

“Pedagogy and the Performance of Learning in Shakespeare’s England”

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The Two Performing Schoolmasters: Performing Professionalization in Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*

Shakespeare’s England serves as the ideal sociological, historical, and literary landscape for confronting a legacy of professionalization among educators. During an era in which occupational groups began to professionalize, teachers—from domestic tutors, to grammar schoolmasters, to university dons—emerged as a vital core of an educationally-conscious and theatrical society. Many early modern educators incorporated drama in their classrooms, and some acted or wrote for the stage. Because of their placement within an inherently educational and dramatic culture, schoolmasters did not enjoy the status and recognition of other more established professional groups. Given the theatricality of the classroom, I argue that the early modern stage makes the precariousness of these professionals particularly visible via the dramatic representations of their work. Beyond reflecting the reality of many schoolmasters’ situations, I suggest that on-stage performances of the profession informed or shaped their contemporary professionalization efforts.

With the proximity of performance and pedagogy serving as my critical lens, my paper considers how dramatic representation and elements of performance appearing in two of Shakespeare’s comedies, *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, construct the schoolmaster’s professional status. Away from the institutional protections of the schoolhouse or the sheltering enclave of the university, Holofernes of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and Gerald of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, exist in an environment in which their learned and professional status appear to have little political, social, or cultural bearing. As objects of mockery, neither Holofernes nor Gerald performs socially fulfilling educational work. Instead, they each engage in and direct performances unrelated to their job descriptions; Gerald leads a morris dance, and Holofernes participates and directs the play of the nine worthies. My paper seeks to understand how the secondary performances by Holofernes and Gerald affect the professions they represent (and perform) on stage as schoolmasters.

Anna Riehl Bertolet, Auburn University

Virtues and Vices of Teaching Stitching in Early Modern England

Traditionally, women’s activity of creating needlework is presented as a safe, wholesome, and commendable alternative to a deeply risqué pursuit of writing. Indeed, time and again in the early modern period, women are urged to stitch rather than to write, to stick to needles and distaff as their tools, leaving pens to men. According to this narrative, writing is associated with speaking one’s mind, independence, and fueling of the passions. Needlework, on the other hand, nurtures self-discipline, industry, and production of material goods. The common practices of educating girls in the period corroborate these views: girls were less likely than boys to be taught how to read, and even fewer of them learned how to write. In contrast, needleworking skills constituted a staple of the curriculum in girls’ education.

These traditional ways of gendering the activities of writing and stitching have, of course, met with resistance, but what needs to be considered more deeply is less frequent and yet recurring moments in which needlework does not function as a marker of female wholesomeness, morality, and virtue. I am interested in the instances when works produced with needle and thread speak as dangerously, or even more so, than those written with pen and ink; instances when needlework becomes a vehicle for vice and immorality—through the way it is either conceived, or executed, or interpreted. In some ways, my inquiry is related to Rozsika Parker's interrogation of the subversive potential of embroidery, but I aim to open up this discussion to the broader, frequently unintentional implications that connect needlework to corruption in the early modern culture. In this paper, I will explore two instances in the drama of the period where the teaching of needlework is presented as intimately connected to the issues of female virtue and depravity.

I will examine two scenes of instruction come from Cyril Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611) and Richard Brome's *The Queen and Concubine* (pub. 1659, written 1635-36), showing how, upon examination, needlework emerges as a type of a "thing indifferent" which may be taught, interpreted, and used to advance either virtue or corruption.

Kerrie Ann Bowen, Independent Scholar **Learning to Suffer**

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Hermia implores Lysander, "Let us teach our trial patience." The imperative of learning patience infuses most of Shakespeare's works, and a given character's relative success or failure in learning the virtue often has profound consequences for the comic or tragic bent of his or her narrative. Shakespeare's seeming interest in the virtue, at once non-secular and social, belongs to a broader cultural fascination: doctrines of Roman stoicism, chronicles of the lives of saints and martyrs, patient Griselda stories, and treatises on the art of dying well flourished in late medieval and early modern Europe. However, Shakespeare's explorations of patience, particularly feminine patience, owe a special debt to iconic renderings of the virtue in visual culture: statues, monuments, woodcuts, paintings, and especially early modern emblem books: volumes that seek to illuminate various virtues, vices, and moral lessons for readers through images and accompanying texts. When considering the relationship between image and word in these lessons, questions arise about the relative didactic force of each. Do we learn differently when gazing at visual images rather than reading texts? Does the image have a force or efficacy separate from the accompanying text that often focuses, narrows, or appropriates its meaning? Considering the way in which critics often gender the dynamic tension between image and word, this paper explores how some of Shakespeare's iconic representations of feminine patience unsettle traditional gender expectations, particularly as they pertain to teaching and learning. Paying special attention to feminine images that subtly resist the domesticating narratives or misguided readings imposed upon them by male characters, this paper builds towards an understanding of what is at stake when the critical lesson of patience remains a lesson unlearned.

