Introduction
Projecting Shakespeare

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Shakespeare education is nothing if not paradoxical. It is a legacy beast, inherently authoritative and socially entrenched, stalking young people from the cover of the past. It is bound up with the history of eighteenth- to twentieth-century Western education inside and outside the classroom, and has strong ties to empire, institutions, associations, popular culture, and social movements and norms (Levine, 1988; Court, 1992; Lanier, 2002; Graff, 2007 [1987]; Shaughnessy, 2007; Murphy, 2008; Kahn et al., 2011; Haughey, 2013; Olive, 2015; Flaherty, 2017). Educational uptake over the centuries is always interconnected with the ebb and flow of Shakespeare spoken and performed on stages (and on film), and Shakespeare edited and interpreted on pages (and on webpages). Myriad local conditions within the United Kingdom, the Anglophone world and the world at large powerfully reconfigure Shakespeare and yet, despite the differences, Shakespeare education in many regions carries with it claims of shared human values and high art that are widely (not universally) accepted and yet deeply problematic (Massai, 2005; Albanese, 2010; Bennett and Carson, 2013; Coles, 2013; Olive et al., 2021; cf. Manuel and Carter, 2017). The global brand power (Rumbold, 2011) of Shakespeare is so extraordinary that even plays with decidedly upsetting content in a twenty-first-century context – such as *Titus Andronicus*, *The Taming of the Shrew, Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* – maintain their popularity on stage and their position on curricula. This positioning is made more complex by the important social justice work these very texts (and others in the canon) are called on to facilitate in classrooms.

The Landscape of Shakespeare Education

If we think of formal education as land, Shakespeare has a sizeable property portfolio that endures through generations and, by virtue of incumbent power and path dependence, shapes both the present and future of education. Millions of young people are brought up on his estates – 'Shakespeare

is the most prescribed author across global curricula' (Irish, 2022)[1] – and are, consequently, beneficiaries of his largesse, a creative and intellectual gift that is extraordinary and inspiring, yet with powerful strings attached in the form of habits of thought, racialised poetics and cultural norms (Hendricks and Parker, 1994; Hall, 1995). No wonder then, that Shakespeare and the texts bearing his name echo through discussions of anti-racist reading and pedagogy, socially just teaching, and the decolonisation of curricula (Hendricks, 1996; Smith, 2016; Sterling Brown, 2016; Eklund and Hyman, 2019; O'Dair and Francisco, 2019; Ruiter, 2020; Ngcongo-James and Pratt, 2020; Hendricks, 2021; Karim-Cooper, 2021; Dadabhoy and Mehdizadeh, 2023), because there is only so much land, and those who have much need to relinquish or renegotiate their holdings if those who have little or none are to find their place in schools and universities and thus gain appropriate representation in public imaginaries and social policy.

The degree to which the institutional past of Westernised Shakespeare education – its old industrial processes and imperial values – owns and curtails its future is largely up to us, because this is a question of what is imaginable by the living. For all its establishment power, Shakespeare education is being reimagined all the time – by everyone, everywhere. Such reimagining may be on a large or small scale, tending radical or conservative, driven by individuals or groups, conducted in theory or practice, or worked out in relation to countless other factors. We could valuably take Ewan Fernie's insight – 'Today … it is more important than ever to learn from Shakespeare that we're free' (Fernie, 2017: 275) – and sink it into the soil of Shakespeare education to see what emerges in response. His words are profound and they become more so when we interweave them with the query: 'And what if we are not free, in society, in institutions, in the classroom?' This is not to critique Fernie, but to digest his insight slowly in order to feel what this learning and this freedom might be.

The reimagining of Shakespeare education entails the reimagining of both Shakespeare and education.[2] When Shakespeare researchers and

[1] Shakespeare's presence in curricula around the world must be understood as a complex and highly variable phenomenon. On the challenges associated with attempting to quantify this presence, see Irish (2015) and Olive (2015: 88–9). We thank Tracy Irish for helping us understand this problem.

