

## Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



### Dowd, Michelle M. The Dynamics of Inheritance on the Shakespearean Stage

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Volume 40, numéro 2, printemps 2017

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1086279ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i2.28516>

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Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)

2293-7374 (numérique)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Johnston, M. (2017). Compte rendu de [Dowd, Michelle M. The Dynamics of Inheritance on the Shakespearean Stage]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 40(2), 187–190. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i2.28516>

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religious faith in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For undergraduates in a course about Early Modern Spain or Europe, a sermon or two would work well to illustrate the religious fervour of the time. This would take some preparation on the instructor's part: for those who have had no prior exposure to Christian devotional literature, the sermons are a very intense, alien experience, particularly the sermon on Christ's passion, and would certainly provoke a lively classroom discussion.

Altogether, the resulting book is a very readable but authoritative excursion into the massive body of work produced by Mother Juana, and the editors are to be congratulated on their successful collaborative effort to bring her voice into the English-speaking world.

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**Dowd, Michelle M.**

*The Dynamics of Inheritance on the Shakespearean Stage.*

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. xiii, 289 + 11 b/w ill. ISBN 978-1-107-09977-7 (hardcover) CDN\$109.95.

Analyzing representations of inheritance on the early modern (not, as the title misleadingly suggests, exclusively Shakespearean) stage, Michelle Dowd's *The Dynamics of Inheritance* pays particularly close attention to spatial discourse as a theatrical mode of expressing the historical pressures and exigencies shaping sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English patriarchal and patrilineal economies. Dowd contends that, in the plays of the period at least, concerns about inheritance and genealogy were explored and rewritten using a spatial rhetoric that manifests both materially and metaphorically, constituting a key but underexplored dramatic methodology. Much like Alexandra Shepard argues about patriarchy in the period, Dowd reminds us that primogeniture—although an undeniably powerful cultural ideology—was internally riven by inconsistencies, variations, and exceptions that complicated its expression both in theory and in practice. Dowd's study endeavours to interrogate the strains in this economy by analyzing the stage as a dynamic spatial medium that actively explored, critiqued, and posited new approaches to patterns of lineage

and wealth transfer during a crucial time in England's history when those patterns were in flux. Testing the limits of both the early modern patrilineal family and the contingencies that complicated the theoretical premises of the common law, Dowd explores various modes of wealth transfer, gift giving, and kinship relations that were not strictly alternatives or challenges to patrilineal inheritance but rather variations and occurrences within that larger structure. Looking beyond representations of royalty and employing recent economic studies of the period, Dowd methodologically selects her dramatic materials, and arranges her chapters, not for the topical centrality of inheritance, nor in any strict chronological order, but in an effort to accentuate the specific ways in which the drama reflects and reformulates the frictions between stability and dispersal—more traditional versus burgeoning tactics for wealth accumulation and exchange.

The book's first chapter explores historical shifts in inheritance practices over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England, providing an overview of the shifting ideology of patrilineage and its practical variations, and arguing that the volatility that was coming to characterize those practices was intimately connected to sociospatial changes, including social and geographic mobility, the division of estates, and the rise of surveying manuals and estate maps. Dowd concludes this chapter by turning briefly to the opening scenes of Shakespeare's *King Lear* and *The Taming of the Shrew* in order to demonstrate *Lear*'s forcefully defending primogeniture by dramatizing the chaos that results when the system is disregarded and alternatives like partible inheritance are introduced, and Sly's defending his social legitimacy against the Hostess's denigrations by strategically deploying the authority of patrilineage proffered via genealogical narration. Here, Dowd argues, we can begin to see some of the rhetorical and dramaturgical mechanisms playwrights like Shakespeare employed in order to bring into relief the alternative narratives of lineage and wealth transfer that form the focus of her study. The book's subsequent chapters explore more broadly how the drama negotiates and reimagines inheritance as an economic, legal, and social practice, each one focusing on a particular contingency commonly faced by early modern families: marriage and remarriage, misbehaving and non-existent male heirs, and greedy male householders who resist wealth transfer entirely. In each case, Dowd details how the dramatists deploy the spatial resources of the theatre to test out different possibilities within the patrilineal