David J. Dagenais, University of Toronto
Hamlet and the Decline of Humanism

In the late sixteenth-century, evidence of a growing ambivalence towards humanism can be found in the works of writers like Michel de Montaigne. Throughout William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, we are presented with various examples of humanist learning and pedagogy, which reflect the education offered by Tudor grammar schools. For example, King Hamlet's victory over Old Fortinbras presents us with an exemplum to be imitated; however, Shakespeare problematizes exemplarity here since the chivalric practice of medieval single combat (Low 12) is no longer relevant in Hamlet's "modern" (i.e. post-Machiavellian) world. Similarly, in Act I, scene 2, we find Claudius and Gertrude employing the *consolatio* in an attempt to "[p]atch" Hamlet's "grief with proverbs" (*Much Ado About Nothing* V. i. 17). In Act I, scene 3, before Laertes departs for France, Polonius directs his son to commit a "few precepts" (I. iii. 58-9) to memory. The untimely fates of Polonius and Laertes, however, seem to suggest Shakespeare's ambivalence towards this practice of memorizing maxims in order to develop prudence. Another example of humanist learning and pedagogy can be found when Hamlet vows to "wipe away all trivial fond records, / All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past" (I. v. 99-100) from "Within the book and volume of" his "brain" (I. v. 103). Hamlet's words resonate with the humanist practice of cataloguing noteworthy precepts and exempla in a commonplace book. And yet, Hamlet pledges that he will expunge all of the records from his cerebral storehouse so that his father's commandment, "Remember me" (I. v. 91), might "live" within it "all alone" (I. v. 102). In this paper, I will explore signs of a growing disenchantment with humanism in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* similar to those found in Montaigne's *Essais*.

Sarah Enloe, American Shakespeare Center
"How if....?" Testing in Shakespeare

In nearly one third of Shakespeare's plays (*Richard III*, *The Comedy Of Errors*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King John*, *1 Henry IV*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *The Winter's Tale*) "students," in the form of various of characters, test an intellectual position using the probe "how if...?" In each case, whether the character is arguing with him- or herself or with another character or, possibly, to the audience, the line of reasoning calls attention to itself, either by means of direct identification—Falstaff says "so ends my catechism" while Desdemona points out the "paradox" presented by Iago—or by means of rhetorical exuberance. This paper will examine the staging options offered by characters who find themselves on the Socratic side of the "how if" equation in the plays in which the trope appears most frequently, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Othello*, and draw dramaturgical links between the historical construction of the question and current performance practice.

Sam Kaufman, University of Toronto
The Advancement of Learning* and the ends of education in *The Tempest

While the *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) is often treated as the first stage of Bacon's programmatic redefinition of natural philosophy, it is simultaneously a defense of learning, a call for a new kind of education, and a reclassification of the disciplines. It is also a backhanded polemic against poetry and the poetic imagination. Elizabeth Spiller has situated *The*

Tempest within an emerging early modern conception of knowledge, associated with Baconianism, arising from a "maker's knowledge" tradition and involving the epistemological rehabilitation of singularities and accidents such as wonders and monsters. I would like to extend Spiller's epistemological resituation of *The Tempest* by stressing the play's obsession with containing the threat these wonders and monsters posed to individuals and socio-political norms.

I suggest that the most obvious of these real-world monsters addressed by the play were the overthrow of Rudolph II by his brother (compare Prospero's exile from Milan) and Galileo's 1610 lunar observations which dramatically emphasized the political and matter-theoretical repercussions of scientific investigation. The various groups of characters in *The Tempest* can be distinguished by their views on a number of related issues: the moon, the mind and the imagination's relationship to sleep and death, and politics. I suggest that Shakespeare/Prospero anticipates later tactics adopted by early-modern scientists to preserve fragile social norms by circumscribing contentious scientific questions; he does so largely by emphasizing psychological processes of causation rather than natural philosophical ones, and narratives of social obligation or biography rather than natural history. Nevertheless, the play emphasizes certain biological certainties, those of death and sex, and their potential for producing political and organic monstrosity. To the extent that the play represents a pedagogical program, it moderates Bacon by emphasizing the need for an "educated imagination" (to borrow Northrop Frye's term) to face and integrate the monsters Bacon's program would inevitably produce.

