Disjoint and Out of Frame?

Shakespeare in schools today: the issues

The following three short articles by Carol Atherton, Sean McEvoy and Helen Nicholson are based on talks given at an English Subject Centre conference on teaching Shakespeare, in London in May 2004. The speakers, all practising teachers and lecturers, were invited to talk about the issues confronting them in teaching Shakespeare in schools today.

Compulsory Shakespeare

Shakespeare in KS3 and KS4 English

Carol Atherton examines the effects of curriculum and assessment on the teaching of Shakespeare in the National Curriculum, and argues for creative resistance.

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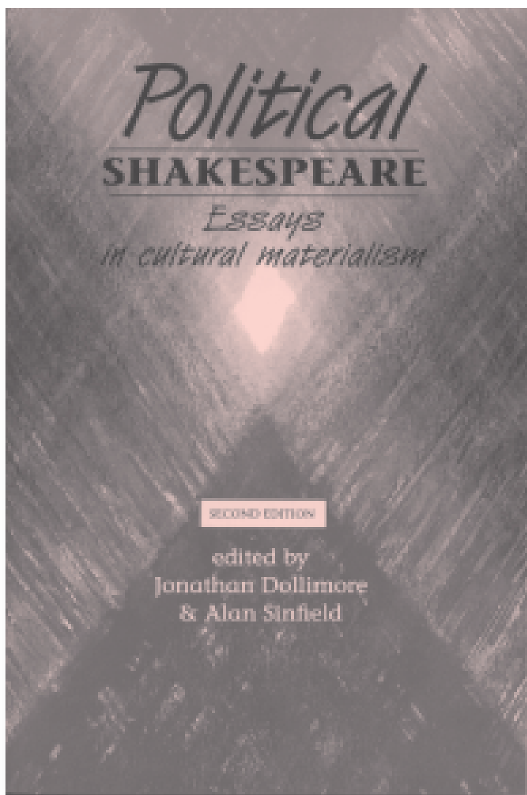
For many teachers, the KS3 English tests epitomise the very worst kind of Government intervention in the way that English is taught: they make the study of Shakespeare compulsory for all students yet treat his work in a manner that is frequently denounced as being dull, reductive and excessively bureaucratic. But in the last decade, they have also become such a focal point in the school year that it actually seems a long time since the study of Shakespeare was optional. Back in the 1980s, before the National Curriculum, things were of course very different. In fact, in 1983, one of the old CSE boards made the pronouncement that 'Candidates, particularly the less able, should be steered away from 'The Works of William Shakespeare''[1] - a statement that now seems to belong to another world.

Contesting Shakespeare

Since 1995, all students, regardless of ability, have had to study two of Shakespeare's plays during their secondary career - one in Year Nine, in preparation for the end-of-key-stage tests, and another as part of their GCSE coursework. Shakespeare is the only author whose study is actually prescribed by the National Curriculum, and clearly, this status has been very controversial, for reasons that are both educational and political. Some detractors have focused their objections on the elevation of Shakespeare as a cultural icon, and the use of Shakespeare to uphold a set of universal truths. One notable example of this particular school of thought is Alan Sinfield's polemically-titled essay 'Give an account of Shakespeare and Education, showing why you think they are effective and what you have appreciated about them. Support your comments with precise references'. In this essay Sinfield argues that Shakespeare is used to induct school students into a certain set of values: that his plays have been made to represent beliefs that are largely conservative and traditional, and that students are effectively coerced into assenting to these beliefs in order to get the grades they need. As a result, Shakespeare has become a valuable agent within an educational meritocracy: one of Sinfield's points is that questions that ask students for their personal response actually demand a response that has been learned.[2]

Other critics of compulsory Shakespeare have chosen to focus on the practicalities of teaching Shakespeare to all. In June 1993, a letter signed by over five hundred academics was published in the *Times Higher Educational Supplement*. This letter argued that Shakespeare may simply be inappropriate for some students. It stated: 'We are all committed to the study of Shakespeare; but to make such study compulsory for 14 year olds […] is to risk permanently alienating a large number of children from the pleasurable understanding of classical literary works.'[3] The sense was that Shakespeare could be divisive, even damaging. Those who didn't understand him, or whose responses didn't fit certain paradigms, would be excluded from Shakespeare forever.

