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Stanley Cavell. *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays by Shakespeare*. Updated edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. [Reviewed by David Schalkwyk](#)

Joan Fitzpatrick. *Shakespeare, Spenser and the Contours of Britain: Reshaping the Atlantic Archipelago*. Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire, 2004. [Reviewed by Dermott Cavanagh](#)

Nancy Gutierrez. *'Shall She Famish Then? Female Food Refusal in Early Modern England*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2003. [Reviewed by Leanore Lieblein](#)

James Hirsh. *Shakespeare and the History of Soliloquies*. Madison, Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003. [Reviewed by Anthony J. Gilbert](#)

Claire Jowitt. *Voyage Drama and Gender Politics 1589 1642: Real and Imagined Worlds*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003. [Reviewed by M. G. Aune](#)

Timothy J. McGee (ed). *Improvisation in the Arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. Early Drama, Art and Music Monograph series, 30. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications (Western Michigan University), 2003. [Reviewed by M.A. Katritzky](#)

Laurie E. Maguire. *Studying Shakespeare: A Guide to the Plays*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004. [Reviewed by Shannon Murray](#)

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Carol Thomas Neely. *Distracted Subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004. Reviewed by [Katharine Goodland](#)

David Ruiter. *Shakespeare's Festive History: Feasting, Festivity, Fasting, and Lent in the Second Henriad*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2003. Reviewed by [Charles Whitney](#)

Philip Schwyzer. *Literature, Nationalism, and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Reviewed by [Christopher Ivic](#)

Jacqueline Vanhoutte. *Strange Communion: Motherland and Masculinity in Tudor Plays, Pamphlets, and Politics*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003. Reviewed by [Caroline Bicks](#)

Brian Vickers. *Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Reviewed by [Jayson B. Brown](#)

Germaine Warkentin (ed.). *The Queens Majestys Passage and Related Documents*. Tudor and Stuart Texts. Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2004. Reviewed by [Anthony Miller](#)

Article Abstracts

Seniority and Mastery: The Politics of Ageism in the Coventry Cycle by Brandon Alakas

Abstract

In the early decades of the sixteenth century, Coventry experienced a severe economic crisis that, by the 1530s, was verging on the point of catastrophe. In this period the city experienced not only a glaring lack of 'substantial citizens' who functioned as the primary force behind much of the medieval urban economy, but also an increasing shortage of merchants willing to hold civic offices. While the reason behind this avoidance of office-holding was its exorbitant expense to the citizen, the effects of evading public office placed a great deal of stress on the city's social fabric. Unable to fill positions within the council, Coventry's authority structures experienced a contraction of membership, which forced a reconfiguring of the city social superstructure. Perhaps the clearest example of this reconfiguration is the merging of the Corpus Christi Guild with the Trinity Guild in 1534.

More than that of many other provincial urban centres, Coventry's social hierarchy was gerontocratic in nature; among the most affluent classes in the city, age served as the principal means of compartmentalising society. The importance of age to an individual's social advancement was mirrored in the duration of his progress through the Corpus Christi and Trinity

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guilds — Coventry's two principal religious guilds. Indeed, the profound interconnectedness between these guilds and the civic government is witnessed by a citizen's necessary progression through the guild hierarchy to attain the highest levels of political status within the city.

The significance of this basic age categorisation was manifested in a variety of ways. One consequence of this mode of social organization is the use of gerontocratic language to confer privilege on elite guildsmen. This notion of age as a distinguishing feature in both the civic and guild hierarchies also appears explicitly within the Corpus Christi Plays, both of which were newly 'translated' within a year of the merger between the city's two religious guilds. My paper focuses on the different ways in which the authority of the city's aged elite is disrupted and how this disruption is dealt with. I argue that in the *Weavers' Pageant* we can see a treatment, though thinly veiled in a biblical context, of the three most significant social groupings within Coventry — the craft fellowship, the household, and the civic council — as well as the specific threats that may potentially disrupt the hierarchy of authority within each grouping. This pageant further suggests a consciousness of how Coventry's aldermanic authorities manipulated the language of age in order to mystify the economic structure that underwrote these divisions. The Weavers' keen awareness of how a rhetoric stressing the authority of the elder was deployed by office-holding guildsmen who practiced the wealthier crafts may help to explain not only the centrality of age within the pageant but also the different ways in which age is exploited in the various encounters between characters.

