

BOOK REVIEWS

EDITED BY GINA BLOOM, WITH LEE EMRICH

Embodied Cognition and Shakespeare's Theatre: The Early Modern Body-Mind. Edited by Laurie Johnson, John Sutton, and Evelyn Tribble. Routledge Studies in Shakespeare. New York: Routledge, 2014; pp. vii + 268, 9 illustrations. \$145 cloth, \$140 e-book.

Affective Performance and Cognitive Science: Body, Brain and Being. Edited by Nicola Shaughnessy. London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013; pp. xiv + 300, 8 illustrations. \$140 cloth, \$42.95 paper, \$45.99 e-book.

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From Mary Thomas Crane's *Shakespeare's Brain* to Evelyn Tribble's *Cognition in the Globe*, cognitive approaches to early modern drama have challenged scholars to acknowledge the place of embodied thought in Shakespeare's theatre. *Embodied Cognition and Shakespeare's Theatre: The Early Modern Body-Mind* further attests to the virtues of this approach within the scholarship of early modern drama, whereas *Affective Performance and Cognitive Science: Body, Brain and Being* reveals that cognitive science can illuminate not only the study of performance, but the practice of it as well. Together, these collections remind us that cognitive science is not "a monolithic entity," as the editors of *Embodied Cognition and Shakespeare's Theatre* put it, but rather "a diverse and often divided multidisciplinary field" (2). In turn, they expand our understanding of that field and offer a wide array of promising and provocative methodologies for bringing its complexity to bear upon the theatre.

Embodied Cognition and Shakespeare's Theatre argues that embodiment defined the contours of affective and imaginative thought within the early modern playhouse. With the phrase "body-mind," the editors Laurie Johnson, John Sutton, and Evelyn Tribble signal not only their interest in "thinking and the passions, imagining and dreaming, planning and communicating" (1), but also their investment in defamiliarizing our sense of the basic coordinates of the pre-Cartesian self (indeed, the editors rightly suggest the need to retire "*pre-Cartesian*" and "*post-Cartesian*" [2] as historical markers and to attend, instead, to the peculiar continuities and disruptions within sixteenth- and seventeenth-century thought). Crucially, the "body-mind" of Shakespeare's theatre concerns not only the psyche's immanence within a somatic structure but also its distribution across networks of material artifacts, cultural practices, and signifying systems. The capaciousness of this concept allows the collection to address both the representation of embodied thought in Shakespeare's theatre and the implications of this "body-mind" for early modern cultural studies.

In keeping with their desire for defamiliarization, the editors choose “to avoid using any obvious internal divisions” and organize the collection, instead, as a series of clustered essays conjoined by “shorter linking pieces” (6). In the first roots of this rhizomatic structure, David Hawkes examines Shakespeare’s meditation on nature and torture, and Ros King establishes the historical, philosophical, and physiological significance of play as a mode of thought. Finally, in a richly suggestive essay, Emma Firestone traces the role of temperature in shaping critical response to the characters of *1 Henry IV*, most notably Hal and his putative coldness.

In the first linking piece, Garrett A. Sullivan Jr. cites Andy Clark and David Chalmers’s groundbreaking essay “The Extended Mind” to argue that early modern selfhood was extended, not only through the body but also across affective and social networks. Sullivan’s contribution lays the foundation for some of the most fascinating and accomplished essays of the collection, those in the second group. Mary Floyd-Wilson reads temptation and demonic possession as early modern correlatives of embodied and extended cognition, showing that cognitive science can provide new insights into the cultural formation of early modern subjectivity. Similarly, James A. Knapp offers an erudite assessment of *Much Ado about Nothing* and the problem of embodied cognition as it was theorized in early modern medical treatises: how does perception shape our knowledge of immaterial things, or “mental bodies” (91), such as character? Knapp’s question points to primary sites of inquiry within the collection—namely, the way that early modern drama stages thought and the epistemological problems that embodied cognition poses for performance—and informs Michael Schoenfeldt’s linking essay on the permeability of the early modern body-mind as well as the essays that constitute the third assemblage within the collection. Given the prominence of epistemological problems in these studies of the body-mind, it is perhaps unsurprising that several essays address *The Winter’s Tale*, a play that metatheatrically addresses its questions about embodied knowledge and the nature of spectatorship to the audience.

