

the family, founded in death, becomes a site of passionate murder, Belsey invokes Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Derrida's *The Post Card*, and Lacan's 'account of aggressivity' (137). These theorists become ways of explaining the play's enigmatic character and its appeal. I am not sure they do much to explain the early modern ambivalence about family values.

In both of the book's final chapters, Belsey criticizes Victorian and Romantic critics for their moralizing and romantic readings of Shakespeare's plays. In chapter 5, she asserts that she has 'no wish to add to the list of tributes to Shakespeare's insight into universal human nature' (167). The paradox within Belsey's own critical practice in this book involves this passionate desire to challenge such readings with theory that invokes another 'universal human nature', the Freudian and Lacanian human nature 'discovered' in Victorian England. The problem with touting family values, according to Belsey, is that such an unambivalent celebration fails to take into account desire, the thing that 'in the twentieth century, Jacques Lacan calls, "the dark god in the sheep's clothing of the Good Shepherd, Eros"' (82). The wonderful evidence and readings in this book suggest that people in the sixteenth century might never have met 'the Good Shepherd, Eros', that they may have been struggling with souls and lust rather than with psyches and desire. Perhaps the 'Good Shepherd, Eros' is as much a child of the Romantics as the Dance of Death was a child of medieval England. Belsey's book is challenging, intelligent, and beautiful. While it only addresses a small piece of the Shakespearean canon, Shakespeareans and readers interested in the family and in the sixteenth and seventeenth century would be well advised to take a look.

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W.R. Elton and John M. Mucciolo (eds). *The Shakespearean International Yearbook 1: Where Are We Now in Shakespearean Studies?* Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate, 1999. Pp xv, 381.

In one way or another the articles in this yearbook address the question posed by its subtitle, 'Where are we now in Shakespearean studies?' As one might expect, the answers range from 'in a state of flux certainly, and perhaps on the cusp of exciting change' (Ros King, on staging at the new Globe, 138) to 'in a state of transition' (Norman Blake, on the study of Shakespeare's language, 182) and 'all over the place' (Graham Bradshaw, on the study of Shakespearean tragedy, 3). 'All over the place' describes the volume itself. In particular, 'now'

is an elastic term. Most of the articles pick a subject, and survey scholarly work on that subject. Norman Blake, in a carefully structured and wide-ranging account of work on Shakespeare's language, reaches well back into the nineteenth century. Heather Dubrow surveys work on the *Sonnets* between 1994 and 1997. Those are the extremes. John M. Steadman's survey of the ideas of heroism and magnanimity dries up around the mid-1980s, and most of the material he deals with is much earlier. This reflects, I suspect, not the limits of his recent reading but the limits of recent Shakespeare criticism. He provides a solid guide to the earlier material. A few pieces, however, are slapdash. R.J. Schoeck, on Shakespeare and the law, provides some local riches, as when he touches down on *The Merchant of Venice*, but he spends time on ancillary topics like revenge and divine providence, and when he wants to recommend surveys of criticism of the comedies and histories, he turns to the overview articles published in *Shakespeare Survey* in the early 1950s. In a very brief article on 'Shakespeare's "Colonialist" *Tempest*, 1975 to the Present Day', John M. Mucciolo, having argued persuasively against the idea that William Strachey's account of a shipwreck was a source of the play, summarizes the pro-Caliban readings, with an air of scepticism but without bothering to mount a proper refutation, as though the pro-Caliban case is self-evidently wrong. (It is vulnerable, certainly, but it does deserve an argument.) The rest of his space is devoted to an extended bibliography.

The more effective articles construct a narrative, sometimes a narrative of progress. Frances K. Barasch describes the way our understanding of Shakespeare's debt to Italian theatre, especially to the *Commedia dell'arte*, has grown, thanks to the work of Louise George Clubb and others. John W. Velz shows how our understanding of *Julius Caesar* has developed as politically partisan readings and productions have been replaced by more complex readings that recognize its ambiguities. Johann P. Sommerville takes us very carefully through recent writing on seventeenth-century British history, with a warning to literary scholars not to rely on a few old, familiar names. In particular, he notes the emergence of a more sympathetic view of King James than that of D.H. Willson's *James VI and I*, and he traces the debates over whether or not the causes of the Civil War stretched well back into the seventeenth century. (The old view held that they did; the revisionist view denies this, seeing the reign of James as one of relative peace and consensus; that view in turn is coming under attack.) Donna B. Hamilton tells a similar story of historical revisionism on the subject of religion, with its new emphasis on the survival of a Catholic mentality in protestant England, and the implications for Shakespeare.

Not everyone believes in progress. Richard Knowles attacks the two-text theory of *King Lear* as an authorial revision, training his guns on Gary Taylor's 'The War in *King Lear*', finding in it everything from an over-literal reading of stage directions to the invention of evidence. His view that scholarship is returning to conflation as the best we can do for now may need modifying in light of the news that Arden 3 intends to present us with three *Hamlets*, and there are some parts of the *Lear* text (notably Lear's death) where the case for revision is strong. But he puts us in touch with the complexity of the subject, particularly the difficulties involved in seeing the Folio revision as purely Shakespearean. A number of essays attack what they see as a levelling, reductive quality in contemporary criticism. In his Foreword, Angus Fletcher calls for 'ambiguous readings' to replace what he calls 'suspicious commentaries' (xiv), and in a similar vein Claus Uhlig tries to reassert the importance of the aesthetic as against 'today's levelling Shakespeare criticism' (26). As an example of what he means he traces the theme of time in *Richard II*; some may find this reading levelling in its own way. Graham Bradshaw, in his essay on criticism of the tragedies, attacks 'groupthink' (3; he borrows the term from Robert Alter, who borrowed it from George Orwell), and calls for readings aware of 'multiple, competing perspectives' (19). He shows us what he means by demonstrating the instability of the concept of the self in a number of Shakespearean tragedies.

