深化させ、プレイクを文化状況に位置付けたものや、テクストの精緻な比較分析によって、言語やイメージの引用、変容における影響関係を示したものが多い。また、9編の論文が、20世紀後半の文学、美術、音楽におけるプレイクの浸透度を詳しく呈示しており、確かにプレイクがどの主要なロマン派詩人よりも広く、大衆的に受容されていることがわかる。

一方、各論者が取り上げている種々のジャンルの作家たちのプレイクへの言及や引喩は、中期までの作品（『天国と地獄の結婚』や『無垢と経験の歌』）が多いうことも目を引く。彼らにとって、プレイクは、思想的な源流というよりも、霊感・契機であり、その意味では断片的な領有である。また、序文で編者が論じている「近代性」に関しては、各論を通底する概念としては見えにくい。しかしここにはやはり新しいプレイク像がある。今後プレイクが、ロマン派の中心的存在としてその地位を維持し、難解な思想が少数者によって研究され続けるのか、あるいは、アカデミズムや教育の現場から離れて、大衆の中で増殖していくのか、興味をそそられるところである。

（日本女子大学教授）

David Worrall

*The Politics of Romantic Theatricality, 1787–1832: The Road to the Stage*

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David Chandler

*The Politics of Romantic Theatricality* is primarily a study of the rise of the "illegitimate" London theatres legally prevented from presenting spoken drama, with some extended side-glances at the plays and "comic operas" staged at the two patent theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden. It argues, compellingly, that an increasingly large and socially diverse sector of the theatre-going public was attending the "illegitimate" theatres throughout the Romantic Period, creating "a plebian public sphere of drama" (7). It argues, further, that what they saw staged there—some version of burletta—was very different from what they could have seen at Drury Lane and
Covent Garden; and demonstrates that all forms of theatre in the period could carry significant political and social commentary. All in all, the book aims "to elucidate the structural conditions of Romantic-period drama" (1) and to "provide a social historiography or anthropology of drama" (9). These are large claims to make for a study of about two hundred pages (excluding notes), and the book falls somewhat short of them, mainly because for the first half of his period (up to about 1810) David Worrall focuses his discussion much more on the local contexts of particular dramatic works than on general issues of genre, plot, theatrical style, music and audience, all of which become significant in the second half of his period, when the discussion is considerably less particularized. In a sense, The Politics of Romantic Theatricality can be thought of as two short studies loosely joined together: they might be called Politics in the Theatre, 1787–96 and The Plebian Public Sphere of Drama, 1815–32. There is a disjointedness about this, not just in terms of method, but in the fact that the period 1797–1814 is scarcely mentioned. Nevertheless, Worrall’s study is bursting with fascinating new information, mostly exhaustively culled from primary sources, and greatly extends our knowledge of Romantic Period theatre, informing and illuminating on every page.

The earlier chapters are not arranged chronologically, and one could read the first four in just about any order and have the sense of a developing argument. For many readers, in fact—especially those with a background in canonical Romanticism—the easiest way into the book will be through the fourth, “Belles Lettres to Burletta: William Henry Ireland as Fortune’s Fool.” Worrall himself seems to concede that this would be a logical place to start:

that day in April 1796 which witnessed the debacle of Ireland and his Vortigern can be taken as a convenient moment from which to chart the development of London popular theatre’s exploitation of burletta. Excluded from spoken drama by the Royal patentees, the new playwrights learned to cater for new types of audience in different types of playhouse. (134)

Worrall’s remarkably bold reinterpretation of the Vortigern scandal centers on the claim that Ireland should be read as an “aspirant artisan” rather than a “forger” (123). As Worrall tells the story, Ireland wanted to be a serious dramatist, but recognizing the difficulties of getting serious, spoken drama produced, he forged a Shakespearean play in “an understandable attempt to short-circuit a monopolistic theatre” (132). “Ireland’s problem,”
Worrall decides, "was not so much that he forged Shakespeare . . . but that he attempted to write a play for a Theatre Royal in the grand, five-act tragic style" (116).

