

# Shakespeare and the Power of Performance: Stage and Page in the Elizabethan Theatre

Robert Weimann, Douglas Bruster



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Focusing on the practical means and media of Shakespeare's stage, this study envisions horizons for his achievement in the theatre. Bridging the gap between today's page- and stage-centred interpretations, two renowned Shakespeareans demonstrate the artful means by which Shakespeare responded to the competing claims of acting and writing in the Elizabethan era. They examine how the playwright explored issues of performance through the resonant trio of clown, fool and cross-dressed boy actor. Like this trio, his deepest and most captivating characters often attain their power through the highly performative mode of 'personation' – through playing the character as an open secret. Surveying the whole of the playwright's career in the theatre, Shakespeare and the Power of Performance offers not only compelling ways of approaching the relation of performance and print in Shakespeare's works, but also new models for understanding dramatic character itself.



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