Biography

Brandon Alakas <8ba3@qlink.queensu.ca> is currently working on a doctoral dissertation that examines the influence of monastic reading practices on late medieval English literature, particularly the work of John Lydgate and John Whethamstede. He is also a contributor to *Facts on File Companion to Pre-1600 British Poetry* (forthcoming).

Taking Liberties by Matt Kozusko

Abstract

The 'place' scholars have assigned to the stage in early modern London is as much a reflection of the procedures of contemporary literary criticism as a reflection of the cultural function of popular drama in the early modern period. Modern critics are often not engaged in re-examining available data, preferring instead to rest on a conjectural paradigm or heuristic that has hardened, over the past couple of decades, into a New Historicist version of 'fact'. Critics have collapsed boundaries and important distinctions in London jurisdiction and geography in the interest of a unified critical narrative that characterizes the theatre as a culturally marginal phenomenon. This article questions the 'marginal' model of popular theatre by revising the current critical notion of the term 'liberties' and by re-examining jurisdiction and city authority in early modern London.

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Biography

Matt Kozusko <mkozusko@ursinus.edu> is Assistant Professor of English at Ursinus College. He has published articles on Shakespeare in performance and is currently working on Shakespeare and modern popular culture. He is performance reviews editor for *Borrowers and Lenders*, the *Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*.

Jonson's Gossips and the Stuart Family Drama by Kristen McDermott

Abstract

During the year 1608-9, Ben Jonson composed two major works, *The Masque of Queens* and *Epicoene*. Both works share a striking character type: the 'gossip' or tattling woman whose appearance is intimately connected to folkloric birth and marriage rituals. By offering the gossip as a parodic female type, while offering only androgynous statues as its opposite, Jonson's court masque participates in James's paternal metaphors of statecraft and personal rule, asserting that the benevolent gaze of the father-king lawfully penetrates even the traditionally privileged female space of the birthing-chamber. In the satiric *Epicoene*, the figure of the gossip comments more pointedly on the disruptive nature of social discourse unmediated by the moralizing context of the nuclear family. The translation of the gossip from a figure associated in *Queens* with threatening female sexuality into the androgynous figure of *Epicoene* implies Jonson's alliance with, and perhaps his effort to augment, James's 'nourish-father' metaphor of kingship at the moment it was beginning to lose currency.

Biography

Kristen McDermott <mcderr1k@cmich.edu> is an Assistant Professor of English Literature at Central Michigan University, specializing in early modern drama. Her edition of Jacobean court entertainments, *Masques of Difference: Power, Race and Gender in the Masques of Ben Jonson*, forthcoming from Manchester University Press, makes use of an interdisciplinary background in music, drama and literature. Her scholarly articles on Shakespeare and Jonson have appeared in *Renaissance Papers*, *Shakespeare Magazine*, and *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*, and she has written several articles on Shakespeare and folk traditions for a general readership for *Realms of Fantasy Magazine*.

A Greatly Exaggerated Demise: The Remaking of the Children of Paul's as the Duke of York's Men (1608) by Brandon Centerwall

Abstract

It is a given that, for whatever reason, the Children of Paul's broke in 1608. This article, to the contrary, foregrounds the argument that, far from breaking, the highly successful Children of Paul's remade themselves into the highly successful adult acting company the Duke of York's Men for the simple reason that their players had grown too old to be any longer acceptable to

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audiences as 'children'. The Children of Paul's is last seen in February 1608; the Duke of York's Men first appear in October 1608 under the royal patronage of Prince Charles, Duke of York. The new adult company featured the extraordinary Joseph Taylor – later to succeed Richard Burbage as the greatest player in England – and the multi-talented William Rowley, who acted as manager, playwright and comedian for the ensemble. Evidence is presented that Taylor, Rowley and others of the Duke of York's Men were previously members of the Children of Paul's.