In its fifth and final group of essays, the collection turns to the place of contemporary cognitive science within historical inquiry. As Katherine Rowe rightly suggests in her linking essay, certain strands of cognitive science readily illuminate early modern culture because, in part, the two fields share the assumption that thought is both embodied and extended across a material and social environment. In her essay, Lianne Habinek artfully demonstrates the virtues of this kind of interpretive practice, showing that *Hamlet* and its consideration of head trauma captures a moment in which early modern anatomy begins to locate cognition within the brain. Laurie Johnson then traces the ideological implications of distributed cognition by asking how cognitive science, with its emphasis upon structure and agency, can recast New Historicism’s questions of subversion and containment. In David Hillman and Carla Mazzio’s afterword, *Embodied Cognition and Shakespeare’s Theatre* concludes with the apt observation that “Shakespearean drama does not, of course, hold a mirror up to neurons (or the early modern equivalent thereof),” but rather “stages whole worlds in which problems and conundrums about embodied cognition inform dramas of human interaction” (255).

If *Embodied Cognition and Shakespeare's Theatre* reveals that cognitive science can enhance a historicist approach to performance, then *Affective Performance and Cognitive Science* undertakes a still more ambitious project, namely, to show how cognitive science and performance studies might transform each other. As Nicole Shaughnessy explains in her introduction, the collection aims to model an “interdisciplinary collaboration between performance and science,” where a “variety of theoretical, critical and performance practices” (17) stage the nonhierarchical intersection of the theatre and the laboratory. Like the editors of *Embodied Cognition and Shakespeare's Theatre*, Shaughnessy acknowledges that cognitive science encompasses a vast field, and her collection attends to this disciplinary diversity by organizing its essays into four parts, loosely united by method and topic and introduced by scholars of theatre history, performance, and cognitive science.

Broadly speaking, the first part, “Dances with Science,” considers movement, embodied memory, and pain within different forms of performance. Introducing the section, Evelyn Tribble and John Sutton encourage interdisciplinary scholars to acquire “familiarisation with the shape, history and debates within the broader field of the cognitive sciences, as well as the particular sub-field of interest” (30). In another testament to the collection’s ambition, the first essay brings scholars of performance (Matthew Reason) and dance (Dee Reynolds) together with two cognitive scientists (Marie-Hélène Grosbras and Frank E. Pollock) to examine the affective contours of different audiences’ responses to ballet and *bharatanatyam*. In turn, Anna Furse addresses embodied memory and trauma in describing her project (cocreated with Esther Linley) *When We Were Birds*, and Erin Hood offers insight into the relationship between pain and selfhood in her analysis of Kira O’Reilly’s *Sssshh . . . Succour*.

Introducing Part 2, Amy Cook examines the contributions cognitive linguistics might make to our understanding of performance texts and dwells particularly on Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner’s theory of conceptual blending. The move to relocate language within embodied subjects provides a strong foundation for the three chapters that follow, in which Natalie Bainter theorizes the metatheatrical significance of blushing in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*; John Lutterbie draws upon Dynamic Systems Theory to figure a relationship between language and gesture; and Naomi Rokotnitz, in a moving analysis of *Wit* and *33 Variations*, argues that the theatre functions as a site of quasi-scientific inquiry into the nature of affect.

Gesturing to the mind’s immanence within the material world, Rhonda Blair introduces Part 3 by suggesting how cognitive science might be appropriated to assist theatre practitioners with their craft. Acknowledging this potential, Neal Utterback describes his experiments on the role of choreographed and spontaneous gesture in helping students memorize Shakespeare’s sonnets. Martin Welton updates James Gibson’s theory of affordances through the work of Anthony Chemero to consider choreographed movement within *Footage*, and Gabriele Sofia asks if the theatre’s insights into audience participation and what she calls the “performative body schema” (177) can contribute to cognitive science.

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