their devastated social worlds, he draws humanist lessons for the present day, often using *we, us,* and *our* to implicate the reader in his transhistorical approach. Although leaping between the plays' worlds and ours is sometimes disorienting, Kottman's method does accomplish its purpose, compelling us to reconsider our own social bonds.

Thus, at the beginning of the chapter on *As You Like It,* "[w]e find ourselves among persons in exile in a makeshift refugee camp" (23), a decidedly non-pastoral Forest of Arden populated by "exiles, the homeless, and the stateless" (33). This reading, informed by the postwar bleakness of Jan Kott's *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* and Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* seems designed to reflect twentieth- and twenty-first-century postmodern crises of meaning. That is, because Kottman is looking to Shakespeare to find out how "individual lives can be recognized as meaningful, without relying on any external, transcendental values" (20), he imagines Orlando and Rosalind completely unmoored from prior social bonds. This lets him argue that these two "matter to *us*" (20) as models or mirrors, as we watch them create their own ties—through their individually willed, personal love—when their inheritances are gone.

Kottman repeats a two-step interpretive strategy as he devotes one chapter to each of the four plays. First, he performs a sensitive examination of the play's protagonist(s), suggesting how we might reread them as disinherited by a particular kind of social disintegration. In *Hamlet,* for instance, the Danish elective monarchy, in the person of Claudius, dissolves the meaning of natural blood ties, replacing these inheritable bonds with an arbitrary system of state-constructed legitimacy. Kottman sees this change as parallel to "the demise of the natural family as a social category" and the present "primacy of property rights" (61). Hamlet consequently worries that there may be no natural meaning at all, no inherent significance to the processes of birth and death, as he asks, "*Am I anything more than a natural creature? . . . What am I—am I at all—without my family?*" (47). (While this occasional tactic—emphasizing the dissolution of social bonds by imagining characters' thoughts—is sometimes too speculative, it does add clarity and punch to Kottman's readings.)

In the second part of his analysis, Kottman moves from disinheritance to possible solutions, or at least to meaningful reactions. Hamlet stages a play for the court, hoping, under otherwise "inauthentic and disownable" social conditions, to provoke an authentic, "'natural,' affective response" and thus establish a meaningful social connection: in this case, the guilty connection between Claudius and "a past he would no longer be able to disown" (75–76). Kottman deftly juxtaposes Hamlet's use of *The Mousetrap* and our own use of *Hamlet,* suggesting that, if tragedy "still works," we may recognize in Shakespeare's text "something of ourselves, something constitutive in our past that we cannot deny" (77), effectively bridging the historical gap.

The chapter on *King Lear,* in which hope for a meaningful response to disinheritance is dimmest, produces several original readings. Both here and in the final chapter, on *The Tempest,* Kottman delivers interesting insights into torture. He reads Gloucester's blinding, and the earl's simultaneous discovery of his son Edmund's treachery, as a nadir of meaningful social existence, an ultimate destroyer of bonds. Prospero's art, his "unilaterally, incontestably sovereign" power, is to Kottman also a form of torture, as the magician uses it to "deprive others of a worldly, historical, and social life" (135), replacing that life with a scripted and artificial one.

Kottman's offhand phrase for how the newcomers to Prospero's island are threatened with drowning—"the waterboarding" (135)—exemplifies both his contribution to Shakespeare studies and his book's limitations. As read by Kottman, Shakespearean tragedy can speak directly to our time, staging for us our own attempts to live meaningfully in a cruel, arbitrary, and fragmented social world. But looking to the plays as a mirror in which to recognize ourselves may tempt us to distort them, to stretch them too far, to deprive them of their own meaningful history.

The Materiality of Religion in Early Modern English Drama, by Elizabeth Williamson. Ashgate: Aldershot, Hants, England, 2009. Pp. 252. Hardcover $99.95

Reviewer: **Michelle Ephraim**

In her carefully researched monograph, *The Materiality of Religion in Early Modern English Drama,* Elizabeth Williamson establishes how the physical representation of religious objects on the post-Reformation public stage would have evoked a dynamic emotional response from its audience.

It is widely known that Reformist discourse derided Catholic religious objects as idolatrous—a material presence against which the spiritual culture of Protestantism was shaped. But it is Williamson's contention that the stage properties of Reformist drama suggest a more nuanced relationship between the Protestant subject and these material vestiges of traditional Christianity. On the public stage, Williamson argues, these so-called graven images could also engage their audience as "affective technologies," a physical means through which the theater could tap into the "emotional resonance" of these objects' original religious context and "translate" these powerful feelings into secular plots (27). As public conceptions of material objects such as the tomb, the altar, the crucifix, and the prayer book—the respective subjects of the four main sections in Williamson's study—changed during the Reformation, the theater was in a unique position to mimic and exploit their fluid meanings. It is Williamson's central argument that "the strategies employed by theater practitioners . . . reflected the remarkable shifts in value that occurred as reli-

gious objects left English churches and were destroyed, repaired, and reincorporated into new contexts" (2).

