Public Theatres and Theatre Publics

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Edited by

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CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS
PUBLISHING

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This book first published 2012

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-4438-3784-9, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-3784-2

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PREFACE/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors would like express their heartfelt gratitude to those who helped make this volume possible. First and foremost, the authors involved deserve thanks for their innovative work and their commitment to expanding notions of publics and publicness in theatre and performance. All of the essays included here debuted at the 2010 Mid-America Theatre Conference in Cleveland, Ohio, and we are grateful to the 2009-2010 MATC executive committee for their work organizing the conference. In particular we would like to thank Scott Magelssen and Ann Haugo, without whom this book would not exist. Scott and Ann's *Querying Difference in Theatre History* (2007) was the first collection of essays from MATC published by Cambridge Scholars. Both of the coeditors of *Public Theatres and Theatre Publics* contributed to *Querying Difference*, and that deeply rewarding process encouraged us to go back to the same publisher to develop a new book on a new theme. We owe thanks for help with the manuscript to Annie Zeidman-Karpinski at the University of Oregon and Zoe Drew-King and Josef Lange at the University of Puget Sound. Thanks also go to Amanda Millar, Carol Koulikourdi, and Andy Nercessian at Cambridge Scholars Publishing for all of their hard work in seeing this project to print. Finally, we are grateful beyond measure to our families and friends for their love and encouragement.

INTRODUCTION

THEATRE, PERFORMANCE, AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

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Theatre studies has a natural and intuitive affinity for historicizing and theorizing relationships between various performative practices and their publics. Now, the concept of a public sphere, as well as various attendant notions of publicness, publicity, and diverse forms of publics, have become increasingly prominent topics in twenty-first century scholarly discourse. Alan McKee observes in his recent book *The Public Sphere: An Introduction* that "the term 'public sphere' has become a common one in many university disciplines: journalism, media studies, cultural studies, mass communication studies, political philosophy and sociology have all found it useful."[1] Yet despite this seeming ubiquity, in the early stages of planning this book we found theatre studies lacking in concentrated scholarly forays into the present discourse on publics, their formation, and their functioning.[2] This did not mean, however, that theatre and performance scholars are uninterested in questions of how individuals involved with creating and criticizing performance precipitated and participated in varieties of public discourse. What we thought would be valuable, then, was to assemble a critical mass of essays, written by outstanding scholars in our field, concerned in different ways with publicness vis-à-vis theatre and performance. *Public Theatres & Theatre Publics* presents sixteen focused investigations of particular interactions of theatre and performance with various aspects of the public sphere from the eighteenth century to the present and in a variety of national contexts. The accumulation of specific case studies creates a complex and multivalent understanding of what it means to be public in theatrical and performative

contexts, with various views of publics and publicness coexisting in tension from chapter to chapter.

The aim of this book is thus to add complexity and diversity to present understandings of performative publicness. To situate the chapters that follow in current discourse, it is important to begin by sketching out some basic aspects of the existing concept of the public sphere. As articulated by Jürgen Habermas, the philosopher generally credited with initiating the now copious body of contemporary public sphere theory, the public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit* in Habermas's original German, a term that translates more directly as "openness" or "publicness") is "a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed. […] A portion of the public sphere is constituted in every conversation in which private persons come together to form a public."[3] Essentially, Habermas developed the concept of the public sphere as a means of describing how individual citizens meeting in discreet groups developed normative attitudes about current events—what came to be known as public opinion—with dominant opinions elevated by the quality of individuals' rhetorical arguments rather than the hierarchal power granted by those same individuals' social statuses. Certain roots of this "associational life" are evident in Enlightenment Germany, particularly in the work of Kant with his concern for the public use of reason, and are paralleled by distinct yet overlapping developments in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England and France:

> The societies for enlightenment, cultural associations, secret freemasonry lodges, and orders of *illuminati* were associations constituted by the free, that is, private, decisions of their founding members, based on voluntary membership, and characterized internally by egalitarian practices of sociability, free discussion, decision by majority, etc. While these societies certainly remained an exclusively bourgeois affair, they did provide the training ground for what were to become a future society's norms of political equality.[4]

According to Habermas, with the growth of liberal democracy and mercantile capitalism during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the public sphere as both limited reality and unlimited ideal manifested itself in the space between the "Private Realm" of individual self-interest (including the maintenance of the conjugal family as well as personal labor) on the one hand and the "Sphere of Public Authority" (concerned with state business and the dictation of laws) on the other.[5]