It is, perhaps, predictable that those who question compulsory Shakespeare have often been depicted as progressivists denying children access to the riches of English literature. The journalist Melanie Phillips described the letter in the *Times Higher* as 'a monument to the state of degeneracy into which British intellectual life fell towards the end of the twentieth century.' Phillips also refers to the 'weasel words' of an 'elite' with the



power to 'destroy a culture and inflict upon the population its own self-destructive alternative'.[4] And the Prince of Wales has also involved himself in this debate. In his Shakespeare Birthday Lecture, delivered in 1991, the Prince lamented the fact that it was then possible for 'thousands of intelligent children' to leave school at sixteen without ever having read 'a single word of any one of [Shakespeare's] plays'.[5]

Balancing Shakespeare

Clearly, it's very easy to polarise arguments about Shakespeare. On the one hand, we've got the supporters of heritage and tradition. On the other, we have the teachers and academics who - according to certain elements of the popular press - want to dismantle the institution of Literature from the inside. Yet this is a very crude polarisation. What we've seen since Shakespeare became compulsory is a vast number of English teachers working to open up Shakespeare to pupils of all ages and abilities, to teach Shakespeare in ways that are neither stultifying, nor threatening, nor 'dumbed-down'. And it's significant that the reclaiming of Shakespeare is itself a process that has gained official sanction. The first version of the National Curriculum alerted teachers to the need to replace traditional desk-bound approaches with a much more active exploration of language, character and stagecraft.[6] And the revised National Curriculum Orders that were introduced in 1995 stated that 'Pupils should be encouraged to appreciate the distinctive qualities of [Shakespeare's] works through activities that emphasise the interest and pleasure of reading them rather than necessitating a detailed line-by-line study'.[7]

Nevertheless, it's fair to say that most English teachers find the teaching of Shakespeare an eternal balancing act, a matter of juggling demands that often seem irreconcilable. We all want our students to see the imaginative appeal of Shakespeare; but we also have to bear in mind the ways in which they will ultimately be assessed. We all want to be creative and experimental, but at the same time we must be prepared for the patient explication that many students will need in order to gain access to Shakespeare's language. And we all want to challenge our students to reach their potential - and must therefore be perplexed by the bizarre writing tasks set in the last few years of the Key Stage Three Shakespeare tests, parodied in an amusing series of spoof questions in the letters page of the *Times Educational Supplement* ('Macbeth has a tongue, which is also a type of meat. Write a story about a piece of meat').[8]

Mediating Shakespeare

The demands of assessment represent one of the major pressures that teachers of English must negotiate when teaching Shakespeare at Key Stages Three and Four. The new specifications at GCSE are unparalleled in the degree of prescriptivism they impose, and give teachers much less scope than before to set tasks that are appropriate to the needs and abilities of their groups. AQA Specification A, for example, states that coursework on Shakespeare must be a piece of formal literary criticism, taking in the effects of character, structure and stagecraft, and of Shakespeare's use of language.[9] This means that students can no longer submit an imaginative response as their Shakespeare coursework: if such writing is submitted, it must be as a piece of original writing for Unit 1. Moreover, the board also advises teachers to select a relatively narrow focus for their Shakespeare coursework, stating that 'candidates write best when they focus on quite small sections of a text' - perhaps only one scene.[10] The development of close literary analysis may well be fostered very effectively by such small-scale work, but the cost in terms of students' broader experience of Shakespeare is easy to imagine. The coursework completed by my Year Ten students several years ago - a piece of empathic writing as Henry V the night before Agincourt, requiring a knowledge of the whole play and a sophisticated understanding of the complexities of Henry V's character - would no longer fulfil the board's requirements. And the greater transparency of the assessment system has created further problems. The various Teachers' Handbooks and Examiners' Reports published by the exam boards have effectively acted to establish certain norms that come to assume the status of orthodoxy, recommending certain types of task and encouraging teachers to modify their work accordingly. What is intended to act as a support may therefore become a straitjacket: one potential vision of the future is of students across the country producing identical pieces of work that lose the range and richness that more imaginative approaches can offer.

