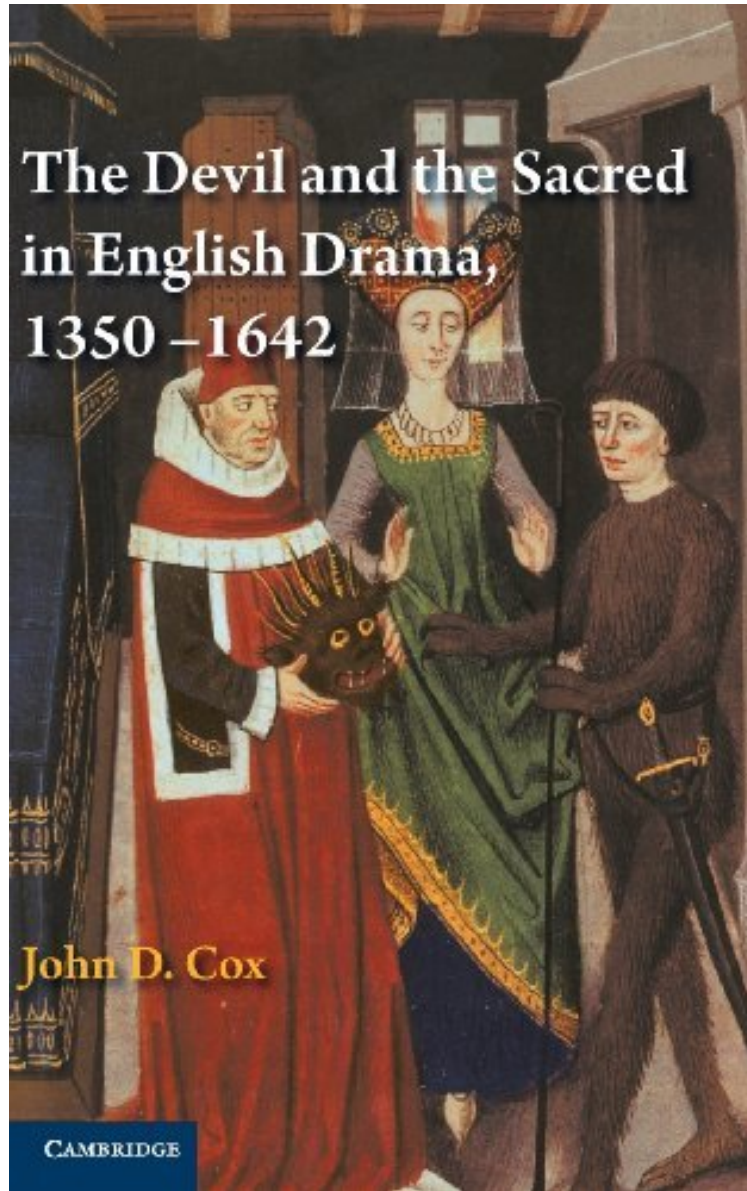


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## The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama, 1350ndash;1642

*John D. Cox*

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**John D. Cox : The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama, 1350ndash;1642** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama, 1350ndash;1642:

John Cox tells the intriguing story of stage devils from their earliest appearance in English plays to the closing of the

theatres by parliamentary order in 1642. The book represents a major revision of E. K. Chambers' ideas of stage devils in *The Medieval Stage* (1903), arguing that this is not a history of gradual secularization, as scholarship has maintained for the last century, but rather that stage devils were profoundly shaped from the outset by the assumptions of sacred drama and retained this shape virtually unchanged until the advent of permanent commercial theatres near London. The book spans both medieval and Renaissance drama including the medieval Mystery cycles on the one hand, through to plays by Greene, Marlowe, Shakespeare (1 and 2 Henry VI), Jonson, Middleton and Davenant. An appendix lists all known devil plays in English from the beginning to 1642.

"...Professor Cox convincingly reevaluates the role of the Devil in early drama and establishes this evil character as in opposition to the social and religious good - in other words, as embodying a function of perversity to fit all situations." *The Early Drama, Art, and Music* "Cox is a careful and insightful reader of dramatic literature from mystery and morality plays through early Protestant drama to the flowering of the Renaissance stage... Valuable and thought-provoking." *Religion and Literature* "This is a good work and I wish I had been able to consult it for my own..." *Bibliothèque d' humanisme et Renaissance* "If you wanted to see a God-like figure nonetheless, the players are glad to provide, for a price, a distant, tantalizing glimpse." *Christianity and Literature* About the Author John D. Cox is Professor of English at Hope College, Michigan. He has taught at Westmont College, the University of Victoria BC, Harvard University, Calvin College and the University of California at Berkeley. His books include *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power* (1989) and *A New History of Early English Drama*, co-edited with David Scottt Kastan, which was chosen as the winner of the 1997 Best Book of the Year Award by the American Association for Theatre in Higher Education.