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Possible Shakespeares

The educational value of working with Shakespeare through theatre-based practice

by

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Contents

Acknowledgements

Once more, I would like to borrow the words of Peter Brook (1999, p2), who in the beginning of his memoir *Threads of Time* writes: 'What I am trying to weave together as best I can are the threads that have helped to develop my own practical understanding in the hope that somewhere they may contribute usefully to someone else's experience.' Many threads and experiences are woven into this thesis, drawn from my intersecting worlds of theatre, education, and academia, and I am grateful to all those who have contributed the quality and qualities I have enjoyed in my own continuity of experience.

Declaration

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree.

The work presented (including data generated and data analysis) was carried out by the author.

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Abstract

This thesis explores how embodying Shakespeare's language through theatre-based practice can connect young people to the plurality of human perspectives, and develop their skills of communication.

I review the evolution of Shakespeare's value in formal education as literary heritage, and the tension that persists between his roles as literary icon and living artist. Peter Brook warns that Shakespeare is particularly in danger of becoming 'deadly theatre': admired and respected, but not alive to the moment of its production and reception. A parallel can exist with 'deadly' classrooms, where Shakespeare is taught with reverence but students find no relevance in his plays to their own lives.

I construct a theoretical framework using key concepts from education and theatre along with findings from linguistics and cognitive science to explore the pedagogical value of Shakespeare as a cultural heritage with which young people can critically and creatively interact. I explore the relationship between language, thought and learning, and how theatre-based practice creates meaning through a dialogic process of collaborative negotiation and close study of the text. This practice acknowledges the role narrative and analogy play in how we learn, and allows young people to be both emotionally engaged in and intellectually critical of how Shakespeare creates situations of human experience.

I conclude that the musicality and metaphorical nature of language is critical in how we express, share and shape our sense of the world and suggest that as performance texts Shakespeare's plays provide a site of continually evolving cultural metaphors. I propose that embodying Shakespeare's text allows young people to explore the possibilities of sense behind the meaning of words, and to reflect metacognitively on their experiences to build understanding of how language works and what it achieves in a search for the quality of truth.

List of Abbreviations

ArtsEd Arts Educational Schools, London

CASE Cognitive Acceleration for Science Education

CBI Confederation of British Industries

CEDAR Centre for Education, Appraisal and Research

CIRT Le Centre International de Recherche Théâtrale

CPD Continuing Professional Development

DfE Department for Education

DCSF Department for Children, Schools and Families

DfES Department for Education and Skills

Ebacc English Baccalaureate

EEA The Education Endowment Agency

ES Effect Size

KS Key Stage

LPN Learning and Performance Network

NATE National Association of Teachers of English

OECD The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Ofsted Office for Standards, Education, Children's Services and Skills

QCA Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

RSC Royal Shakespeare Company

SATs Standard Assessment Tasks

SMSC Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

SOLO Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes

SUFS Stand Up For Shakespeare (RSC manifesto for education)

TES Times Educational Supplement

ToM Theory of Mind

WSF World Shakespeare Festival

ZPD Zone of Proximal Development

Shakespeare plays
AYLI As You Like It
HV Henry V
JC Julius Caesar
KL King Lear
MND A Midsummer Night's Dream
R&J Romeo and Juliet

Chapter one: Shakespeare as embodied metaphor

How many things by season seasoned are (*Merchant of Venice*, 5.1.113)

On the first page of his influential text, *Art as Experience* (1934) John Dewey writes: 'When an art product once attains classic status, it somehow becomes isolated from the human condition under which it was brought into being and from the human consequences it engenders in actual life-experience' (1934, p.1). Shakespeare, as commonly experienced, can fit all too well into this description as an art product that by being elevated to the status of icon of cultural heritage has simultaneously been reduced to the abstracted museum pieces Dewey describes. Since Mathew Arnold (1869) enshrined Shakespeare amongst 'the best that has been thought and written', schoolchildren in this and any country influenced by Western culture have known him as an emblem of cultivated learning. Yet, Shakespeare holds not just a unique, but also highly ambiguous ontological and epistemological position in the consciousness of educators worldwide. Should he be revered as an icon of literary heritage, or engaged with as a living artist? Should young people analyse his plays through reading, as poetry on the page, or through performance, as words in action? Is his global ubiquity because of the dominance of high culture, western culture and the English language, or because he provides material for expression, even subversion? Dewey (1934, p.2) asserts a need 'to restore continuity' between admired works of art and the experiences they symbolise, and poses a question which addresses the way Shakespeare is predominantly valued in school curricula: 'How shall the young become acquainted with the past in such a way that the acquaintance is a potent agent in the appreciation of the living present?' (1938, p.23). In this thesis I explore how using theatre-based practice with Shakespeare in formal education takes up Dewey's answer to his own question: 'The way out of scholastic systems that made the past an end in itself is to make acquaintance with the past a *means* of understanding the present' (1938, p.78, italics original).

Understanding the present requires constant reassessment. As evidence from related research amasses and cultures continue to shift, I believe Shakespeare's position in school curricula should be continually questioned as we continually reassess what we need formal education to do. Robin Alexander (2008, p.123) explains how 'education may empower and liberate, or it may disempower and confuse', and the same can be said of Shakespeare. The teaching of Shakespeare can take the place of 'it' (education) in Alexander's next sentence: 'It may be genuinely universal in aspiration, or it may use the

claim of universality to disguise and reinforce the sectional interests of wealth, class, race, gender or religion.' Tensions around what and how we teach can be seen to coalesce around the teaching of Shakespeare, and tensions over the cultural values we encourage young people to ascribe to Shakespeare sit at the heart of what we think education is for.

Through this thesis, I propose four linked strands for the value of studying Shakespeare:

- Cultural capital is increased through knowledge of Shakespeare as cultural inheritance
- The capacity of our social brain is increased by dialogue through and about Shakespeare
- Our innate sense of aesthetics is engaged through Shakespeare's art
- Our understanding of how words communicate meaning is built through performing Shakespeare's language

The first category of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1996) seems to be the current predominant value of Shakespeare in education and is acquisitive. I propose, however, that greater value can be found if this acquisition is entwined with the following three strands which stem from a more inquisitive approach to learning, growing from the proposition that we need formal education to result in more than passive acquisition of knowledge; that in addition it should stimulate enquiry, collaborative engagement, emotional literacy, and metacognition about communication. Taken together, I suggest these four strands can make 'the past a means of understanding the present' as Dewey proposed.

My interest in the educational potential for Shakespeare results from teaching English and drama at Secondary level for fifteen years in schools in the UK and internationally, and a further ten years as a practitioner specialising in theatre-based approaches. I joined the education department of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in 2006 at a formative time in its history when Michael Boyd had been Artistic Director for four years and had overseen the growth of the department in personnel, practice and status. I brought with me a history of practical engagement with Shakespeare and an academic interest in exploring his role in education which synchronised well with a discourse growing in the company.

Literature about teaching Shakespeare has grown in volume during my career, with numerous publications suggesting ways of engaging students with Shakespeare's texts that will increase their enjoyment, understanding and academic attainment (notable examples referenced in this thesis are: O'Brien, 1993; Gibson, 1998; Stredder, 2004; RSC,

2010; Banks, 2014). Interest has also steadily increased in assessing the impact of such work. Through my association with the RSC, I have been involved in studies that seek to demonstrate the effectiveness of theatre-based practice, focusing on how the collaborative nature of the approaches, working alongside an embodied exploration of text, can lead to improved confidence, attitudes and academic achievement. Such research carried out by and for the RSC is summarised and analysed by Joe Winston (2015), and further research is ongoing (RSC, 2015). Currently, however, there is very little published research exploring the theoretical possibilities for how and why theatre-based approaches achieve their impact on young people's learning, and that is where I positon this thesis.

1.1   Translating Shakespeare

A significant moment in my questioning of the value of Shakespeare dates to a daylong interaction around the question, 'Why Shakespeare in education today?' held in 2009 and involving members of the RSC education department plus Michael Boyd, Cicely Berry (Director of Voice), Tim Crouch (actor and director), Polar Bear (spoken word artist) and Joe Winston (education practitioner and academic). This group's answer can be summarised as: because his plays are not about providing answers, but about asking questions - questions which invite you to think about who you are and how you relate to the world, and which connect you with everybody else through human history who has also thought about that. The reason agreed on for this was: because the physicality of Shakespeare's language makes you think and connect in ways no other writer can (Irish, 2009).

Actors often refer to the 'physical' or 'visceral' nature of Shakespeare's language. As a practitioner, I tacitly understand this physicality and its value in studying Shakespeare with young people. It is, however, a concept which seems collectively felt more than articulated by the theatre community[1] and I wondered how we might best articulate this 'physicality of the text' (Berry, cited in RSC, 2016) for an education audience: the extent to which it is peculiar to Shakespeare, and its practical value for young people in asking questions about being human. Everyone on that day had emphasised the power of the original language. Berry and Boyd, however, with their international experience, both felt strongly that Shakespeare was undiluted through translation. What then, I wondered,

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[1] Although useful investigations exist in print particularly by voice experts, for example Berry, 2008, Rodenburg, 1997.

was being translated? Shakespeare's popularity is unrivalled across the world yet many, probably the majority of performances of his plays taking place today, are not in his own words. I wondered if translation were the key to discovering the essence of how the 'physicality' works and why Shakespeare is worth studying. This was a question I took into my work on the 'World Shakespeare Festival' (WSF).

WSF was part of the Cultural Olympiad which ran alongside the 2012 London Olympics. The RSC produced the festival which included national and international companies performing Shakespeare's plays across the UK, most notably The Globe's project staging thirty-seven plays in thirty-seven languages (Prescott and Sullivan, 2015). My role was to lead an education enquiry into 'where, how and why Shakespeare is taught around the world'. Working with the British Council, I developed a survey to gain an overview, followed by projects to explore the situation in more depth in seven countries through working with students, teachers and artists from each country. The culmination of the project was an international education conference to discuss the place of art, held at Tate Modern in London which included a performance by an international youth ensemble of nineteen young actors brought together from the eight countries I had focused on. These countries, in addition to the UK, were: Brazil, Czech Republic, Hong Kong, India, Oman, South Africa and the U.S., representing a wide range of linguistic as well as cultural differences. My research carried out for WSF, led me to conclude that Shakespeare has become the most prescribed author across the world but also an artist whose works are highly adaptable to enquiring young minds (Irish, 2012).

I met Shakespeare academics and artists who were also, either by necessity or design, translators, and began to understand the art of translation in balancing technical skills with cultural sensitivity in both the source and target languages to find the right quality of cultural and linguistic analogies. Translating as complex a text as Shakespeare is highly skilled: the translator has to consider how the rhythms and imagery of language are linked to cultural expression, and inevitably has to make decisions that may remove some of the ambiguity of the original text, perhaps adding new ambiguities in the target language. Martin Hilský gives as an example his struggle with translating Sonnet 86 into Czech. He explains how the musicality of *womb* and *tomb* in line four is lost in a direct translation of the words to *lůno* and *hrob,* but that he found a solution in the Czech words *kolébka* and *lebka,* where *kolébka* means cradle but contains the word *lebka* meaning skull (Scott, 2012; Hilský, 2007, pp254-255). Recognising the value of how we all

understand Shakespeare differently according to our own personal cultural experiences, Hilský compares the translation of a Shakespeare text to the relationship between a parent and child: 'Children take after their parents but they also talk back. So I see all the Shakespearean translators of the world to be like Shakespeare's children, each in their own way different' (Scott, 2012). For this reason, translations of Shakespeare plays are often created for a particular production, as an accommodation between the writer's perceived original intent and the way current cultural reception talks back to that intent.

Conversations with translators like Hilský led me to consider how translation from one language to another is a more extreme version of what we all do every day within our own language: when we hear someone else's ideas or experiences, we paraphrase them in our own words to share them with others. We accommodate the new experiences with our own cultural references and use analogies and metaphors to do so. In studying Shakespeare, we are all his children, talking back to him in our own ways. As an example, an LPN teacher, reporting how a student explained her understanding of *Romeo and Juliet* to her mother, describes how the girl said, 'the story is about families that argue, "like me and you the other night"', making a very personal analogy, and went on to reference the popular vampire stories *Twilight*, making a very culturally specific analogy (Irish, 2014b). This relativist approach to Shakespeare is often viewed with suspicion by policy makers but constructivist concepts of education identify learning as building through connections to personal cultural experiences. Actors, like translators, must step into someone else's shoes, make decisions about what their words mean and communicate that meaning by ensuring cultural relevance. While actors and translators do this consciously for a living, we all subconsciously communicate our understanding to each other and to ourselves using analogy. Douglas Hofstadter's work on cognition is informed by his facility with languages. He proposes: 'translation is but the challenge of communication rendered crystal clear' adding 'at its core translation is analogy and indeed is analogy at its most sublime and enchanting' (2001, p.528).[2] Recognising translation as analogy shifted my question about Shakespeare's value into a curiosity about the role of analogy and metaphor in how we construct meaning from his texts. Shakespeare's characters undergo translations in response to their environments and to

[2] Hofstadter gives as an example the experience of his own work translating Pushkin's *Eugene Onedin* from nineteenth century Russian into contemporary American English and describes the numerous artistic choices to be made in translating not just literal meaning but cultural associations, rhythm and rhyme, offering the reader seven translations of the same stanza to compare the very different analogical choices made.

the other characters around them, for example with the extreme of Bottom's physical translation or Duke Senior embracing the 'churlish chiding of the winter's wind' over the 'painted pomp' of court, 'translating' as Amiens observes, 'the stubbornness of fortune / Into so quiet and so sweet a style' (*AYLI*: 2.1.3-20). By embodying the words Shakespeare gives his characters can young people translate their own experiences into inhabiting his characters? Is the physicality of the language helping them find embodied metaphors in the plays for contemporary human behaviours and situations?

In the first line of *Evolution, Cognition, and Performance,* Bruce McConachie (2015, p.1) asserts: 'There is no longer any doubt – the performing arts are good for learners!' He goes on to discuss (2015, pp.1-5) the evidence emerging from the cognitive turn of recent decades of the complex interplay of cognitive and physiological factors which challenge the categories we have developed in education. The world's most performed playwright, however, is still predominantly positioned in the lives of learners as a literary text for the examination of reading skills. Exploring historical and contemporary attitudes to Shakespeare teaching in this thesis, I find what seems a common perspective that performance approaches are more enjoyable, but fall short of supporting students to engage with the complexity of the text. Engaging with the cognitive turn, which highlights the central role of metaphor in how we think, I explore how traditional reading approaches to Shakespeare can reduce the embodied affect of the prosody of his language, often simplifying how young people are able to respond. I propose that theatre-based practice can instead embrace the complexities of the text by encouraging students to engage with the embodied nature of language as it communicates in action and in a moment. I discuss how this practice can open up the possibilities for Shakespeare study, the 'possible Shakespeares' young people can discover through creative and critical interaction with their cultural inheritance, and the possibilities and complexities of communication they can learn as a result.

1.2   The inevitability of bricolage

What we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to (Geertz, 1973, p.9).

Robert Stake (1995, p.97) defines a researcher in any discipline as someone who 'has recognised a problem, a puzzlement, and studies it, hoping to connect it better with known things. My puzzlement is around the process of 'physicality' in Shakespeare's

texts; how actors generate embodied meaning from the complexity of a text, and how the practice of actors can support young people in finding meaning within and beyond that text. This puzzlement required me to address contextual issues and resulted in four key research questions:

- How is Shakespeare currently valued in education?
- How do young people learn?
- What is the potential value of Shakespeare for education?
- How is a theatre-based approach useful in achieving this?

These questions resulted in a path of thought which I would summarise as: The point of education is to develop our skills of manipulating knowledge. *What knowledge?* The selected cultural inheritance we receive from previous generations. *How do we manipulate it?* By creatively and critically interacting with it to assess how best to use and develop it. *How do we interact with it?* Through dialogue and art. *Why dialogue?* Dialogue allows us to share and develop meaning in order to question and challenge, as well as acquire and understand our inherited culture. *Why art?* Art, in its widest sense, is how we express meaning, using analogies resulting from our sensory experiences of the world. *How is Shakespeare useful for this?* The quality of Shakespeare's language provides a comprehensive artistic resource and a site of received knowledge with which to interact critically and creatively in order to share and develop meaning. *What's the best way to interact critically and creatively with Shakespeare?* Using theatre-based practice which works with the plays as living performance texts, embodying the complex metaphorical layers of the language to support development of complex active communication skills. This path essentially summarises my thesis, but might be seen as a meander to admire the trees rather than a sign-posted route through the wood. My interest in Shakespeare's value for education is in the organic processes of how meaning develops for individuals; the network of influences from past and present cultures that add up to each individual student's unique construction of the world and how that is shared, expressed and shaped through language. In this way, my meander is an interest in the ecosystem of the woodland, and how it nourishes and shapes young people's learning about the world they live in now.

This quality of meander and the interdisciplinary nature of my research led me to embrace a methodology of bricolage. Silverman's (2013) sound advice for the researcher

is for simplicity and while I appreciate that this is eminently sensible, I felt bricolage, described as being 'grounded on an epistemology of complexity' (Kincheloe, 2006, p.2), better suited to my purposes. The concept, defined through the work of Denzin and Lincoln (2000), Kincheloe and Berry (2004) and taken from Levi-Strauss' (1966) adoption of the term, promotes a creative but rigorously reflexive approach.[3] Bricolage highlights the contingent nature of knowledge and its social evolution through individuals affected by their own environments. It sets up an expectation of 'criticality for social action and justice' (Berry, 2006, p.113) which makes it a highly suitable approach for educational research. It requires researchers to 'enter into the research and act as methodological negotiators' (Kincheloe and Berry, 2004, p.3) and to acknowledge 'contextualising, situating and decentring as dynamic parts of the research process' (Berry, 2006, p.108).

Following on from Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) categorisation of qualitative research approaches into historical moments, Berry claims a contemporary 'ninth moment of research as belonging to bricolage'. She explains:

> Bricoleurs read a lot of theories and methodologies that will be added to their research toolbox when needed. They read a lot of academic materials in their field but as disciplinary boundaries blur and interdisciplinary studies seep into each other, bricoleurs read in and are familiar with many fields; from high to popular culture; from the sciences to the arts and humanities; from academic journals and reports to film, theatre, Internet and other digital technologies (2006, pp.94-95).

This describes the approach I find it very hard not to take, but crucially it also reflects the approach of the worlds I am interested in: the Shakespeare rehearsal room, with its pragmatism in blurring disciplinary boundaries and eclectic use of resources, and today's classrooms, which in best practice also reflect this model. Stake continues his definition of a researcher: 'Finding new connections, the researcher finds ways to make them comprehensible to others' (1995, p.97). In theatre-based practice, young people, along with actors, directors and critics, are researchers. They find connections which are new to them, relevant to their cultural patterns of understanding, and attempt to share the value of those connections through performance or writing. The flexible and plural nature of bricolage acknowledges the complexities and inconsistencies of our interactions with each other and our environments.

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[3] From French, the term translates colloquially as DIY, and is used in common parlance as building pragmatically from the resources available. In English it also carries lexical connotations of creating a collage from blocks of different hues, sizes and textures.

Consistency, however, is the bedrock of rationalism. In our cultural paradigm where rationalism is preferenced, we want our politicians, our academics, our managers, our teachers to have objective knowledge, to know what to do, and to tell us what the right answer is, and we often seem to conflate simplifications and fixed perspectives with strong leadership and rational thought. Leaders in any field, however, can only express degrees of informed opinion; as Michael Trimble (2007, p.177) summarises, 'our cognitive structures and systems […] are simply not as rational as would like to believe.' In Western cultures we can consider how this has led to what George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980, pp.186-188) call the dominance of the 'myth of objectivism', Iain McGilchrist calls 'left-hemisphere chauvinism' (2009, p.129), and Gary Thomas, specifically considering systems of formal education, calls 'rationalist delusions of utility'. Thomas continues:

> The kinds of enquiry and theorisation so beloved of contemporary educators involve the formalization of ideas and knowledge. They involve categorisation, crystallization, codification, making things clear, taking a line, developing constructs through which the world can be viewed. They are logical, clear, tidy, parsimonious, rational, consistent. The disordered or undisciplined is frowned upon and rejected. The result of such a process is the making consistent of knowledge which resists consistency (2007, pp.76-7).

The piles of literature about education theory, largely untouched by practicing teachers with precious little time for any reflection, let alone abstract notions divorced from their classrooms, are testament to the fact there is no agreed perfect model of education which stands as an authoritative source. Wilfred Carr (2006, p.137) argues that 'educational theory is simply an expression of a widely felt need to ground our beliefs and actions in knowledge that derives from some authoritative, external and independent source' but that there is no such source. Each teacher must develop their practice reflectively and pragmatically, within the complexity of their experiences and interactions, yet pressures of time and directions from leaders can make simplifications seem more rational.

In searching for an alternative to the hegemony of rationalism, Thomas quotes Oakeshott's adoption of 'negative capability'[4] a term taken from John Keats (1818) who coins the phrase in reference to Shakespeare as meaning, 'when a man is capable of living

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[4] Oakeshott's post war polemic against rationalism 'Rationalism in Politics' was directed at Atlee's socialist ideas and defended traditions and prejudices grown from human experience as part of a coherent, rather than consistent, view. He decried what he saw as the Labour government's attempt to reduce 'the tangle and variety of experience to a set of principles,' its 'irritable nervousness in the face of anything topical or transitory' (1947, cited in Franco, 2004, p.83). Oakeshott compares this 'irritable nervousness' to Keats' 'irritable reaching after facts and reason'.

in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts', rather than being dominated by an 'irritable reaching after facts and reason'. In championing more 'negative capability' in education, Thomas is in the company of Rex Gibson (1998, p.25) who proposes it as one of his principles of studying Shakespeare: 'Negative capability invites and encourages imaginative exploration and creative dissent in the knowledge that interpretations can never be fully complete, never the final word.' Like Dewey, Gibson was against a pedagogy that views Shakespeare as a museum piece bearing a 'Do Not Touch' sign (1998, p.xii), separating cultural knowledge of Shakespeare from contemporary cultural influences. The testing systems which currently dominate formal education seem to accommodate Shakespeare more easily as a literary icon standing on a pillar of the 'facts and reason' of received knowledge than as a living artist with whom we can share 'uncertainties, mysteries and doubts'. A broader understanding of the skills young people need, however, can illuminate the role Shakespeare can play, not only in studying inherited 'facts and reasons' for appreciating his cultural value, but in the negative capability of understanding the nuances of human interaction that can help us live together.

Negative capability, as a complement to bricolage, can be thought of within an epistemology of heuristics. Heuristics, deriving from 'heuriskein', a form of the Greek verb to find or discover, is not about a discovery of objective truth but rather an intuitive impression, an insight or judgement, the 'aha' moment of understanding that comes through metaphor. It is a good description of what happens in a practical engagement with Shakespeare's language, and a principle for the discovery that takes place in a rehearsal room which can inform a theatre-based pedagogy for the classroom. These discoveries are not random, or achieved without effort, instead they are stimulated and shaped by a director or teacher through a structured process, as will be discussed further in chapter three. Thomas (2007, p.156) expresses a concern that the everyday heuristic approach to problem solving we all naturally and individually employ to find meaning is superseded by 'theory' in education contexts as leaders and policy makers reference discourse built on generalisations to assert truths. In exploring how our brains create truth, McGilchrist reminds us that 'every "explanation", however convincing, is merely a model; a comparison of something with something else' (2009, p.98); while Antonio Damasio suggests that even 'scientific results' should be regarded as 'provisional approximations, to be enjoyed for a while and discarded as soon as better accounts become available' (1994, p.xviii). Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p.230) argue for 'truth' as an experientialist concept, where 'understanding emerges from interaction, from constant

negotiation with the environment and other people.' They make clear, however that truth is not merely subjective and unstable, rather 'our common embodiment allows for common, stable truths' (1999, p.6). In practice, Peter Brook (1996, p.65) describes how it is easier to pin down lies than to pin down truth.

The contingency of truth adds to the problematic relationship of theory to practice in education as an issue to consider in this thesis. In order to provoke his reader's thinking about this relationship, Thomas provides an analogy by offering Stanley Fish's vignette of a conversation between a baseball player and a reporter. The reporter, hoping for some insight into the theory of coaching, asks the player what his coach said to him. The player replies, 'He said "Throw strikes and keep 'em off the bases" and I said, "O.K"' (1989, cited in Thomas, 2007, p.32). The story is offered as an example of what Polanyi (1958) calls 'tacit knowledge' and Oakeshott calls 'practical or traditional knowledge' (Franco, 1990, p.110). Fish explains that the coach and player 'did not come to know it by submitting to a formalization; neither can any formalisation capture what they know in such a way as to make it available to those who haven't come to know it in the same way'. Thomas takes up Fish's point that doing something and talking about it are two different things and that just as being able to 'theorise' about playing baseball does not make you a better baseball player, being better at discourse around teaching does not make you a better teacher. Following MacIntyre (2007), Thomas suggests a better term than 'theory' for the results of abductive reasoning is 'phronesis'. The ancient Greek concept of 'phronesis' was described by Aristotle (350 BCE) as 'practical wisdom', an ability to reflect on experiences and from them make decisions about future behaviours, distinguishing it from 'sophia' or theoretical wisdom. Aristotle illustrates the difference by comparing the sophia of a man who knows that white meat is healthier but does not know which meats are white, with the phronesis of a man who eats chicken because it makes him feel better (350 BCE, VI.7). Phronesis builds knowledge from personal experience but as Aristotle's analogy implicitly suggests, phronesis and sophia work best together: a man who feels his diet needs improving, learns that chicken is healthier, and reflects through experience that eating it makes him feel better, would seem to benefit most.

For Bruner (1996, p.152), 'Skill is a way of dealing with things, not a derivation from theory.' We learn how to do something and this doing can be informed by theory but is not caused by it. In writing this thesis, I am retrospectively applying theory to practice I have found effective. Having developed skills in teaching Shakespeare over many years

through the phronesis of experimenting with different approaches, and the sophia of professional interest, I have found greater value in theatre-based practice. I am now exploring what theories exist that might support an understanding of how and why that practice works. Paulo Freire's answer to the dilemma about theory and practice was 'praxis'. The term derives from Hannah Arendt's (1958) reconception of it in her advancement of the *vita activa*, the 'active life' against the 'contemplative life' she sees as dominant in Western traditions. Arendt's 'active life' emphasises the plurality of perspectives and values held within an interactive social web. Freire adopted the term as reflective action directed towards political change and the term has been widely used in drama education research.

From Aristotle to Arendt, great thinkers have communicated their ideas through analogies and the examples above are symptomatic of the role metaphor and analogy play in how we think. McGilchrist (2009, p.97) asserts: 'all experience is experience of difference' noting that our world is composed through comparisons, while Hofstadter, tapping into the metaphorical power of common experience, asserts that: 'Analogy is the very blue that fills the whole sky of cognition' (2001, p.499). Embracing the cognitive turn and the bricolage of interdisciplinary study in approaching my puzzlement about the physicality of Shakespeare's language, the role of metaphor and analogy has proved central. First published in 1980, Lakoff and Johnson's seminal work, *Metaphors we live by,* accelerated interest into the cognitive basis of metaphor. Their then radical assertion was that metaphors form the conceptual basis of how we understand the world rather than being merely affects of language. They argue for the relative nature of truth as, 'grounded in, and constantly tested by, our experiences and those of other members of our culture in our daily interactions with other people and with our physical and cultural environments' (1980, p.193) and find in metaphor: 'an experientialist synthesis' (1980, p.192) of the seemingly binary positions in Western philosophy of objectivism and subjectivism. They explain:

> The reason we have focused so much on metaphor is that it unites reason and imagination. Reason, at the very least, involves categorization, entailment, and inference. Imagination, in one of its many aspects, involves seeing one kind of thing in terms of another kind of thing – what we have called metaphorical thought. Metaphor is thus imaginative reality. Since the categories of our everyday thought are largely metaphorical and our everyday reasoning involves metaphorical entailments and inferences, ordinary rationality is therefore imaginative by its very nature (1980, p.193).

Lakoff and Johnson (2003, p.254) describe as 'a major advance' for the ideas they set out in 1980 the findings of Joseph Grady (1997) in establishing how complex metaphors arise from primary metaphors. Grady proposes approximately 150 primary metaphors which occur across all cultures and which connect one conceptual domain with another based on our sensory perception of the world around us. For example, with *affection is warmth* the connection between the two conceptual domains of 'affection' and 'warmth' is easy to understand: from birth we associate a sense of affection with the warmth of, particularly, our mother's bodies. This association can lead us into a generative metaphor such as 'Juliet is the sun' (*R&J*, 2.1.58) where Romeo contrasts the warm glow of his physical encounter with Juliet (both the living encounter in his memory and the hoped for one in his imagination) with the cold light of a chaste moon goddess. Another primary metaphor *love is a journey* is brought to life in every comedy and many tragedies, encapsulated in Lysander's line, 'The course of true love never did run smooth' (*MND*, 1.1.136). *Understanding is seeing* compares the two separate conceptual domains of cognition and vision but relies on the physical connection that much of our cognition comes from vision, so we can 'see a solution', 'close our eyes to a problem' or think from 'a point of view'. In *King Lear* we find layers of use of this primary metaphor from Kent's exhortation to 'See better, Lear, and let me still remain / The true blank of thine eye' (*KL*, 1.1.155), to the blinding of Gloucester enacted before us as both literal event and metaphorical symbol which leads him to see more clearly his relationship with his sons.

Further studies across various disciplines under the umbrella of cognitive science have continued to confirm and develop many of Lakoff and Johnson's initial proposals, including McConachie's (2003) application of them to performance studies. In promoting cognitive science as a resource for performance studies, McConachie (2006, p.19) cites Godfrey-Smith in proposing a 'naturalistic epistemology'[5] which 'requires that we begin our philosophical investigations from the standpoint provided by our best current scientific picture of human beings and their place in the universe' (Godfrey-Smith, 2003, p.154). While science may not yet be able to provide answers to all our questions about human behaviour and thought, it seems sensible to embrace the knowledge it does provide as a resource for interdisciplinary research. In this philosophical investigation of the role of Shakespeare study in formal education, I make use of a number of scientific studies, including investigations into the neural bases of language which confirm the

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[5] McConachie describes this as 'a philosophical position associated with the ideas of Charles Darwin and John Dewey' (2006, p.19).

importance of analogy and metaphor in human cognition. These include studies of Theory of Mind (ToM), and how we are able to understand another's thoughts through inhabiting their emotions using 'mirror neurons' (Rizzolatti et al, 1996); and how the lateralisation of our brains supports these abilities. McGilchrist (2009) describes how the more gestalt activity of the right hemisphere reaches out to the world around us, including our interactions with others, while the more rationalising, analytical activity of the left fragments and categorises those experiences. In relation to language, aspects of syntax are dominated by areas in the left-hemisphere of the brain, while what we might consider the more 'Shakespearean' elements of prosody (the emotional colourings of humour, tone, rhythm, and metaphor) are mainly understood in the right-hemisphere. Trimble (2007, p.213) describes how the hemispheres evolved to function 'in duet' rather than dualism, in an experiential synthesis similar to that Lakoff and Johnson propose. McGilchrist explores how the systematic, propositional knowledge of the left, which considers itself more 'objective', has become culturally dominant over the less easily expressed experiential 'subjective' knowledge of the right.

Trimble asserts (2007, pp.204-5) as a 'neurological fact' that we only have access to representations of reality, so that it follows we can only have perspectives on truth created by our attention. McGilchrist finds that our attention 'brings into being a world and, with it, depending on its nature, a set of values' (2009, p.29). Our increasing understanding of how our brains work is confirming that 'truth' is 'not some independent unconditioned universal but is inextricably entwined with the life and experiences of the living individual and the world he or she has constructed' (Trimble, 2007, p.205). As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) proposed, truth has been found to be an experiential concept, a personal translation of reality shaped by how we use our attention and what we compare.