One additional pressure that teachers often feel is the pressure to make Shakespeare relevant. Our students - and, quite often, their parents - may wonder why they need to study Shakespeare at all: why his works can't be replaced with texts that offer a much more immediate (some might say, more superficial) set of rewards. Of course, we can all think of ways in which Shakespeare still speaks to us very directly. We can think of productions of *Macbeth* and *Richard III* and *The Merchant of Venice* that emphasise Shakespeare's relevance to the twentieth and even the twenty-first century, and offer Baz Luhrman's *Romeo + Juliet* as a sop to show that Shakespeare can still speak to contemporary teenage concerns. But there's also a sense in which we

should resist allowing what we teach to be dictated by our immediate interests - or by those of our students. Students need to be engaged, but they also need to be exposed to texts and ideas that are, to some degree, quite alien. They need to face concepts, and language, that they may find difficult - and to be given the chance to recognise that what is strange and difficult can also be thought-provoking, or arresting, or even beautiful. And they also need to be given the chance to challenge Shakespeare, or elements of what Shakespeare has come to represent. We shouldn't forget that the original National Curriculum aimed to encourage a critical understanding of our culture, as well as passing on the cultural heritage.[11]

Appropriating Shakespeare

Earlier I quoted Alan Sinfield on the way in which Shakespeare has been used as a divisive force in education, an instrument of exclusion and alienation that left thousands of students feeling they were simply not good enough. Sinfield's essay was written in 1985, and to read it now is to find oneself in an educational world that seems very dated, with references to qualifications and exam boards that don't exist any more. But in some respects Sinfield's concern for Shakespeare is still very relevant today. I want to end by quoting what he says about his vision of Shakespeare in education. Sinfield writes: 'He does not have to be a crucial stage in the justification of elitism in education and culture. He has been appropriated for certain practices and attitudes, and can be reappropriated for others'. English teachers are, of course, renowned for their capacity for subversion, and their ability to teach 'against the grain'. Appropriating Shakespeare - and teaching him across all key stages in ways that are challenging, imaginative, and inclusive - should be a crucial part of what we do.

Notes

[1]North West Regional Examination Board: Certificate of Secondary Education, Reports on the 1983 Examinations.

[2]Alan Sinfield, 'Give an account of Shakespeare and Education, showing why you think they are effective and what you have appreciated about them. Support your comments with precise references', in *Political Shakespeare: new essays in cultural materialism*, ed. by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (1985) Manchester University Press, pp. 134-57

[3]Quoted in Melanie Phillips, *All Must Have Prizes* (1996) London: Warner, pp. 175-6

[4]ibid., p. 176.

[5]Charles, Prince of Wales, Annual Shakespeare Birthday Lecture, 22 April 1991, accessed online at http://193.36.68.132/speeches/education_22041991.html

[6]See Brian Cox, *Cox on Cox: An English Curriculum for the 1990s* (1991) London: Hodder and Stoughton, pp. 82-3

[7]*English in the National Curriculum* (1995) DFE

[8]Letter published in the *Times Educational Supplement*, 21 May 2004

[9]See AQA GCSE English 2005, Specification A, pp. 56-7; AQA GCSE English and English Literature, Specification A: Teachers' Guide, pp. 31-2, 43

[10]AQA GCSE English and English Literature, Specification A: Teachers' Guide, p. 32

[11]Cox, *Cox on Cox*, pp 21-2.

[12]Sinfield, 'Shakespeare and Education', p. 137

Theatre and Theory

Shakespeare in English A Level

Sean McEvoy argues that Curriculum 2000 has given A Level teachers and students a chance to rethink traditional lapproaches and engage theatrically and theoretically with Shakespeare.