The bourgeois public sphere became the domain in which private citizens, by engaging in rational disputations with one another in public

forums like English coffeehouses and French salons, as well as through mediated arenas like newssheets and literary journals, could develop and articulate attitudes regarding political governance and cultural matters. Two key aspects of these public arenas which should be understood as exemplary of all functioning public spheres are that they were relatively independent from existing political and economic structures and that participation in the discussions they facilitated was voluntary. Out of these arenas and practices developed an increasingly common experience of rational-critical debate formulating public opinion in service of an Enlightenment-style common good. As the public sphere gained discursive strength among the bourgeoisie, it began to exert actual political and cultural power, most importantly in evaluating the laws and policies of less-than-fully-representative governments and forcing the realm of politics to account for the burgeoning realm of public opinion. Additionally, as Natalya Baldyga points out in her essay in this collection, aesthetic debates in the cultural public sphere of eighteenth-century London are exemplary of how self-selecting members of a particular reading and theatre-going public began to regulate standards of public taste. Indeed, public opinion's use in regulating individuals' decisions, in the sense of organized social pressure or taste-making, comes to exist in tension with the still valuable ideals of the public sphere as a means for countering authoritarianism with collective reason. The public sphere can thus both oppress and liberate individuals.

The nexus of the public sphere, the professional theatre, and the rise of liberal democracy becomes keenly evident in the nineteenth-century US, as addressed by Rosemarie Bank and Tyler Smith's chapters in this volume. The French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville, frequently discussed as a precursor to modern public sphere theory who took a dim view of overly-large publics,[6] concluded during his time spent travelling around the young United States that the democratic consciousness firstly and most enduringly expresses itself in the theatre:

> No literary pleasures are more accessible to the crowd than those that come from seeing a play. To experience them requires neither study nor preparation. They grip you in the midst of your preoccupations and your ignorance. When a class of citizens first begins to feel for the pleasures of the mind a love still half-uncivilized, it immediately takes to drama. The theatres of aristocratic nations have always been filled with non-aristocrats. Only in the theatre did the upper classes mingle with the middle and lower classes and agree, if not to accept their opinion, then at least to suffer them to express one. It is in the theatre that scholars and men of letters have always had the greatest difficulty establishing the supremacy of their taste over that of the people and resisting the influence of the people's taste on their own.[7]

Despite some trappings of traditional political liberalism, this passage reflects Tocqueville's overarching concern that with the enlargement of the public sphere to include lower classes of society, it becomes increasingly impossible to reach consensus in public forums, and the bourgeois public sphere therefore begins to lose its efficacy as a determiner of rational public opinion. Some of the democratic advances brought about by the increasing spread of public sphere participation to the less educated were undermined by the conflictedness, diffuseness, and ambiguity introduced to public opinion as a result of the laboring classes gaining a place at the table of public discourse, even if that participation was limited to expressions like yelling out their opinions in public playhouses. Habermas explains: "This was because the unreconciled interests which, with the broadening of the public, flooded the public sphere were represented in a divided public opinion and turned public opinion (in the form of the currently dominant opinion) into a coercive force, whereas it had once been supposed to dissolve any kind of coercion into the compulsion of reason. […] The reign of public opinion appeared as the reign of the many and the mediocre."[8] Tocqueville's portrait of the nineteenth-century American playhouse argues that the good that comes from the ideal of unimpeded rational-critical debate in the public sphere is eventually mitigated in reality by the tyranny of lowest-common-denominator opinions and tastes.

The coercive power of mass public opinion came to resemble more and more the arbitrary dictates of the sort of autocratic princely power that preceded the rise of the public sphere in the first place. This process was exacerbated by the growth of mass media, controlled by relatively few individuals, from the nineteenth century to the present, which has tended, according to Habermas, to diminish the autonomy of individuals in the public sphere. Public opinion became easier to stage manage via pre-fabricated media narratives, and it was therefore increasingly less likely to be able to mount effective critiques of power. To vociferously agree with a political or aesthetic stance manufactured for mass consumption is not the same thing as engaging in rational-critical debate. It is in this context that alternatives to truly massive publics become important and attractive.

One early twenty-first-century scholar interested in reexamining assumptions about the public sphere is the queer theorist Michael Warner, who asks two interrelated questions: "What kind of world would make the values of both publicness and privacy equally accessible to all?" and "How would the experience of gender and sexuality have to be different in such a world?"[9] In his book *Publics and Counterpublics*, Warner explores the complexities of the terms "public" and "private," noting that they are

both "abstract categories for thinking about law, politics, and economics" as well as wielding deeper, more personal power, as in the case of the child's training in a particular relationship to his or her "privates" or use of the "privy."[10] Although public and private have commonly been treated as separate zones in the Western tradition—the town square versus the bedroom, for example—Warner notes that notions of public and private are, in practice, much slipperier and less distinct than that. "A private conversation can take place in a public forum; a kitchen can become a gathering place; a private bedroom can be public and commercial space, as in a hotel; a radio can bring public discussion into a bathroom"[11] and, of course, "a public theatre can be a private enterprise…."[12] Many chapters in *Public Theatres and Theatre Publics* investigate such delicate contours and striking interpenetrations of public and private in enlightening detail.