economy and imagine new possibilities for genealogical and socioeconomic knowledge. Chapter 2 interrogates how John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* consistently reworks Painter's prose narrative so as to expose rather than suppress the indeterminacy of patrilineality, particularly by juxtaposing the Duchess's frequently invisible, offstage reproductive life with the onstage stories and speculations that epitomize her brother's thwarted quest for genealogical knowledge. The next two chapters attend to the movements of wealth away from landed estates that occur through marriage, travel, and trade: chapter 3 provides a new account of the popularity of the prodigal son narrative on the seventeenth-century stage in plays like Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas* and Heywood's *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody, Part II* by considering the significances of early modern travel guides and increased foreign trade and speculation, while chapter 4 interrogates how Shakespeare and Wilkins's *Pericles* counters the uncertainty and potential dissolution represented by a sole heiress with an exploration of the multiple methods of preserving patrilineal order that ultimately privileges a conservative narrative of patrilineal inheritance through patriarchal control. Chapter 5 ponders the unique socioeconomic difficulties caused by excessive insularity and stability by studying the claustrophobic households Ben Jonson depicts in *Volpone* and *Epicene*, arguing that both plays emphasize the value of exchange over excessive seclusion, thereby privileging new economic theories and practices that increasingly rewarded those who maintained flexible investment strategies and a high tolerance for risk.

Influenced by how De Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* grants narrative the profound ability to transform spatial relationships—to turn conventional places into socially significant spaces—Dowd's narratological emphasis and focus on how spatial apparatuses enable drama to explore and rewrite socioeconomic instabilities constitute some of the book's most challenging but also potentially rewarding aspects. While *The Dynamics of Inheritance* makes some notable contributions to early modern masculinities and queer studies, particularly in its flexible treatment of familial kinship networks, it is Dowd's lucidly illustrating through close readings how the drama actively traces the tensions between economic insularity and volatility that provides the strongest evidence for her arguments and ultimately makes the most lasting impression. Illuminating how the open flexibility characterizing the premodern stage helped shape the stories that period playwrights were

telling about inheritance practices, Dowd's study also reminds us that spatial discourse offers an underappreciated archive for rethinking the kinds of cultural work accomplished by the dynamics of early modern drama.

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**Gabriele, Mino.**

***Il primo giorno del mondo.***

Milan : Adelphi Edizioni, 2016. 429 p. ISBN 878-88-459-3128-4 (broché) 38 €.

Après la magistrale étude sur *La Porta magica* (2015, à propos d'un exemple unique d'architecture alchimique à la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle), Mino Gabriele offre à ses lecteurs les conclusions de quatre enquêtes portant sur des questions d'iconologie, ou, si l'on veut, de géométrie mystique et primordiale. L'objet de ce livre, ainsi que l'explique la préface, est de mettre en lumière la chaîne des pensées qui ont, au fil des siècles, transformé les images, celles-ci modifiant à leur tour celles-là.

La première étude porte sur un bas-relief en marbre du II<sup>e</sup> siècle après J.-C., représentant la divinité orphique Phanès. Dès 1939, dans ses *Essais d'iconologie* (« Le Vieillard Temps »), Erwin Panofsky avait fait rapidement allusion à ce bas-relief (redécouvert à Modène en 1862 et sans équivalent dans les monuments des cultes de l'époque impériale) qui montre le Temps représenté par un jeune homme ailé aux pieds de bouc, entouré d'un serpent et tenant un foudre et un sceptre. Mino Gabriele décrit très précisément, en faisant appel aux auteurs les plus pertinents (en ce qui concerne l'œuf orphique : Achille Tatius, Porphyre, Plutarque, Macrobe, et bien d'autres), les différents attributs de ce dieu appelé aussi Protogonos (et Eros), principe créateur inépuisable, manifestation première de l'être, Soleil qui sort du chaos. Puis l'auteur montre de quelle façon les éléments de ce bas-relief sont repris et modifiés au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, à Padoue et à Venise, en particulier avec le projet iconologique que proposent les statues ornant l'Odeo Cornaro de Modène. Faisant constamment référence à des textes « classiques » (non seulement ceux des mythographes, mais aussi ceux qui pouvaient être lus de façon courante : par exemple Stace, Aratos ou Manilius), Mino Gabriele manifeste une impressionnante maîtrise de la culture de