Richard Levin is characteristically trenchant on materialist criticism, accusing it of narrowness, inconsistency and ultimate absurdity. He distinguishes between 'old' and 'new' materialism, but he brings forward only one instance of the latter, Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass's 1993 article 'The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text'. This gets the Levin treatment. He draws out its inconsistencies – notably its reliance on the very categories it seeks to question, such as play, author and gender – and accuses it of failing to realize that there can be no boundary-crossing without boundaries. The 'old materialists', it is interesting to note, include Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield. The critics of that generation are now being accused of the narrowness of vision of which they accused Tillyard. At this point we may glance to the end of the *Yearbook*, to Philip Edwards' graceful tribute to the late Kenneth Muir. Edwards brings before us not just the scholar but the man, his foibles and blind spots as well as his remarkable achievements and his great generosity. Muir saw himself as 'a rebel and a radical' (334). (I can add that he was, and is, one of the few critics to write sympathetically of the tribunes in *Coriolanus*.) In his later years 'it wounded him that in the eyes of some of the young he had come to seem a conservative establishment figure' (334). The wheel turns, and goes

on turning. There is a new establishment now, and while most of the attacks on it are being mounted by survivors of the old establishment, that situation may not last for long.

There are others for whom the present state of flux, or transition, or whatever, is attractive, and their articles are among the best in the *Yearbook*. Under the title, 'What! *You*, Will? Shakespeare and Homoeroticism', Bruce R. Smith writes a lively, rapid, and remarkably comprehensive survey of recent work, taking in questions of language, gender, social order, the body, and the politics of our time. (There is a link with Sommerville's article on history, which concludes by suggesting that historians are swayed by the temper of their own times.) Without being argumentative, Smith takes a clear position in favour of openness and respect for diversity. Ros King, fully acknowledging the problems of the new Globe, such as the fake-groundling syndrome – she was particularly offended by the booing of the French characters in the 1997 *Henry V* – still sees it as a place where exciting experiment is possible. She writes in a very practical way of issues like actors' decisions about which door to use for an exit or an entrance, and her observation (as an academic who has worked at the Globe) that the academic and theatrical communities are engaged not in dialogue but in a conflict of different, even competing interests, represents the sort of frankness we need to get real dialogue started. (For the time being, the new Globe is all we have; in a companion article John D. Demaray reports on the frustration and incompleteness of the Rose and Globe excavations.) Equally practical is John Jowett, who after a wide-ranging account of the variables now involved in editing, variables that have led some to turn against the idea of editing altogether, goes on to suggest the principles that can be followed, the choices that can be made. (The wheel turns again: Jowett pauses to rescue W.W. Greg from the caricatured view of him presented by his recent detractors; he was more flexible and open-minded than he is sometimes given credit for.)

There is more work to be done, though some of it is hard work. Norman Blake's magisterial survey of work on Shakespeare's language points out the need for basic, up-to-date tools of reference in this area. There is also homework to be done. Blake calls attention to a number of specialized works that deserve to be more often consulted than they are. At the end of the volume, introducing an annotated bibliography of reference works, W.R. Elton strikes a similar note: the list includes, he writes, 'works which deserve to be more regularly consulted and cited by editors' (336). Where are we now in Shakespeare studies? All over the place, certainly. In need of some basic reading, according

to Blake and Elton. Some of us are excited, some confused, some grumpy. Some long for certainty. Throughout the collection there are variations on the statement, 'There is as yet no definitive work on ...' – to which others would reply, and there never will be. There is mounting impatience with the critical modes of the last fifteen or twenty years, but no sign of a real breakthrough to the next stage. Meanwhile this first volume of *The Shakespearean International Yearbook*, for all its local imperfections, provides a lively and vivid cross-section of our achievements, complaints and concerns as what may claim to be the most volatile period in the history of Shakespeare studies draws – maybe – to a close.

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Bruce R. Smith (ed). *Twelfth Night*. The Bedford Shakespeare Series. Boston and New York: Palgrave, 2001. Pp xviii, 430.

New historicism is showing all the signs of middle age (which, in academic years, it has in fact entered). Its position is firmly established in the institution it once challenged, as evidenced by how pervasive the practice of 'situating' literary works in their historical context has become. Perhaps as a result, it has also mellowed considerably, if we can take as representative Stephen Greenblatt's recent, and graciously unpolemical, work on *Hamlet* and purgatory (in younger, or other, hands, the history of purgatory could easily have become merely the history of institutional oppression founded on a fiction). If some of the hallmark adversarial energy is no longer so palpable, however, the practice of new historicism is, perhaps as a result again, also fulfilling more explicitly the promise that Greenblatt in particular initially offered; namely, that by studying the social context in which a work of art is produced, we will appreciate more deeply the aesthetic power of that work. Put another way, the founding premise of new historicism was that the presence of the social in a work of art did not diminish but enhanced the aesthetic power of the work. The latest edition of Shakespeare's plays in the Bedford/St. Martin's 'Texts and Contexts' series – *Twelfth Night*, edited by Bruce R. Smith – enables one to experience the force of this premise.

This edition is divided into three sections: the Introduction, the play-text, and a section titled 'Cultural Contexts', which assembles various contextual materials and is three times the length of the play-text (nearly three hundred pages vs about eighty). Because the First Folio provides the only source text