As historian John Randolph has noted, "many of the things once defined in culture and politics as innermost, most personal, and therefore essentially 'intimate' are now being rediscovered as building blocks of public discourse."[13] We selected essays for this volume that detail the relationship of theatrical and performative practices to national self-conception, to political activism, to the formation of communities, or to ideas about who has access to a nation or community's attention, following the implications of ideas about the bourgeois public sphere. At the same time, because of insights like Randolph's, we additionally sought essays that incorporate analysis of public and private dualisms in theatre. Thus, as much as this book is concerned with increasing our ways and means for understanding what publicness actually signifies and entails, much of the writing in the volume also concerns the ways publicness and publicity create tensions with their obverse. Matters like sexual encounters, the closed-door discussions of artistic collaborators, and the formation and readjustment of aesthetic preferences have dimensions deliberately left outside the bounds of public scrutiny. Within liberal democracy, at least, not everything is intended to be everyone else's business.

Warner is one of many subsequent scholars who have problematized and elasticized Habermas's initial description of the public sphere. As scholars have continued to find value in aspects of Habermas's original concept, and as Habermas himself has acknowledged criticisms and modified his own thinking on the subject,[14] the public sphere has been re-imagined less as a fixed historical phenomenon and more as a linguistic occurrence. The "linguistified" public sphere has, over time, been "made fluid and mobile to the point where it was not a space in which a certain kind of communication could take place, but a space generated by a

certain kind of communication."[15] Acknowledging that the term has become dynamic and situational in scholarly discourse, a useful working definition of the public sphere that helps establish the terrain covered by the essays in this book comes from Alan McKee:

> It's a metaphor for thinking about how individual human beings come together to exchange ideas and information and feelings, about how large-scale communities manage themselves when too many individuals are involved to simply list the issues that affect them all and have each one explain, face to face, their position. It's a metaphor which keeps us focused on the distinction between individual, personal forms of representation—over which we have a large degree of control—and shared, consensual representations—which are never exactly what we would like to see precisely because they are shared (public). It's a liberal model which sees the individual human being as having an important input into the formation of the general will—as opposed to totalitarian or Marxist models, which see the state as ultimately powerful in deciding what people think. This is the public sphere.[16]

In recent years, the public sphere as a conceptual construct has begun to mutate from a zone of bourgeois rational-critical debate to a plurality of independent publics, often formed around identity markers like gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or class, or even by shared interests in cultural matters, as in the case of "the theatre-going public." A public can be formed of any group of people who communicate with one another about their given interests, outside the bounds of or in opposition to official power structures. Ken Hirschkop has referred to this diversification of the concept as "the tendency to disperse publicness into the myriad capillaries of the social system," a trend even Habermas has embraced in practice. This modification of public sphere theory from a focus on the political accomplishment of a single economic class to "a potential situation or institution, always threatening to emerge from the pressure exerted by the communicative structures of ordinary language" is why the title of this book refers to theatre publics rather than theatre's public.[17]

Audiences, Spectators, and Publics

As a liminal realm somewhere between an intimate coffeehouse discussion and the massively wide address of a television or radio broadcast, live theatre raises intriguing questions about embodied mediations between realms of private experience and the shaping of public opinion regarding matters of state. Some of the essays in this book do engage with mediatized public spheres, for instance the circulation of

critical opinions in print discussed by Jennifer Schlueter or the fight for control of televised images of political protests seen in Jayson Morrison's analysis. Nonetheless, the essays in *Public Theatres and Theatre Publics* are more centrally concerned with the live discursive exchanges between a play and its audience, as in Les Wade's chapter; among theatre artists in a rehearsal room, as in Harvey Young's chapter; in performances from everyday life, as in John Fletcher's chapter; or in performances that disrupt everyday life, as in DeAnna Toten Beard's chapter.

One thing that distinguishes *Public Theatres and Theatre Publics* from the analyses of publics being done by scholars in the fields of media and communications studies is that this book's focus inevitably falls on live and embodied, rather than mediated, publics.[18] Further, theatre and performance solicit and constitute publics in particular ways; one accepted definition of "publicity" refers to the techniques and processes of attracting public attention, either in mass media or through word-of-mouth. Warner cautions: "The temptation is to think of publics as something we make, through individual heroism and creative inspiration or through common goodwill. Much of the process, however, necessarily remains invisible to consciousness and to reflective agency."[19] It is true that the total conditions for making a public extend well beyond the agency of individual artists to include "the organization of the media, ideologies of reading, institutions of circulation, text genres" and other factors. Nonetheless, that does not mean theatre and performance studies should turn a blind eye to the ways in which individuals try to make public their artistic works, political goals, aesthetic sensibilities, and life experiences.