A notable feature of Williamson's study is her resourceful methodology. As she acknowledges, there is scant documentation of the actual stage materials used in theatrical productions. Yet she pieces together what feels like a comprehensive treatment of religious objects in post-Reformation drama by drawing upon medieval stage inventories and sources such as the Office of the Revels, churchwardens' accounts, legal documents, and personal letters (10). Williamson makes a persuasive case that the material descriptions of religious objects in these writings illuminate also how the same objects might be crafted for stage productions (3).

In the first half of *The Materiality of Religion in Early Modern English Drama,* Williamson examines the role of physically substantial "material technologies" such as the tomb and the altar. The second half of the book focuses on the more prevalent, and portable, objects of the cross and religious book.

Chapter 1 links representations of tombs on the secular stage with the *topos* of Christ's resurrection. Plays such as *The Winter's Tale* and *The Duchess of Malfi,* Williamson argues, continue the guild-sponsored mystery play tradition of staging the resurrection, but do so in a way that "appropriate[es] . . . the emotional power" (60) in a secular form. Her discussion of this imagery in a number of Shakespearean plays is a useful and accessible starting point for the book's broader examination of religious objects in a range of theatrical productions.

In chapter 2, Williamson traces how another overdetermined object of ceremonial worship—the altar—emerges in secular drama. Here Williamson provides crucial historical context in her discussion of how Archbishop William Laud and other anti-Calvinists resisted the prevalent Reformist appropriation of the Catholic altar as a "holy table" or "God's board" (73), repurposed for common use and stripped of ornamentation. Williamson's arguments about the significance of material representations on stage are most persuasive when she incorporates her deft analyses of Laud's controversial revival of ceremonial objects during the first half of the seventeenth century.

Plays such as Thomas Dekker's *The Noble Spanish Soldier,* Williamson argues, call our attention to the slippery (and often purely rhetorical) relationship between "altar" and "holy table." In this production, for example, the Catholic altar is used also as a shrine for a lover. The material presence of the altar on stage evokes the common denigration of the Catholic Mass as bogus stagecraft, but as the prop shifts, the altar/table/shrine also creates a productive analogy between the theater and the religious institution of Christianity. Through the "material resemblance" of religious and theatrical objects, the plays enact the audience's complicated, and necessary, relationships with the physical technologies of worship. Ben Jonson's *Sejanus,* she

notes, actually demonstrates a "sympathetic treatment of religious ritual" (92) that may reflect its audience's renewed interest in the Mass ceremony. And the uses of religious objects in Fletcher, Field, and Massinger's *The Knight of Malta* (which incorporates the elevated, ceremonial altar Laud preferred) "advance a case for the social importance of Christian ritual more generally" (93).

Williamson's examination of the crucifix (or, in its modified form, the cross) in chapter 3 is the most engaging section of her book. Here she integrates a fascinating discussion of Elizabeth's own attachment to physical representations of the cross with theatrical productions such as *The Knight of Malta,* which "create complex emotional portraits of the faith systems associated with this 'Catholic' object" (120). The play portrays the knights sympathetically, and as such the cross becomes a generic symbol of Christian virtue. Most strikingly, the physical representation of the cross is juxtaposed against the "unstable male body" (127), ironically attributing an immaterial, spiritual property to an object also associated with Catholic ritual.

The chapter's treatment of the crucifix/cross concludes with Williamson's readings of Webster's *The White Devil* and Dekker and Ford's *The Spanish Gypsy,* in which she establishes how the cross would have signified "piety within the realm of the family" (136) for its Protestant audience. An object valued as a family heirloom, the cross transcended specific affiliations of "Protestant" and "Catholic."

In her final chapter, Williamson argues that the theatrical representations of religious books expose the "paradox at the heart of Protestant reading practices, which depended upon the materiality of the book as much as Catholic worship did" (30). Rather than enforcing the spiritual/material dichotomy prevalent in Reformist discourse, the stage use of books "highlighted [the] physicality" (153) of religious practice by calling attention to function of book as prop.

The "inherently theatrical nature of piety" (163) is evident, for example, in Ophelia and Claudius' prayer scenes in *Hamlet.* Yet Williamson is careful to point out that Ophelia's performed-on-demand devotion, contrasted against Claudius's false piety, is also an indication of how theatrical representations challenged cultural anxieties about women's use of religious books.

In a particularly well-crafted part of this chapter, Williamson argues that *Arden of Faversham* and *Tamburlaine* (Part 2), while seemingly very different theater productions, both call attention to the materiality of books, and "draw their audience's attention to what is at stake in the book's physical existence by highlighting its susceptibility to violence" (186). Like the foreign setting of *The Knight of Malta,* the "foreign" Qur'an that gets destroyed in *Tamburlaine* (Part 2)—a clear stand-in for the Christian Bible, argues Wil-

liamson—becomes a safe space to explore the relationship between Christian faith and material objects.

