

Here and elsewhere, the density of Worthen's argument makes *Shakespeare Performance Studies* unsuitable to serve as the undergraduate companion or handbook that its title evokes. Rather, it is a work that should take center stage in university-level discussions about what performance means, and what it means to write about performance.

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Clowning and Authorship in Early Modern Theatre. By Richard Preiss. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014; pp. x + 287, 11 illustrations. \$99.99 cloth, \$80 e-book.

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Clowning and Authorship in Early Modern Theatre reflects a growing academic interest in the relationship between actors and audiences in Elizabethan theatre performance. Richard Preiss's excellent book offers a detailed analysis of that relationship and its profound change over the period. As Preiss argues, the early Elizabethan theatre confronted an unruly and entitled audience who expected to join in the proceedings. This audience was corralled by the clown, to whom they looked for commentary and engagement. (This clown figure is personified in *Hamlet's* Yorick, likely a tribute to the first great clown of the period, Richard Tarlton, still widely popular years after his death in 1588.) The book challenges the oft-accepted narrative that playwrights banished clowns from the theatre, arguing instead that the clowns themselves "bequeathed the new categories around which theatre would organize: the author, and the actor" (i). Preiss offers scholars of theatre history and performance practice a compelling analysis of pre-modern clowning and a bravura history of the birth of authorship on the English stage.

Preiss begins by admitting that his book is only "accidentally" about clowns, as he had set out originally to study authorship and audiences (1). Researching early modern theatre, Preiss found the figure of the stage clown to be pivotal: "where the audience was, so was the clown" (59). His book thus charts how theatrical authorship began "not with playwrights but with players themselves" and, specifically, the "entanglement of clown stage practice and print publication" (11). Against the centrality of the clown, the rapidly professionalizing Elizabethan theatre brought authors to prominence. Wrestling control from clown and audience alike, writers began to influence the theatrical experience so that audiences gradually perceived themselves as consumers of, instead of participants in, theatre. The theatre that emerges at the end of the early modern period effectively expunged the clown and accustomed its audiences to attend to an authored, mimetic performance. An emergent elite tradition was effacing a demotic one. For Preiss, this new theatre compelled English drama toward a fourth-wall conception of the theatrical event that was unimaginable to audiences just a few years before. Concordantly, the increased number and popularity of private indoor theatres

ended the social inclusivity of the public stages. When Hamlet talks about Yorick, he both recalls a theatre of social engagement as opposed to that of commodification and celebrates the qualities of community, laughter, and conviviality otherwise absent from the disjointed Elsinore and, arguably, the London stage.

Preiss's introduction, tellingly entitled "The Play Is Not the Thing," describes the central role of audience and clown to theatre making both before and in tension with authored scripts. The first two chapters consider audience and clown by turn. In these, Preiss steers along what he calls two "organically interlocked" (7) axes of inquiry: an archival and a theoretical one. The remaining three chapters offer comprehensive studies, through analysis of their published pamphlets, of the principal clowns of the era—Tarlton, Will Kemp and Robert Armin—and the interest in "reproducing their own performances textually" (178). Tarlton's pamphlet was ghostwritten after his death, speaking to his ongoing popularity. By contrast, *Kemps Nine Daies Wonder* (1600) comes only a year after his leaving London, after which he disappears from the historical record. Chapter 4 argues that Kemp sought a "textual sanctuary," publishing to "preserve his words as his, but only by surrendering his body" (142). Kemp's publications provide examples of his "Merrimentes" and dramatic material that appeared in others' plays. These, Preiss argues, suggest that while the company owned the play, Kemp owned its performance "or at least, *his* performance in it" (143) and offers a model of authorship (and preprofessional collaboration in production) on which later authors would draw. The chapter on Armin in part suggests that the large and thematically key roles Shakespeare gave him actually closed the door on the improvisatory tradition—a tradition that understood how "recognizing the presence of the audience . . . [opens] the play to [the audience's] validation and the stage to their vocalizations" (188). This improvisatory tradition, associated with Tarlton and Kemp, is the "pittifull ambition" Hamlet criticizes (188). With Armin, Shakespeare "substituted an actor who merely played a comic, an extension of the author's words and will" (183). Preiss is more than aware of the irony in the clown's turning to print and posits that his analysis "reinscribe[s] them into the narrative of their own excision" (17). As performers and equal creators of content, they became both "agents and victims at once" (17) of the larger historical process under way. Player-clown(s) and audience alike battled with writers for preeminence in the evolving theatre and, ultimately, they lost.

Central to Preiss's argument is that everything we know of the period is experienced by way of printed texts, and that those very texts are as limiting as they are revealing. Surviving playtexts obscure the constitutive elements that predate them; they are merely "textual deposits" (5) left behind. For Preiss, a playtext is an "artifact of theatre history" that records just one element of a larger performance (6). Preiss contends that the traditional understanding of the period conflates these surviving deposits with the play as it was experienced: the event. Too often a modern perspective mistakenly presupposes that plays are and always "were established communication technologies whose dominant language was always mimesis" (5). This idea is reinforced by those very surviving texts that are limited traces of a complex construction of "extradramatic peripheries" that Preiss helps illuminate (220). Lost to us in transmission is the vibrant interchange characteristic of the event.

His illumination of this loss is what makes Preiss's book so important. Its great achievement is that it evokes a theatre once so vibrant and so essentially different. He returns both clown and audience to their place of prominence even as he describes that moment as forever passed. The clown's disruptive voice can again be heard from the margins, albeit faintly and by accident. Any account of the early modern theatre should attend to those voices calling from beyond the grave and to the manifold silences of the printed page.

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Edwin Booth: A Biography and Performance History. By Arthur W. Bloom. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2013; pp. vii + 358, 18 illustrations. \$55 cloth, \$29.99 e-book.

American Tragedian: The Life of Edwin Booth. By Daniel J. Watermeier. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2015; pp. xiii + 464, 25 illustrations. \$55 cloth, \$55 e-book.

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With 2015 marking the 150th anniversary of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, attention has again turned to actor-turned-assassin John Wilkes Booth and his theatrical family. A series of popular biographies of Booth published over the past decade have chronicled his relationship with his more famous and talented elder brother, Edwin Booth, renewing scholarly and popular interest in the noted actor. Although works such as Gary Jay Williams's "Edwin Booth: What They Also Saw When They Saw Booth's Hamlet" (2011) mark the cultural importance Edwin Booth held in the nineteenth-century theatre, there has been no definitive biography of Booth, the most important classical actor on the nineteenth-century American stage. Two new biographies attempt to rectify this gap in the literature, aiming to reconcile the actor's tempestuous personal life with his long professional career.

Arthur W. Bloom's 2013 study of Edwin Booth is both a biography and an annotated performance history. In his introduction, Bloom acknowledges that his offering "is one scholar's 'version' of Edwin Booth," and this is what he delivers (1). Bloom states his intention to focus on "primary sources" and to avoid "statements unverifiable by valid documents" (1), and through his archival research, Bloom is able to dispel many anecdotal accounts propagated by Booth, his family, critics, and admirers. For instance, using evidence from broadsides and newspaper articles, Bloom disproves the story, first told by Booth's sister Asia, about Booth's first performance of Tressel to his father's Richard III. (Booth supposedly came onstage as a last-minute replacement because the prompter could or would not go on.) Bloom points out that "a broadside had to be up more than a half-hour before the performance, and Edwin had been already listed on the broadside as Tressel" (11), thereby proving that the manager had planned Edwin Booth's