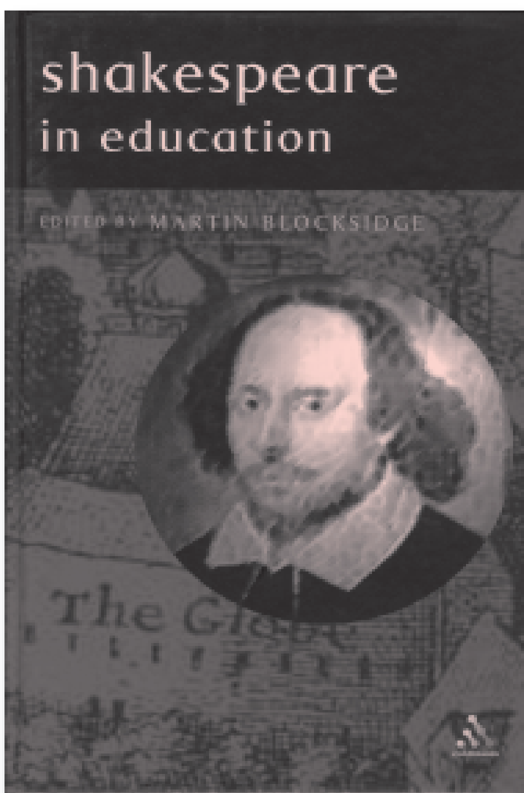
Sean McEvoy teaches English and Drama at Varndean College in Brighton and is the author of *Shakespeare: the Basics* (Routledge, 2000). Part of this article is based on an extract from McEvoy's chapter in *Shakespeare in Education*, edited by Martin Blocksidge and published by Continuum, reviewed in the review section of this issue.

Some years ago I heard an eminent professor of English declare at a conference that the trouble with A Level English is that it encouraged students to write about characters in texts as if they were their personal friends. A Level has changed since then. The assessment objectives which inform the current 'specifications', as we are now supposed to call syllabuses, commendably direct us to avoid that kind of approach. Despite that, a very traditional manner of teaching Shakespeare is still very much alive in A Level classrooms. I want to mention today just two issues in teaching Shakespeare at A Level at the moment, both of which are concerned with ensuring that our students understand Shakespeare in the appropriate contexts. Above all I want our students to be excited by Shakespeare. Here are some ideas about how to ensure that happens, I think.

In performance

The key is to start from the plays' theatricality and then to keep on stressing that. This means putting performance in front of a responding audience, either in theory or in practice, at the heart of everything we do and,

furthermore, it means encouraging the visualisation of the action as happening on stage. This might seems an obvious point, but in fact our students almost always tend to think first of performance in terms of film and TV. This means that two crucial ideas in understanding Shakespeare can be lost. First of all, in film and TV there is only one definitive version of the performance. The enormous richness of interpretation that depends upon the choices made by the actor and by the production can be lost. The idea that the action is not to be seen from one perspective, but from many, simultaneously, is important, as is the crucial awareness that the actors are addressing a live audience in real time, sometimes directly. Film has a monumental quality, freezing and arresting the live potential of the text in living performance. What I am saying is of course true of all theatre. But that particular monumentality in the classroom can only exacerbate a tendency which A Level students have to be intimidated by the iconic cultural status of Shakespeare. For some this means that the real 'meaning' of Shakespeare is something that others possess, 'others' who enjoy a socially or intellectually higher status than them in some respect. For some students this monumentality causes them to reject Shakespeare as the possession of others for whom they have no affinity. Film - or for that matter over-dogmatic front-of-class pontificating by teachers - is a hindrance to their own appropriation of these plays; a barrier to bringing these words and scenes into their own personal and political consciousness. Yes, I use film in bursts - but contrasting bursts from different films if possible. Radio versions are excellent for 'first readings' of some scenes. But there is no substitute for some kind of live performance in the classroom, read, or even better staged by the students and teacher together.



It only takes a core of students in any class to be prepared to take this task on - and there any many gentle steps or grizes whereby you can lead a class there, and much good published advice on how to achieve this. And once you get this going, the 'difficulty' of the language tends to fall away. The live dramatic situation, the understanding of what the character wants in that scene at that point in the play provide an underlying structure of comprehension which the difficult words and phrases either adorn or partially occlude, but you'll carry the class with you. There are also plenty of excellent and accessible accounts of the play in performance which we can make available to our students. The use of these always illuminates and challenges.

