

It is understandable why Kendrick must focus on Renaissance drama, given his interest in Carnival. But he could do much more to demonstrate the important ways that commonwealth ideologies and utopian concepts intersect with carnivalesque practices on the Shakespearean stage. There is nevertheless something about his overreaching, like that of Marlowe's own stage heroes, that sustains the reader's interest until the very end. Kendrick's theoretical acuity and originality of thought shine through *Utopia, Carnival, and Commonwealth in Renaissance England* on almost every page, even if he slips momentarily into abstraction or when a (somewhat too common) typo throws a wrench into his already elliptical prose. This work proves equal in intellectual weight and ambition to many of its influences, including the work of Louis Marin, Richard Halpern, Fredric Jameson, and Raymond Williams. It deserves to share shelf space with these authors as an account of utopian politics and literature.

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Karen Bamford and Alexander Leggatt, eds.
Approaches to Teaching English Renaissance Drama.
New York: Modern Language Association, 2002.

For those of us who have taught courses in non-Shakespearean Renaissance drama, the challenges are familiar, such as the perceived need to situate every play in terms of Shakespeare, the unfamiliarity of the language and social world portrayed, the inexplicable motivations of the characters, and the relative paucity of film/stage versions for supplementary viewing. This book is part of the *Approaches to Teaching World Literature* series published by the Modern Language Association under the general editorship of Joseph Gibaldi, with the purpose of being a "sourcebook of material, information, and ideas on teaching the subject of the volume to undergraduates" (Preface). This welcome addition to the series deals with English Renaissance drama, giving a variety of classroom approaches in twenty-eight essays that focus on a range of plays by dramatists such as Jonson, Marlowe, Kyd, Webster, Cary, and Middleton.

In preparation for this volume, Bamford and Leggatt conducted a survey in which "instructors were asked to report on the courses in which they teach Renaissance drama, the challenges and opportunities it presents, and the critical approaches they have found useful" (3). Leggatt's brief overview

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of the survey results from forty-seven respondents provides an intriguing starting place for this collection, although a more thorough incorporation of the results might have been beneficial. Continuing the discussion on “Practices and Materials” in the initial section of the book, Bamford takes up the problem of finding good texts for teaching these courses, listing available editions and recommended reading, both primary and secondary; she mentions the Norton anthology of *English Renaissance Drama*, edited by David Bevington, which is now available and is an excellent textbook for courses such as the ones described in this volume. Also helpful is Philippa Sheppard’s list of available film adaptations of Renaissance drama, including information on where to procure copies.

The second section is entitled “Approaches” and comprises the bulk of this collection. A subdivision of this section into “Texts and Resources,” “Strategies,” and “Contexts” serves as a rough organization that alerts readers to the methods discussed in each part. Although the approaches vary widely, these refreshingly succinct essays are all devoted to explanations of effective classroom practice.

The first subsection deals with the availability and employment of supplementary material. A. R. Braunmuller provides a thorough overview of information relating to the physical staging, costumes, and playhouses of the early modern stage as a way of engaging students, while Philippa Sheppard gives a bibliography of books with useful illustrations for teaching Renaissance drama, with suggestions appropriate to particular plays. Taking up the issue of multiple primary texts, Leah Marcus focuses on *Doctor Faustus* as a way of engaging a larger question: “[H]ow, if at all, should we incorporate our knowledge of textual differences into our teaching of non-Shakespearean plays?” (29). This “Texts and Resources” subsection is useful, although it would be more appropriate as part of the short “Practices and Materials” section, for it seems to be a continuation of the type of material provided there.

The second subsection on “Strategies,” however, is decidedly different, dealing with practical, hands-on classroom methods. Joseph Candido focuses on the problem of language in Ben Jonson by outlining his teaching method in *The Alchemist*; he aims to “begin with concrete and minute incidents and ask students how any particular event, individual utterance, or pattern of speech contains in its linguistic texture ideas that can shed light on the play as a whole” (57). Two essays here also offer quite different views on how to relate Renaissance plays to the students’ own experience. James Hirsh believes that when teaching *The White Devil* it is productive to allow students to connect the drama to notions of “human experience,”

but Frances Teague strongly disagrees with this sort of approach, explaining that she has “adopted a teaching technique that allows the students to control the works they study effectively enough to understand how their preconceptions about the Renaissance, drama, or literature may fail” (67). Teague requires her students to respond to specific questions on a web bulletin board, and this process helps them to become sophisticated enough to question their own assumptions.

Moving into the subject of teaching through performance, the essayists discuss another facet of the benefits and dangers that accompany the impulse to connect the drama to the students’ own experience. Helen Ostovich lets students become involved in their own interpretation of the plays with performance groups, giving an amusing series of anecdotes that show how the “performers bring dimension and sensibility to characters and actions” (93). Taking an approach more like Teague’s with his performance teaching through *Woman Killed with Kindness*, Ric Knowles argues that “The effect of Method acting, Stanislavskian or American, which appropriates the past and encourages ‘making the characters your own,’ which focuses on similarity rather than difference, is to efface the differences among early modern, modern, and postmodern understandings and constructions of character, role, class, race, gender, and sexuality in the interests of contemporary relevance” (99). Knowles’s essay thus provides an intelligent and complex approach to this problem by mapping historical change over multiple time periods, but the challenges of performing in this way are evident as well. Perhaps the most unexpected essay in the performance section is by Laurie Maguire, discussing the benefit of having students stage the first scene of *Tragedy of Mariam*, with surprisingly effective results for teaching closet drama.

