

Ostovich's brilliantly layered analysis of *The Magnetic Lady*, however, we find Jonson staking out a position at the centre of patriarchal pretension, where women who slip from under male controls are shown to be stupidly transgressive, lascivious, duplicitous, 'leagued in a devilish compact', and inclined to infanticide ('The Appropriation of Pleasure in *The Magnetic Lady*', 106). But see also Simon Morgan-Russell's "'No Good Thing Ever Comes Out of It": Male Expectation and Female Alliance in Dekker and Webster's *Westward Ho*', where an alliance of 'citizen Wives' successfully establishes a powerful alternative to male homosociality, 83).

Only occasionally, when women write for and about women, do they seem able to elide male claims of agency and dominion. Two late seventeenth-century women, for instance, found in the learning and rhetorical powers of Elizabeth I a viable model for women to emulate (Lisa Gim, "'Faire *Eliza's* Chaine": Two Female Writers' Literary Links to Queen Elizabeth'.) Harriette Andreadis, in 'The Erotics of Female Friendship in Early Modern England', works out with exquisite precision ways in which mostly high-born women in the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-centuries allowed themselves to express female same-sex intimacy in the 'sexually evasive yet erotically charged language of female friendship' (241). See too, perhaps, Jessica Tvordi, 'Female Alliance and the Construction of Homoeroticism in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*'. In life, if not in literature, however, even the remarkably successful and ferociously independent society of women founded by Mary Ward, though it was able to stave off episcopal authority and the constraints of women's religious communities for a time, was finally all but destroyed by papal power (Lowell Gallagher, 'Mary Ward's "Jesuitresses" and the Construction of a Typological Community'). Nonetheless, as this anthology demonstrates so well, alliances in the early modern period formed by women, reinforced by the power of their own learning and intelligence, were able to accrue to themselves increased social and civic responsibility along with heightened realization of their own interior identities.

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Margreta De Gratia and Stanley Wells (eds). *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp xx, 328.

Shakespeare need never feel lonely, if we are to judge from the books that have recently proclaimed themselves his companions. Hot on the heels of David

Scott Kastan's large *Companion to Shakespeare* (1999) comes this more svelte Cambridge *Companion*, which nevertheless has large ambition, offering its readers 'an expansive historical, cultural, and global context which will enhance the enduring but ever-changing value and force of Shakespeare's works' (xvi). This is, in fact, the fourth Cambridge *Companion*, earlier ones appeared in 1934, 1971 and 1986. The dates of the third and fourth versions suggest that the value and force of Shakespeare's works change every 15 years, and we might wonder whether such books are in demand more because of the market created by the constantly expanding Shakespeare industry than of any substantial changes in our responses to Shakespeare. Further, we should bear in mind that a volume like this does not simply reflect the current state of play of Shakespeare studies; coming with the prestige of the Cambridge University name it will have some effect on how they are shaped. It seems reasonable, therefore, to assess the significance of the current *Companion* by asking how it differs from the 1986 volume.

Both *Companions* offer a broad range of essays (the new one has 19) on different subjects, such as language; historical, social and cultural background; theatrical conditions; the transmission of texts; and the history of performance and criticism. As described by its editors, the new volume is informed by new historicism and cultural materialism, and some essays clearly reflect this; but it is a work of reference, and so one of its functions is to pin down the 'ever-changing', to show what is, in fact, known or at least generally agreed upon. Consequently, some of the essays cannot offer very much that is different from what is in the earlier volume. Lois Potter's essay 'Shakespeare in the theatre, 1660–1900' and Hugh Grady's 'Shakespeare criticism, 1600–1900' have direct counterparts in the earlier volume, and while they can offer different perspectives, there is little that they can do to vary the content. On the other hand, John Kerrigan's excellent essay on the non-dramatic poems is able to offer real difference by providing the only example of intensive and extensive reading of texts in the volume.

Other essays with direct counterparts in the 1986 volume reflect changes in understanding, the discovery of new information, or the emergence of new material since that publication. Barbara Mowat's essay on 'The reproduction of Shakespeare's texts' takes a rather more skeptical view of the 'unruly state' of editorial affairs than did MacDonald Jackson's earlier essay. John Astington, in 'Playhouses, players, and playgoers in Shakespeare's time', has the great advantage of writing after the excavations of the Rose and the construction of the new Globe, and he puts this information to good use here; his discussion

of audiences is also something new in this volume. Peter Holland's 'Shakespeare in the twentieth-century theatre', can concentrate on productions staged after 1986, though rather than simply presenting a chronological survey, Holland considers theatrical problems and ways in which they have been solved. He is interested in plays that through nonconformist productions have found their way from the margins of the canon to its centre, such as *Troilus and Cressida*, and he also takes in a wide range of casting issues related to gender, race and age, and considers shifts in attitudes to stage design. This is a very stimulating essay, though Holland confines himself almost entirely to British theatre. Russell Jackson on 'Shakespeare and the cinema' does offer a chronological survey, and he brings it up to the year 2000; oddly, this essay involves a contraction from the 1986 essay, in which Robert Hapgood looked also at television productions.