I am sure in this company it might seem strange that I even bother to mention that Shakespeare must be taught as theatre, but in sixth forms today the apparently intimidating content of the new specifications can easily drive us back into more cautious approaches. So this is an appeal for us to stick to our guns.

Text and context

The second context I want to mention is contemporary critical theory. The tides of structuralist and post-structuralist criticism may well have partially receded from the university study of English, but what the 'theory' revolution has established firmly is the necessity of reading texts inside history, and not in some idealized nowhere-place. This means that we read texts as products both of their time and place and within a discourse about them which has been created by the historical circumstances in which we find ourselves now. The new assessment objectives can thus be seen as the bringing up-to-date of English Literature A Level; as the dissemination of the accepted ideas at the highest levels of study into schools and colleges. As Robert Eaglestone has argued in a an important and influential book, A Level English had become dominated by a world-view:

that was developed as a subject in the first half of the twentieth century. Among other things this turns potentially exciting literature into bland exam fodder ... All this risks making English into a subject studied *as a bland ritual, a 'heritage' subject.*[1]

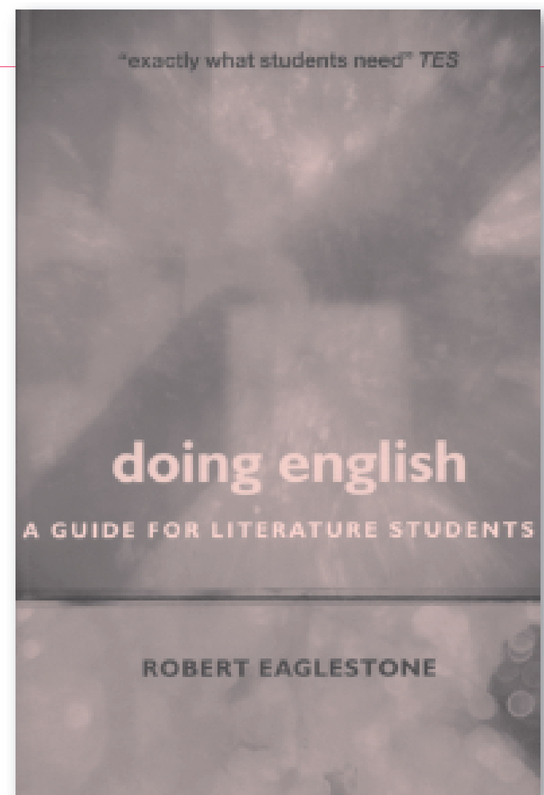
What other academic subject would teach an approach and indeed a content at A Level that was now almost entirely superseded in the universities?

At the Brighton sixth form college where I work we do not accept that there can be such a thing as unmediated contact between student and text; we do not believe that a response to a play can be made without the involvement of contextual factors. We think that in what might be called the 'traditional' approach a whole host of interpretations and contextual factors are in fact brought to the reading of the text, but remain unacknowledged and therefore unexamined. Students have been aware of Shakespeare and forced to study him by statute throughout their school careers. As a cultural icon and emblem of Englishness he has a presence for them in the world beyond the classroom. The kind of unspoken attitudes which students bring to Shakespeare at A Level tend to include a notion that they are reading 'the greatest author in the world' - though, when challenged, they cannot generally articulate what that might mean without falling back on the well-inculcated notion that his work contains 'universal' truths and wisdom, usually about 'human nature'.

They are also aware that an ability to read and to

appreciate Shakespeare is a marker in our society of being educated and intelligent, an idea which curiously enough seems to go back as far as Hemmings and Condell's Preface to the First Folio: 'read him therefore, and again and again. And if then you do not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger not to understand him'. If you don't like Shakespeare, it is because you aren't bright enough to understand him. Neither do students come to us naive of the critical tradition. The extraordinary tenacity of A.C. Bradley's now century-old opinion on 'the tragic flaw', widely held and known by students, is quite remarkable. Characters, they also believe, should be 'credible'; there should also be some virtuous ones with whom they can identify. None of this obviously contextual opinion is produced by direct contact with the text, as a 'personal response'. It is all, obviously, open to question. At my college we approach the study of Shakespeare with a different set of contextual opinions; but we are open and explicit about them, and so they are able to be challenged.

