

## MLA Annotated Bibliography Examples II

Kintz, Linda. "The Sanitized Spectacle: What's Birth Got to Do with It? Adrienne Kennedy's A Movie Star Has to Star in Black and White." Theatre Journal 44 (1992): 67-86. In a heavily theoretical article, Kintz draws on critics and theorists including Kristeva to address the issue of "female specificity" (particularly the references to bleeding and miscarriage) in Kennedy's play. This "female specificity" disrupts the cultural norms that choose to ignore certain aspects of "bloody femininity," instead constructing women like Charlotte (Bette Davis's character in Now, Voyager) asexual, "pure, abstracted mother *figure[s]*" (75). Kintz relates this to "the 'privilege of indifference' to legitimacy," but never really defines what she means by this phrase.

Said, Edward W. "The World, the Text, and the Critic." The World, The Text and the Critic.

Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983. 31-53. Said argues that texts are "enmeshed in circumstance, time, place, and society" (35) and that language, or a text, has a specific situation.(35) This conclusion means that texts do not have limitless interpretations (39). One other interesting point Said makes is that discourse is not a democratic exchange as some describe it. Rather, "texts are fundamentally facts of power, not of democratic exchange"; discourse is "usually like the unequal relation between colonizer and colonized, oppressor and oppressed" (45,48). Words are a part of the world and so are associated with power, authority and force. As an example, Said uses the exchange between Stephen Dedalus and the dean of students. Their worldliness means texts are representative of the reigning institutions; critics' jobs should be to expos[e] things that otherwise lie hidden beneath piety, heedlessness, or routine" (53).

Shinn, Thelma J. "Living the Answer:" The Emergence of African American Feminist Drama." Studies in the Humanities 17 (1990): 149-159. In addition to plays by Hansberry, Childress, and Shange, the article discusses Kennedy's plays. The focus on strong female characters by these playwrights shows the gender tensions within black society. According to Shinn, Kennedy, by emphasizing "the multiplicity of the inner self," shows that these tensions must be "confronted internally" and then "integrated" (157). Shinn notes that Kennedy has shifted to an expressionist form to make these points (as opposed to the more realistic forms of Hansberry and Childress.) I found the points made in this article to be fairly obvious and not very helpful.

Sollors, Werner. "Owls and Rats in the American Funnyhouse: Adrienne Kennedy's Drama." American Literature: A Journal of Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography 63 (1991): 507-32. Sollors summarizes seven of Kennedy's plays, paying particular attention to their imagery, especially the animal imagery. He draws from her autobiography to explicate the text of her plays, explaining what associations she had with some of the images. Sollors provides a good analysis of the structure of Funnyhouse, saying that the repetition and the imagery provide a clear structure with three major rhetorical units: the "returning father," the "Roman ruins," and the "African saviour" (515). These units create a "rhythm...that deepens the themes of conflictual heritage, failed self-recognition, mission, sacrifice, decline, murder, and suicide without resolving these issues" (516). This is a good introductory essay, but not an in depth discussion of any one idea. Funnyhouse is discussed in the most detail.

Tener, Robert L. "Theatre of Identity: Adrienne Kennedy's Portrait of the Black Woman." Studies in Black Literature 6.2 (1975): 1-5. Tener focuses on the owl imagery in The Owl Answers and describes the possible associations of the owl from legend and myth. The character's internal struggle for identity is externalized through the presentation of the owl on stage. Among other

things, the owl has been associated with non-Christians, witches, and the female domestic arts (Athena); its call has been considered the call of death and the voice of a woman calling for her child who died in childbirth (2). Tener argues that “what the black woman receives from her American culture helps to confuse her identity” and that the “historical and literary past” of her white father provides She with “no meaning of solace” (3-4). Based on what Kennedy told Diamond, this conclusion seems questionable, because Kennedy said she felt part of a community of writers, including the dead, English ones.

Zinman, Toby Silverman. ““In the presence of mine enemies’: Adrienne Kennedy’s An Evening with Dead Essex.” Studies in American Drama, 1945-Present 6 (1991): 3-13. Zinman analyzes the play in terms of “presence” and absence” of the characters, but as he says, not in as complex a manner as they are used to in the theories of Lacan, Saussure, and Derrida. He contends that the real subject of the play is absent (Essex) and that Kennedy has not found “a satisfying way to present absence on stage” in this play (12). In particular, according to Zihman, Kennedy’s use of realism limits the play to the “socially possible,” which are the same “forces the play intensely opposes” (8). The article was interesting, but I’m still not sure what a satisfactory absence would be.