[2] In their exploration of Shakespeare education in 'American intellectual and cultural life' (14), Kahn et al. (2011: 14) similarly note how an expanded view of education prompts reciprocal questions: 'We provide snapshots of the theories and varied practices of Shakespearean education in diversified social, cultural, and political milieus over three hundred years. In each case, we ask what constitutes *education* and what constitutes *Shakespeare*; cumulatively, we query the nature of education, the nature of citizenship in a democracy, and the roles of literature, elocution, theater, and performance in both.'

practitioners rethink what is important about Shakespeare, they contribute to shifts of emphasis, praxis and enquiry that ultimately, or swiftly, inflect teaching. Conversely, as educational methods, tools and practices evolve more broadly across the sector they cause us to rethink our pedagogies and reconsider what it is about Shakespeare that we should or could teach. The flaws of Fordist approaches to uniform education regulated by 'cells and bells' are increasingly known and ameliorated in new school architectures, educational processes and philosophical values (Senge et al., 2012). Digitisation was already changing education before the COVID-19 global pandemic of 2020–2 gave it a massive lift in uptake (Lankshear and Knobel, 2011; Gee, 2013a; Battershill and Ross, 2017; Beetham and Sharpe, 2020). Collaborative education, creative expression, place-based and outdoor education, and problem- or enquiry-based learning are rising as new norms (Gruenewald, 2003; Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012: 103–47; Davidson and Major, 2014; Demarest, 2015 [2014]; Sharratt and Planche, 2016; Ewing and Saunders, 2017; Hargreaves and O'Connor, 2018; Porter, 2018; Jefferson and Anderson, 2021). A strong tradition of practical books on Shakespeare teaching continues to grow (for example: Rocklin, 2005; Gibson, 2008 [1998]; Stredder, 2009; Dakin, 2009, 2012; Doona, 2012; Semler, 2013a; Hunter, 2015; Winston, 2015; Lau and Tso, 2016; Thompson and Turchi, 2016; Banks, 2019 [2013]; Cohen, 2019 [2018]; Homan, 2019; Lopez, 2019; Whitfield, 2019; Henderson and Vitale, 2021; Stevens and Bickley, 2023). Various journals have recent education-themed issues including, for example, *Shakespeare Survey*, volume 74 (Smith, 2021), *Research in Drama Education*, volume 25, issue 1 (Bell and Borsuk, 2020), and *Early Modern Culture*, volume 14 (Olson and Pietros, 2019). The British Shakespeare Association's *Teaching Shakespeare* magazine celebrated its twentieth issue in 2021, a year that also saw Cambridge University Press launch its 'Shakespeare and Pedagogy' Elements series. The RaceB4Race professional network community and conference series, Critical Race Theory, Premodern Critical Race Studies, and related scholarship and pedagogy from the late twentieth century through to the present are having an enduring structural impact on not only what is imaginable in Shakespeare education, but also on what freedom might look like in reading, researching, performing and teaching Shakespeare's works (RaceB4Race; hooks 1994, 2003; MacDonald, 2002, 2020; Little, Jr., 2000, 2023; Erickson and Hunt, 2005; Hendricks, 2021; Espinosa, 2021; Thompson, 2021).

This is, collectively, an extraordinary narrative of pedagogical rejuvenation that, nonetheless, finds itself weirdly coinciding with lingering

old-style schooling practices, entrenched socio-cultural and educational inequities worldwide, and penetrating critiques of technology, software and data usage in education (Selwyn, 2014; Lynch, 2015; Williamson, 2017).

Provocative questions abound: Why do we teach Shakespeare? What is Shakespeare? How should we teach Shakespeare? To whom should we teach Shakespeare? Should we teach Shakespeare? What is being learned when we teach Shakespeare? What does it mean to teach, to learn, to perform, to experience? What is education? These are live questions throughout this book because every project detailed in each chapter is, one way or another, not content with simply replicating the past of Shakespeare education.

Institutional Shakespeare

People are not lacking in imagination. All children and adults, all teachers and students, all actors and audiences are gifted with beautiful powers of imagining. Yet, the prerequisite to imagining our way to exciting futures, is an ability to imagine our way out of present constraints. These constraints are complex and not always visible, and so seeing futures depends on actively seeing the present. This means seeing the present as a weave of historical and ideological structures and feeling able to critique or test them without, one hopes, over-simplifying or discarding extraordinary artistic or social constructs in the process. This need to see the present is why we must seek the views of the marginalised: while all views are of course partial, the marginalised see the present with a vividness that those at its centre can barely imagine.

It is also why it is important for educators to see, hear and understand students and their worlds rather than simply imposing, year after year, the same old formula onto teaching and learning as if the world never changes. This is not easy, because in most schools and universities career educators age as the years pass while incoming cohorts of students do not. When many of us started teaching we were mistaken for students; now, decades later, we get mistaken for dinosaurs. That's fine, so long as we embrace the present with empathy, intellectual interest and pedagogies of care. Without these, as our students bring new values and habits of mind to the classroom the natural tendency is for the two sides – teachers and students – to drift apart and only be held in dry relation by inanimate and enforceable institutional structures. With these, the scene of teaching and learning is reimagined all the time because it is collaboratively enabled and enlivened by the loving circulation of respect and expertise.