A point of particular interest is the complex relationship between publicity and theatricality. Tracy C. Davis and Thomas Postlewait note: "The idea of theatricality could…be used to describe the traits of performance that meet a minimum standard of 'stagability.' These theatrical attributes, which hold our attention, serve as the basis for understanding and evaluating drama."[20] A simple illustration of this point is that every year when repertory theatres decide on their seasons, certain scripts are chosen to be made publically available via live performance while a much greater number of other scripts are not selected for performance because they fail to meet standards, based on subjective empathy, regarding what a presumed public would care to see. This notion extends to individual performers as well, as noted by Joseph Roach: "As charismatics seem to know telepathically who needs them most when they walk into a room, so particular audiences in different times and places have known what they most needed and from whom when they walked

into a theatre district, which might be called an 'It-zone,' serving as the Habermasian public sphere for newly self-fashioning mobs of star-gazers."[21] This concern for the specific means by which performers and publics attract and (mis)understand one another—think, for example, of the quintessentially theatrical question asked at the conclusion of Samuel Beckett's *Play*: "Am I as much as…being seen?"[22]—links chapters in this book including those by Noe Montez, Jessica Hester, and Matthew Shifflett.

One factor that complicates the relation between mediatized modes of publicness and the specific aspect of representation termed theatricality[23] is that people who make theatre, as well as those who study it critically, sometimes use the word "public," employed as a noun, as something perilously close to a synonym for "audience" or "member of the public" as akin to "spectator." Nonetheless, even in relatively informal writing, colloquial distinctions reveal themselves. As an example, in his memoir, the actor, director, and theater teacher Ben Iden Payne at one point refers to a self-involved actor fretting over various aspects of a role and asking himself: "How will this make me look before my public?"[24] Elsewhere in the book, Payne relates an anecdote about himself: "…when at question time I was asked for the name of the one great American poet, my emphatic 'Whitman, of course!' obviously surprised my audience."[25] Elsewhere he describes a common experience for theatre-makers: "only when it came to the performance was I able to see the production more from the point of view of a spectator."[26] Rearranging the words "public," "audience," and "spectator" in these passages simply wouldn't do. The distinction seems to hinge on the public as something conceived of abstractly in absentia as opposed to the actual physical presence of an audience of living auditors or an individualized spectator. Indeed, Christopher Balme has recently offered some clarifying distinctions along these lines:

> While 'spectators' and 'audiences' refer to individual or collective bodies inside the building or actively attending the performance—participants in the *hic et nunc* of theatrical encounter and exchange—the terms 'public' and even more broadly 'the public sphere' refer to a potential audience or perhaps not even that. The public might include those individuals who regularly attend a particular theatre or indeed theatre in general—the theatergoing public—independent of a particular building. In this sense, the public is a potential audience to be realized rather than an actualized one. Theatres communicate continually with the theatergoing public, by anticipating its aesthetic tastes, estimating its size and moods, or, in the avant-garde tradition, rhetorically denying its importance or offending it. The space where this communication is enacted can be defined as the theatrical public sphere.[27]

Following Balme's analysis, the public is something both imagined and directly solicited out of which some members of the public hopefully decide to become "individual spectators who will form a collective audience."[28] As helpful as Balme's taxonomy is, anyone who has ever sat as an individual spectator in a theatre audience reading an advert in the program for an upcoming show (thereby being cultivated as that theatre's public) can attest, precise distinctions are often complicated by reality. It is the potential for overlap among notions of "public," "audience," and "spectator" that allows an actor during a curtain call simultaneously to make eye contact with a spectator in the front row, to feel warmed by the applause of the audience, and to ponder who among her public might attend the next night's show.

The contributors to this book, as well as the editors, collectively hold a great deal of practical experience making theatre, in the areas of playwriting, directing, acting, theatrical design, and dramaturgy, and this expertise reveals itself throughout the scholarship. *Public Theatres and Theatre Publics* draws together a cohesive selection of essays that expand our understanding of how theatre (defined to include a broad range of live performative practices) congregates and addresses particular publics, written by people who devote a lot of thought to how to address deliberately convened, corporeally-present audiences and spectators. Our organizing critical lens of publics and publicness allows for the various chapters to cross boundaries of time periods, geographical locations, and modes of theatricality and performance. Each essay presents a theorized case study, some historical and some contemporary, that grapple with fundamental questions of how publicness and performativity intersect. Our hope is that the volume will contribute to new discussions and understandings of how theatre and performance work, as well as how publics, publicity, and modes of publicness have been constructed and contested over the last few centuries.

Formations across the Volume

Launching this discussion of publics, publicity, and modes of publicness, the volume's first set of essays begins and ends with pieces about two major figures, each a type of public intellectual in theatre. Yet these figures exercised their influence with very different styles: there's the African American theatre director of enormous artistic accomplishment whose collaboration with and mentorship of Lorraine Hansberry and August Wilson almost effaces his public persona. Then there's the contrastingly voluble, contentious, and prolific theatre critic and cultural

commentator who also wrote and produced for radio and TV and engaged in public debates with other leading voices of the early twentieth century. These pieces bookend two essays concerned with discourse about audiences in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the analysis found in them probes definitions of and assumptions about class and taste. Together, these essays highlight foundational notions about the public sphere as a place of debate and rational discourse or the "commons" of a community and of a public as a broadly-constituted group that shares a common vocabulary or worldview. The essays problematize issues of neutrality, universality, and representation in the public sphere and are animated by a vision of public figures, theatre audiences, and public discourse about performance as part of contestatory social dynamics in need of rigorous historical explication.

