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GET INSPIRED BY WENDY LENNON & ELEANOR RYCROFT

REMAKE SHAKESPEARE WITH SOPHIE HANSON, LAUREN FINCH & STEPHEN PURCELL

INNOVATE IN LOCKDOWN WITH ANNA HEGLAND, IMKE LICHTERFELD & MYFANWY EDWARDS

UNLOCK CREATIVITY IN YOUR CLASSROOM WITH DOUGLAS LANIER, REED MARTIN
& ROBERT MYLES

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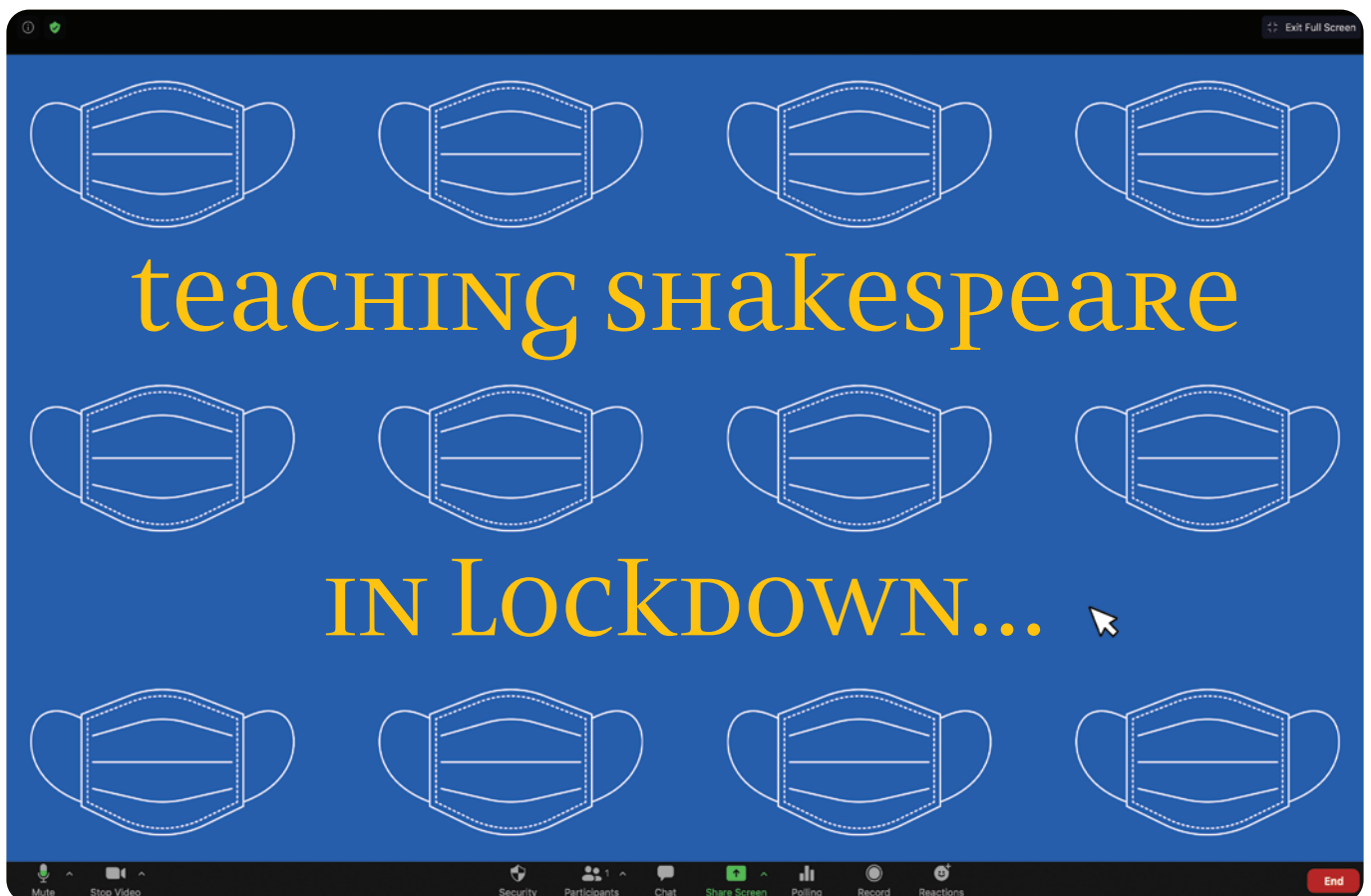
RONAN HATFULL is Assistant Tutor in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Warwick. His teaching and research specialisms are Shakespeare in adaptation, performance and popular culture. Ronan is also a theatre practitioner and co-founded Partners Rapt in 2016. He is co-writing *Shakespeare and Hip-Hop: Adaptation, Citation, Education* (Cambridge University Press, 2022) with pedagogic rapper Devon Glover, co-editing *Shakespeare and Biofiction on the Contemporary Stage and Screen* with Edel Semple, and developing a proposal to turn his doctoral thesis on the Reduced Shakespeare Company into a monograph.

Teaching Shakespeare since 2020 has necessitated the renegotiation of time, space and modes of discussion. The Covid-19 pandemic hit the profession of teaching like a freight train, at a time when both educators and students were already being rightly asked to confront how we think and speak about issues of inequality and injustice. This takeover issue of *Teaching Shakespeare* was engendered by my own experience of starting a new academic job in the 2020/21 academic year and being entrusted with introducing a first-year cohort to Theatre

and Performance Studies via a five-week crash course in *Hamlet* and performance skills.

The online design and deliverance of this module led me to recruit guest speakers such as Robert Myles to speak to my students about his innovative and globally successful lockdown theatre initiative *The Show Must Go Online*. Although my original intention was to write about this experience for *Teaching Shakespeare*, at the invitation of the outgoing editor, Sarah Olive, I instead chose to gather insights and reflections from academics, creatives and students on their experiences of working with Shakespeare and his contemporaries during the age of Covid-19.

Teaching Shakespeare in Lockdown opens with Wendy Lennon's reflection on *Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy*, the remarkable five-day event which she organised in February 2021. Lennon discloses moving and powerful extracts from her opening and closing remarks, and charts each day of the event, offering insight into the motivations behind its creation and the reasons why this work and the fight for equality in the study of Shakespeare and race is far from over. This imperative continues in Eleanor Rycroft's exploration of how the pandemic and



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political contexts necessitated the decolonisation of her 'Early Modern Theatre Practice' module, the inspiration of fellow scholars, and the student response to pairing early modern and contemporary texts.

These articles are followed by a cluster of three, produced by those involved with the University of Warwick's Remaking Shakespeare module. Firstly, Sophie Hanson and Lauren Finch, two students I taught on the module during the 2019/20 academic year, reflect on their respective paths to pedagogy and creativity. Hanson considers the positive outcomes of studying and accessing theatre online, and Finch shares the tale of developing and realising her astonishing orchestral response to Ophelia's death in spite of lockdown restrictions. The cluster closes with module convener and designer Stephen Purcell exploring how teaching Shakespeare in a practical context could be adapted online by utilising Lego figurines, a method which drew inspiration from discussions on social media and Forced Entertainment's *Table Top Shakespeare*, and which empowered his students to make exciting, democratic decisions about staging scenes from *Troilus and Cressida*.

The next three articles offer perspectives on teaching Shakespeare in lockdown in different educational environments. Firstly, Anna Hegland shares the MEMSlib recourse which blossomed from her collaborative work in lockdown and its future applications, illustrating the productive afterlife of projects instigated by Covid-19. Next, Imke Litcherfeld continues the exploration of reframing modules for online deliverance, reflecting on how the myriad options on her 'Shakespeare and Time' module, including guest speakers and creative portfolios, helped students to adjust to pandemic learning. Myfanwy Edwards provides further student reflections, turning our attention to secondary school pupils and extolling the virtues of learning online for students experiencing

Shakespeare for perhaps the first time. These articles offer striking examples of teachers and students alike responding in personal and purposeful ways to early modern texts and the constraints of pandemic education.

The issue concludes with three explorations of how lockdown theatre has been harnessed as an educative tool in the recent teaching of Shakespeare. Douglas Lanier first explains how Sofa Shakespeare helped to demonumentalise the playwright for his students and inspire them to think of themselves as active creators in the adaptation of Shakespeare, rather than passive receivers. Secondly, Reed Martin of the Reduced Shakespeare Company explores the other side of his work as an educator, sharing improvisation techniques and games which aided the process of bridging between face-to-face and online learning. The issue concludes where it commenced, with my interview with Robert Myles, who discusses the pedagogic impact of *The Show Must Go Online*, his experiences of collaborating with and speaking to scholars and students, and hopes for the future of lockdown theatre.

I am extremely grateful to Sarah Olive for the encouragement and opportunity to share this work with the *Teaching Shakespeare* readership. I am indebted to my Warwick colleague and friend Duncan Lees, who edited the previous takeover issue, and was kind enough to share with me his experiences as an editor and to discuss our shared interests in the subject of Shakespeare and education so generously. Finally, to my eleven contributors, I salute you and your endeavours throughout this trickiest of times in the teaching world. The curation of these articles has been truly inspiring. I hope they will similarly provide you, the reader, with stories of resolve and innovation, and a treasure trove of recourses from which to draw in your own teaching and practice.

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SHAKESPEARE, RACE & PEDAGOGY

WENDY LENNON, PhD student at the Shakespeare Institute, English teacher, and founder of 'Shakespeare Race & Pedagogy' reflects upon the inaugural February 2021 event. You can still check out the event website www.shakeracepedagogy.com and reach Wendy via shakeracepedagogy@hotmail.com.

Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy is an education initiative and five-day, free, online event which seeks to share, celebrate, and reinvigorate approaches to the teaching and study of Shakespeare's plays. I conceived and curated the inter-cultural, inter-generational initiative and series of talks to bring together contributions from international scholars, teachers, students, and our multilingual communities to investigate Shakespeare's plays and their place in our classrooms.

Exploring a range of mediums including translations, archives, the 'Everything to Everybody' Shakespeare library collection, and British Sign Language in the classroom as exciting opportunities to teach, study, and enjoy Shakespeare's plays. Revisiting and building upon international scholarship, research, and educational practices, *Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy* aims to consider the relationship between intersectionalities; confront and challenge perceptions; address the contextual complexities of language and race creating a dialogue between the past and present to include and inspire our current and future scholars, teachers, and students. To achieve this, I invited a range of speakers to discuss their approaches to and experiences of studying

and teaching. My approach provided the *Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy* community with an opportunity to hear a variety of contributions and for the speakers to share their brilliant work and unique positionalities.

The inaugural event week, which took place from 15th to 19th February 2021, brought together an amazing community of 619 online attendees from around the world. The audience – consisting of academics, teachers, students, school children, actors, and members of the public – were as varied as the places they logged in from day after day. I am incredibly grateful to the wonderful *Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy* community for their kindness, collegiality, and willingness to engage with these important topics.

