

this is false. Humans get hurt in these attacks. Whether or not the war is justified is not the issue. The point is that many people do not realize that humans are dying, because the language used obscures this. Once again, judgements are being made on the basis of misleading language, not informed knowledge. In the long run it may be more important to detect manipulation of this type than to worry about *t* at the end of words, or the plurality of *graffiti*.

As the writer A.P. Herbert once said: 'Worry about words... For whatever else you may do, you will be using words always. All day, and every day, words matter'. But, he might have added, it is important to worry about them in the right way.

NOTES

Many of the points made here about language change are discussed at greater length in: Aitchison, J. (1991). *Language Change: Progress or Decay?* Second edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The issue of standardization, which has not been discussed here, is dealt with in: Milroy, J. & Milroy, L. (1991). *Authority in Language*. Revised edition. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

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LINDSAY SMITH

New Trends in Shakespeare Criticism

Surveying the large body of critical work on Shakespeare produced during the fifteen year period 1975-1990 we can identify some of the most innovative and significant scholarship as occurring in particular theoretical and political areas: feminist, new historicist, cultural materialist, to name but three. These approaches have utilised larger developments in critical and cultural theory such as Marxism, post-structuralism, anthropology, psychoanalysis and cultural studies which gained momentum particularly during the 1970s and 1980s. Moreover, much recent Shakespeare criticism shares a pervasive inter-disciplinary bias such that, for example, some feminist criticism has taken a materialist position from debates within cultural studies, while cultural materialist approaches have attributed prime importance to issues of gender and sexuality. At the same time, within each of the aforementioned critical camps there has been considerable diversity generating continuous debate and development, and the challenging and overturning of former positions.

The inter-disciplinary bias that characterises new developments in Shakespeare studies as a whole — a radical intersection of what had been previously considered incompatible disciplines — means that some of the most exciting and influential work has been produced by writers who are not primarily 'Shakespeareans', and there has thus been a significant increase in the number of multi-authored collections dealing with aspects of Shakespeare in very different historical, cultural and theoretical contexts. The publications of *Representing Shakespeare* (1980, eds. M. Schwartz and C. Kahn), was followed in 1985 by three popular collections much used by students and higher education teachers alike: *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory* (eds. P. Parker and G. Hartmann), *Alternative Shakespeares* (ed. J. Drakakis) and *Political Shakespeare* (eds. J. Dollimore and A. Sinfield). These were closely followed by *Shakespeare Reproduced* (1987, eds. J. Howard and M. O'Connor) and *The Shakespeare Myth* (1988, ed. G. Holderness).

All of these collections claimed to be signalling a break with established canons of Shakespeare criticism characterised by liberal humanist conceptions of stable texts of unquestionable universal significance. They each identified part of their objective as a contestation of dominant meanings attributed to Shakespeare, and to what Shakespeare had come to represent in various cultural spaces, and to interrogation of a wider Shakespearean 'myth'. Such an interrogation thus

included discussion of Shakespeare as primarily English cultural icon and the ways in which "he/it" has functioned in different historical periods. In this respect, Margot Heineman's reference to a *Guardian* interview with Margaret Thatcher's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, in which he co-opts Shakespeare as a Tory committed to a sense of man's unchanging nature, exemplifies those works which have read the institution of Shakespeare closely in terms of its particular appropriations to contemporary British political debate. The American critic, Don Wayne, writing in *Shakespeare Reproduced*, identifies this reference by Heineman as characteristic of current British approaches to Shakespeare which slip back and forth with ease in their discussions of history.

There are of course also important differences in the rubrics of these collections, most notably those differences determined by divergent political developments in English Studies in the U.K. and the U.S.A. A discussion of new historicist work on Shakespeare in America and cultural materialist work in Britain makes visible some of these differences.

The publication of Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* in 1980 signalled the domain of new historicist approaches to Renaissance literature and culture. New historicism is Greenblatt's term and has come to designate a body of theoretical work concerned with the relationship between aesthetics and politics; the connections between literature and state power. Focussing upon operations of power in Renaissance culture and especially within the theatre, new historicism has approached drama as the locus of theatricality, and the representation and legitimation of state power. It has thus generated pioneering work on pastoral and patronage, and on theatrical spectacle such as the Jacobean Court Masque as an instrument of state power strategically embodied in intricate visual manifestations and scenic machines. In his book, *The Illusion of Power*, Stephen Orgel explores the ways in which the perceptions of the spectacle of the masque were hierarchically determined according to dominant (ideological) rules of geometrical perspective, such that the king's seat was optically perfect, occupying the best relationship of vantage point to vanishing point. Orgel demonstrates how, according to this scheme of things, the nearer one sat to the king the greater one's position of political favour, and how by such spatial manipulation of the spectacle one's position as political subject was constantly negotiable in theatrical terms.

