the modernized version (with notes and commentary), set from the same computer that generated the photo-ready copy for the scholarly edition.

We've come a long way, baby, but we've got a long way to go.

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Michael D. Bristol. *Carnival and Theatre: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England*. New York and London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1985. Pp.237. \$25.00

The study brings a valuable perspective to the debate on the origins of early modern theatre. The primary influence on early modern theatre, argues Bristol, is not "literary production and consumption" (p.4), but plebeian festive traditions as they are expressed in Carnival. An annual winter festival culminating in Shrove Tuesday (Mardis Gras), Carnival combines masquerades in the shape of "travesty and misrepresentation, stylized conflict and agonistic misrule" (p.53) with utopian fantasies of material wellbeing and social harmony. As a festive form of social cohesion, Carnival resists the arbitrary domination of secular authority, celebrating instead the common people's desire to preserve a collective authority which sets its own social standards. The spirit of Carnival, whose locus is the marketplace and public square, is absorbed by the Elizabethan and Jacobean popular theatre, a complex social, political, and literary institution representing to both its opponents and supporters "a genuine rupture in the fabric of social authority" (p.110).

In locating the source of early modern theatre in the Carnavalesque resistance to authority and the celebration of clowning, misrule, and summary justice, the study challenges the reconciliatory notion of history originally proposed by E.M.W. Tillyard (1948) and refined by Norman Rabkin (1967), both of whom view the Elizabethan theatre as intrinsically "reassuring and harmonious" (p.12). The study also goes beyond recent revisionist critiques of the 'essentialist humanism' underlying traditional literary criticism. The reductive orientation of these revisionist strategies, both structuralist and Marxist, results from a neglect of "peripheral interferences" (p.18) in the institution of theatre. The omission has led to a tenuous investiture of the divided self with "an historically specific psychology in the form of anxious self-fashioning" [as in Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980)], and with "an historically specific social character in the form of radical subversion" [as in Jonathan Dollimore's *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1984)] (p.19). Bristol's analysis of the inter-relation between subjectivity, authority, and productive life draws upon a number of materialist traditions, foremost of which is Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of cultural heterogeneity which defines "struggle and difference" (p.18) as the governing principle of dialectical historicism. Developing Bakhtin's cursory analysis, formulated in *Rabelais and His World* (1968), of Carnival's primary function in Elizabethan drama, Bristol considers "the unselfconscious, ritual character of Carnival" as a vehicle for sustaining

social interaction, and its "selfconsciously pragmatic character" as an antisocial instrument (p.25). Another major influence is Emile Durkheim, in particular, his definition of the sacred as a manifestation of a collective social experience observed in ritual and festive activity. Social harmony surfaces periodically through "ritual intensification," while an undercurrent of social protest "and the displacement of the sacred by partisan economic and political concerns" is preserved (p.25).

The three chapters that comprise Part I, where the theoretical perspective is set forth, are balanced in Part II by a trenchant critique of a body of hybrid popular literature which at once celebrates and debunks popular festive forms. An extended commentary on Thomas Nashe's *Lenten Stuffe* demonstrates how this literature crystallizes the repressed or prohibited expressions of plebeian experience, which are structured around three categories: 1) opposition to the status hierarchy, fulfilled through parody and derision; 2) recognition of struggle as a positive component of everyday life; 3) collective desire for material enhancement and for freedom from dispossession. A crucial concern of Part III is with how these categories are imbedded in popular theatrical performance. The Carnavalesque nature of theatre is implied in late sixteenth-century attacks against actors, a pervasive criticism belonging to the broader disparagement of popular culture for its countenance of travesty and misrule. Just as in Carnival travesty, disguise, and "the dispersion of authority" (p.115) render social distinctions unintelligible, so the actor, in mimicking "spontaneous, unrehearsed" speech and action (p.111) blurs distinctions of rank "and even of gender" (p.115). By promoting ridicule and disguise, the theatre thus diminishes the authority of the pulpit, school and courtroom, creating a place where plebeian life is rediscovered and sustained.

