

- 38 See Richard Halpern, *Shakespeare Among the Moderns* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997); John J. Joughin, ed., *Philosophical Shakespeares* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Bristol, McLuskie, and Holmes, eds, *Shakespeare and Modern Theatre*.
- 39 Hugh Grady, *Shakespeare's Universal Wolf: Studies in Early Modern Reification* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); 'Renewing Modernity: Changing Contexts and Contents of a Nearly Invisible Concept', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 50 (1999): 268-84; *Shakespeare, Machiavelli and Montaigne: Power and Subjectivity from Richard II to Hamlet* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002).
- 40 See particularly, Grady, *Shakespeare, Machiavelli and Montaigne*, pp. 1-25, 27-57, 109-25, 243-65.
- 41 Ton Hoenselaars, ed., *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation* (London: Thomson, 2004); Yves Bonnefoy, *Shakespeare and the French Poet*, ed. John Naughton (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2004); Sonia Massai, ed., *World-Wide Shakespeares: Local Appropriations in Film and Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005).
- 42 See the epigraph to this article, and n. 1.

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'Eke out our performance with your mind': Teaching Shakespeare in the New Millennium

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R. E. Salome and J. E. Davis, eds, *Teaching Shakespeare into the Twenty-first Century* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1997).

Joseph Olivieri, *Shakespeare without Fear* (Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers, 2001).

Louis Fantasia, *Instant Shakespeare* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002).

P. Skrebel and V. van der Hoeven (eds), *For All Time? Critical Issues in Teaching Shakespeare* (Kent Town, SA: Wakefield Press, 2002).

Lisa Hopkins, *Beginning Shakespeare* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

There are hundreds of How-to-Teach-Shakespeare books flooding the market, and more tomes pile up annually. Some are geared to elementary and high school teachers, others to teachers of literature and drama at tertiary level, and of course many too are aimed at current performers of Shakespeare. Having directed or performed about half of Shakespeare's canon, as well as having created many anthology plays based on his work, I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to bring life to Shakespeare. I have also been privileged to work at London's rebuilt Globe Theatre. Although the experience of playing Shakespeare outdoors is not new, that of playing in this reconstructed space is, and lessons from that experience cannot help but have affected all my subsequent work and readings. This article will examine five recent texts that, with varying levels of success, discuss varying approaches to opening up his works. The scope is wide and the authors aim to assist both teachers and students of Shakespeare, whether from a practical hands-on approach to the text or through an analytical theoretical approach.

A good place to start is Lisa Hopkins's *Beginning Shakespeare*. Providing practical help for university students, this text examines critical practices of studying Shakespeare from an academic rather than a hands-on approach. In a chronologically organized discussion, she begins with early reactions to his works. She records how his reputation was negatively affected by the English Civil War; how he was rediscovered in the Restoration, though often reworked, as in John Dryden's *All for Love* (drawn from *Antony and Cleopatra*); and how it was not really until the mid-eighteenth century that Shakespeare began 'to find admirers ... [when] Alexander Pope wrote about the erection of the monument to him in Westminster Abbey ... "After an hundred and thirty years' nap, / Enter Shakespeare, with a loud clap"' (p. 11). Within a century, Shakespearean critical analysis became an academic industry often reflecting current trends. In her Introduction Hopkins quotes the following poem from the magazine *Punch*:

I dreamt last night that Shakespeare's Ghost
Sat for a civil service post.
The English paper for that year
Had several questions on *King Lear*,
Which Shakespeare answered very badly
Because he hadn't read his Bradley. (p. 1)

As Hopkins examines the various critical waves that have either swamped or buoyed academic responses to Shakespeare, it is interesting to note which plays can be used to support a reading, and those that are ignored. For example, in her chapter 'Gender studies and queer theory', she notes how feminist criticism has 'focused on some plays at the expense of the relative neglect of others' (p. 136). From Walter Cohen's *Political Criticism of Shakespeare* she quotes: 'Broadly speaking the romantic comedies, the problem plays, and the romances have received sustained, favorable, treatment at the relative expense of the histories and tragedies' (p. 136). This may seem obvious; but the strength of this book, by contrast, is that more than one response to an approach is often explored.

