



Historical Affects and the Early Modern Theater (Routledge Advances in Theatre & Performance Studies)

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This collection of original essays honors the groundbreaking scholarship of Jean E. Howard by exploring cultural and economic constructions of affect in the early modern theater. While historicist and materialist inquiry has dominated early modern theater studies in recent years, the historically specific dimensions of affect and emotion remain underexplored. This volume brings together these lines of inquiry for the first time, exploring the critical turn to affect in literary studies from a historicist perspective to demonstrate how the early modern theater showcased the productive interconnections between historical contingencies and affective attachments. Considering well-known plays such as Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* together with understudied texts such as court entertainments, and examining topics ranging from dramatic celebrity to women's political agency to the parental emotion of grief, this volume provides a fresh and at times provocative assessment of the "historical affects"—financial, emotional, and socio-political—that transformed Renaissance theater. Instead of treating history and affect as mutually exclusive theoretical or philosophical contexts, the essays in this volume ask readers to consider how drama emplaces the most personal, unspeakable passions in matrices defined in part by financial exchange, by erotic desire, by gender, by the material body, and by theatricality itself. As it encourages this conversation to take place, the collection provides scholars and students alike with a series of new perspectives, not only on the plays, emotions, and histories discussed in its pages, but also on broader shifts and pressures animating literary studies today.



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