colonies and the new United States (30).

Chapter two focuses on nineteenth-century America, with an emphasis on the rise of American actors of Shakespeare and a decline in popularity for their British counterparts who performed in the United States. In addition to the well-known stories of the Booth family of actors and the feud between British actor William Charles Macready and American Edwin Forrest, the authors highlight some lesser known but equally important figures, such as African American actor Ira Aldridge. Although Aldridge received little praise in his native United States, in Europe he was regarded as one of the world's finest actors.

Chapter three looks at American expansion during the nineteenth century. During the westward expansion of the middle-to-late part of the century, Shakespeare was the favorite playwright on the frontier (72). The authors also state that as settlers moved towards the Pacific, theatrical venues were established in towns along the way (72). The chapter also looks at Shakespeare in American education. As a way to teach oratory, American schools included speeches and scenes from Shakespeare in readers used by children beginning 1810 (80). These books gained popularity in the mid-1830s (82). At the university level, courses in Shakespeare also began appearing in college curricula beginning in 1857 and, rising in popularity after 1875. According to the authors, by 1906, twenty-five of the thirty American liberal arts colleges offered a class in Shakespeare. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the use of Shakespeare as source material for blackface minstrel shows in the late nineteenth century.

Multicultural Shakespeare and colorblind casting are explored in chapter four. Significant instances highlighted include Jacob Adler's performance in Jacob Gordin's *The Jewish King Lear* in the Yiddish theatre in 1892, the Federal Theatre Project's production of "*Yoodoo*" *Macbeth* in 1936, Paul Robeson's performance of Othello in 1943, and the (Washington D.C.) Shakespeare Theatre's "photo-negative" production of *Othello* in 1997, featuring Patrick Stewart in the title role. The authors also explore resistances to multiracial casting, such as August Wilson's belief that it, in fact, subjugates African-American actors to performing texts of white theatre. Additionally, for Asian-American and Latino actors, Shakespeare

can sometimes be seen as reinforcing Anglo-European cultural hegemony in a nation that professes inclusion.

The book concludes with an assessment of Shakespeare in the present-day United States. The authors propose that a utilitarian and moralistic approach to Shakespeare still holds sway. Reading and understanding Shakespeare is supposed to be "good for you" (193). However, uses of Shakespeare in America remain widely varied. There is no set Shakespearean text for use in the classroom for secondary students. Acting companies of Shakespeare present a range of productions, from the experimental to the more standardized. It is difficult to identify a characteristically "American" Shakespeare, given the many different options available to both actors and audiences, according to the authors.

Shakespeare in America would prove valuable both for students and scholars looking for a general survey of the role and treatment of Shakespeare in American history. The book combines well-known facts with lesser-known stories from history. Along with vivid anecdotes, the text is both engaging and accessible for readers. The authors highlight how, in some form or another, Shakespeare has been a constant presence in America since the colonial period, and in many ways, the story of Shakespeare in America parallels the larger narrative of American history.

Barbara Ozieblo and Noelia Hernando-Real, editors. *Performing Gender Violence: Plays by Contemporary American Women Dramatists*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. vi + 198 pp.

Reviewed by Emily A. Rollie, University of Missouri

Links between masculinity and violence are often explored in dramatic criticism, traditionally focusing on works by men. Barbara Ozieblo and Noelia Hernando-Real's *Performing Gender Violence: Plays by Contemporary American Dramatists* provides a necessary feminist intervention in this discourse, offering a tightly woven collection of essays that consider the many ways American women playwrights are speaking of and against gender violence.

Performing Gender Violence's greatest strength is its diversity. While the volume focuses specifically on American women dramatists, its scope within that geographical category is broad, as the essays consider plays

written in the past forty years by both prominent and lesser-known American women, including Rebecca Gilman, Paula Vogel, Heather Raffo, Stefanie Zadravec, and Heather McDonald. Moreover, the collection of essays considers diverse forms of gender violence—from psychological abuse to the physical abuse inflicted upon women during war and medical treatment. The book's contributors also provide multiple perspectives on American drama, as all seven authors are accomplished scholars and specialists in American feminist and women's drama living beyond U.S. borders, which arguably allows them a more critically distanced eye than traditionally located American scholars might offer.