One would expect that a book that examines such a broad range of Shakespeare study as critical history, psychoanalytical approaches, new his-

toricism and cultural materialism, new biography, editing, gender studies and queer theory, postcolonial criticism, and Shakespeare in performance, would be as massive as *The Complete Works*; but the volume is slim and to the point. Within each chapter are sections entitled 'Stop and Think'. Hopkins describes these as 'interactive exercises' (p. 2), enabling readers to check their understanding of the preceding analysis. Posing the questions in a conversational way, she may answer some, ask more, or leave them hanging. But should she comment, she advises her readers, 'it is important to stress that what I say is not the 'right answer', but merely one possible response; indeed it is one of the main points that there is no right or wrong answer where Shakespeare is concerned' (p. 2). For example, in the chapter entitled 'New Historicism', she asks:

- Do you see *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a work of fantasy or as a document revealing truths about Elizabethan culture or both?
- Does its genre affect and/or condition its meaning? (p. 77)

Her answer stresses that this play is a comedy and that 'genre is always a fundamental determinant of meaning in any Shakespeare play ... but comedy, as the old saying goes, is a serious business, and there is certainly a layer of harder, more troubling meanings' (p. 77). Such a response reminds students of the many layers in Shakespeare's works that can always be peeled back. Finally, at the end of each section is a comprehensive bibliography with further reading on the subject. This feature is also a strength in some of the other books to be discussed. *Beginning Shakespeare*, however, is something of a misnomer, as Hopkins assumes a greater knowledge of the plays than many a newcomer to critical studies of Shakespeare may possess.

Salome's and Davis's *Teaching Shakespeare into the Twenty-first Century* has something for everyone. Particularly helpful, due to the range and scope of the material, is that the chapters have been filed by subject: 'The Classroom: Language and Writing', 'Performance In and Out of Class', 'Approaches In and Out of Literary Theory', 'Beyond Traditional Settings and Approaches', 'Beyond the Text, and Into the Future'. Within these sections, a short synopsis of each article allows the reader to make the

choice whether to delve further. What makes this book even more user-friendly is that it 'is a collection of success stories, thirty-two essays written by middle school, high school and college teachers ... [who] record their best attempts at bringing Shakespeare and the student together in the 'classroom' of today and tomorrow' (p. xii). And, though the writers have diverse educational backgrounds, their accomplishments cross the board. As with *Beginning Shakespeare*, useful references are offered at the end of most chapters.

J. L. Styan's article 'The Writing Assignment: The Basic Questions' opens the book, in the section entitled 'The Classroom: Language and Writing'. To bring to life writing about Shakespeare, he encapsulates what all teachers aspire to:

We must ask ... what are the purposes of teaching Shakespeare in the first place, and the abiding principle is to know that his drama lies in the experience of it, and that any meaning can be found only there. It is crucial to remind oneself that the words on the page are to be seen as signals for the actors to pass on, refined and amplified, as new signals to their audience ... to turn a lifeless classroom into a seeing, hearing place. (p. 4)

The questions he asks of his students are 'What does the audience see, hear and think?'. Using clues within the text, starting with the simple example 'Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears', he lets his students discover what we see—more than one person; what we hear—noise to be stilled; what we think—as we react to the ensuing speech. By examining the plays in this manner, and then writing about them from an audience point of view, the 'class will be confirmed in the habit of reading a Shakespeare who is more lively, stimulating, and profound' (pp. 4-10). These questions are a recurring theme in many of the essays, and indeed are basic to what productions aim to answer.

A stimulating approach to bringing Shakespeare to life is seen in Mary T. Christel's and Christine Heckel-Oliver's 'Role-Playing in *Julius Caesar*'. Students are 'assigned roles that represent the people living outside the immediate world of the play' (p. 18). This involves research into the times,

which they enter in a journal, including the effect of Caesar's assassination on their lives, ultimately evolving into the discovery of their character's voice, which they perform. Such an exploration develops their knowledge of history and opens up their writing skills, as well as giving them an idea of performance, which in turn feeds back into their understanding of the play as theatre.