**‘our childish sport’: Performance as Pedagogy in *Cupid’s Banishment*
Edel Lamb, Queen’s University Belfast**

Moments of female education appear in early modern English drama during a period of increasing literacy levels and the gradual emergence of formal modes of schooling girls in early modern England. Plays such as Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew* and the anonymous *The Wit of a Woman* illustrate the extent to which girls’ school lessons were commonly aligned with lessons in love and represent contemporary anxieties that educating girls might produce sexually active and disruptive young women. However, this is only one element of the debates on female education that were played out on early modern stages. This paper considers Robert White’s *Cupid’s Banishment*, a masque performed in 1617 for Queen Anna at Greenwich, as a performance that constitutes part of the educational programme of the Ladies’ Hall, a girls’ school at Deptford. This masque foregrounds the young females in the context of their schoolroom and, by interrogating the relationship between sexual, gendered and aged identity in relation to their learning, puts the cultural narrative of female schooling under pressure. This paper will consider dramatic representations of schoolgirls and the experiences of schoolgirls on the early modern stage side by side to analyse the ways in which this performance displays the girls’ education through song, dance, recitation and the material objects of needlework gifts and to consider the extent to which this performance is itself a moment of pedagogy. It will suggest that *Cupid’s Banishment* makes a case for the benefits of female education through its representation of young female characters and performers, positioned in the liminal spaces between childhood and adulthood, and that it demonstrates the ways in which schoolgirls might use their education and youth to produce gendered and sexual identities that challenge typical uses of the term ‘girl’ in the period.

Catherine Loomis, University of New Orleans

“You do ill to teach the child such words”: Obscenities for Schoolboys and Boy Actors

Both William Shakespeare’s *Merry Wives of Windsor* and John Marston’s *What You Will* include scenes in which schoolboys, deliberately or not, use obscenities while reciting their lessons. Marston’s boys have a later scene in which they discuss the realities of their lives, including the expectation that they will engage in sexual relationships with their masters. While the presence of pederasty is not surprising in an early modern English text, the depiction of such relationships on stage raises questions about the visibility of this relationship, its role in educating schoolboys and servants, and its social and theatrical function. This essay will compare Shakespeare’s and Marston’s treatment of sexualized school lessons to explore the ways in which the dramatists use classroom scenes to examine (or mock) the use of boy actors and the children’s companies to perform sexually-charged roles and plays.

Sid Ray, Pace University

“What schooling is this?: Pedagogies of Laughter in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Was there an early modern stage equivalent of the sit-com laugh track? Canned laughter gives the television viewer the illusion of participating in a community of live theater. It has been suggested, however, that laugh tracks have the secondary effect of indoctrinating the audience into alternative belief systems. While early modern audience laughter was obviously not induced by a laugh track, the interaction between text and actor cued audience laughter, often very specifically, in a way that created for the viewer what Henri Bergson calls a “secret freemasonry, or even complicity, with other laughers.” This essay posits that when the intercommunication between text and actors induces laughter, the audience becomes complicit in the joke. Early modern Puritans decried comic stagecraft, in part, for this very reason. Stephen Gosson feared that audience members “lose their reason when laughing,” and believed “the meaner sort,” in particular, “would take up a wonderfull laughter, and shout altogether in one voyce, when they see some notable cosenedge practiced, or some slie conveighance of baudry brought out of Italy. Wherby thy showe themselves rather to like it then to rebuke it.” During performances of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the audience laughs at moments that are decidedly not funny in the text. Examining the “conceits as clownage keeps in pay” of such stage clowns as Robert Armin, the Latin lesson scene in *Merry Wives*, and Puritan responses to audience laughter, this paper argues that induced audience laughter, in opening the gap between text and performance, has an important pedagogical function.

