EDITED BY LAURIE MAGUIRE

HOW TO DO THINGS WITH SHAKESPEARE

NEW APPROACHES, NEW ESSAYS

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Anthony B. Dawson is Professor of English (emeritus) at the University of British Columbia. He is the author of several books, including *Watching Shakespeare* (1988), *Hamlet* (in the *Shakespeare in*

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Laurie Maguire is a Fellow of Magdalen College and Reader in English at Oxford University. Her books include *Shakespearean Suspect Texts* (1996), *Studying Shakespeare* (2004), *Where There's a Will There's a Way* (2006), and *Shakespeare's Names* (2007). She has published widely on Renaissance drama, textual problems, performance, and women's studies.

Julie Maxwell is Fellow and Lecturer in English at Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge. Her first book, *You Can Live*

Forever (2007), is a novel and is published by Jonathan Cape. She has written pieces for *Renaissance Quarterly*, *The Ben Jonson Journal*, *Notes and Queries*, *Areté*, and the forthcoming *Blackwell Companion to the Bible in English Literature*. She is currently working on a book about religion in the life and works of Ben Jonson.

Tanya Pollard is Associate Professor at Brooklyn College, City University of New York. Her publications include *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (2005), *Shakespeare's Theater: A Sourcebook* (2003), and essays on early modern theater in *Shakespeare Studies*, *Renaissance Drama*, and various edited volumes. She is currently writing a book on the emergence of new literary genres in early modern England and their debts to the ancient world.

Richard Scholar is University Lecturer in French and a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. His research focuses on the connections between early modern European literature and thought. He is the author of *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe: Encounters with a Certain Something* (2005) and co-editor of *Thinking with Shakespeare: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Essays* (2007). He is currently writing a book on Montaigne and the art of free thinking.

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project is to complete a monograph, *The Fragmented Playtext in Shakespearean England.*

Gillian Woods is a Junior Research Fellow at Wadham College, Oxford. She teaches literature of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. She is currently working on a book-length study of Catholic semiotics in Shakespearean drama.

Paul Yachnin is Tomlinson Professor of Shakespeare Studies and Chair of the English Department at McGill University. He is co-director of the Shakespeare and Performance Research Team and director of the Making Publics project. Among his publications are *Stage-Wrights: Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and the Making of Theatrical Value* and (with Anthony Dawson) *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England.* He is an editor of the forthcoming Oxford *Works of Thomas Middleton.* Works-in-progress include editions of *Richard II* and *The Tempest*, and a book-length study, *Shakespeare and the Social Thing: Making Publics in the Renaissance Theatre.*

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Introduction

Laurie Maguire

One of the first reactions to the exciting new field of feminist criticism was to point out that there are many kinds of feminism(s). Gilbert and Gubar's influential discussion of *Jane Eyre* (1979) didn't necessarily work for writing by women, for black women, for lesbians, for dramatic works, for language theorists, for French feminists, and so on. The field became subdivided and its various allegiances specifically nominated – French feminism, Anglo-American feminism etc.

The sheer vastness of Shakespeare studies in recent decades has meant that critical subdivision is essential (consequently one aligns oneself with an approach – textual, new historicist – rather than with the period or subject: Renaissance/Shakespeare). But sometimes the newly emergent *Companion* literature, in seeking to summarize each of these subdivisions, runs the risk of flattening critical diversity into a series of cultural positions which have been inadvertently reduced to a template.

In many ways this is inevitable: in seeking to grasp a new territory, students need an overview. In overviews it is not always possible to explore why textual specialists do not all agree that Shakespeare revised his plays, or prepared them for publication (for example); it is not possible to consider what is the next step for those who do, nor to chronicle how new orthodoxies come to prevail or what was wrong with the old. *How To Do Things with Shakespeare* stems from my sense that the publishing market is good at helping students identify and understand the current positions, but not so helpful in showing

them how to think ahead – or indeed, to think back to the questions, problems, omissions, and dissatisfactions which led us to our current critical positions.

All literary research (like research in general) is a reaction to something. This is as true of large critical movements (feminism as a desire from female academics to see their experiences reflected in the critical literature) as it is of individual articles which respond to a sense of unease (something is omitted in current literature, misrepresented, simplified), a discovery or a reposing of an old question (what is the evidence for the received wisdom that Shakespeare wasn't interested in publishing his plays? Didn't know Greek drama?), a disagreement with an opinion currently in print, a meandering reflection: What if I inverted the question? We see this most clearly in medicine where breakthroughs are made when researchers approach things from a different angle (not: "why do some people get cancer?" but "why doesn't everyone get cancer?"). Literary research is no different, although its preliminary questions may not be posed as starkly.