The right-hemisphere's manipulation of metaphor is central to the hemispherical duet of how we construct our truths. Metaphors reach out, comparing aspects of our attention with internal memories and categories to create personal understanding through comparisons. Our right-hemispheres show 'widespread activation of related meanings' whereas our left 'operates focally, supressing meanings that are not currently relevant' (McGilchrist, 2009, p.41). If the broad artistic inclinations of the right-hemisphere are encouraged, Shakespeare's prosody can stimulate widespread activation and perhaps develop understanding of the plurality of perspectives around us; if his work is reduced to

an examination text, students' brains necessarily operate more focally. Engaging with a play text stimulates us into creating analogies between the lives of the characters and our own. If we inhabit the text ourselves as performers, or watch others perform, we tap into our innate abilities for embodied and social cognition; since, as McGilchrist describes, 'Metaphor embodies thought and places it in a living context' (2009, p.118). These ideas provide a path towards explaining and valuing 'the physicality of the text' which complements phenomenological studies such as Bruce Smith's (2010) *Phenomenal Shakespeare* and the application of cognitive science to performance studies, explored, for example, in McConachie and Hart's (2006) collection: *Performance and Cognition: theatre studies and the cognitive turn.*

Dewey (1934) argues that art is integral to our lives, constantly surrounding us in the design of the buildings we inhabit, the objects we use and the stories we share. Trimble (2007) and McGilchrist (2009) argue that art is not only integral to our lives but fundamental to how we perceive the world. Evolutionary Psychologist Nicholas Humphrey (2002), poses an interesting thought experiment to consider the value of art in our lives. Pondering in 1987 on the anniversary of the publication of Newton's *Principia Mathematica* in 1687, he considers other works created in '87 and comes up with a list including Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* from 1387, Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* from 1587 and Mozart's *Don Giovanni* from 1787. 'What then,' he asks 'if we had to consign just one of these works to oblivion?' He concludes that it must be the Principia, 'Because of all those works, Newton's would have been the only one that was replaceable' (2002, p.162). Leibniz was working on similar ideas to Newton; Lavoisier, Priestley and Scheele discovered oxygen at about the same time; Alfred Russell Wallace's contribution to the theory of evolution is now better appreciated. As the character of Oppenheimer says in a play about him: 'If it's possible, it's inevitable. It's not a matter of should, but when, where and by whom' (Morton-Smith, 2014). Scientific discoveries are waiting to be discovered, works of art are unique creations. Humphrey explains: 'Take away the work of the person, Shakespeare or Chaucer or Mozart and you would take away the contingent creation of a one-off human mind; take away the work of Newton or Darwin or Einstein and you would take away nothing that could not be replaced by Mind at large' (2002, pp.162-3). Humphrey's rhetoric here provokes for effect. Exceptional thinkers exist across disciplines and each exceptional thinker owes a debt to his or her contemporary and historical influences. Humphrey's distinction, however, reminds us how art expresses the shifting cultural aspects of human nature rather than discerning the constants and

patterns of the environments we inhabit. Science continues to test in a search for 'truth' as a convergence of beliefs; art might be described as expressing a quality of truth in a moment.

As art a play offers an embodied metaphor, a four dimensional thought experiment which actively generates and tests ideas proposed by human culture. A Shakespeare play, especially, through its richness and familiarity, provides a site for social and even physical science research and analysis, as evidenced by the many theorists who have developed and tested their ideas in dialogue with Shakespeare[6]. Perhaps it is interesting to consider that 'theatre' and 'theory' share an etymology from the Greek 'thea' meaning 'view'. Theatre and theory provide us with propositions to view and examine possibilities. Perhaps the difference is that theatre crafts stories of human existence to stimulate a sharing of meaning whilst theory looks for laws about human existence to determine meaning. We need both, however, to understand the world we live in.

As a bricoleur, I synthesise from theories of theatre, education, sociology, psychology, linguistics and cognitive science and draw from my own and others' history of empirical research to develop a thesis for the educational value of embodied theatre-based practice in studying Shakespeare's text. I focus predominantly on how theatre-based practice enables understanding of Shakespeare's language but acknowledge the symbiosis of words, gestures, senses and intentions in how we communicate. I evaluate the history of Shakespeare in education as cultural capital, but in drawing on the experiences of young people, teachers, theatre practitioners and the growing knowledge we now have of how our brains and bodies work, I suggest the potential in studying Shakespeare for developing skills of phronesis, praxis, heuristics and negative capability. I offer illustrations of this theory in practice, particularly in chapters seven and eight with examples drawn from my own experience, from student actors, and from the action research of practising teachers. The student actors were participants on the MA Acting at Arts Educational Schools, London (ArtsEd) as they progressed through their Shakespeare module. As students, these actors were required to be highly reflective about their process, and offered immediate responses to what they were discovering about the text as a crucible for communication. Throughout the thesis I refer to these interviewees as 'MA actors', referenced as 'Irish, 2014a'. The voices of teachers are drawn from my meta-

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[6] From Darwin's use of *Hamlet* in the last chapter of *Expression through Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872) through medical conditions referencing Shakespeare characters.

analysis of essays written by the 2012 cohort of teachers engaged in postgraduate training with the RSC and the University of Warwick as part of the RSC's Learning and Performance Network (LPN). These are referred to as 'LPN teachers', referenced as 'Irish, 2014b'.

1.3   Chapter reviews

In **chapter two**, I evaluate the role of Shakespeare in the evolution of formal education and specifically within the growth of English as a core subject. The current picture of Shakespeare in education around the world shows a divisive figure. He is the world's most widely performed, adapted and reimagined artist, but he is also the most widely prescribed author for study, a prescription that brings expectations of particular knowledge and cultural associations with power (Irish, 2012). Students, parents and teachers often remain sceptical of his value or are intimidated by his reputation. Jane Coles (2013, p.53), questioning how accessible Shakespeare can be in English classrooms, writes:

> Shakespeare is at once regarded as part of 'our' common heritage, and yet apparently absent from many pupils' lives outside of school; Shakespeare is self-evidently 'good for' pupils, yet teachers need to be coerced by means of legislation lest they omit it; Shakespeare is claimed to carry 'universal' meanings and yet when studied by the masses it requires special pedagogical approaches.

While Coles herself acknowledges there are nuances to these simple oppositions, there is also a common sense understanding of them. Shakespeare's influence on popular culture is not always obvious to young people and can, as Douglas Lanier (2002, p.19) suggests, in fact serve to confirm his elite status. Coles argues that students find little of relevance to engage with the Shakespeare presented to them through their school experiences because current policy 'reifies cultural practice as inert pockets of knowledge' (2013, p.55), wrapped in protective covering from the actual life-experiences of the teenagers she interviews. The 'special pedagogical approaches' Coles mentions are 'active approaches' advocated by theatre companies, and I will argue that they complement known effective teaching practice and challenge the idea of 'universal' meanings. I agree, however, that special pedagogical approaches are required by a system that reduces Shakespeare to an examination text with certain policy led expectations, rather than nurturing possibilities which engage our social brains in an exploration of how we create and communicate meaning.

The evolution of Shakespeare's current value in education exposes a tension between his value as a 'museum piece' icon of literary heritage and as works of art that are 'refined and intensified forms of experience' connecting us to 'everyday events, doings and sufferings' (Dewey, 1934, p.2). Through chapter two, I consider how the acquisitive value of Shakespeare as cultural capital became a dominant factor over the more inquisitive valuing of him as a living artist and why it persists.

In **chapter three**, I situate theatre-based practice in the context of influential theory and research in education by exploring the work of John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner and John Hattie. Dewey's influential conception of education was to welcome in a student's current knowledge and experiences as the foundation on which to build and develop further knowledge. His constructivist approach saw the role of the teacher as 'to select those things within the range of existing experience that have the promise and potentiality of presenting new problems which by stimulating new ways of observation and judgement will expand the area of further experience' (1938, p.75). The progressive education movement inspired by Dewey, Vygotsky and Bruner and reinvented by Hattie could be seen in the vanguard of an evolving paradigm shift in our culture from hierarchies to networks; a shift resulting from our growing scientific understanding of systems such as the ecosystems that support existence and the neuronal networked structure of our own minds. Constructivist trends in education theory acknowledge the importance of networks as students' own knowledge is valued and peer to peer support is recognised as integral to the learning ecosystem. From his detailed meta-analysis of education research, Hattie (2009) concludes that learning through interaction with different points of view is a key factor of successful education, agreeing with Dewey that the teacher's role should be in curating an educational experience which critically assesses received knowledge in a networked rather than top down approach. Speaking in 2014, he said:

> A lot of students gain a tremendous amount of their learning from other students in the class, and variability is the way that you get more of that kind of learning from other students [...] As you're learning something, and you're starting to get a grasp of something, when another peer, a fellow student, says it correctly, you're more likely to learn it than if a teacher says it or you read it again. But unfortunately a lot of our classrooms, by age 8, if your child hasn't learned to be passive and listen they get in trouble. We actually want them to be the opposite, we want them to be quite active, knowing what to do when they don't know what to do, and that's what great teaching can do (Hattie, 2014).

Hattie emphasises the value of collaboration between teachers and students, which, like all relationships, is founded on how we speak and listen to each other. In promoting the pedagogy of the spoken word, Alexander proposes: 'Of all the tools for cultural and pedagogical intervention in human development and learning, talk is the most pervasive in its use and powerful in its possibilities' (2008, p.92); yet the value of talk and the pedagogy needed to develop the skills of speaking and listening remain largely unrecognised in our school systems. Since 2015, assessment of speaking and listening is no longer required to gain an English GCSE (DfE, 2014b); although pedagogy that uses drama and dialogue has been shown to improve not only knowledge but also understanding, confidence, empathy, even a better attitude to school (Galloway and Strand, 2010).

Michael Oakeshott's (1989, pp.66-67) description of education as a 'transaction between the generations' acknowledges that a cultural inheritance should be engaged with rather than being acquired as 'a stock of ready-made ideas, images, sentiments, beliefs and so forth'. He contrasts this 'serious business', however, with the play of early childhood, apparently seeing no relationship between the critical thinking of the former and the creative thinking of the latter. Patrick Finn (2015) has more recently called into question the academic hierarchy of critical over creative thinking. Finn regards traditional critical thinking as too often negatively defensive and deconstructive, proposing the complement of creative thinking as open and accepting of others' ideas as stimuli from which to build. Finn quotes the Persian poet Rumi as his invitation to this alternative approach: 'Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I'll meet you there' (2015, p.9). There is a lively suggestion of playful collaboration in the idea of meeting in a field outside the institutions where Oakeshott's 'serious business' of critical engagement with wrongdoing and rightdoing presumably take place. For Dewey, Bruner, Vygotsky and Hattie, engagement with our human inheritance of knowledge and ideas should be active, playful and challenging.

In **chapter four**, I explore how theatre approaches to teaching Shakespeare are active, playful and challenging; how they are founded on collaborative relationships; and how they develop speaking and listening skills. I define my chosen term of 'theatre-based practice' as pedagogical strategies based in the rehearsal and performance techniques of theatre, and situate it within the wider context of 'active approaches' to teaching Shakespeare. I review how these active approaches have developed from the influence of

three key practitioners: Rex Gibson, Cicely Berry and Peggy O'Brien and then introduce two key aspects of the practice:

- **the emancipatory principle**, a term taken from Gibson (1993) which reflects issues raised in the teaching of Shakespeare around relevance, ownership and democracy
- **the social brain**, a term taken from cognitive science (Trimble, 2007, p.97) which reflects issues raised in the teaching of Shakespeare around human predispositions towards making meaning collaboratively and the central role of aesthetic sensibility in how we process language

In subsequent chapters I develop how these intertwined aspects underpin the pedagogical value of working with Shakespeare as a living artist with a four hundred year old pedigree who can help us understand the present.

In chapter five, I consider contemporary arguments that challenge theatre-based practice, focusing particularly on Kate McLuskie's questioning of 'why the experience of Shakespeare in performance is critical to an appreciation of his texts' (2009, p.125). McLuskie is suspicious of theatre-based practice in studying Shakespeare and, like Coles, problematizes the paradox of a Johannes Factotum Shakespeare able to serve all social levels:

> The Works, it is asserted, embody the finest and most complex poetry ever written but the stories are also assumed to speak directly to the human condition. His work is 'not of an age but for all time,' yet it must speak particularly to the preoccupations of the twenty-first century. The work is transcendent and sublime, but it can also provide key skills for the post-industrial workforce (2009, p.133).

For many theatre practitioners of Shakespeare it is in these Wittgensteinian rabbit-duck paradigms that Shakespeare's genius lives, nurturing possible, personal and collaborative responses. In reviewing the effectiveness of the RSC's LPN which targets schools with higher proportions of underachieving and disadvantaged students, Winston (2016) judges its vision and practice as meeting the requirements Pat Thomson (2007) sets out for an 'equity model' of school change to support all students in their learning about the human conditions of the twenty-first century.

Shakespeare's iconic standing in hierarchies of learning requires students to be individually assessed for their response to appreciating his texts as literary heritage. Whilst this builds knowledge of cultural value, realising a play-script as a theatrical work of art requires human minds - and bodies - to work collaboratively and dialogically towards a unique performance in a unique cultural moment and employs a wide variety of skills. In advocating 'solitary engagement with the words on the page', Russ McDonald (2009, p.36) speaks for those who assert the value of the arts and humanities as useless, 'but not worthless' (2009, p.31). McDonald argues for the primacy of the language and the value of 'pleasure' in reading Shakespeare and my response echoes Brook (1968, p.45) 'I have the greatest respect for other people's pleasure and particularly for anyone's frivolity,' but there is the potential in theatre for so much more.

In **chapter six**, I explore that potential by discussing professional rehearsal room practice. Reflecting on the proposals for educational progress from Dewey, Vygotsky, Bruner and Hattie discussed in chapter three, I evaluate the similarities and differences between, using Hattie's term, 'expert' teachers and 'expert' directors. As examples of best practice in theatre, I consider the work of two highly influential directors Peter Brook and Michael Boyd. Additionally I review the work of Aileen Gonsalves, an RSC associate director whose work is inspired by the influential director and teacher Sanford Meisner and rooted in her experiences with young people. Dewey proposes negative capability as the philosophy that takes art to be the essential expression of human meaning. Arguing for art as the lived outcomes of organic process, he writes: 'Ultimately there are but two philosophies. One of them accepts life and experience in all its uncertainty, mystery, doubt, and half-knowledge and turns that experience upon itself to deepen and intensify its own qualities – to imagination and art. This is the philosophy of Shakespeare and Keats' (1934, p.35). In this light, the study of Shakespeare can be made richer by using the text as analogies to explore the infinite variety of human responses, and human responses as analogies to explore the infinite variety of the plays. Chapter six explores how the professional practice of Brook, Boyd and Gonsalves offers pragmatic ideas which can support teachers and young people in discovering this variety for themselves.

Shakespeare's pre-eminence is usually attributed to his exceptionalism, although, like any human achievement, this is an outcome of probability; a serendipitous confluence of one individual's unique experiences colliding with the early modern expansion of knowledge, theatre, publishing, colonising and a host of other intersecting factors. However

remarkable or not Shakespeare's genius was in his own time, the result for us now is a corpus of work with international renown including 37+ plays which between them cover stories with apparent universal appeal. As a resource of shared human stories, Shakespeare's influence could be compared to Disney fairy tales: stories that Disney collected and adapted giving them common currency to become the world's folk tales; while another view might see Disney's animations as gaining a wide reach amongst a minority exposed to, or aspiring to, dominant Western influences. This may appear a glib comparison but its purpose is to return to a consideration of analogy and the crucial role it appears to play in how our brains construct meaning. Running through this thesis is an investigation of how language works and what it achieves, rooted in a central question about how different 'possible Shakespeares' arise from the language and culture we inherit and the language and culture we create.

In **chapter seven**, I explore in more depth findings from linguistics and cognitive science which have informed my understanding of how Shakespeare's language works in performance, particularly the role metaphors and musicality play in forming the 'physicality' of language. The Disney analogy assumes a shared cultural reference of sufficient familiarity with the history of Disney films and knowledge of how they adapted well-known children's stories, suggesting a comparison with how Shakespeare adapted his own sources for his own use. Alongside this shared cultural reference comes a nudge towards a sense of unease the liberal reader may have that Disney versions of the stories have become more popular than their sources. In this case the question of whether Shakespeare's dominance as a global literary icon should inspire similar unease is implicitly suggested. In making the comparison between these examples from 'high' and 'low' culture, there is a deliberate provocation for effect, although that effect will vary from reader to reader.

Analogies provoke our thoughts as we consider the similarities and differences of whatever is being compared. An increasing number of scientists (including: Gentner et al, 2001; Hofstadter, 2001; Trimble 2007; McGilchrist, 2009) propose analogy as our primary means of making sense of the world and on this basis Shakespeare can offer a remarkable resource. His plays provide relationships and situations with which we can compare our own responses and values and those of the people around us; and his characters speak in language richly ambiguous in its use of metaphors to allow seemingly infinite possibilities of interpretation as each 'actor', whether a professional or a student in the classroom,

brings their own unique experiences to inhabit the text. In chapter seven, I explore how analogies are given room to breathe in a rehearsal room as actors investigate possible connections to the text; and how in performance, actors breathe life into the text with their own unique connections to the metaphorical layers.

In **chapter eight**, I offer examples from my own international practice, working in Oman and India. I explore how working with Shakespeare's text can support intercultural dialogue through our human need to develop meaning through analogies. A 400 year old play invites embodied comparisons each time the words are spoken aloud, so that a sequence of moral questions can arise: How did people feel about these situations then? How do we feel now? What's the same? What's different? What's different about how we feel here compared to how people feel over there? What should be different? How can we make it different? I conclude that through a Shakespeare play we can consider our similarities and differences through the prism of his characters, whatever our social, temporal, geographical or cultural differences. We can playfully engage, critically and creatively, with the inheritance he offers, developing responses in the present moment to experiences from the past to shape outcomes and attitudes for the future.

1.4 The useable value of theatre-based practice

In *Reinventing Shakespeare*, as Gary Taylor's (1989) survey of cultural attitudes to Shakespeare moves into his present, he makes a self-consciously postmodern, constructivist and phenomenological statement: 'I cannot prevent this part of my narrative from becoming autobiographical. These are my times; I am no longer an observer but a participant. There can be, now, no pretence of objectivity or aesthetic distance' (1989, p.304). Taylor is aware of his own influence and the contingent nature of his knowledge and opinions. His use of the word 'pretence' acknowledges that objectivity about the past is also an illusion, subject as we always are to incomplete knowledge, cultural bias, and the neurological fact that truth is personal. He concludes his survey of his own present with the acknowledgement that we, as his readers will be reading his present as the past and cultural paradigms will have shifted.

Taylor then moves into his concluding chapter and its central metaphor:

> If Shakespeare has a singularity, it is because he has become a black hole. Light,
> insight, intelligence, matter – all pour ceaselessly into him, as critics are drawn
> into the densening vortex of his reputation; they add their own weight to his
> increasing mass. The light from other stars – other poets, other dramatists – is

> wrenched and bent as it passes by him on its way to us. He warps cultural space-time; he distorts our view of the universe around him […]

> But Shakespeare himself no longer transmits visible light; his stellar energies have been trapped within the gravity well of his own reputation. We find in Shakespeare only what we bring to him or what others have left behind; he gives us back our own values (1989, p.411).

Taylor conflates contemporary cultural understanding of black holes with Kenneth Muir's (1977) exploration of Shakespeare's singularity as an author whose distinction is that he is at least as popular in translation as in his native language. A common understanding of black holes was still quite new in 1989[7] when the book was first published, and though familiar enough now, would have been culturally inaccessible to Shakespeare himself, or to anyone before the twentieth century; yet they would have understood the individual words and quite probably inferred the primal concept of a powerful monster feeding on the life force of others. Taylor chose a very contemporary metaphor but thirty years on our possible connotations with that metaphor have already shifted. We know that time appears to stop at the event horizon of a black hole so we might take the metaphor into an understanding of a Shakespeare play as a frozen moment in history to be examined; or, knowing a singularity is a point of apparent and paradoxical infinity, we could compare it with the infinite possibilities for interpretation when a text is embodied by infinitely different voices. Our understanding of the metaphor shifts as our personal and cultural knowledge and perspectives shift.

Building on Nietzsche and Heidegger's ideas about perspectivism, Hans-Georg Gadamer in *Truth and Method* (1975) describes how we all have a 'historically-effected consciousness' having been brought up within a culture that frames our perspectives on the world. He labels these culturally contingent perspectives 'prejudices', and says that without such prejudices we have no foundations on which to build our knowledge. We are only able to recognise our own prejudices, however, by encountering difference and conversing with others who see the world differently. Such encounters provide opportunities for a 'fusion of horizons' through which we actively engage with the points of view of others and negotiate our differences, attempting to find meaning, not as objective truth but as a shared moment of understanding.

When interviewed for my MA course at the Shakespeare Institute, I explained that the reason I wanted to study Shakespeare was to explore, what I phrased less elegantly than

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[7] Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*, popularising the concept, was first published in 1988

Taylor, as 'the Emperors' new clothes syndrome': is he that good or does everyone agree he is because they believe everyone else sees something they don't? Taylor argues that Shakespeare 'was no less and no more singular than anyone else' (1989, p.411) but that his reputation has achieved the density of a black hole because it is fed by beliefs in his exceptionalism. He proposes: 'We find in Shakespeare only what we bring to him or what others have left behind; he gives us back our own values' (1989, p.411). My own argument is to agree that Shakespeare reflects back our own values but that through theatre-based practice, those values are seen in the light of others' values; that the light transmitted from Shakespeare's text is refracted moment to moment through individual and communal experiences, and that therein lies his useable value for education. Everyone else does see something we don't and unless we engage in dialogue, we will never know what they see; through dialogue we can come to a better understanding of our plural perspectives through a 'fusion of horizons'. In the Emperor's new clothes analogy we might all agree that in reality we see not a sumptuous outfit but 'the king's winkie'; we will have different ideas, however, about why the king has chosen to behave like this, how his behaviour affects us, what sumptuous outfit we imagined others saw, and in negotiating ideas we search for a quality of truth in the narrative.

What seems to me special about Shakespeare is the multiplicity, the equivocalities which add up to a value beyond the sum of their parts and a mass beyond the weight of each critic and performer. Like Taylor's description of him as a black hole, Shakespeare's metaphors are always ambiguous, always in flux, always ready to be read through different eyes. The light his writing provides is metaphors for succeeding generations to test their own ideas and values, learning to manipulate the cultural inheritance they receive from previous generations. His use of language helps us understand how words illuminate rather than define meaning. Wittgenstein offers an analogy that thinking the ambiguity of language is a defect 'would be like saying that the light of my reading lamp is no real light at all because it has no sharp boundary' (1958, p.27). As texts for performance, Shakespeare's plays can be explored in the classroom, not as touchstones of universal values, but as 'metaphors to think by', an inheritance of convenient and evolving cultural constructions to share and develop meaning.

Chapter two: Shakespeare valued for education

A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for? (Browning, 1855)

In this chapter, I contextualise the current debate around the value of Shakespeare in our education systems by reviewing the growth of English literature as a subject for study and how Shakespeare found his place as its only compulsory author. I explore how the plays came to be regarded primarily as literary heritage conveying 'universal' values, and how current policy seems to have conflated those 'universal' values with 'British' values. In subsequent chapters, I explore how the principles of theatre-based practice find a symbiosis in studying Shakespeare as a literary icon and a living artist; and consider how Shakespeare's own schooling seems to have required an apprenticeship of creative and critical engagement with a literary inheritance which balanced respect for classical authors with pragmatic engagement with them as living artists. This chapter reviews the accumulating cultural influences that have often impeded young people in doing the same with him.

If the development of human culture is built on our linguistic ability to share experiences that build our knowledge and understanding and pass it on, a perennial debate for education is which aspects of culture should be acknowledged and to what extent those aspects are questioned in the process of passing them on. Preparing young people for the workplace has always been a key factor of mass education with basic standards of literacy and numeracy constantly revised and decried. There has, however, been a pedagogical shift towards regarding education as what Guy Claxton (2008, p.vii) calls 'epistemic apprenticeship', where 'school is a protracted training in particular ways of thinking, learning and knowing' rather than merely accumulating knowledge. This has built on proposals by Bruner (1966, p.72), among others, for a broader, culturally conscious approach to education which acknowledges that 'knowing is a process, not a product'. The current curriculum for England (DfE, 2014c) reflects this more holistic approach with a requirement for improving the 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural development' of pupils. In our current age, however, league tables create a focus on the results of examinations which largely test students' retention of received knowledge which is relatively easy to test. Other aspects of 'an epistemic apprenticeship' are more difficult to assess, leaving us with an accountability paradox: how can we know education is successful without a system of tests, but how can we test everything that is successful? Pasi Sahlberg (2011, p.142) characterises this paradox by noting how the tests

administered by our current systems 'are rarely able to cover the non-academic domains that include creativity, complex handling of information, or communicating new ideas to others'. Yet these are skills valued by employers as well as being generally useful in adult life. An IBM survey, conducted in 2012 by interviewing 180 CEOs in 80 countries, concluded that the top two qualities employers want are adaptability and creativity. In the same year, the Confederation of British Industries (CBI, 2012) published a report based on consultation with teachers, academics and business leaders, stating: 'the most important part of the UK's long-term growth strategy is improving education' and that to achieve this, a much broader approach is required, going beyond the 'narrow definition of success' of the league tables of examination results. Steve Hilton (2015, p.318), former director of strategy for the Conservative Party, is an example of business leaders who advocate more space for developing skills of creativity and emotional intelligence in schools. He sees this as important across the supposed barriers of personal and working lives, explaining: 'Success is no longer just learning facts; it's about more human skills like empathy, self-regulation, conscientiousness and critical thinking, skills which will give children a platform to build a successful, happy life.'

The National Curriculum for England, (DfE, 2014d) requires the study of two Shakespeare plays in KS3 and 'at least one play' in KS4. As has been the case since the National Curriculum was first introduced in 1987, Shakespeare is the only compulsory author. The instructions to teachers on how they use Shakespeare are, in KS3 that pupils will be: 'taught to […] develop an appreciation and love of reading' and in KS4, they will be: 'taught to […] read and appreciate the depth and power of the English literary heritage'. Being 'taught to' appreciate Shakespeare as the only mandatory literary icon on the curriculum can suggest a right way to respond to reading the right kind of literature. The purpose of study for English at KS4 includes a further statement about the educative purpose of literature:

> Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know (DfE, 2014b, p.3).

This seems a broad and liberal statement but the wording is curious: schools must ensure that pupils are offered 'a chance' to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually, but they must be 'taught to' appreciate the established canon. In addition, 'acquiring knowledge' and 'building on what they already know' does not necessarily

encourage questioning that knowledge. In fact, the only time the word 'question' arises in the KS4 programme of study is in one statement under 'Spoken English' which requires that: 'Pupils should be taught to: speak confidently, audibly and effectively, including through: […] asking questions to clarify and inform, and challenging courteously when necessary' (DfE, 2014b, p.7). 'Asking questions to clarify and inform' and 'challenging courteously' does not exactly encourage a lively debate around dominant ideologies. This may seem semantic quibbling but this programme of study is the current end point in a long evolution of attitudes on the educative purpose of Shakespeare, which might be characterised as 'heritage' versus 'divergence', distinguishing between the study of Shakespeare as a literary icon and a living artist.

2.1   Shakespeare valued before the Victorians

For many people, Shakespeare's dominant position in our curriculum is because *it's Shakespeare* - the name itself connotes 'genius' regardless of any familiarity with his work. Jonathan Bate (1997, p.157) suggests, 'the opinion that Shakespeare was a genius is as close to fact as we are ever likely to get in aesthetics'. Alongside this perception is a commonly held opinion that Shakespeare wrote about 'universal truths', exposure to which can make you a better person. The seedlings of such received wisdom can be seen growing from the very beginning of his fame. In the preface to the First Folio, for example, Ben Jonson places his friend as the 'starre of Poets' amongst the greatest classical and contemporary writers, suggesting a value in being exposed to his work greater than mere entertainment. Heminges and Condell (1623) exhort the reader to 'Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe', but they also suggest that the value of the texts has been proved first through performance:

> And though you be a Magistrate of wit, and sit on the Stage at Black-Friers, or the Cock-pit, to arraigne Playes dailie, know, these Playes have had their triall alreadie, and stood out all Appeales; and do now come forth quitted rather by a Decree of Court, then any purchased letters of commendation.

There is an interesting sense of democracy in this idea of the plays being judged worthy by the play-goers who spanned a wide social spectrum, and that this community of engagement puts the value of the plays beyond any single critic, however well educated. While the concept of universal truths is problematic in reference to the cultural attitudes and behaviours the term is commonly applied to, it is fascinating to think of those early audiences of thousands: English and foreign, rich and poor, prostitutes and priests, as the

first crucible testing the cultural relevance of plays which have since travelled happily through time and space on a planet of seven billion.

There is no reference in these preliminary pieces to the morality of the work, which we find dominating later commentary, yet Shakespeare's contemporary policy makers had their own ideas about the morality of the theatre. With the accession of Oliver Cromwell's Puritans in 1642, theatre was banned in England and that potent symbol of the rise of Shakespearean drama The Globe was pulled down on 15th April 1644.

In 1660, the monarchy was restored and Charles II wasted little time in issuing warrants for the re-establishment of two theatre companies under the leadership of William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew. The eighteen years of the interregnum was a long time without practice for memories of Shakespeare's theatre to survive; however, his name still carried currency. Killigrew inherited the then more popular plays of Beaumont and Fletcher but Taylor (1989, p.15) argues that 'it was to Shakespeare's advantage' that his plays fell to the 'more energetic and innovative manager'. Keenan and Shellard argue for the use of Shakespeare's name on printed texts as an early example of 'the Shakespeare "brand"' (2016, p.6) and Taylor describes how Davenant responded to his disadvantage in competing with Killigrew's company by marketing his direct connections to this brand, including the rumour that he was Shakespeare's illegitimate son, rather than just his godson (Greenblatt, 2005, p.331; Bate, 1997, p.34). Taylor (1989, p.14) notes: 'The questionable accuracy of such accounts matters less than the evident importance of authenticity.' Despite not being considered the best of the pre-restoration playwrights, it seems Shakespeare's name still carried value.

A new edition of the Folio collection came out in 1664, increased by the addition of the apocrypha, and by this time a growing, mainly literate, commercial class swelled the ranks of those able to read the plays as well as, or instead of, seeing them. New publications of the texts continued to appear and began to be shaped by the editors who have so often invisibly influenced common assumptions about the plays ever since. Shakespeare's first editor Nicholas Rowe (1709), for example, inserted descriptive locators for scenes, drew up lists of dramatis personae and modernised spelling and grammar. Alexander Pope (1725) collected early quartos in an attempt to prioritise Shakespeare's original thoughts over the performance alterations he perceived in the Folio and the unfortunate commercial pressures on the poet of writing for the populace, asking: 'How many low and

vicious parts and passages might no longer reflect upon this great Genius, but appear unworthily charged upon him?' (1725, p.xxix). Pope's edition highlights what he refers to as 'shining passages'. In his self-appointed role of saving Shakespeare from the cultural vicissitudes of the theatre, Pope can perhaps be seen as the father of the heritage agenda and its striving for a Shakespeare that supports the dominant ideology. Shakespeare's next editor, Lewis Theobald (1734), reacting against Pope's somewhat subjective criticisms, sets out in the preface to his new edition: 'The Science of Criticism, as far as it affects an Editor,' which he defines as 'the Emendation of corrupt Passages; the Explanation of obscure and difficult ones; and an Inquiry into the Beauties and Defects of Composition'. In this way, Theobald can be regarded as laying the path for future scholarship of the plays as literary texts.

Alongside these and other new editions, Shakespeare continued to be performed on the London stages, but until the Theatres Act of 1843 repealed the restrictions on spoken drama, the general population's access to performances remained limited. Our teleological privilege can recognise an early division of preferences for page and stage at this time, but also a symbiosis which perhaps strengthened Shakespeare's popularity: the page ensured his growing reach through increasing literacy and affordable publications, while the stage kept the characters alive, transmutable to new generations. The accretion of stellar matter from celebrity actors, writers and spectators ensured a critical mass for Shakespeare's star to outshine his contemporaries with Bate (1997, p.47) and Wells (2002, p.211) dating the tipping into critical mass to the 1730s, while Taylor (1989, p.114) prefers 1760. Shakespeare's ascendancy as literary icon continued from there, alongside increasing levels of education.