Emily Rendek, University of South Carolina

“The Body and the Text: The Reader at Work in *The Tempest* and *Doctor Faustus*”

By examining a selection of early modern plays, one can see that the power of the printed word is often juxtaposed with manuscripts. This paper will explore the use of books in *The Tempest* and *Doctor Faustus* and the relationship between the reader’s body and the text in order to explore the attitudes shown toward the printed and written word. In *The Tempest*, Prospero’s connection to his books has a direct effect on his interactions between himself and other bodies—Prospero is able to have power over Ariel and Caliban because of his books. Following Barbara Mowat’s claim in “Prospero’s Book,” I read Prospero’s magic book as a manuscript:

conjurers needed manuscript books to have any sort of power as printed books were of no use to them. Prospero as reader differs greatly from that of Faustus, whose (printed) book use directly affects him. Faustus's destruction comes about because his printed books corrupt him and leave him without the ability to recognize the possibility for redemption due to an act of misreading. *The Tempest* and *Doctor Faustus* demonstrate that the page has the power to affect the reader, but whether this is an internal effect on the reader or one that works outward enabling the reader to have control over others depends upon the form of the text.

N. Amos Rothschild, Hampden-Sydney College

“Figures pedantical”: Status, the Pedant Stereotype, and *Love’s Labour’s Lost*

My essay will focus on the figure of the pedant. I intend to argue that in early modern England the pedant was a powerful stereotype used to negotiate the relationship between learnedness and status. When Tudor-Stuart writers invoke pedants, it is usually to abuse them; such figures meet with scorn in prose, and dramatists shower them with beatings, pranks, and other humiliations. Yet as much as the pedant stereotype would seem to be deployed *against* learned men for the purposes of anti-intellectual critique, such figures are more often deployed *by* learned men to affirm by opposition their own erudition. To establish a context for this interpretation, I situate the discourses of pedantry within a broader (and older) cultural conversation about false and foolish learning. In surveying first learned fools and then pedants, I will uncover a collection of recurrent tropes that help such figures to construct the cultural value of one form of erudition at the expense of others. Moreover, I will argue that the pedant stereotype is fundamentally malleable; one form of erudition invokes the stereotype to assert its worthiness to be preferred over another, only to be represented in turn as the pedantic other of a third. Space permitting, I will turn to drama—and particularly to Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost*—to suggest that the pedant figures of the early modern stage are participants in these discourses of foolish learning, and that the violence visited upon them serves to dramatize the process of distinguishing worthy erudition from unworthy. The humiliation of Holofernes not only allows the lords of Shakespeare’s play to negotiate a “gentleness” free from both “base authority” and “painted flourish,” but also leaves room for Shakespeare to acknowledge—and redress—the essential pedantry of the very project of distinction that discourses of pedantry work to accomplish.

Andrew Tumminia

“The Understanding of the Tongues”: Shakespeare’s Sinners and Syntax

Douglas L. Peterson long ago identified an unexpected source for Shakespeare’s Sonnet 129 (“Th’expense of spirit in a waste of shame”), Thomas Wilson’s *Art of Rhetoric* (1553). Peterson does not think that Shakespeare relies on Wilson for his theme, which is not the stuff of a book on rhetoric; rather, he reads the sonnet as an amalgam of rhetorical techniques described by Wilson: “there is good reason to suspect that the sonnet is the embodiment of an intention expressly rhetorical and that Shakespeare’s interest in the theme was subordinate to his intention” (381). Written in the 1950s, Peterson’s brief article reflects the era’s characteristic formalism, treating the sonnet in relative isolation and expanding its view only to point out the possible influence of a single source. Approaching Shakespeare’s self-conscious engagement of early modern England’s popular rhetorical and grammatical texts—the works of Wilson, Lily, and Fenner—from a perspective more in tune with cultural studies, and especially with

sociolinguistics, my essay will go beyond the fact that Shakespeare borrows from them to examine the effect of his borrowings.

In *Culture in the Plural* (1974), Michel de Certeau discusses “the *practice of a space* that is already constructed when it introduces an innovation or a displacement” and construes “places” broadly to include “the various types of syntax in a language” (145). In this sense, manuals such as Wilson’s are cultural places, prescriptive ones at that; they shape syntax in way akin to the Book of Common Prayer’s and the King James Version’s attempts to determine the language of devotion. This essay will explore the way some of Shakespeare’s rhetoricians—Richard III, Iago, *Hamlet’s* Ghost—interpellate subjects by getting them to mimic their language and adopt their syntax. Reminiscent of the French secondary-school teachers de Certeau describes, those committed to “the myth of originary Unity associated with the purity of language” (53), they limit the plurality of language to assure their own control.