



The Places of Wit in Early Modern English Comedy

Adam Zucker

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What is wit made out of in the comedies of Shakespeare, Jonson, Shirley and their contemporaries? What does it hide? What does it reveal? This book addresses these questions by turning to the relationship between comic form and local history. Explorations of familiar sites, including Windsor Forest, Smithfield, Covent Garden and Hyde Park, are matched with close readings of drama that focus on overlays between theatrical, spatial, narrative and social conventions. Dramatic comedy's definitive interest in cultural competency and incompetence, and wit and witlessness, is revealed through discussions of commerce, gambling, royal forests and new or newly public spaces in and around early modern London. Along with Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and Ben Jonson's *Epicene* and *Bartholomew Fair*, special emphasis is placed on the neglected town comedies of the 1630s - the forerunners of the Restoration comedy of manners and satirical realism of our own day.

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