If we think beyond schools and universities, as many authors in this book do so adeptly, we can see that embracing the present is far more than merely caring about the views of young people – it is, in fact, caring about all people and asking what good I might do in other spaces, and how might Shakespeare's artistic contribution contribute 'over there', in partnership with me and with others. What vivid new experiences and formations might be called into being? This is not to deny that the imaginable is not always actionable and the actioned is not always precisely what was imagined. But this unevenness comes with the territory and is, in its way, deeply human. Inherited structures, assumptions and processes are hard to shift or elude and so deep paradoxes remain as the monuments of the past shimmer in the heat of the present.

This book endeavours to capture something of the educational shimmer caused by the imaginative energies released through collaborative Shakespeare projects. We understand collaboration as a broad principle and an infinitely varied practice. It delivers more than the mere sum of its parts, and relies on sharing, receiving and co-developing ideas. It assumes everyone can learn from everyone. It anticipates new vistas. These projects make our normal landscapes dance and waver. They experiment, challenge and provoke us. They are suggestive – albeit partial, limited, targeted – recastings of Shakespeare education. They are imaginative forays actioned collectively. They are rarely independent of institutional power. In fact, most projects are institutional imaginings, prominences of energy arcing out from creative hotspots within institutional or organisational bases, and so while they usually do not imply the dissolution of inherited structures, they exemplify creative yearnings to reach out, rethink, reframe, do more, do different and do better.

Institutions and organisations become points of origin or destination; models and guiderails; the backdrop or status quo against which to shine; or simply partners endeavouring to see each other more clearly and build passable bridges to new experiences and understandings. In some respects, this is a book about the good in institutions, about the desire of institutional beings to make extraordinary efforts to see what is outside their institutional boundaries and, more courageously, to understand themselves from the outside and seek to actualise improvements where they can. This is exciting because it exemplifies the professional, the expert, reaching beyond their natural habitat and learning how their professional self can morph and grow in different climates.

While the concentrated power of institutions enables such creative adventures, there are also many extraordinary projects that have assembled

themselves outside institutions from sheer human willpower, creativity and an ethical drive to bring good to the world and its people. Some of these wild-born projects become, in time, institutions themselves, while others persist or perish with greater fragility, and so the global ecosystem of formal and informal structures involving Shakespeare education evolves through time unevenly, complexly and by increments.

There is something institutional about most of us – not a radical claim given so many of us work within organisational contexts – and this means we need to be generous to each other as we try to think our way out of, or forward through, larger structures that not only envelop, but also pervade us. When we think, when we imagine, even when we think against our institutions, there's always something – a whisper, a tone, a bias – that is the institution thinking through us. This is not necessarily bad, nor is it necessarily avoidable, but it does mean that as we project new ideas and formations that we know are good or suspect may be so, our projections are often laden with institutional residues good and bad.

We must acknowledge that as surely as the chapters in this book describe richly imaginative interventions in Shakespeare education, they also convey, implicitly and explicitly, complex political and ethical stories. This is important, because collaborative ventures by their very nature tend to make imagination, politics and ethics visible and up for discussion. When our work is confined within our native structures, imagination, politics and ethics are often normalised to the point of invisibility. Collaborative project work, on the other hand, sees us step out of cover, take risks and go places we have not been, troubling assumed or unseen rules and boundaries. This necessarily unveils some of our political and ethical biases, flaws and strengths that may otherwise – in a safer mindset, workspace or routine – have remained shielded from public view. Thus, it will be seen that openness and generosity, along with adventurousness despite the risks, are characteristics of collaborative Shakespeare projects.

Shakespeare pedagogy has long been a field of innovative practice, and collaborative partnerships of disparate types and scales are a key feature of this inventiveness. There are infinite, unique Shakespeare projects that flourish around the world and deliver significant experiences and insights to participants, yet never become widely known as published case studies. Shakespeare projects come and go without ceasing because the stories once confined to walk the boards of the Globe now traverse our terrestrial globe in myriad guises: adapted, translated, appropriated, repurposed and remediated. Shakespeare is so much more than he ever was. Consequently, this collection is suggestive, rather than representative, of collaborative

Shakespeare projects. We hope it is rich enough to provoke extended thinking about collaborative Shakespeare education and to prompt experimentation, but we know that many more books could be assembled – and we hope they will be – on the same collaborative theme with entirely different projects represented.

