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recounting Deleuze's interpellation of Beckett in his discussion of each. Daniel Koczy explores Beckett's discussion of habit and memory in the essay *Proust*, noting their temporal connection to suffering, boredom, creation, destruction. He identifies a crystal image in an equally crystalline theatre that, as in *Play* and *Not I*, eschews the real's 'axis of intimacy' and consequently interrogates theatrical clichés (p. 226). From the perspective of Deleuzian minor language, Arka Chattopadhyay explores the dichotomy of onstage versus offstage events and how each punctures the other in Beckett's plays – thus presenting a novel, yet natural analytic perspective on Beckett's characters, their situations, and their voices.

With texts such as *Not I* (1972) and *Film* (1965), easily readable as the repressed hysteric or some version of the Lacanian mirror stage, Beckett's work certainly opens itself to psychoanalytic criticism. Reading his work in conjunction with Deleuze's, however, enables readers to penetrate to that which lies beyond the superficialities of psychoanalysis. The volume presents repetition, logorrhoea, and silence in Beckett as representative of more than just Freudian repression or the Lacanian symbolic order and performs a more robust and complex analysis worthy of Beckett's clastic characters and situations.

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*Theatre and Evolution from Ibsen to Beckett* by  
Kirsten Shepherd-Barr

New York: Columbia University Press, 2015,  
384pp, ISBN 9780231164702 (hardcover)

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On Thursday 11 April 1878 in the Salle d'Arras in Paris's Latin Quarter, a young medical student, Paul Lebiez, delivered a talk entitled 'Darwinism and the Church' in which he declared that evolution had revealed the true principle of all life: 'at the banquet of nature there are not places for everyone [...] each one struggles to secure his place; the stronger tends to smother the weaker'. The talk gained little coverage until a week later, when Lebiez and his friend Aimé-Thomas Barré were arrested for murdering an elderly woman three weeks earlier, dismembering her body and scattering the parts across Paris. At

their trial, the judge made explicit the connection between theory and practice: 'You set out your theories on the struggle for life [...]. You applied your own principle.'<sup>1</sup> The case gripped Paris and the naturalist writer Alphonse Daudet spent some years planning a documentary novel *Lebiez and Barré – Two Young Frenchmen of Our Times* that would capture the horror of the new contemporary type, the amoral, brutish 'struggle-for-lifetur' (Daudet's neologism). When Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1866) was translated into French in 1884, Daudet realised he had been beaten to it and instead decided to write a play, *La Lutte pour la vie* (1889), which followed its anti-hero Paul Astier's ruthless pursuit of wealth, sex, and power.<sup>2</sup> In his introduction to the published edition, Daudet declared it a portrait of a 'new race of young savages for whom the Darwinian formula of the "struggle for life" serves as a pretext and a justification for all kinds of villainies and infamies'.<sup>3</sup> Paul Lafargue, Karl Marx's son-in-law, writing on the play, noted with asperity the French bourgeois' determination to lay the blame at Darwin's door for the callous spirit of free-market capitalism.<sup>4</sup>

It is striking how science, law, journalism, literature, and theatre braid together in this story to spread and debate some of Darwin's key ideas. In her brilliant and illuminating book Shepherd-Barr shows compellingly how evolutionary science and the theatre have overlapped, bickered, and brawled over the last century and a half. The book deals elegantly with some of the great debates in evolution, particularly before the 'Modern Synthesis', in which the competing claims of Darwin, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, Herbert Spencer, Ernst Haeckel, and others were reconciled and takes in a huge range of plays and performances from naturalism to the present day, placing them in a rich and sophisticated narrative. Some major dramatic works – from *The Breasts of Tiresias* (1917) to *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942) to *Happy Days* (1961) – are refreshed by being reinscribed in historical context. In some ways even more fascinating are the archaeological rediscoveries of forgotten plays like Robert Buchanan's *The Charlatan* (1894) or A. W. Pinero's *The Freaks* (1918), in which the awkwardness or directness of the ideas expressed may not have contributed to the plays' longevity but

1. Quoted in 'Justice Criminelle: Cour d'Assises de la Seine', *Gazette des Tribunaux: Journal de Jurisprudence et des Débats Judiciaires*, 29–30 July 1878, 727–30 (p. 730). Author's translation.
2. Th. Dostoevsky, *Le Crime et le châtement* trans. by Victor Derély (Paris: Plon, 1884).
3. Alphonse Daudet, *La Lutte pour la vie* (Paris: Lévy, 1890), p. ii. Author's translation.
4. Paul Lafargue, 'Darwinism on the French Stage', *Time*, February 1890, pp. 149–56.

certainly help give a vigorous sense of the burrs and tangles of the contemporary debate. A few playwrights are offered extended treatment and the chapters on Henrik Ibsen and Samuel Beckett – just when you might think there was little new to say about these two titans of Modern theatre – are original and compelling. There are substantial and rewarding discussions, too, of George Bernard Shaw, Thornton Wilder, and Susan Glaspell. The political ramifications of all of these theatre makers' interest in the biological is teased out expertly and subtly: while Shepherd-Barr rightly notes that we ought to face up to Ibsen's flirtation with eugenics, she also insists on the complexity of his thought – Ibsen's (and Darwin's) work contains inconsistencies and ambivalences and we may learn more by facing those than by reconciling the contradictions.

The introduction explains that the book will focus more on plays as written texts than on their performances. There is some justification for this, given the relative paucity of information about the latter, but it is a pity, given how powerful the discussion becomes when it does engage directly with theatrical presentation. There are some rather fascinating passages about the complexity of representing breastfeeding and childbirth on stage and, best of all, a discussion of how emotional restraint emerged as an early-twentieth-century acting technique in the context of evolutionary debates; Eleonora Duse's ability to blush at will becomes the centre of a thrilling debate about the connections between physiology, will, and theatricality. Elsewhere, I felt the lack of a more properly theatrical analysis: it is, for instance, true that on the page *Man and Superman* (1905) can

seem like a eugenicist tract, but it seems insufficient to say so without taking the next step to think what the text might do on stage, how its eugenicism might fare on the stage's struggle for semiotic life.

While the book amply demonstrates the interweaving of science and theatre and certainly showed the theatre's role in popularising ideas and contributing to the debate, I do not know that I was finally convinced that the theatre had contributed all that much to the science itself, which is one of the claims of the introduction. There seemed to be no clear example of the theatre directly contributing to scientific knowledge, except by furnishing scientists with occasional vivid metaphors through which to explain ideas (the appearance of dry land in earth's history, explained Robert Chambers in 1844, meant that 'there was now a theatre for the existence of plants and animals').<sup>5</sup> Indeed while the book has a welcome openness to the variety of connections there might be between science and the stage (paying dividends in nuanced discussions of broad themes like 'motherhood', 'children', or 'origins'), at times, as yet another mangling of Darwin hit the boards, I wondered if some lines needed to be drawn.

Nevertheless, this is a superb book and a major contribution to theatre history and the history of ideas. It touches on several very current themes in theatre and performance studies – animals, emotions, science, freak shows – and does so with poise and erudition. It will enthral anyone who cares about the relationship between science and theatre, the origins of Europe's theatrical Modernism, and the vitality of theatre history.

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5. Robert Chambers, *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (London: Churchill, 1844), p. 76.