This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 19 titles deal with a variety of topics, including the following: (1) the ethics of violence as political strategy in contemporary drama; (2) the history of Italian-American theatre from 1900 to 1905; (3) the development of the Iowa Theater Lab, an improvisation-based, nonverbal theatre; (4) performance documentation; (5) the relationships among characters in drama—a combination of precepts from Constantin Stanislavski's system of acting and Eric Berne's system of transactional analysis; (6) dramatic dialogue in adaptations; (7) types, principles, and techniques of composition and stage movement in group performance of literature; (8) A. N. Whitehead's educational and cosmological theories and their implications for educational theatre; (9) Oriental crosscurrents in modern Western theatre; (10) the development and nature of vaudeville in Toronto, Canada; (11) the emergence of children's theatre and drama from 1900 to 1910; (12) the interpretation of action in dramatic language; (13) a process for developing local American historical materials into theatrical productions; (14) the literary works of Paul Laurence Dunbar from the perspectives of the oral interpreter; and (15) historic festivals and the nature of American musical comedy. (HOD)
Theatre and Oral Interpretation:

Abstracts of Doctoral Dissertations Published in *Dissertation Abstracts International*, July through December 1984, (Vol. 45 Nos. 1 through 6).

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shaped the theatre in the ensuing decades: the Maioris, the Minciottis, appear from 1900 to 1905. The period produced the major forces that we introduce those new impresarios and troupes that only begin to First, we follow the fortunes of those companies that originated in the phase in the 19th century. The first several years of the 20th century are this study's concern, specifically the years including 1900 to 1905. The period produced the major forces that shaped the theatre in the ensuing decades: the Maioris, the Minciottis, the Cunicos, Francesco Ricciardi, Guglielmo Ricciardi, the Giglios, and the Migliaccios.

This history attempts to reveal every possible instance of amateur or professional theatrical entertainment in New York City's five boroughs. But in following the fortunes of the personalities in this study, we also touch on theatre outside the city limits, up and down the Eastern seaboard to the midwest and to California. Dramatic companies, the arena of the cafe concerto and the marinette theatre are all considered in great detail. Special attention is given to several major figures: Guglielmo Ricciardi and his transition into the American sphere; Antonio Maiori and his introduction of the classics to immigrant audiences; Riccardo Cordiferro (alias Alessandro Siscia) and his prolific literary activity including Il Pezzente and L'Ongre Perduto; and Eduardo Migliacci, known as Farfariello, and his numerous macchiette, or character sketches. Appendices include complete lists of companies, personnel, authors and plays.


Founded by actor Ric Zank and dancer George Kon as the theatre workshop of the University of Iowa's Center for New Performing Arts, the Iowa Theater Lab grew quickly into an internationally known and highly respected experimental theatre company. Although its peak of success spanned only three years, 1972-75, the Lab productions—because of their use of highly sexual content, graphic violence and highly physical nonverbal form of acting—stimulated widespread controversy within the theatrical world. The organization of this study is chronological, beginning with the company's formative years (1970-71). Chapters I and II trace the groups origins, major influences on their work—Copeau, Artaud, Grotowski and Delaure—, the training, and early explorations with sound compositions and improvisation structures in Relais and Othele Variations. In Chapter III, the study focuses on Zank's collaboration with playwright John O'Keefe in creating the company's first full-length play, Dsins (1971). These three chapters trace the development of the Lab's training discipline, improvisational work process and esthetic standards. Chapters IV, V and VI document the creation of the three major original productions in Iowa City: The Naming (1972), Dancer Without Arms (1974), and Moby Dick (1975). Major concerns in these chapters are reconstructing the creative process by which each production emerged and describing the production in its finished form. Each chapter also includes an analysis of the shifting internal affairs of the company and its relationship to the university, as well as an examination of the critical response to each production.

Finally, in an attempt to place the Iowa Theater Lab in perspective, the study concludes with an analysis of the company's work as a whole. Emphasis is placed on drawing generalizations from the Lab's improvisation-based creative process, and in which non-verbal elements such as light, environment, gesture, picturization and sound were used to communicate dramatic narrative.

