

*Drama and Pedagogy in Medieval and Early Modern England.*

Elisabeth M. Dutton and James McBain, eds.

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This varied and encompassing collection draws from papers presented at the Swiss Association of Medieval and Early Modern English Studies conference held at the University of Fribourg in 2014. The essays, by established and emerging scholars, explore medieval and early modern drama and pedagogy from its theological and liturgical roots in the medieval period through its development in the humanist-inflected early modern period. The editors suggest that academic drama (universities and Inns of Court) was particularly important in the Tudor period, emphasizing drama as a pedagogical tool and noting that this same impulse shapes the professional theater of the early modern period.

Using Emrys Jones's recognition of the link between pedagogy and drama, and subsequent work that has validated this connection as its leaping-off point, this collection seeks to continue and to complicate this trend by expanding the range of authors and works and enlarging the time span. While the editors could interrogate the connection between drama and pedagogy more substantially, they note in their brief introduction that they are "related in numerous ways" (11), letting the essays they have selected for inclusion elucidate the connections. In this regard, thematic groupings of the essays may have helped to highlight important themes and issues more extensively. The fourteen essays included—five focusing on medieval works, the rest on the early modern period—are eclectic but share in common careful analysis and useful individual insights that develop the growing understanding of those connections. Among the issues this collection examines, the central questions of what, how, and who did medieval and early modern drama teach, both onstage and off, unites many of the selections. Themes explored include the link between drama and religious education, the role of grammar-school education, the instructional role of onstage characters, and the connections among performance context, physical location, and teaching.

Noteworthy essays include Alan H. Nelson's "Shakespeare and Southwark." He begins by observing that both Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, the two finest playwrights of the period, each had only a grammar school (not university) education and, using extant records from grammar schools, builds a compelling case for the kind of education Shakespeare would have received at the King's School in Stratford-upon-Avon. He argues further that the relationship between pedagogy and drama is not always mutually supportive and could be complicated by the antagonism some schoolmasters and church authorities displayed toward public playhouses and playgoing. Lynn Enterline's incisive "Drama, Pedagogy, and the Female Complaint: Or What's Troy Got to Do with It?" engages the question of gender, as in Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and other Tudor plays, in light of the training schoolboys who became actors and writers received in grammar schools and the Inns of Court. She explores the potential of the rhetorical practices (like classical imitation) they would have mastered, when employed on the

stage, to disrupt the normative representations of both masculinity and nationhood. Michelle O'Callaghan's "Jests, stolne from the Temples Revels': The Inns of Court Revels and Early Modern Drama" reveals attention to burlesque style and an "aggressive intertextuality" (227) in plays produced by boys' companies that evidences sustained dialogue with the all-male pedagogical culture at the Inns of Court.

Olive Robinson's essay, "Feminizing the Liturgy: The N-Town *Mary Play* and Fifteenth-Century Convent Drama," also calls attention to gender as it examines a lesser-known convent play in an effort to reexamine one of the best-known plays in the N-Town cycle in order to explore "the ways and things that *women* could teach through drama" (73). Tamás Karáth's "Staging Concerns in *The N-Town Plays*" focuses on the same cycle, arguing that its engagement with inquisitorial procedures challenges the dialogic mode of acquiring truth.

This collection's strengths include careful research and convincing close readings of familiar and lesser-known texts. For scholars and teachers alike, particularly in its exploration of drama in varied instruction settings and its consideration of the influence of academic drama on the commercial theater, this collection offers worthwhile analysis that succeeds in expanding the current understanding of drama as/and pedagogy.

Kathryn M. Moncrief, *Washington College*