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**Roberts, David. Restoration Plays and Players: An Introduction**

Andrew Benjamin Bricker

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studies. I do not want to give the impression that Riche's narrative is only worthy, however: *Brusanus* is an engaging story that easily holds the attention and is pleasurable to read. I think it would work well in a variety of university courses, both in the context of Renaissance studies and in the context of theories of adaptation and intertextuality. Khoury's careful editing has resulted in a very usable text.

Riche himself had a remarkable and varied career both as a writer and as a soldier. Unfortunately, he was never able to obtain financial security or even a reasonable pension for all his military labours. As Khoury points out, we can see these issues near the end of the narrative in Riche's detailing of Dorestus's rewarding of the soldiers who fought for him. Riche's financial woes cannot be remedied now, but it seems like an act of justice to restore this valuable narrative to print. It is a welcome addition to the ever-increasing canon of Renaissance prose fiction in scholarly and relatively cheap editions.

STEPHEN GUY-BRAY

University of British Columbia

**Roberts, David.**

***Restoration Plays and Players: An Introduction.***

Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. ix, 252 + 12 ill. ISBN 978-1-107-61797-1 (paperback) \$30.95.

David Roberts's *Restoration Plays and Players* is a wide-ranging and yet laudably lucid introduction to the world of Restoration theatre (1660–1714). Though it targets an undergraduate audience, Roberts's theatrical primer will be a welcome addition to any bookshelf for teachers of later seventeenth-century drama. The book's successive chapters cover almost every imaginable topic—playwrights, companies, actors and acting, playhouses, audiences and critics, texts and publishers, and revivals and adaptations. Each chapter begins with a broad discussion of its central topic across the period and is closed by a series of compact case studies illustrating, for instance, how a company's managerial ethos or cast of actors shaped the drama written and produced.

The finest and most useful chapter, in my view, and the one that effectively serves as the book's introduction, is its second, "The Life Cycle of the

Restoration Play.” Here Roberts lays out the whole range of topics covered, using the guiding idea of the “life cycle”: the process through which a play was written, sold to a theatrical company, revised in rehearsal, staged, viewed by its audience, printed and sold by booksellers, read by readers, evaluated by critics, and revived and adapted years, decades, and centuries later. All of these topics are covered in greater detail in the succeeding chapters. But, for newer students not familiar with this sometimes ignored sixty-four-year period of theatrical history, this chapter offers the broadest outline of how the theatre worked and how plays came into being, were staged, and eventually circulated. At the very least, teachers should not hesitate to distribute this chapter—a brisk introduction to how this whole theatrical microcosm worked. They should do the same with his bibliographic essay, which is more than enough to orient students towards the major critical works on Restoration drama and theatre that have appeared over the last half-century.

Roberts’s lucid, conversational style is one of the great virtues of a book intended largely as an introductory text for undergraduates. I suspect, though, that his occasional analogies to *Hello!*, the comic actor Norman Wisdom, and the short-lived playwright Sarah Kane are likely to be lost on students not raised on British tabloids, mid-century English film, and ’90s experimental theatre. What this Addisonian middle style often enables is Roberts’s both broad and minute analysis of this material in all of its political, social, personal, historical, and theatrical dimensions. Page after page gives way to easy, almost offhand observations and close readings that make sometimes rarefied dramatic conventions and allusions instantly and easily accessible.

The same evenhandedness is also present in Roberts’s unwillingness to accept the many canards of theatre history. Every argument has two sides, in his view, and Roberts is often eager in his rehearsal of academic debates to play devil’s advocate. Perhaps Christopher Rich was a parvenu brute, as scholars of theatre management so cavalierly conclude. Or perhaps, Roberts reasons, he was no different a manager from his predecessors and competitors, Betterton and the Davenants, who used all the same schemes of talent management and finance as Rich, if less effectively.

My lone complaint, and a minor one at that, is the period Roberts has chosen to cover. This book is seemingly pitched as an introduction for undergraduates, likely as a supplement to courses on so-called “Restoration” drama. For Roberts, that means drama written and staged between 1660 and the death

of Queen Anne in 1714. One wonders, though, how easily this book might graft onto today's syllabi. In English departments, Restoration drama is frequently lumped in with surveys of eighteenth-century theatre (even if that means that the majority of the plays studied, with the notable exceptions of Sheridan, Goldsmith, and to a lesser extent perhaps Foote, were produced between 1660 and 1737, when the Licensing Act came into being). This puts teachers in the unenviable position of either fitting the plays to the supplement or the supplement to the plays: teach only "Restoration" drama and use Roberts in tandem, or teach the whole "long" eighteenth century and use other articles and books to cover the decades not addressed by *Restoration Plays and Players*. This already is a magnificently proficient and economical addition to any syllabus, but had Roberts chosen to extend his coverage a mere twenty-three years, to 1737, his book would have more easily aligned with the syllabi of most courses on drama from this period.

Despite the small limitations of its coverage, *Restoration Plays and Players* will be a welcome addition to any syllabus that touches upon drama written and staged between 1660 and 1714. Roberts is particularly good at bridging his close readings of individual plays with the political, social, financial, commercial, managerial, and professional worlds these works circulated in, were shaped by, and shaped themselves. For this, Roberts should be commended and his book liberally used. I have little doubt teachers will return to *Restoration Plays and Players* again and again in the decades to come.

ANDREW BENJAMIN BRICKER  
McGill University

**Rubini, Rocco.**

*The Other Renaissance: Italian Humanism between Hegel and Heidegger.*

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014. Pp. 386. ISBN 978-0-226-18613-9 (hardcover) \$45.

*The Other Renaissance* is a story about the relationship between Renaissance historiography and the philosophical tradition of Italy between the nineteenth century and the end of the Second World War. It is also a story about loss. In his personal attempt to reconcile the interpretations of Renaissance humanism