Projecting Shakespeare

Since our volume's focus is the reimagining of Shakespeare education through collaborative *projects*, we see it as testing the notion of *projecting Shakespeare*. What might it mean to 'project' Shakespeare, especially in a collaborative context? This idea blends outputs and processes: these collaborations are things (projects, partnerships, networks, structures, products, arrangements, outputs) as well as experiences (journeys, reflections, realisations, acts of giving, receiving, feeling, understanding and transforming). The chapters present the views of their contributing authors on not just the content and thematics of their projects, but also the intentions and mechanics of their operations. We invited the creators and leaders of projects to write about their projects – *from the inside*, as it were – so that readers could hear their thinking because such thinking is worth sharing and is often lost as the hard work of any project tends to absorb participants' time. We are aware that this means a certain loss of objectivity, but in its place we get insights into the humanity and complexity of project work and how processes and goals shift in practice. In any case, we urged contributors to be as objective as possible and to share their thoughts on the nature, significance and challenges of their projects.

In Shakespeare's time, the verb 'to project' could mean 'to devise or design (an action, proceeding, scheme, or undertaking); to form a project of' (*OED*, I.1.a), a meaning that evokes the ideation and design processes that modern creators of collaborative projects know so viscerally. Such work is often driven by 'a mental conception, idea, or notion; speculation' (*OED*, 1.b) and becomes 'a planned or proposed undertaking; a scheme, a proposal; a purpose, an objective' (*OED*, 2.a), to draw on two definitions of the noun 'project' in current use. Rather than simply doing one's regular work, project creators and partners – *projectors!* – know the physiological thrill and anxiety of nursing a new undertaking into being and, as it grows, realising that one is not only pursuing an objective but being swept along by it as it becomes its own thing with its own momentum. Projectors are not just swept along, but also swept outward, out to sea where there are few markers and they must bravely chart their path.

The image on our book's cover, Gino Severini's *Dancer=Propeller=Sea* (1915), gracefully suggests the enveloping turbulence to which we refer. The ontologically distinct components of dancer, propeller and sea – human, machine and nature – have somehow found their common spirit and co-perform, indeed co-*project*, a new world that delights by its unexpected harmonies. Structure remains, as do identifiable traits of the individual partners, yet in this space, a space tipped provocatively on its corner to make a startling diamond of a mundane square, they are all transformed into a new, entirely shared life (mark the equals signs in the painting's title). There could hardly be a more appealing picture of complexity (or collaboration) as dynamism and difference, sympathy and responsiveness (note the interlocking shapes and soft colour gradations) cause the emergence of till-then-unseen truth.

Extraordinary new worlds in the roiling sea may remind us of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Prospero's enterprise is referred to in the play as a 'project' by him and his enforced collaborator Ariel (Shakespeare, 2013 [2011]: 2.1.300; 5.1.1). In the play's Epilogue he makes the audience participants in his success by seeking their 'gentle breath' to fill his sails and carry him to Naples, 'or else my project fails,/Which was to please' (Epilogue.11–13). This double layering whereby Prospero is both a fictive, magical Duke and a real, theatrical performer reminds us that we have witnessed the execution of his project on the island unfold in more-or-less real time as the afternoon hours on the island map directly onto the afternoon hours of playing time in the theatre. During the play we hear a lot about the project from its leader, Prospero, whose very name implies he is an accomplished project worker, and he is at the end triumphant. We see how he and Ariel work together, but their partnership is no good model for collaborative ventures because Ariel is effectively enslaved. Prospero's approach to teamwork is coercive, not collaborative, and must be set aside.

Despite this, an insight suggested by Prospero is that project leaders – and to varying degrees, all project participants – are straddling a real yet also imagined space, and thus simultaneously being and performing. They are performing, indeed inhabiting, something magical just above the plain of the world, something that is illusory in so far as it is created and maintained by strenuous dreaming, and yet, at its best, it seizes the real more powerfully than the quotidian structures of normalcy. Shakespeare projects do not define the world, they discover it. The authors of the chapters in this book are highly conscious of this task and are, by necessity, believers that their projects – their designs, notions, schemes – will be *prospero*,

which is to say, 'favourable, propitious, flourishing' (Shakespeare, 2013 [2011]: 163n3). Such belief is not only forgivable; it is necessary.