Harvey Young's clarion call to attend to the work of director and former Dean of the Yale Drama School Lloyd Richards yields rich results. Young's documentation of Richards's influence on both Hansberry and Wilson reinserts Richards's experience into the way the work of these two playwrights reflects the life of black American communities. Young's piece articulates the way a public sphere can contain both a center and margins; thus he describes Hansberry and Wilson's work as dramas of segregated public spheres. The presence of an African-American public sphere in relation to but also as distinct from a dominant white public sphere echoes Warnerian ideas about counterpublics more fully explored in the second set of essays. Young mobilizes the idea of segregated spheres to show in part how, as a director and mentor, Richards bridged them. Young's positioning also allows Richards to emerge as an international and translational figure, one whose artistic insight into America, black and white, took shape in a cross-cultural Jamaican-Canadian-African-American milieu. Young's bold claim that "[i]t was Richards's desire to bring black public sphere conversations to the stage that created an opportunity for Wilson to become a playwright" implies the power of the public circulation of experience Richards effected through theatre. Richards staged African-American plays that bridged theatre publics, as the reception of Hansberry and Wilson by black and white audiences over the last 50 years attests.

In the next essay, Rosemarie K. Bank wrestles to the ground overgeneralizations stemming from "cultural hierarchy" analyses of nineteenth-century audiences by charting the crossover status of women in such public "formations." Bank reverses the tactics of works by Lawrence Levine and Bruce McConachie and starts with women and their identity markers as the basis for naming sectors of the [theatre] public. Starting

with the "Bowery G'hal," moving to the "association woman," and culminating with the "enterprising woman," Bank powerfully decodes depictions of these "types" of women in nineteenth-century dramas and theorizes about the mislabeling of theatre publics who move between working class and middle class categories because or in spite of their gender. Her examples illuminate how the conceptual status of public space as male space shifted in the nineteenth century because of how women "bodied forth," in public theatres and as theatre publics. Bank's analysis positions highbrow/lowbrow terminology as a reflection, in part, of the "extent to which the presence of women in public spaces at the end of the nineteenth century was deeply resented by cultural arbiters," while calling for historians to develop more fluid conceptual models of class in order to better reflect the diversity of the nineteenth-century cultural field.

Natalya Baldgya's close reading of discourse in eighteenth-century English theatrical criticism about "natural" good taste also concerns arbitration of theatre publics by elites. Both Bank and Baldyga's studies signal the way social and aesthetic concerns intermingle in such discourse precisely because theatre performs in public. Baldyga illustrates how eighteenth-century English theatre's social implications received adjudication in the lively print culture of the period. Engaging productively with Habermas, Baldgya draws attention to the urban locus of a public sphere and its association with meritocracy and rationality in his theory. She proposes that the theatrical publics of London-Town in the eighteenth century inhabited "two topographies" that refused to align. In other words, the middle class theatre public inhabited an urban space that did shift focus away from court hierarchies, but their theatrical tastes often stubbornly refused to be either rational or meritocratic by the definition of Enlightenment thinkers. Her analysis suggests that if Habermas formulated his public sphere theory in part to address political and social changes emerging in this historical moment (the eighteenth century), then acknowledgement is needed that theatrical criticism in the period conceived of the public sphere as not as a space broadly representative of common tastes, but rather as a place legitimated only by specific and prescriptive tastes.

Jennifer Schlueter's subject, Gilbert Seldes, wrote as both an arbiter of taste and a rebel against the elitist theories of audience, genre, and class prevalent among his fellow intellectuals between the World Wars. Because of this, her essay extends the conversation already underway between Bank and Baldyga's pieces. Baldyga and Schlueter's essays both capture the role of circulating periodicals as voices of the public sphere that frequently commented on the relationship between public theatre and

theatre's publics. And Schlueter writes up a Seldes who would love Bank's point that hierarchies about theatre publics reveal more about the needs of the people making those hierarchies than they reveal about the actual people in the audiences. Schlueter's unique contribution to the volume lies in her repositioning of American modernism in relation to popular culture. Schlueter intertwines the notion of the public and the popular via Seldes's contrarian take on theatre aesthetics and capitalism.

The implied or necessary relationship between theatre in the public sphere and issues of democracy and capitalism emerges as a shared point of concern in section one and continues to be investigated throughout the collection. But the second group of essays turns more decisively to the dynamics of counterpublics, exploring negotiations of unity and diversity within public sphere performance, especially as concerns religion, the self, parodic identification, and political activism. Robert Asen writes that "[a]s conceptual models of the public sphere have moved toward multiplicity, 'counterpublic' has emerged as a critical term to signify that some publics develop not simply as one among a constellation of discursive entities, but as explicitly articulated alternatives to wider publics that exclude the interests of potential participants."[29] The essays in this section range in topic from the English state-of-the-nation play and worldview training for Christian evangelizers to the divergent audiences for melodramatic parody after the Astor Place Riots and the political funerals staged by ACT-UP. Each one looks at how a performance event brings an explicitly framed alternative into a wider public's vision and builds its artistic techniques in order to persuasively articulate the values of that alternative public.