Williamson's concluding "Coda" draws on her arguments about religious objects to produce a fresh, inspired reading of *Othello.* The constant circulation of Othello's handkerchief, she argues, illustrates how a meaning initially attributed to a material object builds and shifts as the object moves from one context to another. In this sense, the play also becomes a metatextual exploration of how the "theater used stage properties to pose broader questions about the social and economic value of objects" (196). Williamson's final section on public valuation of nineteenth-century "relics" from Shakespearean productions is a provocative, if too brief, examination of how "objects can be commodified in one phase of their social lives and sanctified in another" (210).

The Materiality of Religion in Early Modern English Drama will be of great interest to scholars of early modern stagecraft, religion, and performance history. Also, Williamson's clever discussions of the material intersections of Protestant and Catholic forms of worship are accessible and invaluable to any student of the period. This book is a powerful statement that post-Reformation theater was profoundly engaged with "exploring the ideological intricacies of the material practices that were so often associated with actors and papists" (170), and that we must take seriously these material details if we are to get the full story of the early modern English stage.

Owning William Shakespeare: The King's Men and Their Intellectual Property, by James J. Marino. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. Pp. 204. Cloth $49.95

Reviewer: ROSLYN L. KNUTSON

Each term in the title of *Owning William Shakespeare* carries significant baggage in textual studies and theater history. James Marino focuses here on the rivalry of stationers and playing companies for ownership of theatrical intellectual property. In 1710, stationers won with passage of the *Act for the Encouragement of Learning,* "the first English copyright law" (1). To solidify and extend their claim in terms of Shakespeare specifically, publishing houses commissioned editors to produce endlessly variant editions. For these houses, the goal was a monopoly; for editors, it was an "authentic" text that was "entirely Shakespeare's" (6). In one thread of this monograph, Marino deconstructs the narratives scholars have produced in their use of "empirical tools" to locate "an ideal and hypothetical text" (14). He stands with those who argue that whatever early modern Shakespearean texts were published *are* the authentic texts; everything else is editorial guesswork. In another thread, he considers the circumstances of the rivalry from the perspective of the Chamberlain's/King's Men. He argues that the production of variant early modern Shakespearean texts through legitimate revision was the means by which the company demonstrated its theatrical ownership. That is, the Chamberlain's/King's Men singled out Shakespeare as their signature property and used the publication of his plays as both "a performance and public confirmation of their rights over the text" (11). Marino uses three clusters of playtexts as test cases: (1) the two *Shrew* plays; (2) the many *Hamlets* from 1589 to 1623; (3) the *Sir John Oldcastle* printed by William Jaggard in 1619 and the dramatic texts related to it through the Oldcastle name. These discussions take up chapters 2, 3, and 4, respectively. Chapter 1 is theater history background. An introduction and chapter 5 provide the frame on Shakespearean publishers, their editions, and the bibliographic tradition.

Readers will find the deconstruction of Shakespearean bias in the editorial tradition both incisive and persuasive. Given the complexity of detail in Marino's arguments, it is possible here only to suggest a few critical points. For the *Shrew* plays, Marino addresses both chronology and revision. He argues that a desire to date Shakespeare's play as earlier than the non-Shakespearean text has led scholars to distort evidence on players ("Sincklo" "Nicke") and ignore evidence of late revision (the naming of "Soto"). For the *Hamlets,* he is most interested in the way playhouse revisions folded the non-Shakespearean and Shakespearean versions into one text: "The *ur-Hamlet* was *Hamlet:* the play maintained a continuous identity over its long life, even as it expanded and matured" (105). For the *Oldcastle* cluster, Marino uses the 1619 publication and its claim of Shakespeare's authorship to argue that some stationers in London responded to "the King's Men's aggressive business strategies" by appropriating Shakespeare's name themselves (108). Developing this argument, Marino gathers in *Famous Victories of Henry V* and Shakespeare's Henriad as part of a textual "continuous identity" that culminates in the First Folio (125–28).

As is apparent in this too-selective digest, Marino reintroduces a Shakespearean bias when he lays out a hypothesis of ownership by the Chamberlain's/King's Men, even though he scorns exactly that in his analysis of textual studies. The bias is manifest in the promotion of company membership into something like a board of directors who "had deep professional investments in the public perception of Shakespeare and of his canon" (22). Marino sees the players as "the custodians of his [Shakespeare's] reputation and arbiters of his dramatic canon after his death" (22). Indeed, he claims that Shakespeare was "[t]he star of the story that the Lord Chamberlain's Men devised for themselves" (22).

Theater history has long suffered from a scholarly inclination to elevate Shakespeare's plays and his company above all others. Increasingly, however, narratives of the theatrical marketplace have accommodated non-Shakespearean companies and non-Shakespearean plays. Therefore, Marino