



## RESEARCH PAPER

### Pedagogical Turns in Teaching Shakespearean Studies: A Theoretical Retrospective

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## ABSTRACT

The paper is a retrospective of pedagogical praxis regarding the perception and reception of Shakespearean texts in a Pakistani English Literature classroom. We are positing a consideration of these moments from within our current positionality in a Higher Education Institution, as well as within the debate on the value and role of Shakespearean Texts in the 21st Century. The paper documents the pedagogical and critical theoretical perspectives as a way of historically tracing out the necessity for an interdisciplinary English department to allow for new interpretive frames through the consideration of genre, culture, form and adaptations. By understanding the evolving pedagogical and theoretical turns in the study and teaching of Shakespearean texts, we can not only demythologize Shakespeare, but also promote a more critically reflexive pedagogical practice highlighting the role of Humanities through the use of adaptations, popular culture materials, and performance based classroom praxis.

**KEYWORDS** Pedagogy, Shakespearean Studies, Theoretical Turns

## Introduction

In using the phrase 'turns', we are considering here a retrospective look back at the times we have encountered Shakespearean texts within the classroom - whether it is as a student or as an instructor. This article is a way of looking back at these moments from our current positionality as full time faculty in Higher Education Institutions within the Department of English, who are also at different points in their own academic and professional journeys. Speaking from our own experiences as scholars and instructors, one of the authors' first introduction to Shakespeare was reading *Merchant of Venice* in high school. The play stood out as a scintillating story about cutting out a pound of flesh - an image that lasted until undergrad, where we once again studied the play as an example of how linguistic meaning can be manipulated to suit the purposes of a speaker and how meaning and truth were not necessarily the same thing. Future encounters with the text as a research oriented scholar was when the realization occurred that the text was so much more than we had been led to believe it to be. It became a historical and social commentary of its times and even a feminist statement to the efficacy of feminine intellect. For another author, the first experience with Shakespeare was reading *Hamlet* at the undergraduate level, and thinking how familiar Ophelia's treatment by the men around her was to them. The attitudes towards women in general and those involved in romantic relationships in particular resonated with our own social structuring towards gaslighting and condescending, which in turn can lead to more problematic attitudes that are the root cause

for honour killings and rape. This feeling was further established by reading Shakespeare's poem "The Rape of Lucrece" where the language used was a direct mirror to the Pakistani societal attitudes towards rape i.e. blaming the woman.

### Statement of the Problem

This paper documents the pedagogical and critical processes in the latter half of the 20th and 21st Century, to conceptualize how literature and fiction work within contemporary literary theory and cultural contexts as a way of tracing out how the conception of an interdisciplinary English department is necessary for new interpretive research and ideological frames. By de-mythologizing Shakespeare's canonization through the use of contemporary approaches like cultural studies, popular culture, new genres forms and adaptations, we can question and re-frame authorial and authorized readings of these texts.

### Literature Review

As graduate students, the study of Shakespeare was complicated by our own academic leanings and research interests towards postmodern theoretical domains; questions about textuality, identity, authorship; considerations about the literary canon as a political sphere – to name but a few. Historical and cultural differences that have already been brought to light via models like Cultural Materialism and New Historicism, which are given more immediacy in the effort to realize the implications of such questioning not only on our understanding of Shakespeare's historical context, but also the impact this would have on our own positionality as social objects.

It is only in looking back at personalized encounters with Shakespearean Studies that it is possible to trace the shifts in interpretation and knowledge that have occurred; and to what extent the changing critical and theoretical lenses to which we found ourselves exposed parallel them. Moreover, this was also a retrospective understanding about the facile nature of literary texts and their intersection with the emerging interdisciplinary turns within the late twentieth and twenty first centuries; which for Schlaeger (1996) are epitomized by the "trends and tendencies in intellectual styles and interests at a time when pluralism seems to be the only universally applicable characterization" (p. xii).

It is also imperative to consider this 'pluralism' in the context of how pedagogical concerns function within the study and teaching of Shakespeare in literature classrooms. Peter Widdowson in his introduction to *Re-reading English* (2002) while talking about the crisis in English studies observes that a critic, like a historian, conducts their research within a "social phenomenon". This in turn allows them to select and organize facts and/or texts with regards to their own position within historicized contexts. These critics and scholars "write literature from the perspective of a historical and ideological present" (p. 4-5) - or they did so at least up until the 1980s. When we consider the extent to which the third cultural turn integrates language with context, and the prevalence of multi-disciplinary theoretical lens – it is not implausible to assume a parallel impact on the teaching of and research about Shakespeare. A teacher, for example, works within the theoretical frameworks available to them. With English Studies becoming more and more interdisciplinary – especially within the theoretical frame of Cultural studies in the third cultural turn – the boundaries of studying Shakespeare were and are entering a new theoretical space. With this postmodern questioning of high and low culture, questions of multiple perspectives and multiple interpretive truths enter the discussion.

