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Theatrum mundi: Studies in Honour of Ronald W. Tobin
(review)

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were subjected. Not that Mairet is as difficult in bibliographical terms as Rotrou, Corneille or Molière. And not that the editors limit themselves to matters of bibliography. Their introductions explain fully all that they have discovered about conditions of first performance; and the genesis or fabrication of the plays is explored by analysis of sources and dramaturgy, as one might expect from a team working under the direction of Georges Forestier. Bibliography, biography, lists of other treatments of the same subjects in French and other European languages all help to make this volume an indispensable tool for future research on Mairet and the theatre of the 1630s. It will stimulate many instances of critical discourse, but it will long outlive them.

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Theatrum mundi: Studies in Honour of Ronald W. Tobin. Edited by CLAIRE L. CARLIN and KATHLEEN WINE. Charlottesville, Rookwood Press, 2003. 280 pp.

Twenty-seven short essays address that commonplace of early modern culture, namely that all the world is a stage; three introductory essays summarize the essays in the volume, the career of Ronald W. Tobin, and provide a selected list of his publications. Seven essays are devoted to Molière's theatre (in particular, *Dom Juan*, *Le Tartuffe*, *Les Plaisirs de l'île enchantée*, *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*), six to Racine (in particular, *Iphigénie* and *Phèdre*), and four to Corneille (in particular, *L'Illusion comique*, *Médée*, *Polyeucte* and *Cinna*). These and other essays consider questions of dramaturgy, dramatic themes, and theatre and society (love, passion and desire; women in the theatre of Molière and Corneille; horror and monsters; satire, flattery and the burlesque; witches, impotence, wealth and class; rhetoric, oratory and theatrical form; theatrical illusion). Three essays adopt modern perspectives: Racine and the moderns, *Tartuffe* on screen, and productions of Molière by the Comédie-française in the year 2000. Five essays, more loosely connected to the general theme, study Poussin's *Confirmation* (regrettably without accompanying illustration), dramatized eclogues in Occitan, *Les Entre-tiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène*, Villedieu's Henriette-Sylvie de Molière as actress, and the comedy *L'Avocat Patelin* (1706), a reworking of the medieval farce. The first and last essays in the volume are more directly concerned with the commonplace of the *theatrum mundi*.

Many of the essays rework well-worn themes or re-read well-known plays, but for the most part cleverly, providing fresh perspectives. Other essays ask questions or address themes that invite new research. Jean Emelina argues cogently for the addition of 'horror' to the emotions of pity and fear, which tragedy was to provoke, demonstrating the connection between horror and the sublime, and the way the staging of horror evolved from mimesis to diegesis in the course of the century. John Lyons evokes a triptych of Medeas — Seneca, Euripides, Corneille — revealing how the latter creates a fearsome and tragic Médée in a play peopled with characters more appropriate to tragic-comedy, and thereby brings tragedy to the French stage. John Campbell interrogates the critical consensus that makes Racine's *Iphigénie* a 'tragédie heureuse' because of the ending, and restores to the play its tragic themes, patterns, plot and evocation of the tragic in the human condition. William Cloonan defies the

accepted view that although the use of the ‘play within the play’ is widespread in Elizabethan theatre, it is absent from Corneille, Molière and Racine. His subtle and convincing analysis of Racine’s less obvious use of the technique, although undoubtedly controversial, adds to the chilling cruelty of Agamemnon, Titus and Néron, as they adopt the roles of lead actor and director in the dramas they concoct within the plays. Finally, Larry Riggs explores issues of gender, hegemonic discourse, self-fashioning and surveillance in the theatre of power of absolute monarchy and the theatrical entertainment provided by that power. He revisits the well-worn parallelism between the suppression of the body (and its desire and disorder) in the Cartesian epistemology of objectivism, and the violent repression of painful feelings and memories of wounded bodies, which makes heroic masculinity possible in Corneille’s theatre. His argument is seductive but unconvincing. It relegates Corneille’s women to a femaleness that is defined by the ‘disorders’ of emotion, the body, and contestation of the discursive and political dominance of masculine power. In fact, some of the women in Corneille’s theatre provide a reasoned middle path between the violence of ‘masculine reason’ and order, and the disorder of ‘feminine emotion’, demonstrating that they shared the same human rationality with the men of the plays, but not necessarily the same value system. Undergraduates may find this book useful because the short essays will allow them to sip the work of leading specialists of seventeenth-century theatre and culture. Academics may find it stimulating and be prompted to revisit well-known plays, themes and texts from early modern France.

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MOLIÈRE: *Les Fâcheux*. Édition présentée, établie et annotée par JEAN SERROY. (Folio Théâtre). Paris, Gallimard, 2005. 160 pp. Pb €4.10.

Les Fâcheux was commissioned by Louis XIV’s Minister of Finance, Nicolas Fouquet, as part of an elaborate court fête held at Vaux-le-Vicomte in the king’s honour in August 1661. The play and its performance context mark an important turning point in Molière’s career, and for this reason alone a separate edition of the play is most welcome. Its creation coincided with the unexpected birth of *comédie-ballet* — a genre that was to culminate famously in the delightful theatricality of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (1670) and *Le Malade imaginaire* (1673). In his preface to the play, published in 1662, Molière explains how his own comedy and Beauchamp’s ballet came to be combined: ‘comme il n’y avait qu’un petit nombre choisi de danseurs excellents, on fut contraint de séparer les entrées de ce ballet, et l’avis fut de les jeter dans les entractes de la comédie [...] on s’avisait de les couvrir au sujet du mieux que l’on put’. At the same time, his production of *Les Fâcheux* propelled Molière into the world of court entertainment. Although Fouquet was imprisoned nineteen days after the premiere of *Les Fâcheux*, Molière and his troupe were immediately invited to give two performances of the work (complete with an additional scene suggested by the king) at Louis XIV’s palace in Fontainebleau. Molière’s dedication to the king in the printed edition of the play demonstrates his desire to pursue this association with Louis XIV and his court. He writes of how the king has inspired him better