Orgel's work has been important in opening up the realm of visual culture from an inter-disciplinary perspective, and in exposing predominant visual paradigms in the period as culturally determined. However, the unquestioned sovereignty of geometrical perspective

in optical discourse remains an area that has received relatively little theoretical analysis in Shakespeare studies. Ernest Gilman has an interesting chapter in his book, *The Curious Perspective*, on the optical intricacies of *Richard II*, and more recently Slavoj Žižek has discussed, from a psychoanalytic position, the workings of metaphors of optical distortion in *Richard II*, in his essay "Looking Awry", though a relatively small part of the essay deals with Renaissance material. Leonard Tennenhouse in *Power and Display* refutes the aesthetic categories attributed to Shakespeare's plays by modern critics and (as Dollimore has pointed out) focusses upon ways in which gender and class operate in dramatic spectacle.

Owing to a predominant engagement within new historicism with complexities of representation, works such as Jonathan Goldberg's *James I and the Politics of Literature* and Stephen Mullaney's *The Place of the Stage* have been concerned with the exploration of disruptive elements in contemporary culture by the theatre, elements which although 'contained' by the form in which they are represented nonetheless make visible the potential challenge to the dominant order. New historicist approaches have been equally concerned with the major parts played by the cultural institutions of the family, state, and religion in the formation of subjectivity and these issues are indeed foregrounded by *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* and by Greenblatt's later *Shakespearean Negotiations*. New historicism, however, has been criticised for its "subordination of gender to power" and for its "implicit commitment to arbitrary connectedness". (Walter Cohen, "Political criticism of Shakespeare".) This latter Cohen identifies as both an impressive and problematic characteristic of new historicist criticism. My own experience of students using Greenblatt's "Invisible Bullets" confirms this view. They sense an arbitrariness in his analysis of Thomas Harriot's *Brief and True Report* which could, as Greenblatt admits, be applied to any number of plays apart from *Henry IV*, and they mistrust a conclusion pronouncing what they regard as overly assured 'containment' of subversive tendencies.

What then are the differences between new historicist and cultural materialist works on Shakespeare? Both "reject a conservative intellectual history for a wide cultural range." But cultural materialism claims a history in the work of Raymond Williams and in the field of British cultural studies during the 1970s and 80s, as represented by writers such as Stuart Hall. Materialist criticism "relates changing interpretations to the cultural formations that produce them, and which these interpretations in turn reproduce, or help to change." In these terms, then, Shakespeare is addressed as a powerful cultural institution and so too are the institutions through which he is reproduced as a dramatist and as a cultural industry. The pioneering work

of Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield is especially important in this respect, as represented by their *Political Shakespeare* and by Dollimore's *Radical Tragedy*. In one of two essays in *Political Shakespeare*, Sinfield discusses the evolution of the Royal Shakespeare Company from its insignificance at the end of the Second World War to its receipt of an Arts Council grant of nearly five million pounds in 1984-5. He reads the rapid development of the company as "both a cause and an effect of the construction of Shakespeare which has become dominant in Modern British Society." In his other essay on Shakespeare and education, Sinfield addresses ways in which the works of Shakespeare figure in the teaching of English and in public examinations as "a mode of exclusion in respect of class and gender." With wide-ranging reference to public examination papers and curriculum documents, he shows how "the allegedly universal culture" of Shakespeare "to which equal access is apparently offered is, at the same time, a marker of 'attainment' and hence privilege." His point is not merely to draw attention to educational establishment appropriations of Shakespeare, but to show how 'The Bard' can be otherwise appropriated.

Dollimore has recently drawn attention to the way in which new historicism and cultural materialism have been wrongly conflated by certain critics as representing a world which is 'unsubvertible' ("Shakespeare, Cultural materialism, Feminism and Marxist Humanism"). He takes issue with the suggestion that both critical positions register subversive tendencies in literature of the period in order to show how these threats are contained, and he argues that by contrast, "it is new historicism which has been accused of finding too much containment, while cultural materialism has been accused of finding too much subversion".

In attempting to pin-point some of the differences between 'political' criticism in the U.S. and the U.K., Don Wayne attributes to the principle of aesthetic distance, as established by Eliot and the New Critics in the U.S., a tendency to repress the political nature of criticism: "the most effective means by which this depoliticization was achieved... was by the repression of an affective response that might provide the energy for a politically engaged criticism." He also maintains that the greater heterogeneity of cultural backgrounds in the U.S. than in Britain "entail mediations of a different kind between the text and ourselves." British criticism is, he believes, more directly concerned with debunking its own earlier tradition and consequently ranges more freely across historical periods. Thus he ends his piece by advocating a more visible study of Shakespeare in relation to present day "conflicts and differences" which would allow American criticism to go beyond the disestablishment of an existing critical orthodoxy.