From the mid-eighteenth century, literary anthologies began to become popular for the edification of young minds, and these would, more often than not, include passages from Shakespeare (Bottoms, 2013). One of the most popular was *The Speaker,* compiled by William Enfield (1774), a Unitarian minister and teacher for his pupils at Warrington Academy. *The Speaker* became immensely popular with over sixty editions. It highlighted passages from the Histories, chosen for their patriotic appeal and used to teach elocution and rhetoric. Collections of 'shining passages' solely from Shakespeare were also finding a market. One such collection was *The Beauties of Shakespeare,* compiled by William Dodd (1752). His book collected passages under themes such as 'Conscience and Constancy', and was seen as suitable for young ladies to read in the home. This appropriation of

Shakespeare to convey accepted values can be seen also in Elizabeth Griffith's *The Morality of Shakespeare's Drama Illustrated,* published in 1775.

The well-known *Tales from Shakespeare* (otherwise known as Lambs' Tales) followed in this vein. The book comprises story versions of twenty of the plays, occasionally incorporating Shakespeare's words. The missing sixteen are the Histories and Roman plays, not considered suitable for children and young ladies for whom the book was written. The tales were first published in 1807, written by brother and sister, Charles and Mary Lamb and became popular, reaching over two hundred editions and published around the world following the progress of British colonial expansion.[8] Lambs' tales were written as entertainment and guides to good behaviour and fortified a growing tradition of seeing Shakespeare's plays as literature providing universal truths from which moral guidance could be drawn. The Lambs declared the plays to be 'a lesson of all sweet and honourable thoughts and actions' (1807, p.xv). To modern tastes the stories are disturbingly partisan and overly simplified, with, for example, Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice* described as 'the kindest man alive' (1807, p.72); and the end of *Taming of the Shrew* reading: 'And Katherine once more became famous in Padua, not as heretofore, as Katherine the Shrew, but as Katherine, the most obedient and duteous wife in Padua' (1807, p.145). *The Family Shakespear* (Bowdler, 1807), first published in the same year as Lambs' Tales, comprised story versions of the plays, edited for women and children to enjoy, and therefore omitting 'those words and expressions which cannot with propriety be read aloud in a family'. 'Out damned spot', for example, becomes 'Out crimson spot.'[9]

By the early nineteenth century, knowledge of Shakespeare as literature was enough of an educational marker for Jane Austen to have Henry Crawford in *Mansfield Park* declare that Shakespeare 'is part of an Englishman's constitution' (Austen, 1814, p.259). Crawford's acknowledged skill in reading a section of *Henry VIII* impresses Fanny Price, the heroine of the book, whom he is trying to seduce. Although claiming not to have picked up a volume of Shakespeare since he was fifteen, Crawford declares: 'But Shakespeare one gets acquainted with without knowing how. It is part of an Englishman's constitution. His thoughts and beauties are so spread abroad that one touches them

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[8] I have been assured by teachers from across India that Lambs' Tales are still the versions through which most young Indians first encounter Shakespeare.

[9] The plays are believed to have been largely edited by Henrietta Bowdler but were published solely in her brother, Thomas Bowdler's name; a respectable woman like Henrietta could not have been considered to have read the unexpurgated versions.

everywhere, one is intimate with him by instinct.' His friend Edmund Bertram agrees: 'His celebrated passages are quoted by everybody: they are in half the books we open and we all talk Shakespeare, use his similes, and describe with his descriptions.' Austen's inclusion of Shakespeare in this way implies cultural norms for the period that Shakespeare was better known for the aesthetic appeal of what Pope had called his 'shining passages' than in performance, and that status was accorded those who could read aloud those passages.

Bertram and Crawford represent a certain strata of English society. Even basic education for the majority of the English population, however, remained patchy at best until the early twentieth century. Andrew Murphy (2008, pp.30-35) describes how the Sunday School movement, first set up by Robert Raikes in the 1780s, led to more extensive networks of charitable schools through which the children of poorer families could gain some literacy skills, alongside an education in Christian values. While the Bible formed the main focus of this schooling, cheap anthologies of other texts were increasingly used. Murphy (2008, p.50) finds that 'From the 1860s forward, quotations from Shakespeare become a standard element of the reading books, with certain passages establishing themselves as absolute staples of the schoolbook repertoire'. He is clear, however, that for working class young people in the nineteenth century, 'Reading Shakespeare – or, indeed, other canonical writers more generally – was something that typically happened outside rather than inside the classroom' (2008, p.50).

After 1843 when the patent companies no longer had a monopoly on who could perform Shakespeare, actors and audiences outside London could engage with whole plays, exploring different possibilities for interpretation of social and political issues beyond the selected shining passages of the accessible collections and the limited opportunities of the fledgling school system.[10] In wider culture, after 1843, Shakespeare became accessible again as a living artist. In education terms, he was becoming enshrined as a literary icon for the new study of English Literature. In Sarah Olive's words, by 1882, 'Shakespeare became associated, very literally, with a gold standard of literacy' (2015, p.18)

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[10] Triverdi (2011, p.234) describes a similar situation happening in India where Shakespeare had been imported under the influence of the Empire but had taken on a life of its own as part of the 'new liberationist freedom' Indians enjoyed through the possibilities for amateur dramatics that Shakespeare's plays afforded. She explains: 'For while the study of Shakespeare was an imperial imposition, the performance was not'.

2.2   Shakespeare assessed: the Victorians

By the middle of the nineteenth century, English literature was beginning to come into its own, slowly taking over from Latin and Greek. Where the focus on studying classical texts had been about translating, structures, and rhetoric, the value of studying English texts became about material knowledge of works selected by a cultural evolution of informed opinion, and the ability to read aloud competently from selected passages. Since Shakespeare was well on the way to becoming the most revered literary icon, material knowledge of his work became a key marker of cultural capital resulting in a further growth in editions of narrative and abridged versions of the plays, along with notes and glossaries to aid comprehension and perpetuate received knowledge. Alfred Ainger, Charles Lamb's biographer, wrote in 1879: 'More and more is a knowledge of Shakespeare coming to be regarded as a necessary part of an Englishman's education' (cited in Bottoms, 2000, p.18). In *Beginning Theory,* Peter Barry (2002, p.13) traces the origins of English Literature as a subject to King's College, London in 1831 and cites F.D. Maurice's inaugural lecture in 1840 as setting out the principles of the liberal humanist approach: 'The study of English literature would serve 'to emancipate us … from the notions and habits which are peculiar to our own age', connecting us instead with 'what is fixed and enduring'.

The Elementary Education Act of 1870, 'Forster's Act', paved the way for compulsory education to be introduced in the UK from 1880. Attendance became compulsory for 5-10 year olds and free from 1891, following arguments for the instrumental need for an educated work force to compete in global markets. Any employer then employing children under the age of 13 had, in theory at least, to prove they had reached a required standard of education (Gillard, 2004). Victorian state education was controlled by School Boards and Churches. The School Board implemented 'The Standards': a system of summative assessment which tested a pupil's ability in reading, writing and arithmetic. There were six standards with a seventh added in 1882. For Standards VI and VII, pupils had to read aloud, with Shakespeare and Milton as the only named authors on the list of options (Murphy, 2008, p.50; Olive, 2015, p.18). The distinction that for Standard VI the Shakespeare passage needed to be from 'a historical play' could be seen as uniting Shakespeare's reputation and stirring language into a vehicle for promoting patriotism and a particular kind of moral value disambiguated from the complexity of the full texts, an early policy for promoting 'British values'. If we consider that school budgets were set according to the number of students passing tests at these highest levels, we might also

see the first steps of Shakespeare being instrumentally coerced into a system that values him as a mark of excellence to achieve a place on nascent league tables. In practice, however, most students did not then stay at school long enough to attempt Standards VI and VII.

A perspective on Shakespeare as a provider of moral guidance and marker of excellence is provided by Mathew Arnold. Influential in his role both as writer and school inspector, Arnold mentions Shakespeare in a letter in 1884, placing him foremost in a pantheon of writers he celebrates as 'idealists': those whose work is of universal value because their underpinning motive is that good should prevail. In contrast, he decries the motive of contemporary writers as 'curiosity' and 'provincial appeal' in presenting life as it is, a trend he is sure cannot last. He writes: 'We connect the word morality with preachers and bores and no-one is so little of a preacher and bore as Shakespeare; but yet, to understand Shakespeare aright, the clue to seize is the morality of Shakespeare.' Victorian educators seemed to believe that exposure to great literature automatically has an enriching effect, that learning by rote and reciting passages of Shakespeare would have the effect, as Arnold described it, that 'in all but the rudest natures […] they will be insensibly nourished by that which was stored in them […] and their taste will be formed by it' (1863, cited in Shuman, 2000, p.58). Quiller-Couch explained, in a lecture in 1917, that reading aloud by teachers and students 'lets the author – Chaucer or Shakespeare or Milton or Coleridge – have his own way with the young plant – just lets them drop like the gentle rain from heaven and soak in' (cited in Sinfield, 1994, p.167).[11]

Barry (2002, p.14) summarises the early values for teaching English Literature as: 'a distinctly Victorian mixture of class guilt about social inequality, a genuine desire to improve things for everybody, a kind of missionary zeal to spread culture and enlightenment, and a self-interested desire to maintain social stability'. Here is a summary that could easily apply to current policy values around the teaching of Literature seen in the programme of study for KS4. It reflects the belief that a more equal society will result through social mobility when less privileged children learn core knowledge at school which allows them to 'share' the core intellectual currency of the more privileged

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[11] Quiller-Couch (1907) edited probably the most influential collection of English literature of its time, *The Oxford English Book of Verse*. His first edition published in 1900 by Clarendon covered 1250 – 1900 and was companion to many British explorers, soldiers and bureaucrats throughout the Empire

classes; with Shakespeare's 'fixed and enduring' (Maurice, 1840) values constituting an integral part of that core knowledge.

2.3   Education, but not Shakespeare, for all

As compulsory education for all took hold and the Fisher Act of 1918 raised the compulsory leaving age to 14, whole texts became more widely studied. There was also, however, a growing sense that despite his 'universal values', Shakespeare was not for everyone. Clarendon Shakespeare, first published in the 1860s by Oxford University Press, produced the most common school editions. The series became New Clarendon in the twentieth century and the little blue books were probably still the most commonly found Shakespeare texts in school stock cupboards well into the 1980s when their old fashioned approach was overtaken by Gibson's Cambridge editions. The New Clarendon edition of *Antony and Cleopatra,* published in 1962, emphasises the difficulty of Shakespeare and the need for applied study to appreciate him. Comparing *Antony and Cleopatra* to what he perceives as the relative moral and linguistic simplicity of *Julius Caesar,* editor R.E.C. Houghton (1962, p.7) writes: 'For in this play the moral is ambiguous – our emotions perhaps taking side against our reason – while the consummate mastery of the language can only be felt by those who have undergone a considerable apprenticeship both to poetry in general and to this poet in particular.'

In the new world of mass education, Shakespeare was set in a hierarchy of literary texts, to be appreciated only by those who had earned or inherited the right to do so. This attitude persists in some quarters. Among those who question that Shakespeare can speak to all we might, for example, number Julian Fellowes, celebrated screen writer, who, on being interviewed by the BBC about his adaptations to Shakespeare's language for a film of *Romeo & Juliet* said:

> To see the original in its absolutely unchanged form, you require a kind of Shakespearian scholarship and you need to understand the language and analyse it and so on. I can do that because I had a very expensive education, I went to Cambridge. Not everyone did that and there are plenty of perfectly intelligent people out there who have not been trained in Shakespeare's language choices (Sweeney, 2013).

Fellowes is not trying to be unkind, quite the contrary, he goes on to explain that he was attempting to smooth out the difficulties in order to allow a wider audience to enjoy the language, but the tone is undeniably patronising. This is symptomatic of an attitude that separates Shakespeare from popular culture, regarding a little smoothing of the language

in an otherwise traditionally set production as acceptable in conveying a literary heritage, but frowning on activities that create a dialogue with Shakespeare as a living artist, for example, through hip-hop.

There were always voices which promoted treating the plays in schools as performance. The English Association was founded in 1906 and one of its first publications was a pamphlet on 'The Teaching of Shakespeare in Schools', which came out in 1908. The pamphlet regards Shakespeare as 'the supreme figure of our literature,' and says:

> It is desirable that all the Shakespeare chosen for study should be read aloud in class. The living voice will often give a clue to the meaning, and reading aloud is the only way of ensuring knowledge of the metre. In a class of beginners the teacher must take a liberal share of the reading, but the pupils should be brought into play. They can be cast for some of the parts; the forum scene in *Julius Caesar* comes one step nearer the dramatic if the teacher is Antony and the other parts are distributed and the class transformed into a Roman mob shouting for the will (1908, p.2)

The pamphlet goes on to suggest that occasionally acting out scenes and seeing a performance of the play would be good practice. It says 'There is a serious danger in the class-room, with text books open before us, of our forgetting what drama really means' (1908, p.7). Whether, however, to the English Association drama means skills of presentation or of interpretation is unclear. Quiller-Couch's *King's Treasuries of Literature,* which produced a series of schools editions of Shakespeare in the 1920s, included an 'acting appendix' with advice on creating a school production of the play but which restricts itself to considerations of presentation rather than interpretation or pro-social skills. For example: 'The actors should speak clearly, slowly and distinctly, so that they may be heard without effort at the back of the hall' (Abbott, 1927, p.177).

An early advocate of active learning of Shakespeare and personal interpretation was Henry Caldwell Cook who taught at The Perse School in Cambridge. His book, *The Play Way* was published in 1917 and strongly put forward the case for a theatrical approach to the study of Shakespeare in an argument for the importance of play and child centred learning. His legacy long continued as Peter Hall (1993, p.37), a former pupil of the school, testifies: 'My earliest memory of Shakespeare is of a group of eleven-year-olds, armed with wooden shields and swords and cloaks, shouting *Macbeth* at each other […] It never occurred to me not to love Shakespeare. He was thrilling and blood-soaked and full of witches.'

In 1921, The Newbolt Report (entitled *The Teaching of English in England*) was published, giving prominence to two texts, The Bible and the works of Shakespeare.[12] The report is generally regarded as a forerunner to the age of child centred learning, and stresses the need for English to be enjoyable, but also continues to emphasise the universal values found in great literature and considers in prescriptive detail how best to teach Shakespeare. It insists, for example, on the 'imperative duty of ensuring that a child's first impressions of Shakespeare shall not be misshapen' by exposure to performances that might include 'the protracted clowning of Bottom' or 'extravagant orgies of would-be comic drunkenness' in *Twelfth Night* (1921, p.318). It also, however, warns against 'artificial solemnity', advising 'Anything in our treatment that makes Shakespeare dull or distorted is a crime against his spirit' (1921, p.319). A first reading, say the authors, should avoid too much translation of unfamiliar language, instead allowing the music to be heard, then treating the plays 'as something delightful to talk about' before attempting 'a real dramatic reading, with parts allotted' (1921, p.314). The report also questions whether Shakespeare's difficult and archaic language makes him suitable for all children (1921, p.312) and, as the twentieth century progressed, and the democratic right of all young people to a Secondary education became enshrined, the right of all young people to study Shakespeare became increasingly under debate.

In 1954, A K Hudson compiled a book, *Shakespeare and the Classroom* for 'The Society for Teachers of English,' which affirmed the importance of active approaches if Shakespeare were to be accessible for all. In his introduction, Hudson writes:

> The unsuccessful methods [of teaching Shakespeare] normally display two features: they are non-dramatic and they reflect a tendency to regard school children as textual scholars in embryo. The present book recognizes frankly the difficulties which the modern pupil finds in dealing with Shakespeare. It has been written in the belief that the plays can be made intelligible and interesting only if the teaching remains stage-centred (1954, p.8)

The 1963 Newsom Report (entitled *Half Our Future*) barely mentions Shakespeare but does restate the Victorian belief that high art in general can provide moral guidance: 'All pupils, including those of very limited attainments, need the civilizing experience of contact with great literature, and can respond to its universality'; but sees a need for

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[12] Nearly 100 years later, under the Coalition government of 2010 – 2015, the Department for Education ensured two books were sent to every school in the UK: a bible, the production and distribution costs of which were privately funded but publically endorsed by the Secretary of State, and the RSC's toolkit for teaching Shakespeare.

mediation: 'although they will depend heavily on the skills of the teacher as an interpreter' (1963, p.155). Shakespeare's reputation for being too difficult for most young people appeared to have taken root, as Martin Blocksidge (2005b, p.8) describes citing two books, influential in the teaching of English in the mid-sixties. *The Disappearing Dais* by Frank Whitehead (1966) and *Sense and Sensitivity* by J W Patrick Creber (1965) both maintain the view of Shakespeare as our greatest writer but question the suitability of the study of Shakespeare for young teenagers, both on grounds of his content and their abilities. In the 1960s and 1970s, Shakespeare was standard fare for independent and grammar school pupils studying 'O' level English Literature, but more often than not avoided in Secondary Moderns. In the 1980s, with the majority of schools moving to a comprehensive system and adjusting to mixed ability groups, 'O' level examination boards also began to move away from Shakespeare. By the late 1980s, it was possible, and common, for students to leave school without having studied Shakespeare at all (Aers, 1991, p.31; QCA, 2004a, p.4). GCSE replaced 'O' level and CSE for first examination in 1988 and the study of Shakespeare remained at the discretion of the teacher. Many schools took the new option to submit 100 per cent coursework, providing creative possibilities for teachers to assess their students' work in ways other than the standard literary criticism essay. Some took the chance to do interesting assignments on Shakespeare, but since it was possible to secure a top grade for a sophisticated piece of writing on *Gregory's Girl* (Forsyth, 1983) it is understandable why so many opted not to bother with Shakespeare. Shakespeare's value in education was at a low ebb. Despite his alleged 'universal values', he was considered too complex for most children to study.

2.4   The National Curriculum

1986 proved to be a pivotal year in the history of Shakespeare in the classroom for two key reasons: firstly because Gibson began his influential counter movement, the 'Shakespeare in Schools' project, and secondly because Kenneth Baker became Secretary of State for Education and ushered in the National Curriculum (NC).

Gibson set up the 'Shakespeare in Schools' programme in 1986. Based at the Cambridge Institute of Education, his team produced a termly newsletter and information related to Shakespeare teaching at Secondary and Primary levels. Gibson also set up an Inservice Scheme whereby each LEA was invited to second a teacher to be a Teacher Associate of the Cambridge Institute of Education in order to carry out research into some aspect of pupils' encounters with Shakespeare. In his introduction (1990) to the collection of papers

resulting from this research, Gibson is passionate that active and flexible approaches to the plays allow every student of any age to appreciate Shakespeare:

> In total, our research reveals an encouraging picture. Teachers increasingly report success as they employ a variety of methods, at the heart of which is social, collaborative, imaginative, re-creative activities. Such methods deepen and enhance students' informed personal responses (1990, p.1)

This work was followed by new school editions of the plays from 1991, published by Cambridge University Press, which were timely for the new compulsory study of Shakespeare in KS3. Gibson's *Teaching Shakespeare* (1998) became a handbook for many new and experienced teachers alike.

Since the 1980s, policy makers seem to have increasingly felt they have a contribution to make to the life of the classroom. Where previously there had been a 'secret garden' approach to education, which discouraged political interference, politicians now feel a need to bring order and uniformity, laying down paths and borders and prescribing how and where the plants should grow. In 1976, James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech questioned the quality of state education and instigated discussion about the curriculum (Gillard, 2004, p.19). Ideas, however, remained fairly theoretical and generalised until Baker's appointment. Baker was determined to create a coherent education system with specific requirements for all school children. He built on his predecessor Keith Joseph's plans, proposing a National Curriculum in the Party Manifesto on 19th May 1987 and ushering in the biggest overhaul in education since 1944 (Baker, 1993; Cox, 1991).

Baker's stated intention was to open 'doors of opportunity' for students of all abilities and he used Shakespeare to explain his idea: 'One of my favourite quotations comes from *Timon of Athens:* "the fire i'the flint shows not till it be struck." The task of the good school and the good teacher is to find that flint and to strike from it a spark' (1993, p.165). But, like the current programme of study, it seemed there were particular sparks he was looking for. He wanted a National Curriculum because: 'We can no longer leave individual teachers, schools or local education authorities to devise the curriculum children should follow' (1993, p.192). Baker believed that setting targets for attainment in English meant prioritising content: 'specifying the range of books children were expected to read and understand. This range should be wide and draw upon the great literary inheritance of our country' (1993, p.190). He was very clear that Shakespeare should be a compulsory author for study and studied as literary heritage. Baker's attitude can be seen

in the 'class guilt' tradition of the Victorians described by Barry (2002, p.14) and shows a familiar Conservative blend of elitism and democracy. As Alan Sinfield wrote in 1985, before Baker began his crusade: 'A crucial ideological manoeuvre in education is this: that the allegedly universal culture to which equal access is apparently offered is, at the same time, a marker of 'attainment' and hence of privilege' (1985, p.160).

English for Ages 5-16 (Cox, 1989), otherwise known as the Cox Report, created a National Curriculum for English at Primary and Secondary levels with attainment targets, levels, and a framework for testing at the end of each of four key stages. From the Cox Report, Shakespeare became the only prescribed author, although other authors, such as Dickens and Wordsworth (and indeed the Bible) were recommended. The NC was introduced progressively from autumn 1989, putting into practice the legal requirements set out in the Education Reform Act of 1988.

Cox validates the place of Shakespeare in this paragraph:

> Many teachers believe that Shakespeare's work conveys universal values, and that his language expresses rich and subtle meanings beyond that of any other English writer. Other teachers point out that evaluations of Shakespeare have varied from one historical period to the next and they argue that pupils should be encouraged to think critically about his status in the canon. But almost everyone agrees that his work should be represented in a National Curriculum. Shakespeare's plays are so rich that in every age they can produce fresh meanings and even those who deny his universality agree on his cultural importance (1989, 7.16)

Cox neatly summarises here the debate over the cultural value of Shakespeare and just as neatly synthesises it for classroom use: whether the values in Shakespeare are universal or contingent, the richness of the language has led to widespread appeal and that's worthy of note. He integrates approaches of heritage and divergence in suggesting that fresh meanings are continually emerging from a writer who has earned his position by continuous attention. He was also positive about Gibson's 'Shakespeare and Schools' project, which, he said:

> has shown that Secondary pupils of a wide range of abilities can find Shakespeare accessible, meaningful and enjoyable. The project has demonstrated that the once-traditional method where desk-bound pupils read the text has been advantageously replaced by exciting, enjoyable approaches that are social, imaginative and physical (1989, 7.16)

The report agrees with Gibson that teachers should be trusted to judge how to teach Shakespeare:

In particular, every pupil should be given at least some experience of the plays or poetry of Shakespeare. Whether this is through the study, viewing or performance of whole plays or of selected poems or scenes should be entirely at the discretion of the teacher (1989, 7.15).

For English teachers struggling to meet all the new demands the NC placed on them and their classes, this requirement for 'some experience of the plays or poetry' allowed some breathing space within so much change and without extra training or support. The 'shining passages' approach of the eighteenth century provided a way in, along with the late twentieth century friend of the English teacher, the video. Meanwhile a growing industry was spawned as resources and courses were created to support teachers in bringing Shakespeare into their classrooms. In 1995, following the Dearing Review (1994), schools were given a new slimmed down version of the NC which stated unequivocally that at least two whole Shakespeare plays should be studied during KS3/4.

Assessment was seen as a cornerstone of the new system and thus NC tests, or SATs, were born. If Shakespeare is good for us, the politicians needed to know how good we were. Voices were raised against the inclusion of Shakespeare on the SATs, not least Gibson's (1993) when he asserted:

I passionately believe that all students should have the opportunity to gain some experience of Shakespeare's writing. But I equally passionately believe that the proposal to assess all pupils by a 30/45 minute written test is utterly misconceived […] It mistakes measurement for meaning.

In 1992, Gibson's project carried out a survey of English teachers and found that 86% welcomed the inclusion of Shakespeare in the NC, but 92% were uncomfortable with his inclusion in the proposed testing regimes.

Tensions around Shakespeare's place on the NC boiled over on 8th October 1993 with Prime Minister John Major's 'Back to Basics' speech to his Party Conference (Holderness and Murphy, 1997: Wintour, 1993). On education, Major called for a return to 'traditional teaching' with testing and Shakespeare as a core part of this regime. He attacked a letter from five hundred academics, led by Terry Eagleton, protesting against the government's policies on English teaching. The letter expressed concern at a narrow prescribed reading list which could discourage young people from further engagement with the canon. It supported the study of Shakespeare in schools, 'but to make such study compulsory for 14-year-olds […] is to risk permanently alienating a large number of children from the pleasurable classical literary works' (cited in Gibson, 1993). Although these words now

seem prescient, at the time Brian Appleyard (1994) commented: 'So little faith have these academics in the quality of teachers, the imaginations of their pupils and the greatness of Shakespeare that they fear early exposure. They assume there is some problem with Shakespeare that makes his works particularly intimidating to the young.' The academics were not opposing the study of Shakespeare in schools, they were opposing tested compulsory study, yet Appleyard, along with other right-wing commentators and politicians, chose to interpret this concern as an attack on the democratic entitlement of all young people to 'be exposed to' 'the greatness' of Shakespeare, rather than engaging with how that study might best take place. Major took a similarly uncritical stance in his speech when, in an attempt at satire, he responded to the letter by saying: 'Me and my party ain't going to take what them on the left says is OK. Right?' (Wintour, 1993).[13]

For the first incarnation of the SATs, all Year 9 students in 1993/4 had to study *Romeo & Juliet, Julius Caesar* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in anticipation of paper 2, their Shakespeare examination. Students were required to answer one of two questions on the set scenes of the play they had studied, writing their response in one hour, fifteen minutes. They were to be assessed for their reading and writing skills and questions were traditional literary questions, regarding the play as a story fixed within a range of interpretation rather than a script for performance. For example, with regard to Act 1, Scene 3 of *Julius Caesar*, the question was: 'At this point in the play do you support the conspirators?' This was a full ten years after Sinfield (1994) first published the caustic: 'Give an account of Shakespeare and Education showing why you think they are effective and what you have appreciated about them. Support your comments with precise references', in which he generously sprinkles similar types of examination questions from 'O' and 'A' level papers of 1983, which he points out are designed to reinforce dominant ideologies in uncovering the 'larger significance' of the texts. 'Even the occasional question about staging is liable to involve the assumption that there is a true reading behind the diverse possibilities' (1994, p.163). Sinfield was writing in the polemical *Political Shakespeare* which brought the then relatively new theory of Cultural

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[13] The following year, Michael Portillo and Nigel Lawson were quoting Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida* in support of the Back to Basics agenda and the need for the accepted social order to thrive: '*Take but degree away, untune that string, / And hark what discord follows*' (1.3.110-11) with no apparent sense of the ambiguities of such lines in the context of the play. For the likes of Lawson and Portillo, the value of Shakespeare lay in his 'shining passages', and since Shakespeare's characters speak from so many different viewpoints a suitable passage can be found and deployed, either out of ignorance or cynicism, to impress on any occasion.

Materialism to bear on Shakespeare and, according to Sinfield, unashamedly sought to take back Shakespeare from the right. He regarded the still dominant classical humanism mediated through Leavis as creating a set of right answers which a student had to learn and show they'd learned by passing an exam, regardless of the pretence of being asked for their opinions. 'The student is offered no political direction or analysis but is exhorted to regard as her or his authentic response what can in actuality be only a combination of pressures from society at large and from the teacher in particular' (1994, p.173).

The 1994 English KS3 SATs were boycotted by the majority of schools because teachers and their unions felt the tests had been brought in too quickly for students to be adequately prepared. The first year of national tests taken by all Year 9s was 1995 and while the format of the paper remained the same, the questions were designed to be as inoffensive as possible with several questions asking, 'What do you think of…' a character's behaviour in the set scene, or asking the student to put themselves in a character's place and write a letter or diary. Such questions, as Sinfield (1994, p.174) had recognised, are potentially more subversive in allowing a personal reading, a creative interaction with a living artist rather than an 'objective' literary critical response. The extent to which such responses are valued, however, depends on the system of assessment, and the scale of SATs meant low paid markers working from inflexible mark schemes so that students were still expected to uncover inherited truths in their writing, however divergently they approached the task.

By 2004, it was clear that the inclusion of Shakespeare on the SATs promoted negative attitudes from not only students, but teachers and parents, for reasons that Ted Wragg (2004) summarised in his column in the TES:

> At its best the examination process is a check on what people have learned, a valuable tool for pupils, teachers and society at large. At its worst it can comprehensively and irrevocably hammer the life out of something, however magnificent or dynamic, so that children never want to see it again as long as they have breath.

A QCA (2004b) report highlights the growing divide between the government's emphasis on the summative nature of KS3 English tests in their desire to publicise statistics, and educationalists' desire for formative assessment. The report (2004b, p.8) also details the negative stress factor caused by SATs and claims as 'a fact that school-level key stage 3 test results have a significant impact on schools with the potential to affect teachers' careers'. In May 2005, The National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE),

deciding that enough was enough, wrote an open letter, published in the TES, calling for a thorough review of how and why KS3 assessment was carried out. The QCA (2005) survey 'English 21' was partly in response to this and was followed by 'Taking English Forward' (QCA, 2005) with proposals highlighting alternative methods of assessment and creative approaches.

By this time hardly anybody outside of government had a good word to say about KS3 SATs. They were widely regarded as the epitome of tick box education and how to kill any enthusiasm for Shakespeare in the classroom. Finally, following another marking debacle in 2008, they were summarily scrapped.[14] Although there was general jubilation, there was also immediate concern that now students were no longer being tested on their Shakespeare knowledge, teachers and/or their senior management would push Shakespeare study into the background once more for all but those deemed worthy, rather than taking the opportunity to embrace more creative approaches. The Ofsted (2012) report, *Moving English Forward* found that 'Few of the secondary schools visited had taken the opportunity, following the ending of the Year 9 statutory tests, to refresh their Key Stage 3 schemes of work.' The current situation is that no national tests or agreed system of assessment are in place for KS3, but schools are required to report closely on pupils' progress, including their reading achievements relative to the required study of two plays by Shakespeare.

The NC changes for Shakespeare at 14-16 provide a shorter story than the painful rise and demise of KS3 SATs, but have perhaps been more fundamental. The KS4 programme of study set out in the 1991 NC came into force to affect GCSEs for first examination in 1995. The study of a Shakespeare play was required and Shakespeare once again became the only compulsory author on the Literature syllabi. Since 1999, the study of a Shakespeare play has also been compulsory for GCSE English Language in order to assess the continuing NC requirement that a play be studied at KS4. Initially assessment was mainly through coursework; however, from first teaching in September 2015, it is through examination. Whether through coursework, or examination, what is assessed has shifted.

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[14] In 2009, teacher assessment was used instead to assess Year 9s, resulting in a leap of about 7% in NC levels recorded, triggering debate on whether this was the result of better learning without tests or teachers cheating. Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove did not call for the return of KS3 SATs, but did ensure that teacher assessment was removed from final examinations at GCSE.

A QCA review of standards between 1980 and 2000 comments on 'a significant change in demand related to the kind of knowledge of texts required of candidates, reflecting the extended range of texts to be studied' (2004a, p.4). The 'O' level syllabi in 1980 required detailed knowledge of a text, its characters, themes and plot, mainly in isolation, but by 2000 there was more focus on interpretation and critical response, more understanding expected that a text exists in time and space, should be compared to other relevant texts and should be considered in the light of the time it was written. In 1995, it became a requirement of the exam boards that texts be compared and contrasted and that an understanding be shown of social and historical contexts; the influence of literary theory having percolated into the school curriculum. Teachers now regard setting a text in its social and historical context as second nature. The more political aspirations expressed by Sinfield and other cultural materialists, however, that the plays be judged for their relevance to now, a key approach in treating Shakespeare as a living artist, remains less widespread. Material knowledge of Shakespeare, often through highlights of his work, has become a well-established marker of educational capital. Since schooling became formalised for all, however, a tension has become apparent between a curriculum aspiration to acquire that knowledge, called for by successive government policies, and pedagogical aspirations to ensure Shakespeare study is engaging and useful, not just a badge of attainment.

2.5   Shakespeare for British Values

A pervasive sense still exists in English classrooms that there are right ways to understand the literary heritage of Shakespeare. This can leave young people, their parents, and teachers, feeling intimidated and excluded, while paradoxically, Shakespeare as a brand carries immense economic and cultural weight throughout the world (Keenan and Shellard, 2016). As Secretary of State for Education in 1992, John Patten asserted:

> It is essential that pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding and appreciation of our country's literary heritage. Studying the works of Shakespeare is central to that development. That is why the study of Shakespeare is an explicit requirement of the National Curriculum' (cited in Gilmour, 1997, p.5).

