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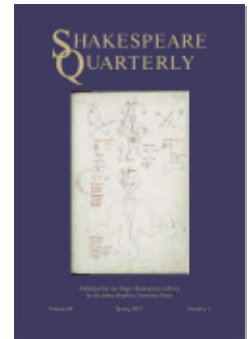
*Lincoln and Shakespeare* by Michael Anderegg (review)

John F. Andrews

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I found particularly appealing Ginsberg's riffings on, or mantra-like iterations of, particular words and phrases in his lectures; it's a way for him to make audible Shakespeare's "funny ear," "funny mind," and "funny tongue" ("funny" carrying senses of idiosyncratic, playful, uncanny, queer). And Leinwand speaks grippingly about Berryman's work on his never-completed edition of *King Lear*, including his long, carefully penned lists of Shakespearean coinages, and his elaborately evolved emendations—for instance, the case where, after much reflection, he finds behind Edgar's speaking of his father as "poorlie, leed" (Q1A), "parti, eyed" (Q1B), and "poorely led" (Q2 and F), the lost original words, "My father, pearly-ey'd" (4–5). Berryman the fanatical editor becomes a mirror of Berryman the poet "collating bones." Leinwand hints at what of Shakespeare—and of Shakespearean madness—is doubled in the poet's frenzied, multiform annotations of his *own* dark dreams, his tracking in those dreams of "new readings, sophistications, inversions, equivalents, additions, strange variants, corrections, and corruptions" (131).

Leinwand suggests that he wants to speak to "any reader" (11) of Shakespeare, even, perhaps, a "common reader" (65) (*uncommon* as his own writing readers are). At the same time, the idiosyncratic modes of study, response, appropriation, and instruction that he traces in his writers often speak very plainly to the particular work and methods of scholars, editors, and teachers of Shakespeare, even as he shows how that work can be animated by a kind of irregular, obsessive, or hallucinatory energy that puts such work in a different light. The book indeed evokes an orbit of possibilities, strange occasions, where the stakes of our professional work come into play and under scrutiny. I can see myself using the word "funny" a bit more frequently in my Shakespeare classes.

*Lincoln and Shakespeare*. By MICHAEL ANDEREGG. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015. Illus. Pp. xiv + 222. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewed by JOHN F. ANDREWS

We've long known that America's sixteenth president was deeply influenced by the writings of William Shakespeare. But until now we've lacked a comprehensive overview of the ways in which Lincoln acquired and manifested his knowledge of the author whose works he considered most rewarding. It's therefore a pleasure to welcome *Lincoln and Shakespeare*.

In his preface Michael Anderegg observes that, "although quotations from and citations to Shakespeare's plays are not abundant in Lincoln's own writings, he often read from and alluded to Shakespeare in conversation with friends, secretaries, family members, and other visitors and bystanders who recorded their impressions in diaries and letters as well as, in later years, essays and memoirs" (xii). Many of these recollections appear reliable, but Anderegg identifies others that need to be treated with caution. He goes on to demonstrate secure knowledge of the Shakespeare editions available to Lincoln and the selections Lincoln would have found in popular textbooks ("readers") and reference sources. He draws on congressional debates, newspaper cartoons, and other materials to illustrate how

easily passages could be invoked to make rhetorical points and skewer political opponents. And he explores the roles that lecturers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson played in making the poet accessible, even in communities as small as Lincoln's Springfield. Anderegg cites historians such as Lawrence Levine and Charles Shattuck as he traces the evolution of nineteenth-century performance styles, touring practices, and audience expectations. And he quotes extensively from Douglas L. Wilson as he documents Lincoln's awareness of the many ways in which productions he experienced diverged from texts he knew, such as *Richard III*, *1 Henry IV*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Hamlet*.

In 1863 a letter that Lincoln wrote to James H. Hackett in gratitude for a collection of *Notes and Comments* the actor had presented him made its way into the *New York Herald*. Anderegg quotes the chief executive's characteristically self-effacing remarks to Hackett, which enumerate "Lear, Richard Third, Henry Eighth, Hamlet, and especially Macbeth" as plays that Lincoln particularly cherished (85). Anderegg then offers a cogent analysis of Lincoln's preference for "the soliloquy in Hamlet commencing 'O, my offence is rank,'" which the president found more moving than "that commencing 'To be, or not to be'" (85). He goes on to discuss Lincoln's observations about "the opening speech of Richard the Third," focusing not only on the president's desire to hear Hackett "pronounce" the soliloquy but also on portrait painter Francis Carpenter's glowing praise for Lincoln's own recitation of the title character's famous lines.