A common thread runs through and unifies the collection. Individual essays frequently refer to the introduction, and nearly all refer in some way to "female solidarity," which is indicative not only of the dramatic conventions emerging from the plays but also of the collective work of the scholars. In "The Role of Female Bonding on the Stage of Violence," María Dolores Narbona-Carrión, for instance, looks specifically at female solidarity in Lynn Nottage's *Poof!* and Heather McDonald's *Dream of a Common Language*. She advocates that female bonding is a "powerful instrument in the fight against gender violence" (61), and this attitude is reflected in the overall cohesion of the text itself.

In the Introduction, Ozieblo and Hernando-Real articulately put forth the volume's intent: to "chart the ways in which American women dramatists have reflected the changing attitudes and ever-more sophisticated techniques of portrayal of the reactions to suffering caused by both domestic and social violence at home and abroad" (2). Co-written by four of the contributors, chapter one, "Violence Against Women: Forms and Responses," then further establishes the text's collective voice, arguing passionately and articulately for the "need to rewrite the relationship that women have with their own bodies and that men construct with the female bodies around them" (24). This chapter provides a useful historical and cultural context for gender violence in America, citing pertinent statistics, defining key terms, and paving the way for subsequent essays to illuminate a "range of abuses" explored by American playwrights. Having established the cultural and historical context, chapter two, co-written by the editors, provides further justification for the study, pointing to the alarming lack of attention to violence against women in plays by women—particularly in contemporary contexts. Together, these two chapters actively set the stage for the subsequent feminist analyses.

Each of the subsequent chapters focuses on a specific form of gender

violence, thus exposing the frighteningly expansive terrain of violence and the social conditions that perpetuate it. In chapter three, "My Home, My Battleground: The Deconstruction of the American Family," Herrdando-Real considers the role of power and violence with the American family, specifically focusing on the ways that female protagonists in plays by Paula Vogel, Marsha Norman, and Maria Irene Fornes escape the violence occurring in their homes and, in so doing, refuse the role of "victim."

In chapters five and six, often overlooked areas of violence are considered. Miriam López-Rodríguez, for instance, turns her critical eye to often-invisible instances of psychological abuse as discussed in plays by Rebecca Gilman and Julia Cho, while Marta Fernández-Morales examines violence in medical treatment, specifically "the female subject, her breast cancer experience, and her retelling thereof" (98). Fernández-Morales' essay offers a particularly fascinating consideration of the physical and "symbolic" violence inflicted on women by the medical system as depicted in autobiographical pieces by Linda Park-Fuller and Susan Miller.

A consideration of women and violence is not simple, however, and in Chapter seven, Inmaculada Pineda-Hernandez looks at the sometimes violent strategies African-American women characters employ to subvert abusive situations. Strategies such as "hurting oneself, killing one's offspring, tolerating violence, and killing the perpetrator"—often undertaken with the support of other women—are all viable options for these women in their efforts to gain agency (114).

The final chapters—"Documenting War: Theatrical Interventions by Emily Mann and Heather Raffo" and "The Victim and the Audience's Pleasure: An Exploration of Carson Kreitzer's *Self Defense* and Stefanie Zadravec's *Honey Brown Eyes*"—by Ilka Saal and Ozieblo, respectively, employ broader lenses of analysis, considering the violence inflicted upon women in global wars and audience responses to depictions of gender violence on stage.

Useful for theatre and literature scholars interested in feminist theory and contemporary women's plays, this book fills a decided gap in scholarship on gender and the performance of violence on contemporary stages. Each essay provides a deep reading of the texts it addresses, firmly supported by critical theory. The volume's well-researched, careful examination of the many, differing forms of violence addressed in the plays of US women dramatists makes it a welcome addition to feminist theatre scholarship.