Flipping through the book, we share in teachers' frustrations and discoveries. Mary Z. Maher wonders if her Shakespeare in Performance class covered too much ground. Should she have sacrificed theatre to electronic media? Are they too different to teach in one course? In 'Teaching the Sonnets with Performance Techniques', Robert Pierce discovers how 'a student can learn a great deal about the creation of a dramatic voice by language and rhythm. About the value of trying to imagine a dramatic setting and audience, and about how to read poetry with real understanding' (p. 43).

The section 'Approaches In and Out of Literary Theory' expands some of the points introduced by Hopkins in *Beginning Shakespeare*. Paul Skrebels is concerned with the 'condition of aporia that causes many students to dismiss the text as boring, old fashioned, and irrelevant' (p. 82). Comparing the difficulty to deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics, Skrebels continues:

In our society, too, 'Shakespeare' and 'Shakespearean' can connote many things—usually associated with a hierarchy of cultural values—even for those who have never read a playtext or watched a performance. But what service are we doing students if our teaching of Shakespeare only reinforces such vague and possibly damaging associations and fails to achieve at least a few points of reconciliation between them and the text? (p. 83)

Paralleling themes from *Much Ado About Nothing* with recent sensational developments in the House of Windsor, Skrebels takes historicism in a different direction, coining the term 'transhistoricization' to make Shakespeare's plays more obviously relevant. This use of popular culture can

support and develop ways in which classroom teachers keep open

a dynamic space for Shakespeare. ... As Hamlet urges Polonius to see the acting troupe ... as 'the abstract and brief chronicles of the time', so should we teachers—frequently in danger of becoming Polonius-like in our opinions of our own learning—not scorn the use of the chronicles of our time to bridge the critical gap between 'universal human themes' and the specific historical and cultural circumstances of a text's production and reception. (p. 93)

'Textual Studies and Teaching Shakespeare', by C. W. Griffin, examines the dangers and problems of modern editing, which in attempts to simplify often complicate. He encourages the comparison of quarto and folio editions as well as early audience and reader response to the plays both read and played. At any level such comparisons can be illuminating. This chapter also complements Hopkins's discussion of editing in *Beginning Shakespeare*, and reminds us that there is more than one way to respond to the printed text. In fact, in another book discussed below, *Instant Shakespeare*, Louis Fantasia suggest that the punctuation be whited out, leaving each reader or performer the possibility to find his or her own edit, the phrasing of which will often be determined by the individual's breath.

Christine Warner's 'Building Shakespearean Worlds in the Everyday Classroom' parallels and links the 'three distinct but interpenetrating worlds: the world of the original text; the dramatic world that developed parallel to that text; and their own [the students'] personal worlds' (p.148). As part of the technique called 'process drama', integration of these worlds is explored through different strategies including: 'retelling, extension, elaboration, enactment of events in the original play, as well as the exploration of individual characters' motives and behaviors' (p. 149). She asserts that by using this process no play is too difficult, reminding us of what John Heminge and Henry Condell wrote in the First Folio, which was offered to 'The great Variety of Readers ... From the most able, to him that can but spell' (p. 152).

In 'Teaching *King Lear*', Michael Collins begins, 'As I always tell my students, each time I begin teaching the play, with *King Lear* literary critics

and English teachers get found out' (p. 166). This ability to acknowledge that there may be more than one reading, that the teacher or the critic may not be able to sum up a play definitively, may not even have all the answers, is a key to freeing up the teaching of Shakespeare. Throughout this book teachers describe the release this discovery gave them. In an earlier essay, Marie A. Plasse rethought her carefully planned classroom approach to Shakespeare by developing 'an enquiry based class procedure' (p. 124). This more improvisational approach to teaching 'was nerve wracking at first', but the 'process of working through the questions alongside students makes me feel more like a true participant in my classes ... it removes some of the loneliness of being a teacher' (p. 124). Michael Collins remarks that the uncertainties in *King Lear* parallel the uncertainties in life and that 'While our students inevitably look to us for certain answers about the play and sometimes about the world as well, we ought to have the courage to say that we do not have them, that we, like all who live, live in uncertainty and what answers we have ... are at best guarded, tentative, subject always to revision' (p. 170).

