



1993

**Review Essay: Kastan, David Scott, and Peter Stallybrass, edd.
*Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretation of Elizabethan and
Jacobean Drama***

Mac Groves
Northern Arizona University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/rmmra>



Part of the [Comparative Literature Commons](#), [History Commons](#), [Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Renaissance Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Groves, Mac (1993) "Review Essay: Kastan, David Scott, and Peter Stallybrass, edd. *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretation of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*," *Quidditas*: Vol. 14 , Article 27. Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/rmmra/vol14/iss1/27>

This Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Quidditas by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Kastan, David Scott, and Peter Stallybrass, edd. *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretation of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*. Routledge, London 1991. 293 pp. \$45.00 / \$14.95.

Kastan and Stallybrass's anthology, *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, is based on the premise that 'for thirty years, no new, wide-ranging anthology of essays on non-Shakespearean Renaissance drama has appeared . . . [despite] a remarkable quantity of new work' (p 1). From that perspective, the editors have offered up a sampling of interesting new interpretations of traditional dramas and Elizabethan/Jacobean conventions that, when combined, represents a valuable, convenient resource to the interpretive artist and scholar.

Nineteen of the twenty-four articles are reprints and as such, certain articles such as Jonathan Goldberg's interesting research on the case of Christopher Marlow, entitled 'Sodomy and Society', are now widely considered; however, most scholars will find that the perspectives offered in the anthology viably expand on traditional works, like Tillyard's treatment of the Elizabethan world picture. Certain recent trends in scholarship and criticism, particularly the feminist perspective and gay/lesbian awareness, are included to make the anthology, at the least, a comprehensive supplemental text and, at the most, an exciting tool for artists and scholars seeking to create new, varied approaches to the culture and its drama.

The book is divided into two sections. Part one, 'The Conditions of Playing', offers new ways of viewing the culture, while asserting that the collaborative process of making plays with authors in the middle, now considered the norm, was also the norm in Elizabethan/Jacobean England. The purpose of this section is to register these collaborations, emphasizing the ways in which theatre is 'at once responsive to and constitutive of the social formations of Renaissance England' (p 2).

Part two, by far the more valuable asset to the theatre director and dramatic scholar if only by offering new perspective on written-over scripts, treats individual dramas from the host of Shakespeare's contemporaries. A number of the essays, like Sara Eaton's criticism regarding Middleton's *The Changeling*: 'Beatrice-Joanna and the Rhetoric of Love', reflect how changes in our culture have altered the way in which a drama speaks to a society. Others, like Lisa Jardine's 'Boy Actors, female roles and Elizabethan Eroticism', an essay that suggests the use of young boys in female roles was something other than simply a dramatic convention of the day, are based on reevaluations of historical and/or descriptive data.

Mac Groves
Northern Arizona University

MacCaffrey, Wallace T. *Elizabeth I: War and Politics, 1588-1603*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J. 1992. 592 pp. \$65.00.

No review can do justice to the scope, elegance, and intuitive grasp of issues Wallace T. MacCaffrey provides in this the last volume of his magisterial trilogy