not address here, of whether and how the image of the English shifted in Moorish imagination and politics. A study of this kind would round out our understanding of the Orientalist dynamic and make a fascinating fourth volume to complement this broadly researched and thoughtful trilogy.

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Janette Dillon

The Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xiv, 296

This accessible book takes its place within the Cambridge series mandated to introduce students to key topics and authors. It certainly succeeds in that regard and does so with a variety of implicit teaching approaches, offering an overview of English drama on stage and page from the earliest vernacular texts up to the closing of the theatres in 1642. Deemphasizing a perceived boundary between “medieval” and “early modern,” this study covers both the continuities and divisions of English theatrical experience over some three centuries. Modernized spelling throughout certainly enhances continuity but also works effectively within an approach that is critical rather than chronological. Organized into five topical chapters, the work describes “Places of performance,” “Actors and audiences,” “Writers, controllers and the place of theatre,” “Genre and tradition,” and “Instruction and spectacle.” The first two chapters feature case studies that focus attention and illustrate larger issues. In the first, the performance practices of *Mankind*, which are implicit in the text, are juxtaposed with the fuller evidence for the performance of *The Masque of Blackness*. In the second, brief attention to staging and costume in the N-Town *The Death of Herod*, is followed by a treatment of the later shock-and-awe self-consciousness of Edward Alleyn in the title role of *Tamburlaine*. Subsequent consideration of theatre and authority addresses the York Creed Play, Sidney’s politicized playlet *The Lady of May*, and Middleton’s later popular sensation *A Game at Chess*. Throughout, the specific influences of church and state, the Revels Office, professionalism, art, instruction, propaganda, and spectacle are all treated effectively.

An important feature of the book is the intervention of shaded and boxed quoted passages that relate to the argument and allow contemporary documents to speak for themselves in typographical isolation from the main text. These—including legal depositions and ordinances, official and personal correspondence, contemporary pamphlet prose, and relevant passages from Shakespeare, Jonson, and

others—illustrate, accentuate, and problematize the information being developed. Most effective early in the book, this strategy begins to feel a bit forced later on and perhaps even overdone in dominating pages 172–75 and 197–200. Still, it's a generally effective way to focus student attention while sketching larger contexts. The book includes illustrations familiar to instructors of English drama such as the stage plan from *The Castle of Perseverance* manuscript, De Witt's sketch of the Swan Theatre, Henry Peacham's illustration of *Titus Andronicus* in performance, and the especially informative title pages of *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Cambyeses*. Three appendices also provide important information: "Select chronology of plays and other performances," "Chronology of events," and "Known dimensions of playing spaces." The author wisely keeps endnotes to a minimum, but the text is scrupulously noted with a full bibliography of primary plays and entertainments as well as secondary critical and non-dramatic sources. A good index rounds out the package. Accessible, credible, and informative, *The Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre* provides worthwhile support for students first encountering the plays of this fascinating period in English literary culture.

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