'Beyond the Text' features several essays discussing the use of film and video in the study of Shakespeare. In 'Teaching Shakespeare Through Film', Linda Kissler suggests, 'If you are not accustomed to teaching Shakespeare via videotape, one of the first—and most important—rules to follow is never introduce the film before your students are comfortable with the text' (p. 201). It is a choice teachers may make if they are insecure or fearful about teaching Shakespeare and believe that '(through a kind of literary osmosis?) their students would understand the play by watching it for two hours without interruption' (p. 202). As she says, 'the class went not to Agincourt—or Elsinore—but to sleep' (p. 201). Kissler feels that first the plays must be read aloud, as they were meant to be performed, and not seen 'silently and alone'. The entire film may then be viewed at the end of the teaching unit. Using the play of *Henry V* and Olivier's and Branagh's film interpretations, she takes us through her course, which combines reading short excerpts, discussing thematic, historical, and character development, and then introduces them to short film clips. Thus her students are enabled to discover gradually, for example, the different attitudes to war as portrayed in film and text. And in the best of all possible worlds:

If you have done your job well, you have given your students a unique and memorable experience; you, with the help of Laurence Olivier and Kenneth Branagh, have made Shakespeare—and his Henry—come alive. And perhaps you have whetted their appetites not just for the study of Shakespeare's plays, but for history ... geography ... linguistics ... acting ... directing. (p. 207)

A later chapter, 'Making Media Matter in the Shakespeare Classroom' by Sharon A. Beehler, complements Kissler's essay, offering even more practical information for a hands-on approach, including explanations of filmic devices. A series of 'Questions for Film and Videotape Versions of Shakespeare' (p. 251) examines the importance of the camera, the importance of the soundtrack, the pull of focus, so that 'By applying these questions to whichever videotaped play they are studying, students can begin to realize not only the stage director's influence on the production of the play-text but also the film maker's [increasing] awareness of the complexity of interpretation and ... the myriad of ways in which we have the world interpreted to us on a daily basis through the media as well as through more localized communications' (p. 251).

Although using American Shakespeare companies for her source material, in 'Shakespeare Festivals, Materials for the Classroom', many of the resources Eva B. McManus offers teachers can cross the hemispheres. These include: traveling companies, in-school residencies, teaching institutes, special community programs, printed materials. At the end of this invaluable chapter she lists twenty-four of the top Shakespeare Festivals in the United States including contact details. (Readers may be interested in the quarterly McManus edits, entitled *Shakespeare in the Classroom*, published by Ohio Northern University.)

The concluding section, 'Into the Future', takes readers into the exciting possibilities provided by the new information technology. The final two essays deal specifically with the limitless potential opened up by computer technology and the World Wide Web. Web resources for teachers are included as well as ideas on creating Shakespeare home pages, newsgroups,

electronic discussion lists, and so forth. No doubt some of this may already be outdated, as this book was published almost a decade ago. But it is a good introduction for those who haven't embraced these possibilities and it is not at all intimidating for those who are computer illiterate.

Paul Skrebels's and Sieta van der Hoeven's *For all Time? Critical Issues in Teaching Shakespeare* is a collection of twelve essays, which cover many of the same topics. An interesting aspect of classroom Shakespeare, particularly in secondary schools, is the limited choice of texts to be studied. In his essay 'Shakespeare, Hegemony and Assessment in New Zealand High Schools', Mark Houlahan discusses this shortcoming as a result of the influence of A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* and his insistence that *Othello* and *Hamlet* are the 'epitome of Shakespearean tragedy. Since tragedy has been held to be the "first form", by extension these plays become the quintessence of Shakespeare's genius' (p. 9). Therefore 'Teachers persist with these very difficult plays because in part they still wish to expose their classes to the best of what has been felt and thought'. Houlahan's table outlining Bursary Shakespeare Plays 1977-2003 (p. 8) shows that only fifteen plays from the canon were included. The most popular was *King Lear*, studied for seventeen years. *Othello* was the second most examined tragedy, and interestingly, although *Hamlet* was only introduced in 2000, in that year 73% of answers focused on that play and *King Lear*. Of the fifteen plays, only three comedies, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado about Nothing* and *As You Like It* were included, *As You Like It* having occurred twelve times over the period and *Twelfth Night* only once. *Henry IV Part 2* and *Henry V* represent the histories although the former was only on the list for four years. And *The Tempest* is represented for thirteen years. Surprisingly, neither *Julius Caesar* nor *Romeo and Juliet* is included. This selection of what examiners have chosen as 'the best' is not, alas, atypical. Most of the plays examined in this collection of books, particularly in those articles geared to high school level, are those listed in the New Zealand Bursary Shakespeare. The so-called 'problem plays' are not even highly featured in those essays dealing more specifically with tertiary studies.