ANALYZING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG CHARACTERS IN DRAMA: A COMBINATION OF PRECEPTS FROM CONSTANTIN STANISLAVSKI'S SYSTEM OF ACTING AND ERIC BERNE'S SYSTEM OF TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

Bianco, Patricia Stevens, Ph.D. The Florida State University, 1984. 249pp. Major Professor: Gil Lazier

The purpose of this study is to determine the possibility of using Eric Berne's system of transactional analysis to expand and clarify Stanislavski's system of acting. This expansion can form an effective tool for the analysis of character relationships. The value of using Berne's system to expand Stanislavski's is tested by using this combination of systems to analyze the character of Blanche Dubois in A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams. The results of this analysis serve as a functional model of how these systems may be used together for analysis. This model should be applicable to other characters as well.

Both Stanislavski's and Berne's systems are capitalized in the first part of this study's design in order to identify their working structures. Second, divisional devices of character analysis used by the systems are applied to one episode of A Streetcar Named Desire so that their use together is tested and the results recorded in terms of their accessibility to actors. Next, the restructuring devices of both systems are applied to the same play to ascertain whether they work together and, if so, how an actor can use these devices for character analysis. The concluding section summarizes the results of the analysis, concludes whether or not Berne's system can be used to expand Stanislavski's role analysis, and suggests future research in Stanislavski's and Berne's work in order to suggest how precepts from transactional analysis can be used to clarify and expand relationships among characters from Stanislavski's system of acting. This study offers a systematic comparison, as well as a concrete demonstration of how the two systems can be used by an actor.

PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION: AN ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN MATERIALS

Cohn, Kathleen Ann Fallat, Ph.D. The University of Michigan, 1984. 207pp. Chairman: Richard J. Burgwin

Performance documentation has become a major concern of theatre scholars in their attempt to reconstruct past productions. Although the technological revolution has made photography, film, and videotape available as the recording media, written performance documents remain the primary sources for research. This study into the problems of performance documentation was based on the following premises: (1) Performance documentation has for its object the dramatic and the theatrical elements of the performance event; (2) The actor's performance is at the center of the theatrical event; and (3) Promptbooks are regarded as repositories of information about past performances. Using the elements of dramatic action and Tadeusz Koszlik's thirteen signs of the theatre as a guide, a variety of written documents were examined to determine if they contained the particularized execution of an implied, textually prescribed, or rehearsal generated activity for actors.

Chapter I is an overview of performance documentation. Chapter II reviews the history of promptbook research and analyzes other written performance documents including medieval rubrics, commedia scenarios, Elizabethan prompt materials, tributes and memorials, descriptive essays, and post-scriptive texts. Chapter III and Chapter IV are intensive analyses of three significant promptbooks and three significant post-scriptive texts respectively. Chapter V summarizes and analyzes the research data, and suggests areas for future research.

The proven thesis is that although the actor is at the center of the theatrical event, promptbooks and other related performance documents record and therefore preserve the contribution of the playwright (text), the stage manager (technical cues), and the director (visual elements) but seldom the details of the actor's performance.
THE ETHICS OF VIOLENCE AS POLITICAL STRATEGY IN CONTEMPORARY DRAMA

DANL, MARY KAREN, Ph.D. Stanford University, 1984. 300pp.

A significant number of contemporary playwrights—John Arden, Bertolt Brecht, Howard Brenton, Albert Camus, Max Frisch, Eugène Ionesco, Slawomir Mrozek, and Ernst Toller among others—address the difficulty of discerning between right and wrong uses of political violence in a desacralized universe. These dramatists structure the problem of political action as a paradigm of human freedom. They define freedom in terms of the individual’s ability to effect change in his community. The center of the ethical problem is the violent deed; the critical choice, whether to inflict or submit to violence. These playwrights examine the relationship of the hero to his community by means of schematic representations: the nexus, victim-deed-executioner. They ask if the hero, whether victim or executioner, pollutes or redeems his society through his action.

I approach political killings as a theatrical image and as an analogue to the psychological-sociological mechanisms of ritual sacrifice. I suggest no causal relationship between ritual and dramatic structures; I propose the analogy to heighten awareness of the forms, functions, and expectations that inform dramatic representations of the ethical problem. Given the basic analogy, my analysis incorporates images from anthropology, the Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament. To establish the conventionality of the schemes of sacrifice as they appear in the drama, the discussion focuses on a series of parables from Greek tragedy, then considers those images as contemporary playwrights reconfigure them for a new political and religious moment. Thus the Orestes demonstrates the linkage of social, political, and religious structures of violence; Aeschylus’ Prometheus and Sophocles’ Oedipus provide exemplars of victims; Aeschylus’ Orestes and Clytemnestra, exemplars of executioners. As for the moderns (listed above), they provide images ranging from Toller’s inquiry into the kind of violence that renews the community to Brecht’s vindication of revolutionary violence to Ionesco’s absolute rejection of violence as a means to effect change in the world. No consistent ethic of violence emerges; the only constant is the need to continue responsible assessment.