I opened *Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy* 2021 to outline and introduce my motivations, purpose and aims of my education initiative. Here is an extract of my opening speech:

As I created this event and scheduled each session, I negotiated different time zones. For me, here, just a few miles from Shakespeare's birthplace, where he went to school and is buried, it's the evening. For the amazing Ian Smith it's his afternoon. For the brilliant Ambereen Dadabhoy it's her morning.

It's astonishing, isn't it? I find it absolutely astounding that exactly the same moment in time can be experienced so many ways.

Exactly the same Shakespeare play can be experienced in so many ways. The possibilities, the multiple methodologies, the ways we can read, recreate, and recoup the plays is endless and so exciting.

That's all I ask.

That's all I'm asking you to consider and make room for. Make room in your lectures, classrooms, libraries, online seminars, funding awards, on your bookshelves, in your creative industries and staffrooms.

In the meantime, I welcome you into my living room to share and to celebrate the possibilities and multiplicity of our many and varied experiences of Shakespeare's plays. That's what calls to me, that's why I created this event.

Over the last few years, the term diversity has been a valiant attempt to make room. Yet, still, I am silenced and



SHAKESPEARE,
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deleted from meeting minutes as if I wasn't even in the room. Still I am forced to remind schools that my male colleagues are awarded time, money and titles for work I am expected to do for free. Still my Shakespeare research funding is rejected and referred to as a subculture of the main field. Prefix sub-meaning below, beneath, less than.

Yet I refuse to sit in my trauma. I refuse to wear the mantle of victimhood. Like Pericles's Thaisa who rejects her own death and resists the decomposition of her body that Pericles imagined in a sea grave 'scarcely coffined in the ooze', the humming water of inequality will not overwhelm me. Instead, I will do what I can, where I am, with what I have.

Like Marina, I am the daughter and bearer of both history and future. I am not in opposition to history or literary texts, I am a product of history and shaped by all that I have read. Emma Dabiri writes that 'traditional Yoruba concepts of time were cyclical and of the belief that the 'past' is not necessarily disposed with but is in fact in dialogue with the future.' (3)

The plays are in dialogue with us, our children, and I hope, our future. I would like Shakespeare to continue to be an important part of education and research. Shakespeare is a tool we can utilise to develop Literacy and racial Literacy. The scope for learning and collaborative teaching is as wide and varied as we are. Across subjects, not just English and history, but geography, maths, science, modern foreign languages, dance, art. I hope to work with educators to create this. Learning in all senses is important for our children; academically, personally, socially, to learn about each other and the world we share.

When I was grieving the loss of my father, I understood 'Hamlet'. When I studied 'King Lear' I connected with Cordelia's plight to navigate her parent's fractured mind. This connection was as important as my academic success. Devastatingly, Shakespeare has become the casualty of the exam factories we have the audacity to call schools. As a teacher I am a sequential component on the data production line. In competitive exam focused education, in which hierarchies cannot cope with complexities, we lose the opportunity to foster creative, collaborative communities. So much of teaching and learning has nothing to do with teaching and learning. Regurgitated quotations and PEAL paragraphs are not the sum total of Shakespeare. Shakespeare isn't an exam; Shakespeare is an experience. The words, the play, the playfulness, the questions, the volatility, and uncertainties.

Many children leave school hating Shakespeare and that's

concerning for the future of Shakespeare studies and the brilliant work that is happening in our field and the arts. I bring this event to you as a PhD student. Seeking teachers, experts and academic excellence in my field I have been inspired by and learnt so much from the amazing colleagues who will be presenting to you this week. I also bring this event to you as an English teacher. It is my responsibility as an educator to share all that I am learning. To facilitate learning and collaboration between teachers and students. In these challenging times it's easy to forget what is possible.

Being a PhD student and teaching to fund my studies, I am beyond exhausted but it is the place beyond our place of comfort where we can learn, really learn, help people and teach authentically so that no child, and we are all still children, so that none of us are left behind.

DAY ONE

On Monday 15th February, following my introduction to the week's proceedings, we were lucky enough to hear exclusive content from our amazing speakers, including an opening address from Professor Farah Karim-Cooper (Globe and King's College, London) and an inspirational paper *Reading Shakespeare & the Racial Blind Spot* by Dr Ian Smith (Lafayette). This was followed by *Anti-Racist Shakespeare* with Dr Ambereen Dadabhoy (Harvey Mudd, California) and Dr Nedda Mehdizadeh (UCLA). Extraordinary, thought-provoking opening sessions. At the speakers' request these sessions were not recorded and I will not reproduce the content here, however, I look forward to the publication of their new books to reflect upon and implement their approaches.

DAY TWO

Tuesday 16th February began with Dr Xine Yao (University College London) and her undergraduate students, Natacia Lim, Xara Dutton and Jennifer Irving, sharing their experiences of anti-racist education and Shakespeare. Although Dr Xine Yao is not an early modern scholar, it was important that I invited her to share her expertise and approaches to teaching. Like Xine, and many English faculty, I teach a range of texts and time periods, not just Shakespeare. Applying classroom approaches and skills that are transferrable to the early modern period, I incorporate pedagogical practices from later periods to improve my teaching of Shakespeare. The session was an example of English faculty solidarity and demonstrated the benefits of student-teacher collaboration.

Another of example of student-teacher collaboration was apparent in my next session with Dr Eoin Price (Swansea) and Dr Nandini Das (Oxford). Nandini and Eoin have both

“I HOPE THIS WEEK HAS SHOWN YOU THAT WHEN WE EXPERIENCE, NOTICE, OR FEEL THE ANGER OF INJUSTICE THAT WE HARNESS ITS CREATIVE POWER.”

made significant contributions to the field of early modern and race studies. In 2019 Eoin organised and hosted the British Shakespeare Association’s annual conference on the theme of ‘Race and Nation’. In the same year, Nandini organised a Beacon Teacher Fellowship. I was awarded a Fellowship; this was a significant moment for me, both personally and professionally. It was the first time I had ever been taught by a woman of colour and where I was introduced to the archives. The findings from Fellowship resulted in the Teaching Migration, Belonging and Empire report to government. It was a pleasure and a privilege to discuss their work and have the opportunity to publicly thank them both for teaching me so much.

The event evening sessions began with *Writing, Publishing & Teaching* with Dr Sarah Olive (York) and Dr Gillian Woods (Birkbeck). This was a brilliant and inspiring session that provided attendees with exciting avenues and opportunities to publish their work. During the Q&A, I raised the serious issues of access to publications and the prohibitive cost of academic books.

Day Two ended with a fantastic *Pedagogy* session by Dr David Sterling Brown (Binghamton, New York) who discussed his (*Early*) *Modern Literature: Crossing the Sonic Color Line* course. David also shared his approaches to teaching Shakespeare, effective classroom practices and teachable moments, including the ways in which he encourages students to bring their own identity to the text and the classroom. The intersections of race and sexuality were also significant aspects of the Q&A session. An important topic that David will be developing further in his forthcoming Shakespeare and Queer Sexuality symposium.

DAY THREE

Before embarking on postgraduate research, I was involved in Miranda Kaufmann’s Teaching *Black Tudors* Project. What inspired me, an English teacher, to become part of the History focused Teaching Black Tudors project? Why was it important for me to contribute to the project and be the only English teacher to present at the 2019 School’s History Project Conference? Firstly, my firm belief that English and history need each other. So often in schools our subjects and colleagues are separated, and we very rarely have the opportunity to productively learn and collaborate. For both history and English inference, interpretation, reading, and writing are central to both disciplines. In the history classroom, students need these skills to understand, analyse and explain the

sources. In English, the most successful students were not only able to read and write well but also had a wider knowledge of history and a deeper understanding of the world. Furthermore, for all students, having a grasp of the historical context enables them to understand and explain the motivations, actions, and responses of characters and engage with a writers’ potential influences. Therefore, to start Day Three of *Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy*, I curated a *History Teaching & Literary Contexts* session and invited History teacher and Beacon Fellowship alumna, Zaiba Patel, to discuss history in our classrooms.

During my undergraduate degree at Royal Holloway, University of London, I was lucky enough to be taught by the amazing Professor Ewan Fernie whose work and approach to teaching Shakespeare has influenced and inspired me as a scholar and a teacher. Professor Ewan Fernie is now Director of the ‘Everything to Everybody’ project and Chair, Professor and Fellow of the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham. The ‘Everything to Everybody’ project aims to: ‘unlock the first, oldest and largest Shakespeare collection in any public library in the world; revive and extend its founding principle that culture should be actively owned by everybody; inspire Birmingham people and communities to explore, interrogate and improve the collection now’. To end Day Three of *Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy*, I was in conversation with Ewan Fernie to discuss the project. Our discussion was followed by an opportunity for the attendees to virtually explore the collection with Dr Islam Issa, Tom Epps and Lucy Kamenova.

DAY FOUR

To coincide with the *Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy* event week, the Shakespeare Institute Thursday seminar hosted actor Andrew French. In conversation with Dr Abigail Rokison-Woodall, Andrew discussed his experiences of postgraduate study at the Institute, honouring his inspirational and influential teacher, Sir Stanley Wells. It was a pleasure and privilege to hear Andrew’s delivery of lines from his forthcoming role of Polixenes in the Royal Shakespeare Company’s *The Winter’s Tale* directed by Erica Whyman.

Closing Day Four, Professor Michael Dobson, Director of the Shakespeare Institute, was in conversation with Dr Joyce Green MacDonald (Kentucky). Dr Joyce Green MacDonald is one of the many scholars that have led the way in the fields of Shakespeare and race. Palgrave have just published her new book *Shakespearean Adaptation, Race and Memory in the New World*. It was fascinating to learn about her career and receive advice as I continue my academic journey.

DAY FIVE

As part of the 2019 teacher fellowship, I created lessons based on the poetry of Raymond Antrobus whose poems explore his mixed-race identity. Through Antrobus' poems, I also learnt about his experiences of the hearing world and wearing a hearing aid for the first time. To develop my understanding further and to connect my passion of sharing multiple ways of experiencing Shakespeare, I wanted to include the brilliant work of Dr Abigail Rokison-Woodall (Shakespeare Institute), Angie Wootton and Dr Tracy Irish. To open the final day of the event, these fantastic educators presented their *Signing Shakespeare* work. During the session, they explored innovative approaches to using British Sign Language to teach, study and experience Shakespeare's plays.

The afternoon session, *Scholars of Colour: Our Graduate Experience* with Shani Bans (UCL), Wendy Lennon (Shakespeare Institute), Nour El Gazzaz (Royal Holloway) and Hassana Moosa (King's College, London), was a vulnerable and honest discussion about our experiences and challenges of being early career researchers of colour. Central to my education initiative is the enjoyment and investigation of Shakespeare's plays. Recently, I played Moth in a radio play production of *Love's Labour's Lost* directed by Bronwyn Barnwell. For the event finale and to share the joy of this production, I invited Bronwyn and several cast members discuss their favourite parts of the play and their experiences of recording for radio.

To close my *Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy* event week, I reflected upon the week and the catalyst for the event:

As a PhD student, I have learnt so much from all of the wonderful teachers, students, and academics that have contributed to this event. As a teacher it has been my privilege, duty and responsibility to share all that I am learning.

