

Childhood, Education and the Stage in Early Modern England, edited by Richard Preiss and Deanne Williams, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017, 296 pp., £64.99 (cloth), ISBN-13: 978-1-107-09418-5

This excellent collection explores the dynamic convergence of the school and the stage in early modern England, bringing childhood studies into conversation with theatre and literary studies in order to trace the various ways that the two institutions influenced both the representation of childhood as a life stage and the lived experiences of boys and girls. As co-editor Deanne Williams writes, the volume demonstrates ‘that childhood in early modern England was inherently and imaginatively involved in school and playing’ (11), on professional and nonprofessional stages, in the schoolroom, and in the home. Although, as one might expect of a volume dedicated to the early modern period, Shakespeare looms large, other playwrights, philosophers, and performers from Andrew Marvel and John Lyly to Sigmund Freud and Tom Stoppard also get their due.

The book is organized into four sections, each of which contains three chapters oriented around a particular subject or theme. In ‘Shakespearean Childhoods,’ the authors challenge conventional readings of childhood as an idyllic period of ‘innocence and authenticity’ (Williams, 4). With ‘Hamlet’s Boyhood,’ Seth Lerer examines the boyhood of one of the early modern period’s most iconic students, offering a close reading of two scenes ‘when Hamlet looks back on relationships of his youth and how the habits of reading and recitation, teaching and questioning, reconfigure his sense of adult self’ (18). Joseph Campana follows with ‘The Traffic in Children: Shipwrecked Shakespeare, Precarious *Pericles*,’ in which he draws on feminist scholarship to understand how the play ‘oddly interweaves’ (38) the trafficking in humans with education in order to raise questions about the commodification and disposability of human life. Charlotte Scott closes the section with ‘Incapable and Shallow Innocents: Mourning Shakespeare’s Children in *Richard III* and *The Winter’s Tale*,’ in which she emphasizes the centrality of grief and mourning to Shakespeare’s vision of childhood and the figure of the child. ‘Whether it is through the actual loss of a young person or the figurative loss of the qualities they embody,’ Scott writes, ‘innocence and grief come to reside in the adult/child relations that define the moral visions of these plays’ (59).

In the following section, ‘Beyond the Boy Actor,’ the three authors extend previous studies of children’s companies and the plays written explicitly for boy actors, exploring how the stage became a site for competing representations of childhood. Lucy Munro looks to writing about, and representations of, children’s speech in ‘Speaking Like a Child: Children’s Speech in Early Modern Drama.’ Here she considers not only ‘the range of associations that adhered to children’s speech in the early modern period’ (82), but also the conventions playwrights developed to represent children’s speech. In ‘Shakespeare versus Blackfriars: Satiric Comedy, Domestic Tragedy, and the Boy Actor in *Othello*,’ Bart van Es compares Shakespeare’s *Othello* with George Chapman’s *May Day*, a play written for the children’s company at Blackfriars; he notes previously overlooked similarities between the two plays in order to offer a fresh reading of *Othello*’s comic structure. Bastian Kuhl likewise examines the repertoire of the boys’ companies in ‘The Metamorphoses of Cupid: John Lyly’s *Love’s Metamorphosis* and the Return of the Children’s Playing Companies.’ Focusing on the return of children’s companies in 1599, Kuhl argues that the Children of the Chapel performed a truncated version of Lyly’s ‘old’ play to set themselves apart from ‘their boy rivals and their adult competitors’ (124).

Section III expands the volume’s exploration of gender and sexuality to consider the on- and offstage experiences of ‘Girls and Boys.’ In ‘The Further Adventures of Ganymede,’ Stephen Orgal draws on visual and textual evidence to trace the radical transformations of the Ganymede myth before it found its way into Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. His excavations suggest

that early modern writers and 'modern historians of Renaissance art and society' have purposefully overlooked the myth's original 'story of homosexual pederasty that is devoid of wooing and accomplished by violence' (143). Deanne Williams follows with 'Chastity, Speech, and the Girl Masquer,' in which she situates Milton's masque *Comus* within the lengthy 'tradition of girls' performance in England' in order to argue that the play's 'obsession with chastity [was] neither novel nor anomalous' (162). Douglas Trevor offers another reading of *Comus* in 'Milton and Female Perspiration,' spotlighting a particularly puzzling moment in the masque wherein the leakiness of the female body seems to be on full display.

In the final section, 'Afterlives,' three authors investigate the influence of early modern approaches to children and education on later generations. Blaine Greteman turns to the poetry of Andrew Marvel in "'Too green/Yet for Lust, but not for Love": Andrew Marvell and the Invention of Children's Literature,' offering a recuperative reading of a writer known for the 'unsettling pederastic undertones (or overtones) of [his] work' (207). James J. Marino traces Shakespeare's influence on late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century psychoanalysis in 'All Macbeth's Sons,' arguing against tendencies to read the Scottish king as an Oedipal figure to instead see him as 'a thoroughly undisguised Laius figure, both symbolically and on the manifest level of plot' (234). Finally, in 'Modern Retrospectives: Childhood and Education in Tom Stoppard's Shakespearean Plays,' Elizabeth Pentland skilfully analyses Stoppard's interest in 'childhood as a liminal or transitional state' (245) across three of his Shakespearean (or Shakespeare-influenced) plays: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*; *Doggs Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth*; and *Arcadia*.

As this brief survey suggests, one of the volume's greatest strengths is the variety modelled by the authors, whose methods include close textual readings, archival excavations, and image analysis. Of course, as one might expect with any collection, some of the essays explore the convergence of childhood, education, and the stage more thoroughly or consistently than others. In such moments, the volume's origins in a seminar entitled 'Mythologies of Childhood' peak through and I found myself wondering whether a different title might have more effectively captured the volume's contents. Fortunately, the occasional inconsistency in thematic focus does not diminish the quality of the volume as a whole. The diversity of perspectives gives the volume multiple points of entry, which should appeal to readers from different disciplinary backgrounds. Students interested in the history of childhood in the early modern period, as well as those interested in the history of performing children more directly, will find much to admire here.

Marlis Schweitzer
York University, Canada
 schweit@yorku.ca

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Paleopathology of Children: Identification of Pathological Conditions in the Human Skeletal Remains of Non-Adults, by Mary Lewis, London, Academic Press, 2017, 300 pp., £104 (hardback), ISBN: 9780124104020

There has been a recent proliferation of paleopathological research focusing on infants and children, stimulated in large part by Lewis' seminal work published in 2006 *The Bioarchaeology*