

Stoll's book gives rise to some incidental doubts. For one, I would place less reliance on Judith Butler. For another, Macbeth's air-drawn dagger surely extends its handle not to prick his conscience but to invite the act of murder, even if this imagined deed also fills him with horror. And third, the isolation of theology from popular culture tends to give undue weight to the Reformation. True, salvation by faith makes no space for the role Aquinas allots to the few sparks of reason that survived the Fall. In his Catholic account, these remain incorruptible, while in general the Protestant mind is entirely fallible. But the fifteenth-century moral play *Mind, Will and Understanding*, for example, while it does not name conscience, already shows Mind, as the higher part of reason, to be capable of falling into sin. The consciousness that takes subjectivity as an object of knowledge is implicit in Anima's self-contempt when the choices of her own mind have defiled her. Perhaps theology is more a symptom of cultural change than a cause.

These are quibbles, however, topics for a discussion provoked by the strength and scope of an important, balanced, and textually based case.

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Stage and Picture in the English Renaissance: The Mirror up to Nature.

John Astington.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. xii + 270 pp. \$99.99.

This is a beautifully illustrated monograph that brings together theater and art history, offering nuanced yet accessible analyses of both dramatic works and works of art. The argument is that the visual arts, especially decorative art, had a "profound influence" on Shakespeare and his contemporaries. John Astington contends that iconography made familiar by visual art influenced how playwrights depicted and described familiar subjects on stage, and shaped audiences' interpretations of and responses to dramatic presentations. Astington attempts to support these assertions through a "comparative aesthetics" of performing versus fine arts. However, what this book demonstrates is that visual art could have influenced English Renaissance playwrights, not that it did.

The themes and works covered in this book are decidedly eclectic. There are chapters that explore Roman and scriptural stories told through tapestry series, torches and the association of light with morality, and title pages and other illustrations that may portray theatrical stagings. One chapter discusses portraits, statues, and other visual representations of monarchs that might have influenced audiences' expectations of royalty and royal ceremonials on the stage. Another examines groupings of three that include representations of death, sex, or folly.

Astington presents correlations and possibilities rather than certainties, but the material examined is intrinsically interesting. The illustrations in this volume include dozens of black-and-white etchings, engravings, and woodcuts, as well as a handful of lush

color plates. A few, such as Holbein's portrait of the Duke of Norfolk, are well known, but many will be new to the reader, such as the skillful, if often pornographic, engravings of Sebald Beham and his imitators.

Astington's work on tapestries is particularly noteworthy. He makes a strong case for the narrative function of tapestry series and illuminates the multi-episodic storytelling capabilities made possible within single pieces through the utilization of the foreground and background as temporally distinct spaces. Nowadays, we mostly encounter tapestries singly, but Astington reminds us that in the Renaissance they were often made and displayed in series. Moreover, his analysis of tapestries as sets bolsters his argument that they were not merely static decorations but, rather, a form of serial storytelling not unlike that found in plays and literature. Furthermore, where Charles I used portraiture to articulate his philosophy of governance and advance his political agenda, Astington demonstrates that the Tudors used tapestries. Both Henry VII and Henry VIII spent vast sums acquiring them and displayed them in prominent locations. If nothing else, this book will convince its readers that Renaissance scholars need to pay more attention to tapestries, many of which survive in museums and royal collections.

Another valuable contribution is Astington's observation that the continued popularity of religious-themed tapestry series allowed a certain kind of religious art and iconography to continue to exist even after similar images were removed from churches, plays, and public spaces during the Protestant Reformation. Similarly, Astington calls attention to the survival in plays of religious themes long after most scholars had assumed their expulsion. The reader also learns that scriptural subjects were more popular at certain theaters, like the Fortune, than at others. Finally, Astington's discussion includes thoughtful readings of less well-known plays, like Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene's *A Looking Glass for London and England* (1592) and George Peele's *The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe* (ca. 1594).

It should be noted that, though likely no fault of the author's, a number of artworks discussed at length in the text are not included among the book's figures and illustrations. Happily, though, the images that are featured are beautifully produced, especially the color plates, and, as one would expect from Cambridge University Press, the book is carefully edited. In short, *Stage and Picture in the English Renaissance: The Mirror up to Nature* is an enjoyable read that has much to offer Renaissance scholars and aficionados. Those expecting a straightforward analysis of Shakespeare's artistic influences, however, will be disappointed. This eclectic, motley sampling of English Renaissance art and theater offers something messier and more ambitious: a broader understanding of what Shakespeare's cultural world encompassed.

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