When students are, however, presented with the 'problem plays' or those not considered important enough to be formally studied, the results can be

remarkable. The Shakespeare Globe Centre Australia (SGCA) has been running its National Youth Shakespeare Festival across Australia for more than fifteen years. High school students are asked to interpret through acting, music composition, choreography, and design a piece of Shakespeare in any way that brings it to life. Often they choose a non-syllabus text. Their response to these is not only refreshing but also often surprisingly sophisticated. For unlike those who have labelled some plays as problems or other plays not as significant as those selected for exams, these uncluttered minds bring to their work not the set preconceptions derived from previous research or theatre viewing but the imaginations of the first audiences who witnessed these plays: 'And make imaginary puissance ... Gently to hear, kindly to judge, [the] play' (*Henry V*, 1.Chorus). For example, four Year Ten dancers created Cleopatra's character by dancing facets of her character: the lover, the beauty, the warrior, the ruler. In *Troilus and Cressida*, Pandarus' excited description of the Greek warriors was set by two year eleven students in the stands at a football match, complete with football scarves and raucous cheering.

Outstanding participants are then selected to become part of the SGCA's National Youth Shakespeare Company. In earlier years thematic anthology plays were collaboratively created. More recently, however, the Centre has chosen plays that are less frequently produced. These have included *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Pericles*, and *Cymbeline*. Though a complete work is now the basis of this production, collaboration is still key. Before the beginning of rehearsals, therefore, actors, designers, choreographers, and composers are asked to send us their initial reactions to the selected play as well as to suggest production ideas. Here are the first thoughts from a Year Ten actor about *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

The way I perceive the 2 characters of Valentine and Proteus is that they are 2 young guys who are no different from any one else their age. They are immature, boisterous and even at times self-centered. They both want to stamp their authority on each other by seeing who can act more 'cool'. ... There is the usual teenager talk with Valentine acting all tough and Proteus falling for the girl. I find this scene so genuine and real ... These two characters

I think should be 16 and 18 and played exactly their age where they are immature etc ... We could in a very subtle way use the name of the play as a joke. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, We could make Valentine and Proteus anything but **2 gentlemen**. I think that the comedy throughout this whole play will be best expressed if we made the play modernized ... I believe the audience will appreciate all the characters, as they will be able to relate to them and understand what they are doing ... Also there is so much more to this play than 2 mates fighting for girls. The play explores the issue of loyalty to friends or the love for a girl ... I like *Two Gentlemen of Verona* as themes and issues that are explored in it are just everyday things that happen around me in my own life.

The production was finally set in the 1950s—the last time, as a Year Eleven composer wrote, when 'love should be a pure and wonderful partnership; and that such a thing entails commitment and duty. Also that the commitment to platonic and romantic love should not be nullified by passion'. And, as another participant remarked, 'divorce was not an everyday occurrence and parents still had authority'. So the music score became important, with a slight twist at the end, when the flavour of the more liberated 60s began to occur and helped the company come to grips with Shakespeare's throwaway treatment of Sylvia's threatened rape.

When young people respond to such a text with such relish and understanding, one wonders at the narrow selection of plays that students around the world must study to pass examinations. There must be a way to balance the choices between the perceived great plays and those that may, dare I say, be more fun and more relevant. Then more students, at whatever age they are when they first meet Shakespeare, can discover, as a young actor from the SGCA's *Love's Labour's Lost: The Remix* said, 'Shakespeare at first can be so intimidating, yet once you let go and dive face first into his world, you begin to realize that his world and our world are exactly the same, he just expresses it better'.

