

Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



Gallagher, Lowell, James Kearney, and Julia Reinhard Lupton,
eds. *Entertaining the Idea: Shakespeare, Performance, and
Philosophy*

Goran Stanivukovic

Volume 44, Number 2, Spring 2021

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1082715ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v44i2.37544>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Stanivukovic, G. (2021). Review of [Gallagher, Lowell, James Kearney, and Julia Reinhard Lupton, eds. *Entertaining the Idea: Shakespeare, Performance, and Philosophy*]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 44(2), 242–245. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v44i2.37544>

© Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies / Société canadienne d'études de la Renaissance; Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society; Toronto Renaissance and Reformation Colloquium; Victoria University Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2021

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

on it. Based on this careful reading of the materials Leonardo acquired and of Alberti's advice, Bellucci and Frosinini show that Leonardo's *Battle* existed only as a cartoon, never as a painting on a wall. Leonardo's *Battle*, which is documented as displayed in the Sala Grande in the following centuries, was not Leonardo's mural but a section of his second cartoon which, in the absence of the mural, the Signoria decided to frame and hang in the place where the mural was supposed to be. It is this framed cartoon that later artists copied.

The authors of this volume were able to achieve this level of clarity on this hotly debated work by Leonardo because they were able to bring together humanistic and scientific research and to focus on the materiality of Leonardo's works. This approach is part of a broader art historical shift that is grounded in the rigorous examination of documentary and physical evidence, in the open sharing of conservation and diagnostic data, and in the acknowledgement that sources of the period do not document everything we would like to know about the art of the past, including Leonardo's *Battle*, but that, nonetheless, if properly interrogated, they offer important insight on a work's history, making, and uses. Thanks to this team's insightful work, we now know that Leonardo's *Battle of Anghiari*, which was long regarded as a "lost masterpiece," was never lost—because Leonardo never painted it.

FRANCESCA FIORANI

University of Virginia

<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v44i2.37543>

Gallagher, Lowell, James Kearney, and Julia Reinhard Lupton, eds.

Entertaining the Idea: Shakespeare, Performance, and Philosophy.

UCLA Clark Memorial Library. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020. Pp. 252. ISBN 978-1-4875-0743-5 (hardcover) \$65.

This book is yet another superb result of the long-standing publishing joint venture of the UCLA Clark Memorial Library Series and University of Toronto Press. The volume's editors have brought together twelve stimulating and original essays that consider Shakespeare from the intersection of philosophy, aesthetic and performance history, theory, and criticism. Most contributors are scholars of English literature, but some work in comparative literature, comparative

humanities, philosophy, drama, and theatre studies; the book's Afterword is written by a theatre critic. It is hard for a book on Shakespeare to lay claim to a genuinely interdisciplinary approach and audience, but this impressively edited volume undoubtedly can: this is a genuinely interdisciplinary book and a model for a new direction for thinking and writing about Shakespeare at the intersection of performance, philosophy, aesthetics, and cultural theory and history. All essays are written with care for lucidity, stylistic grace, and engaging scholarly prose. Their readers will be grateful for this pleasure of the text.

In their thought-provoking introduction, the editors set a broad conceptual frame for their endeavour: their volume is composed in such a way that each author "entertains" an idea, and ruminates and meditates on it. The essays' mode largely follows the manner of writing philosophy, characterized by the slow, careful unfolding of an idea and with the utmost attentiveness to the signification of abstract detail; texts often read like mental performance, or like playing with an idea in one's mind. In choosing to conceptualize the volume in this way, the editors were guided by the notion of the Idea derived from Erwin Panofsky's *Idea: A Concept in Art Theory* (1968), a book that should be more influential in Renaissance literary studies than it is. The editors build the conceptual architecture of their volume around Panofsky's point about the Renaissance understanding of the Idea as both a copy of something that exists outside the creator and as an authentic creation: the notion and pursuit of Idea in the Renaissance existing in the creative opposition between artistic authenticity and the creative confinement of external reality. Each contributor in this volume picks up an idea that they see as a dynamic phenomenon that shapes Shakespeare's play-world, and they engage with that idea in a critical conversation with a cognate philosophical theory. The essays are arranged with care so that, taken together, they achieve maximum coherence in the book as a whole.