Anger often has a bad reputation and can manifest itself in damaging ways – an angry tweet or unkindness. Women of colour, black women especially, are displayed and dehumanised through the negative trope of the angry black woman.

If I'm being honest with you, this event was born out of anger. Anger and sadness at being silenced, my research being side lined and out of my supervisor's four students being the only one not to receive funding.

However, I hope this week has shown you that when we experience, notice, or feel the anger of injustice that we harness its creative power. I have used that fuel to create



this event and bring us all together. Even though some people have suggested that I rest this weekend. I am not deterred. I will not stop.

I'm absolutely delighted that so many people have gained so much from my event. Hundreds of attendees from across the world and over five hundred views of the recorded sessions that are available on the Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy YouTube channel. I have received messages from a wide range of people from all over the world to share how *Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy* has impacted their lives, study, and pedagogical practices.

However, there is still work to be done. I will continue to write my book and research for my PhD, both titled *From Shakespeare to the Windrush*. I am also excited about my *Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy* education initiative that I will continue to develop to bring more thought-provoking sessions, resources, exclusive events, and publications to the Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy community.

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The global pandemic, in conjunction with the global recognition of the Black Lives Matter movement, led to major pedagogical changes in the 2020/21 academic year. These two cultural shifts necessitated that we teach online and, at the same time, urgently attend to decolonising our curricula. While the sudden movement into a digital classroom was entirely unexpected, the call to decolonise had been gathering momentum for a number of years, starting at the University of Cape Town in 2015 with the ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ campaign and spreading worldwide. If they weren’t already, teachers had to interrogate whether their reading lists perpetuated misrepresentations and mythologies of race, despite their increasingly diverse cohorts’ lived experiences and understanding of the world. There was growing academic recognition that much teaching reproduced systems of knowledge that excluded, marginalised, or erased particular voices. This article reflects on how I took both of these imperatives into account as I planned my second-year undergraduate unit ‘Early Modern Theatre Practice’ for 2021, simultaneously attempting to digitise whilst continuing to decolonise its content.

“TEACHERS HAD TO INTERROGATE WHETHER THEIR READING LISTS PERPETUATED MISREPRESENTATIONS AND MYTHOLOGIES OF RACE, DESPITE THEIR INCREASINGLY DIVERSE COHORTS’ LIVED EXPERIENCES AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD.”

The question of decolonisation is particularly important for Shakespeare studies. Lynn Quinn and Jo-Anne Vorster write that academics “need to ask questions about what knowledge they select for their courses and whether what counts as ‘powerful knowledge’ of the traditional canons in their disciplines” is still necessary and, if so, then why (133). For the arts and humanities, what knowledge is more powerful, what canon more traditional, than Shakespeare? For some years I had taught *Othello*, and more recently *The Masque of Blackness*, ensuring that BIPOC scholars

were also represented in the secondary reading list for the unit. I learned from phenomenal critical race theorists such as Kim F. Hall to think of play texts as being as much about “whiteness” as “blackness”. However, I remained uncomfortable with the fact that my teaching was still largely based in the misogynist, racist, ableist, and classist frameworks of early modern drama. In addition, the numbers of students enrolling on the course was dropping as they, too, queried why they were being taught such texts, however critically. The issue was especially pressing in the civic context of Bristol, a city in which the statue of the Edward Colston was pulled down on 7th June 2020. What opportunities might the move into digital space present for furthering the project of decolonisation?

“I REMAINED UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE FACT THAT MY TEACHING WAS STILL LARGELY BASED IN THE MISOGYNIST, RACIST, ABLEIST, AND CLASSIST FRAMEWORKS OF EARLY MODERN DRAMA.”

The practical teaching of early modern theatre is, like all drama, significantly invested in space and bodies. I was therefore deeply concerned about replicating this learning virtually. Responses to a tweet which expressed this concern made me realise it was shared, so I organised the online event ‘Early Modern Digital Practice’ in December 2020, asking drama experts Valerie Clayman Pye, Nour El Gazzaz, Miranda Fay Thomas, Emma Whipday, and Nora Williams to pool their teaching success stories from the term. From this event I garnered both inspiration and concrete ideas. Most importantly, it helped me to realise that I could make a virtue out of necessity. Teaching online meant that I could augment practical teaching with digitally available performances of early modern plays that confronted their problematic content and contexts. I could use the restructuring opportunity of the pandemic to make better use of the digital resources available – such as Drama Online and Box of Broadcasts – to facilitate productive, performance-informed student discussion, and place performances that rewrote, reimagined, or resisted early modern drama at the heart of the unit.

The module was therefore split into fortnightly segments: one week spent looking at an early modern play in its historical context, the next taking a more modern approach. The main texts would be *Edward II* / Derek Jarman’s 1991 film adaptation, *The Taming of the Shrew* / the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC)’s 2019 gender-swapped *Shrew*, and *Othello* / Toni Morrison’s 2011 play

Desdemona. I would then use the final practical assessment to ask students to either develop their knowledge of early modern practice through a 15 to 20-minute performance of part of *The Witch of Edmonton*, or to produce a contemporary performance that challenged the play, or any others that they had encountered on the unit. In making these changes, I wanted students to develop skills that would make them adept practitioners of Shakespearean theatre – skills focused on building their historical and practical knowledge of how to approach early modern plays. At the same time, by studying the interventions of Jarman, the RSC production, and Morrison, I wanted them to develop into practitioners confident enough to write (or play) back against the dominant structures of early modern drama. They would then be better placed theatre-makers for our moment, one in which Shakespeare’s cultural authority is rightly being challenged; the statue rocked, if not toppled.

The workshops during the weeks that looked at the “original” text would focus on original practices, with contemporary and digital practices governing workshops for the “response” text. OP workshops would involve cue scripts, verse speaking, stock characterisation, and online investigations of early modern performance space. Workshop designs were largely plundered from the ‘Early Modern Digital Practice’ event, such as Pyeman’s ideas for implementing the Globe 360 app in teaching, Whipday’s use of the Reddit “Am I the Asshole?” exercise to consider the ambivalent dramaturgies of early modern plays, Williams’ model for a cue script rehearsal, and Thomas’ stock character suggestions to challenge post-Stanislvskian thinking about roles. The “response” week would be focused on digital resources and involve Zoom workshops, watch parties of performances, as well as online workshops that would ask students to develop strategies for disrupting “original” texts. Students have fed back positively on the unit structure so far, suggesting that the pairings of plays and performances are well-selected. One student reported that the sequential structure brought “a greater focus to the adaptations/responses,” enhancing their understanding of what was being adapted while highlighting the multiple modes in which early modern drama could be reinterpreted. Another said that the “response” text didn’t feel like a response at all, but rather, “a continuation of the story.”

“I COULD USE THE RESTRUCTURE TO FACILITATE PRODUCTIVE, PERFORMANCE-INFORMED STUDENT DISCUSSION, AND PLACE PERFORMANCES THAT REWROTE, REIMAGINED, OR RESISTED EARLY MODERN DRAMA AT THE HEART OF THE UNIT.”

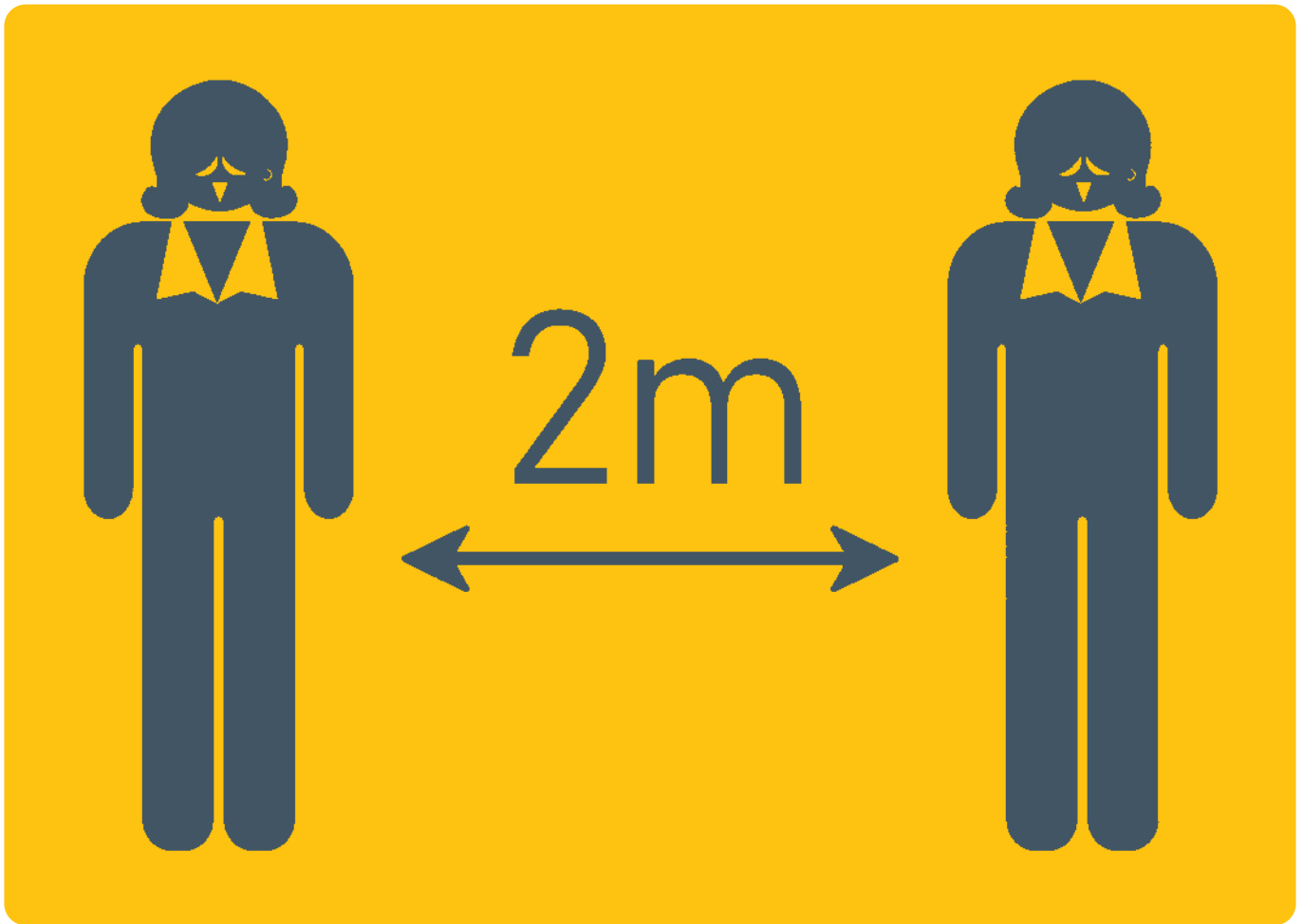
The opportunity of Zoom performance has already yielded

interesting results, with students inventively using the mute function to interrogate Kate’s silencing in *Shrew* for instance, or mocking up Twitter pages to explore Iago’s “fake news” – imagined as the “pouring” of “pestilence” into the ears of social media users. I have been astounded by students’ innovation, technical skills, and make-do attitude, especially when producing Forced Entertainment-like *Table Top Shakespeare* versions of *Othello*. An adaptation of Cassio’s scene of drunkenness (2.3) involving toilet roll tubes, tomato ketchup, and a very wittily-edited script was hilarious. As befits a decolonised unit, I have also been heartened to see students’ avoidance of or exceptional sensitivity to the voicing of *Othello* during these teaching weeks.

