

# Introduction

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## Introduction

It is almost fifty years since Emrys Jones articulated the symbiotic link between pedagogy and drama, “Without humanism, in short, there could have been no Elizabethan Literature: without Erasmus, no Shakespeare” (13). In the intervening period, scholarship has certainly supported Jones’ aphorism, but it has also produced a more complicated picture of educational transmission, with a greater emphasis on a wider supporting cast of both pedagogues and writers. This volume of essays, which draws both inspiration and material from the conference of the Swiss Association of Medieval and Early Modern English Studies, held in the University of Fribourg in September 2014, seeks to continue that trend and also aims to help develop the temporal range of the links between teaching and drama more widely.

It might not seem immediately obvious, but as with all editors, we spent a considerable amount of time pondering the title of this volume and settled upon one that, we hope, fairly describes the contents of the text presented here. Whilst we hope that our temporal tags will be accepted, viewed as broad descriptors rather than precise and non-porous structures, the focus of our work has really been to animate and explore the work of our titular connectives – the apparently simple “and” with which the themes and periods are joined together. There would not, we might argue *should* not, ever be a single, correct way of organising related but disparate essays and our hope is that we have selected and presented work so as to help and encourage an inclusive and productive approach.

Drama and pedagogy might usefully be seen to be related in numerous ways. Drama can be used to teach, just as it can be used to present the activity of teaching, and also to raise questions about what should be taught. It can represent pedagogy, both explicitly and implicitly, by carrying the textual traces of educational practice. And it can serve as a way

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of considering, representing, and defining educational institutions. All of these relationships are considered within the essays presented here, often in combinations, and whilst this is a cohesive volume of essays, it is also one in which authors can be seen to be in dialogue and debate about precisely how these connections should be understood.

As for the second “and”: we certainly do not wish to impose the delusion of a straightforward positivist teleology from Medieval to Caroline literature. But there are, of course, important differences between periods broadly defined as medieval and early modern and it is evident at first glance that the essays here display a distinction between those that relate to (predominantly) religious and those that relate to (predominantly) secular didacticism: it would have been unhelpful, we think, not to have observed that difference. Under the surface, however, we hope to have included essays that draw upon a shared interest in the different ways in which drama and pedagogy relate so that the volume as a whole offers insight from across a wide historical span.

In her essay on didacticism in the York Cycle, Alexandra Johnston provides an argument for how the plays present Christ as an internal expositor, guiding the assembled audience as to how they should interpret the drama before it, in much the same way as Oliver Morgan’s essay presents a pedagogical Prospero, with Miranda and Caliban performing the role of students. Whilst Christ’s didactic reliability is never in doubt, Camille Marshall’s essay explores the complicated role of those mediating religious messages more widely in medieval drama and considers the propriety and reliability of their instructional role. The wider focus of the audience here is useful for an insistence on dramatic context. How plays might be considered as performing different functions within different contexts is a question explored by John McGavin’s piece, which follows *Patient and Meek Grissill* across pedagogical bounds in the formation of a methodology capable of dealing with “migratory drama.”

By another route: in detailing the civic ownership of the York plays, Johnston’s argument facilitates important links to be made with the didactic aspirations of church authorities and posits the city’s Augustinian Friary as a possible locus of production, a rich connection of institution and didactic message. The link between drama and a religious educational, and institutional, context is also evident in Olivia Robinson’s essay on The N-Town *Mary Play*, which explores shared implications of the “female transmission” of Latin liturgical text into both the eponymous text and a vernacular play produced by Burgundian nuns. And, with a connection of performance context and teaching, Effie

Botonaki's essay considers how Caroline masques, whilst accommodated to their performance space, were used to teach as well as praise the royal members of their audience. In tackling issues of orthodoxy and heterodoxy in dramatic performance, Botonaki's essay can be purposefully linked to Sarah Brazil's argument about the performance of Christ's Resurrection across a number of vernacular cycle plays and how dramaturgical decisions reflect doctrinal controversies concerning the Eucharist.

Tamás Karáth's engagement with the records of legal proceedings, which he reads alongside "inquisitorial" scenes from the N-Town plays, has much in common with the archival pedagogical work presented by Alan Nelson here. As the editor (and co-editor) of *REED* volumes for Oxford, Cambridge, and the Inns of Court, Professor Nelson has done as much as anybody to invigorate and facilitate research between pedagogy and drama, and his essay, presenting evidence from St. Olave's and St. Saviour's parishes, Southwark, is a contribution to our knowledge of a significant theatrical district and particularly its grammar school. Extending the valuable work of her recent monograph, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, Lynn Enterline's essay explores the pedagogical and rhetorical contexts from which female complaints, considered here in a range of epyllia and Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, derive their compositional source. And with a similar enquiry into the textual traces of grammar school curricula, an intensively studied corpus of works held in common by early modern dramatists, Robert Stagg argues for the many echoes of Lyly's Grammar across Shakespeare's works.

More broadly, in institutional terms, Stephanie Allen considers how two prominent Oxford University playwrights, William Gager and Matthew Gwinne, used core Arts texts, as well as broader literary and dramatic material from London and beyond, to experiment with tragicomedy. In demonstrating the sophistication, but also relevance, of early modern academic drama, Allen complicates both simplistic critical conceptions of university plays as well as the relationship between academic and professional theatre. And, continuing an institutional link, Michelle O'Callaghan's essay suggests that the frequent relationship inferred between theatre and the Inns of Court, that the latter provided a number of prominent playwrights and a ready audience, can also be developed into a more complicated two-way relationship of compositional influence. As O'Callaghan argues, an "aggressive intertextuality" in plays produced for Jacobean boys' companies includes material derived from masculine pedagogical Revels culture at the Inns of Court.

With boys' companies in mind, the easiest decision of all was to give the final words, as was the case at the Fribourg conference, to Perry Mills. Perry's work reminds us that, above all, drama exists to be understood on its own terms as drama. This is not at all to exclude meditative and closet texts, but to argue that they too should be "performed" as dramatic works, rather than prose or poetry that just happens to be organised and presented in a particular way on the page. Perry's essay, co-written with his son Alex, an alumnus of Edward's Boys, provides considerable and fascinating insight from the founding director of what has quickly become England's leading boys' company. Just as academics have benefitted hugely from the numerous works that the company have so far performed, so too, as Perry argues here, the boys from Shakespeare's school have themselves developed and learned much more than just their lines through the process. Alex Mills is also the "cover model" for the volume. The picture was taken during rehearsals for a performance of Gager's *Dido* in Oxford in 2013, directed by Elisabeth Dutton, and the play was restaged in Fribourg as part of the "Drama and Pedagogy" conference. More information about the play, its staging, and its place within our wider project can be found at [www.edox.org.uk](http://www.edox.org.uk).

Elisabeth Dutton and James McBain

*Reference*

Jones, Emrys. *The Origins of Shakespeare*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.