FICTION INTO DRAMA: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF DRAMATIC DIALOGUE IN ADAPTATIONS


This dissertation presents and develops the notion of pragmatic dramatics. Pragmatic dramatics employs the insights and explanations of linguistic pragmatics and applies them to dramatic dialogue. My study uses pragmatic dramatics to examine plays that have been adapted from fiction. The comparative study of play and the fictional work from which the play is adapted reveals three features of language exploited in dramatic dialogue: (1) questions and answers, (2) deixis and deixis centering, and (3) conversational implicature. This study is limited to dialogue in two plays considered naturalistic and realistic.

Chapter 1 discusses the theoretical background needed to develop pragmatic dramatics, focusing on modern linguistics, pragmatics and its distinction from formalist linguistics, and the relationships between real-world conversation, dramatic dialogue and fictional dialogue.

Chapter 2 analyzes Edward Albee’s adaptation of Carson McCullers’ The Ballad of the Sad Café. Albee rearranged McCullers’ tone, setting, character, and narrator in a dramatic frame. I examine this dramatic rearrangement with particular attention to the use of a narrator in the play and the role of deixis in the dialogue. In this adapted play, the use of a narrator undercuts the essentially pragmatic nature of the dialogue and exchanges.

Chapter 3 examines William A. Nadolski’s The Innocents, a play based on Henry James’ The Turn of the Screw. The analysis focuses on the transformation of unspoken thought into dialogue and a comparison of specific features of character dialogue. I find the playwright relying on rhetorical questions, tag questions, and questions that implicate polite forms of speaking; and direct/indirect questions and statements.

Chapter 4 draws conclusions on the pragmatic nature of dialogue in plays that have been adapted from fiction and suggests areas for further exploration in the study of dialogue using the principles of pragmatic dramatics.

TYPES, PRINCIPLES, AND TECHNIQUES OF COMPOSITION AND STAGE MOVEMENT IN GROUP PERFORMANCE OF LITERATURE

FERGUSON, PAUL HARRY, Ph.D. The University of Texas at Austin, 1983. 342pp. Supervising Professor: Paul Gray

The purpose of this study is to explore, refine, and expand existing group performance theory through a focus on composition and stage movement. Combining composition and stage movement under the single term staging, the study discusses how various types of staging are used to make aesthetic and critical statements about a literary work; and to solve common group performance production problems.

After tracing the growing importance of composition and stage movement in modern group performance, the study identifies eight types of staging: imitation, observational, symbolic, juxtaposition, frame, neutral, summary, and atmosphere. Each type of staging is presented as a possible solution to recurring group performance production problems (e.g., how to create a feeling of scene on the bare stage; how to create staging responsive to the constantly shifting times and locations common in non-dramatic literature; and how to create staging that reveals symbolism, theme, and subtext). Following this, the study describes a set of techniques useful in executing all the types of staging (e.g., repetition and variation of the pattern and shape of composition and stage movement).

After the types, principles, and techniques of staging are described, their usefulness as aesthetic and critical tools is demonstrated by applying them to a production of Hansel and Gretel, a fairy tale by the brothers Grimm. The tale is adapted for group performance (retaining its narrative structure) and its Freudian sub-text—suggested by psychologist Bruno Bettelheim in The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales—is revealed through the described staging (i.e., composition and stage movement).

Throughout the study, where helpful or necessary, illustrations accompany the text.

WHITEHEAD’S EDUCATIONAL AND COSMOLOGICAL THEORIES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL THEATRE


Like a chronicle of the author’s interest in Whitehead, this thesis starts with a discussion of his educational theory as described in The Aims of Education, proceeds to a discussion of his cosmological theory, and ends with some speculations about how they both relate to one school experience, specifically participation in a high school drama.

Two of the ideas in The Aims of Education are the subjects of Part One of this thesis: “concrete apprehension,” by which Whitehead means the ability of the student to experience a subject before he can comprehend it fully; and “the rhythms of education,” by which he means the student’s need to learn a subject in a series of three stages. Chapter IV is a review of “The Aims of Education;” an essay from the book by the same name.