For Conservative policy makers, as for many, Shakespeare seems to represent something to be proudly celebrated as a stable, enduring symbol of British culture in a shifting world, a quality 'brand' used to promote Britain abroad (Bird, Eliadis and Scriven, 2016). The danger of this in schools, however, is that he becomes the shiny object of cultural

excellence that Dewey (1934, p.1) describes, detached from context and useable value. Frank Cottrell-Boyce (2015, p.52) offers a tale which illustrates the tensions around taking Shakespeare as a symbol of the quality of British culture without engagement with the substance of that heritage in offering us a living artist. He describes the response of Jeremy Hunt, then Culture Secretary, on first viewing the plans for the 2012 Olympic opening ceremony. Hunt asked 'Where's Shakespeare?' When told the whole ceremony was planned around *The Tempest*, he had to be reminded that *The Tempest* was written by Shakespeare. Writing in 1993, Gibson gives the example of Rhodes Boyson, Conservative MP and former head teacher, explaining how he would begin teaching *The Merchant of Venice* by reading the version in Lamb's Tales, a version which contracts Shylock's character to that of mere villain. Gibson comments:

> To see it only as beautiful poetry or an unambiguous tale of noble Venetian gentlefolk is, to put it mildly, shocking ignorance. Dr Boyson's intervention is typical of the present day political contribution to education. Belief in an ideological golden age legitimates crassness and denies inconvenient complexity. Such belief must evoke deep suspicion of political determination of Shakespeare teaching in schools (1993, p.77)

More than twenty years later it is still too easy to sympathise with Gibson's anger and frustration.

During his tenure as Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove (2013) reasserted the traditional Conservative line that all children should be exposed, in an Arnoldian way, to the 'Great Tradition of English Literature - a canon of transcendent works', continuing:

> I could observe that it was a funny form of progressive thinking that held that the knowledge which elites have used to communicate with confidence and authority over the years - and which they pay to ensure their children can master - should be denied to the majority of children.

He also labelled one hundred academics 'Enemies of Promise'[15] (2013), dismissing them as Marxists for challenging his new curriculum plans. These education specialists had written a letter to *The Independent* expressing concern over the traditional approaches demanded by Gove's new curriculum, where: 'The learner is largely ignored. Little account is taken of children's potential interests and capacities, or that young children need to relate abstract ideas to their experience, lives and activity' (Bassey, 2013). In a strikingly similar way to Major in 1993, Gove chose to interpret the criticism as an attack

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[15] After *Enemies of Promise* by Cyril Connolly (1961). First published in 1938, revised edition published by Penguin 1961.

on the entitlement of all young people to access their literary heritage, rather than engage with the complexities of how and why the canon is taught, or consider Shakespeare as a resource for dialogue. His demonization of left leaning progressive ideas as denying Shakespeare to the masses was a symptom of his refusal to engage with pedagogical expertise, exposed more rawly in his now infamous declaration during the 2016 Brexit debate that we should not listen to experts (Mance, 2016).

Gove preferred to listen to those who confirmed his own mental schema such as Lindsay Johns whom he invited to speak at the Conservative Party Conference in 2013. Johns (2013) extolled the absolute necessity for more 'dead white men' on the curriculum, berated 'the pernicious rush to relevance currently pervading our classrooms,' stated that '*Hamlet* doesn't need a hip-hop sound track for young people to enjoy it or understand it' and then added:

> With absolutely staggering levels of hypocrisy, the overwhelming majority of those who denigrate the canon and piously advocate a 'more inclusive, easier, down wiv da kidz' curriculum are often metropolitan liberals who have themselves enjoyed the massive intellectual and social benefits of a Rolls-Royce, Oxbridge humanities education, with, what's more I'll wager, absolutely no hip-hop whatsoever.

Even a cursory discursive analysis of this text can identify a level of bias toward the agency of the perceived other here, although Johns never identifies who the actual targets of his vitriol are beyond an amorphous liberal elite.

Johns' and Gove's response to 'Why Shakespeare?' would appear to be one of institutionalised cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986); that students need to know the canon in order to go to universities and get good jobs, leaving behind their own cultural references as inferior. As reviewed in this chapter, this opposition of Shakespeare and popular culture is as old as the English education system. After 1843 when the patent companies no longer had a monopoly on who could perform Shakespeare, productions sprang up across the country, watched by and starring ordinary people, but by 1882, the ability to read aloud from Shakespeare was enshrined in the Victorian Standards of Education. High quality literature was seen as a way of combating what the report of the Committee on Education in 1895-6 called the 'pernicious matter' of the increasingly popular magazines and music halls. Echoes of Johns' 'pernicious rush to relevance' are clear.

These attitudes to the spectrum of Shakespeare as literary heritage and living artist are perhaps summarised in an article in *The Telegraph* (Paton, 2013) reporting on the launch of Shakespeare Week for Primary schools, organised by The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Gove is quoted as saying the Government is backing plans to 'bring Shakespeare's literary and cultural legacy to thousands more children,' continuing 'Shakespeare's language is our language. It is our inheritance […] Through Shakespeare Week, many pupils will have the chance to share and enjoy this inheritance.' Without comment on their differences, the article also quotes Philip Davis, from Liverpool University's School of English, saying: 'Unleashing the power of Shakespeare in young minds is exactly what education should be doing in order to create mobile and lively minds in our young people.' Davis goes on to say that children should be given 'exposure to the language of Shakespeare to help to develop creative minds and independent thought before it's too late and mental pathways become rigid'.[16]

The current validation for Shakespeare's place on the curriculum is that pupils should 'read and appreciate the depth and power of the English literary heritage' so that they have 'a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually' (DfE, 2014c). In November 2014, the DfE (2014e) published: *Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools* (SMSC being spiritual, moral, social and cultural development). This suggests that British values are synonymous with the English Literary heritage in encouraging spiritual, social and cultural development. We are left to wonder about the nuances between emotional and moral development, but might guess that both are intended to imply right minded behaviour. In summary, the document states that British values are about following British laws: 'It is expected that pupils should understand that while different people may hold different views about what is 'right' and 'wrong', all people living in England are subject to its law' (DfE, 2014e, p4). In suggesting how to cover the SMSC requirement, The Citizenship Foundation (2015) puts forward a caveat:

> The language we hear from government is of 'promoting fundamental British values' and of young people 'accepting', 'respecting' and 'tolerating' – as though we all agree already on what those values are, accept that they are unique to Britain and believe we should follow them unquestionably. At the Citizenship

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[16] Davis, notably, has worked with cognitive scientists to research the effect of Shakespeare's language on the brain, resulting in ground-breaking work on the effect of Shakespeare's use of functional shift (University of Liverpool, 2006)

Foundation, we think education is about helping people understand how things work and how to challenge and change them for the better.

In December 2014, the DfE (2014a) proclaimed 'England to become a global leader of teaching character', by which it meant instilling the right (British) moral values in children. Examples of existing approaches to teaching character outlined in the press release include those by London's King Solomon Academy, which 'fosters commitment, endeavour and resilience, as well as scholarship, in its inner-city pupils. Inspired by the US Knowledge is Power programme (KIPP), the head teacher has introduced character-based rewards for pupils, while unabridged Shakespeare plays are produced from year 7 onwards.' The non-sequitur is not clarified; apparently we are simply to assume that exposure to Shakespeare is an obvious element of fostering commitment, endeavour and resilience.

Studying literature can provide opportunities for young people to examine other perspectives on the world. We cannot control how they understand those perspectives but through a dialogic approach which shares our responses we can hope to challenge and change things for the better, as the Citizenship Foundation suggests. Back in 1938, even before contemporary findings about how we learn, Dewey argued 'There is no such thing as educational value in the abstract. The notion that some subjects and methods and that acquaintance with certain facts and truths possess educational value in and of themselves is the reason why traditional education reduced the material of education so largely to a diet of pre-digested materials' (1938, p.46). For Dewey, 'Everything depends on the quality of the experience' (1938, p.27) in terms of how it connects to and develops personal experience, opens up or closes down further growth (1938, p.36). While this chimes with the emancipatory principle of theatre-based practice, it does not necessarily suit an approach that puts Shakespeare on the curriculum in an attempt to convey values, whether 'universal' or 'British' through literary heritage, rather than dialogically engaging with the cultural relevance of what the texts might mean both then and now.

From a director's perspective the question mark Gove and others raise over making Shakespeare relevant can appear nonsensical. As Brook (1968, p.20) explains, 'the vehicle of drama is flesh and blood'; not wooden puppets to be moved around but responsive beings who breathe life, their own emotions and experiences, into a writer's words. Brook confesses a suspicion of directors who talk of letting a play speak for itself: 'If you just let a play speak, it may not make a sound. If what you want is for the play to be

heard, then you must conjure its sound from it' (1968, p.43). Brook is not advocating that a director impose a concept or shape the play to meet a predetermined interpretation, instead he is talking about effort and engagement to enter into a conversation which explores the possible intentions of the text rather than the limited, even if knowable, intentions of the author, in order to explore the human values that emerge. Examples abound in theatres and classrooms of forcing relevance on Shakespeare's text when a director or teacher imposes their own analogies. *Finding* relevant analogies, however, is an inescapable process of how our brains create meaning, and a process directors and teachers can encourage and guide. In considering how 'the present must always contain the past,' Brook finds that the great stories of the world do contain universal truths but that 'a truth is merely a fantasy if it cannot be rediscovered and experienced directly within the ordinary actions of the present day' (1998, p.221); or as Dewey proposed 'make acquaintance with the past a means of understanding the present' (1938, p.78).

Back in 1887, Edward Freeman, Professor of History anticipated the continuing tensions around testing responses to Literature when he objected to the establishment of English as a subject at Oxford:

> We are told that the study of literature 'cultivates the taste, educates the sympathies and enlarges the mind'. These are all excellent things, only we cannot examine tastes and sympathies. Examiners must have technical and positive information to examine (cited in Barry, 2001, p.14)

The current value of Shakespeare in our classrooms is muddled when we expect his work to teach our young people British values, develop them culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually, and reduce their responses to what can be coded in marking a written examination. The perennial debate between a heritage Shakespeare, osmotically influencing young people's values through his iconic status, and a divergence Shakespeare as a site of living art for critical and creative engagement, provides the context for where we are now. The heritage end of our literary icon – living artist spectrum is tidy, promoting material knowledge of the plays on which young people can be judged; but it is reductive. The catchword for education under Gove quickly became 'excellence' - an excellence easy to measure because the marks of excellence are taken from the dominant ideology and all young people are compared to the most privileged in society. The immediately prior years of Labour government saw the growing stranglehold of league tables but a prominent catchword was 'creativity'. Creativity is messier; it involves risk and failure and is far harder to measure, but it encourages us to reach out to

other perspectives and possibilities so that we can evaluate and progress our cultural inheritance. It listens to how our right-hemispheres take in the world around us and values the hemispheric duet that dances between reaching out to possibilities and grasping and ordering their immediate relevance to our lives.

The continued value accorded Shakespeare means, as Keenan and Shellard (2016, p.9) note, that co-opting his name for any project 'implicitly adopts him as […] a symbolic guarantor of its quality and value'. In this chapter, I have reviewed how material knowledge of Shakespeare has been viewed as a marker of that quality and value in education, associated with the rise of English Literature as a core subject of study in schools; how this led to Shakespeare's position as the only compulsory author on the NC; and how assessment of that knowledge proved highly contentious. The Victorian belief in social mobility through education, providing that mobility does not disturb social stability, can be seen persisting in government policies with Shakespeare co-opted to reflect dominant social narratives as 'universal' themes. However, as Cox (1989, 7.16) noted, whatever debates rage about how and why Shakespeare should be taught in schools, 'even those who deny his universality agree on his cultural importance'. Today's English classrooms are required to teach young people to 'appreciate' Shakespeare as their literary inheritance (DfE, 2014d), but, as shown, policy voices have always been present that encourage that appreciation through understanding the texts as plays to be performed: from the English Association's call in 1908 for Shakespeare to be heard through 'the living voice' and the Newbolt Report's 1921 exhortation for 'the music [of the language] to be heard', to Cox's endorsement of Gibson's active approaches and the Coalition government's sponsoring of an RSC toolkit to be sent to every state school in the country. The question for schools persists: is there room for engaging creatively with this marker of excellence, so that students can construct as well as appreciate his cultural importance?

Chapter three: The pedagogical value of theatre-based practice

I could not understand how experience could be divided into two opposing categories [of art and science], into what can be felt and what can be defined (Brook, 1998, p.63).

As mass education took hold, twentieth century advances in psychology brought new ideas about *how* young people should be educated rather than just what they should learn. Behaviourists were documenting human susceptibility to conditioning and encouraged approaches which attempted to facilitate better learning through manipulating behavioural responses; constructivists were exploring how context affects learning and recognising that teaching should support students to synthesise new knowledge with old. These new ideas increasingly influenced more traditional transmissive approaches as the century progressed. In this chapter I review relevant areas of study from three key figures in educational thinking: John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner in order to consider how theatre-based practice can be situated within the progress of twentieth century pedagogical understanding. I then make connections to the more recent work of John Hattie and his major meta-analysis of education research.

I first explore the work of Dewey, the American philosopher and psychologist, active in the first half of the twentieth century, whose work has been highly influential on education, social reform and the importance of the arts in our lives. I focus on four key concepts taken from his writing: pragmatism, democracy, continuity of experience, and quality, and how these concepts illuminate the pedagogical potential for theatre-based practice. I explore the work of Vygotsky both for his contributions to the value of play in learning and his foundational explorations of the relationship between language and meaning which informs current concepts of metaphorical thinking. I explore the work of Bruner particularly for his conceptualisations of the importance of narrative in how we think and learn, linking this to how Shakespeare's texts provide analogies for human behaviours and situations. Concluding with the contemporary findings of Hattie, I consider how his concept of 'expert' teachers maps on to teachers who use theatre-based practice.

3.1 Dewey

3.1.1 Pragmatism

Theatres, like schools, are highly pragmatic institutions. Creative ideas abound both in rehearsal rooms and classrooms and in the surrounding industry that supports the end product of actors on a stage and students taking an examination. All ideas, however, are constrained by the practical limitations of time, space, funding and the myriad factors involved in human beings working together towards an end goal. A philosophy for theatre and for schools needs to be pragmatic. David Sidorsky (1977, p.xii) describes Pragmatism as the 'first indigenous movement of philosophical thought to develop in the United States'. He defines its difference in relation to 'the genteel tradition' of contemporary European philosophies where 'human purposes are derived by the unfolding of transcendental law' as 'For pragmatic philosophy, however, human purposes are the experimental goals of individuals derived from their wants and needs' (1977, pp.xv-xvi). Key early voices in the movement were William James and Charles Pierce who saw themselves as building on the Utilitarian ideas of John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham. John Dewey was probably the most influential voice in taking Pragmatism into the pragmatic arenas of art and education.

Dewey's key interest was in how values *are* formed, rather than how they *should be* formed and central to his thinking was the paradigm shift brought about as a result of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, published in the year of Dewey's birth, 1859. Darwin's work suggests that values, along with all thought, are instrumental in allowing us to adapt as best we can to a constantly changing environment. According to Darwinian theory, the objective truth philosophers had been trying to uncover could not exist because this would mean animals were unable to predict, adapt to, or control their environment. Speaking on 'The Influence of Dawinism on Philosophy', Dewey (1909, p.13) said:

> The conceptions that had reigned in the philosophy of nature and knowledge for two thousand years, the conceptions that had become the familiar furniture of the mind, rested on the assumptions of the superiority of the fixed and final; they rested upon treating change and origin as signs of defect and unreality.

Instead, Dewey recognised that human nature is not fixed or universal but cultural (1931, p.22). It then followed that philosophy is 'a conversion of such culture as exists into consciousness, into an imagination which is logically coherent and is not incompatible with what is factually known' (1931, p. 11). He saw philosophical movements as culturally

illustrative, not to be followed or deconstructed for the extent to which they explain the human condition but as educationally illustrative of how people regard the human condition at a particular time and place.

Pragmatists are moral relativists, seeing morality and values as originating from within a culture as instrumental social choices rather than from external truths. Human behaviour attempts to organise the environment in order to predict it and thrive within it, but our experiences are necessarily contingent; we experience things differently at different times with different priorities according to our different needs and desires. Many of Dewey's thoughts about human perception have been borne out by recent developments in cognitive and behavioural science. Nick Chater (2012), for example, has extended these ideas in his conceptions around 'the illusion of depth of mind' which shows that we infer our beliefs and values on a continuous pragmatic basis rather than searching an 'inner library' for stable beliefs. Chater's ideas are founded on what he describes as 'the overwhelming evidence from psychology, the psychology of judgements and decision making, that utilities and belief do not cohere'; an example of which is that any adjustments made to experimental procedures will yield different results as the human mind pragmatically adapts to the nuances of any situation. Trimble (2009, p.205) asserts as a 'neurological fact' that each of us individually 'can have only perspectives on reality', since reality has to be filtered to our consciousness via our nervous systems.

Pragmatic philosophy has much in common with a theatre-based practice of working with Shakespeare which regards the performance history of a play as culturally illustrative and the texts themselves as working philosophical questions about the extent to which the human condition is culturally contingent. This provides a different perspective from F.D. Maurice's foundational liberal humanist view that Literature should free us from the cultural vicissitudes of our own age and connect us to 'what is fixed and enduring' (1840, cited in Barry, 2002, p.13). McConachie (2015, p.170) suggests Dewey's 'naturalistic epistemology' in recognising the inevitability and necessity of change as providing an ethical standpoint for performance studies. He explains how Dewey 'recognised that all solutions to society's problems must always be temporary' constantly reviewed by a 'pluralistic community of problem-solvers, which included artists as well as politicians, scientists and educators.' Theatre-based practice not only acknowledges but embraces change, plurality, interdisciplinarity and the notion that 'utilities and beliefs do not

cohere'; valuing the texts as sites for exploring and sharing how and why utilities and beliefs do occur, when they do.

3.1.2   Democracy

Dewey's philosophical investigations into the experiences he saw as foundational to both education and art were not just assessments of the cultural status quo but proposals for progressive democratic approaches to encourage shared perspectives in pursuit of positive change (1916, p.223). In recognising an instinctive preference for democracy in Western cultures, Dewey was convinced that the reason for the preference 'comes down to the belief that democratic social arrangements promote a better quality of human experience, one which is more widely accessible and enjoyed, than do non-democratic and anti-democratic forms of social life' (1938, p.34). He saw these pragmatic principles of democracy as bringing together different elements within societies, who would inevitably learn and develop through contact with each other, declaring: 'A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience' (1916, p.224). He saw the potential of education to provide opportunities for personal development within a social democracy where pluralism and inquiry are fundamental to the process. He regarded pluralism as a strength in a democratic society which works to mediate difference through inquiry; learning to understand, not supplant others' values.

In *Time and Individuality* (1940), Dewey examines the unpredictability of human lives. He uses Abraham Lincoln as an example of an individual life that acts on and is acted on by a complex set of circumstances producing a unique career: 'The career which is his unique individuality is the series of interactions in which he was created to be what he was by the ways in which he responded to the occasions with which he was presented' (1940, p.145). We compose patterns and connections about our own lives and others' in retrospect. A biographer of Lincoln can post-rationalise how he came to do what he did, but at the time no-one could predict how his life would turn out; everything was contingent, circumstantial, what Dewey calls 'fortuitous', acknowledging that luck can be good or bad. Individuality is development through time. Dewey gives *Hamlet* as another example:

> If we knew enough about Shakespeare's life we could doubtless show after *Hamlet* was produced how it is connected with other things. We would link it with sources; we could connect its mood with specific experiences of its author and so on. But no-one with the fullest knowledge of Shakespeare's past could have predicted the drama as it stands. If they could have done so, they would

have been able to write it. Not even Shakespeare himself could have told in advance just what he was going to say (1940, p.146).[17]

For Dewey, this contingency is an exhortation to action, to consciously take control: 'Change is going to occur anyway, and the problem is the control of change in a given direction' (1940, p.147). If we allow others to control our lives, we surrender our individuality which allows totalitarianism to operate. Democracy requires individuals to share meaning in order to progress and Dewey saw the role of art as to show what is possible.

3.1.3   Continuity of Experience

Dewey's observations of how our sensory interactions with the world shape our understanding by creating experiences became a cornerstone of his work. He states his philosophy of education as 'of, by and for experience' adding that each of these prepositions 'is a challenge to discover and put into operation a principle of order and organisation which follows from understanding what educative experience signifies' (1938, p.29). The significance is a continuum of human experience, constantly growing and developing, within which each individual can learn and contribute. Dewey explains 'the principle of continuity of experience' as meaning 'that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after' (1938, p.35). He saw all human experience as a result of collaborative process (1938, pp.39-40) and seems prescient in recognising what cognitive scientists have shown us about the plasticity of our brains to constantly respond and adapt, making us the sum of our interactions. Early child psychology observations, such as those of Piaget and Vygotsky, were showing learning to be a cumulative process of experience through interaction; in Dewey's words what someone 'has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow' (1938, p.44). Although we tend to accept this situation in 'real life', our hierarchy of learning often regards academic learning as beyond this experiential reality. Dewey recognises that for many students a traditional approach of abstract learning unhelpfully isolates and compartmentalises knowledge (1938, p.48); an approach Trimble (2007) and McGilchrist (2009) would

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[17] The fact that many people have tried to do just what Dewey describes in tracing the aspects of Shakespeare's life that led to the writing of *Hamlet* is an example of hard wiring for patterns in our striving to organise our environment and be able to predict outcomes.

recognise as preferencing how the left-hemisphere of the brain operates over the more gestalt approach of the right.

Dewey criticises a common educational attitude that schooling is preparing young people for the future, warning: 'When preparation is made the controlling end then the potentialities of the present are sacrificed to a suppositious future' (1938, p.49). Since we can only live in the present and the future remains unknown, our best preparation for the future is in learning what we can in the present in order to have useful experiences to call on for whatever faces us. This is not to say that we should ignore the past since the past has made the present, but nor should learning about the past be the 'controlling end' of education. Dewey regards the teacher's job as not simply to present new knowledge to students and test their retention of it (which as he points out still results in experiences , but often negative ones) but instead to connect ideas and facts in a continuity of experience that challenges a student's ability and builds both personal and social development. For Dewey the role of an educator is to 'select those things within the range of existing experience that have the promise and potentiality of presenting new problems which by stimulating new ways of observation and judgement will expand the area of further experience' (1938, p.75). The role of art in this process is to celebrate 'with peculiar intensity the moments in which the past reinforces the present and in which the future is a quickening of what now is' (1934, p.17)

Dewey's 'continuity of experience' as a pragmatic approach to education does not present an easy option, instead it requires skilled and committed teachers capable of a 'sympathetic understanding of individuals as individuals' (1938, p.39). Progressive education in the second half of the twentieth century gained a reputation as a byword for unstructured play but Dewey is clear about the importance of the teacher's leadership in selecting experiences for growth and setting goals. He explains that real freedom is not about thoughtlessly acting on impulses and desires but the freedom to make informed choices, stimulated by impulses and desires, but mindful of their consequences. Adults' own experiences play a vital role in shaping and supporting such choices (1938, pp.67-9).

3.1.4   Quality

Dewey's focus on experience continues in his investigations into the world of art and its intrinsic importance to our lives. He points out that all disciplines build on their inheritance: along with the artist, 'the scientific inquirer, the philosopher, the

technologist, also derive their substance from the stream of culture,' and adds, 'This dependence is an essential factor in original vision and creative expression' (1934, p. 277). He sees progress as coming from a creative and critical, often interdisciplinary interaction with the received knowledge of past experiences.

His definition of experience is not just something that happens but something that happens on which we reflect; experience requires a relationship between action and consequences that engenders meaning and that relationship is marked by an emotional response. We exist in a continuum of cultural experience, but also in a continuum of personal experience. Moments marked by reflection subconsciously accumulate, creating habits of meaning and value that come to define us, or as Dewey describes: 'Through habits formed in intercourse with the world, we also inhabit the world' (1934, p.108). 'Experience becomes conscious, a matter of perception, only when meanings enter it that are derived from prior experiences' (1934, p.283). This view of experience, based in Pragmatism, is developed by Damasio (1994) into his theory of somatic markers, described in chapter three, which effectively create a 'continuity of feeling'.

Dewey sees communication as the value of all art, whether or not the artist intends it. The expression of meaning the work of art conjures for each of us creates a sharper focus on our own experience of being in the world. He likens this relationship to language which only exists to be heard as well as spoken, yet may be understood in different ways to how it was meant; meaning is affected not just by the 'substance' of what is said, but the 'form' of how it is said. 'Form' creates experience in our interactions with art as we interpret a hermeneutic circle of value, simultaneously judging parts in relation to the whole and the whole as a sum of the parts. Dewey explains how 'Art expresses, it does not state; it is concerned with existences in their perceived qualities, not with conceptions symbolized in terms' (1934, p.140); meanings continuously shift as our experiences shift through different rhythms of cause and effect, and different metaphorical concepts.

Dewey asserts that 'All interactions that effect stability and order in the whirling flux of change are rhythms' (1934, p.15). Rhythms and patterns pervade our natural environment and pervade human culture's adaptations to environment. He observes that despite the abstract sophistications of science 'a common interest in rhythm is still the tie which holds science and art in kinship' (1934, p.156). Trimble (2007, p.201) regards

rhythm 'as a biological given of our bodies and our autonomic functions, from breathing and heartbeat to the rhythm of our brains'; and in explaining how these functions underscore our response to music and poetry, he develops Dewey's definition of rhythm as 'an ordered variation of changes' (1934, p.160). Like experience, rhythm is not just something that happens, but a variation in something that happens that makes it significant. 'Each beat, in differentiating a part within the whole, adds to the force of what went before while creating a suspense that is a demand for something to come' (Dewey, 1934, p.161). Sound requires silence; the downward beat of a bird's wing requires the opposite energy of the upward beat; human experience requires novelty as well as comfort: 'confusion is displeasing but so is ennui' (Dewey, 1934, p.173).

It seems likely that human appreciation of and response to rhythm was a key factor in our evolution as a social, collaborative species (Mithen, 2005) and our response to rhythms is as personal as it is shared. Our personal sense of rhythm manifests through perceived harmonies and balance in a sense of *quality*. In an art gallery or listening to a concert or watching a performance we are drawn to some compositions more than others, a subjective attraction that may or may not be shared with those around us, and which we often find hard to define. Quality is not easy to define or divide, but, explains Dewey, 'is concrete and existential, and hence varies with individuals since it is impregnated with their uniqueness' (1934, p.223). Each sunset has a unique quality of 'redness' contextually affected by each day's different physical conditions and by each viewer's different experiences, despite general similarities of having 'the same hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions […] warmed and cooled by the same variations in climate' (1934, p.256).[18] This is reflected in Trimble's 'neurological fact' of how we each uniquely perceive reality (2007, pp.204).

Language for Dewey is how we manage our varied qualitative experiences, taxonomising them in order to share what we perceive. Certain uses of language, like poetry can connect us to indefinable felt qualities reminding us that language is physical as well as intellectual; uses that recent findings would associate with the working of the right-hemispheres of our brains (McGilchrist, 2009). Dewey describes how such language

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[18] The Globe's Director of Music, Bill Barclay, has investigated how the concept, common in Shakespeare's time of 'the music of the spheres' reflects a very real instinctive recognition of the quality of rhythms in our lives. We subconsciously respond to the laws of harmonics that pervade the natural world and which, apparently by coincidence according to physicists, also determine how the planets move through the solar system.

'absorbs the intellectual into immediate qualities that are experienced through senses that belong to the vital body' (1934, p.224). Music often has a more direct emotional effect but language refines communication and language used effectively with a quality of music, can communicate more deeply (a concept that will be explored further in chapter seven).

The summation of these aspects of Dewey's work, his Pragmatism, his belief in democracy, and his concepts of the continuity of experience and quality can be seen as a focus on communication.

> Communication is the process of creating participation, of making common what had been isolated and singular; and part of the miracle it achieves is that, in being communicated, the conveyance of meaning gives body and definiteness to the experience of the one who utters as well as to that of those who listen (1934, p.253).

He questions 'the authority of tradition and convention' (1934, p.313) and is suspicious of those (like Mathew Arnold and his legacy of policy makers) who impose judgements of quality on others since the purpose of art should not be communication of abiding values but of possibilities.[19] He says: 'The moral function of art itself is to remove prejudice, do away with the scales that keep the eye from seeing, tear away the veils due to wont and custom. Perfect the power to perceive'. He adds: 'It is the critic's privilege to share in the promotion of this active process. His condemnation is that he so often arrests it' (1934, p.338).

3.2   Vygotsky

Advances in cognitive science and a growing interest in cultural theory have shone brighter light on another early twentieth century thinker, Lev Vygotsky (Kozulin, 2012). His work is useful in considering the value of theatre-based practice both for the role of play in his paradigm of the zone of proximal development (zpd), and for his thinking around the relationship of language and meaning

Vygotsky's key influence on education has been through his concept of the zpd, derived from studying the relationship between learning and development in young children as

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[19] Aristotle explained: 'It is not the business of the poet to tell what has happened but the kind of thing that might happen – what is possible, whether necessary or probable (cited in Dewey, 1934, p.295).

they naturally engage in play. He found that rather than development leading learning, as Piaget's earlier findings seemed to suggest, play provides an environment where the reverse becomes true: 'play creates a zone of proximal development of the child. In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself' (1978, p.102). He notes how this extension to the child's normal world, as they creatively imitate the adult roles they see around them allows the child to grow cognitively, emotionally and socially. Vygotsky defines the zpd as: 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (1978, p.86). Thus the zpd, often interpreted in education as an individual zone of influence between a teacher and student, can also be seen as a playful and collaborative process between peers.[20]

Vygotsky challenges Piaget's discounting of play as developmentally useful, especially his ideas that children's egocentric chapter is unimportant and superseded through socialisation by a maturing rationality around the age of 7-8. Vygotsky saw the acquisition and use of language by young children as a cultural rather than biological process, regarding language as 'the social means of thought,' a mastery of which is essential to a child's intellectual growth (1934, p.100). His conclusions were that as highly social animals, we develop meaning through interaction with others: 'Verbal thought is not an innate natural form of behaviour but is determined by a historical-cultural process' (1934, p.101).

Piaget's own influence on education has been immense and continues to shape how we measure children's stages of development and assess their cognitive abilities. Vygotsky's work is often read in antagonism to Piaget with Vygotsky observing continuous and contextual development in children as opposed to Piaget's stages of socialisation. It seems, however, that Vygotsky greatly admired the French psychologist and saw himself as building on Piaget's work. Shayer (2003, p.476) usefully summarises Vygotsky's concern as 'with the *dynamics* of development—that which drives it—and Piaget's with

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[20] Interestingly, van der Veer (1991, p.337) translates the last phrase as 'in cooperation with his more intelligent partners' 'Cooperation' is perhaps more passive than 'collaboration', and 'partners' carries different connotations to 'peers'. As we have already seen words are imprecise conveyors of meaning, but what is clear is that Vygotsky saw a need in learning for a relationship, a social process.

the *statics* of development, where they actually are when removed from sources of stimulus'. The dynamics of development can be seen as a concern of the 'art' of teaching, the 'expertise' Hattie (2009) describes with its focus on the relationship of a teacher asking questions about why and how an individual student learns. Within that dynamic relationship a balance can be negotiated of providing stimulus, in Dewey's terms 'from without' that engages the student in a high quality experience that allows the student to 'develop from within', providing sufficient challenge to move forward and into new curiosity. The statics of development can be viewed as a concern of the 'science' of teaching, asking questions of when and where a student learns and seeking answers from which we can generalise. Both approaches are necessary and can inform the other as qualitative and quantitative methods.

Essential to Vygotsky's theorising is that 'Word meanings are dynamic rather than static formations' (1934, p.230). The meanings children associate with words change and adapt as they mature, and continue to evolve as they accumulate life experiences. Word meanings are dynamic because meaning itself is dynamic as we continually process experience:

> The relation of thought to word is not a thing but a process, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and from word to thought. In that process, the relation of thought to word undergoes changes that themselves may be regarded as development in the functional sense. Thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them. Every thought tends to connect something with something else, to establish a relation between things. Every thought moves, grows and develops, fulfils a function, solves a problem (1934, p.231)

An illustration of this dynamic and instrumental nature of language can be given by comparing two translations of one of Vygotsky's key concepts:

> Speech does not merely serve as the expression of developed thought. Thought is restructured as it is transformed into speech. It is not expressed but completed in the word. (cited in Holzman, 2009, p.39)

> Thought undergoes many changes as it turns into speech. It does not merely find expression in speech; it finds its reality and form (1934, p.233)

Both images of 'completion' and 'reality and form' are metaphorical; both final sentences use the rhythms of rhetoric. Both translations communicate Vygotsky's essential meaning but convey subtly different meanings for empirical readers who will find a different quality about each. My own preference is for the more poetic, but perhaps

slightly less accurate, elegance of the former (and older) translation, as for me it expresses a more appropriate quality of meaning. That quality, as Dewey recognised, is a hard to define but personal sense of value from shared meaning.

