

In his stimulating introduction to Part 4, Bruce McConachie theorizes performance as the successful cognitive coupling of audience and actor, subtly indicating that cognitive science might transform our understanding of the experience and the ideological effects of theatre. The three essays that follow—on *Rotating in a Room of Images* and the interactive performance space of *Imagining Autism*—bear out McConachie's interpretation of performance as the playful collaboration of participants and practitioners.

*Affective Performance and Cognitive Science* is laudable in its ambition, but the book's efforts to address strikingly different forms of performance—from the scripted drama of *A Woman Killed with Kindness* to the immersive theatre of *Rotating in a Room of Images*—makes its insights less sustained than one might expect from such a promising collection. In contrast, *Embodied Cognition and Shakespeare's Theatre* balances topical focus with intellectual breadth, showing how cognitive science can illuminate the history of performance. Taken together, the collections readily attest to the remarkable diversity of conceptual apparatuses and methodological approaches that emerge from the intersection of cognitive science and the study of the theatre. By revealing new and exciting opportunities for research, they demonstrate that scholars of the theatre must draw upon the insights of cognitive science to understand how performance engages the embodied and extended mind.

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**Acting Companies and Their Plays in Shakespeare's London.** By Siobhan Keenan. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2014; pp. x + 272. \$104 cloth, \$32.95 paper, \$27.99 e-book.

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The persistent idea that early modern playwrights wrote mostly in accordance with their own isolated genius was swept aside late in the twentieth century by studies such as Roslyn Lander Knutson's *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company, 1594–1613* (1991), Andrew Gurr's *The Shakespearian Playing Companies* (1996), and especially Scott McMillan and Sally-Beth MacLean's *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (1998). It is now readily granted that Shakespeare and his contemporaries were collaborators in a dense theatrical community that was competitive but also highly sociable, knit together by ties of shared commercial interest, kinship, and friendship. Playing companies have emerged in this context as artistic agents deserving of their own analysis, and much recent work has explored the extent to which their star performers, accumulated repertoires, preferred venues, and the tastes of their patrons may have shaped the scriptwriting process. Siobhan Keenan's *Acting Companies and Their Plays in Shakespeare's London*—a contextual companion designed for general readers of the Arden Shakespeare and Arden Early Modern Drama series—offers a rich distillation of the findings and debates that this scholarly shift has generated over the past two decades. No new

controversy will be ignited by its claim that “the needs, practices, resources and pressures on acting companies and playwrights informed not only the performance and publication of contemporary dramas but playwrights’ writing practices” (8). The book nevertheless provides an elegant and accessible primer for those wishing to understand the complex environment in which Shakespeare and his contemporary theatrical professionals operated.

In a brief introduction, Keenan attributes “the turn to acting company history” (4) to the wealth of documentary evidence uncovered by the Records of Early English Drama project (REED) as well as a disciplinary absorption of postmodern ideas of disintegrated authorship and textual transmission (3–4). Keenan negotiates carefully the charge that too weighted an emphasis on collective agency risks displacing our appreciation for individual authorial achievement by arguing that, although by the later sixteenth century commercial acting companies were typically imbricated in most playwrights’ working practices, “the demands posed by the professional stage and its players were not necessarily an obstacle to creative expression, but rather a potential source of artistic stimulation, as playwrights sought to rise to the challenge of making the most of players’ talents and of pleasing them and their audiences, as well as themselves” (202–3).

Five chapters efficiently support this claim, reporting what is currently known about the sizes, structures, and divisions of labor among the troupes that sought to anchor themselves in the sometimes stormy theatrical marketplace of Tudor and Stuart London (Chapter 1); the preparation of dramatic manuscripts, their subjection to official and internal forms of censorship, and the potential for their revision by actors during their lifetime in performance (Chapter 2); the material conditions of London’s playhouses, the daily grind of rehearsal and performance in a repertory system, styles of acting, costuming, and staging (Chapter 3); the social composition and behavior of the city’s audiences (Chapter 4); and the opportunities and constraining pressures that came with wearing the liveries of aristocratic patrons (Chapter 5).

Each chapter digests an impressive range of primary and critical sources. Keenan is deft at explaining the complicated knots that bound playwrights to actors, and actors to patrons, carefully drawing attention to areas of the field where unstable evidentiary ground makes historical assertion tenuous. Where scholarly disagreements arise—for instance, over whether Elizabethan privy councillors determined the personnel and repertories of the Chamberlain’s and Admiral’s companies or the putative popularity of printed playbooks—her tone remains generously unbiased. The information relayed may occasionally strike the reader as too commonplace, as when we are told that playwrights and players “seem to have been interested in the creation of striking visual spectacles” (112). But offsetting these moments are richer case studies that punctuate each chapter, shrewdly included to illustrate in more detail aspects of the survey preceding them. Among the best of these is a biography of Lady Elizabeth’s Men, a company that seems to have succeeded commercially between 1611 and 1625 even as it merged and fragmented at a dizzying pace (Chapter 1); a discussion of the controversial revival of *The Valiant Scot* at the Fortune playhouse during the Bishops’ Wars (Chapter 4); and an analysis of the pressures that elite and commercial

patrons exerted on productions of Middleton's *A Game at Chess* in 1624 and Heywood and Brome's *The Late Lancashire Witches* in 1634 (Chapter 5).

Given the book's scope, minor flaws are understandable. When the actors Nathan Field and Robert Benfield joined Lady Elizabeth's company in 1613 they were aged 25 and about 30; yet in the space of two pages Keenan rather confusingly calls them "boy[s]," "no longer boys," and "youths" (36–7). We are told that Lady Elizabeth's Men acquired Cooke's *Greene's Tu Quoque* and Dekker's *Match Me in London* from the Children of the Revels (45); in fact, as early quartos of these plays indicate, they were originally the property of Queen Anne's adult company and transferred by the actor-manager Christopher Beeston when Lady Elizabeth's players took up residence at the Cockpit in 1622. Additionally, Keenan relies upon G. E. Bentley's estimation (made in 1971) that nine hundred plays were written for the commercial stage between 1580 and 1642 (53); this figure fails to account for over seven hundred scripts that we now know escaped preservation and for which, in many cases, we have titles and other information—a considerable oversight given how integral the evidence of lost plays has become to our conception of company repertoires and the tastes to which they catered. Although wrinkles of this kind are not insignificant, they may certainly be ironed out in a future edition and do not seriously diminish the utility of this timely new guide to a vital area of Shakespeare scholarship. *Acting Companies and Their Plays in Shakespeare's London* deserves the wide general readership for which it aims.

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**Performing Environments: Site-Specificity in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama.** Edited by Susan Bennett and Mary Polito. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014; pp. xiii + 271, 7 illustrations. \$90 cloth, \$90 e-book. doi:10.1017/S0040557415000617

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This essay collection continues a welcome recent shift in early theatre studies privileging the study of phenomena, objects, location, and material coincidences across traditional period boundaries. The volume also attempts to correct or balance other traditional biases: London over the provinces; purpose-built theatres over part-time theatres; literary history and formalist reading over interdisciplinary historicism. The introduction emphasizes the process of instating place and perception via performance in specific sites; the material and the psychic, the present and the past, the playful and the earnest, the here and the there, the improvised and the rehearsed, the delineated and the obscure are just some of the apparent dualistic relationships closely read and complicated.

In "Building Frameworks," the first of four themed parts, Patricia Badir takes Jonathan Gil Harris's notion of "untimely matter" (18) to demonstrate "the palimpsest-like character of urban space" (31) and the way "the stuffiness of our records" (30) emphasizes the dramatic roles played by objects. Perhaps we could call