

process of erasure here is complicated by the hypervisibility that the work itself demands” (170). These individuals are using performance as an opportunity to claim space in the United States, even when their very presence in the nation demands invisibility as a way of staying safe and secure.

This is a well-written, finely supported, and engaging work. From beginning to end, Guterman offers a distinct and sharp perspective into the ways in which performance works within and against the institution of law and its effects on those living in undocumentedness. This book is sure to make a critical impact in the fields of American theatre and performance studies: the questions posed offer provocative avenues for further research and will undoubtedly generate a series of conversations that will shift the dialogue about immigration law and performance for years to come.



ELIZABETH MANNION. *The Urban Plays of the Early Abbey Theatre: Beyond O'Casey*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2014. Pp. xvii + 218. \$34.95 (Hb).

*Reviewed by Susan Cannon Harris, University of Notre Dame*

The globalization of Irish studies, though initially inspired by the rise of the Celtic Tiger, has now long survived that unfortunate feline's demise. I would be the first to acknowledge that this widening of perspective has produced a great deal of fresh, innovative, and exciting work on Irish literature; but all the same, the “global turn” is not without its costs, and one of them is the effacement of the local. For that reason, it is refreshing to open up *The Urban Plays of the Early Abbey Theatre* and see Elizabeth Mannion immediately arguing for the importance of Dublin both as the site of the Irish dramatic revival and as a setting in Irish revival drama. Challenging the traditional scholarly emphasis on rural plays and the peasant cottage set, Mannion asks, “Where is the city that was home to the Abbey and central to the political movements that emerged during the Abbey's early decades?” (1).

It is a good question, and *Urban Plays* is an important first step in the search for a good answer. In recent years, Ben Levitas and Joe Cleary have drawn our attention to a tradition of urban-centred Irish drama that predated Sean O'Casey's tenement plays, but their reading of this material is more focused on labour politics and left ideology than on the city per se. Mannion's *Urban Plays*, by contrast, treats setting as the primary category of analysis. *Urban Plays* is a “survey” that “aims to provide the broadest picture possible” (9) of all the plays staged at the original Abbey Theatre that were set in a city. This city is almost always Dublin, although one chapter is devoted

to Ireland's "second cities" (Belfast, Cork, and Galway). The book's historical scope is bounded by the life of the original Abbey Theatre, which was built in 1904 and burned down in 1951 (2). Mannion argues, via David Lloyd and Deleuze and Guattari, that the urban plays, which made up about 15 per cent of the theatre's original works (22), constitute a "minor literature" (3) – a "definitive Abbey urban genre with all the conventions and expectations that the term *genre* implies" (2). *Urban Plays* is then organized by subgenre, with individual chapters dedicated to plays with domestic settings, plays set in public spaces, plays about the labour movement, biographical dramas, and so on.

Mannion testifies to the "archival delight" (167) that she experienced as she discovered the Abbey's forgotten urban plays, and along with the new knowledge that she has distilled from her thorough investigation of the Abbey Theatre archives, the best part of her book is the way it shares that delight with the reader. Most of the plays that she discusses have been forgotten for decades. We may recognize the titles from histories, biographies, and Abbey Theatre programs, but they do not appear in our scholarship. No matter how long you have been working on Irish revival drama, this book will most likely challenge your understanding of it. I was intrigued, for instance, by Mannion's discussion of Matthew Brennan's 1922 comedy *The Young Man from Rathmines*, in which a social-climbing Dublin family is horrified to discover that the medical student who has been courting their daughter is not white (Mannion 112–13). Spend a few moments thinking about the fact that the Abbey directors, less than a decade after producing Rabindranath Tagore's *The Post Office*, signed off on an outrageously racist marriage comedy, whose title character – "described in the . . . *Evening Herald* review as 'an Indian half caste'" – was played by "a heavily made-up Gabriel Fallon" (113), and you will soon come to understand why the kind of local project in which Mannion is engaged is a necessary counterpart to more "global" readings of the Irish revival.

Mannion hopes that "this introduction to the early urban repertoire contributes to smoothing out one more edge in Abbey historiography" (170), and that is a goal that *Urban Plays* definitely achieves. As theatre history, *Urban Plays* is quite successful. Precisely because it is so conscientiously comprehensive, it will be of tremendous usefulness to future scholars and will, it is hoped, inspire more critical investigation of these urban plays, both individually and generically. Such a broad sweep, however, inevitably involves a loss of depth and nuance in the literary analysis. Mannion acknowledges that, artistically, the urban repertoire is a "mixed bag" (9), and many of the plays get only cursory treatment. Her focus on setting often leads Mannion to group together plays that are formally and ideologically heterogeneous, sometimes undermining her claim that the urban plays form a distinct and

coherent genre. In the book's final chapter, for instance, Yeats's *Words Upon the Window Pane* is lumped in with biographical plays based on the lives of prominent Dublin men ranging from James Clarence Mangan to Robert Emmet. An overriding concern with taxonomy and categorization flattens out Mannion's chapter on public space and metadrama. In her chapter on labour plays, one does sometimes miss the perspective that a deeper knowledge of the international labour movement would have provided.

Nevertheless, *The Urban Plays of the Early Abbey Theatre* expands our conception of Irish revival drama in unexpected ways that will, over time, prove to be quite productive and revealing. Mannion's carefully researched and comprehensive history of this minor but significant segment of the Abbey's repertoire introduces us to an exciting body of dramatic work and demonstrates how and why the neglect of the Abbey's urban plays has skewed dominant narratives about the Abbey Theatre and its audiences. It makes a genuinely new contribution to Irish theatre history, and by inspiring a fresh investigation of the relationship between the Abbey Theatre and its home city, it has something to teach all of us – even or especially those of us who have embraced the “global turn.”



JOANNA MANSBRIDGE. *Paula Vogel*. Michigan Modern Dramatists Series. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014. Pp. viii + 221, illustrated. \$65.00 (Hb); \$29.95 (Pb).

*Reviewed by Meghan Brodie, Ursinus College*

The Michigan Modern Dramatists series aims to provide readers with “concise, accessible, and indispensable guides to the works of individual playwrights” (ii), and Joanna Mansbridge's *Paula Vogel* does just that. It not only fills a significant hole in theatre studies scholarship but should also appeal to scholars and students of American studies, women's studies, and queer studies, among other disciplines. Mansbridge has successfully cast a wide net in terms of audience; her analysis is rigorous enough to engage scholars and accessible enough to appeal to students. The book is ultimately a celebration of Vogel's work, introducing readers to her most popular plays and providing dramaturgical, often feminist, readings of these plays. Mansbridge's respect for Vogel's work is evident in her writing: she does not criticize Vogel but instead illuminates her plays for those who might have little experience with her *oeuvre* beyond the sometimes shallow reviews of her New York productions.