Some teachers think that an approach influenced by literary theory, even the kind of historicism we practice, is too advanced for this age group. But our students are quite familiar with the ideas of genre, audience, representation and ideology from their Media Studies and Social Science lessons. Those also studying Drama will have some acquaintance with Brecht's and Boal's ideas about performance. Some teachers claim that there is not time to introduce the contextual material that students require; we cannot see that they can come to adequate understanding of the text without it. What kind of understanding can a seventeen year-old have of Othello without knowledge of Venice and the Turks, Moors, Machaivelli, the romance tradition, courtly love and so on? It is not as if it is possible to read the text without inter-preting at the same time; all under-standing involves interpretation. Love, race and gender are complex notions and were not under-stood in London in 1604 in the same way as they are in Brighton in 2004. There are not universal values in the plays, but historically specific ones. Once students are aware of this they gain a perspective which allows them to be critical of the way concepts like race and gender are used in a superficial and even sinister way in our own society.



Shakespeare is contemporary because the plays are alive in our theatres and classrooms today, but it isn't contemporary at all in another obvious sense. In that gap the stretches a perspective of enormous educational value.

Notes

[1]Robert Eaglestone, *Doing English* (first edition) (2000) London: Routledge, p. 130

Hamlet's Chips

Shakespeare and Progression

Helen Nicholson suggests that we can improve our students' experience of Shakespeare from primary school to A Level and beyond by reconciling theory with practice, English with Drama, and creativity with criticism.

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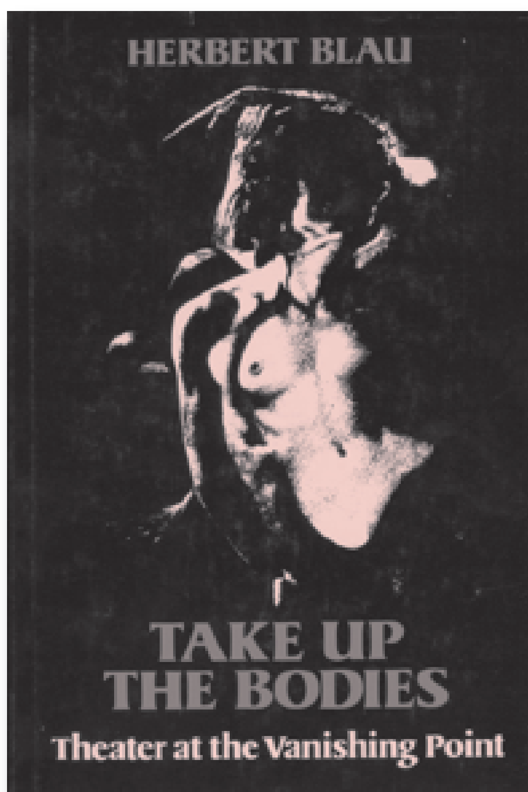
A few years ago I was invited to observe student teachers working on *Hamlet* with children in Year 3. At the time, I doubted the wisdom of this choice of play for this age group but I was intrigued to see what they would make of it in a primary classroom. The student teachers had chosen to work on the play using a mixture of storytelling, role-play and very short extracts of the text performed with the children. Using their knowledge of the work of Peter Reynolds, Rex Gibson, Sarah Gorman and other educationalists with an interest in Shakespeare in schools, they aimed to encourage the children to become familiar enough with the story to make creative decisions about how it might be told, and to introduce them to the language of the play through experimenting physically and vocally with key lines and phrases.

When I arrived the children were working on the Mousetrap scene. By exploring the lines 'The play's the

thing/Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king', they had understood that the main point of the scene was to observe the reactions of King Claudius. I observed the class busily choreographing a banquet scene which framed the play-within-a-play - there would be tumblers and jesters and other entertaining acts to create a festive atmosphere. They had decided that guests would be served with cold meats with the neat logic that King Claudius and Queen Gertrude must like the dish as they ate it at their wedding. As the food was served, a little girl solemnly in role as a maid approached the royal party with her imaginary plates of food. She bowed respectfully: 'Here you are King Claudius, here are your cold meats'. Turning to Gertrude, she repeated the line, 'here you are Queen Gertrude, here are your cold meats'. She moved along to Hamlet. Her tone changed from one of solemn respect to a conspiratorial whisper: 'Here you are Prince Hamlet, eat up your chips'. Later, I had the opportunity to ask the girl why she had given Hamlet chips. She replied without hesitation - 'he needs a bit of cheering up' and added, confidentially, that it had been hard for Hamlet as his dad had died and his mum had 'gone off with someone else a bit quick'.