Biography

Brandon Centerwall <bcenter@u.washington.edu> is a graduate student in the Department of English Graduate Studies at the University of Washington, where he is completing his Ph.D. in English and Textual Studies. He has published articles in the *John Donne Journal* and *Ben Jonson Journal* wherein he restores poems previously lost to the canons of John Donne and Ben Jonson respectively. He has an essay forthcoming in *Shakespeare Survey* wherein he identifies and restores Donne's previously unrecognized encomium upon Shakespeare. His Ph.D. explores previously unrecognized connections between the Children of Paul's and Shakespeare. He teaches Medieval and Renaissance English Literature with remarkable enthusiasm and is equally keen on the teaching of English Drama.

Note Abstracts

Structure, Legitimacy, and Magic in *The Birth of Merlin* by Megan Lynn Isaac

Abstract

In *The Birth of Merlin* the playwright uses the legend and example of Merlin to legitimize the use of demonic magic by Christian kings. The playwright qualifies or tempers the potentially subversive nature of this argument by plotting a complicated strategy of comparison which deconstructs the dichotomy of good and bad, moral and immoral. To do this he creates a plot interweaving four representations of female sexual behavior, four kings, four sorcerers or magicians, and four magical contests. With this rich set of characters and opportunities, the playwright creates a variety of situations in which stereotypically virtuous choices (especially sexual and marital choices) are shown to have unexpectedly corrupt or disappointing consequences in order to suggest antithetically that stereotypically wicked choices may, similarly, have surprising, which is to say rewarding, results.

Biography

Megan Lynn Isaac <meganlisaac@aol.com> was an associate professor of English at Youngstown State University in Ohio. She is currently taking time away from teaching to raise her two young sons. Her previous publications include *Heirs to Shakespeare: Reinventing the Bard in Young Adult Literature* (2000) and nearly seventy articles for the *Oxford Encyclopedia*

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of *Children's Literature* (forthcoming 2006). She is currently working on a book about representations of women and the Middle East in the novels of the young adult author Suzanne Fisher Staples.

Bawdily Manipulations: Spheres of Female Power in *The Birth of Merlin* by Monika Karpinska

Abstract

This paper traces out the various plotlines in Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin* by examining the behaviors of the female characters as they act out their sexuality within the confines of patriarchal expectation. Though each female character confounds traditional expectations with her individual deviant behaviour, by the end of the play all of the females are sequestered into confines of one type or another – whether they are enclosed by choice or by force depends on how they use, or refuse to use, their bodies. The mapping of these representations reveals the power of the female body wielded in a potentially threatening way and the (un)surprising traditional conclusion of such power display.

Biography

Monika Karpinska <mkarpinska@gmail.com> completed her MA at McMaster University in 2005. She has a BA (Honours) and a BEd (Secondary) from the University of British Columbia. Her literary interests span a range of periods, focused especially on the medieval period and early modern drama.

Book Reviewers

M. G. Aune <m.aune@ndsu.nodak.edu> is Assistant Professor in the English department at North Dakota State University, and has research interests in early modern travel writing, authorship, and drama.

Caroline Bicks <bicks@bc.edu> is Assistant Professor of English at Boston College. She is the author of *Midwiving Subjects in Shakespeare's England* (2003) and has written essays on birth rituals, midwifery, and the maternal imagination in early modern culture and literature. She is currently working on the role of theatrical productions in early modern girls' schools and on the performance of pregnancy on the early modern stage.

