

atomizes the play. Perhaps a concluding chapter that wove together the eight 'themes' would have countered this, but in accordance with his schematic method Elton provides only a two-page conclusion that recapitulates what he set out in his introduction.

I do not wish to deny that there is an important argument here about the direction of *Troilus and Cressida* to the interests of law students. The evidence Elton adduces in support of it is overwhelming, but this makes it all the more surprising when he feels the need to hammer into place pieces that do not fit or that have no special significance. He informs us, for example, that the word 'infant' indicated a young law student (149), and then connects this to Troilus describing himself as 'skillless as unpractised infancy' (1.1.12) and Cassandra's address to 'Soft infancy, that nothing canst but cry' (2.2.105). While Troilus' 'infancy' might certainly equate him to a lawyer-in-training, Cassandra surely uses the word with its more general meaning of 'babyhood'. Elsewhere he says that 3.1 'includes a trial or arraignment, recurrent in Inns of Court revels, and suited to a law-student audience' (138). Well, yes, but many of Shakespeare's plays contain trials, *King Lear* most extensively, but no one would take this as evidence that they were intended for law students.

Perhaps the most controversial effect of Elton's work lies in his inversion of the play's 'bitterness' into 'un-"bitter" playfulness' (167). One can, after all, accept his dissatisfaction with the 'problem play' category while still finding this play 'bitter'. A re-reading that finds the play to be 'an academic-classic burlesque' (167) written for a small learned audience has much about it that is persuasive, but it pushes the play into arcane territory even less accessible to a modern audience and denies what they have seen in it. Modern audiences *have* found the play accessible, precisely because of what is perceived as its bitterness: its dark and unillusioned deflation of heroic and romantic myths. *Troilus and Cressida* may not be a problem play, but it remains a problem.

PETER HYLAND

Jody Enders. *The Medieval Theater of Cruelty: Rhetoric, Memory, Violence*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999. Pp xvii, 268.

Whatever the celebrated illustration by Jean Fouquet of *The Martyrdom of Saint Apollonia* may have to tell us about the staging of medieval plays – a topic recently complicated by the sceptical inquiries of Gordon Kipling – it certainly attests to an abiding human fascination with cruelty and torture. Strapped to

her board of pain by executioners straining at the ropes, yanked at the hair by another torturer, the long-suffering saint is excruciatingly worked over by yet another torturer with an elegant, long set of pincers. Royal and ecclesiastical figures preside approvingly. The crowd is agape (and I don't mean the Greek agape). The intended replay of Christ's suffering at the hands of his tormentors, so vividly portrayed in northern European art, reminds us that our culture's obsession with the Crucifixion is also an integral part of a theatre of cruelty.

Part of what is so compelling about Jody Enders' reflections on this macabre aspect of human nature and of theatre is that she insists on our seeing the connection between Saint Apollonia and Antonin Artaud. Tertullian points to this universality when he says, 'If we are what people say we are, let us take our delight in the blood of men' (*De spectaculis*, serving as an epigraph for Enders' book). How does one deal with the aesthetics of cruel violence? Enders grounds her analysis in medieval theories of rhetoric and law, arguing that violence in medieval theatre finds its rationale in a rhetorical tradition that vividly expressed itself in terms of torture, punishment, and pain.

Her central topic, then, is 'the role of dramatic theory and spectacle in the rhetorical discovery, interpretation, enactment, and even theatricalization of torture' (3). Torture is essential to the presentation in medieval drama of such integral elements as verisimilitude, probability, character, and catharsis. The languages of the law and of theatre interpenetrate one another, so that the spectacularity of violence is expressed through the language of the law while the violence of the law takes the form of theatrical spectacle. Invention, memory, and delivery offer means of visualizing violence in the theatre.

At the same time, Enders conceptualizes her critical task in terms of more recent theorizing by Michel Foucault, Elaine Scarry, Wendy Lesser, and Jacques Derrida, refuting the notion too often heard that Artaud's 'Theater of Cruelty' is something new. Violence, it seems, has been an essential element of theatre since its very beginnings. Medieval dramatizations of the Passion of Christ are not identical to the modern theatre of cruelty, but a violent spectacularity informs both. The attempt to distinguish 'bad' from 'good' violence mirrors the theoretical impasses that are a part of the history of rhetoric – hence the impulse to camouflage the violence on which rhetoric depends.

What is especially useful about Enders' book is its historical documentation of the ways in which theories of torture were formulated in the language of drama and rhetoric. Theories about memory as a device for engendering speech provided a mnemonic repertory for legal proceedings, pedagogy, and medieval staging alike; the depiction of violent acts was thought to serve an essential mnemonic function. So too with the actor's body, voice, gesture.

Organizing her book rhetorically under the rubrics of invention, memory, and delivery, Enders plentifully illustrates her contentions from French medieval drama – a body of work with which English scholars are apt to be too unfamiliar. Medieval discussions of rhetorical invention, as she shows, give rise to theatrical views of torture; historical narratives of the origins of drama are consistently linked to torture and to invention at the same time. (The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* is a case in point.) Memory served as ‘the epistemological place where the inventional materials of torture were assembled (*dispositio*) and rehearsed for performance (*actio*)’ (61). The very art of memory, according to legend, grew out of Simonides’ ability to remember what had been dismembered in the human victims of a collapsed building.

A mnemonically engendered oration was persuasive precisely to the extent that it was dramatic, as Enders has argued in her earlier *Rhetoric and the Origins of Drama*. Here she goes on to stress that the memory image was persuasive and dramatic because it was violent. She recalls that Thomas Bradwardine taught his students how to memorize the signs of the zodiac by visualizing them as a series of gory mutilations. As Nietzsche was later to theorize, pain is the ‘strongest aid to mnemonics’ (100). Violence in the classroom was a device to ensure that students would not forget what they had been taught; violence in the theatre was thought to operate in a similar way, as dramatic action oscillated between violence and play. To the extent that plays were regarded as pedagogical devices, they shared with the classroom a devotion to violent means of flogging the memory and the will.

Enders points out that language is itself a ‘matter of force’, as Roland Barthes has argued (160). The terminology of catharsis is one of pathology and pain. The properties of medieval plays run heavily to rocks, cudgels, knives, daggers, whips, and the like. John Gattton says it eloquently in his memorable title, ‘There Must be Blood’ (193). Jody Enders’ evocation of the medieval theatre of cruelty brilliantly captures what is so important and abiding about this concept of theatre, in a book that is both learned and daring.

DAVID BEVINGTON

Edward J. Esche (ed). *Shakespeare and his Contemporaries in Performance*. Aldershot, VT: Ashgate, 2000. Pp xii, 364.

In his consideration of ‘Shakespeare and Cultural Tourism,’ Dennis Kennedy comments on the postwar Shakespeare festivals that proved so crucial to the