It has become essential to question the worlds that we teach and the way that we teach them. Priyamvada Gopal writes that “knowledge is inevitably marked by power relations. In a society still shaped by a long colonial history in which straight, white, upper-class men are at the top of the social order, most disciplines give disproportionate prominence to the experiences, concerns and achievements of this one group.” Decolonising means refusing to accept this disproportional prominence by refusing to do things in the same way, over and over again. It means getting students ready for a creative industry that will inevitably involve Shakespeare, but which may ask them to produce more critical responses to his work. It also means, in the post-pandemic age, facilitating students’ readiness to harness digital platforms such as Zoom, so that they can build their reputations as innovative, exciting producers of Shakespeare today. As Quinn and Vorster argue, our focus should be on the sorts of individuals that we want our students to become; academics “need to ask questions about the nature of the knowers their disciplines set out to shape and whether these are the kinds of knowers needed . . . globally for the twenty-first century” (133). In 2020, the concerns, the structures, and the economics of the world – and those of the theatre – have changed. How can we ensure that our students follow suit?

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SOPHIE HANSON is a final year undergraduate at the University of Warwick, completing a degree in English Literature. Over the past three years, she has worked as a GCSE, A-level and primary school tutor. In September 2021, she will join the Teach First Graduate Programme to train as a primary school teacher in the West Midlands.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has infected almost all human interactions. Students and educators are spending more time online than ever before. In the age of Zoom, it is remarkably easy to feel we are missing out on educational interactions in physical teaching spaces. However, is it possible that, by taking us away from the comfort of the classroom, the pandemic has opened up new opportunities for interaction? As both a student and tutor of Shakespeare, I will explore the paradoxical ways pandemic-induced-distance has enabled my tutees and

“IS IT POSSIBLE THAT, BY TAKING US AWAY FROM THE COMFORT OF THE CLASSROOM, THE PANDEMIC HAS OPENED UP NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERACTION?”

I to interact with Shakespeare’s plays more closely than before.

In 2020, I participated in my first online academic experience: a panel discussion of Shakespeare Anti-Fandom at the Fan Studies Network North America Virtual Conference. From my kitchen table, armed with a cup of tea, I discussed Shakespeare with academics scattered across the globe. Despite being isolated from the other panellists and audience members, in many ways, the virtual format permitted me to interact with Shakespeare much more intimately. Studying Shakespeare was no longer something that happened in the classroom or the library but a conversation around the kitchen table.

The pandemic has invited Shakespeare into our home in other ways. Let us not forget that, despite theatre being currently off-limits for everyone due to Covid-19 closures, unaffordable prices meant theatre was not accessible to all students pre-pandemic, nor will it be when doors reopen. Taking this into consideration, we should therefore acknowledge ways that the pandemic has supported

“despite being isolated from the other panelists and audience members, in many ways, the virtual format permitted me to interact with Shakespeare much more intimately. Studying Shakespeare was no longer something that happened in the classroom or the library but a conversation around the kitchen table.”

students of Shakespeare. As part of the BBC’s *Culture in Quarantine* programme, recordings of RSC productions of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, and others were free to watch on BBC Four and BBC iPlayer. Unable to perform on stage, the RSC also released a series of YouTube videos in which actors read Shakespeare’s sonnets. These are just two of the many ways in which the pandemic has encouraged “free” Shakespeare, removing the financial shackles that has restricted some students from engaging with his work.

During the pandemic, I have been working as a tutor, preparing a GCSE student for their English Literature exam. Social distancing has meant that we have conducted all our sessions over Zoom, which has placed many limits on the interactive elements of our sessions. However, the pandemic has in fact become a vehicle for helping my student to navigate the chaos of *Macbeth*. In one lesson, we compared the ambitions of Macbeth and Boris Johnson: looking at the Dagger Soliloquy, we compared Macbeth’s delay and fear of retribution to Johnson’s delayed decision to introduce lockdown restrictions. This helped my student see Macbeth as a politician, afraid of how his decisions may affect his reputation.

On another occasion, we discussed how, by Act 5, Macbeth feels immune to the horrors of murder and believes it is impossible that Birnam Wood could move. We likened this to the false sense of security after we emerged from the first lockdown, believing ourselves immune to further school closures and restrictions. These comparisons transformed the play from a completely unrelatable story about kings and castles into a political drama about a man facing all-too-familiar decisions.

“these comparisons transformed the play from a completely unrelatable story about kings and castles into a political drama about a man facing all-too-familiar decisions..”

In “these uncertain times”, everyone is united by the same anxieties as we respond to a shared crisis and, if we can consider Shakespeare’s plays to share one commonality, it is this. Hamlet faces the crisis of his father’s murder, Othello the crisis of a purportedly unfaithful wife, and Macbeth the crisis of the witches’ prophecy. Many of the comedies revolve around a crisis, such as the mistaken identities

of *Twelfth Night* or Puck’s love potion in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Though students and teachers may not be grappling with the urge to kill a king, we are each contained in the grip of a global crisis. In this case, we are emotionally closer to Shakespeare than ever and more able to use our own experiences to cut through Shakespearean language to the emotional core of his work.

This insight is particularly important for younger students of Shakespeare. In my experience, it can be difficult for a teenager with limited life experience to understand the extreme emotions of Shakespeare’s soliloquies, but this pandemic has heightened everything: our anxiety, our isolation, our sense of community, our fear, and our hope. So, in this age of extremities, teachers and students are better placed than ever to connect with a canon of plays that take emotion and turn it up to eleven.

That being said, we should not minimise the reality of this pandemic. It has posed an immense challenge for so many people. Admittedly, learning online has lacked much of the richness of face-to-face teaching. Nevertheless, we should embrace the opportunities open to us, so that we might enhance our educational interaction with Shakespeare and acknowledge those interactions which have emerged from the pandemic. We can still discuss Shakespeare. We can still watch Shakespeare. We can still connect to Shakespeare. As long as we can do this, we can still educate, and we can still learn.

“we should embrace the opportunities open to us, so that we might enhance our educational interaction with Shakespeare and acknowledge those interactions which have emerged from the pandemic.”



COMPOSING SHAKESPEARE

LAUREN FINCH is in the final year of her English Literature undergraduate degree at the University of Warwick and was taught by Ronan Hatfull on the “Remaking Shakespeare” module in during the 2019/20 academic year.

Like many, the summer term of 2020 was my first experience of university online. It was also in this term that I started my creative project for the module Remaking Shakespeare, which focuses on the adaptation of Shakespeare. I had decided early on that my creative project was going to take the form of music, responding to *Hamlet* and its adaptation in three movements. The first movement, “Ophelia’s Theme”, establishes the piano as the metaphorical voice of Ophelia and her initial mental state. The second movement, “Melody for the Mad”, conveys Ophelia’s descent into madness and the third movement, “Theme for the Ophelias”, reflects the perception of adaptation as a metaphorical force of resurrection capable of reviving the character of Ophelia.

However, the way in which these ideas were to be musically realised was substantially shaped by the limited resources available to me during lockdown. Not being a confident multi-instrumentalist, I had hoped to accompany my piano compositions with the musical and vocal talents of friends, recording strings for each movement and a song for the third movement. However, when lockdown put a stop to these plans, I was instead forced to venture into the world of virtual instruments for the first time. Though grappling with this learning curve, I reminded myself that there was a good reason why composer Hans Zimmer, despite his access to the finest musicians in the world, considers the computer his primary instrument! Indeed, arming myself with a laptop, keyboard, and a cable to connect the two, became not only an acceptable substitute; it widened the possibilities of how I could present a musical interpretation of Ophelia’s madness and the resurrective powers of adaptation.

Ophelia’s changing mental state is primarily presented through the contrast between Movements 1 and 2. Where Movement 1 is generally more hopeful and positive, Movement 2’s contrasting minor key and descending musical phrases presents Ophelia’s descent into madness, culminating in her abrupt death. However, the vast choice of music sample libraries permitted me to build upon this representation far more creatively. In the first half of Movement 2, I was able to lift Shakespeare’s musical imagery straight from the pages of *Hamlet* and realise it, quite literally, in the form of “sweet bells jangled, out

of tune and harsh” (3.1.156-9) to represent Ophelia’s madness. Furthermore, rather than solely employing the vocal abilities of the female friend I had in mind initially, I now had the freedom to use both male and female choirs. This enabled me musically to represent the perception that Ophelia’s madness is caused by the male influences in her life, using female choirs in the first movement and male choirs in the second. I further emphasised this connection with brass instruments, alluding to how trumpets often precede the entrance of male characters in *Hamlet*.

Presenting the resurrective force of adaptation through different performances of Ophelia was another challenge in itself. My initial plans were to compose a song. However, when lockdown meant I could not record any singers, this was no longer an option. Therefore, sound design became the primary way in which I conveyed Ophelia’s metaphorical resurrection in Movement 3. Representing Ophelia being taken from the water, I opened this movement with underwater and running water sound effects. These sounds invited the entrance of two repeating cello chords intended to convey the breathing of Ophelia brought about by her new resurrection through adaptation, with a D major chord representing an inhale and C major the exhale.

To represent adaptation, I layered the audio of notable performances of Ophelia – such as Mimi Ndiweni, Kate Winslet, and Helena Bonham Carter – constructing a Chorus of Ophelias and beckoning in the entrance of Ophelia’s new heartbeat. To reiterate the musicality of the project, I then capitalised on the piano as the metaphorical voice of Ophelia, as established in Movement 1. Echoing the voices that came before, I layered multiple piano melodies with alternating chord progressions to reflect the varying voices of Ophelia which result from different adaptations. I ended this third and final movement abruptly to indicate that, since *Hamlet* continues to be performed and adapted, the creation of new voices of Ophelia is not finished either.

I did not expect, like many students and teachers, to complete the last academic year at home on my laptop – let alone terms beyond. However, least of all, I did not expect that the limitations of the pandemic, which I so often thought to have negatively affected my university experience, would instead transform a module assignment for the better by inspiring a completely new creative approach.

You can listen to the three movements here:
<https://soundcloud.com/laurenfmusic/sets/ophelia>

a Lego *TROILUS AND CRESSIDA*

STEPHEN PURCELL is Associate Professor of English at the University of Warwick. His research focuses on Shakespeare and his contemporaries in modern performance and popular culture. He is joint artistic director of the theatre company The Pantaloons.