In any attempt to understand the evolution of Shakespearean Studies and the place Shakespeare's body of works has in today's academia, it is important to realize that this is a tradition that "haunts European and American modernist culture with an intensity and tension unknown in the nineteenth century". It is equally important to understand that the "the sites of contestation are varied and uneven, as indeed the forms of resistance, dispute and appropriation" (Cianci & Patey, 2014, p. 13). Furthermore, the question of what led to the dismantling of the Eurocentric and western metaphysical structures that allowed for a canonical author like Shakespeare, whose works are central to the British literary tradition (itself the grand overarching literary tradition); to be questioned and deconstructed in ways not previously possible is the central concern this paper will attempt to address.

One of the most prevalent notions about Shakespeare is that his plays reveal universal values (Longhurst, 1992, p. 150). As such, they represent a standard of truth that is in agreement with the standards setup in western metaphysics as given in for example Aristotle's *Poetics* about what a dramatic text should be and how it should be approached. These theoretical assumptions when transferred to pedagogical practices means that Shakespeare was and is still being taught as the standard by which we judge other texts – "as the founding moment of a literary culture, an appeal that will be repeated and enshrined in the curriculum" (Reading, 1997, p. 79). The binary that is created by Othering all other texts has led to a Eurocentric assumption about literary tradition that has dominated the field of literary studies. Ideologically, this means that the values Shakespeare was meant to represent were also ones that applied to the historical/social world. David Longhurst gives the example of E. M. W. Tillyard's *Shakespeare's History Plays* (1944) which promoted the values of an ordered Elizabethan world, "fearing civil war and rebellion, and caring deeply for nature, order, monarchy and, most important of all, England" (p. 155).

Like Longhurst, Alan Sinfield's 1989 study on the conflation of Shakespeare and educational practices also talks about the extent to which traditional readings of Shakespearean texts have dominated pedagogical practices by using them to mainly represent "universal truths" which has led to using his texts to support the established practices of literary criticism (p. 135). The presence of Shakespeare as a standard by which students are taught to judge all works of literature is an arbitrary practice that needs to be questioned if we are to judge future texts on individual merits rather than on a comparative scale. However, what Sinfield points out is that this privileging of Shakespearean (and therefore the British) texts over others also has an ideological impact in that "the allegedly universal culture to which equal access is apparently offered is, at the same time, a marker of attainment and hence privilege" (p. 136). Students thus end up believing that 'appropriate' attitudes towards literary texts is also applicable to the general world; for example, the gender stereotyping that can be seen in *King Lear*, or the racial/class stereotyping seen in *Merchant of Venice*, the struggle for power seen in the history cycles like *Richard* or *Henry*, the nonchalant attitudes toward rape in *Lucrece*.

Yet Sinfield, like Widdowson, is of the opinion that Shakespeare does not have to function in a conservative manner. It is rather the theoretical or pedagogical lens that is being used ideologically that has led to this interpretation of his plays – "He has been appropriated for certain practices and attitudes, and can be reappropriated for others" (p. 137). This 'reappropriation' of Shakespeare's body of works has taken place in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century via discussions about issues like provenance, authenticity of the folios, the genre conventions, and new forms the plays have taken across stage, film, television, intertextual references in various texts. This has in turn given rise to questions of the value systems that has led to these adaptations/appropriations. The biggest shift of which has been that we are now moving from a universal understanding of the meaning

of a text determined by a fixed system of values, to a more individualized reading which is subjective in nature.

### Research Framework

The university was initially conceived as a place that was taxed with the teaching of a culture and a context – what is perceived to be the role of a humanities department, especially the literature one. By teaching the historicized meaning of texts, national institutions like a literary canon could retain their hegemonic positions. For the purposes of this study, we are considering pedagogy from an instructor’s perspective, as being both critically and culturally relevant that is aware of temporal shifts in theory and literary genres (Thiessen, 2013, p. 7).