Whitehead’s cosmology, i.e., his attempt to frame a coherent system of ideas which would allow us to interpret all our experiences, is the subject of the second part of this thesis. Twelve or so of his new terms are defined and a full discussion of the cosmology itself follows, with particular emphasis on the cosmology’s “First Principle,”...
Strindberg's works, and his Dream Plays incorporate occultism, alchemy, Theosophy, Buddhismcan be eccentric Zen praeecea designed to free the mind striking parallels, inner mind. The subsequent Dada revolt against traditional values pieces of Oriental myth and thought into freeflowing odysseys of direct communication in the theatre.

In the twentieth-century, and concurrent development, of elements in moder...nment of the actual entity; also his theory of concrete apprehension is not congruent with his cosmological theory of "prehension", whereby an entity's "becoming" or "concernence" is difficult to submit to chronology.

The thesis concludes with some speculations as to how the cosmological principle of creativity could inspire some changes in teaching practice.
THE INTERPRETATION OF ACTION IN DRAMATIC LANGUAGE

Order No. DA8418533

Dramatic theory has historically placed little emphasis on the analysis of language, focusing instead on plot, character, and theme. Although there has been increased study of dramatic language since 1960, there has been no comprehensive reevaluation of the history of dramatic theory in terms of linguistic theory. Nor has a critical consensus formed about which linguistic theory or critical methodology is best suited to the study of dramatic language. This study undertakes to lay the groundwork for a unified dramatic-linguistic approach to the interpretation of dramatic texts. It first reviews major works of dramatic theory, beginning with Aristotle's Poetics. It finds that Aristotle's poetic theory is related to his theories of language and logic, and that the technique of dramatic dialogue is central to his view of poetic imitation. Samuel Johnson, August Strindberg, and Gertrude Stein are shown to follow Aristotle in finding language to be the primary mode of dramatic imitation, while Horace, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the nineteenth century romantics, and Konstantin Stanislavski all place language secondary to other considerations. The study of dramatic language since 1960 is shown to have developed in three directions. The earliest relies on conventional methods of stylistic analysis; the second incorporates linguistic or psychological theories; the most recent adopts the terminology and techniques of structuralism. The work of these most recent critics suggests that a theory of dramatic interpretation demands both a theory of language comprehension and a general theory of perception. A review of contemporary cognitive psychology finds its researchers borrowing theatrical terminology to describe the most basic relationships between perception and the comprehension of both linguistic and non-linguistic experience. A series of recent psychological experiments are examined which demonstrate the importance of integrative, inferential skills in language comprehension. Specific examples of dramatic language are examined to show how ambiguity in language and the influence of contextual forces together help or hinder comprehension and communication in the theatre. This study concludes by suggesting how our understanding of dramatic language might be increased by bringing dramatic literature into the psychological laboratory and the tools of psychological research into the theatre.

A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED LITERARY WORKS OF PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR FROM PERSPECTIVES OF THE ORAL INTERPRETER

Order No. DA8410641
Stone, Roy Edwin, Ph.D. The Ohio State University, 1984. 229pp.
Adviser: Professor Kathryn T. Schoen

This dissertation involves a rhetorical analysis of selected literary works of Paul Laurence Dunbar from perspectives of the oral interpreter.

Dear e Dunbar's popularity at the turn of the century, his poems and other works have rarely appeared in general anthologies of American literature in the past several decades; however, recently he has been included in a few revised editions.

Both traditional as well as some nontraditional principles are utilized to explicate works of Dunbar in several literary genres--poems, novels, short stories, essays and letters. The works are examined for both their intrinsic and extrinsic values. However, of particular importance to the oral interpreter is Dunbar's appeal to audiences as an effective communicator. Therefore, the study focuses on those rhetorical strategies and devices which accomplish this purpose. Important to the understanding of the writer's ideas, attitudes and points of view...
LONDON’S LUNCHTIME THEATRES: 1966 - 1975

Chairperson: Professor Jerrold Ross

Edward Bullough’s theory of Psychical Distance, first published in 1912, holds that distance is essential for the “esthetic consciousness” of artists as well as appreciators of art. Furthermore, the theory proposes that distance is variable according to the “distinguishing power” of the individual artist or appreciator and according to the “characteristics of the object.”

The objects whose characteristics are investigated here are 10 contemporary theatre presentations. Studied concurrently is criticism of those presentations. Critical reports, it is discovered, reflect the wide variation that exists among individuals’ orientations to performances, their perceptions, their “powers of distancing,” and their choices as to what to verbalize and in what manner.

While Bullough’s Theory of Psychical Distance remains open to question, its value as one theoretical basis for the evaluation of theatre is demonstrated in this dissertation.