One of the reasons why this workshop has become so vividly rooted in my mind is because I realised that my scepticism about *Hamlet* as a choice of play for seven year olds was ill-founded. What I learnt from these children was that I had underestimated the potential for this play's narrative to speak in different ways to those who identify or empathise with Hamlet's unhappy predicament. The children were emotionally and physically engaged with the story, and their first experience of Shakespeare had given them insights into the characters which were both personally reflexive and intellectually challenging. If this level of embodied understanding of *Hamlet* is possible at the age of seven, I wonder how we, as teachers of drama and English, might sustain young people's enthusiasm and develop their understanding of Shakespeare's plays as they progress through the Key Stages.



In this brief discussion I should like to focus on the implications for progression, challenging the perception that progression involves ever-increasing critical detachment from the play. I am interested in working through how we can erode unhelpful binary divisions between theory and practice, creativity and criticism, English and Drama, between an embodied understanding of live theatre and literary analysis. My argument is not that, as curriculum areas English and Drama should blend into one amorphous whole, but that we might recognise that there are similar intellectual concerns and creative processes which inform a range of artistic practices and readings of Shakespeare. This, it seems to me, is a debate about understanding how shared interests are articulated in the division of labour between literary critic, theatre critic, actor, director, designer - and all those who contribute to Shakespeare studies and to the process of making Shakespearean theatre.

The Shadow of Theory

The key distinction between the curriculum areas of English and Drama in relation to Shakespeare lies in assessment. In English, students are assessed on their ability to write about Shakespeare's plays whereas in drama they are more likely to be assessed as active theatre-makers. It may be that in English students are asked to write about directing, designing or acting, but it is quite possible to achieve high marks without any actual ability to communicate as performers, to realise a design or to manage a cast as a director. In drama lessons, students are of course required to write about theatre-making, but there is also an emphasis on demonstrating a practical understanding of plays in performance. Furthermore, although classroom activity in English is likely to include much group work, students are assessed primarily as individuals whereas in drama the emphasis on collaborative practice is often recognised by awarding group marks. There are, however, clear areas of overlap and similar understandings which inform critical practitioners of theatre and creative literary critics.

The American theatre academic Herbert Blau has written that 'Theatre is theory, or a shadow of it. In the act of seeing, there is already theory' (Blau, 1982,1). The different modes of assessment in English and Drama point to ways of working which, whilst recognising the disciplinary boundaries of the subjects, are complementary in the sense that both forms of readership are dependent on the inter-relationship between theory and practice which is inherent in the act of seeing. It is no longer the case that drama can be associated with making and doing and English with thinking. On the contrary, in both contexts theory and practice are mutually embedded, and for theatrical theory to be fully productive it needs to be linked with the processes and crafts of performance. In other words, theory and practice are not separate processes or modes of thought, with one based on action and another on reflection. They are interdependent and constantly in flux. Gilles Deleuze, in conversation with philosopher Michel Foucault, has identified the relationship between theory and practice.

At one time, a practice was considered an application of theory, a consequence; at other times, it had an opposite sense and it was thought to inspire theory, to be indispensable for future theoretical forms. .. The relationships between theory and practice are far more partial and fragmentary… Practice is a set of relays from one theoretical point to another, and theory is a relay from one practice to another. No theory can develop without eventually encountering a wall, and practice is necessary for piercing this wall. (Foucault and Deleuze,1977, 205-206)