Eight out of eleven essays are organized under the convenient and helpful rubric of "Keywords," recalling Raymond Williams's landmark book of the same name (1976). Thus Tzachi Zamir explores the idea of "role playing" as a way of "realizing an alien possibility" (21) for a role played on stage. J. K. Barrett's essay on the notion of "habit" starts with a straightforward philological analysis of this idea, and then develops the conceptual resonances of its etymology through the concise interpretation of an example from each of three plays, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *The Tempest*. Sarah Beckwith takes up the idea

of “acknowledgment,” examined by way of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s and Stanley Cavell’s investigations of this term and applied to a reading of *The Winter’s Tale* and French film. Kevin Curran analyzes “judgment” and the term’s possible meanings in the audience’s sensory and bodily experience of the theatre. Jeffrey Knapp explores “entertainment” as a cultural more so than philosophical idea, specific to the commercial theatre of early modern London. His case study is one of Shakespeare’s most inspiring earlier models, the playwright Thomas Kyd, and he pursues the idea of the “immersive relation” (83) that the early audience had with Kyd’s extremely popular *The Spanish Tragedy*, a play full of horrors. In the volume’s strongest essay, Björn Quiring analyzes the notion of the “curse” with utmost theoretical precision and clarity, paying close attention to religious and cultural contexts. Quiring argues for an understanding of the curse “as a destructive source of social cohesion” (99) in a theatrical representation of *Richard III*. James Kuzner follows French philosopher Pierre Hadot’s philosophy of and for a way of living, in a beautifully written essay, “Way of Life,” which focuses mostly on love in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Sheiba Kian Kaufman interprets “care” and its personification in a well-argued essay that focuses on *King Lear*.

In the second, shorter section of the volume, “Extended Encounters,” Sanford Budick writes about “atemporal presentness” in the “interchanges” (135) between *King Lear* and *The Winter’s Tale*. In the penultimate essay, Anselm Haverkamp interprets Hegel’s thoughts on “dramatic irony” in relation to *Hamlet*, recovering for the modern reader Hegel’s lesser-known writing on this play. In the last essay, Paul A. Kottman discusses the idea of “the maternal love and grief for a dead son” (185) by exploring the connection between dramatic meaning and aesthetic form in the trial scene in *The Winter’s Tale*.

Charles McNulty’s brief Afterword reflects on the feasibility of performing *King Lear* by engaging briefly with Harley Granville-Barker’s theatre criticism on this topic. It is appropriate that a book about the plasticity of performance would end with tributes to two different forward-looking Shakespeareans: in addition to praising Granville-Barker’s “critical acumen” (213), McNulty locates hope for future productions in the actor Mark Rylance.

This book’s philosophical and critical frame is vast and demanding, in the manner of the best scholarly criticism. The range of Shakespeare’s plays discussed is narrower, however, and because the volume does not analyze any of the earliest, very performative plays, it falls on other scholars to pursue

this book's chartered path of philosophical inquiry and the hermeneutics of performance, and to test its methods on other, stranger plays from Shakespeare's canon. This book will serve many readers: Shakespeare scholars and students, drama critics and practitioners, philosophers, performance theorists, art critics, and those interested in aesthetics.

GORAN STANIVUKOVIC

Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia

<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v44i2.37544>

García Pérez, Noelia, ed.

Mary of Hungary, Renaissance Patron and Collector: Gender, Art and Culture.

Études Renaissance 31. Turnhout: Brepols, 2020. Pp. 232 + 32 ill., 5 tables. ISBN 978-2-503-58948-0 (paperback) €55.

This century heralded a number of Habsburg quincentenaries, beginning with that of Emperor Charles V (1500–58). In 2005, the emperor's sister, Queen Mary of Hungary and Bohemia and Regent of the Netherlands (1505–58), was the subject of a series of exhibitions and conferences that substantially expanded the scholarship devoted to her. Outside of Hungary, most studies have focused on Mary's role in the Spanish Netherlands; however, an exhibition and conference in Budapest and Bratislava commemorated her court in Buda, before the Turkish victory at Mohács on 29 August 1526 decimated the Hungarian defenses and drove Mary's husband King Louis II Jagiellon (1506–26) to a watery death in the marshes beyond the battle. Between that fateful event and 1530, Mary and her small court travelled between Pozsony and Vienna while she acted as Regent of Hungary for her brother Ferdinand. Resisting remarriage, the queen became a paragon of Christian widowhood—celebrated by Erasmus in *De Vidua* (1529)—and chose to serve her family by becoming the successor of her aunt, Margaret of Austria (1480–1530), as Regent of the Netherlands.

This new collection of essays edited by Noelia García Pérez focuses on Mary of Hungary's remarkable cultural patronage. It follows and expands upon scholarship generated in 2005 and a recent exhibition *Women: The Art*