Other essays seem specifically intended to distinguish themselves from their predecessors. S. Schoenbaum, in the 1986 volume, provided a 'Life' that remained as close as possible to known facts. Ernst Honigmann provides a great deal of speculation about such questions as Shakespeare's relationship with his parents, his religion, and his possible homosexuality. It is great fun, but an essay quite so full of phrases like 'It could be that ...' and 'It is not impossible that ...' does generate some misgivings. Leonard Barkan, rather than providing a general 'background of ideas', sets his focus clearly on what Shakespeare himself would have read and how he used it. Margreta de Grazia, in 'Shakespeare and the craft of language', does not so much discuss how Shakespeare used language as examine the materiality of the language he used – how it became what it was, how it differs from our own. This is a fine essay, though something significant about the attitudes that underpin the volume is suggested by the change in its title from 1986's 'Shakespeare and the *arts* of language'.

Most of the remaining essays provide something completely new or reflect a radical departure in the volume's treatment of the material. The 1986 volume had separate essays on comedy, tragedy and history, as well as a chapter in which twentieth-century criticism of the three genres was surveyed, each by a different scholar. All these are gone, replaced by an essay by Susan Snyder entitled 'The genres of Shakespeare's plays'. Snyder examines Renaissance genre theories, rightly noting 'the instability of generic labelling at the time and the fluid mingling of kinds' (88). While she discusses the tendencies of genres to leak into one another, she might have gone further in considering those comedies, such as *Twelfth Night*, that offer an ironic perspective on their own comic endings. The genre that raises the most questions is, of course,

history, and her essay is complemented by David Scott Kastan's 'Shakespeare and English history'. Kastan considers how the past was understood as having meaning for the present and shows how the development of the study of history led to different conceptions of the past and therefore of the nation. While he is concerned with issues of historiography rather than of genre his essay is very suggestive about what history as a genre might mean.

Something new to this *Companion* (and surprisingly lacking in the earlier one) is provided by Anne Barton in 'The London scene: City and Court'. Barton details the competing interests of the two political entities, and raises intriguing questions about the care Shakespeare (almost alone amongst his contemporaries) took to avoid using London as a locale in his comedies. Also new is 'Shakespeare on the page and the stage', Michael Dobson's tracing of shifting attitudes to the question of whether the texts areactable poems or poetic scripts. This has been at issue since their originating moment, but only recently has 'performance studies' become a subject in itself and it earns its place here. The other new areas represented are related to recent and controversial theoretical movements. Valerie Traub's 'Gender and sexuality in Shakespeare' is a useful and blessedly uncontentious exposition of the issues raised by feminist and queer criticism. For Traub, 'the analysis of gender and sexuality allows us to understand the variety of ways that Shakespeare responded imaginatively to sex, gender, and sexuality as crucial determinants of human identity and political power' (129). In 'Outsiders in Shakespeare's England' Ania Loomba considers otherness not simply in terms of race, but more broadly as part of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century project of defining Englishness. Loomba does not so much read Shakespeare as provide a background against which he might be read. Another essay concerned with Shakespeare's 'Englishness' is Dennis Kennedy's 'Shakespeare worldwide'. Kennedy addresses, by presenting examples from Germany, India and Japan, the tripartite question of whether the broad international dissemination of Shakespeare is 'a logical result of [his] overriding genius, another example of English cultural imperialism, or just clever marketing in the post-modern manner?' (251), and comes to the conclusion that all are true.

The volume's final essay is R.S. White's engagingly genial survey of Shakespeare criticism in the twentieth century. White begins by reviving the generally discarded images of Bradley, Empson and Knights to show continuities between the ideas of these early figures and much of what is now taken as new; he makes a particularly strong case for Empson. He then goes on briefly to survey psychoanalytical, materialist, feminist/gender and intertextuality and

reception theories. White is an interesting choice for author of this particular essay because he is at odds with much of what the primary perspective of the volume represents. He writes, of a broadly defined materialist criticism, that while it 'opens up new interpretation . . . it is fair to say that it risks losing some of the strengths of earlier modes like new criticism, which focused attention on textual details, and formalism, which illuminates dramatic structure in ways that explain theatrical effect' (290). Although his essay could hardly be called dissenting, it does remind us how much might be lost in the name of theory.

Any book that offers itself as a work of reference should have reasonably up-to-date bibliographies. Each essay here is followed by its own reading list, but they vary widely in quality and comprehensiveness. Honigmann's contains only four titles, two of them published in the 1930s. Mowat's contains 21, almost all of them published after 1986. The volume aims to make up for this inconsistency with Dieter Mehl's valuable survey 'Shakespeare reference books'. This is an updating of his contribution to the 1986 volume, in which under a variety of subheadings he identifies the best or most useful reference tools, including a number of Internet sites. There is one interesting omission. In his 1986 survey Mehl included in the category 'handbooks' the 1971 *Companion* edited by Muir and Schoenbaum. It is gone from his updated survey and is not replaced by the 1986 volume. The implicit though surely unintended suggestion that the new *Companion* has displaced its predecessor should, I think, be ignored. The two volumes are sufficiently different in orientation that they are best understood as complementary. The value and force of Shakespeare's works may be ever-changing, but not everything changes at the same rate and, as White reminds us, voices from the past can still have a lot to say to us.

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Richard Harp and Stanley Stewart (eds). *The Cambridge Companion to Ben Jonson*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp xvi, 218.

A collection of essays declaring itself to be a 'Companion' sets up particular generic expectations that are not easy to fulfill. Such a collection implicitly seeks to satisfy a variety of readers with divergent interests. Specialists expect a handy reference tool and synthesis of the current state of knowledge about the subject. Non-specialist scholars, graduate students, undergraduates, and general readers all expect an introduction to the subject, but the kind of contextual