In *For all Time?*, Derek Peat further probes the issue of Shakespeare as exam-text in 'An Approach to Teaching Shakespeare: *King Lear* and The

New Senior English Syllabus in New South Wales'. He begins with the following, written in 1917 by an English schoolteacher, Caldwell Cook:

A visitor enquired of me recently, 'What do you do with a play of Shakespeare?' 'Act it', I replied. 'What else can you do with a play?' What the old-fashioned pedant could do with a play of Shakespeare is too well known to bear relation, but, incredible though it may seem, it is still rare to find acting the principal means of dealing with plays in school'. (p. 26)

Peat goes on to discuss with scepticism the requirements for the set text examined in the Higher School Certificate, and although acknowledging some changes in recent restructurings, he writes:

any government introducing changes to the ways English is taught needs to take with it an electorate suspicious of 'trendy' new approaches ... So with this new syllabus does Shakespeare still need saving? I suspect the answer remains 'Yes' because in the English course, in Cook's words, 'It is still rare to find acting the principal means of dealing with plays in school'. (p. 27)

This is not unusual across the globe, and is also elaborated on in Houlahan's article: as he says, the result of the English requirements in New Zealand is that 'Most will never again read a Shakespeare play; their Shakespeare inevitably will retain this conservative, non-dramatic, non-cinematic cast' (p. 13).

Fortunately the teachers represented in these books, many of whom are bound by literary rather than theatrical constraints, have been stretching the imposed limits in ways that may open a life-long appreciation of Shakespeare. Derek Peat's approach to *King Lear*, although satisfying HSC aims, is such an approach. He writes:

My own teaching of Shakespeare has always been informed by the belief that students learn best by working with the text through performance. If this is done under something approximating 'original' performance conditions, it can lead quite natu-

rally into an exploration of performances through time and of the ways in which the audience may value and respond. (p. 28)

Eschewing the video-first approach, he starts by having them read the play, keeping a log recording 'anything they choose—problems, difficulties or understanding, words or lines that catch their attention, and particularly their personal responses', and then gets them on their feet so 'that students can make the scene their own before they see how others have interpreted it' (p. 29). His lesson plan for *King Lear* is detailed and could give many teachers a new approach to the teaching of Shakespeare, even if it is only to help their students pass an examination.

As previously mentioned many of the essays in *For All Time?* expand on or complement other articles; however, a few chapters are worth touching on in more detail. Roger Ochse's 'Digital Shakespeare, Integrating Texts and Technology' is a hands-on approach to the use of digital recording in teaching Shakespeare:

Using a digital camcorder, students tape scenes from plays they are studying ... [They] are provided a structure, within which they are controlling production or meaning via the construction of visual text, which gives them a reason to read, to interpret, and to renew the printed text. As they tape, edit, reflect, and process their productions, students develop their creative and critical thinking ... Digital Shakespeare intertwines three principles: text as language, text as theatre, and text as student performance. (p. 47)

This is a way that allows video to be integrated into the learning process in an active rather than sedentary 'watch someone else's film approach'. As with Derek Peat's article, the 'how to's' are clear and inspirational.

Both Paul Skrebels and Mary T. Christel discuss adaptations and cuttings of Shakespeare, Christel focusing on *The Tempest*. Using the term 'textual intervention' (p. 56), Skrebels argues that playing around with text provides

a means of linking critical theory with classroom practice ... Rather than destroying Shakespeare's status, the explicit ideological agenda of the textual interventionist project ... actually reinvigorates him in the lives of students by putting him back in their world(s) also. (p. 57)

In his Shakespeare Reworked class, Skrebels's goal is for his students to own Shakespeare's works in their own way. He achieves this by getting them 'to examine the ways in which Shakespeare's plays have been reworked and reproduced over time, to explore the techniques and cultural and historical contexts that inform such representations, and to experiment with ways of reworking Shakespeare' (p. 56). At the end of this chapter he encapsulates the work of four of his students. One student created a comic strip "Confrontation at Dunsinane" as a presentation of Marvel Comics and DC Comics ... in conjunction with Immortal Bard Comics' (p. 59). The most radical was "Much ado about nothing: the SMS version" ... where Beatrice discusses her attitudes towards men and marriage with her uncles Leonato and Antonio, and turns it into a text message conversation between a modern young woman, B, and her gay clubber friend, Tony' (p. 63). This approach complements his essay in *Teaching Shakespeare into the Twenty-first Century*, which discussed transhistoricization as a means for achieving similar objectives.