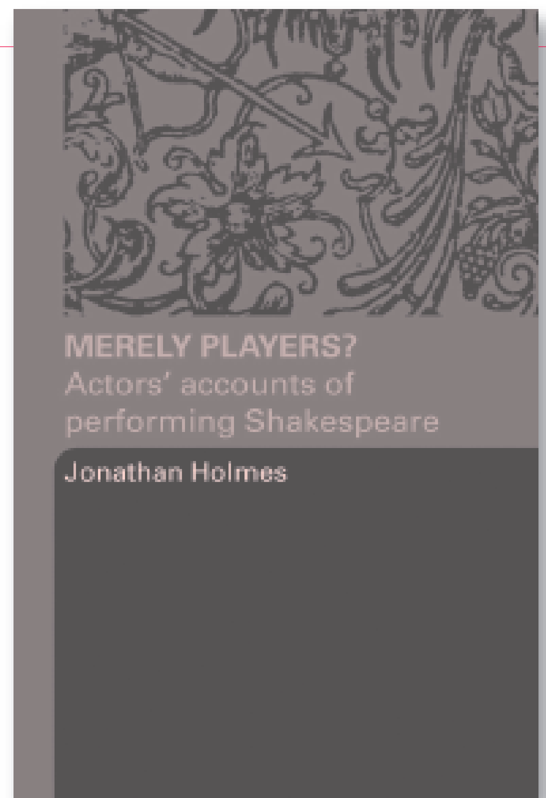
In relation to the teaching of Shakespeare, and particularly now that it is acknowledged that no reading however practice-based can ever be ideologically neutral, this way of thinking generates questions about what kinds of theoretical shadows lurk in our drama studios and English classrooms.

Blau's association of theory with seeing offers a useful reminder that, in theatre as in education, theory is not only concerned with the abstract and cognitive but also with physicality and the senses. Hearing and movement, as well as seeing, are integral to theatrical theorising and their interaction leads directly to students' perception and conceptualisation of Shakespeare's plays as live performances. Traditional dualistic oppositions between mind and body, writing and speech, process and product, presence and absence become unfixed in discussions of live performance, particularly where audiences and theatre-makers continue to 'process' the production long after the performative event.

The Presence of Ghosts : Shakespeare and Progression

In teaching Shakespeare, my contention is theory and practice are always complexly and contingently inter-related. This is fuelled by both the literary histories and theatrical genealogies which haunt Shakespeare's plays, and none more so than Hamlet. In his study of actors' accounts of performing Shakespeare, Jonathan Holmes records that there are many inherited readings and theatrical processes which influence contemporary performances of the play, and that many actors (Derek Jacobi, Kenneth Branagh, Richard Burton, Laurence Olivier to name but four) have themselves recorded the impact of seeing productions of Hamlet on their careers and own performances in the title role (Holmes, 2004, 99). In other words, in tracing this genealogy, actors are continually aware of the haunting presence of the ghosts of previous Hamlets against which they will be compared.

What, then, do these shadows of theory and Hamlettian ghosts imply for progression in the teaching of Shakespeare? My suggestion is that progression is achieved when students gain an ever-expanding repertoire of theoretical and practical readings of Shakespeare's plays. The divisions between the personal, the cultural and the intellectual might be eroded when students become aware of the consonance and dissonances between their own histories and the cultural production of ideas evident in the history of Shakespearean production.



Progression in English and drama is supported when students have a clear and explicit understanding of how theatre is made, and are able to articulate their ideas in different ways and for different audiences knowing that they are working with specific modes of production - such as literary criticism, direction, design and performance. All these separate practices require a robust interrogation of theory in practice, and require practice to be tested against theoretical readings. By suggesting these principles of progression, I am also rejecting any suggestion that moving from personal response to increasingly disinterested critical judgements is the only way to measure and value progress.

I am reminded here of bell hooks, who argues passionately for a way of thinking about both theory and practice as social production. She describes how she saw in theory a 'location for healing', a way of looking at the world differently, a focus for asking risky questions (hooks, 1994, 59). Neither thought nor action is without a theoretical foundation, hooks claims, however implicit, and theory can be as creative as more obvious forms of practical action. This way of thinking about the social and personal significance of both theory and practice might be usefully applied to the teaching of Shakespeare in schools if we are to maintain and develop the interest of the little girl who once served Hamlet with chips.

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