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Of particular importance to these chapters were efforts made by parties on both sides of the negotiations to keep discussions of censorship out of the public eye, as the larger public, represented in the book through mainstream reviews of featured plays and films, was adverse to the machinations of the LCO and BBFC.

Another important focal point of the book is the way in which, without changing the language of the law, the standards of acceptability changed over time. Chapter 7, titled "From the 'Angry' Fifties to the 'Swinging' Sixties," looks at the ways this shift occurred over a span of two decades, given the social changes of the time. Of special interest is the authors' use of LCO and BBFC correspondence and reports, in which officials for both organizations articulate their specific concerns for the works discussed and detail their suggestions on everything from potential language changes to the camera angles and stage directions best suited to particular scenes. Chapter 8 "Sundry Genres" details a range of work, including horror films and others, that pushed decisions regarding the LCO's and BBFC's interpretation of "religious reverence."

The organization by genre highlights larger themes and trends in British censorship during the first half of the twentieth century, and demonstrates not only how quickly the definitions of "decency" changed, but also how dependent those definitions were on constantly shifting social and political climates. To demonstrate the reception of the films and plays featured in their work, Aldgate and Robertson use mainstream reviews and letters of complaint sent by film- and playgoers to the LCO and BBFC. The language of these reviews and letters hints at how the larger public viewed the censorship of the work they saw, if they were aware of it at all. *Censorship in Theatre and Cinema* creates a vivid, thorough picture of how censorship of the British stage and screen were closely linked throughout the mid-twentieth century. It is most helpful in revealing the language used to create the much-reviled standard for "decency" in the arts, and the historical trajectory of how that standard has been enforced.

**REBECCA HEWETT**

*The University of Texas at Austin*

**THE CINEMATIC THEATER.** By Babak A. Ebrahimian. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2004; pp. xiii + 141. \$30.95 paper.

In recent years, various theatre practitioners and scholars have posed the following questions: What is the future of the theatre, and how might the theatre

compete with other entertainments in our technology-driven society? Babak Ebrahimian's *The Cinematic Theater* offers the controversial solution that the theatre should become "cinematic." Ebrahimian writes in his introduction that for the past hundred years, theatre and film "have been in dialogue and in active exchange with one another. Yet, the theater has still not fully embraced the cinema" (3). In order for the theatre to do this it must, according to the author, become a "theater of images, sound, and technology highly appropriate for the twenty-first century" (9). His proposed theatre "has a cinematic (film) form and structure, and functions (operates) as if it were a film" (7). Ebrahimian spends the remainder of his book fleshing out these ideas and providing examples from both film and theatre in theory and in practice.

The first three chapters of the book provide the theoretical foundations, while the concluding chapter offers a comprehensive definition of the "cinematic theater" and illustrates it in practice. Ebrahimian begins by admitting that the theatre relies on presence and works on a three-dimensional plane, whereas film relies on distance and remains flat or two-dimensional. He argues that the theatre should compensate for these differences by applying Sergei Eisenstein's montage theory in addition to spatial distancing, which will redefine and reinterpret the theatre in cinematic terms.

In chapter 1, "Precursors to the Cinematic Theater," the author posits that images are not only "today's language," but are also "the language of theater and cinema" (11). To further support his assertion that image functions as language, Ebrahimian turns to the work of Jean Baudrillard and his analysis of the hyperreal, before transitioning into a discussion of auteur theory. He references Bonnie Marranca's *The Theatre of Images* (1977) as a seminal study of the image-centered director-auteur before turning to an analysis of the directorial work of Robert Wilson and Richard Foreman. While Ebrahimian's analysis of Wilson and Foreman is interesting, he admits that neither of their canons is truly "cinematic" because "they have actively been shunning and / or redefining the real and realism" rather than attempting to discover "neorealism" (31), the crux of the author's "cinematic theater." Unfortunately, Ebrahimian introduces, but does not fully explicate his preference for this genre.