Finally, Pavel Drabeck discusses the "noetic" of theatre, that is focusing on the cognitive aspect of experiencing a play while reading it' (p. 112). This develops J. L. Styan's earlier article which urged readers to place themselves in the audience, asking them to hear, see, and think as if they were watching a production. Examining specific plot constructions, Drabeck also poses questions: 'Where does the plot of the play begin? How does the "plotter" build up the story?' (p. 113). Following Una Ellis-Fermor, he asks, 'Why does Shakespeare not give us the murder of Duncan?' (p. 113). Or how does 'the author communicate off-stage happenings?' (p. 114). And what about time and "timelessness" and "nowhere-ness"?' (p. 115). Drabeck believes such questions assist us to 'analyse what techniques and tricks the dramatist uses to provoke the play in our mind' (p. 122). This is another approach which brings the page to the stage, albeit staged in the mind.

So far the books discussed have been mainly targeted to teachers in the secondary school or university environment, although woven in and out of these essays are practical exercises that could be useful to both director and actor. The last two books, *Shakespeare without Fear*, by Joseph Olivieri, and *Instant Shakespeare*, by Louis Fantasia, are predominantly aimed at performers, although Fantasia's subtitle is inclusive: *A Proven Technique for Actors, Directors, and Teachers*.

Shakespeare without Fear is subtitled *A User-Friendly Guide to Acting Shakespeare*. It is, however, among the most complicated and academic approaches to acting Shakespeare. Olivieri invents two students, Sam and Liz, creating stilted question-and-answer sessions about the various ways of learning how to act Shakespeare. Topics range from the essential books, which include *Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, published by Harcourt College Publications (who coincidentally published this book), to the analysis of soliloquies, monologues, language structure, etc. These are all important topics, but the pseudo-discussion sessions are off-putting. There are occasional good exercises, and a glossary of terms is worth photocopying, but reading the chapters is not a rewarding exercise. If one needs a director-actor dialogue in order to learn how to approach Shakespeare, the 1984 classic, *Playing Shakespeare*, by John Barton of the Royal Shakespeare Company, has not dated.¹ How can one improve on question and answer sessions which include such stars of the Shakespearean stage as Ian McKellen, Judi Dench, Sinéad Cusack, Ben Kingsley, and Patrick Stewart? It is an essential resource, and it works with or without the accompanying videos.

Instant Shakespeare on the other hand is lively, to the point, and it works. Drawing on the author's substantial experience at London's Globe Theatre, Louis Fantasia's method is easily understood and is truly 'Shakespeare without Fear'. The book is divided into two sections: 'Pre-performance—Instant Shakespeare' and 'Aspects of Performance'. The first part is useful for teachers, actors, and directors alike. The second part is more specific to performance practice, but not a waste of time for those who teach. Within the text Fantasia chats about his experiences at the Globe and what it has or has not yet achieved since reconstructed. It is a difficult stage to work

on for most modern actors, Fantasia says: ‘It is simply too big ... I believe that rather than occupying two or three of the exterior bays of the ‘wooden O’, the stage should have been set in front of those bays to produce a smaller circumference’. (p. 98). This debate continues among both scholars and those who have played the stage. Fantasia discusses the ‘enormous presence on stage and an abundance of physical energy’ (p. 98) of Shakespeare’s company, and compares them to

rock stars playing in Wembley Stadium or Central Park. There was no introspection here, at least not the kind permitted under a spotlight in an enclosed theatre. The introspection required was more along the lines of what one must think about before bungee-jumping off the Golden Gate bridge! (p. 99)

As mentioned in the first paragraph, Fantasia affirms how ‘working near the spot where the Globe once stood truly changes the scholar, the educator and the theatre artist’ (p. 101). When Fantasia wrote *Instant Shakespeare*, the Globe had been open for only four years, but his concerns, have, sadly, often been realized since. The theatre has failed to have a ‘truly international impact’ (p. 101); furthermore,

Unfortunately, with the authority of its research, craftsmanship, and privileged position near Shakespeare’s original theatre, the Globe, whether intentionally or not, misled audiences, teachers, and students of Shakespeare into believing what they saw on stage was what Shakespeare intended. This is what I call the Vaticanization of the Globe—the suggestion of the infallibility of its artistic judgments based upon the weight of its architecture and its sacrosanct location. What saddens me is that in the pursuit of this optional authenticity, the Globe has squandered an opportunity to create true theatrical events which engage and enlighten audiences. ... It contains great possibilities for presence—actor and audience contained in the same volume, sharing the same event at the same time. It has yet to happen. (p. 194)

But this criticism, shared by many, does not negate how this space can empower teachers, directors, and actors. Fantasia never regrets the ‘happy

accidents that allowed [him] to be present at the creation of the new Globe’ (p. 195), and indeed, as previously mentioned, it has defined his approach.