I usually teach my Shakespeare classes in one of the flexible studio spaces at the University of Warwick. I am based in the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, so while some of my students come from a theatre studies background, many do not. I tend to reassure students that my practical classes are not “acting” classes, but rather invitations to learn through doing – to understand verse structure by speaking it, for example, or to examine dramaturgy by exploring the ways in which bodies can be arranged in space.

Much of what I do in my classes translated relatively straightforwardly into online learning during the pandemic. Discussion-based analysis has been fine; breakout groups can work just as easily on a platform like Microsoft Teams.

Even exercises like “actioning” a text can work fairly well – the post-Stanislvskian practice of assigning each line a verb, or “action”, for the actor to play. But space plays a major role in my teaching, and this was, for me, the major

challenge of moving my teaching online. In one of my classes, for example, I usually invite students to examine pages from the promptbook of William Poel’s 1912 production of *Troilus and Cressida* in order to think about the implications of staging certain scenes with particular configurations of bodies on Poel’s split stage:

What happens to 4.4 if Pandarus stays physically close to Cressida throughout the scene? How might Diomedes’ newly ignited rivalry with Troilus be presented through blocking?

*What happens in 5.2 if Cressida and Diomedes are presented on an inner stage akin to a discovery space, with Troilus, Ulysses and Thersites eavesdropping on them from positions closer to the audience? (Robert Weimann writes about the implications of a similar staging configuration for this scene in *Author’s Pen and Actor’s Voice* (62–70).) What happens to the audience’s gaze if this staging configuration is reversed?*

Normally, we would play out these scenes in a studio space, trying the various possibilities suggested by Poel’s promptbook. Online, this would be impossible. The solution presented itself in the form of a Tweet by Peter Kirwan (@DrPeteKirwan):



Photo © I Wei Huang / Shutterstock.com

Back to work tomorrow and the planning for online teaching will begin. Have been musing on options for how to recreate practical drama experiments via distance learning, and think I know the route I'll be taking. LEGO.

For my practical classes on promptbooks, then, I sourced a handful of Lego minifigures and found a couple of notebooks that were roughly the right size, relative to the minifigures, to double as Poel's stages. I made digitized copies of the relevant promptbook pages available to my students in advance of the classes, alongside some other material on Poel's production. I assigned each student to a particular sub-group, with each sub-group looking at a separate scene. In a normal year, they would have been invited to prepare to recreate the scene as Poel might have staged it. This year, the students broke off into their sub-groups to *talk* about how Poel might have staged their assigned scenes, before returning to a plenary in which they would direct me, live, in arranging the Lego figures into particular configurations for the scenes.

"BUT SPACE PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN MY TEACHING, AND THIS WAS, FOR ME, THE MAJOR CHALLENGE OF MOVING MY TEACHING ONLINE."

The plenary activity alternated between discussion and staging as we talked through the scenes, the students instructing me to move the minifigures in particular ways at specific moments. I had the minifigures set up in front of my laptop on my desk, and tilted the screen downwards whenever we wanted to try out a particular staging configuration. In retrospect, setting up a separate device on a separate login would have been more practical, as I could not therefore see my own laptop screen during the practical demonstrations – but since the students were giving me verbal directions, this did not matter all that much in practice. I spotlighted myself for the demonstrations so that the image of the Lego minifigures filled the screen. One or two students also had desktop toys and other small items in their own rooms, so they staged parts of the scenes themselves with these, and I spotlighted them accordingly.

"DIRECTING THE SCENES WITH LEGO MINIFIGURES AND OTHER SMALL TOYS ALLOWED US TO EXPLORE MANY OF THE SAME INTERPRETIVE CRUXES AND STAGING PROBLEMS THAT AN IN-PERSON PRACTICAL CLASS WOULD HAVE DONE."

For the most part, the strategy worked well. Directing the scenes with Lego minifigures and other small toys allowed us to explore many of the same interpretive cruxes and staging problems that an in-person practical class would have done. Some aspects of staging remained impossible

to replicate in this format – the nuances of gesture and eye contact, for example, or direct address to the audience. However, the exercise also opened up some new possibilities. "Casting" the roles by selecting the most appropriate toy for each, for example, was a fun way to discuss the students' interpretations of the characters, or their impressions of Poel's interpretations.

"SOME ASPECTS OF STAGING REMAINED IMPOSSIBLE TO REPLICATE IN THIS FORMAT – THE NUANCES OF GESTURE AND EYE CONTACT, FOR EXAMPLE, OR DIRECT ADDRESS TO THE AUDIENCE."

I had already observed in response to Forced Entertainment's *Table Top Shakespeare* series that retelling Shakespeare's plots using small household items to represent the characters could facilitate an emphasis on what director Tim Etchells called the "diagrammatic" aspects of Shakespeare's storytelling: groupings and regroupings of characters, parallels and contrasts, symmetries and imbalances. Focusing purely on stage positioning allowed us to identify turning points in the scenes, to think about the dynamics of the characters' shifting allegiances, and to speculate about how the audience might be invited to look at them.

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a NNA L HEGLAND is writing up her PhD on *The Language of Violence in Early Modern Tragedies* at the University of Kent, where her research focuses on the intersections of rhetoric, materiality, and performance.

In April 2020, as the UK adjusted to life in lockdown, I received an email from the organising committee of the University of Kent's Medieval and Early Modern Studies Festival. I had been scheduled to deliver an acting workshop as part of the two-day postgraduate conference in June, based on my doctoral research into the vocabularies of violence in early modern tragedies, with an eye towards both text- and practice-based research. While we could no longer run an in-person workshop, the committee asked if I would be willing to trial an online version delivered over Microsoft Teams.

The prospect of successfully transitioning an in-person acting workshop to a digital space only weeks after lockdown began was daunting. My questions ranged from "how might drama workshops function in a virtual setting?" to "how do we build a sense of trust and collaboration between a group of strangers in separate rooms?" Building on the legacy of ongoing work within Shakespeare and the digital humanities, my intentions for the workshop remained centred on active collaboration, during which the participants and I would be able to stage a scene and experiment with a variety of performance scenarios.

At their core, my research questions focused on personal responses to the set text and did not necessarily require participants to be physically in the same room if we shared a digital space. These included:

How are displays of emotion gendered in early modern plays?

How is emotion represented or expressed rhetorically?

In what ways might rhetoric impact the embodiment of emotion on stage?

Does the playwright distinguish between female and male emotions?

In planning the workshop, I turned to other forms of digital media, bringing together text, pre-recorded video, and



Image of the MEMSlib logo, a medieval book with "MEMS" in blackletter script across it and chains forming a circle above and below, as designed by Ruth Nichols-Pike.

synchronous analysis of each to facilitate collaborative research in a virtual rehearsal space. We could work from an excerpted portion of John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, using a script I distributed via the workshop's dedicated Teams channel and supported by video clips of the scene in performance as well as a plot synopsis shared at the start of the workshop.

Some of this preparatory work demanded more creative thought than it might under normal circumstances, particularly in terms of ensuring that anyone who turned up on the day would have equal and instant access to the workshop materials. This was one of the unique challenges of organizing the workshop as part of a conference rather than as a seminar or standalone event; while MEMS Fest was ticketed, there was no way of knowing which attendees might choose to attend my workshop or the panel held simultaneously on the second conference channel stream.

As I set up the virtual workshop, I received another email from the directors of my research centre, who sought students willing and able to spearhead a "lockdown library" project. These students would create an online community meant to facilitate shared access to research materials and resources, in whatever form they felt would prove useful and sustainable over the anticipated weeks-long lockdown. This project resonated with my work gathering digital material for use at MEMS Fest, and I found myself returning to the idea of the "lockdown library" and what role it might play in future digital research, workshops, and teaching practice. Such a resource undoubtedly served the immediate need of university students and staff to access research material from home but might also be



built to support creative and collaborative work during and beyond lockdown. In both cases, open access materials and resources already existed, but not in aggregate form. A collection of research and teaching resources was suddenly a necessity, aiding global research in a global pandemic.

I joined a team of five students – Anna-Nadine Pike, Emma-Louise Hill, Roisin Astell, Dr Daniella M Gonzalez, and myself – from across the MA and PhD cohorts in Kent’s MEMS Centre as founding co-editors for the “lockdown library”, which we named MEMSLib. As a team, we designed a website that separated resources by time period and subject, then divided these into pages that corresponded with our individual research experience. Here, my workshop preparation informed my work on the Early Modern Drama page, where I included such resources as practice-as-research writeups, production archives, podcasts and videos, and digital tours of theatre spaces alongside information on digital texts, theatre history, and print and publication.

From the start, we committed to sharing Open Access sources that reflect not only the broad scope but the diversity of medieval and early modern studies. This meant building diversity into every page: users can find information on Black Central Europe (1000–1500); Race, Racism, and the Middle Ages; the European Qur’an project; Teaching Race and Middle English Literature; the Race B4 Race conference series; Stigma in Shakespeare; the #SuchStuff podcast from Shakespeare’s Globe; and anti-racist teaching resources, to name just a few.

Each page also has a corresponding forum space for questions and further resource requests. Pages were developed pedagogically, with an eye toward the needs of both teachers and students; many of the resources

listed include educational materials for use in secondary- and university-level classrooms. My own research-led teaching practice made particular use of the performance resources, which gave access to practitioner interviews, images, videos, reviews, essays, and analysis.

Outputs from last year’s early stages of lockdown, like the *‘Tis Pity* workshop I delivered on Teams, illustrate the potential for online work in the field of early modern drama that has only grown in the succeeding months. With its focus on the accessibility of both traditional and creative materials, resources like MEMSLib demonstrate how far online teaching and research have come and provide the space to think about where we might go next. As we continue to meet the challenges of teaching, research, and theatre practice in a digital world, what new opportunities might Zoom, Teams, or other virtual platforms afford for practice-based research into Shakespeare and early modern drama? How else can we encourage accessible, robust, and innovative digital work on embodied practice and build this into our teaching and research? MEMSLib and its application in classrooms and workshops represents one such effort but, perhaps most importantly, also functions as a reminder of the principle at the centre of this work: collaboration.

FURTHER READING:

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EXPERIMENTING WITH PORTFOLIOS

IMKE LICHTERFELD teaches English Literature at Bonn, Germany. She published a monograph on mantic elements in early modern English revenge tragedy called *When the Bad Bleeds . . .* and she has contributed to publications on contemporary literature and modernism. Her research predominantly focuses on Renaissance drama. Currently, she holds a position as Studies Coordinator at the Department of English, American and Celtic Studies at the University of Bonn.

In March 2020, the challenge of transferring my planned “Shakespeare and Time” third year undergraduate course at Bonn University to a completely digital format seemed as daunting to me as to others facing Covid-19, the emergency online semester, and the teaching load. A learning portfolio – “a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student’s efforts, progress and achievements” (Paulson 1) – served to gather feedback on their learning progress in spite of physical distance. Learning Outcomes in this “Renaissance Studies” module include competencies to acquire textual knowledge, compartmentalise this according to its political, socio-economic, historical, and cultural context, and to structure research. Covering theoretical texts, two dramas, and a few sonnets, students would normally have to regularly contribute to in-class discussions. These had to be adjusted to offer students more flexibility and not create zoom fatigue. To gauge efficiency, we thus “met” online every fortnight to ensure some interaction, engaged in forum discussions, arranged feedback on reading, and explored the preoccupation with different aspects of the topic. Portfolios seemed perfect to meet the module requirements in full.