Anderegg finds Lincoln to be a discriminating reader. And he notes that a president "frustrated at the high-handed manner in which theatrical practitioners" of his day "handled Shakespeare's texts" (131) was generally happier when he could ponder the plays either in solitude or in conversation with friends than when he was compelled to fidget through ineptly truncated or egregiously augmented versions of them in performance. But if Lincoln valued Shakespeare primarily as a source of contemplative reflection, this predilection did not keep him away from Washington's bustling theaters. Leonard Grover and John T. Ford vied for the honor of having the president and his guests in attendance, and Lincoln sampled a diversity of offerings in both venues, among them melodramas like *The Marble Heart* (in which a menacing John Wilkes Booth performed before him on 9 November 1863) and farces like *Our American Cousin* (in which the same actor interrupted a popular comedy with what he regarded as a more "lofty scene" on 14 April 1865). Yet as much as he enjoyed what we would now classify as light entertainment, the president was most inclined to renderings of Shakespeare, because, even with their imperfections, such productions gave him a chance "to test his own sense of what the plays meant and how they should be performed" (108).

Anderegg writes at length about what Lincoln was likely to have encountered when he saw such performers as Edwin Booth, Charlotte Cushman, E. L. Davenport, or Edwin Forrest. He reminds us that the president "came of age at a time when Shakespeare's plays were becoming central to American popular culture and simultaneously beginning to be recognized as the prime representative of high culture" (141). And he sums up his conclusions with persuasive elegance: "In his Shakespearean 'journey,' if it may be so called, Lincoln's interests and activities

moved parallel with Shakespeare's integration into the texture of America's cultural life; posthumously, Lincoln would himself become a notably visible embodiment of that transformation" (141).

Anderegg ends with a brief epilogue about "Lincoln, Shakespeare, and the Brothers Booth" (142). He includes a photograph of John Wilkes, Edwin, and Junius Brutus Booth the younger that was taken on or near 25 November 1864, when the three brothers presented *Julius Caesar* in New York's Winter Garden Theatre as a three-hundredth anniversary benefit to fund a Shakespeare statue in Central Park. Surprisingly, Anderegg says very little about this historic event, and he makes no mention of the May 1872 festivities at which Edwin helped dedicate sculptor J. Q. A. Ward's completed Shakespeare memorial.

Anderegg does call attention to the irony of a comparison to Brutus that appeared "on the front of the Paymaster's office, adjoining Grover's Theatre" (144) when Lincoln's funeral procession passed that location after the assassination. This banner proclaimed that the president's "life was gentle, and the elements so mix'd in him that nature might stand up and say to all the world: This was a man" (144). Anderegg identifies several echoes of *Julius Caesar* and other Shakespeare works in the pocket diary that John Wilkes Booth had been annotating during the days that led up to his capture on 26 April 1865 (146). And he emphasizes an evocative passage from *Macbeth* (1.7.16–25) that Lincoln had shared with his traveling companions (less than a week before the President's final visit to Ford's Theatre)—a quotation that "became," in the words of Richard Wightman Fox, "the virtually official slogan of the mourning period" (144).

Anderegg offers no mention of numerous Shakespeare echoes that might have provided deeper insight into the president's tragic demise and its bitter consequences. But despite these omissions and a few minor errors, his volume is "a most welcome addition to the Lincoln literature" (Michael Burlingame) and "a notable contribution" to our understanding of "the reception and performance of Shakespeare in nineteenth-century America" (Russell Jackson).

*Religion Around Shakespeare*. By PETER IVER KAUFMAN. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013. Pp. viii + 256. \$34.95 cloth.

*Stages of Engagement: Drama and Religion in Post-Reformation England*. Edited by JAMES D. MARDOCK and KATHRYN R. MCPHERSON. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2014. Pp. viii + 352. \$70.00 cloth.

Reviewed by KRISTEN POOLE

The "religious turn" in early modern literary studies is still going strong. Both Peter Iver Kaufman's *Religion Around Shakespeare* and James D. Mardock and Kathryn R. McPherson's essay collection, *Stages of Engagement: Drama and Religion in Post-Reformation England*, contribute to this turn and reflect on the direction of