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Dupuis, Margaret and Grace Tiffany, eds. Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's Taming of the Shrew

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Dupuis, Margaret and Grace Tiffany, eds.

Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's Taming of the Shrew.

New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2013. Pp. xii, 248. ISBN 978-1-60329-119-4 (paperback) US\$19.75.

This collection of essays joins the MLA's catalogue of teaching-oriented volumes on Shakespeare's drama. Margaret Dupuis and Grace Tiffany have drawn together a stimulating group of essays by experienced educators, providing both a wide range of perspectives on this controversial comedy and effective, creative strategies with which to introduce it to undergraduate audiences. An early essay by Jay L. Halio, for example, provocatively asks, "Is Shakespeare's *Shrew* Tamed or Unmasked?" and goes on to explore issues of "deception and illusion" as staged in the play's induction and disguise plot, and potentially also in the wife-taming plot (which Halio cautiously interprets as a process of education and self-awakening). Halio, as one would expect of so experienced a performance scholar, is alert to the ways that actors' choices shape meaning onstage, while firmly nudging the reader towards understanding the two central characters as "birds of a feather" (42), better together than apart. This view of the comedy as a winning "love story" is balanced by an essay by Laura Grace Godwin, who engagingly shares how this kind of perspective, first encountered as an undergraduate, nearly put her off Shakespeare for good. Godwin explains how she eventually returned to the play—and now brings her students to it—through study of "textual variation, editorial invention, and the mechanisms used to detect both" (79). By such means, Godwin makes room for "resistant" rather than "disillusioned" readings of the central action (80).

The volume is divided into two parts. The first part, "Materials," is written by Dupuis and pulls together available editions and teaching resources (including the play on film). The second part, which consists of twenty-seven essays plus an introduction by Tiffany, is in turn broken into four sections: "Language and Texts," "Contexts," "Teaching through and about Performance," and "Short Takes." The essays in this second part frequently offer lecture structures (both in terms of a single class and a unit on the play) and practical classroom exercises, and they are consistently articulate about learning objectives. Taken as a whole, these contributors speak to a range of student audiences, who come to Shakespeare for different reasons and with varying expectations.

The essays are engaging and well-written. The section on “Contexts,” somewhat unusually, provides impressive “background” detail on such topics as homilies, music, rhetoric, and marriage customs without losing sight of their potential application to Shakespeare’s comedy. Readers gain a better understanding of the practices and conventions that shaped sixteenth-century English mindsets, while also grasping how such considerations translate today into a richer interpretive engagement with *Shrew* and might be put to work in the modern classroom. To pull out just a few examples from this section, Robert Matz, writing on “Early Modern Marriage,” explores the tension between homilies and theatrical farce to show that the “ideological trick of the play” is to “encourage male authority and violence even as it disguises both in a fiction of mutuality that makes obedience look like love” (97). Joseph Ricke helps teachers and students grasp that shrews were “a hot topic in the 1590s” (124)—and why—by offering a long view of the type. Ricke’s contextualizations of literary and dramatic shrews are wide-ranging and thought-provoking, and he helpfully suggests anthologies and online materials from which teachers can draw medieval and Renaissance non-dramatic and dramatic examples. Dupuis’s essay on “Rhetorical Strategy,” which rounds out this section, culminates in three short close readings of scenes; her one-page analysis of Katherine’s final speech is particularly good.

Attention to the complicated textual condition of Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew* is scattered throughout the collection (in essays by Margaret Maurer, Godwin, Michael McClintock, and M. G. Aune), rather than being hived off in its own editorial ghetto. This strategy usefully allows readers to see how they might build textual studies into their pedagogy without turning over to textual matters the entirety of their lecture time; it also immensely enriches the specific essays in which issues of textual instability and the editorial tradition appear. The other thread that runs through the volume is performance studies. Peter H. Greenfield includes a couple of classroom exercises in his essay at the end of the “Contexts” section, one of which I myself successfully tried twice, once at a teaching workshop and later at my home university. The section on pedagogical approaches devoted to performance (“Teaching through and about Performance”) is very good, and many of the brief accounts of classroom exercises in “Short Takes” further address stage work, props, and performance histories (both live and available on DVD). Readers of this volume will come away with a clear sense of the recorded performances available for classroom

use, and also gain some creative ideas for building these performances into lectures and learning activities. I especially appreciated Sheila T. Cavanagh's critique of these recordings as conforming to a "happy ending" view of the play, along with her suggestions about how "to take pedagogical advantage of this relative uniformity" (181). This collection provides engaging, balanced, and creative perspectives on a play that features regularly in theatre repertoires and classroom syllabuses alike.

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Gambara, Veronica.

***Complete Poems: A Bilingual Edition.* Ed. and trans. Molly M. Martin and Paola Ugolini. Critical intro. Molly M. Martin.**

The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series 34. Toronto: Iter Inc. / Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2014. Pp. xiii, 168. ISBN 978-0-7727-2168-6 (paperback) US\$39.95.

This bilingual edition of Veronica Gambara's complete poetic works is the first of its kind. Until now, Allan Bullock's noteworthy 1995 volume was the only modern critical edition of Gambara's complete poetry; however, in Bullock's text, Gambara's poems appear solely in Italian.

Written by one of the first female poets to emulate the Petrarchan model, Gambara's poems were not assembled into a single printed edition until 1759. Their rhetorical originality helped Gambara forge important political alliances and establish her reputation as the voice that honoured Brescia and as the "Sappho" of the early sixteenth century.

The cover image of *Complete Poems: A Bilingual Edition* features Antonio Allegri's (named Correggio) *Portrait of a Lady*, a stunning painting that mediates the absence of images within the text. The text itself begins with a comprehensive, stimulating critical introduction to Gambara's life by Molly M. Martin, who sheds light on the uneasy balance between cultural currency and political power that dominated Renaissance Italy, and in turn, Gambara's poetry. Tracing significant similarities between Gambara and fellow poet and noblewoman Vittoria Colonna, Martin is careful to stress what makes