

Farah Karim-Cooper and Tiffany Stern, eds. *Shakespeare's Theatre and the Effects of Performance*.

London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2012. xix + 296 pp. \$85. ISBN: 978-1-40814-692-7.

A new collection of essays on stage effects in the early modern theater, this is an important and at times indispensable work. Facsimile Renaissance playhouses including Shakespeare's Globe and Virginia's Blackfriars Playhouse have long approximated the experience of Elizabethan playgoing, but neither venue suggests true authenticity, a fact comprehensively emphasized in this new publication from Bloomsbury's Arden imprint. Through a series of eleven essays from internationally renowned scholars, this collection explores the physical and material experience of performing in, writing for, and attending London's early modern theaters. The collection is split into three distinct parts, with essays on the physical playhouse buildings ("The Fabric of Early Modern Theatres"), properties and movables ("Technologies of the Body"), and the role of human senses in playhouse contexts ("The Sensory Stage"). Andrew Gurr's imprimatur in the form of his preface is fitting given his close involvement with the construction of the two replicas named above; it is with a sense of purpose that Gurr endorses this text's attempt to expand "the possibilities of early staging" that the facsimile buildings were built to interrogate (ix). As Gurr notes, actor-audience relations have dominated recent scholarly attention, whereas this collection seeks answers on the "scenic, visual and sensory aspects of early staging" (ix). This specific focus summarizes this work's intrinsic value, as an enriching volume to be read in conjunction with Shakespeare, his contemporaries, and associated scholarship. In their introduction, editors Farah Karim-Cooper and Tiffany Stern emphasize interest in the impact of effects in the early modern theater, and ask far-reaching questions that delve into our means of processing theatrical effects. Compellingly, they liken early modern playgoing to witnessing a ravishing medley of effects, and ask us to follow their contributors through the various elements that comprise this medley (1).

The volume is well organized, its structural subheadings lending a progressive logic. Stern headlines the first part with a consideration of the playhouse itself as a prop, and considers the functional nature of the space and its incorporation into performing texts. Gwilym Jones preempts a later discussion of the auditory stage by considering early modern storm effects, with particularly interesting focus on textually implied, unheard effects. Nathalie Rivere de Carles offers insight into the performing function of material hangings, including curtains and arras, and argues for a meaningful transcoding depending on its site of activation. Part 2 considers "technologies of the body," in which insightful papers by Lucy Munro, Andrea Stevens, and Bridget Escolme examine the functions of stage blood and prosthetics, cosmetics, and costume or disguise, all activated through exacting close readings in context of the familiar visible accoutrements of the stage. Paul Menzer's "Character Acting" prompts reassessment of publishing-based assumptions on how early modern actors encountered playtexts, where easily embellished scrolls challenge expectations that print was the "desired end of writing" (146).

Finally, in four sections, each of the five human senses are considered with the playhouses' meaning making, for, as Karim-Cooper notes, "early modern sensory theory had it that to know the world one needed to sense it first" (214). Bruce R. Smith delves into this sensory world with an elegant and well-ordered assessment of the way sound circulated, and he offers approaches to on- and offstage noise. Holly Dugan has contributed an engrossing account of how Jonson used the smells of pork, combined with those of the noxious Hope Theater, to create an immersive olfactory supplement to *Bartholomew Fair*, further layered in court. Karim-Cooper offers an approach to touch and taste in both physical and figurative terms, and considers how playhouse crowding and early modern attitudes contributed to the content of playscripts. Finally, Evelyn Tribble makes further challenge (begun in the preface and introduction) to the concept that the early modern theater was a space for hearing rather than seeing, with evaluation of the value of spectacle and the imagination-fueled sense of sight. This final sensory section solidly grounds the editors' immersive medley of ravishment, with much-appreciated context for the performing gesture.

This is an enriching, successful collection that should appeal both in the classroom and the library. It readably and vividly renders playgoing texture not immediately apparent in a modern visit to the rebuilt facsimile theaters, and read alongside early modern playtexts, offers useful approaches to strengthen comprehension of the performing moment.

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