My major disappointment at this point is with the largely gratuitous references to the distinction of gender. While insisting upon the fallacy of reconciliatory historicism, which minimizes "interpretive conflict" (p.13) by failing to account for the value of gender, hierarchy, and economic production, Bristol never addresses directly the extent to which resistance to the differentiation of gender functions as one of the "ethical imperatives of plebeian culture" (p.213). The omission is only marginally redressed in the concluding section (Part IV) which begins with a discussion of the allocation of authority in marriage, "a largely public matter in which personal desire and preference are always open to external scrutiny" (p.162). The structural ambiguities of marriage are briefly discussed in relation to the "hierarchy of male dominance" which characterizes patriarchal authority and which makes marriage a "perilous situation" for women (p.164). However, the problem of gender is subordinated to the consideration of class antagonism as a catalyst in the plebeian "thrashing" (p.172) of authority.

The principal concern of Part IV is the relation between theatre, authority, and popular culture as it unfolds in several Elizabethan and Jacobean plays. We are shown how critically neglected texts such as *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* and *Locrine* as well as canonical plays (among them, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the two parts of *Henry IV*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*) utilize the structures of Carnival in order to interrogate "elementary political relationships" (p.160). The exploration of the Carnival elements in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet* is particularly incisive. The celebration of the aristocratic wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta is

viewed as the narrative frame within which Shakespeare weaves a number of tales "of resistance and discord," the most problematical being the mechanicals' parody of Pyramus and Thisby, a "counter-model" of "the reconciliation and accommodation" (p.172) proposed by the play's typical comic conclusion. Similarly, Shakespeare's utilization in *Hamlet* of the festive ritual of "charivari" or "mirth in funerals" (p.161) reveals how the elements of clowning and "grotesque laughter" resist the reconciliation of "the unfathomable contradictions of political succession" (p.193). Bristol's claim, on the other hand, for the popular "agon or Battle of Carnival and Lent" (p.161) as a dominant rhetorical structure in *King Lear* – Lear, the "Carnival king," is replaced by "Lenten severity" which fails to bring about harmonious rule (pp.211-12) – is disappointingly cursory. The analysis of the Battle of Carnival and Lent in *Henry IV*, Parts I and II is the least engaging, for it does not pursue the full significance of Falstaff's defeat. Falstaff's Carnavalesque treatment of "honorable death as a joke" and his exultation in the excesses of the body render him the spokesman for "a plebeian consciousness that maintains itself despite sacrifices demanded in the name of the nation-state" (p.183) represented by Prince Hal, the "embodiment of Lenten civil policy" (p.206). Bristol, however, ignores the possibility that Falstaff's public rejection in *2 Henry IV* implies Shakespeare's negation of Carnival as the voice of historical continuity.

Although the problem of authority is not fully accommodated to Shakespeare's complex vision of history, the study is a significant and provocative contribution to revisionist criticism.

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Science and the Arts in the Renaissance. Eds. John W. Shirley and F. David Hoeniger. Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library. London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1985. Pp. 220.

The ten essays published in this collection were first presented as talks at a two-day symposium on *Science and the Arts in the Renaissance* held at the Folger Shakespeare Library in October, 1978. Taken as a whole, they represent an eclectic harvest of ideas demonstrating diverse methodologies and sometimes contradictory theories about the early relationship of the two disciplines. The diversity of the contributions reflects what must have been an energetic scholarly interchange, and records for posterity an important event in the history of the field.

The first essay, by the venerable historian of science Alistair Crombie, seeks to establish a common cultural and philosophical context for Renaissance intellectuals, be they artists or scientists. It is difficult reading, moving forward with the ease of a medieval Scholastic treatise, but the point is ultimately made that, in the history of ideas, theory ("science") precedes to material analysis ("art"). To Crombie, mathematical rationalism was the seed from which the modern age grew.

The next two essays, by Jerome Bylebyl on medicine, philosophy and humanism in Renaissance Italy, and P.M. Rattansi on the Paracelsian vision, have very little to do with the "arts" as such unless, of course, we include the German word *artz* in our definition of the term. Bylebyl is concerned with the balance of theory and