The phrase ‘Instant Shakespeare’ refers to simple formulas that Fantasia has coined which are then developed by practical work. For example in the chapter ‘Know What the Play is About—Central Event’, Fantasia writes:

‘About’ does not mean the plot or theme but rather the central event that underlies the play’s existence. It is the action that answers the question, ‘why did this author write the play?’ What lesson does the author want us to learn? What is he or she trying to tell us? (p. 78)

This seems obvious, but far too often in the search for meaning and interpretation ‘Shakespeare’ becomes so complicated that no wonder people are dumbstruck with fear. Fantasia offers us his simple signposts which he suggests we write out and keep in our pockets. In this chapter they are as follows:

What is the end of the play?
What is the tune?
What is the texture?
What is the play about?

Using *Hamlet* as one of his examples, he writes, ‘The end of a play is like a crime scene’ (p. 80). So, if Fortinbras’ last speech was the only part surviving, what key points would we learn about the play? He sums up: ‘There are intimations of large issues at work in this small fragment. These are the themes I would explore as I worked back through the play’ (p. 82). Continuing with *Hamlet*: What is the tune? If this was a musical, ‘the producers [would] want the audience to leave the theatre humming the theme’ (p. 84). In *Hamlet* perhaps it would be, ‘Something is rotten in the state of Denmark’, as throughout the play there are many images of decay and corruption including ‘Hamlet’s own rot, his inability to act ... [which] he describes ... as a ‘mole of nature’, a cancer that destroys otherwise noble men’ (p. 85). Then there is the ‘texture’, which is ‘tangible and three dimensional’. It is not only the practical realization of the text, costumes, set, and

so forth, but the ‘manifestation of human relationships’ (p. 87). Neither works in isolation but is ‘as the key signature in your music’ (p. 87). The final choices are made after trying ‘this, not that’ (p. 89), many times over the course of a rehearsal process. Ultimately, “‘What is the play about?’ means looking for the “why” of the play ... what’s hidden in the sand of Shakespeare’s language ... the impulse that answers the question “why, etc.?”” (pp. 90-91). Answers to each of these questions can finally be narrowed down to one brief phrase. To be able to do so succinctly is valuable not only for actors and directors but for teachers at all levels and students of all ages. All the ‘instant’ guidelines in Fantasia’s book are equally practical and constructive.

These five books illustrate the myriad ways in which Shakespeare can be taught across the board and on the boards. There should be something new to be found in them for every teacher of Shakespeare, no matter how expert. One would further hope that teachers of Shakespeare might be encouraged to explore an area that they haven’t touched, perhaps because of fear of the unorthodox. University professors might find refreshing ways to break academic staleness by trying some of the approaches that seem to be for younger students only. High school teachers might equally be inspired by some of the critical theory that may indeed (surprisingly) relate to their pupils.

In the Preface to *For All Time?* the artistic director of Australia’s Bell Shakespeare Company, John Bell, quotes from John Joughin’s chapter proposal:

the survival of Shakespeare inside and outside the classroom is caught up in a process which is interruptive, untimely and out-of-joint. This means that each encounter is singular, always a first time as well as a last time ... In this sense at least, then, teaching and theorizing Shakespeare cannot be part of some universal or ‘never ending’ process. Indeed, for most of us it and only ever be said to have just begun. (p. viii)

To accept gladly that one can never be absolute in one’s interpretation of

Shakespeare should be the goal of all who experience his works whether from behind classroom doors or when the curtain rises. As each class begins, teachers should feel the excitement of Henry V before Harfleur when he says, ‘I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips, / Straining upon the start. The game’s afoot: Follow your spirit’ (III.i.31-32).

NOTES

- 1 John Barton, *Playing Shakespeare* (London: Methuen, 1984).

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