Arresting as this analysis is, it seems to gloss over an awful lot. In Worrall's reading, the issues would have been essentially the same if Ireland merely wrote a Shakespearean play, instead of a play purporting to be Shakespeare's. The problem was not, at bottom, imposture, he maintains, but plebian presumption and suspect politics in Vortigern. But given that contemporary London was fixated on the question of forgery, how can these other strands in the Ireland story be disentangled? Worrall does not so much disentangle them as write about them to the point where they seem supremely significant (and placing this chapter in the middle of his book means readers come to it warmed up for the emphasis). It is vexing that he does not engage with the great amount of scholarship already devoted to Ireland. Most of that scholarship emphasizes the importance of Edmond Malone, the greatest Shakespeare scholar of the day, who was known for many months to be working on a scholarly assault on the Ireland forgeries, and who eventually published his devastating Inquiry just two days before the first performance of Vortigern. In those two days, five hundred copies of Malone's work sold, and one must assume that most of them had several readers, and that those readers passed on the gist of the great scholar's conclusions to others. The newspapers were full of Malone. In most accounts it was this that killed off any chance that Vortigern had. Amazingly, Worrall does not mention Malone at all.

Worrall connects the failure of Vortigern with the failure of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats to get their five-act tragedies produced. These "canonical Romantic poets," he announces at the outset, approached the matter of writing for the theatre "with amazing naivety" (1). (He doesn't mention that Coleridge, at least, eventually made £400 with Remorse; "more than all my other literary Labors put together," Coleridge pointedly said at the time.) All of them, Worrall suggests, should have seen that the market was increasingly tilted towards burletta. For many readers this will seem a bit like suggesting that Stravinsky missed the signpost to rock 'n' roll, or that Michael Tippett should have tried something in the Cats line. Certainly questions of literary, dramatic, and musical quality are conspicuously absent in most of The Politics of Romantic Theatricality: as far as I can see it is not until he gets to William Moncrieff's Giovanni in London in the fifth chapter that Worrall commits himself to something like an artistic
evaluation: "a brilliant piece of comic writing, innovative, quick-witted . . ." (150). I accept that anything once popular is of historical interest in that it potentially reveals a good deal about the culture in which it was produced. But Worrall devotes considerable space to works that cannot claim even this much. For example, his second chapter, the most obviously dispensable in the book, is devoted to Robert Merry’s "comic opera," The Magician No Conjuror, which managed a dismal four productions at Covent Garden in 1792 and was never revived. For Worrall, the value of the opera lies in the fact that it obliquely commented on the Birmingham Riots of the previous year, subversively offering a radical perspective (as with his earlier studies, one feels that in the Worrall lexicon radical equates to "good"). But he avoids the question of whether Merry’s work failed because of its suspect politics or because it was simply considered a bad opera. Surprisingly, given his exhaustive researches into the work’s background, Worrall does not quote any contemporary reviews.

The finest, and I suspect most generally useful, of the chapters on the earlier part of the period is the third, "Blackface and Black Mask: The Benevolent Planters versus Harlequin Mungo." Central to this is a straightforward formula of contrast so apropos to the larger study that one wishes Worrall had employed it more. Thomas Bellamy’s spoken play, The Friends; or, The Benevolent Planters (1789), and William Bates’s pantomime, Harlequin Mungo (1787), both portray slavery, but while the first was acted at the West End Haymarket Theatre, the second was acted at the East End Royalty Theatre. To contrast the works is thus to contrast both genre and intended audience (though Bellamy’s play only survived two performances, while Bates’s pantomime was very popular). Indeed the analysis of the different audiences is one of the strongest and most innovative aspects of the chapter. Worrall considers at length the location of the Royalty, and demonstrates that the audience, almost certainly including colored people, was "intensely connected to a gradually modernizing world of manufacture, commodity import and dockyard employment" (105). In Harlequin Mungo they saw a work not shy of representing the realities of the slave trade, and both sympathetic and "culturally adventurous" (102) in its representation of blacks and interracial issues. By contrast, the Haymarket audience saw an idealized, essentially anti-abolitionist representation of slavery, and, if anything, Worrall seems too generous to Bellamy’s obviously third rate play (one suspects Bellamy would be astonished to read Worrall’s radical—and therefore approving—interpretation of a "stray reference" to a Jubilee
The chapter looks forwards and backwards from the late 1780s, offering a sensitively nuanced overview of the appearance of black roles (and, later, black actors) in the theatre from the 1750s to the 1820s. It should become essential reading for anyone interested in issues of racial representation in the Romantic Period.

