in Ireland, without changing a word of Beckett's text. Trish McTighe quotes a telling review in which western Irish accents are said to be unable to dramatize 'the tones of Beckett's Everyman', and McTighe notes that this 'Everyman' himself tends to be conceived, at least in Ireland, as a particular type of Dubliner. Paul Murphy demonstrates how treatments of *Godot* as 'a matter of existential philosophy rather than of material deprivation' chime with, and might even owe something to, a particularly staunch brand of political conservatism prevalent at the time of *Godot*'s premiere in Dublin.

Derval Tubridy shows how innovative stagings of Beckett's late short plays in Britain continue Beckett's legacy of remaining sensitive to the necessary 'contingency and responsiveness that unite text and performance'. Nicholas Johnson highlights that Beckett's often-cited call to 'keep genres distinct' was contradicted by his own collaboration on a number of stagings of his prose, and in any case it makes little sense as a guiding principle for theatre companies operating in an era when digital media are redefining genre boundaries that were never all that firmly fixed in the first place.

Other contributors engage with new discussions and debates arising from the ever-widening appeal of Beckett's work. Many comment on the trends of 'festivalization' and 'eventing' that, as David Clare summarizes, have laudably drawn wider audiences to Beckett's work but at the same time threaten to harness Beckett's popularity into an ethically dubious 'branding' of Irishness. John Stokes is more sanguine about marketing to mass audiences, arguing that the attendees of West End productions of Beckett's work can be viewed in terms of Jacques Rancière's notion of the 'emancipated spectator' – not passive members of a mindless herd but active and intelligent individuals aware of how culture is mediated to them – while adding the important caveat that such spectators would still need to be able to 'afford West End prices'.

Scaife and Brian Singleton explore alternative ways of emancipating audiences: namely, by performing Beckett's works in outdoor, urban locations such as parking lots and back alleys, where passers-by can take a break from the daily routines of work and consumption – or of coping with mental illness, addiction, and poverty – and help themselves to a free peek at a performance.

Space prohibits giving everything its due here. Anna McMullan's discussion of 'scenographic remains' is fascinating. So is David Tucker's discussion of Harold Pinter playing Krapp shortly before his death. So is Fergal Whelan's piece on performing Beckett in Irish. So is David Pattie's argument that, even before its British premiere, *Godot* was 'pre-mediated' by existing debates about the future of British theatre. So is Barry

McGovern's anecdote about an actor playing Pozzo who, during a 1982 performance in Dublin, accidentally introduced himself as Godot. So, indeed, is everything else in these volumes – unfortunately themselves limited by space.

As the editors acknowledge, there is plenty of room for more work on Welsh productions, which are mentioned only once. There is also plenty of scope for further research into Scottish theatres and into 'regional' Irish and English theatres that will benefit from the work already done by McTighe's chapter on the western Irish theatre company Druid, by Ksenija Horvat's chapter on Beckett in Scotland, by Mark Taylor-Batty's chapter on Beckett at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, and by Andrew Head's chapter on *Krapp's Last Tape* in 'regional' English and Welsh theatres. Taken as a whole, these volumes will also provide key reference points for future scholars investigating how Beckett's work interacts with theatre cultures throughout the world.

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Peter Boenisch and Thomas Ostermeier

The Theatre of Thomas Ostermeier

Abingdon: Routledge, 2016, 262 p. £32.99.

ISBN: 978-1-138-91447-6.

Peter M. Boenisch

**Directing Scenes and Senses:
the Thinking of Regie**

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015.

256 p. £65.

ISBN: 978-0-7190-9719-5.

These publications from Peter Boenisch represent two sides of the same project: to bring the continental European traditions of political philosophy, and the particular form of theatre directing known as *Regie*, into dialogue with each other. In *The Theatre of Thomas Ostermeier*, Boenisch does so literally by interspersing the director's own writings (previously unpublished in English) with images of his work, reflections from his closest collaborators, and in-depth studies of two key productions: *Ein Volksfeind* (Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*, 2012) and Shakespeare's *Richard III* (2015).

Those wishing to study, and particularly to teach, the work of the best-known mainland European director to English audiences (thanks to his long association with the Barbican) will find their task is made much easier by this volume, which is richly varied and will be accessible to students at all levels. Its readers will, however, benefit considerably from being able to contextualize it against *Directing Scenes and Senses*, Boenisch's more ambitious and detailed study of the historical and theoretical development of the art of *Regie*.