Les Wade's essay picks up the issue of capitalism and the public sphere by situating the Royal Court premiere of Jez Butterworth's *Jerusalem* amid debate in British newspapers about market-based, individualist narratives in the postmodern west, public demonstrations by religious leaders targeted at London financiers, and the publication of books and articles debating "the case for God." Wade's insightful reading of this play's provocative combination of pastoral, pagan, nationalistic, and new age imagery engages a discussion about the "return of religion" in the public sphere that John Fletcher's essay continues in a different mode by documenting shifting approaches used in Evangelical outreach to "post-Christian" publics. Wade argues that the ideas and images the award-winning production of *Jerusalem* put into circulation, especially through the lauded performance of Mark Rylance as the main character, upend notions about religion in the public sphere from both left and right at the start of the twenty-first century. While Wade wonders about the people who attended *Jerusalem* and their points of connection to the potent but

inchoate spiritual call in the work, Fletcher's study looks closely at tactics developed precisely because of careful attention to how specific publics were reacting to direct religious messages.

Fletcher's groundbreaking analysis of the rhetorical and performative strategies that differentiate "confrontational" evangelism from "conversational or friendship" evangelism argues that a new strategy of public relations, or, perhaps better, counter-public relations, drives a mode of peer-to-peer activism that takes into account the way that, as Fletcher points out, "faith now itself operates against a background assumption of ideological plurality." Fletcher opens perspectives about the relationship of ideas about Enlightenment-based secularity and modernity to conceptions of the public sphere. His exhortation to progressive political activists to heed the efficacy of worldview analysis is like the mantra of a smart theatre producer: know your audience, even if—especially if—you disagree with them on points of aesthetics, politics, philosophy, or theology.

Tyler Smith's essay concerns the different strategies of parody used in plays by a playwright who indeed knew his audiences very well. Smith's reading of two nineteenth-century parodies by John Brougham relates to both Bank and Baldyga's work in its approach to the publics targeted by these plays—Jacksonian working class or business class audiences—and independently develops the idea of "ownership" as a key term of analysis for the relationship a public experiences with cultural events. Smith's attention to the separate textual and performance strategies and different venues of production used by Brougham for his parodies of Indian plays turns on issues of both material ownership and symbolic ownership. Smith also raises questions about the codes different audiences catch or apprehend as they watch performance and, like Wade, captures the nexus of a city and nation self-consciously reflecting on its heroes, its "others," and its history in public.

Jayson Morrison's central formulation in the study of ACT UP's political funerals is that they are performance events that mobilize "private grief for political purposes in public memorials." Like Fletcher, Morrison is interested in what motivates public sphere activism and the use of interactive techniques in that arena. For Morrison, the public AIDS funeral fascinates primarily because of the effect it has on those who enact it, so he focuses on the "performers" of the funeral as much as on those who "watch" the event. Carrying out acts of mourning in public marks the difference between having an emotion and having that emotion recognized and legitimated. These are two distinct but linked processes, and that is why the public theatre of the political funeral proves effective: the public show strengthens the private resolve of AIDS activists at the same time

that it legitimates their grief within the public sphere. Morrison's argument anticipates several of the dynamics of the fourth set of essays in the collection, which all treat private matters of public concern. His essay also links to Noe Montez's exploration of performance in museums and of oral histories as modes of public memorials at the top the volume's third section.

Montez's essay on the performance of a Falklands War fighter pilot's oral history in Argentina's National Museum of Aeronautics kicks off a set of studies focused on theatrical reflections on the business of the state. These essays concern uses of theatre in the public sphere in ways that relate to issues of governance, war, and transgression. This group of essays probes the use of theatre to demystify political issues, reveal abuses, encourage community action, and broadcast ongoing debate, anatomizing the relationship of theatre to government transparency in the public sphere and to the creation of a culture's "living memory." Montez's interest in the performance of oral history as a democratizing force that gives "agency to individuals with previously silenced voices and offer[s] audiences perspectives on historical events in ways that physical objects can not" threads through into DeAnna M. Toten Beard's positioning of the WWI-era "preparedness movement" as a complex mode of participatory democratic performance and Alan Sikes's valorization of Brecht's early plays as "political" in the sense that they give voice to factions that feel excluded from the political scene.