We are questioning traditional conceptualization of Shakespearean texts with frameworks under the umbrella of Cultural Studies; like Postmodernism, Postcolonialism, New Historicism etc. The goal is not so much to dismantle the eurocentric approach, but rather to reestablish and de/recontextualize the cultural center. Antony Easthope, for example, has made a case for this shift in literary studies being rooted in the move from a formalist/structuralist or Marxist perspective towards cultural studies, which is the inevitable position English departments have to take. In his essay *But What is Cultural Studies?*, he traces the transformations that cultural studies has undergone since the late 1950s and argues that there have been effectively three phases:

- the Culturalist phase of the 1960s, which attempted to broaden the concept of a literary tradition to include texts other than the traditional cannon, in turn rooted in the high-low culture debate of postmodernism;
- the Structuralist phase of the 1970s which examined the relationship between textuality and hegemony, through the lens of New Historicism and Deconstruction;
- the Post-structuralist/Cultural Materialist phase, which recognizes the idea of interpretive pluralism based on culture.

However, these theoretical shifts have not taken place in isolation. They are paralleled by the materialist turn in the world that has also led to a change in the university culture, because the modes of knowledge production have changed. Bill Reading (1997) in *University in Ruins* argues that since the university is no longer a bastion for national culture, it has “move[d] from philosophy to literary studies as the major discipline entrusted by the nation-state with the task of reflecting on cultural identity” (p. 70). Furthermore, since Shakespeare in at the nexus of this time when culture split away from the university (p. 80), “a minority culture must supervene as the dialectical resolution of the opposition, embodying the principle of the lost unity of culture in order to resist and reform mass civilization through the practice of criticism” (p. 80). The only way to do this in the university, according to Reading, is through creating a new literary canon, for without it the teaching of literature becomes hard (p. 85). This is why Cultural Studies has become the new marker for the study of literature for it not only recognizes the uniqueness of the citizens of a nation-state but at the same time it is a way of uniting the different disciplines and traditions

### Results and Discussion

Keeping in mind the above given debates and framework for the study, the question now is what does Cultural Studies and its proponents mean for the critical and

pedagogical practices of the English Departments in general and for the study of Shakespeare in particular. It should be borne in mind that the instances and texts delineated in this section are based on the personal and professional interactions with Shakespeare for the authors – who themselves have studied and are teaching in Pakistani Higher Education Institutions. The first author has their PhD in Literature and Criticism, with fifteen years of experience in HEIs, the second author has their Masters from Lehigh University Pennsylvania, USA with four years of teaching experience, and the third author is pursuing their PhD in English Literature with twelve years of experience in HEIs. Our argument is that there are mainly three key approaches by which the study of Shakespeare is usually adopted to the purposes of higher education:

First, there is the task of replacing Shakespeare firmly within the historical field of his own period. Second, there is the analysis of the constitutive criticism of Shakespeare, that process which has identified his greatness and produced his meanings. Third, there is the analysis of the mediation of Shakespeare in our own historical period; how he is reproduced and the processes which determine the way we receive and understand his work (Longhurst, 1992, p. 159).

Those who teach Shakespearean Drama at the undergraduate level especially, are often advised to emphasize the mechanics of literary genres so that students would have a toolkit as a way of reading any literary text. The disciplinary scholarship tends to be mostly concerned with “indoctrinating the student into a privileged canon of texts as a prerequisite and accompaniment to the teaching of the interpretive, imaginative, and performative skills” (McNeely, 2009, p. 11) that a lot of the creativity and self-expression that should have been a part of literary studies was lost in search for a measurable mastery of skills and specialization.

It was not until we bring in performance and history of Shakespeare into the classroom (though we are certainly not the only or the last to do so), that we can effectively connect texts with context and its formalist conventions was the only way to encourage a true engagement with texts – a fact that became even more imperative when teaching a text to a class with different contextual backgrounds. In addition to teaching a text (to make matters more complicated), that is from a historically foreign tradition.

As an example situation, teaching *Macbeth* to an undergraduate class and framing the discussion in light of, for instance, the corrupting influence of power, the discussion tends to naturally move towards what is happening in the country’s political sphere and what they had been observing for themselves. They were also able to see the parallels between Lady Macbeth’s actions and how that can be correlated to a patriarchal social structure. This resulted in a class that understood intuitively the actions of these characters, and they did so by connecting it not only to the play’s historical context but also to their own. The class went on to put on a full length adaptation of *Macbeth* and it resulted in response papers that not only quoted lines from the play but offered a critical, interrogatory response to them.