Good as this is, Worrall’s study really blossoms when he turns to the later part of his period and focuses on the popular energy of 1810s and 20s burlettas, “perfect vehicles of social criticism because they did not attempt social subversion head-on” (205). The Giovanni burlettas of the late 1810s and the Tom and Jerry burlettas of the early 1820s were so overwhelmingly successful and influential that they qualify as “popular culture” in the truest sense of the term. Here the reader is made to feel, for the first time, that the “illegitimate” theatres were posing a genuine cultural threat to an anxious Covent Garden and Drury Lane, stealing their audience (and thunder). They could feed parasitically off the “high” culture of their times, and transform it into something lowbrow and vital. Most remarkably, it was the production of Mozart’s Don Giovanni at the King’s Theatre in 1817 that directly inspired the various Giovanni burlettas which flourished in the following years. Hazlitt, for one, was appalled by the transformation, and the jingoistic audiences that hissed Mozart’s music because it was foreign. Worrall considers Hazlitt’s objections “rather lofty” (146), and leaves the reader in little doubt that he would rather see Moncrieff’s Giovanni in London than Don Giovanni. (Could such a work be revived, one wonders?) Such was the power of this plebian culture that it impacted, in turn, on polite culture. The patent theatres “switch[ed] from being gamekeepers to poachers” (156), and put on lavish productions of Giovanni in London. And the exiled Lord Byron, Worrall would like to think, was inspired to start work on Don Juan. Whether one accepts the Byron connection or not, the implicit argument running through these chapters, that anyone working on the literature and culture of the 1810s and 20s needs to know about these burlettas, is completely persuasive. Worrall’s enthusiasms, not always easy to share in the earlier part of the book, are here exhilaratingly infectious.

Perhaps one remarkable omission should be mentioned, and in part rectified. Although The Politics of Romantic Theatricality repeatedly and emphatically states that burletta was the most widespread and popular form of theatre in the Romantic Period, “the definitive format of the lesser London theatres” (21), nothing is said of its history. Earlier scholarship is
scarcely nodded at, and Worrall does not even mention the derivation of the generic term from Italian *burla*, or "fun." Indeed the Italian influence is ignored; instead *The Beggar's Opera* is described as a "proto burletta" (41), a fanciful invention of tradition which seems to imply that burletta was somehow always subversive and *in modo popolare*. But the term entered English quite specifically as a description of an Italian comic opera. When Giovanni Francesco Crosa brought his troupe to London in 1748, the London press reported his intention "to entertain the town the approaching season, at the King's Theatre, with operas of a new kind, entitled BURLETTAS."¹ *OED*’s earliest example of the word, a 1748 letter by Horace Walpole announcing "[t]he burlettas are begun" confirms that the Englishman's idea of a burletta began at this date, when it was a novelty entertainment at the most socially exclusive of London's theatres. For the next quarter of a century and more, the word continued to be used to describe full-length Italian comic operas, as well as shorter *intermezzi*. In 1774, for example, Sir William Hamilton referred to Niccolò Piccinni, no less, as "the greatest Composer for the Bullettas [sic] that ever existed."² Worrall's book contains not a word on the relationship of his later low-brow entertainments to these refined antecedents, and the reader is forced to one of two rather unsatisfactory conclusions: that he knew about the history of his "keyword," but decided not to mention it; or that he simply did not investigate. Some reflections on the generic mut(i)lation central to the development of the English burletta could have added valuably to the reader's sense of the social and cultural significance of these works.

*(Doshisha University, Kyoto)*

Notes