Criticising the dominance of 'behaviour' in psychology, and by extension education, that has influenced much of our assessment driven culture, Lois Holzman writes: 'It ignores the socio-cultural-historicalness of individuals and groups of people. It obscures the continuously emergent and dialectical activity of human life, and denies that human beings are simultaneously agents and products (tools-and-results) of qualitative change' (2009, p.13). Holzman explains that 'when people are speaking, what they are doing is not *saying* what's going on but *creating* what's going on, and that what is called 'understanding each other' comes about by virtue of engaging in this activity'(2009, p.40 italics original). When Shakespeare's text is regarded, from a heritage perspective, as the best that has been thought and written, the epitome of beautifully crafted poetry, we construct it as a literary text that can make us think and feel in response to it but is to be read and treasured as complete in and of itself. If instead, we regard the text, from a divergence perspective, as thought in action, incomplete without a human body to mediate it, the experience of working with the text comes closer to the activity Holzman describes, and Vygotsky's concept of language as a process rather than a product of thought. As a theatre text, Shakespeare's words are provocations, stimuli for audience and actor to complete thoughts we are perhaps otherwise unable to adequately express. Shakespeare's outstanding facility with crafting language conveys a feeling of articulacy to those who speak it; it is viscerally satisfying to speak and provokes us to engage dialectically with our own thoughts and feelings and those of others as we reverse engineer the need to speak such text.

As Dewey is fascinated by the qualities of meaning in the world of art, Vygotsky is intrigued by his contemporary, the director Stanislavsky's work, and acknowledges that theatre was examining issues of the relationship between thought and language long before psychology came on the scene. He considers Stanislavsky's approach to subtext as an illustration of the many possible meanings or 'sense' behind every utterance, noting 'Every sentence we say in real life has some kind of subtext, a thought hidden behind it' (1934, p.265). In considering Stanislavsky's subtext, he forefronts the need to understand another's thoughts by understanding their motivation, concluding, 'Direct communication between minds is impossible, not only physically but psychologically. Communication can

be achieved only in a roundabout way. Thought must first pass through meanings and only then words' (1934, p.267). Subtexts are constructed through tone and gesture to aid the conveyance of meaning through words as best we can. In this way, theatre-based practice can allow students to explore how we employ language in our pragmatic need to communicate.

3.3   Bruner

From the discipline of psychology, Jerome Bruner built on the early Pragmatist thinking to develop his ideas around the importance of culture to education, investigating how we make sense of knowledge by how it best fits our cultural needs and desires. Influenced by Vygotsky's zpd, and Dewey's continuity of experience, he created a concept of 'spiral' learning: that by starting with a child's existing knowledge, you can teach any concept by extending their understanding, circling back to reinforce and building ever upwards, creating a spiral of connected learning. Like Dewey and Vygotsky, Bruner's interest is in *how* rather than *what* we learn, and, like them, he saw the value of constructing learning using personal experiences as a more coherent approach to develop and secure knowledge, based on the principle that 'domains of knowledge are made not found' (1996, p.119).

Bruner employs a theatre metaphor to explain his version of the continuity of experience:

> It is as if we walk on stage into a play whose enactment is already in progress – a play whose somewhat open plot determines what parts we may play and toward what denouements we may be heading. Others on stage already have a sense of what the play is about, enough of a sense to make negotiations with the newcomer possible (1990, p.34).

Understanding a concept, according to Bruner, means being able to place that concept within a structure of knowledge, understanding how, where and why it fits, but also understanding it not as a specific incidence but as an 'exemplar of a broader conceptual principle or theory' (1996, p.xii). Bruner's conception of 'discovery learning' is not about proposing unstructured play but that if knowledge is '"discovered" through the learner's own cognitive efforts', that discovery has come about by relating new knowledge to old, making it more secure (1996, p.xii). He explored the causes and effects of human social evolution to create support and obstacles to learning, and from research with reluctant learners, concluded that problems with engagement were usually related to access rather than ability. The current popularity of 'growth mindsets' (Dweck, 2006) builds on these

ideas. For Bruner, the optimum environment for learning acknowledges the social brain in stimulating 'curiosity, a desire for competence, aspiration to emulate a model, and a deep-sensed commitment to the web of social reciprocity' (1966, p.127).

Bruner finds a dominance of narrative[21] in how we learn and communicate, regarding language and the ability to construct narrative as one of the 'prosthetics' or tools that have allowed human culture to evolve. Like concrete 'prosthetics' made from wood, stone or metals, language as an abstract prosthetic allows us to pass on culture. He explains: 'It is through our own narratives that we principally construct a version of ourselves in the world, and it is through its narrative that a culture provides models of identity and agency to its members' (1996, p.xiv). For Bruner, narrative becomes 'a communal tool' for sense making (1990, p.45); a way of 'trafficking in human possibilities rather than settled certainties (1986, p.26); a 'mode of thinking, as a structure for organising our knowledge, and as a vehicle in the process of education' (1996 p.119). He describes how narratives work through the hermeneutic circle of mutual reliance of meaning of the parts and the whole, which results in interpretation, not explanation. Scientific theories are falsifiable, narratives are not; they can be judged not on whether they are 'true' but on the *quality* of whether they are 'true-to-life'. Bruner summarises this as 'a story can be true *to* life without being true *of* life' (1996, p.122).

In stories we consider other points of view; we temporarily inhabit the complex mix of intentions and cultural conditioning that affect another human being's agency as we attempt to interpret the human condition; consciously or unconsciously using the concept of other lives to understand more about our own. With facts we deal instead with the relatively more simple instrumental nature of the world, co-ordinating multiple points of view to resolve our best case explanations for our existence. Stories are found in all human culture, and story-telling is fundamental not only to our sense of identity, but also to progressing knowledge. Trimble (2007, p.210) explains 'the evolution of creativity' as 'a basic neurobiological force' which compels us to explore and manipulate not only the world around us but, by extension, the worlds we can imagine.

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[21] As Paul Cobley (2014, p.2) writes, 'even the most simple of stories is embedded in a network of relations that is sometimes astounding in its complexity'. The numerous conceptions and theories of narrative can be explored further in Herman, Jahn and Ryan (eds.) 2005. *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory.*

The aim of science is objectivity, but it invariably begins with subjectivity. As Cobley explains: 'even when thinking about the world in an 'objective' fashion, scientifically or ethically, the tendency to storify remains' (2014, p.2). Our brains function to compare individual observations and conjectures in a continuity of experience. Bruner gives the example of Niels Bohr's narrative account of how he discovered the theory of complementarity in particle physics. He envisaged it first as a moral dilemma inspired by his young son's guilt stricken confession of shop-lifting, explaining, 'I was struck by the fact that I could not think of my son at the same moment both in the light of love and in the light of justice' (cited in Bruner, 1996, p.125). Musing on this led Bohr to understand the problem of attempting to measure both the position and velocity of a moving particle and resolving a major scientific dilemma. Science is full of such stories of discovery which result from what Bruner calls 'grasping the right narrative' (1996, p.125).The narratives we tell ourselves and each other in order to gain and share meaning are made up of the analogies and metaphors we use to understand the relationship between one experience and another. That analogy will carry similarities and differences and the differences, where the analogy breaks down, are as important as the similarities. The importance of the narrative is that it has the right quality to communicate.

Bruner's investigations into narrative consider how young children negotiate myths and found that myths and stories from different cultures presented to children may be far from their daily experience, set for example in Inuit culture, but that children readily find analogies with the behaviours of the characters in the narratives. By bringing their own experiences of kinship to bear, for example, they can compare how their experiences are like and unlike those described in the story. Bruner comments:

> To personalise knowledge, one does not simply link it to the familiar. Rather one makes the familiar an instance of a more general case and thereby produces awareness of it. What the children were learning about was not seagulls and Eskimos, but about their own feelings and preconceptions that, up to then, were too implicit to be recognisable to them (1966, p.161).

Bruner here advocates an analogical pedagogy which sees each narrative as a case study 'capable of instructive transferability to other settings' (Walton, 1992, p.125) through which meaning can be shared with others. In studying *Macbeth*, we might consider that children are not learning about specific witches and kings, but their own feelings about the supernatural and hierarchies, loyalty and ambition. Through theatre-based practice, young people are encouraged to embody witches and kings, bringing to bear their own

experiences and collaboratively questioning the prejudices of their habitus through playfully inhabiting another culture.

Bruner recognised a human instinct for problem solving but proposes that children need support in the more creative task of problem *finding*. He identifies social pressures to conform as barriers which lead to attempts to solve a task by seeking an answer already 'out there in the book or on the blackboard' rather than inventing an answer. Bruner's assessment of classroom learning is that 'Young children in school expend extraordinary time and effort figuring out what it is that the teacher wants – and usually coming to the conclusion that she or he wants tidiness or remembering or doing things at a certain time or in a certain way' (1966, p.159). This he labels as 'extrinsic problem solving' which interferes with 'intrinsic problem solving' or 'problem finding', where deeper learning can occur.

Problem finding happens when we begin to look at 'what might be and why it isn't' (1966, p.159). Bruner views this as a more metacognitive approach to education which asks how and why knowledge is arrived at, and considers the extent to which knowledge has been tested and found to be comprehensive and coherent. Einstein's model of general relativity or Darwin's theory of evolution are examples of thoroughly tested ideas, the models of religion they challenged are examples of cultural beliefs and assumptions that have either shifted significantly to accommodate the new knowledge or fail to provide a coherent picture. Human knowledge is progressed, not by accepting an inheritance but by questioning it and 'finding problems' with the inherited views. In theatre-based practice, this concept is captured in the maxim of 'what if?': what if Macbeth had never met the witches?; what if he had a son?; what if he believes he is doing God's will? This 'what if' approach of 'finding problems' encourages actors and young people to explore the texts using their own experiences and imaginations, thereby testing the quality of the narrative to communicate.

Bruner is interested in the apparent conflict in our education systems between the dominance of post-enlightenment rational thought and our instincts for narrative.

> We devote an enormous amount of pedagogical effort to teaching the methods of science and rational thought: what is involved in verification, what constitutes contradiction, how to convert mere utterances into testable propositions, and on down the list. For these are the 'methods' for creating a 'reality according to science'. Yet we live most of our lives in a world constructed according to the rules and devices of narrative. Surely education could provide richer

opportunities than it does for creating the metacognitive sensitivity needed for coping with the world of narrative reality and its competing claims (1996, p.149).

McGilchrist (2009, p.129) ascribes this conflict to the cultural dominance in Western countries of 'a sort of left-hemisphere chauvinism'. In his dystopian but disturbingly familiar vision of what the left-hemisphere's world of seeking answers already known would look like as the more problem finding right-hemisphere lost influence, he describes a world 'of systems of abstraction and control', 'highly intolerant of uncertainty', 'technologically driven and bureaucratically administered' with 'a focus on material things at the expense of the living', where 'tacit forms of knowing' are discarded altogether (2009, pp.428-434). His vision provides a strong call for reassessing how we nurture and value the contribution of the negative capability of the right-hemisphere in our education systems. This is a call theatre-based practice can help to meet by encouraging young people to consider 'what if?' and 'find problems' in Shakespeare's narrative to explore, thereby making more conscious the unconscious assumptions and competing claims of the dominant narratives that surround them. LPN teacher Rachel notes how when she used theatre-based practice, her class 'seemed to be increasingly willing to admit that they were unsure of something' and sees this as a significant, positive shift, particularly for higher ability groups, where she identifies 'often a real resistance to admit uncertainty for fear of looking stupid' (Irish, 2014b, p.6).

Bruner calls for a more metacognitive approach to education that increases understanding of how we learn. In this way, not only can better individual learning occur but more democratic learning, as understanding our own process of understanding can help us understand others, whether we agree with their conclusions or not. Narratives of understanding are not mutually exclusive – there are many reasons for the fall of Rome or the start of the Second World War, just as there are many possible reasons for the actions of Hamlet or Rosalind. Interpretation of those events and actions depends on the perspective from which you view them and how you construct patterns from the knowledge you have. A metacognitive approach is not simply about learning a list of dates or quotes, but how we understand situations, and how we might allow or prevent something similar being repeated. As Nussbaum points out, 'a catalogue of facts, without the ability to assess them, or to understand how a narrative is assembled from evidence, is almost as bad as ignorance' (2010, p.94).

Bruner sees curriculum lists of dates, facts or values as unambitious, preferring a metacognitive approach which understands and appreciates the plurality of values in a cultural web. In his words: 'The objective of skilled agency and collaboration in the study of the human condition is to achieve not unanimity, but more consciousness. And more consciousness always implies more diversity' (1996, p.97). He views the development of metacognitive skills as a key factor in promoting the quality of democracy in societies, explaining:

> Metacognition converts ontological arguments about the nature of reality into epistemological ones about how we know. While contrast and confrontation may raise consciousness about the relativity of knowing, the object of metacognition is to create alternate ways of conceiving of reality making. Metacognition, in this sense, provides a reasoned base for the interpersonal negotiation of meanings, a way to achieve mutual understanding even when negotiation fails to bring consensus (1996, p.148)

Exploring different narratives, embodying different perspectives through working with performance texts using metacognitive approaches can provide democratic ways to keep our consciousness alive to possibilities.

One of Bruner's tenets for education in today's world is that we are constrained in our thinking by how evolution has shaped our brains to work through 'common sense' or 'folk psychology' beliefs that mean we adopt culturally shaped habits of interaction, normalised through use into conventions. Bourdieu described our existence within such conventions as 'habitus' where certain beliefs and assumptions are so integral to our culture that we accept them unquestioningly as reality, like a fish swimming through water (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.127). We are also constrained by our language in what and how we share inner meaning. Bruner suggests that a function of education should be increasing awareness of these inbuilt constraints and how we can stretch them, which he summarises as: '"thinking about thinking" has to be a principal ingredient of any empowering practice of education' (1996, p.19). If we accept the now common scientific notion that our 'reality' is constructed through streams of perception and cultural conditioning, the role of education could be seen as teaching us to use the tools our biology and culture have evolved to support us in constructing a shared democratic and pragmatic reality. It could value the way our brain hemispheres function in duet to construct meaning rather than preferencing the fragmenting and organising aspects of the left. In this way, formal education could better support the 'complex pursuit of fitting

a culture to the needs of its members and of fitting its members and their ways of knowing to the needs of the culture' (Bruner, 1996, p.43).

3.4 Hattie

New Zealand education expert, John Hattie led an extensive and influential investigation of education research, comprising a rigorous study of over 800 meta-analyses. The findings of the project were first published in 2008 and resulted in his concept of 'Visible Learning'. This metaphor captures his conclusions that 'achievement in schools is maximised when teachers see learning through the eyes of students, and when students see learning through the eyes of themselves as teachers' (2014, p.xii). He supports Bruner's call for a more metacognitive approach by emphasising the value of teachers understanding how their approaches impact on students and students understanding how they learn.

Hattie's research sets a significant effect size (ES) at above 0.4[22]. He reasons that almost any intervention will improve a student's learning,[23] but that if this effect can be measured on a scale of 0.0 - 1.2 as below 0.4, then it most likely results from normal developmental progress or the focus to learning that any teaching will bring. Any ES above this 0.4 'hinge point' therefore indicates an approach worthy of more detailed examination for its potential in enhancing a student's capacity to learn. According to this measure, he finds that neither structural issues, attributes of students, specific intervention programmes, technology, nor external accountability measures have any significant ES by comparison with teachers working collaboratively to improve their impact, and offering feedback that allows students to gain a clear understanding of how to improve (2013).

Other meta-analytical work supports Hattie's findings, for example The Education Endowment Agency (EEA), an arm of the Sutton Trust, publishes an online summary rating the effect of a range of interventions in schools. The only two interventions groupings rated as 'high impact' are 'Metacognitive approaches' and 'Feedback' with weighted mean effect sizes of 0.62 and 0.63. The summary of 'Feedback' interventions carries the caveat that variance in the quality of feedback means it can have a negative effect; more effective feedback is linked, as Hattie suggests, to metacognitive approaches

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[22] ES = average post-test results – average pre-test results ÷ standard deviation
[23] Along the lines of the Hawthorne effect (Landsberger, 1958) which showed that a concentration of attention through any method temporarily improves productivity

in terms of supporting a student to know how and why they are learning. By contrast, structural interventions such as school uniform, school buildings and streaming have low or negative impact.[24]

Hattie's proposals for how to use his data develop the constructionist thinking about education set forward by Dewey, Vygotsky and Bruner and takes those ideas into the current education scene of high accountability. He links theory with practice by providing a strong evidential basis for what works and emphasises that 'constructivism is a form of knowing and not a form of teaching' (2009 p.243). An effective teacher is central to his theory as someone who 'activates' rather than 'facilitates' learning, directly shaping a students' learning through their pedagogical knowledge of how each students' learning can be constructed, rather than leaving a student to develop their own learning through self-discovery. Hattie's narrative of Visible Learning requires teachers taking students on a clear journey from what they know to what they need to know; engaging them in an active process of developing conceptual or deep learning by supporting them to make connections; and developing awareness of *how* they make connections. Metacognition is the cornerstone of his work. He explains: 'It is not the knowledge or ideas, but the learner's construction of the knowledge and ideas that is critical. Increases in student learning follow a reconceptualization as well as an acquisition of information' (2009, p.37). This 'reconceptualization' works with the brain's need to make analogies using personal qualitative experiences. In describing his theory as 'a story' (2009, p.248), Hattie puts his own theory into practice, constructing knowledge and ideas into a reconceptualization of learning using the data he has acquired. He describes his concept of Visible Learning as an abductive exercise in creating an explanation rather than determining causality, resulting in theory which constructs a plausible narrative for a better model of education, open to development and challenge (2009, p.237).

3.4.1 Expert teachers

As a result of his fifteen yearlong meta-analysis of education research, Hattie places the relationship between teacher and students as central to effective learning, claiming that the most effective, or 'expert' teachers are not necessarily those with the most

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[24] It is also useful to note that the EEA rates 'Arts Participation' as low impact, but notes that research in this area has varied widely in both content and quality of study with reported effect sizes between 0.03 – 0.77. This suggests that rather than focus on the arts content of theatre-based practice, it may be the metacognitive potential of the work that is of most value for young people.

experience in terms of years of teaching, but those who are reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983) or 'students of their own impact' (2012, p.17). These teachers 'intervene in calculated and meaningful ways' to support cognitive change through constant judgements and adjustments, allowing for the individuality of each student' (2012, p.15). LPN teacher Kathy notes how she became 'a more responsive practitioner' when using theatre-based practice by 'attempting to create a more democratic classroom, by creating more opportunities to use dialogic talk, by valuing students' opinions' (Irish, 2014b, p.7).

Two effect sizes relevant here are those for 'teachers' subject knowledge', surprisingly low at 0.09, and 'teacher-student relationships', perhaps less surprisingly high at 0.72. Hattie suggests that general intellectual ability and verbal proficiency, abilities that tend to correlate with attributes like flexibility and empathy, are better indicators of an effective teacher than subject knowledge per se (2009, p.114). He concludes that it is the ensemble of 'knowledge, empathy and verbal ability' that is crucial for good teaching: 'They are greater than the sum of the parts and if one is missing, the effectiveness is reduced by more than a third' (2009, p.115). How expert teachers use their knowledge is key:

> Experts possess knowledge that is more integrated, in that they combine the introduction of new subject knowledge with students' prior knowledge; they can relate current lesson content to other subjects in the curriculum; and they make lessons uniquely their own by changing, combining and adding to the lessons according to their students' needs and their own teaching goals (2012, p.25)

His explanation is reminiscent of Dewey's continuity of experience and he goes on to explain how an expert teacher is one who learns reflectively from their own experience how best to predict, organise and respond in order to best support the individual learning experiences of their students; effectively employing the tacit knowledge discussed in chapter one to continuously search for the quality of progress.

In total, Hattie (2012, pp.26-7) identifies five dimensions of an expert teacher. They:

a. 'Can identify the most important ways in which to represent the subject that they teach'

b. 'Are proficient at creating an optimal classroom climate for learning' – where the key word is 'trust' so that risk taking can occur.

c. 'Monitor learning and provide feedback' – with a constant alertness to the needs of each student in their care and the flexibility to respond accordingly and dialogically rather than through prescribed systems of accountability.

d. 'Believe that all students can reach the success criteria' – this translates into the hard to define quality of 'passion' in teachers, for the growth of their students, not just for their subject areas.

e. 'Influence surface and deep student outcomes' – where deep learning builds on surface learning to create integrated learning through a continuity of experience.

He redefines the oft discredited concept of 'child-centred learning' as: 'starting with the private world of each student and the semi-private world of peer interactions, as well as the more public teacher-managed effect on students' (2012, p.33). He emphasises the importance of a positive relationship between teacher and students, such that trust exists which occurs when students recognise a high level of competence and integrity in their teacher, alongside a personal regard and respect for them as an individual: 'A positive, caring, respectful climate in the classroom is a prior condition to learning' (2012, p.70).

3.4.2 Creating the climate for learning

Hattie's Visible Learning synthesis 'asks for teachers to see themselves as evaluators of their impact, and as change agents purposely setting up conditions to impact on learning' (2014, p.xi). He concludes that 'openness and willingness to invest in learning' are crucial attributes of successful learners. A classroom therefore needs to be a safe space where students enjoy challenging rather than merely engaging tasks (2009, p.245). He cites openness to experience as 'one of the more powerful influences on achievement throughout schooling' (2009, p.60) and this links directly to one of the more powerful teaching interventions of feedback which is most effective when students feel low levels of threat to their self-esteem (2009, p.175). Bruner similarly asserts that: 'Any system of education, any theory of pedagogy, any "grand national policy" that diminishes the school's role in nurturing its pupils' self-esteem fails at one of its primary functions' (1996, p.38). There is a complex web of factors in and out of school affecting a young person's self-esteem but the role of education should be in mitigating those factors as far as possible. Hattie's research leads him to conclude that the key to good learning is collaboration: between teachers, between students, between teachers and students. Effective schools are communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Hattie finds that although attributes of a students' socio-economic and biological background have no significant impact on their ability to progress, their own self-attributes do. Part of a teacher's expertise is then in creating an environment of trust for the student to safely take on challenges and risks that strengthen rather than damage their self-belief, such that school learning becomes intrinsically valuable in the eyes of the student, rather than merely valuable for the extrinsic rewards gained from socially conforming and passing tests. Hattie's caveat is that 'Too much external motivation can lead to shallow learning of the surface features, completion of work regardless of the standard and completing work for the sake of praise or similar rewards' (2012, p.42). On the other hand, 'Succeeding at something that you thought was difficult is the surest way in which to enhance self-efficacy and self-concept as a learner' (2012, p.52). Shakespeare's reputation for difficulty can therefore be an advantage in boosting students' self-esteem when they are able to feel ownership of his work through theatre-based practice. Finding the right level of challenge for each student is the art of teaching and while Bruner chose the metaphor of a spiral curriculum, Dewey talked about continuity of experience, and Vygotsky developed the zpd, Hattie uses the metaphor of a 'Goldilocks zone' of just the right level of challenge and familiarity to progress learning. In this zone, students can build their resilience to become more confident, productive learners. Theatre-based practice requires teachers to take risks in their encouragement of students to take risks (Irish, 2011), for as Bruner asserts: 'Education is risky, for it fuels the sense of possibility' which in turn supports the 'viability of a culture' (1996, p.42).

Progression results from the right balance of surface to deep or conceptual learning. Surface learning can be understood through the lower order thinking skills in Bloom's highly influential taxonomy (1956): recall, comprehension and application; while deep learning can be understood as Bloom's higher order thinking skills of: analysis, evaluation and synthesis/creativity. Hattie prefers the Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes (SOLO) model developed by John Biggs and Kevin Collis (1982) as a clearer approach, allowing teachers, and importantly students, to understand progression. The SOLO taxonomy moves from the surface learning of uni-structural and multi-structural knowledge of related but unconnected points to the deep 'relational' learning where the multiple points can be connected and compared, through to 'extended abstract' learning where the ideas are secure enough to translate to a different domain (Hattie, 2012, pp.26-9). See example below.

SOLO Taxonomy
(from Biggs and Collis 1982)

| Prestructural | Unistructural | Multistructural | Relational | Extended abstract |

Who's Macbeth?

Macbeth is King of Scotland

Macbeth met some witches. He killed Duncan. He became king of Scotland.

By telling Macbeth something that was already true, the witches tricked him into believing he could be king and this gave him confidence to kill Duncan and become king himself.

Michael Gove used to be good friends with David Cameron but he listened to the predictions of the Daily Mail (including his wife) and stabbed Cameron in the back over Brexit because he wanted to be PM himself.

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3.4.3 Collaboration

Hattie is a great admirer of Shayer's seminal work on cognitive acceleration which built on the principles developed by both Vygotsky and Piaget. Shayer and colleagues demonstrated through the Cognitive Acceleration for Science Education (CASE) project that critical and creative engagement with received knowledge is effective in science learning as it is in the arts and humanities. They found that such interventions have a permanent effect on student's capabilities and that the effects transfer to other subject areas with students achieving, on average, a grade higher than previously predicted for maths and English as well as science (Shayer, 1999; 2003). CASE promotes peer collaboration as essential to the process, with students playing roles in their problem solving tasks that in a Vygotskyan way extend their scope, making them a head taller than normal. Shayer describes how a CASE lesson works in principle, borrowing a performance metaphor of Acts. The lesson plan moves through Act 1 – in which the teacher sets up the task - to Act 2 which is the CZA (Construction Zone Activity) where the element of cognitive conflict or problem solving is introduced. Students work in groups to solve the problem by negotiating externally with each other (and the knowledge and ability each other brings to the task) and internally with their own knowledge and ability challenged both by the content and process of the task. This is followed in Act 3 by a plenary through which students share and question other groups, thereby consolidating their individual

learning through this social process. This last Act includes teacher guided metacognition of how and what they have learned.

Shayer describes the teacher's role in Act 2:

> During Act 2 the teacher's main task is the class scan. He/she only intervenes to enhance group energy where it flags, or to drop in the right question to induce cognitive conflict where a group has become complacent at too low a level of processing […] It is her job to manage the lesson so that peer–peer mediation is maximised, a very different skill from ordinary instructional teaching. (2003, p.483)

As Shayer highlights, this approach requires different skills from the traditional teacher role and the pedagogy described here will still be more readily familiar to a drama teacher than a science teacher. As a young teacher in the early 1990s, I spent a year teaching science in a comprehensive school. CASE was a new buzzword among my colleagues, with the project starting to achieve success. Those were early days but my drama background allowed me to feel far more comfortable with the approaches suggested than my science trained colleagues who questioned the rigour of the approach, particularly that the students had any worthwhile experiences to bring to bear on the problems tackled. In agreement with Shayer and advocates of a co-constructivist approach, Dewey (1938, p.21) recognises that engaging with the experiences a student brings to the classroom is a more challenging role for the teacher than transmitting the experience of received knowledge: 'basing education upon personal experience may mean more multiplied and more intimate contacts between the mature and the immature than ever existed in the traditional school, and consequently more, rather than less guidance by others.' Alexander (2008, p.50) notes the challenge as requiring 'a conceptual map of what is to be taught, the ability to think laterally within and beyond that map, and an appreciation of where children are 'at' cognitively and what kind of intervention will scaffold their thinking from present to desired understanding'. LPN teacher Kathy would agree noting, 'This type of co-construction is not without difficulties since it requires fluid planning and often quick thinking on the part of the teacher' (Irish, 2014b, p.3).

Hattie's focus on the role of the teacher and his conditions for what makes an expert teacher can seem idealistic or overly demanding for busy teachers working under stressful conditions but his call is for a more collaborative climate where trust is as important for teachers as it is for students. He rates teachers working together in a

community of practice to improve their impact on students' learning as achieving one of the highest effect sizes of his findings at 0.93 (2013). Collaborative working requires 'a caring, supportive staffroom, a tolerance of errors, and for learning from other teachers, a peer culture among teachers of engagement, trust, shared passion and so on' (2009, p.240) The same attributes, he points out, that work for students, and which theatre practice recognises as *ensemble* (further explored in chapter six). LPN teacher Emily notes the change collaborative working made to her teaching: 'Working as an ensemble instantly changes the class dynamic. The feeling of playfulness, the change of energy, the instant engagement suddenly allows the teacher to see students construct understanding for themselves.' Another LPN teacher Mark quotes his Year 8 student who told an Ofsted inspector 'I know I am making progress because the teacher is not telling me the answers, I am finding them for myself.'

Although Hattie credits teachers with immense agency over their students' learning, he also acknowledges that 'it is students themselves, in the end, not teachers, who decide what students will learn' (2009, p.241). He cites the work of fellow New Zealander, Graham Nuthall (2005) on the three worlds that intersect in the classroom: the public world of activity shared with the teacher; the private-social world of peer interactions; and the private-individual world where personal meaning is formed. Hattie summarises Nuthall's findings:

> students lived in a personal and social world of their own in the classroom, they already knew at least 40 per cent of what the teachers intended them to learn, a third of what each student learned was not learned by any other student in the class, students learned how and when the teacher would notice them and how to give the appearance of active involvement, and a quarter of the specific concepts and principles that students learned were critically dependent on private peer talk or on self-designed activities or use of resources (2005, cited in Hattie, 2009, p.241)

These findings emphasise the value of creating independent learners, willing, interested and able to further their own learning and confident in understanding the value of making personal analogies to help them learn. A study by Nuthall (2007) found that whatever their prior level of ability, the students who made most progress were those with a pragmatic approach to making the classroom work for them rather than those who did everything they were told but without a sense of personal investment. Nuthall's findings highlight the unique nature of how we each process meaning and the value of co-operative learning strategies that allow students to share and explore meanings. Hattie

finds that structured opportunities for co-operative rather than individualistic learning result in a greater probability of increases, not only in students' well-being and openness to learning but also in academic achievement and the interpersonal skills that will make young people successful in adult life (2009, pp.213-4; 2012, p.78). To this end, he advises against 'prescription strategies' that use particular methods or scripts since these will not create personalised or independent learning. An ensemble of teachers and students requires not just trust, but respect for the plurality of perspectives. It depends on sharing of meanings through analogies and an acknowledgement of the value of analogy and narrative in how we learn. In Hattie's words:

> We learn best by interacting with the ideas, by deliberately rephrasing the ideas, and by finding 'coat hangers' to link to previous notions (or examples) […] Stories and example cases tend to be remembered better than facts and abstract principles' (2012, p.101).

Hattie's message ultimately is that each student and each teacher is unique and teaching must therefore be allowed to flourish as an art, a practice, rather than a prescribed set of approaches.

3.5   A broad and balanced curriculum

The 2016 OECD report on 'Teaching Excellence' finds that 96% of teachers in England see their role as a teacher as facilitating students' own inquiry (Schleicher, 2016), illustrating a strong belief across the profession in the constructivist pedagogies Dewey, Vygotsky and Bruner pioneered. In today's systems, official school measurements of a child's ability strip away context to reductive data driven labels such as 'pupil premium' and 'contextualised value added'. Teachers working with the individual human beings who inhabit their classrooms day in and day out readily tell stories of individual successes and failures, instinctively situating those successes and failures within the social context of the child and their peers; they explain the humanity behind the numbers and some of their voices have been heard in this chapter. For policy makers, however, there is a temptation towards the clarity of generalised behaviourist approaches. In a reaction against such approaches, Adey and Dillon (2012, p.xxiii) explain: 'Many myths in education arise from over simple categorization and stereotyping […] Over the last 25 years, teachers have been subjected to an increasing barrage of instructions, guidance, advice and statutory regulations all designed by an administration that acts as if the fine details of classroom life can be fully controlled.'