Cultural Studies is one of the theoretical frames that “provides the theoretical tools for allowing teachers to recognize the important, though not unproblematic, cultural resources students bring to school and the willingness to affirm and engage them critically as forms of knowledge crucial to the production of the students’ sense of identity, place, and history” (Giroux, 2004, p. 66). As an instructor, it can mean bringing in film or graphic novel adaptations to show to the class, asking them to engage with how words were spoken and the ways in which kinetics and visuals can change the way meaning is conveyed. It meant putting on full-scale productions of Shakespeare’s plays as final projects, in both

authentic and appropriated or adapted versions. As a researcher, it meant finding ways to make Shakespeare relevant to our own world. By positioning the student's context into what they were reading – combined with how they were supposed to read it – puts our pedagogical practices now in line with the shift in the systems of pedagogical practices the Paulo Freire talks about in terms of a critical pedagogy. The shifting from a banking model to a problem-posing model encourages an individualistic response to texts, as well as fulfills the function of teaching students how to think critically and not perpetuate a system of preconceived ideas and ways of thinking. As Henry Giroux says "Pedagogy is not simply about the social construction of knowledge, values, and experiences; it is also a performative practice embodied in the lived interactions among educators, audiences, texts, and institutional formations" (2004, p. 61).

Cultural Studies emerged from the social turmoil of the sixties, and is an amalgamation of elements from those disciplines that concentrate on social and cultural forces. Drawing on the works of Roland Barthes and Claude Levi-Strauss, cultural studies draws upon structuralist and poststructuralist principles as well as the fields of sociology, anthropology and popular culture studies. Theorists like Henry Giroux and others see this as an emancipatory project as it crosses disciplinary boundaries within higher education and allows for an engagement with society. In the context of the United States, with multiculturalism being on the rise, this approach will allow for a more humanistic approach to literary studies and will allow the study of culture to escape the boundaries of class, as Raymond Williams states "There are no masses; there are only ways of seeing people as masses" (1997, p. 2). As such, cultural studies stand in opposition to cultural hegemony.

In the context of undergraduate classrooms, such an approach only becomes possible due to the cultural shift that has allowed for the study of a once canonical author and body of works not from the interpellation of a colonial subject, but rather the reading of a canon critically apolitically. Shakespearean studies is a major subject of interest in English Departments in Pakistan, where if it is not a subject that is offered exclusively, his texts nonetheless do dominate the reading lists. For example, in most undergraduate and Master's departments, students will have a course on Elizabethan Drama (or under a similar title) which will have at least three plays by Shakespeare. Even up to the MPhil/PhD level, courses on Shakespeare exclusively are offered – though the theoretical lenses would be contemporary ones (adaptation, feminist studies, postcolonial approaches, sociological etc.).

This is however, not something exclusive to Pakistan. In a paper written by Meena Pillai (2015) on Cultural Studies and English Pedagogy in India, she talks about the colonial hegemony of teaching English Studies and "the principles of de-canonization and classroom practices which de-link English literature from its imperial cultural contexts and root it in postcolonial literary and cultural practices" (p. 155). The paper mentions the decision taken by the University of Kerala in 1995 to remove Shakespeare from the syllabus completely, however this was changed after much public debate in 2005 over the "inevitability and indispensability of teaching the bard to English literature students" (p. 158)– leading in 2013 to an entire course dedicated to Shakespeare's works. This speaks to the entrenched presence of Shakespeare in terms of Literature departments on a global scale and raises the question of how and why these texts have managed to retain their significance into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Pillai's answer to this is a shift in pedagogical practices that allows for "a radical self-critique in terms of canon, aesthetics, and how these are taught" (p. 164) and therefore works to question the imperial canon and locates it in a postcolonial classroom in the South Asian context.

A solution to this can perhaps be found in a more global context, that is of New Historicism, as a movement within Cultural Studies and a theoretical frame, that allows for a further breaking away from the hierarchical binaries and centered knowledge that are the governing principles of western metaphysics. By considering the construction of literary values as absolute and structured as per an overarching grand narrative, we are perpetuating a means of oppression by marginalizing those literary and cultural productions that do not appear to fit into traditional models. This is why, as Greenblatt says in *Towards a Poetics of Culture* "contemporary theory must situate itself not outside interpretation, but in the hidden places of negotiation and exchange" (1989, p. 13). Thus, the problem with teaching Shakespearean texts occurs when we focus solely on the values and ethical considerations in these works, without acknowledging the situatedness of the same.