A question thus repeatedly surfacing in new historicist and cultural materialist criticism is that of the relationship of Shakespeare's plays to the dominant social order, a question directly applicable to issues of gender and sexuality in Shakespeare studies, and it is to the diverse range of feminist work on Shakespeare that I would now like to turn, in order to show how it discloses most visibly a radical inter-disciplinarity and intersection of a range of theoretical positions. Broadly speaking, some of the earliest feminist work in Shakespeare studies sought to prove that Shakespeare challenged the dominant social order in terms of his treatment of gender, and they duly appropriated him as a proto-feminist committed to uncharacteristically 'strong' (for the Renaissance) parts for women. More recently, as one would expect, such readings have been superseded by more advanced work in critical theory and a commitment to a wider inter-disciplinary bias. Feminist readings no longer restrict themselves to female character and gender is not so easily separated from issues of race and class. I am thinking in particular here of Ania Loomba's recent book, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama*. However, this is not to discount the importance of earlier studies such as Juliet Dusinberre's influential study *Shakespeare and the Nature of Woman* which deals with the drama from 1590 to 1625 as feminist in sympathy, reading it in relation to the effects upon women of cultural developments of the time. Similarly, *The Woman's Part*, a collection of essays originating in Carolyn Lenz's special session on feminist criticism of Shakespeare at the MLA in 1976, constituted a noticeable feminist intervention in Shakespeare studies at that particular historical moment.

The proto-feminist position mapped out for Shakespeare in *The Woman's Part* has something of a precedent in the nineteenth century actress Ellen Terry's working notes and lectures on the playing of Shakespeare's 'heroines'. Conservative as some of these notes might in themselves seem, they do in fact make an intervention in a history of Shakespeare production. Terry's Lady Macbeth, in particular, failed to convince critics owing to her radical transformation of determined shrew into affectionate misguided woman. Oscar Wilde's comment upon first seeing Terry's Lady Macbeth (*Macbeth* opened at the Lyceum in December 1888 with Henry Irving in the title role) generated by the fabled gown resembling armoury and sewn all over with real beetles' wings, goes straight to the heart of an aesthetic interest in the female consumer:

Judging from the banquet, Lady Macbeth seems an economical housekeeper, and evidently patronises local industries for her husband's clothes and servants liveries; but she takes care to do all her own shopping in Byzantium.

The predictably Wildean paradox of shopping in Byzantium shows how easily one female stereotype is replaced by another (shrew be-

comes 'economical housekeeper with a weakness for *haute couture*'), even though Terry's input into the playing of Shakespearean roles extended beyond appearance.

Given this example, it is perhaps not surprising that some of the earliest feminist criticism of Shakespeare enacted an oppositional position for women, and thus, for example, attempted to re-evaluate in positive terms characters such as Goneril, Regan, Gertrude, Lady Macbeth and Isabella, interpreted negatively in the history of Shakespeare criticism. But the political implications of such a strategy are problematic. For to merely re-assess the woman's part is, in many instances, to leave intact a distinction between male and female stereotypes, especially if such readings work from the pre-supposition that the categories of 'masculine' and 'feminine' are simply unproblematic markers of biological difference rather than culturally determined categories. For example Linda Bamber's *Comic Women, Tragic Men: A Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare* explores, as the title implies, a division of genre and gender that does not contest gender definitions. Shakespeare is read as replicating positions of a patriarchal culture in depictions of men capable of tragedy and women who are empowered in the lesser world of comedy. Marilyn French produces a similar outcome in *Shakespeare's Division of Experience* in that she constructs a binary opposition of male and female principles — the male standing for violence and competitiveness, the female for the power to nurture and give birth.

Coppelia Kahn's *Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* has had a significant influence upon the development of feminist approaches to Shakespeare in America, although it is now easy to criticise the nature of its psychological premise: "Shakespeare and Freud deal with the same subject: the expressed and hidden feelings in the human heart. They are both psychologists." Kahn retains Shakespeare's position as an all-knowing figure, but with the addition that his views on women as well as men could be co-opted to the liberal feminism of the critic. More recent feminist criticism has criticised the reductive application of feminist anthropological discussions of nature and culture since, as Kathleen McLuskie points out in her very interesting essay "The Patriarchal Bard", "their effect is to construct an author whose views can be applied in moral terms to rally and exhort the women readers of today." McLuskie is representative of feminist critics of Shakespeare who dissent from approaches which fail to interrogate issues of gender and sexuality and to take into account the material circumstances of the differential power relations which they support. She thus requests a production of *Lear* which would "restore the element of dialectic, removing the privilege both from the character of Lear and from the ideological positions he dramatises" as crucial to a feminist critique.

