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Thomas Moisan and Douglas Bruster (eds). *In the Company of Shakespeare: Essays on English Renaissance Literature in Honor of G. Blakemore Evans*. Madison and Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2002. Pp 357.

This gathering of essays, largely traditionalist in methodology yet wide-ranging in subject matter and often original in perspective, pays fitting tribute to the scholarly legacy of G. Blakemore Evans. The three sections of the volume ('Shakespearean Drama,' 'Shakespearean Verse,' and 'Post-Shakespearean Writers and the Transmission of Shakespeare') are united, as the editors suggest in their Introduction, by 'a respect for deep reading and for the complexity of literary texts' (9) as well as by a 'hearty curiosity' regarding what comprises 'evidence' in literary studies these days and how we use that evidence as we reinterpret the early modern period (née 'Renaissance') in light of newer formal and historical approaches (8–9). Each essay in the book has real merit, and many break new (if narrow) ground. No doubt the most avid post-structuralist will consider the volume too ideologically reticent in some places, and the most dedicated conservative too theoretically adventuresome in others; but the great variety of readers should find among its fourteen essays a good deal of intellectually stimulating inquiry well worth considering.

Heather Dubrow's study of the dynamics of parental loss in *Pericles* opens the volume and also announces one of its recurring themes: the relationship of literary texts to their immediate social and material conditions. Dubrow is interested in how situations like Marina's loss of her family – particularly the replacement of her natural mother with 'a villainous stepmother figure' (33) – resonates in a culture where the Elizabethan system of wardship trafficked in displaced children who were seized upon for monetary gain. In this context Pericles's recovery of his father's armor is crucial, since it amounts to a 'magical recovery of the deceased' parent (34) that allows him to assert his control over death even as it affirms (not without some reservation) the restorative elements implicit in romance. Dubrow's contention that the terrain of the play 'is no country for poststructuralists' (39) aptly describes Bruce W. Young's '*King Lear* and the Calamity of Fatherhood,' which reassesses much of the New-Historicist emphasis on power and its function in Shakespeare's plays. Young revisits the familiar subject of the Renaissance family, showing how the post-Lawrence Stone cliché of the father as a petty tyrant is contradicted by contemporary cultural norms, and goes on to illustrate (I think provocatively) that the Cordelia/Lear relationship validates principles of 'mutual submission and

love,' nurturing, and connectedness (60) that reject the pursuit of power and, moreover, that these principles are deeply embedded in Renaissance life. Young's essay thus manages to be highly 'traditional' even as it seeks to engage recent historicist scholars on their own ground.

The twin issues of the text in its time and what constitutes fit 'evidence' for interpreting it characterize the remaining essays in Part I. Robert Watson's '*Othello* as Reformation Tragedy' is a learned and painstaking attempt to see the play as allegorically (and polemically) advocating Protestantism, yet advocating it with a truly astonishing indirection. Even Watson admits that much of his evidence is 'secondary, recessive, and protean' (68), indeed at times even 'subliminal' (69), yet he nevertheless builds a cogent case. The argument is far too nuanced in places to summarize without severe oversimplification; suffice it to say that much of our critical consent here depends upon hearing with Watson's ear. In brief, Watson argues that Desdemona is a Christ figure, Iago a Jesuitical devil, and Othello an imperfectly reformed infidel, and that the play depicts 'a Protestant ideal of marriage sustainable only through the Protestant version of love' (82). The strength of the argument often rests on a network of verbal parallels and oblique allusions to theological tracts. At times one gets carried buoyantly along and at times one winces, but even the most skeptical reader will concede that the elaborate tissue of correspondences that Watson notices is too massive simply to dismiss out of hand. Similar in technique to Watson's study is J. J. M. Tobin's attempt to elevate Thomas Nashe to the status of Major Source for Shakespeare; i.e., 'the single most influential contemporary writer in terms of affecting the texture of Shakespeare's plays' (97). This is a large claim, but Tobin, like Watson, has a sharp ear for verbal parallels and he cites them in droves. After absorbing the full weight of Tobin's evidence no reasonable reader could dispute the fact that the *Henry IV* plays and *Merry Wives* exhibit clear echoes from Nashe's work. I, for one, can't go so far as to agree with Tobin that 'Shakespeare without Nashe and his works would not be Shakespeare' (109), but I am willing to concede that Nashe's writings now seem more integrally connected to Shakespeare's than previously assumed.