When a person or group of people project Shakespeare in this way we can say they lead with their imagination, draw others in to be co-sharers in the enterprise and collaboratively express (in increasingly concrete terms) a raised appetite for risk and the new. When one projects Shakespeare the claims of the present or an imagined future are validated, the legacies of the past are questioned, and the shape of Shakespeare changes. When one projects Shakespeare, research and communication are fully intermingled in a blend of analysis, adaptation and application. A Shakespeare project is a novel entity, simultaneously a new infrastructure and a new community that reaches in too many directions (indeed, dimensions) for its influences to be fully traced. Its irreducibility and lability are the point: it is not fully native to the way things are generally done and thus it has not been fully measured or known; it freely admits its live and risky status, its performativity in the world. It could all come crashing down. Sometimes it does, but other times it thrives. A project exists in its own space, a space it has invented and which never fully maps onto the disciplinary frames that guide regular Shakespeare education. In troubling familiar structures and finding the world beyond them, these projects raise new questions about Shakespeare and education.

As the chapters in the book confirm, a collaborative project is imagined, designed, built according to plan and realised via implementation that involves innumerable variables that could not be fully conceptualised in the abstract. The planned structures endure minor tweaks or major overhauls in response to the exigencies of the human interactivity that flows through them once the project is underway. It is a living architecture and, ideally, a learning architecture. It is agile, yet also fragile. Shakespeare's works are not solely plays to be performed or texts to be analysed. They are, of course, these things, but so much more is entailed when we shift our focus from 'performing Shakespeare' or 'reading Shakespeare', or even 'teaching Shakespeare', to 'projecting Shakespeare'. We are conscious of vivid and contemporary notions such as 'appropriating Shakespeare' (Desmet et al., 2020; Fazel and Geddes, 2021), 'using Shakespeare' (Fazel and Geddes, 2017), 'blogging Shakespeare' (Carson and Kirwan, 2014), 'upcycling Shakespeare' (Iyengar, 2014), 'broadcasting/YouTubing Shakespeare' (O'Neill, 2014, 2017) and 'civic Shakespeare' (Edmondson and Fernie, 2018), yet for our purposes of foregrounding collaborative enterprises with an educational edge, we opt for 'projecting Shakespeare'.

The notion of 'projection' implies a pushing outward, a newly devised scheme via which to reach into the less known or unknown, a working of

the gaps or connections between or across entities rather than fully within them. The consequence of projecting Shakespeare – understood simultaneously as collaborative and exploratory endeavour – is that our understanding and experience of Shakespeare education is loosened and heightened. The same goes for disciplinary boundaries, professional identity, the teacher:learner dichotomy, the analyst:maker division, the scholar:public interface, notions of inclusion, and the public good. Our idealising narrative is complicated by the pragmatics of making distinct parties function together and the necessary compromises that must be accepted as one's interests are hybridised by cooperation with the interests of collaborators. This challenge will be starkly visible in some chapters. Sensitive questions of funding and viability are also rarely out of mind because collaborative partnerships depend on more than the captain's vision to be kept afloat.

To project Shakespeare is to feed new energy into the global Shakespeare system. This is especially important in respect to teaching and learning because institutional Shakespeare education is always subject to gradual ossification by the entrenching of inherited values and practices. As James Paul Gee neatly puts it: 'Institutions are "frozen thought"' (Gee, 2013b: 85). They 'freeze a solution to a problem' and over time people get so used to it that 'it takes a lot of work to unfreeze it' (Gee 2013b: 88). The natural process of routinisation is made worse in many jurisdictions of the education sector by rampant managerialism, neoliberalism and audit cultures masquerading as leadership, responsibility and professionalism (Ward, 2012; Ball, 2012). The Better Strangers project team (cf. Chapter 4), which includes the editors of this volume, has theorised the asphyxiating over-systematisation of institutional teaching and learning as 'SysEd', a condition where 'system' comes before and is valued above 'education' (Semler, 2017). SysEd is not a universal blight, but is certainly widespread, and vivid examples abound of how it overburdens and dispirits teachers and students, undoes professionalism and educator agency, dovetails with the worst aspects of neoliberalism and marketisation, and misunderstands the holistic and human essence of teaching and learning. Some of the worst examples of SysEd come from Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States where oftentimes what is imagined by senior managers as best practice is actually the opposite: pointless administrative churn and managerial interference put the brakes on excellent teaching and professional maturity.

Gee proposes non-institutional 'passionate affinity spaces' (Gee, 2013a: 133–9) as a way to rethink stale education: 'If human learning and growth flourish in passionate affinity spaces, especially nurturing ones, then it is of