HISTORIC FESTIVALS AND THE NATURE OF AMERICAN MUSICAL COMEDY

White, Richard Kerry, Ph.D. University of Oregon, 1984. 358pp. Adviser: Grant McKernie

This study examines the general characteristics of selected historic festivals of Europe and employs their common features in an analysis of Oklahoma! and other American musical comedies. The contention is that examples of the genre are “displaced festivals” in form, content, and function.

An introduction defines the parameters of the investigation and its terminology. A primary hypothesis claims that festivals celebrating existential moments in the life of a community are often correlated with the life of a culture hero. Such festivals of renewal are expected to have, minimally, elements of “celebration,” “display,” “contest,” and “ceremony.” Successive adaptations of European historical traditions resulting in events with interdependent synchronic and diachronic significance. In addition, such events are seen as multilateral systems of community communication, typically employing a variety of aural, visual, and kinetic media in order to encourage an extra-mundane experience among the participants.

The first two chapters examine major Renaissance and baroque court festivals. In all cases, the focus of celebration centered on the ruler as a “godly prince,” whose power bestowed life to the community. Further, relatively private entertainments, such as opera, formally analogous to the festival as a whole, were held in conjunction with public celebrations.

A third chapter analyzes festivals of the French and English revolutions. In these, the values of an emergent middle-class and its heroes were celebrated. Consequent forms of entertainment, such as melodramas and operettas, are displaced festivals—fictional representations with analogous forms and functions.

American musical comedies, in general, and Oklahoma! in particular, while clearly products of the American mythos and reflective of specific moments in American history, are also seen as displaced festivals, analogous to and descended from the European festive tradition. A detailed analysis of Oklahoma! and brief examinations of other representative American musical comedies help to confirm the festive nature of the genre.

Conclusions drawn concern the analysis and production of American musical comedy. A “festive style” is described as a product of a synthesis of the arts and the establishment of a celebratory actor/audience relationship.

TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CRITICALLY RESPONSIVE AUDIENCE: AN AESTHETIC INQUIRY

The concept of a synthesis of the arts and the establishment of a celebratory actor/audience relationship.

Chairperson: Professor Jerrold Ross


This study explores the potential of a form of aesthetic inquiry, its purpose is to not only discover information but also provide a model for developing skills with which to appraise theatre, to understand and evaluate conflicting critical reports, and to articulate personal critical responses. Based on the premise (elaborated upon by phenomenologists) that an important relationship exists between audience, artist, and theatre and criticism, the study examines theatre from both sides of the intentional correlation: both the characteristics of plays or theatre events and the orientations of observers are considered.

Distance, the separation of viewer (i.e. audience) from that which is viewed (i.e. play) is a timeless and widely accepted, though controversial, requirement for both the creation and appreciation of art. Debate about the relevance of a theory of distance to certain contemporary theatrical forms in which spectators must become participants raises questions about the aesthetic value of those forms as well as about the theory. While the term distance appears in many discussions of art, and especially of theatre, its varieties, its full import and its origins are seldom recognized.
AN EXAMINATION OF PROTAGONISTS IN SELECTED FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT PLAYS AS A REFLECTION OF NEW DEAL SOCIETY AND POLITICS

Order No. DA8416287


Director: William H. Zucchero

The Federal Theatre Project (FTP), a branch of the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression of the 1930s, provided employment for thousands of unemployed theatre artists throughout the country from 1935 until 1939, when Congress denied it further funding. The New York City FTP units produced ten original standard long plays during the first year of the project’s existence.

This investigation seeks to examine the protagonists in those first original plays. Through detailed examination and analysis of the plays, an attempt is made to relate the protagonists to the era and to demonstrate how they became dynamic symbols of popular social and political concerns.

The first chapter discusses the domestic and international political scene. The second chapter details the formation of the Works Progress Administration and the genesis of the Federal Theatre Project. The third chapter offers an analysis of the two original long plays produced by the Popular Price unit, American Holiday and Class of ‘29. The fourth chapter examines the Managers’ tryout unit’s A Woman of Destiny, In Heaven and Earth and Backwash. Chapter Five details Chalk Dust and Battle Hymn, produced by the Experimental unit. The final chapter includes studies of plays produced outside “unit” organizations: Jefferson Davis, The Ballad of Davy Crockett, and It Can’t Happen Here.

The work concludes that the plays examined reflected American social and political concerns of the time. The protagonists generally represented ideals which were in harmony with the aims of the first administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the antagonists symbolized forces allied against it.
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