Vincent Petronella's 'Shakespeare's Dramatic Chambers' links domestic space, theatrical space, and town space, showing how public playhouses like the Globe 'absorbed characteristics of the houses and rooms of the upper and lower classes' (111). The connecting strand among all these spaces is human memory, which Petronella cleverly terms 'memorial reconstruction.' This is an essay which opens up some interesting possibilities for how Shakespeare's audience might have 'thought' about stage spaces as they saw his plays. My

only quibble with the piece is Petronella's disinclination to tackle the discovery space, and what specific aspects of domestic or urban architecture this area might have evoked. Similarly profitable is Frederick Kiefer's treatment of the masque of the Five Senses in *Timon of Athens* and how such a scene might have looked on the stage. Kiefer points out that the five senses were represented stereotypically in the art and pageantry of the period so that they could always be easily identified. Their association with Cupid in *Timon* has an 'admonitory force' (151) because of their long-standing association with the folly of superficial judgment – precisely Timon's problem.

Three essays on the non-dramatic poems occupy Part II of the book, beginning with Helen Vendler's 'Shakespeare's Other Sonnets'; i.e., the sonnets embedded in the plays. Vendler's purpose is to examine how these extrasequential sonnets may shed light on the sequential ones, and she shows, with the acuity that characterizes her book on the sonnets,[1] how these poems reveal aspects of Shakespeare's technique that find fuller expression in the larger sequence. This is the most unabashedly 'formalistic' essay in the book, and it yields just the sort of interpretive subtlety one associates with the best 'close reading.' Vendler's observation, for example, that in *Romeo and Juliet* (I.v.105–12) where the lovers share a sonnet and a kiss and then begin a second sonnet that by sharing a line (I.v.110) they perform what amounts to the 'poetic equivalent of sharing a kiss' (166), takes us about as far from cultural materialism as modern scholarship can get. The essay, which shimmers with observations of this kind, is clearly not for all ideological markets; but those who like to shop in this part of town will certainly buy it. Nuance and subtlety are also the province of Jonathan Hart, who finds the familiar idea of the struggle against Time in the sonnets (sequential and extrasequential) as also exploring the 'limits and possibilities of poetry' (177) and indeed the sonnet form itself. Paradox and oxymoron are Hart's focus as he goes about to reveal how these 'conflicting monuments' both affirm the power of poetry to defeat Time even as they reveal poetry's terrible vulnerabilities. We're back to historical context with John Klause's '*The Phoenix and the Turtle* in Its Time,' a nicely cadenced, highly evidential, and lucid piece arguing that the poem is 'a subtle and enigmatic' pro-Catholic insult (223) to Sir John Salusbury that only appears on the surface to praise him. Klause, who marshals evidence with gelid precision, builds a powerful case. If I were teaching an Introduction to Graduate Studies course I'd give students this piece along with Watson's so that they could see how two quite convincing essays could 'prove' Shakespeare to have Protestant and Catholic leanings at the same time.