Jayson B. Brown <conan_grammarians@hotmail.com> is a Ph.D. candidate at McMaster University, currently working on collaborative authorship in Renaissance literature. A contributor to the *Compendium of Renaissance Drama* (forthcoming), he has co-authored an article entitled 'The Witch of Edmonton: A Model for Teaching Collaboration in the

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Renaissance' (*Approaches to Teaching English Renaissance Drama*, 2002), and has contributed another to a forthcoming volume on George Wither's emblems.

Dermott Cavanagh <Dermot.Cavanagh@ed.ac.uk> is Lecturer in English at the University of Edinburgh and author of *Language and Politics in the Sixteenth-Century History Play* (2003) and co-editor of *Shakespeare's Histories and Counter-Histories* (2006).

Anthony J. Gilbert <a.gilbert@lancaster.ac.uk> has taught the pragmatics of Shakespeare's dialogue since 1967 in the Department of English at Lancaster University, United Kingdom. His most recent book is *Shakespeare's Dramatic Speech* (1977).

Katharine Goodland <goodland@mail.csi.cuny.edu> is Assistant Professor of English at the City University of New York's College of Staten Island. Her articles on medieval and Renaissance drama have appeared in *Early Theatre*, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, and *The Journal of Religion and the Arts*. Her book, *Female Mourning and Tragedy in Medieval and Renaissance English Drama from the Raising of Lazarus to King Lear* is forthcoming from Ashgate.

Christopher Ivic <iviccs@potdams.edu> is Associate Professor and Departmental Chair at SUNY Potsdam. He is co-editor of *Forgetting in Early Modern English Literature and Culture: Lethe's Legacies* (2004). His articles on cultural identities in early modern Britain and Ireland have appeared in such books as *Archipelagic Identities* and *British Identities and English Renaissance Literature*, as well as in *Ariel*, *Genre*, and *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*.

M.A. Katritzky <M.A.Katritzky@open.ac.uk> is Wilkes Research Fellow in Theatre Studies in the Department of Literature of The Open University, Milton Keynes, and a Research Associate of St Catherine's College, University of Oxford. She has contributed to *Theatre Research International*, *Quaderni Veneti*, *Maske und Kothurn*, *Renaissance Studies* and, most recently, *Schlern Schriften*, 326 ('What Did Vigil Raber's Stage Look Like? Questions of Authenticity and Integrity in medieval Theatre Iconography') and *Shakespeare Yearbook* ('Pickelhering and Hamlet in Dutch Art: The English Comedians of Robert Browne, John Green and Robert Reynolds').

Leanore Lieblein <leanore.lieblein@mcgill.ca> is a former Chair of English at McGill University and a member of the McGill Shakespeare and Performance Research Team. She has published widely on various aspects of early modern and contemporary theatre. Her recent work has focused on Shakespeare in francophone Quebec, and she is currently working on the early modern performing body and the concept of character.

Anthony Miller <anthony.miller@arts.usyd.edu.au> is Associate Professor of English and Chair of Department, University of Sydney. He is author of *Roman Triumphs and Early Modern English Culture* (2001) and has edited Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Julius Caesar*. He is

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currently working on *The Poetics of Vulcan*, a monograph on mining and metallurgy in the early modern imagination.

Shannon Murray <smurray@upei.ca> is a Professor of Renaissance Literature at the University of Prince Edward Island, Canada. A 3M Teaching Fellow, she has published on Milton and on teaching in higher education.

David Schalkwyk <schalk@humanities.uct.ac.za>, Professor of English at the University of Cape Town, is the author of *Speech and Performance in Shakespeare's Sonnets and Plays* (2002) and *Literature and the Touch of the Real* (2004); he is currently working on a book-length study of love and service in the works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

Charles Whitney <whitney@unlv.nevada.edu> teaches Renaissance literature at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He is the author of *Francis Bacon and Modernity* (1986) and 'Festivity and Topicality in the Coventry Scene of I Henry IV', *English Literary Renaissance* 24.2 (1994). He is working on a book on early responses to Shakespeare, Marlowe, and other dramatists.

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