George Potter's timely essay on representations of torture in Egyptian drama, first written in the year before the protests in Tahrir Square that felled the Mubarek government, powerfully details the adaptation of foreign texts about torture by Egyptian theatre artists as a mode of publicly reflecting on the Mubarak regime. The adapted texts help circumvent government controls that form a "regulated public sphere," Potter writes, and make "it nearly impossible for locally-written, non-comedic political dramas to reach the stage." Still, Potter's analysis pinpoints the dilemma that speaking in another voice complicates agency in the public sphere—it obfuscates even as it liberates, and it ultimately does not completely protect artists and performers from a state apparatus that intends to silence domestic dissent and fundamentally does not accord freedom of expression within a public sphere. In cases like this, public theatres and theatre publics create, as Potter contends, "an alternative public space," one that bears comparison to the more open dynamics of protest in Tahrir Square during 2011.

Toten Beard's study of initiatives spearheaded by Major General John F. O'Ryan in the World War I era considers the use of live-enacted

training exercises for National Guardsmen that traversed public spaces (the subway, a park) and gained impromptu audiences of people who were doing their daily business or having their lunch. Toten Beard argues that this aspect of witness to the "sham battle" should be understood as part of a strategy to shape public attitudes toward the military, and both New York state and United States national government. Toten Beard's extensive historical research details the different modes of "theatricalized" training undertaken under O'Ryan's command and reveals O'Ryan's approach to the idea of "rehearsals for war" as a precursor to training tactics used even today. Toten Beard's historiographical analysis makes a unique partner to Potter's essay, setting up different cases of government use and abuse of theatre in the public sphere to protect or advance military interests. And Major General O'Ryan emerges as an important figure within public dialogue and, perhaps, theatre history.

Alan Sikes returns to an already titanic figure in theatre history, Bertolt Brecht, and thoroughly resituates the depiction of homosexual desire in Brecht's early plays in light of public debates and political events in Germany prior to World War I and during the Weimar Republic. Sikes refutes the notion that Brecht's early plays are "anarchic and apolitical" by framing them rather as anarchic and *deeply* political since despite the progressive Weimar constitution, Sikes writes, "homosexual men found themselves members of a visible and vocal minority still excluded from full participation in civic and political life, an inassimilable element within the Weimar political landscape." The public impact of challenging legal sanctions on sexual acts that forms the crux of Weimar sexual politics makes Sikes's chapter an important bridge between the essays concerned with theatrical critiques of state power and the final set of essays about theatrical negotiations of the interaction of public and private life. Sikes's argument moves in both directions, deepening the range of political critique recognized in Brecht's oeuvre and advancing this volume's ongoing dialogue about public and private dualisms in theatre, since one of the paradoxical functions of theatre is to make available in public representations of things usually deemed private.

Sikes's attention to paragraph 175 of the Weimar penal code heralds the way the last set of essays in the book contend with laws as a measure of the tension between public and private and the policing of the public sphere from incursions from private life. Jessica Hester explores how the Marquis de Sade runs afoul of the law for his "blasphemous deeds" and rants against religion, these being more damning when made public than his sexual desire for whipping; part of the power of *The Madness of Lady Bright* in Jeff Grace's assessment derives from its public presentation of a

"screaming" queen in a time when laws prohibited public cross dressing; the crimes of passion directed at performers in Stuart England and their novelization that Matthew Shifflett explores channel private desire into public transgression and popular consumption; and Christine Woodworth's reading of racial representation in birth control drama turns in part on the problem of the Comstock Laws, which outlawed public dissemination of information about birth control and abortion in the United States during the twentieth century.

Hester's essay inaugurates the final section with a study of the innate theatricality of the Marquis de Sade's public persona, as achieved by his pamphlet writing, pornographic novels, and well-publicized criminal record, but not, however, by his rather conventional and poorly received stage plays. Hester details, following Simone de Beauvoir, the dilemma between personal desire and public acceptance Sade staged in his life by courting scandal. Grace continues the section with a vindication of Caffe Cino and Lanford Wilson as breakthrough theatre artists in public presentation of homosexuals on stage, prior to both the Stonewall riots and *The Boys in the Band*. Grace's moving investigation of Wilson's distillation of a community's private pain on stage in *The Madness of Lady Bright* highlights the importance of the play's invitation to its audience to respond to the main character as a human being above all. Shifflett evocatively unpacks a "historical footnote" about the 1692 attempted abduction of actress Anne Bracegirdle and the murder of her stage partner, William Mountfort, by Captain Richard Hill, a fan enflamed with desire. Shifflett charts the way that Hill imported his interaction with Bracegirdle as a public performer into his personal narrative and how in the late Restoration boundaries demarcating the public and the private, especially with regards to gendered appeal and sexual availability, were engendering new modes of spectatorship. Finally, Woodworth caps the section with a reclamation of Harlem Renaissance writer Mary Burrill into the history of dramatic literature, focusing on her birth control propaganda piece *They That Sit in Darkness*. The role of theatre as educational propaganda about reproduction and contraception emerges also as a site for the negotiation of racial prejudice and paternalism within the birth control movement in the early twentieth century. Woodworth's analysis of Burrill's revisions to her play for its appearance in different publications reveals how much was at stake in the representation of race within the movement's literature.