Our research questions tend to be implicit in the methodology of our subsequent published research. What I asked contributors to do in this volume was to foreground not their methodology but the questions that led them to their topic or essay in the first place. Essays on (for example) animals or Catholicism or the culture of quotation do not simply emerge like Minerva, fully formed. What led up to the essay? What caught the writer's attention which meant that s/he had to write this essay? What questions preceded the essay?

For each of the essays that follow I offer a short introduction explaining the critical needs that I had or perceived which led me to commission the topic of the essay and why I chose that particular contributor. The contributor then offers a short autobiographical introduction which sets the essay in the context of his or her interrogative thoughts, needs, and practices. Readers will judge for themselves how well or how differently the essays follow on from the questions which prompted them; often, research moves in an unanticipated direction. There are many ways to do things with Shakespeare. But when these contributors show us how to do things with the topics and questions with which they set out, they show us not what to think but how we might begin to think.

The idea is that we can then go on and do things like that (or not like that) ourselves.

Work Cited

Gilbert, Sandra and Gubar, Susan 1979: *The Madwoman in the Attic.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Part I

How To Do Things with Sources

Editor's Introduction

Just thirty years ago Philip Brockbank viewed source-study as one of the highest forms of Shakespeare scholarship; by the end of the twentieth century the esteem in which this activity was held had fallen irrecoverably and Stephen Greenblatt could declare that source-hunting is "the elephant's graveyard of literary history." Greenblatt's metaphor continues to encapsulate the dominant attitude. His image is regularly quoted approvingly (see Goldberg 1987: 243) and developed sympathetically; thus Jonathan Gil Harris (1994: 408) talks of "that tired terrain" of source-study; and in a recent online article Peter Bilton (2000: §1) extends Greenblatt's image: "The paths once worn by Shakespeare source-hunters are becoming faint and overgrown. They lead through footnote graveyards with dismissive headstones. Modern warning signs tell angels where not to tread." When scholars do investigate sources they now feel the need to position themselves carefully or defensively in relation to Greenblatt's metaphor. For example, in her survey of the field of romance as Shakespeare inherited it, Darlene Greenhalgh (2004) concludes with a defense of source studies as a form of what we now call intertextuality.

There was, certainly, something mechanical, linear, and often unimaginative about the methodology of the New Critics who collated Shakespeare texts with their sources. There was also something distorting: Boswell-Stone's edition of Shakespeare's Holinshed, for example, focuses on what Shakespeare used, not on the vast chunks he didn't. And there was textual prejudice, with the ideological traffic tending to move only one way: Shakespeare rewrites/adapts/improves his sources, but when others use Shakespeare as a source, their product is

inferior or derivative. In one of the most interesting essays of recent years – Stephen Miller's comparison of *The Taming of the Shrew* with its related version, *The Taming of a Shrew* (Q 1594) – Miller shows what we miss by concentrating only on what is most similar in the two texts (i.e., the areas where *A Shrew* runs closest to Shakespeare) and not on the areas of greatest divergence. His focus on the latter makes it clear that the writer of *A Shrew* had a coherent agenda in adapting Shakespeare's unconventional comedy and that his adaptation of his Shakespearean source makes him, in effect, a literary critic, the first Shakespeare critic. Miller's argument is a wonderful example of How To Do Things with Sources.

So, too, are the three essays which follow, all of which offer new and flexible ways of thinking about questions of influence. Richard Scholar is a comparative literature specialist (French/English), and his work is rooted in philosophy as much as it is in literature. Consequently, he was well positioned to realize that a verbal tic in Shakespeare – "I know not what" – was part of a continental philosophical current, the struggle to put indefinable emotional affinity (or antipathy) into words. His study of Shakespeare's most important humanist contemporary, the French essayist Michel de Montaigne (1533–92), looks at the way both writers respond to this intellectual Zeitgeist without one writer being demonstrably influenced by the other. Instead, he shows the influence this contemporary issue has on the language and ideas of *Merchant of Venice*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*. Scholar's essay chronicles not the specific influence of one author on another, but the air that both breathed. (This is source-study as literal inspiration, from the Latin *inspirare*, to breathe in.) Because his essay is such a bracing example of comparative criticism, and because it shows us how to shed our preconceived approaches, it provides a critically supple starting point for both this volume and this section.

Tanya Pollard has degrees in both Classics and English, so she is doubly qualified to write about the twin subjects of classical influence and generic inheritance in Shakespeare. Genre is usually a problem for readers and critics alike. It is the first subject we encounter when we read a Shakespeare play: individual quarto volumes – and plays in performance – tell readers and audiences what genre of drama they are about to see or read. The Folio collection of Shakespeare's plays, prepared by his contemporaries and published in 1623, divides the canon into three generic categories (indeed, the volume is titled *Mr William*