

well detailed and ideologies labeled and defined, but little of Faulkner emerges from this plenitude of detail for pure literary enjoyment.

Undoubtedly Davis's refusal to acknowledge the pleasures of reading Faulkner stems from her political commitment to social and racial justice. Such commitment certainly enables her study to expose the injustices embedded in a social system that accommodates racial oppression. But what is lost in Davis's critical approach may be recovered by returning to Faulkner's work to investigate, borrowing from Zender, "new gaps and absences" created by the latest political readings.

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***On the Lam: Narratives of Flight in J. Edgar Hoover's America.* By William Beverly. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi. 2003. xvii, 236 pp. \$40.00.**

***Censorship of the American Theatre in the Twentieth Century.* By John Houchin. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press. 2003. ix, 332 pp. \$60.00.**

Studies of governmental control are likely to dominate historical, literary, and cultural criticism for the foreseeable future given the unprecedented surveillance and regulation the U.S. government has mobilized following the September 11 terrorist attacks. These two excellent studies reflect on the twentieth century, an era when moralists reacted to radical shifts in thought while rapid advancements in technology made it possible for the government to scrutinize individuals more easily, causing artists to resist such scrutiny in the name of freedom. Although these studies do not analyze the twenty-first-century United States, the implications are clear: censorship of the arts and surveillance of the individual increase notably in unstable times.

William Beverly's *On the Lam* focuses on the narratives surrounding real and fictional fugitives between 1932 and 1952, gracefully synthesizing a number of genres, including autobiography, press accounts, film, and fiction. His analysis draws connections between FBI director J. Edgar Hoover's attempts to "map" the United States (to demarcate and control criminality) with the narratives of real and fictional fugitives who resisted such mapping. Beverly effectively argues that the fugitive is "a figure whose irruption provides a dramatic stage on which the nation is continually reimagined and consensus around the meaning of law is recruited" (xv).

The texts Beverly analyzes range from literary classics like Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, to pulp bestsellers like Robert Elliott Burns's *I Am a Fugitive from a Georgia Chain Gang!*, to less tangible and less clearly literary narratives, such as the myth of John Dillinger created in the popular press and Hoover's own life story. This mixing of literary genres could have been disorienting, but Beverly paints an extraordinarily clear cultural-historical portrait through literary analysis. Because the study is informed, coherent,

and well-written, the reader is not likely to be distracted by the diversity of the texts under consideration.

Distinguishing between narratives of a fugitive's flight and manhunts, Beverly argues that the increased ability of police and other law enforcement officers to map the lives of fugitives changed the nature of lam narratives. He points to a tension between the American public's tendency to romanticize or glorify outlaw figures such as Dillinger and a fascination with the ability of the police to use technology to bring such outlaws to justice. *On the Lam* is organized chronologically to develop the argument that the ability of the police (and the general public) to control fugitives and their narratives improves over the two decades the study covers (1932–52). Beverly anticipates questions about his inclusion of *Invisible Man* in the study's final chapter since it is not technically about a criminal fugitive, but this chapter reveals some of the more intriguing implications of the study and provides an excellent connection between Richard Wright and Ellison while offering an original reading of *Invisible Man*. Beverly is adept at analyzing film, literature, and media representations, but I wish that the book had included some visual images, particularly in chapter 3, which analyzes photographs of Dillinger. The afterword to the study connects recent film history and the international manhunt for Osama bin Laden to the trends Beverly discusses in his main text, making the relevance of his study to contemporary culture indisputable.

John Houchin's *Censorship of the American Theatre in the Twentieth Century* covers a broader period of time than Beverly's study, yet it achieves coherence and a focus because it is limited to one literary genre. Houchin's first chapter reaches back to the Puritans and takes us on a dizzying historical tour of American theater censorship from the seventeenth century to 1900. Like the study as a whole, this chapter is meticulously researched, making the book especially valuable as a catalog of the history of censorship, a compendium of twentieth-century drama and the opposition it faced from conservative forces. Although Houchin's emphasis is more on the history of censorship and less on an argument about it, he does a splendid job defining the forces behind that conservatism and observing how those forces adapt and take different forms over time. In his introduction Houchin points out that conservative elements in society enact censorship as a way of "reverting to the rituals or philosophy of a purer, Golden Age" (1). These conservative forces make their voices heard in different forms, Houchin demonstrates, including newspaper reviews, committees called "play juries," and, of course, laws. A common conservative perception, especially in the era before entertainment was dominated by film and television, was that "anarchistic forces that employed theatre as their principal weapon were attacking their culture and traditions" (88). What unfolds over the course of the study is a pattern of discrimination not only against transgressions on the stage but against individuals and groups perceived as different: New Women, African Americans, Jews, communists, or homosexuals.

Especially admirable in this study is Houchin's ability to connect theater history to a larger cultural history. Houchin manages to do this effectively by constructing a coherent narrative through detailed research. The amount of information packed into this study is simply impressive without being overwhelming. Houchin does not feel pressured to cover the twentieth century evenly, which is understandable: part of his argument is that censorship varies according to cultural-historical forces. Still, Houchin is particularly fascinated with the history of this issue in the 1920s and 1960s, a focus not uncommon in twentieth-century histories, but this focus means that the last three decades of the twentieth century combined receive less attention than the 1960s. As a result, there is a less immediate connection to the culture of the twenty-first century than there might have been; still, it is certain that the patterns Houchin describes are observable in our time and will be well into the future, as long as drama remains an important cultural force.

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***A Queer Sort of Materialism: Recontextualizing American Theater.* By David Savran. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press. 2003. xii, 234 pp. Cloth, \$55.00; paper, \$22.95.**

***Professing Performance: Theatre in the Academy from Philology to Performativity.* By Shannon Jackson. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge Univ. Press. 2004. xi, 254 pp. Cloth, \$55; paper, \$24.00.**

By his own admission, Savran's collection of nine essays, written over ten years, is united not by "common subject matter but [by] the historical-materialist method" he employs (x). Thus he proposes to analyze contemporary drama through Marxist lenses and, as the title indicates, though his introduction does not, queer theory. Savran complains that "for virtually the entire twentieth century, theater . . . recycl[ed] and recomb[in]ed elements of . . . public amusements like cinema, minstrel shows, . . . vaudeville and . . . serious art . . . [T]heater has consistently evinced those characteristics that have historically been branded middlebrow: the promiscuous mixture of commerce and art, entertainment and politics, . . . the profane and the sacred" (15). In his disparaging of this recent "middlebrow" mixture, Savran ignores the history of theater, the combination of tragedies with satyr plays in ancient Greece or Shakespeare's gravedigger in *Hamlet* or his porter in *Macbeth*, profane entertainment for the groundlings. Theater has always had to appeal to mixed audiences. I also find it ironic that a Marxist critic snobbishly condemns middlebrow entertainment for the masses.

In fact, however, there is less detailed analysis of plays in this text than there is psychoanalysis of American culture. Only four plays receive detailed scrutiny—Kushner's *Angels in America*, Shepard's *Suicide in B-flat*, Jane Bowles's *Summer House*, and Vogel's *How I Learned to Drive*—and the analy-