Even before the age of compulsory education for all, Dewey (1938, p.45) had recognised a flaw in traditional models that saw children as empty vessels to be filled with received knowledge: 'This lack of mutual adaptation made the process of teaching and learning accidental. Those to whom the provided conditions were suitable managed to learn. Others got on as best they could.' Over the last century since Dewey was writing, engagement and enjoyment have been recognised as key elements of any classroom experience, not least for promoting intrinsic motivation. Hattie, however, raises caveats that:

> Decisions are so often made to engage students in interesting activities, to excite them to participate in learning, and to ensure that, when the bell rings, they have completed the assigned tasks and at least enjoyed the activity. Such dull aspirations for students may entice the willing, the bright, and those with high levels of 'inhibitory control', but will not continue to challenge students to reinvest in the game of schooling (2012, p.35).

He suggests that both transmissive models of education and learning through enjoyment can be seen as best suited to independent learners motivated to learn in any environment. Many students need more support from the 'expert' teachers Hattie describes who are able to respond to the unique abilities and experiences of their students, and provide a climate of trust, collaboration, engagement and challenge that allows them to grow as independent learners within a broad and balanced curriculum. These teachers put the practice into theatre-based practice, using their pedagogical skills and tacit knowledge to realise the potential of theatre approaches.

In considering the question of 'how do young people learn?' it is easy to understand how teachers and senior leaders might see prioritising the material knowledge that leads to good examination results as pragmatic and democratic. Reviewing the findings of Dewey, Vygotsky, Bruner and Hattie, however, it seems that the values of democracy are best served by an education system that prioritises metacognition and collaboration. In this way, students are able to build, not just knowledge, but the skills and confidence to critically and creatively engage with it. Dewey's Pragmatic approach foregrounds the need for teachers to shape experiences of sufficient quality to progress young people's learning. He emphasises the need for pluralism and inquiry in a social democracy, and for art to communicate possibilities rather than abiding values. Vygotsky describes the value of playful challenge, particularly in the development of social communication skills and in understanding language as a contextually dynamic means of communication. Bruner

develops Dewey's Pragmatic perspective on education, focussing on the importance of the quality of a narrative in how we learn and share that learning. He promotes the value of metacognitive approaches which seek out problems and ask 'what if?' of a cultural inheritance. Hattie confirms and consolidates the importance of collaboration and metacognition, and the crucial role relationships and personal experiences play in shaping learning. LPN teacher Emily explains the value of the dialogic, constructivist approaches she learned through her training on theatre-based practice as achieving:

> what generally day to day teaching misses, it can allow pupils to truly engage in lessons where their thoughts and ideas are valued and built upon immediately by their peers and teachers. For many pupils this feeling of power is transforming their attitude to education (Irish, 2014b, p.13).

This growth in confidence as young people feel that their thoughts and ideas are valued should, as Bruner says, be 'one of the primary functions' of schooling (1996, p.38). It can support them in building experiences that value the thoughts and feelings of others and in developing the creative and critical skills that will help them play a role in a democratic society.

Chapter four: The values of theatre-based practice

He lived and lives in a community of artists (Bate, 1997, p.184).

In this chapter I consider how theatre-based practice has evolved in dialogue with formal education and introduce key ideas for how it can support young people in appreciating Shakespeare as a literary heritage which is an artistic resource for understanding the culture that surrounds them. I situate theatre-based practice as complementary to the spectrum of active approaches to teaching Shakespeare by reviewing the influence of three leading advocates of the practice: Rex Gibson, Peggy O'Brien and Cicely Berry. I then set out the key principles of the practice as dialogic pedagogy which makes 'acquaintance with the past a means of understanding the present' (Dewey, 1938, p.78) by introducing the concepts of 'the emancipatory principle' and 'the social brain'. I end by discussing how Shakespeare's own education can usefully illuminate our relationship with him.

I have chosen to use the term 'theatre-based' for the pedagogy I am assessing because the approaches are based in the performance and rehearsal techniques of the theatre world; allowing that this sets up an analogy where the similarities and differences of practice between directors and actors, and teachers and students can be explored. I distinguish 'practice' from 'approaches', as 'practice' includes key attitudes, behaviours and knowledge alongside the techniques and strategies which can form a toolkit of 'approaches'. Teachers' ownership of pedagogy becomes absorbed into their practice through reflection that adapts approaches to suit the social and curriculum context in which they are working. Personal adaptation is the difference between theatre-based *practice*: a reflective, constantly shifting process, relying on tacit knowledge; and theatre-based *approaches*: a set of tools to use. I propose theatre-based practice as acknowledging and celebrating the incompleteness of our knowledge by exploring cases of dramatic situations as hypotheses about the human condition. In this way, it works with negative capability, not in a passive acceptance but in an active and restless search for a quality of truth through finding rather than forcing analogies. It could be seen as restoring a balance in education between valuing how our left and right hemispheres work to construct our worlds.

4.1 Active approaches

The late twentieth century saw a zeitgeist of development of 'active approaches' for school study of Shakespeare. Drama pedagogies were becoming more established in schools, influencing the practice of English classrooms, alongside which Rex Gibson in Cambridge, Peggy O'Brien in Washington, DC, and Cecily Berry in Stratford were devising strategies for working on Shakespeare with young people which would become highly influential.

Gibson called his own methods 'active, and, as seen in chapter four, his work was noted positively by Brian Cox in the new NC. Gibson's influence has been substantial and it is worth quoting his definition of active methods in full:

> Active methods comprise a wide range of expressive, creative and physical activities. They recognise that Shakespeare wrote his plays for performance, and that his scripts are completed by enactment of some kind. The dramatic context demands classroom practices that are the antithesis of methods in which students sit passively, without intellectual or emotional engagement. Shakespeare is not a museum exhibit with a large 'Do Not Touch' label, but a living force inviting active, imaginative creation. Active methods release students' imagination and involve them in speaking and acting. Such action gives force and substance to the discussion, writing and design work that students undertake. It helps them to make Shakespeare their own, as they inhabit the imaginative worlds of the plays through action. Direct experience of Shakespeare's language allows students to feel its distinctive forms and rhythms, and to respond with a real sense of personal engagement. Active methods dissolve the traditional oppositions of analysis and imagination, intellect and emotion. They encourage informed personal responses which are both critical and appreciative. In active work, students combine critical thought with empathy, confidence with a willingness to suspend judgement. Interpretations do not have to be of the narrowing 'either…or' type but can be the more expansive and imaginative 'both…and' variety. (1998, pp.xii-xiii)

The key aspect of what 'active' means emerging from this definition is relativism. The words 'imagination' or imaginative' are used no less than five times in this short passage alongside active verbs: enact, involve, make their own, inhabit, experience, feel, respond, engage. Gibson is clear that through these methods, young people are encouraged to bring their own ideas and values to bear on a shared experience of understanding the text. He is also clear that intellectual and emotional responses should go hand in hand, and as such, ideas can be wide ranging and organic, rather than narrowly taxonomic.

Since Gibson wrote this definition, leaders in Shakespeare education have chosen to refine it in their own way and find their own terms to describe their practice. In his

introduction to *The North Face of Shakespeare*, James Stredder describes his book as 'a contribution to the "Active Shakespeare" movement' (2004, p.xiv) which he sees as first gaining momentum from the progressive approaches developed in the 1960s and gaining mass through Gibson's Shakespeare in Schools Project in the 1980s (2004, pp.4-5). Stredder acknowledges the various descriptive terms used for working with Shakespeare in the classroom, suggesting a progressive laddering of three terms: 'active', 'practical' and 'dramatic'. 'Active' has been relegated to the lowest or rather the most foundational rung of engagement as it implies sharing with other people, for example paired or group discussion. 'Practical' involves a further step in moving from talking to showing, for example creating physical images of what has been discussed. Stredder defines 'dramatic' as:

> more specialised again, for now there is the implication that students are performing or using the idea of performative voices or roles or structures. Taking part in the practical activity of making a tableau is barely dramatic, but may rapidly become so as participants are invited to speak, relate, move or comment, in role as characters from the play (2004, p.xv).

'Dramatic' then implies a bigger imaginative shift of putting yourselves in someone else's shoes; responding as you think they would respond under their given circumstances; bringing your own relative experiences to bear on understanding someone else's situation in a creative interaction with received knowledge.

Working contemporaneously with Gibson, but on the other side of the Atlantic, O'Brien set up the Teaching Shakespeare Institute in the US. Beginning in 1984, as Head of Education at the Folger Library in Washington DC, she expanded the programmes bringing together academics, teachers (from Elementary and High schools), actors and directors to explore how best to work with Shakespeare and young people. In the Folger's first edition of *Shakespeare Set Free*, the culmination of exploratory work by a team of teachers and artists in the late 1980s, O'Brien explains her philosophy:

> The man wrote *plays*. So is this about *acting?* No, it's about *doing.* Students get his language in their mouths, take on the work of actors and directors, get to know a play from the inside out. Don't worry about that stodgy academic notion that the body and the intellect can't be engaged simultaneously, that students moving about a classroom can't possibly be *really* learning anything. Make no mistake: learning Shakespeare through *doing* Shakespeare involves the very best kind of close reading, the most exacting sort of literary analysis (1993, p.xii, italics original).

The Folger (2015b) defines its own practice as distinctive with the 'Folger Approach'. The three tenets of which are:

- Connects students with Shakespeare's language head on, so that they own the plays and everything in them
- Builds on that foundation with elements of performance and scholarship, at a level and in a way that only the Folger Shakespeare Library can
- Supports all students in reading closely, asking good questions, citing textual evidence, and benefiting from lasting relationships with words and ideas

As an organisation combining a rich resource of texts by and about Shakespeare, and a working theatre, Folger's education team have always emphasised the links between practice and scholarship. They provide online resources, CPD for teachers, workshops and performance opportunities for students, and programmes for communities, based on a pedagogy they define as: 'an interactive approach to the study of literature, particularly Shakespeare's plays and poems, in which students participate in a close reading of text through intellectual, physical, and vocal engagement' (2015a).

As Senior Advisor for education programmes at the Globe Theatre, Fiona Banks has chosen the term 'Creative Shakespeare' to describe Globe practice. It is a pedagogy she sees rooted in the processes of discovery that happen in Globe rehearsal rooms as the artistic company work towards productions, but which may have 'evolved and been adapted to work for young people' (2014, p.4). She acknowledges Gibson as a major influence in setting up Globe Education principles and practice, and echoes of his language, as well as O'Brien's, can be heard in her definition of 'creative approaches':

> Creative approaches are active, physically and/or intellectually. They require students to engage fully with the moment they are exploring, to analyse based on the evidence of their actual experience and to make informed critical responses to the play. They can enable and deepen a student's insight and his/her analysis of any given moment or character. They challenge any notion that academic understanding and physical, vocal and emotional engagement with a text do not go hand in hand (2014, p.5).

While Globe Education embraces Gibson as a foundational influence, the main early influence on the RSC approach to Shakespeare in the classroom was the work of Cicely Berry. Berry was appointed as Head of Voice at the RSC in the late 1970s, and persuaded by Maurice Daniels, then in charge of education, to contribute workshops to the company's fledgling education programme. Berry reports learning a great deal through her encounters with young people which helped further develop her methods of working

with Shakespeare's language. A foundational encounter for her, which she often recalls, was working with a group of Year 13 boys on Act 3, Scene 3 of *Othello*. The boys were connecting to the text intellectually but not emotionally and in a moment of inspiration borne from frustration she asked them to speak the text whilst holding on to each other, pushing and pulling against each other as they did so. She describes tables and chairs being knocked over but regards it as all worthwhile when one boy said, 'I see how he feels – he is drowning in his feelings,' voicing the physical connection with the language the students were making (Berry, 2008, pp.28-9). Berry's work in her own words is 'about releasing both the actors' and the directors' subconscious response to the sound of the text, and through that response to find a deeper and 'other' layer to its literal, surface meaning' (2008, p.1). She is deeply interested in how the rhythms of language create meaning, not in a generalised way but in the specific case of how each individual finds thoughts as they speak and listen. Her work proved highly influential on the development of the RSC's educational practices as ways to connect young people to the way Shakespeare's language works when it is put on its feet in the physical dynamics of a play, and has been hugely influential on my own practice.

In order to reflect a rooting of their education practice in the authentic work of the company, the RSC moved from defining their practice from 'active' to 'rehearsal room'. As Stredder (2004) recognised, 'active approaches' had become too broad a term, incorporating discursive approaches that have become not only standard but required in English classrooms. The current introduction to all RSC teacher training, however, uses the term 'active, playful approaches' (RSC, 2016, p.86). Both the Globe's 'creative' and the RSC's 'active, playful' build from Stredder's definition of 'dramatic' and what they signify are approaches to working with young people on Shakespeare's text that both expect and respect personal discoveries made through working with other people in any of the many ways that actors make discoveries about the text as they create productions of the plays.

The Folger, Globe and RSC advocate their own version of theatre-based practice, but each version values the sum of the interconnected parts of intellectual, emotional and physical responses, which give social purpose to engagement with a cultural inheritance. Stredder (2004, p.13) optimistically suggests:

> This pedagogy combines traditional and progressive elements [...] a synthesis has been forged, making a 'new progressivism' possible [...] Traditionalists can

welcome the principle that the original text is always used, while progressives
know that the work is freed from the tyranny of authority and propriety.

In practice, issues of time, space, and the confidence and commitment to take the risks
theatre-based practice entails often inhibit teachers engaging with it (Irish, 2011), and
there remains limited understanding from policy-makers, commentators, and many
teachers about the potential for theatre-based practice to provide structured
opportunities for creative and critical interaction with the cultural inheritance of
Shakespeare texts.

In the field of Shakespeare education, the central ontological question of 'Why
Shakespeare?' has a long history. As discussed in chapter two, whilst it is rare to find an
educationalist who argues against the inclusion of Shakespeare in a first language English
curriculum, the reasons why he should be included rumble on with a dialectic that
roughly divides between a more cleanly defined heritage perspective: reading
Shakespeare as a cultural inheritance of received knowledge, and a messy, creative
perspective: performing Shakespeare as intercultural dialogue. This dialectic matches
Dewey's (1938, p.17) assertion that 'The history of educational theory is marked by
opposition between the idea that education is development from within and that it is
formation from without.' Dewey characterises 'traditional' approaches to education as
knowledge, skills and values constructed by past generations being transmitted to or
'imposed' on the new generation from outside their own experiences. He argues that this
'formation from without' must be balanced with the personal experiences of
'development from within', and that the art of teaching is in managing this balance.
Frances Dolan (2009, p.194) observes this dilemma from the perspective of Higher
Education:

> Other teachers have sometimes shared with me their concern that allowing
> students to make connections to the present encourages relativism, a cavalier
> disregard for the otherness of the past, sloppiness. This is not an anxiety I've ever
> shared. I prefer chaos to silence any day and those often seem as if they're pretty
> much the alternatives.

The chaos versus silence Dolan suggests could be recognised by Secondary teachers of
English as the alternatives of a drama versus desk-bound approach to the plays. English
teachers often feel they have insufficient training to use theatre approaches with their
students or are sceptical that such approaches provide sufficient depth of analysis for
examination requirements. They can feel that the silence of students apparently imbibing

knowledge is preferable to the chaos of apparently unassessable and undisciplined discovery. Teachers like Dolan, however, also recognise that relativism engages students, supporting the necessary connections in the brain for learning to happen. Relativism is essential to theatre-based practice, but in the sense of Alexander's (2008, p.118) proposal of 'cumulation' as the principle of dialogic teaching:

> Cumulation simultaneously makes demands on the teacher's professional skill, subject knowledge, and insight into the capacities and current understanding of each of his/her pupils […] seeking then to scaffold understanding between the child's and the culture's ways of making sense.

Two key interconnected principles of theatre-based practice supporting this scaffolding are: the democratic values of the emancipatory principle, and an appreciation of the functioning of the social brain.

4.2   The Emancipatory Principle

In 1993, five hundred academics protested about the proposed introduction of KS3 tests: 'These philistine, ill-informed proposals would strip English of much that we and many of our colleagues regard as most precious and educational about it. They threaten to reduce a living language to a dead one, and a vital literary heritage to a mummified relic' (cited in Gibson, 1993, p.80). As seen in chapter two, the Government retaliated that these left leaning academics wanted to deny young people their entitlement to Shakespeare. Following the successes of his *Shakespeare in Schools* project, no-one could accuse Gibson of this. Gibson (1993, p.80) clarifies the more strident tone of the Eagleton led letter and explains: 'One central feature unites all critics of KS3 Shakespeare SATs. It is the conviction that education must open up emancipatory possibilities.' He asserts that trust in teachers to choose the Shakespeare experience most suitable for their pupils is a basic tenet of this emancipation, and continues:

> But the emancipatory principle entails much more than that practical (but highly important) choice. It means showing there are worlds elsewhere, other ways of living. It is the belief that other sets of values must be fairly and openly considered; other ways of defining oneself. It is an `opening up' rather than a `closing down' experience; a concern that individuals should not be imprisoned in a single point of view. Shakespeare's plays have this quaky [sic] supremely, showing as they do, the `other-sidedness of things'. The plays offer an almost inexhaustible resource of alternatives. They are choices which can be understood at a wide variety of levels. The range extends from the qualities of individual characters to the greater themes of what it is to be human, what societies are or might be.

Gibson' emancipatory principle involves a clear democratic entitlement for all students to study Shakespeare, but also a democratic responsibility to understand other points of view, the 'other-sidedness of things', and to question 'what societies are or might be.' Gibson was an idealist, but also a pragmatist - a description that could define any good teacher - he asserts the 'right' of every child to study Shakespeare but also the need to find how best to both achieve and profit from that study in a democratic society. He found Dewey's balance of development from within and formation from without through practice that requires young people to make connections between the text they embody and their own lives, opening up the 'other-sidedness of things.'

4.2.1 Democratic entitlement

The 2012 CBI report on England's education systems endorses the World Bank's stated purpose of education to enhance 'people's ability to make informed decisions, be better parents, sustain a livelihood, adopt new technologies, cope with shocks, and be responsible citizens and effective stewards of the natural environment' (2020 education strategy, cited in CBI, 2012). For both the CBI and the World Bank, their focus is on the future economy, but there is recognition of the integrated value of personal, social and democratic aspects, and an emphasis on skills and attitudes rather than mere accumulation of knowledge. This outlook can be seen reflected in Bruner's (1996, p.118) summary that the purpose of education is to make people 'more effective, less alienated, and better human beings'. Martha Nussbaum (2010), however, observes a current trend in education policies around the world towards educating young people to promote a nation's economic rather than democratic growth. She argues for the essential role the humanities and the arts play in developing 'the ability to think critically; the ability to transcend local loyalties and to approach world problems as a "citizen of the world"; and, finally, the ability to imagine sympathetically the predicament of another person' (2010, p.7), abilities not dissimilar to those called for by the World Bank. These are abilities Nussbaum regards 'as crucial in order to enable democracies to deal responsibly with the problems we currently face as members of an interdependent world' (2010, p.10).

While, presumably, few Western politicians would argue with the need to develop these abilities or strengthen democracy, much of the political wrangling over Shakespeare's position in education systems results from differing perceptions over what democracy in education systems should mean. That the areas of study on a school curriculum are selected according to cultural priorities, reflecting the power dynamics of that culture, is

now substantially recognised (Bernstein, 1977; Hirsch 1988; Bourdieu 1992). For policy makers, setting a curriculum often entails prescribing areas of study as a matter of 'entitlement'; an illustration of 'democracy' that all young people have access to the knowledge most readily available to the dominant class. Others recognise the potential here for a superficial democracy that masks social control. Bernstein (1977, p.85) describes how a curriculum legitimising certain areas of culture, deliberately or by default, marginalises others. He explains: 'How a society collects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control.' Examination results are the most salient aspect of the system of league tables from which parents and other interested parties can judge the success of a school. Over reliance on examination grades as an indicator of a child's abilities can, however, create obstacles to an understanding of the cultural contingency of knowledge and learning if too much emphasis is placed on examining received knowledge. Former Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove was accused of demanding a 'pub quiz' curriculum for History by Richard J Evans (2013) and for being a modern day Gradgrind wanting children to learn content rather than the skills to interact with it. Gove was influenced by E.D. Hirsch's (1988) arguments that to achieve social equality, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds need to have the same knowledge base as their advantaged peers. Schools Minister Nick Gibb (Abrams, 2012) explained that the practice of applying skills in History lessons to construct historical narratives is insufficient and instead a specified core set of facts needs to be learned, adding: 'The essence of what Hirsch is talking about is: it's not just any knowledge, it's only that knowledge which constitutes the shared intellectual currency of the society.' Gibb here smooths over the key question of who constructs the received knowledge of 'the *shared* intellectual currency' and disregards the critical engagement with it which can develop from the more metacognitive approaches discussed in chapter three.

Many Historians would regard a critical engagement with inherited cultures and systems of rule as integral to their subject, just as many education specialists, like Coles, regard teaching as engaging in democratic practice. Coles (2012, p.59) advocates 'classrooms as sites of social interaction where students are afforded agency' and she questions the role of compulsory Shakespeare in this context. In her examination of the current prevalent concept of a 'democratic entitlement' to Shakespeare, Coles is convinced that for the majority of students who come from backgrounds unfamiliar with Shakespeare, their

school encounters reinforce cultural divides by cementing their cultural consciousness that his work is not for them. She finds English teachers directly and indirectly strengthening preconceptions that Shakespeare is to be endured, is difficult, and can only be understood through teacher mediation. She finds little evidence of students finding relevance in the plays to their own lives and concludes:

> If policymakers continue to adhere to a view of culture which presents it [Shakespeare] more as a body of elite knowledge rather than as social practice, then students who do not come from backgrounds where Shakespeare forms part of their cultural capital, are unlikely to find it the liberating experience it is claimed to be (Coles, 2013, p.63).

Coles is not directly assessing the efficacy of theatre-based approaches and claims no expertise in this area, but it is interesting to note that her observations from the perspective of a specialist in English education lead her to be unconvinced that theatre approaches can improve democratic access to Shakespeare. She assesses the available evidence as overly idealistic and focussing on approaches which tend 'to shift interpretation of the play towards an expressive realist paradigm' (2012 ,p.252). Her concern is that in practice, the approaches lead students towards a Bradleyan conception of characters as real people. In her words: 'What becomes important is experiencing the apparently authentic feelings, motivations and preferences of people who inhabit the play, rather than exploring roles, ideas and situations in a more abstract sense' (2012, p.252) - a description I recognise as a common misapprehension of theatre-based practice which is explored further in chapter five. She also finds, however, that the students she interviews invariably cite drama activities as those most enjoyable and useful in supporting their understanding of the texts, and finds an exception to her concerns with one teaching group in which pupils are more ready to analyse characters as cultural, dramatic constructions. This group's teacher is described by Coles as overtly using theatre techniques and terminology, as opposed to 'active approaches', and notably this is the group she observes to be most likely to find personal relevance in the texts through sharing and exploring their own culturally constructed responses. Coles acknowledges this as the democratic potential of drama to afford agency. This leads, however, to her conclusion that: 'Any consideration of the positive aspects of teaching Shakespeare […] needs to be separated out from the emotional, social and intellectual benefits attributed to drama per se (as either an arts subject or as a method)' (2012, p.293).

In defining the RSC's education practice, Jonothan Neelands and Jacqui O'Hanlon (2011, p.245) challenge this separation, explaining that the RSC's use of social constructivist and pro-social methods in its education practice is not about a 'crude instrumentalism […] in which Shakespeare becomes a "means" to social and behavioural outcomes rather than an "end" in itself', but is about nurturing a learning environment that encourages students to engage positively with Shakespeare in a way that might lead to a life-long relationship with his work with all its cultural and aesthetic complexities. They acknowledge the difficulties in negotiating an appropriate balance between the often conflicting pedagogical aims of experience and access on the one hand and intellectual tools and socio-historical knowledge on the other, but present a pedagogy based on rehearsal room practice as a resolution.

Addressing the issue of democratic entitlement, Neelands and O'Hanlon (2011, p.240) argue for a cultural as well as curriculum entitlement to Shakespeare, allowing young people the opportunity to recognise Shakespeare 'as a source of pleasure and as a reference point for understanding the complexities of their own and others' lives'. For Neelands, an entitlement to Shakespeare increases a young person's potential to access and challenge the cultural hegemony, but this goes hand in hand with an entitlement to a dialogic education found through drama to create and share meaning. He explains: 'At the heart of all drama and theatre is the opportunity for role-taking – to imagine oneself as the other. To try and find oneself in the other and in so doing to recognise the other in oneself' (2002, p.122). This speaks to a wider definition of democracy than that each voice should be heard, rather that each voice should be understood; that through inhabiting the 'other-sidedness of things' (Gibson, 1993) we acknowledge our own 'prejudices' (Gadamer, 1975).

In an article advocating an understanding of Shakespeare, not as a 'cosy poet' but a chronicler of changing times and attitudes, Neelands (2005, p.14) believes, 'Shakespeare can be interesting to young people if presented as a man who was torn by the choices and movement of the world around him - sometimes dangerous and radical, sometimes conservative and monarchist, sometimes a man of the people and sometimes only of the prosperous and educated classes.' Rather than the 'inert parcels of curriculum knowledge' Coles (2013, p.63) finds Shakespeare reduced to by a curriculum entitlement, Neelands' Shakespeare is one to be engaged with through a conversation across time which acknowledges and explores the similarities and differences between the

knowledge and understanding Shakespeare's original audience may have brought to the plays and our own. He asserts that: 'Access and belonging to the culture of power requires knowledge of its symbolic and cultural heritage' (2008, p.10). For progressive educationalists including Dewey and Freire, a foundational aspect of their educational philosophy was that democracy is an active, critical process that requires engaging with and challenging the received wisdom of a cultural inheritance. A creative and critical interaction with inherited culture requires both the acquisition of knowledge considered a cultural and curriculum entitlement, but also, as a principle of emancipation, the skills to question its symbolism and why it is considered an entitlement.

4.2.2   Democratic action

Paulo Freire worked mainly in adult education in Brazil and Africa in the mid-twentieth century, formulating his ideas around the importance of 'authentic' dialogue as the foundation of learning, the purpose of which is the development of critical consciousness, or 'conscientization'. He metaphorically termed traditional approaches 'banking learning' whereby teachers 'deposit' learning in students' empty accounts, and in contrast, proposed 'problem-posing learning' where teachers acknowledge the experiences and social conditions of the students and work with them. He explained: 'Banking learning treats learners as objects of assistance. Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity, thereby responding to the vocation of men [sic] who are authentic only in inquiry and creative transformation' (1970, p.71). Freire's agenda was overtly political but he saw his message as one of hope that through critical dialogue, obstacles could be overcome in the struggle towards a fairer society.

Freire's work had a strong influence on his fellow Brazilian Augosto Boal who adopted the title of Freire's seminal text *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) into his own *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1985). Boal's influence on theatre-based practice is not always recognised since many of his ideas have become incorporated into practitioners' toolkits, adapted and developed beyond their original purpose and meaning, which is in itself a testament to the wide applicability of his work. His key idea was the metaphor of 'theatre as container' in which to exercise ideas and share meaning about how to deal with the world beyond. Within the container, social oppression could be recognised through theatrical analogies and ways of overcoming it rehearsed. Boal employed our human ability to suspend disbelief and simultaneously play a role in an imagined drama reflective of reality, terming this 'metaxis'.

Boal's techniques are particularly useful for the emancipatory principle of theatre-based practice because of their focus on interaction. He aimed for his audience to become 'Spect-Actors', both spectators and actors of the unfolding drama. In his performances, the spect-actor 'assumes the protagonistic role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change – in short trains himself for real action' (1985, p.122). A production of a Shakespeare play does not conventionally employ the improvisational techniques Boal developed for performance, but many of his principles relate to rehearsal room practice. Image theatre for example, employs the conventions of tableaux, using bodies to convey non-verbal meaning. In Boal's image theatre, the spect-actors sculpt each other into representations of feelings and situations. In a typical sequence of imaging, they create a 'real' image representing their 'oppression' or how things are and an 'ideal' image, representing their 'liberation' or how they would like things to be. They then find a way to move from the real to the ideal as a rehearsal for making that change in life outside the theatrical container.

Rehearsing a Shakespeare play, actors investigate potential turning points in order to discover intentions and motivations: when could something have changed; how could someone have acted differently and why didn't they; summarised in the foundational inquiry of theatre practice, 'what if'? Boal's techniques, particularly his image theatre and forum theatre, have become embedded in drama practice and using these in the Shakespeare classroom can support speculation around how and why characters behave, providing metaphors for how and why people behave outside the container of the drama. This uses drama as case studies, 'the illuminative from which others may […] draw or engage with' (Thomas, 2007, p.110).

This collaborative problem solving links to the sequence of moral questions studying a Shakespeare play can provoke, exploring our similarities and differences in response to the questions raised by the plays. A plurality of perspectives exists amongst human minds because of what McConachie (2006, p.8) describes as 'the culturally specific conditions of their given moments and places'. Accommodating and understanding these differences through exploring the 'other-sidedness of things' is the strength of a democratic society which theatre-based practice can support. Embodying the text can also, however, bring young people closer to the similarities humans share at the core of our cultures as part of our evolutionary heritage. Lakoff and Johnson (1999, p.6) describe this as the commonalities of our bodies and environments resulting in our conceptual systems being

'either universal or widespread across languages and cultures'; McConachie (2015, p.13) summarises these commonalities as 'biocultural universals'. These biocultural universals emerge as a result of our social brains.

4.3   The Social Brain

4.3.1   Social intelligence

Piaget (1953) is often quoted as saying 'Intelligence is what you use when you don't know what to do' and the maxim provides a useful summary of the widely accepted concept of intelligence as being adaptation to environment. Within this wide concept, however, a definition of intelligence is still highly contentious (Sternberg, 2012). Higher primate intelligence is generally distinguished from lower animals' through our ability to infer that something is likely to happen even if we have not experienced comparable past circumstances; in other words, a creative intellect or imagination to consider 'what if?' In an influential paper in 1976, evolutionary psychologist Nicholas Humphrey considered why such intelligence might have evolved. He reasons that subsistence technology - the use of tools for gaining food and shelter that afford a relatively easy way of life - does not require creative intelligence but rather trial and error and copying. Perpetuating this easy way of life, however, requires the circumstances to pass on the achieved level of subsistence technology: giving young animals a protected period of prolonged dependence in order to learn; and contact with older animals to learn from. He suggests that: 'The resulting mix of old and young, caretakers and dependents, sisters, cousins, aunts and grandparents not only calls for considerable social responsibility but also has potentially disruptive consequences' (1976, p.8). High levels of creative intelligence are then needed to negotiate these social intricacies and those best able to do so would have gained the best chance of evolutionary success to pass on their learning as well as their DNA. Our sophisticated levels of accumulating knowledge, Humphrey argues, are the result of an intelligence that evolved to allow social communal living rather than the other way round.

Many subsequent studies have shown the importance of socialisation on the developing human mind. Philip Kitcher (2011) and Mark Johnson (2015) for example, develop ideas around how socialisation led to the evolution of our concepts of ethics and morality. Bruner's studies comparing the intersubjectivity of human and other higher primates led him to consider the value of such studies for improving pedagogy (1996, p.50). His

research into cultural psychology for education develops ideas of how we use our social and cultural intelligence to learn, describing the social transmission of learning as our species' 'astonishingly strong predisposition to culture' (1996, p.47), achieved through our ability to recognise each other as individual thinking beings who nevertheless experience the world much as we do.

Continuing advances in studies of cognitive evolution use the shorthand of 'the social brain' to describe the composition of features in human brains that seem responsible in allowing us to read others' intentions and to assess the possible effects of our possible responses (Trimble, 2007, p.173); something an actor would recognise as core to their craft. A key aspect of our social brains is Theory of Mind (ToM) or mentalising, which Carrington and Bailey (2009, p.2313) in their review of its neurological basis, describe as 'the ability to think about mental states, such as thoughts and beliefs, in oneself and others [which underlie] social interaction and allows people to make sense of the behaviour of others'. Developing ideas around ToM suggest we have an implicit and explicit system for understanding somebody else's point of view (Apperly, 2009; 2012). The implicit system appears to be present in babies from around the age of one, and recognises that someone else literally has a different point of view and does not see what we see. This probably accounts for our general response to what another mind can see and know. The explicit system is more flexible and develops in complexity in humans from the age of 3-4, allowing us to understand that someone else has understanding different to our own, another point of view, literally and metaphorically. This system seems to result in empathy and develops in complexity as we mature and experience different social situations. Adolescents are still developing this capacity and the experiences that shape their learning may account for how some people become more empathetic than others (Bainbridge, 2009; Damasio, 2004; Blakemore and Frith, 2005).

