was undisputed. Most of them were habitués at Drury Lane; but what made Garrick particularly sought after by contemporary Shakespeareans was his extensive collection of Renaissance and Restoration plays. This collection, unequalled during his lifetime, made Garrick a figure practically impossible to ignore for any aspiring editor, and can certainly be regarded as his "most enduring contribution to Shakespeare scholarship" (168).

Cunningham, in her efforts to turn Garrick from a 'mere' actor-manager into a man of letters, makes much of this collection, and deservedly so. Still, to collect is not to study or even to understand, and the author's intellectual elevation of Garrick, at the expense of the "squabbling editors" (13) who worked with the texts that he owned, is not always entirely convincing. In places, Cunningham's detailed analyses of Garrick's alterations work somewhat against the grain of her own argument. While many of his adaptations testify to a deep engagement with, and thorough understanding of, the Shakespearean text, some are informed by a taste for self-aggrandizement. Roles to be played by Garrick tend to appear in a more sympathetic light than they do in Shakespeare (Leontes in his version of The Winter's Tale is a notable example), and Shakespeare's language is modified to suit Garrick's particular acting skills. Garrick excelled in intense emotion and violent mood swings; his notable preference for short, disrupted sentences is clearly born from a desire to showcase this particular ability.

All of this would seem to play into the hands of the Garrick detractors. But as Cunningham points out, to glibly discard popular appeal as somehow detrimental to Shakespeare is somewhat anachronistic. With the Bard's reputation far from established, had the plays failed, they might easily have been forgotten. The strength of Cunningham's study lies precisely in observations like this – in the author's ability to take readers back to a period when Shakespeare's status as a cultural icon was far from secure. Her effort to understand Garrick on his own terms rather than on those of much later generations of critics is a welcome addition to the field of eighteenth-century Shakespeare reception.

München

Bettina Boecker


What is the place of Wales? This question about the most underrepresented and least visible of the UK's nations refuses to go away even after some measure of political autonomy has been granted in the devolution process since the late 1990s. Wales continues to occupy a marginal or liminal position on both the geographical and cultural maps of Britain, and this is reflected in a distinct lack of academic research on Welsh culture and literature (when compared, for example, to Scotland or (Northern) Ireland). This is compounded when it comes to Welsh drama, a genre that has by and large been neglected even within Wales itself, as Alyce von Rothkirch emphasises in her fine study on contemporary Welsh drama in English. This is a welcome book in the context just outlined, and it succeeds in providing a well-written and engagingly argued panorama of recent Welsh plays in English from the early 1980s to c. 2002,
with a strong emphasis on the 1990s. All in all, about thirty plays are being discussed under a variety of headings, not all of them specifically related to place or space (class, for example, seems just as central). It is clear that the author is a committed aficionado of (Welsh) theatre, that the research has been carried out mainly in situ (the support of the University of Wales Swansea is acknowledged) and that von Rothkirch has had personal access to several of the playwrights she discusses. This contributes to a well-informed, up-to-date and readable study of a little known but clearly thriving theatre landscape. On the other hand, this 'view from inside' tends to obscure the larger picture, so that there is too little sense here of a broader Welsh literary or cultural scene, let alone a British or European one. More specifically, the theoretical and methodological framework of the study leaves much to be desired, so that generalised inferences on "the place of Wales" from the concrete reading of the plays often seem arbitrary and subjective. But this might as well be a problem only because of the German PhD publishing industry, which makes it difficult to get a study into print that simply offers intelligent (and perhaps journalistic or essayistic) discussions of specific cultural artefacts without necessarily subjecting them to the influence of one of the latest theoretical concepts.