Part II opens with Marjorie Garber's entertaining piece on 'Roman Numerals,' which only touches Shakespeare tangentially, but breezily and learnedly explores the history of the 'Roman' numeral (as Garber notes, something of a misnomer) as it participates in the formation of nostalgia and cultural authority from the earliest times to the present. Readers may be surprised to discover, as I was, that in the Medieval and Renaissance periods Roman numerals, rather than conferring authority, were considered 'casual and demotic' (240) – a fact that Henslowe's *Diary* validates – and that as they became less practical for mathematical purposes their cultural status rose. Scott Paul Gordon's study of 'The Cultural Politics of William Cartwright's *Royal Slave*' hasn't a trace of Garber's wryness but every bit of her cultural awareness. Gordon shows how Cartwright's play represents a moral elitism, both Christian and Platonic, that King Charles I personally embraced; i.e., the idea that certain extraordinary individuals, like himself, were able to transcend mere self-interest and pursue the public good. The essay gives a detailed reading both of the play and of the royal culture that sustained it to illustrate how Charles's particular moral style enabled the king to fashion an 'elite Protestantism' (263) different from that of his Protestant adversaries who were (in his eyes) motivated by mere wilfulness and self-interest. Thomas Moisan also focuses on Charles, seeing the king and his reign through the dedicatory poems in the 1647 Beaumont and Fletcher Folio. In brief, he sees in these verses a 'political furtiveness' (272) that is not monolithically encomiastic, an 'epideictic hybrid of the era, at once a panegyric and a threnody' (272). In arguing that these poems, in praising the achievement of Beaumont and Fletcher, also remind us of the playwrights' disenfranchisement, Moisan draws a direct parallel between the 1647 dedications and the situation of Charles, whose triumphant return to London was also beset by similar 'furtiveness and doubts' regarding its permanence (283).

The last two essays in the volume, Marvin Spevack's on J. O. Halliwell's folio edition of Shakespeare and Brian Gibbons's on Alan Bennett's *The Madness of George III*, address somewhat different cultural concerns. Spevack chronicles the self-promoting and financially self-interested nature of Halliwell's 'bookmanship' (294) as he went about to complete his ambitious edition amid the backbiting of his mid-nineteenth-century detractors in the emerging Shakespeare industry of the time. The essay is primarily a history of Halliwell's troubles, personal, scholarly, and financial, yet it also serves as a sobering reminder that spite, egotism, and factiousness has a long scholarly history – at least in the Shakespeare business. Even more so than Spevack's essay, Gibbons's looks backward as it contemplates the present. Gibbons is interested in *The Madness of George III* as a modern-day resuscitation of the Shakespearean

history play and as a reflection (à la Shakespeare) of contemporary politics as seen filtered through the Georgian and Shakespearean worlds. This is a bit of a balancing act, but Gibbons carries it off, enabling us to see how the three historical layers of the play (to borrow a word from Donne) 'interinanimate' each other. As such, it comprises a fit coda to the twin preoccupations with form and context that characterize the essays in the book as a whole.

The volume concludes with an Appendix compiled by W. H. Bond (331–8) listing the publications of Gwynne Blakemore Evans. The twenty-two editions (including the monumental *Riverside Shakespeare*), forty-three articles and notes, and some fifty-five book reviews (many of them amounting to scholarly articles in their own right) stand as the most unassailable testimony to Professor Evans's distinguished academic career. This collection of essays by his colleagues and friends gestures encomiastically toward that highly productive career in the best way possible – by making a noteworthy scholarly statement of its own.

Joseph Candido

Note

1 *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Cambridge, MA., 1997).

Barbara A. Murray. *Restoration Shakespeare: Viewing the Voice*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press in conjunction with Modern Humanities Research Association, 2001. Pp 306.

This book offers a close look at seventeen Shakespeare adaptations produced for the London stage between 1662 and 1682. Murray promises to treat these 'much vilified' plays (including the Dryden-Davenant *Tempest* and the Tate *Lear*) with respect in an effort to understand how these plays 'were meant to work, and ... how powerful many of them must have been' (10). By doing so, she hopes 'to demonstrate that the reworking of Shakespeare in this period was driven by new stage-production techniques that enhanced immediate visual impact, and that this was reinforced by a developing theoretical prescription for the coherently visual in poetic imagery' (17–18). This approach promises