On this question of production and the relationship of constructions of sexual differences, Lisa Jardine's *Still Harping on Daughters: Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* has approached these issues in relationship to the cultural complexities of cross-dressing in Elizabethan and Jacobean society and drama. And she has renounced the view that the fact that women's parts were played by boys was simply accepted as 'natural' within the dramatic spectacle, and with limited potential for disrupting gender distinctions. Jardine has been critical of earlier positive identifications of women, concentrating instead on their representation in relation to social change within the period.

There are a number of recent feminist essays which problematise aspects of gender and sexuality by taking as a starting point the fact of the extra-textual sex of the actor, particularly in the comedies which most obviously articulate layered linguistic and visual complexities from the occasion of a boy actor, playing a female role, subsequently disguised as a woman. Jean Howard in "Crossdressing, the Theatre and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England" explores the role played by the theatre in controversies over dress. And Catherine Belsey's "Disrupting Sexual Difference in the Comedies" is an interesting case in point. For although critics such as Ann Thompson in "The Warrant of Womanhood" have suggested that the comedies have provided a more obvious point of focus for feminists than the tragedies because, (to quote McLuskie) it "might be more difficult to deny the emotional, moral and aesthetic satisfaction afforded by tragedy" we might wish to question the basis for retaining such a generic distinction. For the complex status of crossdressing in the comedies provides a productive site for contestations of gendered subjectivity. Indeed, we should bear in mind that some of the problems cited earlier (in relation to Bamber's book for example) resulted in part from a rigid division of genre and gender.

Thus, although in Belsey's essay the initial account of the changing pattern of the family in the early modern period is somewhat dislocated as a paradigm from the core of her discussion of *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, the analysis of constructions of gendered subjectivity as raised by the 'patience on a moment' speech (*Twelfth Night* Act II sc 4) is highly productive. One of the main points of Belsey's deconstructive reading is that through the artifice of the theatre, disguise, and role-playing we are made to question gender as the result of divine or social law. In those staged gender transgressions we are able to glimpse (Belsey maintains) alternative positions which are not those of a fully gendered subject. In this respect, even though original gender distinctions are restored at the end of both comedies, this is not to deny that "the heterosexual 'norms' based on the metaphysics of sexual difference lose their status in the unfixing

of sexual disposition." The point, then, is that to problematise the question 'who is speaking' when Viola in *Twelfth Night* disguised as Cesario speaks of his father's daughter is not to create a third "unified and androgynous identity" but to make visible "the systems of differences upon which sexual stereotyping depends."

It is indeed, we might say, the attempt to make visible such systems of difference that distinguishes the most influential contemporary Shakespearean criticism. Such criticism promises to remain at the forefront of debates on Shakespeare in the foreseeable future.

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M

Current Research

The "American Swedish" of Swedish people who were part of the last wave of emigration to America in the 1920s is the object of study of Staffan Klintborg's dissertation project. Klintborg investigates vocabulary, morphology and syntax, making comparisons both with earlier studies and with the "Swenglish" of today's Sweden. Address: Staffan Klintborg, Department of Modern Languages, University of Växjö, Box 5053, S-350 05 Växjö, Sweden.

Gunnel Melchers of Stockholm University is completing a monograph on the Scandinavian element in Shetland dialect based on ten years of extensive fieldwork. Mainly descriptive, the study also addresses theoretical issues: functions of bidialectism, types of language contact situations, relexification, semantic shifts. Address: Gunnel Melchers, Department of English, University of Stockholm, S-106 91 Stockholm, Sweden.

In Lund, Bengt Altenberg is conducting a project with the aim of analyzing the prosodic and functional aspects of collocations and prefabricated expressions in the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English. Software tools for exploring prosodic characteristics are being developed in collaboration with the Dept of Computer Science. Address: Bengt Altenberg, Department of English, University of Lund, Helgonabacken 14, S-223 62 Lund, Sweden.

How do words develop novel senses? This question is addressed by Beatrice Warren of Stockholm University in her book *Sense Developments* (to appear), which discusses recent sense developments in standard British and American words as well as the development of slang senses from standard senses. She is also about to complete a similar investigation on euphemisms. Address: Beatrice Warren, Department of English, University of Stockholm, S-106 91 Stockholm, Sweden.

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