The second volume takes as its starting point Rancière's idea of the 'aesthetic regime of art', which Boenisch connects with Hegel's announcement of a 'new era' in his *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). In its first part, the book then plots the development of the *Regisseur*, and of *Regie* as a mode of thinking, from the late eighteenth century to the work of Leopold Jessner. In an appropriately Hegelian move, Boenisch seeks within this history for insights which may help us to understand contemporary *Regie* as a process and a function where, in his words, 'the playtext remains . . . the same, yet our perception and understanding of it is ultimately changed'.

Prominent among such insights are Schiller's notion of 'play' as a mediating function between binary oppositions; Helmar Schramm's conception of performance as a situation defined by relations between corporeality or kinesis, meaning or semiosis, and perception or aesthesis; and Jessner's activation of dialectic relations between text, staging, and spectators. In the second part of the book, Boenisch reads the work of contemporary *Regisseurs* in the light of the constellation of ideas explored in the first. He offers complex, provocative readings of productions that are likely to be known to a UK audience, such as Ostermeier's *Volksfeind* and Ivo van Hove's *Scènes uit een Huwelijk* (*Scenes from a Marriage*, 2005), as well as major works from directors less likely to be familiar to an Anglophone readership: Jürgen Gosch, Michael Thalheimer, Andreas Kriegenburg, Guy Cassiers, Frank Castorf, and the Antwerp-based collective 'tg STAN'.

Boenisch acknowledges the partiality of this list, which, in spite of the variety of work discussed, can only be considered to be problematically monocultural in the context of contemporary Europe. It would be true to argue that an all-white and male selection is nonetheless representative of those *Regisseurs* currently privileged enough to make work on the scale that Boenisch has chosen to analyze – predominantly large-cast productions of canonical works. But some will doubtless find a troubling connection between the politics of this selection and Boenisch's Hegelian account of the history of *Regie* as 'a chain of mediated antagonisms and sublated contradictions' that ultimately affirm the canonical texts with which it unfolds.

Those who take issue with Boenisch's account along these lines will, however, still find much that is valuable in this deeply scholarly account of the many ways in which *Regie* offers opportunities for attacking the 'distribution of the sensible' under contemporary capitalism, and disrupting 'the established hegemonic aesthetic-political order of things'. My own perspective is that Boenisch's over-arching approach to the study of *Regie* takes somewhat for granted another 'established hegemonic . . . order of things', namely the

processes by which the particular directors he has chosen to study have been able to rise to such cultural prominence. But I am nonetheless entirely persuaded that the dialectic form of *Regie* that he elucidates in such detail here contains numerous essential intellectual tools for generating forms of theatre that enable us as spectators to, in Boenisch's words, 'reflect on our involvement and our responsibility as a subject in our . . . world'.

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Hans-Thies Lehmann, trans. Erik Butler

Tragedy and Dramatic Theatre

Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2016. 466 p.

£32.99.

ISBN: 978-1-1381-9196-9.

The trickiest aspect of the writing of Hans-Thies Lehmann's *Tragedy and Dramatic Theatre*, first published in German in 2014, was perhaps finding the right title. As Lehmann notes, it is customary to start by disentangling tragedy, the tragic, tragic experience, *Trauerspiel*, and so on, and the choice of which terms to favour indicates Lehmann's focus. This book is an extension and expansion of his influential 1999 German text, translated in 2006 as *Postdramatic Theatre*.

Lehmann wryly laments how much of the theoretical work on tragedy sees theatrical performance as an impediment to thinking about the tragic: 'What gets in the way of the theatre is . . . theatre' (ellipsis original). Lehmann's interest is in the texture of a tragic experience that is peculiarly theatrical. Ironically, as with *Postdramatic Theatre*, some material has absented itself in translation. *Tragedy and Dramatic Theatre* has lost some commentary on Racine, on dance, on Hölderlin, on Wagner and 'Musikdrama'. Opposing itself to one form of theory, Lehmann's text remains compellingly theoretical. He insists on aesthetic experience, emphasizing spectator-as-witness over protagonist-as-noble-sufferer. Playing off Kant against Hegel in the shadow of Adorno, his is not an aesthetic of organic unity but of rupture, stressing interruption of the aesthetic itself as the dramatic empties itself into the postdramatic.

Part of Lehmann's aim is to displace the tendency to tie tragedy to dramatic theatre by thinking tragedy through the lens of the postdramatic. There is a strong anti-Aristotelianism, taking apart the theatre of representation (here effectively synonymous with dramatic theatre) and the generic categories that depend on it, opening the door to tragedy-as-literature. Lehmann slyly rewrites Kant: 'Tragic experience is not simply a matter of reflection; it is also a pause in reflection – it is sensory, "blind" (so to speak), and affect-laden all at once; otherwise, it amounts to nothing