Intended as a written tool to dispute the course content in writing, a portfolio is a recorded observation and reflection on learning outcomes. I gave students instructions how to incorporate different facets of the course, proposed it as an invitation to advance thoughts, and a challenge to question themselves. I also hoped to nourish motivation through a realisation of their personal learning progress. To facilitate this, I greatly extended the Further Learning Opportunities section of my syllabus and not only added more literature but included visual uploads, links to podcasts, videos, online talks, and more. The experimental portfolio covered tasks that accompanied the content of the four teaching blocks (theory, *Richard II*, *The Winter’s Tale*, poetry) during term time. The instruction indicated that it should be academic but could also embrace creative contributions: “Summarise, analyse and evaluate your

course work – surprise me!” (Lichterfeld). At the same time, I specified that it was not graded and therefore students should not feel too pressured. The resulting portfolios were a revelation and I have rarely seen such impressive coursework. Some of the prompts were received rather well:

“Write a review? [a lot of people did this]

Draw a picture of a scene? [a few]

Film yourself doing a monologue? [nobody]

A PowerPoint presentation on a play? [nobody]

Write a poem? [some]

Present your opinion on a character? [quite a few]” (Lichterfeld).

Some teaching degree students took up the idea of creating a work sheet for future pupils. I had the pleasure to read wonderfully illustrated pages, as some had created pictures of characters and stage sets. The feedback was very positive. Students elaborated on their own learning experiences and gave responses both on course content as well as format:

“a portfolio was a new experience [...] I was unsure about the relatively “free” nature of the tasks, [but] came to appreciate being able to focus on different aspects of the seminar” (Annika Jordan).

Students understood its benefit during this digital term to “further reflect [...] and do some additional work on the topic” (Lioba Niederhoff).

As to the suggestion to “contextualise and ponder what you have learnt” (Lichterfeld), a lot of students did so with regard to online conditions, and realised that the consideration of time worked well in lockdown: the experience of seemingly having more time at hand while scheduling their own time effectively revealed surprising parallels to our course.

“It seems oddly fitting to have done a class on time [...] when time management and the notion of ‘wasted time’ became very important both in my student life and private life” (Annika Jordan).

I am thankful to have had the opportunity to read this feedback, as it demonstrates the contemplation between a degree and the current situation. The feeling that the course gave structure and a sense of normality, while questioning routines, and yet allowed students to make progress on their academic curriculum was a relief. The portfolio gave valuable feedback on this:

“I really enjoyed working on this [...] I was able to practice my researching, summarising, and close reading skills which are all important for writing a successful term paper.” (Lioba Niederhoff)

For these reasons, I am very content with this assessment of the course structure and the students’ progress that entails the improvement of academic writing skills.

Throughout the following winter term, still taught from home, I repeated the experience and again was greeted with remarkable portfolios. This time, it was less rigid as far as the teaching blocks were concerned but similar tasks were set for my module on “Shakespeare and Diversity”, a course that required readings of *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* as well as monologues from *Titus Andronicus* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, apart from secondary literature (theory, history, analysis). I adjusted the structure of the portfolio to a certain extent: it contained the obligatory tasks of a “Topic Reflection” and an “Online Course & Learning Feedback Reflection” as well as elective tasks:

A “Performance Reflection” [some completed this]

“Reflecting Theory” [most provided summaries of additional texts]

The “Close Reading” of a scene [surprisingly few]

Or a “Term Paper Abstract” [fewer than expected]

Almost all students chose to complete a “Guest Talk Reflection”, as I had invited speakers via video stream on four evenings, and considered their contributions: most chose Emer McHugh’s presentation on the Globe’s 2016 Irish *Taming of the Shrew*, and Sabina Laskowska-Hinz’s consideration of Polish *Merchant of Venice* posters. The elective “Creative Task” resulted in a POV story, poems, and a few drawings, among them a Desdemona with a “silencing” handkerchief / Covid face mask covered with strawberries. There was also a fabulous “Othello & Desdemona relationship health check” that showed the abusive character of their marriage, including references to scenes. I was positively surprised to find that many

students completed more tasks than required. The part of the portfolio that demanded a reflected response to digital learning showed that most students enjoyed the “satisfactory balance” (Noah Scheen), the “very effective and still educational” (Sebastian Lülldorf) combination of specific tasks and individual learning freedom, synchronous and asynchronous sessions. The portfolios thus gave feedback on the syllabus and the students’ learning progress. For future purposes, they helped me to evaluate the digital working atmosphere, to support the writing process, and to refine my module. This was a valuable task for me as an educator, both during and beyond Covid.

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For more online, student Shakespeares created during the pandemic, check out the Waseda Institute Players (Tokyo, Japan). Their production of *Twelfth Night* was filmed using teleconferencing technology. Apart from their pithy production, their YouTube channel includes a post-show talk with cast and crew reflecting on their experience. www.youtube.com/channel/UC1RJAaxxf6jPzfZADZrMaw



the tempest explored ONLINE BY year 7

mYFANWY EDWARDS is the Curriculum Leader for English at The Richmond Upon Thames School in west London. She is a PhD student at UCL Institute of Education. Her thesis is about the development and reception of a National Theatre production of *Macbeth* for school audiences. Her research interests are Shakespeare and education, the social construction of meaning and the ways in which young people engage with literature. She is also the General Secretary for the London Association for the Teaching of English.

Working out how to teach *The Tempest* remotely to Year 7 has undoubtedly been a challenge. In the classroom, I would use discussions, small group work and drama activities to develop both their interpretations and a sense of theme and character. However, what I have noticed is that not only are there ways to replicate this in the online classroom, but that there are aspects that work more effectively. I teach a mixed ability Year 7 class. Their understanding of the play, even very early on, has been impressive and I've seen what Barbara Bleiman might call "big picture thinking" (2020) from all students. As we shall see, by utilizing the features of Google Classroom, Year 7 have developed a complex understanding of Prospero, even in the early stages of their reading. I will focus on how the creation of an interactive theatre experience online and share some of the work produced by my students.

The chat function seems to be something most teachers agree is useful in online learning, since it allows you to see quickly what students think and understand. It also enables them to consistently comment and interact with the lesson, without disruption. This is something others, such as Rachael Nicholas, have explored when researching audiences of live broadcasts and digital theatre performances. There is much to be said on how an English teacher can harness the chat function in an online lesson. One way I used it was to direct the play collaboratively. To begin, we watched two versions of Ariel and Prospero's exchange in Act 1 Scene 2, one performed by the RSC and the other by Shakespeare's Globe. Next, I divided the scene into three and asked for volunteers to read the parts. For each section, two students would read the lines aloud and others would listen and offer direction or thoughts on the performance. This was easier to some extent than a real-

life performance, with students feeling more confident to read and to post their feedback than they might face-to-face with their peers. The focus on voice without the added movement and gesture also helped.

At the end of each section, students gave their ideas for how the next two readers should approach their character. We tried three different scenarios: both characters angry, Ariel as childlike, and Ariel as fed up whilst Prospero is annoyed. Once we had tried it several ways, I asked them to tell me how they would direct the scene having seen a few alternatives. Their responses were not simple adjectives but the beginnings of developed ideas. What can be seen in the exchange below is the sense of indignation at the way that Ariel is treated in the play so far. Even at this early stage the students were beginning to raise important questions about Prospero's power.

00:25:42.588,00:25:45.588

Thomas: Prospero in both plays is very angry at Ariel so Ariel should have excuses so that Prospero won't be so strict

00:25:43.899,00:25:46.899

Hasan: I think that prospero [sic] needs to be bossed around by ariel [sic]

00:25:45.895,00:25:48.895

Ben: Prospero should be more loyal and have a friendly relationship and be more respectful to each other

00:26:01.650,00:26:04.650

Hannah: Prospero should be a bit less dependent on Ariel because just because he saved him 12 years ago

Using the chat function allowed me to deal with each idea and interpretation in turn, something I could not do as easily in the classroom. I gave opportunities for the students to come "off mic" and explain their ideas. I also saw some students who were unsure of their own opinion post "thumbs up" and "yup" in the chat when an opinion they agreed with was given.

I found the ways in which students responded to the question revealing of their own attitudes to power and compliance. Whilst most saw Prospero as in the wrong, one student, Thomas, suggested Ariel should change

"THERE IS MUCH TO BE SAID ON HOW AN ENGLISH TEACHER CAN HARNESS THE CHAT FUNCTION IN AN ONLINE LESSON."

“USING THE CHAT FUNCTION ALLOWED ME TO DEAL WITH EACH IDEA AND INTERPRETATION IN TURN, SOMETHING I COULD NOT DO AS EASILY IN THE CLASSROOM.”

their behaviour to stop Prospero “being so strict”. Another popular opinion was that the roles should reverse; another was that mutual respect would be the best solution. Yet it is Hannah’s comment that interested me the most and we picked up a discussion about it. Despite not quite answering the question – her answer would fundamentally change the plot of the play – it shows a greater understanding of the plot of the story and begins to question Prospero’s power on the island. Prompted by Hannah, I introduced them to the idea of the saviour complex and asked them to decide if they thought this fitted in with how they saw Prospero.

The lesson culminated in the opportunity for independent reflection on the scene. Students were asked to look at

snippets of the scene and explain how their relationship came across throughout the conversation, as shown by this example of the work produced by Calum.

What I like about Calum’s writing is that his personal opinion comes across strongly, but is rooted in parts of the text. By spending an entire lesson reading and writing about the scene, most students completed this task quickly and had a lot to say. I think Jason’s perspective reflects the class consensus that Ariel is mistreated, whilst focusing on parts of the language in which Calum was personally interested. Usually in class, I use a lot of talk before writing and will continue to do so when we return to face-to-face teaching. However, I will also be thinking hard about ways to include short, low stakes bursts of writing and ways to facilitate interaction with the answers and ideas of other students.

Note: all names have been changed to respect the privacy of the students.