The final subsection, “Contexts,” is the longest in the book, covering diverse ways to situate the drama to enhance classroom experience. These approaches range from the very traditional (such as Arthur Kinney’s opening essay on how to use the archives about the Arden murder to supplement *Arden of Faversham*) to the much more contemporary (such as Paul Budra’s method of capitalizing on the students’ familiarity with film to teach Renaissance drama, connecting works such as *The Revenger’s Tragedy* and *Pulp Fiction*). Between these bookends, essays deal with issues that have become so important to our discussions of Renaissance drama, such as class, race, religion, and gender.

A set of three essays within this section shows varied methods of teaching about early modern concepts of sex, gender, and the body. All three authors heavily employ secondary material in order to supplement

their students' understanding of the subject matter. At times, this includes material contemporary to the dramatists (such as Lori Haslem's assigned reading of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*); Mario DiGangi, on the other hand, assigns works such as Eve Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* in order to convey "why sex matters for teaching these plays both as compelling theatrical works and as sites of social and ideological conflict" (150). These articles point to one of the most interesting facets of this collection: that the essays display not just a variety of teaching methods but of student experiences and skills. Some of the courses are challenging students with complicated secondary material and original archival research, while others are covering more basic approaches to the text and the fundamental problem of getting modern students to engage with them. It may have been helpful, in fact, had this book posed questions about the level at which these courses are taught. Most of them seem to be upper-level undergraduate courses, but even this commonality involves different circumstances depending on the institution.

Another cluster of essays raises the issue of how we can use history when we teach Renaissance drama. Innovative ideas arise here, such as teaching *Shoemaker's Holiday* and *Knight of the Burning Pestle* as festivity, using Brueghel's *Children's Games* as a window into the atmosphere of *Bartholomew Fair*, and arranging a class around the principle of the masque followed by the anti-masque, in which a teacher may "draw attention to [her] intervention as a part of a prescribed, formal performance" (183). Stepping back from the plethora of supplementary historical material, John Hunter takes up the question of how much history is enough when we teach this period, arguing that students are also sometimes distanced from the artistic products of their own period, so negotiating this gap is a normal part of interpretation that cannot be blamed entirely on historical difference/distance.

Approaches to Teaching English Renaissance Drama gives us a sense of various teaching methods, from lecture to performance, debate, and web bulletin boards. These different and self-reflexive pedagogical strategies raise important questions and potential answers that are enlightening for anyone who teaches these plays. The weakness of this book lies in its organization, which could have provided a more insistent connection between some of the essays, clustering more definitively around teaching methods and different approaches to the subjects of historical background and pedagogical assumptions. The short introduction and absence of a conclusion contribute to the sense that this is most definitely a work comprised of very loosely connected approaches to a single subject. Nonetheless, this

is an invaluable collection of essays for anyone interested in instructional ideas and pedagogical strategies to help meet the challenge of teaching English Renaissance drama.

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Thomas Keymer. *Sterne, the Moderns, and the Novel*.
Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002. xiii + 222 pp.

As Thomas Keymer observes, critics commonly read Laurence Sterne ahistorically. To some, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* uncannily prefigures formalism and even deconstruction. To others, it anachronistically hearkens back, through Scriblerian satire, to the Renaissance tradition of scholarly play that D. W. Jefferson called “learned wit.” Brilliant, theoretically charged readings support the first view. The Florida Edition of Sterne’s works, currently in progress, bolsters the second. Its hefty volume of notes to *Tristram Shandy* records a degree of learned quotation that would have startled even John Ferriar, the early critic who accused Sterne of plagiarism. By contrast, Keymer grounds Sterne’s parodic, relentlessly intertextual masterpiece in the print (and political) culture of the 1750s and 1760s, reading the book that made Sterne famous as the deliberately trendy textual embodiment of its historical moment.

Keymer makes deft use of narrative theory, drawing especially on Gérard Genette’s *Palimpsests*, but since he wants to historicize *Tristram*, he rejects “the poststructuralist armour ... in which intertextuality is an infinite field of potential relations from which readers, unconfined by authorial intention or editorial fiat, select at will” (11). A meticulous scholar, he first considers the characteristic literary artifacts produced by the “new species of writing” dominated by Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding. A precise reader, he can compel a characteristic strategy in Smollett and the footnotes that Richardson added to the third edition of *Clarissa* to illuminate Sterne’s text. Showing that reviewers created pressure to innovate by disparaging contemporary novels less innovative than Richardson’s and Fielding’s, he makes sense of eccentric minor precursors of *Tristram*, notably the *Life and Memoirs of Mr. Ephraim Tristram Bates* (1756)—first identified as a source in 1918—or John Kidgell’s *The Card* (1755). He reproduces pages from both that clinch his point: the very appearance of *Tristram Shandy* shows how consciously Sterne engaged with his most innovative contemporaries.

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