This shifting in paradigms that is parallel by the understanding of a text as one that is woven together from a multiplicity of "citations, references, echoes, cultural languages" (p. 160) is discussed in Roland Barthes' essay entitled *From Work to Text* (1977). Barthes believes that these signifiers, woven together, are where cultural forces are embedded and given voice. The distinctions between particular genres, therefore, cannot be placed in a hierarchy as they are all part of the same textual weave. As Barthes writes, "the Text does not stop at (good) Literature; it cannot be contained in a hierarchy, even in a simple division of genres, what constitutes the Text is, on the contrary (or precisely), its subversive force in respect of the old classifications" (p. 157). New Historicism as a field confirms this particularization of what constitutes the wrap and weft that weave together a text - to carry forward the metaphor employed by Barthes. In dealing with the Renaissance period, for instance, New Historicists consider this era as part of a larger cultural shift that took place in Europe, as it helps to foreground the ideological forces of the time by focusing on the "serial movement of disconnections, overlaps, variations" that occur within the "field of the text" (Barthes, 1977, p. 158). This is what helps to explain the interdisciplinary emphasis of New Historicism as well, as Stephen Greenblatt continues in his essay, this "methodological self-consciousness is one of the distinguishing marks of the new historicism in cultural studies as opposed to a historicism based upon faith in the transparency of signs and interpretive procedure" (1989, p. 12).

New Historicism, despite its inauspicious beginnings, remains one of the dominant frames of analysis for early modern literature. Originating in the works of Stephen Greenblatt, New Historicism holds to the belief that Shakespeare's works should be firmly situated in the context of when they were originally written. Greenblatt was influenced by the works of writers like Jameson, Foucault and Layotard, all of whom "raised questions about society and art" (Guerin et al, 2015, p. 283). For each, capitalism was the reason for the break between the public and private spheres, and as such history cannot be considered a universal principle because there is no actual knowledge of the "governing ideas of the past or present, we should not imagine that we even have a center for mapping the real" (Guerin et al, 2015, p. 284).

As a return to historical scholarship, New Historicism is as much about the text itself as it is about the archival materials like letters, diaries, paintings etc. that would help to reveal the context of a text. For example, in studying Shakespeare, knowing the socio-political tensions of his day allows for a more in-depth analysis of plays like *Richard II*, or *Macbeth*. We can raise issues like press censorship, the marginalization of women, or the rights of inheritance and abuse of power within the texts, but by situating it outside the boundary of it we can better understand real world tensions.

New Historicism has done much in raising the bar in renaissance and therefore Shakespearean Studies. One of its major contributions has been in shifting the focus from character studies to a more egalitarian approach to the study of texts. According to Neema Parvini (2014), there has been a further shifting in the premise of New Historicism in the twenty-first century as well. The usual focus of Cultural Studies or New Historicism would have been on:

(in America) a discourse analysis demythologizing Shakespeare's plays as mechanisms of state power and the various ways in which power contains subversions or (in Britain) an ideology critique showing either how Shakespeare's plays were sites of subcultural dissidence in their own time or how they have been used insidiously to support the status quo in our own (Parvini, 2014, p. 212).

However, the focus now is on study of historical context for its own sake – that is a moving away from the ideological to the social function.

Parvini goes on to trace the recent scholarship that has come out over the last ten years (the article was published in 2014) and explains what appears to be a split between the scholar and theorist of Shakespeare Studies. She feels that the focus now has shifted more towards scholarship based on existing theoretical models than in an attempt to search for new interpretive paradigms. For her, the cause of this is the “question of funding and the Research Excellence Framework” (p. 221). Scholars are sometimes made to choose between an original idea and a publishable one so as to fit the required parameters of public utility or funding approval requirements, or the current trends in research which determine impact for research councils. This once again illustrates the rule of the economic principle when it comes to research – which in principle should be innovative, original and sometimes appears impossible. The movement of New Historicism becomes a case in point of something that would have never succeeded in the current research funding models.

This is also why Shakespearean scholarship needs to be located in domains beyond the perceived areas of scholarship – popular culture being one where Shakespeare has found a niche. Though Richard Halpern only talks about moving Shakespeare outside of the confines of an English literary tradition, the fact is that he has also moved outside the bounds of a purely literary scholarship as well. Marie Plasse in her essay tracing the crossovers between Shakespeare and Popular culture studies talks about why Shakespeareans would find the move to popular culture a “freer, more playful space” because it is not as “densely mediated” (2004, p. 15). More than that, she feels that this is a cultural moment that she herself is a part of. While we remain unable to connect to an original “authentic” performance of Shakespeare, this is something we can find in the adaptations and cultural appropriations of his texts. Plasse ends by talking about the dilemma of this as perceived by the community outside of academia, which can give rise to the erroneous notion that as educators, the function of cultural transmission is not being carried out. However, her final conclusion is that this type of engagement rather than taking us away from the primary field of study, instead allows for new ways of interaction.