Robin Dunbar has explored ToM in relation to Shakespeare, and argues that a high order of mentalising is required from an audience asked to follow multiple mind states in the plays; for example, in understanding that Iago wants Othello to think that Desdemona loves Cassio. His research suggests that such fourth order mentalising is the limit of what 20% of the population can achieve. Dunbar proposes that actors and playwrights require higher levels of mentalising: they must understand that the audience thinks Iago wants Othello to think that Desdemona loves Cassio who is actually thinking of Bianca, sixth order mentalising that experiments have shown is within the capability of only 20% of the

population (Stiller, Nettle and Dunbar, 2003; Jahme, 2013). The question this raises for theatre-based practice is whether it can support the development of higher levels of ToM, developing capacity for empathy through developing metaphors of social scenarios for young people to experience.

4.3.2   Cognition and emotion

The complex neocortex of the human brain is the current end point of millions of years of evolution, and is where our sense of self, our sophisticated level of consciousness, is thought to reside. Increasing understanding of neurobiology has revealed what Trimble (2012, p.120) describes as 'the dominance of the old limbic and subcortical structures over neocortical activity in regulating behaviour [which] ensures a continual triumph of the emotional over the rational'. Not only our empathy, but also our reasoning is dependent on our emotional responses. Neurobiological research is building evidence for the essential role of emotion as 'a collaborator and indeed coeval constructor of our reasoning and thinking' (Trimble, 2012, p.121).

Research has built particularly on Damasio's theory of somatic markers, which itself builds on the Pragmatic thinking of William James and Charles Pierce, and leads back to Darwin's early observations in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872). Damasio (1994, p.174) describes somatic markers as 'a special instance of feelings generated from secondary emotions'. Primary emotions are generally identified as: joy, sadness, anger, fear, disgust. Secondary emotions are socialised responses developed from primary emotions and can be recognised as the stuff of drama as they include: shame, compassion, contentment, revenge, awe, jealousy, and guilt. Damasio defines 'feelings' as the quality created in our minds by physiological emotional responses to external or imagined stimuli. He describes 'all feelings of emotions' as 'complex musical variations on primordial feelings' (2012, p.21).

Somatic markers denote the physiological pathways our unique experiences shape to become our instinctive responses to emotional stimuli, and result from association through learning. Damasio describes them as 'a biasing device' (2005, p.174) which creates a feeling biasing us towards a narrower range of options from which our conscious reasoning can then select. He theorises (2005, p.177) that this bias is probably 'created in our brains during the process of education and socialization'. Notably these markers can be triggered by mental as well as physical stimulation, which suggests that

using our imaginations, particularly in maturing adolescent minds, and particularly in an embodied way through drama, could modify somatic markers in potentially positive ways, using the metaphors of dramatic social scenarios to stimulate empathic capacity and democratic socialization. Trimble (2012, p.79) agrees that: 'Cognitions can modify the responses to the stimuli in part through the effects of language and memory.' This provides some explanation of how Boal's concept of 'theatre as container' can achieve results and how theatre-based practice can encourage understanding of difference.

The language of a play concentrates human experience of how and what we share of our emotional reasoning. Playwrights employ poetic designs to compose complex human thoughts into lines of text which actors flesh out with momentary emotion, leading Langer (1994, p.314) to describe drama as 'essentially an enacted poem'. McGilchrist (2009, p.122) argues that 'language originates as an embodied expression of emotion, that is communicated by one individual "inhabiting" the body, and therefore the emotional world, of another.' Surveying the available evidence, he finds it highly probable that verbal language evolved from music, which itself evolved as a shared expression of emotion. The musical, prosodic elements of language, including intonation, rhythms and poetic devices are recognised by McGilchrist, among others, as essential and universal in human communication. Fred Lerdahl (1999, cited in Trimble, 2007, p.130) has studied the similar neural effects of music and poetry and concludes a common root of music and language which diverged as we became verbal. He argues that 'poetry straddles this evolutionary divergence by projecting, through the addition to ordinary speech of metrical and timbral patterning, its common heritage with music.' The much commented on 'musicality' of Shakespeare's language can then be seen as an integral part of how his language works to achieve social, emotional communication, which comes alive when the text is spoken aloud with intention in theatre-based practice , as will be explored further in chapter seven.

4.3.3   Cognition and metaphor

Observing that psychology experiments studying the use of metaphor tended to find a high degree of literal-mindedness with subjects making mainly superficial links between concepts, Kevin Dunbar (2001) argues that such findings result from experimenters choosing, or forcing, the analogies, effectively creating a treasure hunt. In contrast, when people are invited to invent their own metaphors they are far more creative. When, for example, Dunbar asked participants to create analogies reflecting the two sides of a

contemporary debate around whether the national budget should be balanced at the expense of social initiatives, it took just a few minutes for the average participant to create eleven, generally deriving from their own interests and experiences of the world. His studies convinced him that in naturalistic settings, we spontaneously create metaphors all the time either professionally to convey meanings, such as a politician explaining national debt by comparing it to household debt; or personally in conversation with friends and family, such as a friend who told me it was so cold in her office they were thinking of installing an ice rink. Dunbar coins his own analogy to label the findings of psychologists in a controlled laboratory experiment *in vitro* and the findings from field studies *in vivo*. He notes the discrepancy between them as 'analogical paradox' (2001, p.275).

Dunbar's resolution of the analogical paradox echoes Hofstadter's thinking: that when generating analogies spontaneously we reach inside our memories for a comparison, relying on a shared schema or mental frame with whomever we are addressing to interpret the analogy and recognise the deeper relational links we are making. When asked to choose between sources presented to us, however, we focus only on superficial features. Agreeing that 'metaphorical thinking is fundamental to our understanding of the world', McGilchrist (2009, p.115) argues this is because 'it is the only way in which understanding can reach outside the system of signs to life itself'. Metaphors take us beyond the narrow focus of labels the organising syntactic aspects of language assign to our own habitual experiences to connect us to the world of possibilities, *in vivo,* that challenge our habitual thinking.

There are interesting implications of this for how we teach Shakespeare in the classroom. Berry's (2009, pp.28-29) foundational example of a lesson in an inner London school in the 1970s discussed above (p.95) offers a good example of *in vivo* practice with the spontaneous generation of a metaphor provoked through sensory input. When Berry encouraged students to read a speech by Othello whilst holding on to each other, pushing and pulling as they did so, this created a physical, *in vivo* analogy of feeling out of control which allowed the students to make an intuitive leap to understanding Othello as 'drowning in his feelings'. A more traditional *in vitro* approach to the text with the teacher transmitting an interpretation might decode Othello's reference in the speech to the Pontic sea (*Othello*, 3.3.499) by a literal glossing that strong currents carry water from the Black Sea through the Dardanelles strait or an abstract glossing that Othello is driven

forward by his anger like being carried in a strong current. This textual analysis offers sources for comparison, but misses the opportunity for the students themselves to make deeper relational links more likely to aid both their understanding and memory of the passage. Dunbar found finding rather than forcing analogies as a way of encoding information lays down a more secure basis for retrieval of the relational features of that information; recall is strengthened through making personal analogies. If our evolutionary priority for socialization is responsible for the development of our creative intelligence, this may suggest that theatre-based practice can strengthen accumulation of received knowledge *because* it is engaging creatively with it.

Humphrey (1976, p.315) describes 'much of the best published literature' on social interaction as 'in fact genuinely "literature"', since literature provides case studies or metaphors which concentrate recognised human experiences, providing 'the illuminative from which others may […] draw or engage with' (Thomas, 2007, p.110). Bruner (1996, p.62) describes classical literature as 'talking to dead authors' and a valuable site of interaction between personal beliefs and opinions, and justified knowledge, providing the objective of the encounter is 'not worship but discourse and interpretation'; or '"going meta" on thoughts about the past'. In this way, students can make discoveries and share meaning about the human condition, generalising from what they find written in the past to apply to specific cases in the present and project about possibilities in the future. Bakhtin (1981, p.7) similarly sees the value in literature of encouraging dialogue as a reader engages with the different perspectives of the characters an author creates, something he describes as 'a living contact with unfinished, still evolving reality'. Langer (1994) argues for the advantage of drama over other literature in studying human interaction because of its necessary focus on an embodied present, which allows the social brain to reach beyond its own habitual thinking to find *in vivo* metaphors by embodying the thinking of others.

4.3.4 Embodied cognition

Bruce McConachie and Elizabeth Hart (2006) consolidate the value of the 'cognitive turn' for performance studies in a collection of essays entitled *Performance and Cognition*. In the introduction to the volume, McConachie asserts: 'It is evident that most spectators engage in empathetic observation as soon as a performance begins' employing 'a mode of cognitive engagement involving mirror neurons' (2006, p.5). Both editors additionally contribute chapters which explore the challenge findings from cognitive scientists present

to more established performance theories deriving from structuralism and semiotics. In embracing Enaction theory (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 1991) as an approach to performance studies, McConachie (2015) foregrounds experience as our means of making meaning from and through performance. He reviews the proposals of Enaction theory that our abilities to construct meaning have evolved alongside our capacity to take agency in our interactions with each other and the world around us, noting that: 'Enactivists emphasise that experiences transform our bodies and brains over time. In younger animals especially, new experiences can activate memory and learning to enable new capabilities, interactions and identities' (McConachie, 2015, p.30).

It seems we are hard-wired for collaboration and enculturation (Pagel, 1994). Experiments have shown how chimpanzees brought up in human environments learn to behave in human ways and the difference in their behaviour is thought to result from human intentions towards them, intending for them to learn (Bruner, 1996, pp.180-183). A key aspect of being human, emphasised by the Enaction paradigm, is our sophisticated recognition of another's intention, leading to encultured thought. Humphrey's (1976) early scientific description of how we anticipate behaviour, react to each other and switch tactics to achieve our ends parallels the techniques an actor learns in bringing to life the social interaction of a play. Actors inhabit social scenarios beyond their personal experience by using their social brains to imagine being in someone else's circumstances. Carrington and Bailey (2009, p.2314) define social cognition 'as the ability to understand people's behaviour through the use of cues such as facial expression, eye gaze, body postures—including gesture—and social linguistic factors, such as prosody and the social content of speech'. Understanding more about language as a function of our corporeal minds can provide insight into how theatre-based practice can go beyond material knowledge of Shakespeare and his plays to using the texts to explore and develop the highly sophisticated, but fragile social skills that millions of years of evolution have destined us to.

Theatre practice entails a complexity of human interactions, not just between the performers but also between the performers and the audience. As McConachie (2015, p.154) notes, such 'dynamic interactions' occurring within 'the constraints and satisfactions of their historical biocultures' may not necessarily lead spectators to understand the meaning intended by the artists.' Using the paradigm of the schoolmaster and the ignoramus, taken from the early nineteenth-century theories of Joseph Jacotot,

Jacques Rancière (2009) explains how a traditional transmission model of education depends on a student's recognition of their own inability, similar to the Arnoldian concept of an empty vessel waiting to be filled. Rancière (2009, p.10) proposes an alternative of 'intellectual emancipation': that whoever and wherever we are, we all share 'an intelligence that translates signs into other signs and proceeds by comparisons and illustrations in order to communicate its intellectual adventures and understand what another intelligence is endeavouring to communicate to it'. Where Jacotot calls for engaging the pupil in co-constructivist learning, Rancière calls for engaging the spectator in a theatre in co-constructivist viewing. He offers a metaphor: 'She composes her own poem with the elements of the poem before her' (2009, p.13). Rancière suggests an individual cannot help but conceive their own narrative, built from the connotations they bring and share with others in the community of the theatrical experience, through what Michael Boyd (2009) calls 'a collective encounter hanging in the air between us'.

Theatre-based practice acknowledges and embraces the different perspectives that result in different compositions but consciously deconstructs the collective encounter through collaborative, dialogic exploration of text. It works with the social brain and is rooted in the emancipatory principles of dialogic pedagogy, where, as Alexander (2008, p.122) explains:

> Dialogue requires willingness and skill to engage with minds, ideas and ways of thinking other than our own; it involves the ability to question, listen, reflect, reason, explain, speculate and explore ideas; to analyse problems, frame hypotheses and develop solutions; to discuss, argue, examine evidence, defend, probe and assess arguments; and to see through the rhetorical games that people play in order to disguise their real intentions or deny access to the truth.

This definition of dialogue, as distinct from 'talk' or 'conversation' is behind a theatre-based exploration of a Shakespeare text as it is behind a rehearsal room exploration as students and actors embody other minds in order to probe and assess the arguments characters put forward, examining their rhetorical games in order to understand their possible intentions. In this way, theatre-based practice works with the biocultural similarities of how our embodied social brains make sense of the world to explore the differences our specific cultural environments create; and can contribute to developing the emancipatory principles of democratic living.

4.4   Shakespeare's education

Although we cannot be sure how much dialogue was part of Shakespeare's own education, or even that he actually did attend the grammar school in Stratford, it seems highly likely that he profited from an education influenced by the traditions of medieval scholasticism which provided grounding in the dialogically focused trivium of grammar, logic and rhetoric. Shakespeare and his school friends were most probably brought up on a diet of Ovid, Plutarch, Seneca and Cicero, digesting classical texts that blended history and literature and exposed them to classical arguments about the emancipatory principles of 'what it is to be human, what societies are or might be' (Gibson, 1993). They were taught to engage with the ideas these great thinkers presented through embodying their styles and arguments. Colin Burrow (2013, p.5) argues that Shakespeare's familiarity with texts from his grammar school and subsequent reading was a pragmatic pursuit. 'Many sixteenth century readers encountered these texts in the spirit of "What can this text do for me?", a divergence approach rather than the heritage approach of, "What culturally remote beauties can I discover here?"' This approach, driven by need and use, he characterises as 'practical humanism'.

Burrow (2013, p.42), describes how grammar school boys of Shakespeare's generation were trained to debate from either side of a complex question, pointing out that this 'had the secondary and unintended consequences of developing students' ability to engage in what would now be called imagining a different point of view'. He describes Hamlet's famous soliloquy as a 'textbook case of such classically inspired debate,' known as a 'quaestio', with the first line spoken as though 'underlining the title of his rhetorical exercise' (2013, p.42). Lynn Enterline explores in more depth the physicality of how the boys were taught, explaining: 'Schoolmasters required young orators to learn how to use and refine the chief tools of their trade: eyes, ears, hands, tongues' (2012, p.3). She argues that through the process of *imitatio* grammar school boys were trained to imitate 'the physical as well as verbal techniques that would touch the "hearts" of those who heard and saw them' (2012, p.4). Pupils learned to not only write but perform speeches from the perspective of a wide range of literary characters, translating and analysing the stories of women and slaves as well as heroes and politicians. This seems an approach Dewey would approve as he notes that a person viewing or hearing a work of art must consciously engage in a creative process to construct meaning in a similar way to the originator of the art, whatever form it takes. Without this effort, Dewey explains, any '"appreciation" will be a mixture of scraps of learning with conformity to norms of

conventional admiration and with a confused, even if genuine, emotional excitation' (1934, p.56). McGilchrist (2009, pp.247-248) argues for the crucial role of imitation in how we understand others. He describes imitation as 'imaginatively entering into the world of the one that is imitated' and as 'imagination's most powerful path into whatever is Other than ourselves'. Imitation embodies the reaching out of our right-hemispheres to explore possibilities, uncertainties, mysteries and doubts, while the left manages and categorises them. These ideas can contribute to an understanding of how Shakespeare's school experiences may have supported him in becoming a playwright with such skill in using language to represent different points of view, and how young people can benefit through embodying his words.

An important useable value Shakespeare seems to have gained from the literary authority figures of his schooling was in developing these 'habits of alterity' (Enterline, 2012, pp.7-8), as he went on to employ the perspectives, arguments, rhetorical techniques, poetic devices, narrative structures, allusions, and analogies familiar from his sources in his own work. Much of this parallels our own relationship to Shakespeare who has become the authority figure of our own time. Just as Shakespeare developed the metaphors he inherited to speak to his own age, we use his metaphors to speak to ours. As contemporary theatre and literature across the world is in dialogue with Shakespeare in considering what he can mean for us now and how he can be used to make us think and reflect on our own world, so Shakespeare drew from classical examples, in dialogue with them as living artists. In the necessarily pragmatic and collaborative world of theatre, Shakespeare would have brought his scripts, full of his education and continuous reading, but must also have worked with his company to adapt, explore, solve problems and review since, as Brook (2013, p.11) points out, 'Shakespeare was not a poet living on an island, he was writing for a community with a precarious way of life.'

There is a further parallel to how Shakespeare uses his classical authority figures and how we use him. Just as a primary role for Shakespeare today is in conveying cultural capital, so knowledge of Ovid, Virgil, Seneca and Plutarch allowed a mere grammar school boy from the country to be accepted in a profession dominated by metropolitan university graduates. Enterline (2012, p.1) describes Shakespeare's 'debt to the Latin institution that granted him the cultural capital of an early modern gentleman'; Burrow (2013) proposes that it is the widening influence of the grammar school education that we have to thank for the richness of early modern drama in its nurturing of the lowly born, but enduring

talents of Shakespeare, Marlowe and Jonson. Bate (1997, p.158) tracks how Shakespeare's unique 'alchemy of genes and circumstances' resulted in this low born Warwickshire boy with a grammar school education becoming universally acknowledged as a genius. Brook says he had 'a brain in a million' that 'never stopped, searching and experimenting' (2013, pp.5-9). From an educational perspective, however, we could consider that too much talk of genius can deflect from the example Shakespeare provides of a relatively disadvantaged, albeit gifted young man who found his talent through educational opportunity and developed it through lifelong learning. Shakespeare as a working artist exploited theatre as a medium to engage and question, explore and examine, analyse and assess, using the skills of dialogue Alexander (2008, p.122) describes. Theatre-based practice requires young people to do the same, dynamically using Shakespeare as he used his classical sources.

In this chapter I have situated theatre-based practice within 'the Active Shakespeare movement' (Stredder, 2004) and introduced two key aspects of the practice: 'the emancipatory principle', a term adapted from Gibson (1993) to summarise the democratic principles of the practice; and 'the social brain', a term adapted from Trimble (2007) to summarise the biological and cultural shaping of the human brain which forms our similarities and differences. The emancipatory principle of theatre-based practice supports the democratic principle that each voice should be understood rather than merely heard through using the social brain's capacity to emotionally inhabit a plurality of perspectives. Through this imaginative experience of 'the other-sidedness of things' (Gibson, 1993), 'theatre as container' (Boal 1985) explores the plays as embodied metaphors from which we construct meaning; understanding that meaning as our own experiential truth.

In chapter two, I reviewed how and why Shakespeare has been valued as part of the curriculum and found a canonical text credited with 'universal' or more recently 'British' values but perceived by many students as distant from their own lives; Dewey's (1934, p1) art product of classic status divorced from human experiences. In chapter three, I explored the pedagogical reasoning for supporting students to engage with Shakespeare's texts by 'finding problems' (Bruner, 1966, p.159) and collaboratively constructing meaning from the continuity of their own and others' experiences. In this chapter, I have defined theatre-based practice as taking study of Shakespeare beyond the knowledge and appreciation of a literary heritage text required for an examination of reading and into a

wider understanding of how language as an embodied process complements our cognitive functions and social interactions to provide embodied metaphors to explore situations of human experience.

Chapter five: The value of Shakespeare as performance

The purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure (*Hamlet*, 3.2.14)

Although there seems to be a growing support for teaching Shakespeare as performance texts, there also seems a lingering assumption that such work makes the plays more accessible and enjoyable for those otherwise unable to appreciate them, rather than as pedagogically valuable in allowing young people to engage critically and creatively with their cultural inheritance as described in chapter four. In order to explore this obstacle I consider in this chapter contemporary arguments about Shakespeare's cultural value and young people's relationship with him, focusing particularly on the challenge implied in Kate McLuskie's writing to the educational value of experiencing Shakespeare in performance.

5.1   Shakespeare owned

He's like this big playwright and it's something very serious (Marianne[25]).

Brook (1968, pp.12-13) warns that Shakespeare is particularly in danger of becoming what he terms 'deadly theatre', theatre which is admired and respected but not alive to the moment of its production and reception. A parallel can be seen to exist in 'deadly' classrooms where Shakespeare may be taught with reverence for his genius but less than a quarter of students find any relevance in his plays to their own lives (Strand, 2009). Coles' research (2013) finds in the contemporary English classroom an objectified Shakespeare, part of an untouchable cultural elitism rather than a democratic resource for dialogue. The quotation above from Marianne is typical of the attitudes expressed by the young MA actors I interviewed prior to beginning their module on Shakespeare. Comments ranged from a general sense of alienation, like Marianne's, to perceptions of inadequacy that particular abilities or skills were needed: 'I thought I had to like train myself to get to a point to be, I don't know, able to speak better or – like I haven't naturally got an RP accent and maybe I should, or this or that or better posture or all these weird things' (Emily). Even actors, like Emily, who embarked on the module with a high level of confidence about Shakespeare felt daunted by a 'right way'. Kitty provides another example: 'I think – although I was very familiar with Shakespeare with the texts and everything, I was still quite shy from thinking that there's – there's set ways that

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[25] Quotations from MA actors taken from interviews in 2014, referenced as Irish, 2014a

things have to be done and it's still this big thing and I'm just a little person with this big thing.' A few, like Tom, saw it less as a right way than a conventional way and were keen to push against it: 'One of my biggest fears before I started was not wanting to sound Shakespearean as in I didn't want it to be like on the Olivier stage and all that'. Several actors described experiences which had confirmed ideas of a 'right way', for example: 'In my undergraduate course we had a scene and the way we were taught it, it seemed really like it's only done this way and it has to be done this way otherwise you can't do – it's not right' (Becky).

This sense of alienation from Shakespeare is more often manifested in the classroom through attitudes that see him as boring and irrelevant. A survey conducted by the Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR) at the University of Warwick (Winston and Strand, 2015, pp.134-5) found that only 23 per cent of students agreed that 'Shakespeare's plays are relevant to events in the modern world' and 46 per cent agreed that 'Studying Shakespeare is boring.' LPN teachers suggest the figure of 46 per cent seems conservative. For example, Mark writes: 'almost all students expressed that they did not enjoy Shakespeare and used the word 'boring' to describe it'; while Rachel writes: 'introducing Shakespeare was regularly greeted by an audible groan […] many students weren't engaged and very few saw the relevance of Shakespeare to the modern world (Irish, 2014b, p.10).

The dialectic of Shakespeare as museum piece or Shakespeare as living art is encapsulated in how questions around Shakespeare's position in education often centre on 'ownership': do all young people, regardless of ability or background, have an 'entitlement' to study such complex texts? Which critics, theorists or practitioners can most convincingly 'unlock' an understanding of his words, and what does 'ownership' mean in a world of ever shifting cultural dynamics? Jennifer Clement (2012, p.14) questions the current frequency of 'ownership' in discussions of Shakespeare teaching. Although she favours an understanding of ownership as thinking 'of Shakespeare as an issue to be addressed, rather than as a stable body of knowledge to be mastered', she highlights the alternative ready connotation that students might 'acquire Shakespeare much as they would acquire a new car' and proposes we talk of 'participation' in an ongoing process of meaning-making instead of ownership. Winston (2015, p.112) defends the RSC's use of 'ownership' explaining, 'it is the current pervasiveness of the term that ought to be questioned, common and uncritically deployed throughout educational

discourse as it is, rather than the RSC's use of it.' In the RSC (2008) manifesto for schools, *Stand up for Shakespeare,* 'ownership' is contextualised within active, collaborative working: 'Active techniques ensure that experiences of Shakespeare are inherently inclusive [...] that Shakespeare is collectively owned as participants collaborate and build a shared understanding of the play.' The Folger (2015a) similarly claims intent to actively engage students with Shakespeare 'so that they develop rich literacy - and a sense of ownership in the language.' Both companies are drawing parallels between the collective ownership of shared understanding that underpins the work of actors creating a performance of a play with the sense of ownership a similar process can give young people. For the Folger and the RSC, 'ownership' is not meant as a passive acquisition but as the result of a deep and collaborative inquisition of the text. While Clements' preferred 'participation' may be a more technically accurate term, the Folger and RSC find 'ownership' a more apt word for their intent, aware of its stronger emotional value in current culture, and its stronger political value in suggesting a democracy of access.

Other words current in educational debate around Shakespeare require similar contextual understanding to be unpacked as intended. 'Unlock', used for example in the 'Shakespeare Unlocked' season of education programmes created by the BBC and RSC (BBC, 2012), was intended to widen democratic access. Some, however, may consider the requirement of some kind of mediation to unlock as reinforcing the elitist position of whatever lies beyond the key; or, as Sarah Olive (2011, p.255) contends, that the RSC regard Shakespeare 'as theirs to give, that they hold the key with which to "unlock" his works.' 'Entitlement' is another contentious term; again the term is often used to imply that all young people should be given access to Shakespeare as their democratic right to their cultural inheritance, but it also carries connotations of access to what is approved by the dominant culture at the exclusion of what is not. Each term is used in the discourse as a metaphor, understood or misunderstood according to the internal and external contexts of the hearer, but, as Wittgenstein (1953) argued, never precise in isolation.

Owning Shakespeare is as personal and unstable as owning words but evidence suggests it is pedagogically valuable in working with his texts. The RSC's (2016) 'Final Impact Evaluation Report' on the ten years of the LPN states the programme's aim as to 'Bring about a significant change in the way young people experience, engage with, and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare'. It reports that, of the cross section of participating teachers interviewed, 100 per cent felt that achievement of this aim had

exceeded their expectations, with the pragmatic outcome that 96 per cent continued to embed theatre-based approaches into their own teaching practice (2016, pp.59-60). In previous chapters, I have begun to assess theories supporting the pedagogical value of this sense of ownership, in this chapter I consider a key challenge to it.

5.2 McLuskie's challenge

Some Shakespeare academics, Russ McDonald (2009, p.38) for example, advocate 'solitary engagement with the words on the page' in order to best appreciate the text; others take their criticism of active approaches a step further in expressing concern that Shakespeare as theatre and a tool for experiential learning has become overly dominant as a pedagogy and is selling short the value of the language as poetry on the page. One such voice is Kate McLuskie, a former director of the University of Birmingham's Shakespeare Institute. As a highly regarded Shakespeare academic with a strong interest in Shakespeare's place in culture, her views can be seen as both informed and representative; but usefully in contention with practitioners in the field. McLuskie's scepticism of theatre-based approaches can be found in the book resulting from her four year AHRC funded project to assess the cultural value of Shakespeare: *Cultural Value in Twenty-First Century England: The Case of Shakespeare* (2014) co-authored with Kate Rumbold, which provides a detailed assessment of what 'culture' and 'value' mean in our current age and the place Shakespeare finds in those debates.

McLuskie and Rumbold (2014, p.4) state the question they kept returning to as 'How did Shakespeare become such a valued part of world culture?' a question similar to my own. Our experiences, however, our phronesis, enable us with very different perspectives and require me to acknowledge my own assumptions as I analyse theirs. Where I see analogy as fundamental to how we each make sense of the world and a Shakespeare play as a useful resource to share and develop meaning, my understanding of McLuskie's argument is that she regards analogy, experience and by extension, performance, as diluting the intrinsic value of Shakespeare's work. While McLuskie and Rumbold approach Shakespeare's value from the outside-in view of how policy and funding decisions have shaped the concepts contributing to how Shakespeare is valued in formal and informal education, my interest is from the inside-out of allowing the cultural experiences young people bring to react with Shakespeare's language and considering how the resulting value reflects on policy priorities.

5.2.1 Defining culture

In their first chapter, McLuskie and Rumbold acknowledge the difficulty of defining the terms, 'culture' and 'value'. 'Culture' is a notoriously difficult term to define, but, like all words, an accommodation of its meaning can be found in the context of its use: in conversation we can quickly resolve misunderstanding between culture as an influential environment or set of behaviours, and culture as a set of artistic pursuits or collection of objects. It is in this distinction, however, that McLuskie and Rumbold (2014, p.3) find tensions when it comes to the attitudes of the organisations and institutions that shape our lives, explaining: 'We need to address the different implications of formulating culture as both "a way of life" and a canon of valued objects and of the tensions created by locating value both as inherent in valued objects and in the process by which that value is recognised, conferred or endorsed.' For me, the tension here lies in the separation of the inherent value of an object and the valuing process, for how else does an object achieve and maintain value except through a valuing process, where according value is a continuous assessment of physiological and emotional need?

In their interrogation of cultural value, McLuskie and Rumbold cite John Holden's (2006) Demos report in which he devises a triangular model of cultural value: 'instrumental value' (of most concern to governments with its focus on achieving a social or economic purpose), 'institutional value' (created by the active agency of cultural organisations) and 'intrinsic value' (accorded by the public). Holden's report sets out to highlight the disconnect between the hard to quantify instrumental value governments want and the qualitative intrinsic value evidenced by the experiences of cultural professionals and the public. He proposes a model to hold these values in balance. Controversially, for McLuskie and Rumbold, Holden (2006, p.15) argues that the intrinsic value of a cultural phenomenon depends on public estimation, that 'value is located in the encounter or interaction between individuals (who will have all sorts of pre-existing attitudes, beliefs and levels of knowledge) on the one hand and an object or experience on the other'. Holden goes on to define intrinsic value as 'the capacity and potential of culture to affect us, rather than as measurable and fixed stocks of worth'. McLuskie and Rumbold (2014, p.155) question this, arguing 'the equation of experience and intrinsic value seems to suppose that intrinsic cultural value can be optimised by giving more people the opportunity to experience the arts'. They propose this as a surmise clearly untrue, but perhaps this is indeed the way to optimise the value of a cultural object. Equally, their mycterismic suggestion that ''Shakespeare' thus becomes a free resource for cultural

reproduction as well as an open field of knowledge in which individual taste and opinion can have free play' strikes me as a good thing; that the framing of McLuskie and Rumbold's argument suggests otherwise provides a useful challenge to my own assumptions which align more with Holden's conclusions that 'in a field such as culture […] we are dealing with dynamic relationships and not timeless "facts"' (2006, p.56).

McLuskie and Rumbold (2014, p.155) continue: 'By focusing exclusively on people's cultural experiences, and locating value primarily in the moment of encounter, policy-makers and analysts occlude the decision-making that has often already determined what constitutes 'culture', and ascribed value to it, before the encounter takes place.' Their concern here appears to be one I would readily share, that public encounters with the arts should not be reduced to a passive experience of exposure to 'objects' already deemed of cultural value with no engagement in how and why those objects have been previously valued; but our relationship with that previous value seems different. In considering our relationship with Shakespeare in history, John Drakakis (2013, p.181) comments 'History is neither an object nor an obstacle, but part of a multifaceted dialogue which the reader/critics consciously and actively engage in, bringing with them their own, frequently complex cultural perspectives that shape particular narratives.' Drakakis suggests this active dialogue needs to be embraced in the process of making meaning rather than dismissed as a superficial encounter; or as Dewey (1997, p.27) says, 'Everything depends on the quality of the experience.'

In a chapter entitled: 'Dancing and thinking: Teaching 'Shakespeare' in the twenty first century', written during her engagement with the Cultural Value project, McLuskie (2009, pp. 123-4) concludes that a current trend towards active, theatre-based approaches can reduce Shakespeare study to a solipsistic, experiential exercise, which she summarises in the metaphor of Lucky in *Waiting for Godot* being told either to dance or think: 'Beckett, with characteristic brilliance identifies and dramatizes the twin poles of artistic and intellectual endeavour. One can dance or one can think: in either case, time passes, as it would have done if neither activity had taken place.' McLuskie uses her metaphor to characterise 'the comic misalignment between the experience of the physical arts and the discursive meanings that we demand of them', and describes as a 'complex oscillation' the way teachers treat the plays as performance texts, literary texts and sites of academic discussion. For McLuskie, 'experience of the physical arts' and 'discursive meanings' are

set in opposition to each other: you can dance or you can think, but one does not inform the other. She goes on:

> In educational circles, the idea that Shakespeare 'wrote for performance' has supported the view that the experience of Shakespeare in performance is critical to the appreciation of his plays and that that experience will in and of itself produce educational value. The progressive shifts in educational focus from content to experience, from assimilating received knowledge to creative interaction with it, have also restated Estragon's simple reaction to Lucky's dilemma: 'I'd rather he dance, it'd be more fun' (2009, p.125).

