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978-0-521-89953-6 - Aliens and Englishness in Elizabethan Drama

Lloyd Edward Kermode

Frontmatter

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IN ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

Covering a wide variety of dramatic texts and performances from 1550 to 1600, including Shakespeare's second tetralogy, this book explores moral, historical, and comic plays as contributions to Elizabethan debates on Anglo-foreign relations in England. The economic, social, religious, and political issues that arose from inter-British contact and Continental immigration into England are reinvented and rehearsed on the public stage. Kermode uncovers two broad 'alien stages' in the drama: distinctive but overlapping processes by which the alien was used to posit ideas and ideals of Englishness. Many studies of English national identity pit Englishness *against* the alien 'other' so that the native self and the alien settle into antithetical positions. In contrast, *Aliens and Englishness* reads a body of plays that represents Englishness as a state of ideological, invented superiority – paradoxically stable in its constant changeability, and brought into being by incorporating and eventually even celebrating, rather than rejecting, the alien.

LLOYD EDWARD KERMODE is Associate Professor in the Department of English, California State University, Long Beach. He is the editor of *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, and co-editor, with Jason Scott-Warren and Martine van Elk, of *Tudor Drama before Shakespeare, 1485–1590: New Directions for Research, Criticism, and Pedagogy*.

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For aliaunts and butterboxes

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NOTE ON THE FRONTISPIECE

The frontispiece and cover illustration is from Jost Amman's *Gynaeceum, sive, Theatrum mulierum* [*The Theatre of Women*] (1586). The book is a collection of prints from fine wood engravings, each image accompanied by eight lines of Latin text by François Modius (1556–97). The title-page notes that the book is designed to present 'The female costumes of all the principal nations, tribes, and peoples of Europe . . . in commendation of the female sex, and for the especial gratification of such as by their manner of ordinary life, or from other causes, are hindered from distant travel, but at the same time take pleasure at home in the costume of various people, which is a silent index of their character.'¹ Costumed appearance of figures is of primary importance throughout this study as various dramatic 'types' and disguises question early modern notions of social, political, gendered, and religious 'character'. Amman's 'married lady of London' is what Pisaro's daughters are aspiring to in their attempt to shed their Portuguese nationality in William Haughton's *Englishmen for My Money*. This matron also, according to the dedicatory letter by the printer Sigmund Feyerabend of Frankfurt (1528–90), represents a moral goodness that we see being strived for in Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London*. The text accompanying the image tells us that Amman's London matron has rosy cheeks deserving of a wealthy husband. She is thus a poignantly optimistic version of *Three Ladies'* Lady Conscience, who is by contrast offered the stability of marriage only by the laughable Simplicity and whose 'reddy and white' 'cheeks' attract the wealth of corrupted Lady Lucre. Amman's presentation of women, and Feyerabend's covert *instruction* of women, as on one hand a locus of national glory and praise and on the other hand the obvious site for corruption and failure to maintain moral uprightness, are further touchstones for the interplay of gender, national security, cross-border

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traffic of bodies and habits, wealth, and religious conscience in the comedies and histories discussed in *Aliens and Englishness in Elizabethan Drama*.

NOTE ON QUOTATIONS

Quotations from early modern texts have retained original spelling with the exceptions of silent i/j and u/v correction and modern title capitalization.

Quotations from Shakespeare are taken from *The Norton Shakespeare*, 2nd edition (2008).

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Rewritten sections of two previously published essays appear in Chapters 3 and 5: ‘The Playwright’s Prophecy: Robert Wilson’s *The Three Ladies of London* and the “Alienation” of the English’, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 11 (1999): 60–87; and ‘After Shylock: the “Judaizer” in England’, *Renaissance and Reformation* 20 (1996): 5–25.

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