How does Shakespeare present Prospero & Ariel's relationship in this scene?	
Quotation	What is Shakespeare saying about Prospero & Ariel's relationship?
<p>PROSPERO Come away, servant, come. I am ready now. Approach, my Ariel, come.</p> <p><i>Enter ARIEL</i></p> <p>ARIEL All hail, great master! grave sir, hail!</p>	<p>In this extract we see Prospero address Ariel as a Servant suggests that.... He doesn't have any respect for Ariel because you don't call someone for what they are. You can only call someone for what they are if they are powerful or your parents and grandparents.</p>
<p>ARIEL Is there more toil? Since thou dost give me pains, Let me remember thee what thou hast promised, Which has not yet perform'd me.</p> <p>PROSPERO How now? moody? What is't thou canst demand?</p> <p>ARIEL My liberty.</p>	<p>In using the word 'which' Ariel is showing that.... Ariel thinks he has a lot more work to do. It also shows that Prospero is taking advance of Ariel because he is his servant. Ariel may even fear Prospero. And, yes, Prospero did save Ariel from a tree but, that doesn't mean Ariel has to be his slave. He has essentially just, took him as a prisoner again AFTER saving him FROM a prison.</p> <p>Prospero says "How now? Moody?"... Because of him saying this, we can tell that he is still a horrible person towards him and is unfair to Ariel. That's not fair. Everyone should be treated the same. Human or not.</p>
<p>ARIEL I prithee, Remember I have done thee worthy service; Told thee no lies, made thee no mistakings, served Without or grudge or grumbings: thou didst promise To bate me a full year.</p> <p>PROSPERO Dost thou forget From what a torment I did free thee?</p>	<p>Ariel starts to babble on about how good of a servant he is to Prospero... This shows us that Prospero is extremely ungrateful to Ariel and although Ariel has been nice, loyal and even granting his wishes to cause harm on others, he still sees Ariel as a servant. Ariel snaps and by doing this, it shows us that Ariel has had enough of Prospero.</p> <p>Prospero says "From what a torment I did free thee?"... This shows us that he is oblivious to how he has been treating Ariel. This is Abuse and he's been treating him like this and without thought of, "Maybe this is wrong?" this is horrible.</p>
<p>ARIEL Pardon, master; I will be correspondent to command And do my spiring gently.</p> <p>PROSPERO Do so, and after two days I will discharge thee.</p> <p>ARIEL That's my noble master! What shall I do? say what; what shall I do?</p>	<p>Ariel says "That's my noble master! What shall I do next? Say what; what shall I do?"... This shows us that he has respect for Prospero and has been driven to doing many jobs to the point that he knows, he can never rest.</p>

COUCHING SHAKESPEARE, HIDDEN POTENTIAL

DOUGLAS M. LANIER is Professor of English at the University of New Hampshire, where he teaches courses in Shakespeare, drama, adaptation, popular culture, and theory. He has written widely on modern Shakespeare adaptations in mass media, including his 2002 book *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* (OUP). His current projects are a history of screen adaptation of *Othello* and a monograph on reparative Shakespeare, uses of Shakespeare that address the traumas of stigmatized social groups such as prisoners, veterans, gay youth, the elderly, those with cognitive or physical disabilities, and the like.

One of the few benefits from this miserable Covid year has been the proliferation of Shakespeare productions on the internet. There have been myriad series of Zoom readings, some of them traversing the entire Shakespearean canon (*Shakespeare Happy Hours*, *The Show Must Go Online*); short films of Shakespearean monologues (the “Bard from the Barn” series by the Barn Theatre, the “Power of One” series by Perchance Theatre); even serialized readings of the sonnets, including, famously, the #ASonnetADay series on Twitter featuring Patrick Stewart. Once Covid took hold, the show had to go online, and as a result we now have an embarrassment of digital riches.

Perhaps the most interesting of these Covid-era series is

Sofa Shakespeare, a project created by San Diego actor Julia Giolzetti. Giolzetti’s technique is simple: assign actors—mostly amateurs—one-minute passages from a Shakespeare play, which they can perform in any style they like so long as they stick to Shakespeare’s text. The actors record their performances within two days of receiving the assignment, using whatever means they have at hand. Giolzetti edits the segments together to create a full-length performance of the play, which is then posted at sofashakespeare.com and on YouTube. The result is a kaleidoscopic, crowd-sourced Shakespeare production that changes from minute to minute, all barely held together by Shakespeare’s text and plotline.

Though many segments are deliberately comic, the whole doesn’t read as Shakespearean parody. Rather, what emerges from this assemblage is an exuberant, unexpectedly earnest engagement with Shakespeare, using the domestic objects and spaces so central to our lives throughout the pandemic. Giolzetti has produced twelve plays in this fashion, spanning the generic and historical breadth of Shakespeare’s output. What I find charming and even moving about these Shakespeare productions is that they lay bare the conditions under which they were made. They constitute a sort of Grotowskian “poor theater,” in which common objects and spaces are transformed into Shakespearean scenes. For me, precisely





because Sofa Shakespeare is so zanily homespun, such a testament to public creativity, it rises above even the best Zoom productions of the era.

How to use Sofa Shakespeare in the classroom? First, it provides an object for analysis, unpromising though it at first may seem. The sheer variety of approaches Sofa Shakespeare offers prompts students to consider a wide range of performance possibilities. One can choose a scene – Sofa Shakespeare conveniently also publishes individual scenes as well as complete plays – and ask students which approaches work and which don't, and why. Which clips use minimalism or shock techniques? Which take fruitful advantage of our knowledge of popular culture? Which pick up on something in the text, and which simply impose a design concept?

The advantage of using Sofa Shakespeare in the classroom is that its productions aren't committed to a single concept or style of performance. Instead, it loosens up students' thinking about the notion of performance choices. Too often, when I show a video clip from a professional Shakespeare performance, its very polish along with the fixity of film works to monumentalise the production – “this is the way Shakespeare ought to be done,” such clips suggest, “leave it to the professionals.” By contrast, the DIY quality of Sofa Shakespeare and its constantly changing styles invite students to consider the idea of a performance choice more capaciously, with more of a sense of personal interpretive ownership. In short, Sofa Shakespeare works to demonumentalise Shakespeare in performance in ways that encourage students' analytic and creative faculties at once.

Sofa Shakespeare also provided a productive model for class performance projects in an age of social distancing.

“for me, precisely because sofa shakespeare is so zanily homespun, such a testament to public creativity, it rises above even the best zoom productions of the era.”

One benefit is that the technical barriers to completing the assignment were very low – nearly every student already owns a mobile phone with video capabilities, clips of a minute or two are easy to record, and there always seems to be one student in class technically adept enough to edit the clips together into a complete film. For one Shakespeare class, I broke up the final scene of *The Tempest* into 20-line segments and assigned them to students, with the instruction that they were to produce a performance clip in a style of their choice. I stressed that they needed to include every line of dialogue in the original, that they should be wary of producing a sophomore parody, and that the clip needed to be filmed in landscape mode.

Our discussions of Sofa Shakespeare identified pitfalls students needed to address: for one, since the performers are constantly changing in the course of a Sofa Shakespeare scene, performers need to make sure the viewer knows who is who, whether through labels, costuming, captions or some other device. For students who were shy or unaccustomed to public speaking, Sofa Shakespeare was a godsend, since they could make stuffed animals or beer bottles the characters and provide the dialogue off-camera. Because the segments were quite short, students had to think hard about the details of their assigned passage: what words will the audience have trouble understanding, and how do I make them clear? What crucial action appears in my segment, and how to indicate it to the viewer? What does my passage contribute to the developing scene as a whole? What performance choice or production concept might enhance the passage's meaning?

Many students commented that the project forced them to pay especially close attention to the minutiae of the Shakespearean text and to think hard through the implications of a performance style. Perhaps the greatest benefit was simply that students could produce a group performance project, always an important assignment in my class, without violating Covid restrictions. Their inventiveness was a revelation – the Sofa Shakespeare approach clearly introduced some gentle competition between students into the mix – and the final product testified to their sense of shared purpose under difficult circumstances. My hope is that this project might encourage some of my students to think of themselves as active performers of Shakespeare's meaning, not just passive consumers of others' productions.



zoom'd for a certain term

REED MARTIN is Co-Artistic Director of the Reduced Shakespeare Company. He is also a member of the Drama Faculty of Napa Valley College, Santa Rosa Junior College, Diablo Valley College, and San Joaquin Delta College

I have been inspired by the work my drama students have done online during the pandemic. My experience has been that, although remote learning is not optimal in all cases, most classes can be taught effectively online with a few adjustments.

Classes and rehearsals have been held via Zoom and the online learning platform Canvas. I had not utilized either of these platforms prior to March 2020 and cannot imagine working without them in the future, even when we are again teaching and directing in person. I have increased the amount of screen media I use in my instruction and will continue to do so when classes again meet in person. I've stopped using paper and do not plan on using it ever again. I will continue to post assignments digitally and collect work online only.

For my online acting classes, we start with a physical and vocal warmup. Students seem to enjoy the warmup because they are spending so much time sitting around these days. At the very beginning of the pandemic, I stopped doing the warmup for a brief period of time, but the students let me know that they missed it. I noticed when I went back to doing the warmup that the students were more focused and energised to start the class. They seem to be genuinely happy just for the general social interaction of even an online theatre class.

After warmups, I generally play a couple of improv or theatre games. I found halfway through my third semester online that most improvisation and theatre games work well with only minor adjustments. A few that are particularly effective on Zoom are "Inner Monologue", "Inner Voice" and "Slide Show":

"Inner Monologue": two people improvise a scene and then two other people with their camera turned off provide the inner monologues of the people in the scene so that we not only hear what the characters say but also what they are thinking.

"Little Voice": an inanimate object suddenly speaks to its owner for the first time ever and wants something (again

the "voice" has its camera off).

"Slide Show": two people strike random poses as a "photo" from the third person's vacation and the vacationer explains what moment this is from their holiday (it's a justification game).

There are obvious limitations to staging Zoom performances. Is it theatre? Is it film? Is it neither? I don't have answers to these questions, other than to say that, although these forms of performance are not optimal, they are what are available to us at the moment. I think it is therefore instructive for the students to get performance experience, albeit in an unusual form. The shows I've directed have worked best when the performers and I have embraced the reality and not tried to pretend that a Zoom performance was anything other than what it was. This is the equivalent of how, in the Reduced Shakespeare Company, we acknowledge the reality that sometimes audience members arrive late at a performance, so we stop performing the script and ask them why they were late. It's the truth of the situation.

I've tried to allow students as much leeway as possible during this most unusual time in education. Staring at people's faces up close on a screen for hours on end can be an intense and exhausting experience, so I don't always insist that they have their cameras on. I am also aware that during class some students are at home caring for their younger siblings, while their parents are working and that the students might be embarrassed about this. Another scenario is that students might be self-conscious about the appearance of their home. They may also live in a situation with many people simultaneously online for work or school and that they may have limited bandwidth. Again, these are reasons I give the students as much freedom as possible about turning their cameras on.

In terms of self-care while teaching online, early on I purchased an adjustable standing desk converter that I placed on top of my existing desk. It allows me the option to either stand or sit at my current desk while I teach. I have also found that, by taking short, regular breaks during my longer classes and rehearsals, I am able to help keep the class focused and energized. Is online learning ideal? No, but over the past year I have come to the conclusion that it can be very effective in many cases and am grateful that it has been available during this most unusual time in the world.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT MYLES, CREATOR OF *THE SHOW MUST GO ONLINE*

Ronan Hatfull: When you conceived *The Show Must Go Online* (*TSMGO*), did you envisage the potential educational applications that it might have?

