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MODERN THEATRE IN RUSSIA TRADITION BUILDING AND TRANSMISSION PROCESSES, By Ayse Dietrich*, Published by Bloomsbury, Methuen Drama, Stefan Aquilina, Year of Publishing: 2020. Subject Area: Modern Russian Theater. Book Type: History of Theater. Total Number of Pages: 229. ISBN: 978-135-0066-083, hardback, \$67.50.

This book is about the history of Russian theater tradition and practice, and consists of six chapters. In the first chapter, *Introduction*, the writer gives a brief sketch of Russian theater tradition in the 19th century and how this tradition was transmitted to the 20th century, and explains what cultural transmission means. Aquilina introduces his methods and the outlines of his study. He states that he will examine Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Smyshlaev, Kerzhentsev and the Proletkultists to analyze the tradition and transmission of theater culture in Russia, paying particular attention to the sources of these writers that are not translated into English, such as Stanislavsky's book *Collected Works*, Smyshlaev's book on acting theory, Kerzhentsev's book *Theater and Revolution* and *The Creative Theater*, and the Proletkult's compilation of works from the workers' clubs.

In the second chapter, *Stanislavky: Renewing tradition through transmission*, the author states that Stanislavsky contributed to the renewal of the Russian theater tradition and transmitted it to the 20th century with his assertions on tradition building when he himself was going through a major transformation. The author analyzes Stanislavsky's letter written to the French playwright and drama critic, Lucien Besnard in 1897 and his speeches in Volume 6 of his *Collected Works*. Aquilina introduces new terms such as *Scenic Transmission* (looking at visual and photographic materials of the performances to get staging ideas) and *Rehearsal Transmission* (looking at techniques that performers could detach from the rehearsal and apply to diverse performances). For *Scenic Transmission*, the author examines the relationship between Stanislavsky and the German actor Ludwig Barnay. In this chapter, the author also talks about *the First Studio* that made a contribution to Stanislavsky's experimentation in acting technique and Stanislavky's conception of studio culture, and the hierarchies between the actor, director and playwright.

In chapter three, Aquilina discusses the idea of misinterpreting theater practice and tries to find an answer to the question of how the application of cultural transmission theories serve the study of theater and performance without it becoming an end in itself. The author works on Valentin Smyshlaev's acting manual *Theory to Process Stage Performance* which was based on Stanislavsky's ideas that were misinterpreted by Smyshlaev. The author also used Smyshlaev's diary that is not well-known outside of Russia.

In chapter four, the author discusses the amateur theater of the workers born during the Russian Revolution, and the historiography, periodization and reliability of the sources. He also talks about the transmission issue of amateur and proletarian theater in post-revolutionary Russia. He discusses the historiographical difficulties raised by amateur performances, some transmission issues that appeared from the scene, the spaces where the workers gathered to perform theatrical activities, the standards of amateur theaters, collective creation and independent action, and the incongruity between the Proletkult and amateur theater.

In chapter five, Aquilina discusses the transmission bias issue, Meyerhold's methods he used to study part theater traditions, his laboratorial practice at the Borodin Studio and how much it shared with 21st century Practice as Research, and the internationalism of his theater. The author also explores newspapers published in the West which include articles about Meyerhold and his work.

In chapter six, the author discusses the status of women in early Soviet Russia, their lives and the restrictions on them. Particular attention is given to female artists, such as the Latvian-born Asja Lacis to show their contributions to theatrical experimentation.

Aquilina's introductory book gives a comprehensive analysis of modern Russian theater, and provides critical analyses of tradition and the transmission process. It is a valuable resource for academicians, researchers and students who study the history of the Russian theater.

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