An example of this is the presence of Shakespeare both as a character and as intertextual appropriations in Neil Gaiman's graphic novel *The Sandman*. Two of the stories within the series are based on Shakespeare's plays: namely *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*. The stories play upon the universality of Shakespeare's narrative while also raising questions about authorship, creative inspiration, and how this plays into Gaiman's fictional world. The central character of the series Dream, meets William Shakespeare and offers to make him the greatest writer, better even than Kit Marlowe. Though Gaiman's text came out in 1990, it's a noteworthy happenstance that a few months



ago, Oxford University Press released a series of revised plays giving co-authorship to both Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare. This kind of appropriation changes not only how scholarship is conducted on Shakespeare's plays – but of all intertextual and adapted versions as well.

Shakespeare's plays have been one of the most frequently adapted texts in the film and television industry, with historically accurate adaptations to more modernized ones (Clement, 2015, p. 1). Interestingly enough, these adaptations are as much a product of the cultural and theoretical shifts / turns as they are of capitalist motivations. In the introduction to *Shakespeare Survey*, Anthony Davies (1987) critiqued "the motives behind the production of all films were seen to be brashly commercial" as well as that "the historical moment of cinema's meeting with theater was especially traumatic," and that "cinema was quickly perceived as posing a threat to traditional aesthetic distinctions" (p. 1). The debate between whether the elite version of Shakespeare compared to his more popular incarnations is of any aesthetic or academic value is surmounted by Douglas Lanier's contention that:

If Shakespearean adaptation is one of the cultural sites where social orders are reproduced and potentially contested from generation to generation, then examination of how contemporary adaptations reshape Shakespeare for youth consumption promises to be particularly important (2006, p. 234).

Though Lanier in his study presents an overview of the many dissenters of Shakespeare in popular culture, the scholarship about the films and television adaptations of Shakespeare have steadily been gaining critical acceptance, and is due as much to their critical as it to their financial success. Many of the most popular cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare use modern settings and costume, yet still use the same language (like Baz Lurhman's *Romeo + Juliet*), while others modernize everything about the story (like Gil Junger's *10 Things I Hate About You*). The critical discussion on these films is still grounded in the study of the source text itself. Graham Holderness (2002) further stresses the implicit value of the source text's authority:

By "adaptation" we would normally understand a version of the story which did not simply reproduce Shakespeare's text and Shakespeare's words, but developed the basic story into a more or less different treatment: transferring the action to a different time and place; substituting a modern script or screenplay for the Elizabethan text; translating the play into a new form, such as the popular musical. An adaptation, we might say, is formed by composing variations on a theme. (Holderness, 2002, p. 156)

In the shift towards interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches, along with a postmodernist engagement with literary and cultural production, the analysis of media and popular culture forms like films and television have become a major concern. As McNelly states:

it is by appealing to innate curiosity and timeless human ethical, aesthetic, and political concerns that we can best motivate our students to acquire the difficult practical skills needed for economic competitiveness and global citizenship (2009, p. 11).

This is why Adaptations and the study of them change Shakespeare's texts while relying on his cultural authority and contributing to the social significance of the plays' roles in contemporary society.

**Conclusion**

In the concluding analysis, any area of study within the discipline of literature in today's context demands that we still need a pedagogical flexibility that understands theoretical shifts, especially when it comes to teaching writers like Shakespeare. The discrediting of the grand narrative does not mean that those texts are not integral to the discipline. As future educators, we need to be aware of the need to balance the imparting of practical skill with the ability to initiate a critical debate. This is why a concurrent engagement within our field by us as scholars is also important. A case in point is the Oxford University Press' decision regarding attributing The Henry Plays to both Shakespeare and Marlowe as co-authors. This is something that is going to have to inform not only the reading of the plays but also in how we talk about them in classrooms. For the university to survive and the humanities ideally to continue, we need to make sure that in the search for theoretical specialization we do not lose out on the ability to understand that there are real world consequences to not only ourselves as scholars but also to future pedagogical practices.

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