As a medium, theatre's ability to call a public into being by displaying private acts related to sexuality, identity, desire, and emotion grounds its association with sensationalism, scandal, intimacy, and exposé analyzed in each of these essays. Joseph Roach's influential framing of "It," the

magnetic power of a performative presence that seems to bridge opposites of strength and vulnerability; innocence and experience; typicality and exceptionalism; and privacy and publicity, shapes the analysis of both Hester and Shifflett.[30] Meanwhile, Grace develops a point about gay visibility that reinstates the Caffe Cino into historical narratives about gay theatre despite its lack to interest in a "large public audience," and Woodworth calls attention to the category of "public health"—the realm to which policy about birth control and abortion adheres—as another place where the meaning of private acts works out in public.

Shifflett introduces the phrase "public intimacy" to describe some of the dynamics of late Stuart theatre, especially in the way actresses served as a flashpoint for contact between classes and genders in the public sphere during this period. As a concept, public intimacy factors into all of the arguments in this section and also frames a key to some of theatre's liberatory and activist energies suggested in previous sections: while on the one hand, theatrical combinations of the public and the private can create scandal and sensationalism, in its best case, public intimacy creates transformative contact, aids in the formation of shared meaning, and humanizes abstract concepts from the law or philosophy or theology. The fourth group of essays concludes the volume with a strong focus on the shocking, creative, and efficacious ways public theatres and theatre publics traverse the continuum of public and private spheres.

Given the incredibly long and varied histories of theatre and performance, plus the fact that the terms "theatre" and "performance" represent so many complex and disparate techniques for addressing publics, we feel that the concepts of publics and publicness as they intersect with theatre and performance are best addressed via concentrated case studies. Though the range of essays covers a lot of territory, the reader will find a consistency of purpose and shared discovery. The chapters in this volume speak to each other across time periods and geographies, inviting the reader to think about how performing in public circulates ideas, concepts of identity, notions of taste or belonging, markers of class, and possibilities for political agency. Our hope is that this book will stir up important conversations about the necessary and desirable, as well as the sometimes fraught and uncomfortable, public aspects of theatre that teachers, students, and scholars must continue to consider as public sphere theory "opens up" aspects of theatre practice.

Notes

[1] Alan McKee, *The Public Sphere: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12.
[2] For a corroborating opinion, see Christopher B. Balme, "Playbills and the Theatrical Public Sphere" in *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography*, ed. Charlotte M. Canning and Thomas Postlewait (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010), 45-46.
[3] Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere," in *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics: A Reader*, ed. Steven Seidman (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 231.
[4] Jürgen Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1992), 423-4.
[5] See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1989), 30.
[6] Beginning with Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 132-139.
[7] Alexis de Tocqueville, "Some Observations on the Theatre of Democratic Peoples," excerpted in *The American Stag*e, ed. Laurence Senelick (New York: Library of America, 2011), 26.
[8] *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 133.
[9] Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), 21.
[10] Ibid, 23.
[11] Ibid, 27.
[12] Ibid, 31.
[13] John Randolph, "'That Historic Family': The Bakunin Archive and the Intimate Theater of History in Imperial Russia, 1780-1925," *The Russian Review* 63 (October 2004), 576.
[14] See Habermas, 1992, 421-457.
[15] Ken Hirschkop, "Justice and Drama: on Bakhtin as a Compliment to Habermas" in *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere*, ed. Nick Crossley and John Michael Roberts (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 51.
[16] Ibid, 204.
[17] Hirschkop, 51.
[18] See Richard Butsch, ed., *Media and Public Spheres* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) for an excellent and diverse collection of essays discussing publics in relation to radio, film, television, newspapers, the internet and other media.
[19] Warner, 14.
[20] Thomas Postlewait and Tracy C. Davis, "Theatricality: An Introduction" in *Theatricality*, ed. Tracy C. Davis and Thomas Postlewait (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 21.
[21] Joseph Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 12.
[22] Samuel Beckett, "Play" in *Collected Shorter Plays* (New York: Grove Press, 1984), 157.

[23] For a sophisticated unpacking of the term "theatricality," see Tracy C. Davis and Thomas Postlewait, *Theatricality*, 1-34. Davis and Postlewait resist a singular definition of the term in order to preserve its wide applicability. Nonetheless, they endeavor to recognize "some of the interpretive possibilities and critical problems…that pertain to the idea of theatricality" (3). Our hope is that the present volume performs somewhat analogous analytic work regarding applications of publicness vis-à-vis theatre and performance.
[24] Ben Iden Payne, *A Life in a Wooden O: Memoirs of the Theatre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 141.
[25] Ibid, 116.
[26] Ibid, 171.
[27] Balme, 40-41.
[28] Balme, 39.
[29] Robert Asen, "Seeking the 'Counter' in Counterpublics," *Communication Theory* 10 (November 2000), 424-446.
[30] Roach, 8.