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Chinese theatre, where artists such as Huang Zuolin, Gao Xingjian, Xu Xiaozhong and Lin Zhaohua continue to develop new forms out of its endlessly fertile material.

This study is long overdue, and ought to be required reading for any advanced student of drama for its illuminating examination of the 'other side' of modern Western theatre. Without overstating his case, or falling back on overused postcolonial rubrics, Min reveals how genuinely fruitful and rewarding encounters of difference and displacement can be, and how theatre the world over continues to be shaped by these encounters.

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Theatres of the Troubles: Theatre, Resistance and Liberation in Ireland. By **Bill McDonnell**. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2008. Pp. xvii + 254. £16.99/\$32.95 Pb; £49.50/\$89.95 Hb.

Theatre and Globalization: Irish Drama in the Celtic Tiger Era. By **Patrick Lonergan**. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Pp. x + 248. £50/\$85 Hb.

Reviewed by Sruti Bala, University of Amsterdam, s.bala@uva.nl

McDonnell's study on Irish theatre of the period known as the 'Troubles' (1969–98) and the first decade of the 'Long Peace' following the Good Friday Agreement (1997–2007) is a valuable document about grassroots, working-class community theatre in Northern Ireland. Thankfully, he does not claim to offer a metanarrative of the Troubles through the microcosm of the theatre. Instead, and this makes his study methodologically sound and historically extremely interesting, he traces various aspects of interventionist, community-led political theatre work as part of a wider environment of 'radical educational practice and cultural activism' (p. 5). McDonnell shows how the realities of the war determined the processes of theatre-making. Using a wide range of previously unpublished source materials – including interviews, pamphlets, production records, letters and private recordings of performances and rehearsals – the author demonstrates how theatre practices were a very important part of the culture of dissent in a violent conflict zone. Crucially, he links these practices to the contexts of their emergence: the struggles for forging spaces for cultural community in popular education centres; the existence of a strong volunteer tradition, which facilitated the intriguing collective scriptwriting practices; or the significant contributions of ex-prisoners of war to playwriting. The casebooks cover both Republican and Loyalist community theatre projects, including discussions of productive failures, excerpts from plays that were never performed for political reasons, and the politics of arts funding in a postwar region. The study also highlights the influences from other parts of the world that were crucial to shaping the cultural politics of theatre in Northern Ireland, such as Paulo Freire's radical pedagogy, the concept of the ATOR (actor–teacher–organizer–researcher) from the Philippine's educational theatre movement PETA, and the Latin American liberation theology of Camilo Torres or Ernesto Cardenal. It is obvious that the author favours what he terms 'organic theatre' – that is, locally initiated and community-owned cultural initiatives – over 'facilitated theatre' projects by outsiders, here (primarily) from England.

While this addresses the immensely sensitive question of ownership of cultural activities in a war-torn region, the author does tend towards a somewhat naively positive self-appraisal of his own attempts to be involved with the Belfast community theatre.

Both his book and Lonergan's *Theatre and Globalization* were shortlisted for the 2008 British Society for Theatre Research Book Prize. It is more than surprising that the latter won. Lonergan's study lacks not only the scholarly rigour or force of argument of *Theatres of the Troubles*, but also does not tap into original source material in the way McDonnell's book manages to do. Lonergan takes a very different stance towards the question of Irish postcoloniality. He argues that Irish theatre should not primarily be seen in the context of the Troubles, or its relation to Britain, because Ireland is a wealthy nation that has benefited from liberal capitalism. For him, economic and cultural globalization provide the best context to understand drama in Ireland during the era of economic growth known as the 'Celtic Tiger' era (1990–2005). Lonergan claims that the links between art and commerce mark a paradigmatic shift in Irish theatre history, from contestation over territory to contestation over meaning (p. 17). He outlines four ways in which globalization has changed the face of Irish theatre: first, it has enabled Irish playwrights and theatre companies to tour the globe; second, it has allowed for the emergence of what he terms a 'global consciousness' (p. 19) in the choice of issues and themes of Irish plays; third, the visually prejudiced culture evolving from globalization he links to the preference for fast-paced short scenes, monologues and visual spectacle; finally, he suggests, it has led to national theatres in Ireland being revalued as promoters of civic concerns and a newly branded notion of Irishness. So not only has theatre become well resourced as a direct result of foreign investment in the Republic of Ireland, but 'the performance of the Irish economy was influenced by the international profile of Irish drama' (p. 22). Such sweeping statements, in addition to a resistance to critical examination of one's choice of case studies, make the book a great disappointment.

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Hegemony and Fantasy in Irish Drama, 1899–1949. By **Paul Murphy**. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Pp. 266. £50/\$75 Hb.

Reviewed by James Moran, University of Nottingham,
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In 1907, the Abbey Theatre caused riots in Dublin by producing *The Playboy of the Western World*. Lady Gregory famously sent a telegraph to Yeats to tell him that 'Audience broke up in disorder at the word shift', and that week saw booing in the theatre, fisticuffs outside, and a flurry of newspaper articles; all of which helped ensure the central place of Synge's play in the history of twentieth-century Irish drama. Yet three years later, as Paul Murphy's insightful book points out, the playhouse produced a play that asked even more provocative questions about female sexuality. Lennox Robinson's *Harvest* features an Irish woman who had worked as a prostitute in London, and who refuses to alter her behaviour. She declares, 'I went into it deliberately with my eyes open. You see, a woman I knew chucked typing and went in for this . . . and I saw what a splendid time she had,