Robert Myles: We did. However, it was only one of many elements, or tensions, that we had to resolve. At its heart, *TSMGO* had to be participatory and inclusive in the doing of Shakespeare; that means that you will see people learning how to do Shakespeare in the shows themselves, as there are performers of all levels of experience. In a perfect educational tool, the actors wouldn't necessarily be learning too, but there are nevertheless lessons I believe can be gleaned from seeing Shakespeare interpreted by people at different levels of familiarity and/or professional experience. Providing a free, accessible, digital resource for educators felt like an important part of the work we were doing, yet this was only one way in which the accessibility of YouTube was a benefit: people in palliative care, people with access needs unmet by traditional theatre spaces all reported benefits from the work. We were conscious at the time that there would be "unintended consequences" to the work we were creating, and those have always been the most exciting parts of creating work. The *extent* of the extraordinary response from the education and academic communities has been overwhelming, humbling, and a wonderful surprise. In creating this work in a volunteer-led, artist-led way, we have created a resource that is both reflective of this moment, but can also stand for all time as a means by which to engage freely with Shakespeare in a

"we were conscious at the time that there would be 'unintended consequences' to the work we were creating, and those have always been the most exciting parts of creating work."



manner more akin to what the writer intended – on its feet, out loud, by a cast with a variety of voices and characteristics.

RH: How have you worked with university lecturers to create sessions which allow students to interact with and understand *TSMGO*?

RM: I have been lucky enough to be contacted by several University Lecturers, mostly in the US but also in London, about the possibility of speaking directly with students to answer their questions about one or more of the *TSMGO* productions. Some choose to examine a specific play, some examine several of the plays. Dr. Jeffrey Wilson at Harvard University has made *TSMGO* the focus of his "Why Shakespeare" module, which funnily enough is a question that didn't come up when speaking with his students (I'm sure they've examined it in detail already!) but has definitely come up time and again when speaking not just with English or Theatre students but with trainee actors as well. Jeffrey was a fantastic collaborator, interested in getting me involved from the earliest stages of his course design to speaking with the students after they'd created initial drafts of their essays. Similarly, Scott Newstok was kind enough to send me an advanced copy of his book, *How To Think Like Shakespeare*, which I found deeply inspiring, and he is inviting both myself and a member of the cast of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to do a deep dive into that play, its themes and our interpretation. Finally, I'm working with Valerie Clayman Pye at the moment, attempting to codify a pedagogy of responding to crisis and unpredictability in theatre based on the experience of *TSMGO*. This work crystallises the universal principles at play in creating something with no resources, when the best-funded, most internationally renowned producing houses in the world shut down completely and played re runs. We're hoping to create lasting lessons for what could be a turbulent future to navigate.

RH: How have you found the experience of speaking about *TSMGO* to students in seminars?

RM: It's been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life! When you first create art, you of course hope people will like it and respond positively to it, but as a theatre-maker our metrics are ultimately quite flat and quantitative – applause or laughter – or if you care about them, star-ratings and even awards. These are great, don't get me wrong, but the amazing thing about engaging with students around the work is the qualitative *depth* of



“I’m also constantly surprised by the depth of what people are able to take from the work, and the articulateness of their expression of the ideas the work has inspired him, which may only have been a seedling in our creative imaginations, but their response as an active, engaged audience member has taken that seed and seen it flourish.”

their experience with the shows. The lines of enquiry they produce, and the in-depth reckoning they give to a piece of your work. That’s beyond humbling to experience. I’ve loved how challenging and provocative some of the questions are – people are engaging *meaningfully* in what we’ve done. I’m also constantly surprised by the depth of what people are able to take from the work, and the articulateness of their expression of the ideas the work has inspired him, which may only have been a seedling in our creative imaginations, but their response as an active, engaged audience member has taken that seed and seen it flourish. It’s so humbling to see people create a thesis about a work that is so much more than what you intended, because that’s what Shakespeare should be in my mind: an active argument, an active discussion with an audience that asks them to really think, really feel, and really respond. Unlike modern drama where the experience is tightly curated and the production drives you toward a single conclusion, Shakespeare is a forum where your personal takeaways are always valid yet might be stridently disagreed with by others. With trainee actors, it’s an extraordinary way to engage with the plays, because the Zoom format allows them to actively hybridise the work they do in contemporary acting for screen with early modern approaches – this can be disorientating at

first, especially if the students are getting to grips with Shakespeare for the first time, but it can also help to bridge the work into something that can feel more intuitive or native. We watch far more TV and film than we do theatre nowadays, so understanding how an aside can work using *Fleabag*, or understanding how spatial relationships can be created through *Peep Show*, is a great way to make foundational concepts of Shakespearean performance feel more contemporary.

RH: What type of responses to your work have these seminars elicited in the students?

RM: A huge range, though whether earnestly or out of politeness, thankfully positive! I think that whenever students can go straight to a living source and interrogate their own ideas with the benefit of creatives involved, it’s a rare opportunity to engage actively in a discussion which is so often indirect. I’ve seen seasoned academics write about our work and make assertions about our intentions without asking us if that’s the case, and I think the benefit of still being a student is that you’re less at ease taking those leaps.

RH: How does the experience of speaking about *TSMGO* in a pedagogic context and setting connect to your previous work as an educator and workshop leader, such as the creation and distribution of *The Shakespeare Deck*?

RM: I believe Shakespeare has to be said not read, done on its feet and out loud to get into the bones of it. Consequently, whenever I’m speaking to students and questions arise over execution, I inevitably bring it back to

the roots of early modern drama, playing in shared light and so on. The choices we made in shows with *TSMGO* almost always had their basis in the text, and unpicking how the text informs those choices, and the dramaturgical devices Shakespeare deploys in order for us to bring them to vivid life through the production. These are things that students are not necessarily aware of, and so I'm glad I've run workshops and taught at drama school, because I'm ready to give what I hope is an accessible explanation of Rhetorical devices or rhythmic variations or antithesis or chiasmus or whatever else it might be.

RH: How have you worked with other companies to help them create their own online performances in lockdown?

RM: Yes, we've been in touch with more than 15 different companies and many more institutions, both formally or informally, to help them set up their own ways to participate in and produce digital theatre. The work we've done has also inspired how many have gone on to respond to this moment and this medium independently, including a number of the *TSMGO* Alumni, who have gone on to create digital theatre of their own after becoming immersed in our way of working. The legacy of the project is another of those delightful unintended consequences – bear in mind the ubiquity of Zoom hadn't yet been established when we did our first show! That makes it feel like a lifetime ago.

RH: How do you envisage the future of online teaching and performance and how do you think the two might dovetail?

RM: Having done both now, I think they have to remain a core part of how we approach both education and theatre. People are quick to point out of the disadvantages because this sandbox has its own rules and has to be

“we COULD create a GENUINELY MEANINGFUL MODE of CULTURAL EXCHANGE WHERE WE CAN BROADEN OUR HORIZONS SIGNIFICANTLY WITHOUT THE SAME BUDGETARY BURDEN THAT GOING TO SEE TRADITIONAL THEATRE IN ITS ORIGINAL SETTING MIGHT PUT ON US”

addressed in its own way, but there are also huge upsides and advantages, especially for those traditionally excluded from how we've traditionally worked. I think the massive thing the digital era can offer is global access, which I think could have massive institutional benefits, especially for those who are willing to disrupt the old ways of working and embrace the new, perhaps those who are more agile and not burdened with institutional inertia. In the work I do for multinationals you hear it all the time, “big ships move slowly”, but there they understand this as a potentially deadly threat to innovation. I'm not sure either education or theatre quite grapple with this with the same sense of urgency, but we should. In terms of how we dovetail to the two, I think Zoom productions with integrated workshops could be an amazing way to get companies into your institutions from radically different backgrounds to your students, and we could create a genuinely meaningful mode of cultural exchange where we can broaden our horizons significantly without the same budgetary burden that going to see traditional theatre in its original setting might put on us. I'm lucky enough to have lived in Japan and seen Kabuki and Noh theatre live – imagine seeing a Zoom Noh theatre piece and getting to talk to the artists afterwards! Ultimately, we have a new playground with all kinds of new possibilities and we've only just begun to scratch the surface, but I'm excited to see where it goes, and to be a part of the continued exploration and discovery we all have ahead of us.

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“THIS PARTING WAS WELL MADE” (*JULIUS CAESAR*)

THIS IS a brief valediction from me as I leave to take on the role of lead editor for the academic journal *Jeunesse: young people, texts, cultures* and a new role at Bangor, University of Wales. Although my focus will not be strictly Shakespearean, adaptations for children do feature in *Jeunesse's* articles and reviews, plus content relating to education, so it may well be the case that we will meet again and smile.

It has been a great joy and a privilege to edit *Teaching Shakespeare* magazine over the last ten years, with the support of so many BSA colleagues and members, contributors and readers. I want to acknowledge especially the work of our designer, Becky Chilcott, who has made every issue eye-catching and been a dream collaborator.

Teaching Shakespeare builds on a 1990s project, *Shakespeare in Schools*, by Rex Gibson (Cambridge University). Where its newsletter had a focus on the UK, and to a lesser extent the USA, I wanted *Teaching Shakespeare* to be truly international in content, contributors, and readership. Contributors come from Asia (including the Middle East), the Americas, and Europe. African educators' experiences need to be better represented. Aiming to include material from Antarctica might, however, be a long shot. The magazine embraces the use of world Englishes to better represent and value the plurality of Englishes that exist on the planet, as well as to increase the magazine's appeal to contributors and readers alike. Perhaps this is one factor in the magazine being read in over 60 countries.

The magazine is written for, and by, cross-sector educators working in theatre, heritage, and prison education, to give a few examples. I am particularly pleased that *Teaching Shakespeare* organically developed a strength in Shakespeare for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities over the last decade, though the credit goes wholly to the contributors.

One of my reasons for not developing a scholarly peer-review system for *Teaching Shakespeare* has been to better include other professionals engaged in teaching Shakespeare than many existing periodicals. Another is the diversity of format it has allowed, meaning that content ranges from practical hacks to philosophical musings. A future avenue for this, and other periodicals, might be to expand the peer-review process from one that operates almost exclusively among academics, to one that includes professional peers from a range of sectors:



schoolteachers, arts practitioners, creators of digital resources and librarians.

Ronan Hatfull, guest editing this issue, has willingly adopted the magazine's ethos of range and inclusivity. The pandemic that is the impetus for this themed issue has been devastating for so many. This issue is intended to contribute to post-pandemic recovery, including wider improvements to education and society such as decolonising and anti-racist work, and to suggest some roles Shakespeare – the wider subjects and sectors in which he is found – might play in this. Issue 21 demonstrates both the need for continued humanities and arts education as well as the adaptability of its teachers and students. In terms of my bowing out on an issue strong in timeliness and practicality, Brutus' line feels very apt.

It is my pleasure to introduce Myfanwy Edwards, whose work features in this issue, as the incoming Editor. She is an English teacher, PhD student at UCL's Institute of Education, and General Secretary for the London Association for the Teaching of English. Her experiences happily combine the practice, scholarship, and leadership needed to propel *Teaching Shakespeare* forwards.

Sarah Olive, outgoing editor