In the long introduction to her study, von Rothkirch helpfully outlines the patchy tradition of twentieth-century Welsh drama in English as dominated by the well-made realist play until c. the 1970s, and then introduces the recent shift towards a more diverse scene that is strongly concerned with issues of place and (national) identity. Together with the short review of the existing academic literature, this is a nice start to the book, even though it fails to outline clear categories for the following analysis, either concerning the representation of "place" (or national/regional identity?) or the selection of the plays and authors discussed. This reader, for one, would have liked to see the rationale for the following structuring of the study into issues of "social exclusion", "Theatre for the Evicted" (Dic Edwards' phrase), "past and present", "gender" and "new mythology" – none of which, at first sight, is intimately linked to "place" (the matter is not helped by the complete absence of subheadings or sections in the book). To be fair, the author does use concepts of "place" and "space(s)" frequently in her discussion, but apart from the last chapter one cannot help feeling that they most obscure things rather than illuminate them. In the first chapter, which deals mainly with plays by Alan Osborne and Patrick Jones, for example, the emphasis is clearly on matters of class. The anti-Thatcherite rhetoric and the move beyond realism emphasised here is certainly as typical of many English or Scottish plays of the time as of Welsh ones. The implied superiority of the newer non-realist mode over more traditional dramatic forms is never discussed outright but rather taken for granted. However, together with the next chapter centred on Dic Edwards' work, which covers similar ground, the discussions of the plays are always illuminating and informative and bespeak a broad knowledge of the underlying developments in Welsh politics and society as well as the theatrical scene and the more general theoretical debates. Chapters 3 and 4, on history/heritage and gender respectively, while still offering valuable readings of plays by authors such as Laurence Allan, Tim Rhys, Greg Cullen, Ed Thomas, Sharon Morgan, Lucinda Coxon and Ian Rowlands, are less successful in my view. Too many individual plays are discussed on their own terms without a clear central argument emerging. In both chapters the theoretical framework is rather in-
flexibly handled and does not (always) link very well with the broader "place" theme. In the gender part, in particular, some rather controversial and almost essentialist statements contradict the 'performative' approach to gender outlined at the beginning. This should not detract from the merits of the detailed discussion of individual plays, which is clearly the great achievement of the book. Finally, in the last chapter von Rothkirch comes full circle and discusses place and Welsh identity in a postcolonial context (being well aware of the problems involved) with reference mainly to Ed Thomas' plays. The "new mythology" seems to imply a typically ambiguous and open-ended imagination of Wales as a hybrid "sustainable community", as it is put here. This is probably a fashionable way of describing many places or communities today, postcolonial or not, and it incidentally problematises the search for the place of Wales. But more importantly, this insight is here backed up with a wealth of perceptive and thought-provoking analyses of recent Welsh plays in English, which very few readers will have encountered before. Most of them are well worth discovering, and Alyce von Rothkirch is clearly one of the best guides available for that journey - which need and perhaps should not remain a theoretical one.

Leipzig

Dietmar Böhnke


In W.B. Yeats's The Dreaming of the Bones, a refugee from the failed 1916 rebellion in Dublin hides in the mountains of the Clare coast "[u]ntil an Aran coracle puts in / At Muckinish, or at the rocky shore [...]" to take him to safety on the islands. Yeats here refers to one of the images of the Aran Islands off the west coast of Ireland: offering refuge to those who have come into conflict with the law imposed from beyond the Irish Sea. The other, and even more prominent image is that of a last bastion of ancient Gaelic culture as opposed to the civilisation that has spread throughout the country from the Pale, dominated by the Protestant Ascendancy. In these two functions, the Aran archipelago has attracted, and produced, an inordinate amount of publications, quite out of proportion to the size of the islands or their population.

The present study analyses these publications in three stages. An introductory chapter provides useful basic information on the islands' geology, topography, history, economy, anthropology and social life. The second chapter surveys, in twelve steps, the 'literature' (in the widest possible sense) that has been published over the centuries about, and from, the islands, covering scholarly studies and travelogues as well as fiction and poetry, and even including Robert Flaherty's controversial film Man of Aran of 1934. It is one of the assets of Mayr's study to have assembled, and briefly summarised, a wide range of titles beyond the obvious ones like Synge's The Aran Islands or O'Flaherty's Aran novels, and the book can, indeed, claim to be a concise 'literary history' of Aran. Where this chapter goes beyond a mere descriptive approach, it regularly attempts to deconstruct or dismantle the 'myth of Aran' created by the late-nineteenth-century writers of the Irish Renaissance who romanticized the islands as an ultima Thule of Celtic civilisation. The author's somewhat condescend-