The author then turns his attention to the physical manifestation of the "cinematic theater" in chapter 2, "Space and Structure." To facilitate his discussion he relies on Michel Foucault's description of Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon*, Gilles Deleuze's notion of *fold*, and the idea of the German *Raum*. According to Ebrahimian, cinematic theater is panoptic

because it "is a frame [*sic*] and screened space, lit such that the actors never see the audience" (39). Deleuze's *fold* contributes to the cinematic theater's unique treatment of time and space because, as Peter Eisenman describes, the *fold* marks something's "thisness as an event or a spectacle" (42). Finally, Ebrahimian employs the German scene-design notion of *Raum*, which is "a space / room designed independently from the action, the interpretation of the director, and the sounds of the text" (44). While his treatment of each of these theorists / theories is brief, his ideas are intriguing and highly relevant. Ultimately, his account of the *panopticon*, *fold*, and *Raum* allows Ebrahimian to further explore ways in which a cinematic theater may be physically manifest as "a panoptic space constructed by a screened, distanced, and framed proscenium. It needs to be a distanced space defined by a fold and containing a *Raum*" (46).

Before closing the chapter, Ebrahimian traces the theoretical conception of "tableaux," beginning with Diderot through Bertolt Brecht (*gestus*) and Sergei Eisenstein (montage of attractions). In the conclusion of chapter 2, Ebrahimian parallels his concept of cinematic theatre structure with that of Brechtian epic structure, specifically highlighting the importance of tableaux to each form. Although Ebrahimian's treatment of tableaux is highly technical and a bit dense, it remains essential because it provides the foundation for the following chapter's discussion of film theory and montage. In chapter 3, Ebrahimian agrees with Eisenstein's foundational contention that "montage is undoubtedly *the* single most important element of filmmaking" (64). The remainder of the chapter explores Eisenstein's two forms of montage: montage of attractions, and vertical montage. Whereas the montage of attractions is primarily a visual sequencing of tableaux, the creation of a vertical montage often takes place in the editing room and combines a "visual track" and "sound track" in order to "communicate through [the] juxtaposition" of the two elements (68). Vertical montage is of utmost importance in defining "cinematic theater" because it lends to the live theatre event a film-like atmosphere in which the sound track and the visual track are precisely aligned. Ebrahimian further explores this concept through a series of examples, ranging from the films of Ingmar Bergman to Walt Disney's *Fantasia*.

The final chapter of the book attempts to bring together the theories, genres, and mediums heretofore discussed. But before the author concludes, he thoroughly analyzes Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane*, which introduced theatrical conventions into the film medium. While Ebrahimian's analysis is passionate and interesting, his focus on Welles's film impedes his ability to make connections between

the theories he has previously illustrated. Thus, after spending half of the final chapter on an analysis of Welles, Ebrahimian allows a mere four pages to capture the essence of his "cinematic theater." He then provides what feels like a rushed illustration of "cinematic theater" in practice by quickly introducing, but never fully fleshing out, six different Stanford University Experimental Theater Lab productions, including several in which he participated. The book concludes abruptly with his discussion of his own play, *Fragments of an America*.

While the weakness of *The Cinematic Theater* is its hasty conclusion, the strength of the book lies in its foundation. It is precisely because Ebrahimian takes such care setting up the theory behind and foundations of the cinematic theatre that he is unable to devote the space necessary to bring his own theory to fruition. Even so, in a time when theatre scholars and practitioners are questioning the state and future of the theatre, Ebrahimian provides us with a new option. In the book's foreword, Carl Weber suggests the likelihood that Ebrahimian's ideas will spark controversy and debate. Perhaps it is such debate that will invigorate twenty-first-century theatre and provide a new avenue and new production possibilities that might appeal to a society to which visual language and technology are central.

SEASON ELLISON

Bowling Green State University

**RAINER WERNER FASSBINDER AND THE GERMAN THEATRE.** By David Barnett. Cambridge Studies in Modern Theatre, no. 16. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005; pp. xii + 300. \$90.00 cloth.

Rainer Werner Fassbinder (1946–1982) is primarily known as the prematurely gone, überproductive bad boy of the New German Cinema. That Fassbinder had worked for over a year in theatre before making his first feature film, spent ten years (1967 to 1976) as playwright, director, actor, and artistic director, and has left seventeen plays are facts known only to a few. David Barnett's study *Rainer Werner Fassbinder and the German Theatre*, the first dedicated solely to Fassbinder's work in the theatre, aims at changing this state of affairs. Barnett is right when he states that Fassbinder's theatre work "has been overlooked and erased in the critical literature" (3). His objective is to show that "Fassbinder is truly an international figure in the theatre, as well as in the cinema" (259). The book is the writing of what has been left unwritten—that is, the story of the "climb of a minor actor from a small role in a