McLuskie here reinforces her oppositions: 'content' versus 'experience', 'received knowledge' versus 'creative interaction', tapping into key oppositions in wider educational debate. The resolution for me seems inherent in how the opposition is set up: 'from assimilating received knowledge to creative interaction with it,' the 'with it' being the key phrase. 'Received knowledge' can, arguably, exist alone – 'creative interaction' has to interact with something and therefore encompasses the received knowledge. McLuskie's challenge in her proposal of 'dancing and thinking' provides a useful metaphor drawing together the oppositions discussed in chapter one of theory and practice, sophia and phronesis, objectivity and subjectivity; binaries belied by the interrelationship of mind and body underpinning this thesis.

5.2.2   What is a play?

In 'Dancing not Thinking', McLuskie (2009, p.125) does not go into detail about the kind of 'experience of Shakespeare in performance' she is referring to, whether it is seeing a professional performance, watching peers perform a scene, taking part in a performance, or simply reading aloud from the text. Any of these activities and the many in-between could 'produce educational value' but not necessarily 'in and of itself'. For Dewey (1938, p.46) 'The notion that some subjects and methods and that acquaintance with certain facts and truths possess educational value in and of themselves is the reason why traditional education reduced the material of education so largely to a diet of pre-digested materials.' He concludes: 'There is no such thing as educational value in the abstract' since it is the quality of the experience that is critical.

McLuskie's perspective on the value of 'experience' is argued in more detail in *Cultural Value.* McLuskie and Rumbold (2014, p.132) describe how at the RSC, Cicely Berry has led the development of 'an enormously influential set of techniques that have allowed actors to […] connect rhetorical commentary to their imagined emotional situation in real time'

which leads to performances where 'even minor figures from the plays can be given a psychological depth that is seldom explicit in the text but which connects them to commonplace contemporary social ideas'. As will be discussed further in chapters six and seven, theatre practitioners acknowledge this 'connecting' as the purpose of their work, however, McLuskie and Rumbold conclude that such work 'ensures the connection necessary to turn words into situated and shared experience' as though the words themselves have no part to play in this. They offer as an example Judi Dench's adoption of a stammer when playing the role of Regan in 1976, describing how the effect of the stammer, suggesting as it did, the damage to a daughter by a bullying father, meant that 'The dramatization of Regan could be *moved from* Shakespeare's cruel woman to a woman victimised by her father and the play's narrative *transformed into* a psychologically motivated family drama' (2014, p.133, italics mine). The effect of the italicised verbs is to indicate that such an interpretation of *King Lear* is textually tenuous at best. They go on to judge that in this production, 'The specific social, political and economic ideas that surrounded Shakespeare's adaptation of the Lear story were of no significance. Instead they were replaced by the interactions of characters whose behaviour could be understood in contemporary terms' (2014, p.133). The suggestion here is of absolutes: either a Shakespeare play is performed with the emotional literacy of the time or it is twisted to suit our own. My own experience of rehearsal rooms, at the RSC and elsewhere is that in finding meaning in the words, actors necessarily consider the social, political and economic ideas of the time because their job is to mediate that meaning for our own time. My own assumptions lie in viewing a Shakespeare play as a performance text and as such, a form of art whose purpose is to express contemporary as well as historical meaning. In education terms, a perspective divorcing Shakespeare from contemporary meaning returns us to Coles' (2013) description of 'inert packets of cultural knowledge' which, as she illustrates, result in an elitist curriculum item to be learned for examination purposes. The quality of such an experience often creates a negative attitude to the learning experience, as Dewey suggests (p.65).

McLuskie and Rumbold move on to consider Boyd's Histories cycle, which was in rep as they were undertaking their study: 'The plays' complex narratives of dynastic conflict were presented with great clarity, but the overall effect of sound and colour was of a total theatre that did not depend on interpretive reading' (2014, p.134). I confess to finding this an extraordinary statement: what did the effect depend on then? McLuskie and Rumbold explain: 'The moments of recognition that connected audience to action

came from memorable visual images' and they give examples of Joan of Arc reincarnated as Queen Margaret; the future Richard III playing with a pig's severed head; and Edward IV's white coronation robes becoming stained with Henry VI's blood. These images are dismissed as 'spectacle' yet they had to arise directly from interpretations of the text found in the process of rehearsal and will have been understood in the context of performance on different levels according to the knowledge and experiences of each audience member. The purpose of a play is to put bodies on a stage and as soon as our social awareness and our senses are engaged we invent symbolism, whether or not it is intended, as we read a performance from our own unique perspectives. Umberto Eco (1994, p.8) reminds us that for writing as for performances, only 'empirical readers' exist: 'Empirical readers can read in many ways, and there is no law that tells them how to read, because they often use the text as a container for their own passions, which may come from outside the text or which the text may arouse by chance.'

McLuskie and Rumbold (2014, p.135) describe as 'less commonplace' symbolism the initial presentation of Richard II in the cycle 'with white make-up and red hair in an eerie simulacrum of well-known portraits of Elizabeth I,' commenting 'the connection was available to informed members of the audience, a reminder that their knowledge was shared by the director and designer, but for others it constituted only a half-heard echo that enhanced the production's resonance without imposing meaning.' For less 'informed members of the audience' this visual image may have communicated a less precise but still affecting sense of Richard II as in some way 'other', even 'uncanny' (Freud, 2003); his position as monarch, like Elizabeth I's, setting him apart in a way that can be seen as iconic but also disturbing, perhaps vulnerable. Any staged image is crafted to create associations for an audience with the understanding that many possible layers of resonances may result. McLuskie and Rumbold, however, note how 'The work of director and performers filled the gap between the text and its implied actions with spectacle' with the suggestion that the spectacle detracts or distracts from the intrinsic value of the text.

From their perspective as cultural observers, McLuskie and Rumbold (2014, p.137) label the era of Boyd's leadership of the RSC with a 'sense of mischievous iconoclasm' because of a perceived shift towards accessibility:

> The value of Shakespeare no longer depended upon its rhetorical articulation of complex ideas and 'difficult' language. Its acclaimed universality depended less

on its connection to a specific moment in the past and more on its capacity to create immediately recognisable human experience within the narratives.

From the perspective of creating Shakespeare for performance, a responsibility 'to create immediately recognisable human experience' on the stage is far wider than the RSC. The American director Sanford Meisner, building on the Russian director Konstantin Stanislavsky's idea of 'particularization' or 'as if' explains this key acting concept as 'your personal example chosen from your experience of your imagination which emotionally clarifies the cold material of the text' (1987, p.138).

5.2.3 Do dancers think?

In 'Dancing not Thinking', McLuskie (2009, p.135) contends that performers interviewed about their work 'dance first and think afterwards':

> The thinking involved, however, though it may claim to inform performance, is quite distinct from performance itself. Its articulation in the literature that now routinely surrounds performances, in the form of programs, interviews, and spin-off books, short-circuits performance by communicating meaning directly from director or critic to audience.

This raises questions about how meaning is communicated. McLuskie appears to separate the meaning communicated through the connections between an actor and an audience which happen through the physical act of embodying the metaphor of a play script, from the conscious interpretations which formulate those responses. It denies the level of emotional, pragmatic and cognitive research interwoven in a rehearsal process and suggests this distinction between thinking and dancing stems from the dualism of a superior mind separate from an emotive body. Perhaps, McLuskie concludes, active approaches are all very well for formal education but not higher education, which requires 'thinking' not 'dancing'. Her reasons for the distinction are that higher education is concerned with analysis and argument based on evidence not personal development, which suggests that the significance of the plays resides in a truth to be uncovered, rather than a shifting, culturally contingent quality of truth to be arrived at. Indeed, she compares contingency of meaning to a 'consumerist free-for-all' (2009, p.135), an effective dumbing down which dilutes the truth of what the play meant in its own time and place. Her criticism is that 'The knowledges that can arise from such accounts (personal connections) of Shakespeare are always driven by analogy' (2009, p.136). I agree, but because I have found analogy to be the basis of all analysis.

In *Cultural Value*, McLuskie and Rumbold (2014, p.135) write of Boyd's Histories cycle:

> The historical and social implications of the plays' actions – their potential for analogy with other wars and conflict – were addressed in essays in the programme, but performance itself communicated ideas more directly through image and action. The shifts in costume from medieval to modern, the visual oscillation from the present to the past, dramatized the familiar theme of the continuities of recurring violence and war.

This, I would suggest is an example of the production dancing *and* thinking, entertaining and provocative. McLuskie and Rumbold, however, dismiss such thoughts as 'idiosyncratic reflections on the contemporary political situation' and give the example of Libby Purves' '*startling* imaginative leap [...] to the complex politics of fundamentalism in Pakistan', a connection they do not accept as 'coherent intellectual analysis' (2014, p.136, italics mine). For Purves, the analogy made sense and illuminated her understanding both of the situation portrayed on stage and the contemporary situation in Pakistan. She shares this personal meaning with her readers in a dialogic bid (Christoph and Nystrand, 2001), yet for McLuskie and Rumbold this is an example of how 'the experience of theatre [...] can create *the illusion* of a synergy between culture as a fulfilling experience and culture as a continued engagement with a venerated object from the past' (2014, p.136-7, italics mine). This labelling of personal meaning making as 'illusion' is at the root of the challenge McLuskie and Rumbold direct towards the subject of teaching Shakespeare in schools when they question whether 'lively education programmes' are 'making Shakespeare more accessible – that is, finding new ways to put audiences in contact with his intrinsic value – or whether they are in fact constituting that value, by constructing "Shakespeare" as important, engaging and relevant' (2014, p.190).

5.2.4   Advocacy and analysis

Most usefully, McLuskie's arguments articulate the reservations of many English teachers addressing the issues of Shakespeare in their classrooms. In analysing a set of postgraduate assignments completed by LPN teachers undertaking training with the RSC and the University of Warwick (Irish, 2014b), I noted an initial scepticism around the efficacy of active approaches. None of them doubted, as McLuskie does not, that the approaches would make learning Shakespeare more enjoyable for their students, variously describing their initial attitudes towards the approaches as 'fun games', 'special treats', or 'style over substance' (Irish, 2014b, p.3). Driven to ensure the best possible grades for their students, however, they expressed initial doubts that working actively

with the text could enable the depth of analysis and independent thought required for top grades. Their assignments record being pleasantly surprised by the increase in analytical comments and independent learning from their students, and a consensus that the approaches supported the students to higher achievements. Anna, for example, writes of her Year 9 group: 'They were not afraid to argue with each other justifying their choices. They were engaged and interested. Every single student in the class showed progress in their final assessment' (Irish, 2014b, p.6). Rachel writes:

> Throughout the delivery of these activities one outcome that had been unexpected was the evaluative skills students developed through the use of this activity. Once students had several interpretative choices they naturally started discussing which they felt was the most effective method and consequently evaluating these interpretative choices, therefore, demonstrating and using higher order thinking skills to respond to a text (Irish, 2014b, p.12).

There are, however, caveats raised around the fact that the activities are not in themselves a panacea and that skilful teaching is required to contextualise and profit from them. Rachel summarises this point:

> It is vital to remember that the use of active approaches to teach Shakespeare complements good teaching skills and good practice. Without any number of features of good practice – effective questioning, effective behaviour management and discipline, effective differentiation or clear aims and objectives – then the impact that using active approaches will have upon progress of the individual and the group becomes limited (Irish, 2014b, p.2)

Rachel's initial scepticism and measured conversion are a useful example of an experienced teacher's articulation of the difference between theatre-based approaches and practice, and of the role of the teacher in ensuring the quality of their students' experience in order to produce educational value.

Part of McLuskie's challenge is to question the evidence presented by theatre companies in support of theatre-based approaches, since it is in their interest to 'sell' the effectiveness of their work from a pragmatic need to generate value both through enhancing their reputation to support their brand and income to continue their work. The first chapter of *Cultural Value*, 'Advocacy and Analysis' explores the relative contribution of each to the debate around culture and value. McLuskie and Rumbold's assessment, though inconclusive, highlights the stronger emotional effect of narratives of success over dispassionate analysis; something that should come as no surprise to any scholar of Shakespeare who knows how effectively the playwright can employ rhetorical devices of

pathos compared to logos. As example, McLuskie and Rumbold (2014, p.19) cite Bruce

Wall's testimonies of the life changing effect of working with Shakespeare for prisoners.

In support of their scepticism over the validity of such narratives, the authors cite a report

on 'The arts in criminal justice: a study of research feasibility' produced by The Centre for

Research on Socio Cultural Change at the University of Manchester (Miles and Clarke,

2006) which concludes that reliable evidence is hard to achieve in such contexts. The

report does, however, also conclude that:

> Evidence from this and other studies suggests that arts interventions in prisons
> and resettlement are particularly good at fostering the kinds of personal and
> social resources that open avenues to further learning and underpin attitudinal
> and behavioural change (2006, p.10).

Whilst McLuskie and Rumbold raise important questions about the validity of success

narratives, this report does not undervalue the experiences prisoners gained through the

arts projects observed, instead it chimes with a familiar theme in education that the

development of personal resilience and interpersonal skills are deliverable and

observable but hard to quantify; whether this be for adults in the institutional framework

of a progressive prison system, or young people in the institutional framework of schools.

5.2.5   Valuing Shakespeare as theatre

McLuskie and Rumbold's distrust of theatre to represent Shakespeare finds more

concrete examples in Olive's (2011) article, 'The Royal Shakespeare Company as 'Cultural

Chemist''. Olive's article was written shortly after completing her doctoral thesis as part

of McLuskie's cultural value project and proved particularly controversial, especially

through its publication in juxtaposition with an article by Neelands and O'Hanlon (2011)

on RSC practice in the same issue: 'There is Some Soul of Good: An Action-Centred

Approach to Teaching Shakespeare in Schools'. The analogies each article takes for its title

usefully summarise their different metaphorical frameworks. Neelands and O'Hanlon's

title references Henry V's words on the eve of the battle of Agincourt 'There is some soul

of goodness in things evil, would men observingly distil it out' (*HV*, 4.1.4-5) which

prefaces Henry's disguised and 'democratic' discussions with the ordinary men in his

army. The title also references Nussbaum's (2010) exploration of the purpose of the arts

and humanities in our society, *Not for Profit*, which calls for recognising each other's souls

rather than mere bodies for our own use (Neelands and O'Hanlon, 2011, p.250). Neelands

and O'Hanlon's article asserts an intent to 'offer an account of the theory, practice and

relevance of the Royal Shakespeare Company's recent work with schools in England' (2011, p.240) and at the heart of their account is a defence of theatre-based approaches as promoting democratic aspirations as much as authentic theatrical practice. Olive's analogy is taken from Richard Wilson's attack on the ideas of Rex Gibson from the 1990s and casts the RSC as a scientist deliberately selecting and weighing elements to construct Shakespeare in its own image. If both were casting the RSC as Henry V, Neelands and O'Hanlon's interpretation would be the Henry of the band of brothers, the king with the common touch; Olive's would be the Machiavellian prince.

Olive's main contention is that 'the values of the RSC are made, by the company, to stand in for the value of Shakespeare' (2011, p.252). Her concern here, in a similar way to Coles, is that in the minds of teachers and students the value of drama approaches is conflated with the value of Shakespeare. She comments: 'This signals the confusion of intrinsic value with instrumental, the value of Shakespeare with that of the methods used to teach him' (2011, p.255). A fundamental value of the approaches advocated by the RSC is the primacy of interpretive choice, that young people are invited to bring their own ideas to the work and to collaboratively explore relative values with reference to the text. If this approach 'changes what constitutes Shakespeare for students and teachers' the change intended is in shifting a perception of Shakespeare as a container of received values to be reproduced in highly valued examinations, to a highly valued resource through which to explore our contemporary plurality of values. If we choose to accept Holden's (2006) definition of intrinsic value as 'the capacity and potential of culture to affect us,' then an approach to Shakespeare which invites contemporary ideas confers significantly more value.

In response to Olive's article, Winston (2015, p.114) also synthesises the instrumental and intrinsic, suggesting, 'The RSC does, indeed, see its approaches as instrumental, as ways to help students and teachers engage with Shakespeare, but it advocates them because it believes in the intrinsic value of such an engagement.' For Neelands and O'Hanlon, the intrinsic and the instrumental values are blended in a practice which acknowledges the range of theatre and drama approaches used and confirms that RSC pedagogy 'is as much about raising the quality of the instructional objectives for teaching and learning as it is about raising the profile of Shakespeare as a dramatist' (2011, p.144). More widely this question relates to our understanding of art and its role in our lives and the education of young people.

Olive's distrust of theatre-based practice appears to stem from her distrust of the 'naturalization of Shakespeare as theatre'. From her perspective, Shakespeare as theatre is merely one possibility amongst 'Shakespeare as poetry, as artefact, or as the object of textual study' (2011, p.254). Theatre practitioners, however, generally see all these facets of Shakespeare embodied in a good rehearsal room. Winston asserts, 'The Company has never attacked 'desk-bound *literary criticism'* (this being part of the rehearsal process) but has instead sought to counter 'desk-bound *ineffective teaching*' (2015, p.114, italics original). Neelands and O'Hanlon explain: 'the learning is based on critical enquiry, social interpretation and exploration of choices, carefully traced back to text and context' (2011, p.243) and reference the history behind the RSC's pedagogy, which has developed through the knowledge of theatre practice and social constructivist pedagogies of the artists and practitioners involved with it. Olive accuses the RSC of promoting an agenda 'that performance is not just a pedagogy but *the* pedagogy' (2011, p.256, italics original). Neelands and O'Hanlon do assert 'something distinctive' (2011, p.240) about the pedagogy developed by the RSC, implying its superiority in conveying 'a personally meaningful and authentic introduction to Shakespeare' without which 'many young people come to fear and resent his apparent difficulties and 'irrelevancies'' (2011, p.245). Along with McLuskie and Rumbold, Olive is suspicious of theatre companies promoting theatre-based pedagogies as self-interested. The companies often characterise themselves, however, as liberating Shakespeare from his dominating role, not as poetry, artefact, or object of textual study, but as examination text. Neelands and O'Hanlon outline how the Stand Up For Shakespeare (SUFS) campaign resulted from a reaction to the KS3 SATs tests which were widely perceived by teachers as alienating young people from Shakespeare through their pressurised and reductive expectations.[26]

Any company, however, promoting particular approaches to teaching Shakespeare is competing in a climate where funding for both arts and education is increasingly less available and this necessarily affects the rhetoric of those companies about their work. It could be argued that the RSC brand has a stronger resonance than other organisations, and the discourse of its education output capitalises on this brand familiarity in appearing to 'own' theatre-based practice. A language of advocacy is generally apparent in RSC discourse about their education practice as it is with all theatre companies, but has been tempered by engagement with external agencies conducting research into the efficacy of

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[26] A more detailed outline of the evolution of SUFS from a widespread concern by cultural organisations is given in Winston, 2015

the approaches (Winston, 2015), and judged primarily by the pragmatic needs of teachers (Irish, 2014b; RSC, 2016) whose primary knowledge of such practice is through their association with the RSC. One of the LPN teachers explains: 'When pupils see that they are using skills and approaches that professional RSC actors use, they feel more valued and want to try them for themselves' (Irish, 2014b, p.12). Other organisations such as the Globe, Folger and Shakespeare Schools Festival have influenced the purpose and practice of Shakespeare teaching in schools, conferring their own institutional value, and teachers may well attribute theatre-based practice as the province of the organisations they been most influenced by.

All this raises the issue that ownership and valuing of intellectual property has developed into a highly problematic area; not least in academia where the paradox exists that achievements and developments can only be made through collaboration, but competition for resources can result in protectionism. Examining the potential for collaboration presented by digital technologies, Charles Leadbeater (2008, p.6) concludes: 'In the economy of ideas the web is creating, you are what you share.' His concept of 'We Think' is that the democratic possibilities of the web move us from a sense of status tied to material wealth to status gained from the ideas we share. Young people are increasingly growing up in networks of ideas rather than hierarchies of received knowledge and although, as Leadbeater acknowledges, creativity has always been a collaborative process, how ideas are valued has been dominated by elite minorities. Leadbeater (2008, p.19) describes how, at its best, using the example of Wikipedia, digital resources rely on 'the collaborative exercise of individual responsibility', emphasising that 'We Think' is not group think. He notes that the new opportunities rely on the old needs of our social brains, not just for collaboration but for social recognition. The free digital resources that theatre companies are increasingly publishing could be seen as staking a claim on particular pedagogies in a bid to enhance reputation and shore up scarce funding, or as a socially responsible sharing of knowledge. As with so many binaries, these opposing positions serve to raise interesting questions but the answers often lie in the complexities of interaction between the two extremes.

 'Owning' and 'sharing' can carry opposing connotations but in the context of theatre-based practice, they are complementary concepts. LPN teacher Rachel describes how her students, as well as herself, were initially sceptical of using theatre-based practice, accustomed as they were to being fed, or feeding, 'right answers', but that they became

increasingly confident in sharing ideas through the practice, and 'increasingly willing to explore possibilities and interpretative choices […] to take increased ownership of the text' (Irish, 2014b, p.6). In ways that might be seen to demonstrate Leadbeater's 'collaborative exercise of individual responsibility', theatre-based practice aims to provide a broad platform for young people to achieve social recognition as their individual thoughts and experiences are valued through collaborative exploration of the texts.

5.2.6   Shakespeare dancing

A survey of current teaching resources may suggest, as McLuskie (2009) implies, a growing movement towards working with Shakespeare as a performance text, both in formal and higher education, but I would question that we are yet at a stage where 'the view that the experience of Shakespeare in performance is critical to the appreciation of his plays and that that experience will in and of itself produce educational value' (McLuskie, 2009, p.125) is dominant. Although theatre-based approaches are not new, neither are they commonplace enough to be established tools of an English teacher's craft. Historically, study of Shakespeare as a literary text has dominated and the view that exposure to Shakespeare in *literary* form 'will in and of itself produce educational value' stretches back to at least the eighteenth century when passages began to be selected and compiled with the express intention of providing moral guidance (see chapter two).

If the question McLuskie ultimately poses is: 'Why is the experience of Shakespeare in performance critical to the appreciation of his plays?' The challenge I take is to argue that it is through the experience of Shakespeare in performance that more young people can be offered structured opportunities for a critical and creative interaction with their cultural inheritance; with Dewey's (1997, p.27) caveat that 'Everything depends on the quality of the experience.' Through theatre-based practice, students can learn the skills of analysis integrated with, rather than separated from, embodied experience. An RSC rehearsal room invites in a wide range of knowledge: experts in particular fields like warfare, law or medicine for example, as well as Shakespearean academics from various areas of study. Alongside this knowledge comes the practical and technical knowledge of voice and movement experts, designers of set, lighting and costume. While few theatre companies and fewer classrooms can boast such luxury, all can refer to notes and essays in different editions of the plays and use other methods of research to find related knowledge. Creative and critical approaches can then provide not just motivation but also

a deeper, because more personal, interaction with the substance of that knowledge to form meaning.

McLuskie's (2009, p.139) concluding point is that to overcome what she perceives as a key binary in teaching Shakespeare: 'difficult/boring texts' v 'pleasures of performance', we need to acknowledge the many different facets of Shakespeare study which would then allow students to 'explore rather than assume the connection between text, performance, and meaning in more explicit ways'. These more explicit ways being 'the challenging task of separating out the analysis from the experience of Shakespeare' or 'the dancing stalls while the thinking goes on'. The main difference between McLuskie, Rumbold and Olive's perspectives and my own would appear to be the separation of personal meaning from collective, quality assured meaning. I construct my own partial narrative, understanding their meaning through my own point of view and judging their work through selected examples just as they understand and judge the RSC's work. We call this understanding and judgement 'analysis' because this confers a semblance of objectivity, but there are no right answers in this debate, only informed opinions and experiential truths.

The informed opinion of John Russell Brown (2005), another well established and respected Shakespeare academic, provides an alternative perspective to McLuskie's in his aptly named *Shakespeare Dancing*. Brown writes from the perspective of working with actors and directors and explores the physical experiences that a Shakespeare text requires. For him, the texts provide 'a stream of sensuous provocation that sets imagination to work and awakens memories of lived experience' (2005, p.1). He recognises the primary role of analogy in how we experience Shakespeare and the contingent nature of those analogies as Shakespeare's imagination 'dancing on the shifting sands that border the ocean's mind' (2005, p.2). Like Rancière, Brown believes that the meaning of the plays comes to life in the space between the audience and actors, each of whom bring their own unique experiences to bear on the relationship: 'there can be no such thing as an authoritative definition of a role, still less a whole play' (2005, p.115). This is the value of Shakespeare Neelands and O'Hanlon take from theatre into the classroom, explaining: 'Shakespeare in performance defies orderly and contained study of the authorial achievements of a single mind because it is socially made and sensuously received and because its semiotics are multiple, simultaneous and transient' (2011, p.249). Binary emphases of Shakespeare study are often characterised as 'page

versus stage'. On one side of the perceived divide stands the mind, rarefied art, intellect; on the other stands the body, lived experience, emotion. From the slopes of two mountains of accumulated knowledge, critics and actors watch each other, operate through the shadow of each other. Between mountains, the most fertile ground is always the valley floor connecting them, fed from the nutrients washed down from both and this is where the most fertile learning can happen as critical and actorly ways frolic together.

5.3   Shakespeare as Presentism

A relatively new movement in Shakespeare studies and a development in cultural materialist criticism, 'Presentism' usefully contributes to a critical vocabulary for a co-constructivist approach to teaching Shakespeare, acknowledging as it does contingency of meaning and plurality of values. In considering the value of Presentism as a theoretical lens for Shakespeare criticism, Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes (2007, p.3) assert that facts and texts don't speak for themselves but only communicate as:

> part of specific discourses which impose on them their own shaping requirements and agendas. We choose the facts. We choose the texts. We do the inserting. We order the priorities which govern everything. Facts and texts, that is to say, don't simply speak, don't merely mean. *We* speak, *we* mean, *by* them (italics original)

This recalls Brook's (1968, p.43) assertion that 'for the play to be heard, then you must conjure its sound from it', and seems to echo a pedagogical understanding of the value of analogy, relevance and interpretation in how we understand our cultural inheritance. In a review of the highly influential *Political Shakespeare* which brought Cultural Materialism into the mainstream of Shakespeare study, Graham Holderness (2014) describes how the movement was about 'dismantling barriers' in order to widen ways of approaching Shakespeare. Cultural Materialism and New Historicism, are often seen as challenging the notions of 'universal values' in Shakespeare by considering the cultural and historical context of production. Grady and Hawkes (2007) present Presentism as the next and more honest development in its acknowledgment of how we can only read the past from our experiences in the present: 'The truth is that none of us can step beyond time. The present can't be drained out of our experience. As a result, the critic's own situatedness does not – cannot – contaminate the past. In effect, it constitutes the only means by which it's possible to see and perhaps comprehend it' (2007, p.3).

Dewey's (1938, p.78) call for 'making acquaintance with the past a means of understanding the present' could be read as a Presentist pedagogy, making a progressive

aim out of using our cultural inheritance to learn more about ourselves as well as our similarities and differences with our ancestors. My situatedness in advocating theatre-based practice is in arguing for the interplay between individuals' unique contemporary sum of experiences and the knowledge they can share about the past. McConachie (2006, p.7) argues that 'the comparativist work of cognitive linguists has concluded that people in all cultures probably use many of the same image schemas and basic level categories to structure their languages' which suggests that as a species we share common mental processes across space and time. He adds that this 'does pose a problem for New Historicism.' Alexander Leggatt (2009, p.70) protests against a historicist approach that regards its position as objective: 'We can only read from our world, and that applies to our sense of the history no less than our sense of the text. We have constructed the Renaissance (sorry, the Early Modern Period) that we need.' Ewan Fernie (2005, p.179) describes how although Presentism has been viewed suspiciously in Shakespeare academia as dissolving historical difference, it can instead allow a more responsive approach to difference. If, as cognitive scientists suggest, our brains and bodies process sensory input including verbal and non-verbal language just as our ancestors did, the differences of culture become more mutable and more salient than historicist processes might suggest.

Pragmatist Richard Rorty (1992, p.105) argues that reading theorists and critics might 'give you something interesting to say about a text which you could not otherwise have said. But it brings you no closer to what is *really* going on in it' (italics original). What it brings you to is your unique interpretation born from the confluence of influences depending on the flows of time and culture. Rorty (1992, p.107) distinguishes between 'methodical readings' and 'inspired readings' where the former applies a strategy, often a theory, to deciphering a text, leaving the reader unchanged. 'Inspired reading' by contrast changes the reader: 'Such criticism uses the author or text not as a specimen reiterating a type but as an occasion for changing a previously accepted taxonomy, or for putting a new twist on a previously told story.' This contention provides a further nuance to the distinction between 'learning about' and 'doing' discussed in chapter one. 'Doing' literature is to be inspired by it, as Rorty suggests, finding its usable value in extending and developing personal meaning; 'learning about' it is methodical. Perhaps, with literary texts there can be this distinction between 'doing' and 'learning about'. Approaching Shakespeare as a performance text, however, requires a symbiosis of inspired and methodical reading. An actor needs to appreciate the crafting of the language in order to

use it. Eco addresses the idea of 'reader-oriented paradigms' by asserting the intention of the text or *intentio operis* which he contrasts with *intentio auctoris and intentio lectoris*. He insists: 'it is possible to speak of the text's intention only as the result of a conjecture on the part of the reader' (1992, p.64). A text is written by an empirical author with the intention of being received by a model reader, able and entitled to see numerous possible interpretations. But a text can only be received by an empirical reader, able and entitled to interpret the text from their own limited experiences and associations.

Holderness (2014) describes the cultural materialist movement in Shakespeare study as influenced by the Marxist philosophy that 'men and women make their own history, but in conditions not of their choosing' and this in turn reflects an actor's approach to the text of finding an emotional truth to play within the limits of the given circumstances of the text. Modern dress productions of Shakespeare have been common since the early twentieth century and other countries have habitually performed Shakespeare in their own images. Shakespeare performance and criticism, consciously or not, work in symbiosis with each other but the emphasis for actors and directors is in what Brook calls the 'immediacy' of the text. Brook (1998, p.224) reflects on the temptation of ideas and theories but concludes, pragmatically, that 'Learning to assemble ideas and thereby live in a palace of glittering thoughts' should not be an end in itself divorced from empirical experience. Understanding comes through doing; an actor's understanding of the text comes from finding themselves in it, necessarily a Presentist and Pragmatic approach. In tying together the experiences of performers and students with Presentism, Leggatt (2009, p.72) summarises the potential for classroom Shakespeare:

> To bring in common experience […] is to suggest why the plays still matter in a world far removed from the world in which they were written. This, together with close textual work, is the sort of thing actors do. Shakespeare was an actor and wrote for actors. In the end actors have to make choices about moments readers can leave open. But there is a stage in rehearsal where the choices are open and free exploration takes place. A class needs to be like that kind of rehearsal, a place where ideas can live and grow, not a place where they are frozen and stored, never to stir again.

In this chapter, I have explored some contemporary perspectives on the intrinsic and instrumental value of Shakespeare, focusing particularly on the challenges McLuskie, Rumbold and Olive offer to the educational value of Shakespeare as a performance text. McLuskie argues that 'The progressive shifts in educational focus from content to experience' devalue Shakespeare's intrinsic value, making him the province of 'dancing

not thinking' (2009, p.125). In his retrospective look at the progressive movement in education he helped to inspire, Dewey (1938) decries the tendency in Western thought towards binaries that pit progressivism against traditionalism, as McLuskie pits thinking against dancing. Dewey (1938, p.25) instead calls for an acceptance of 'the organic connection between education and personal experience'. Situating theatre-based practice in the Pragmatic approaches to pedagogy of Dewey and Bruner, the phenomenological underpinning of findings from educational and cognitive research, and finding a useful vocabulary in the new critical movement of Presentism, I have argued that studying Shakespeare as performance texts, using theatre-based practice to curate good quality experiences, can deepen and interweave his instrumental and intrinsic value. This approach, which values the complexity between the binarisms, can bring young people an educationally valuable sense of ownership of Shakespeare that connects them to their literary inheritance. In this way they can not only appreciate the intrinsic value of their cultural heritage, but also its instrumental value in progressing cultural outlooks and attitudes. Dewey considers the 'odd notion that an artist does not think and a scientific inquirer does nothing else' as 'the result of converting a difference of tempo and emphasis into a difference in kind' (1934, p.14), suggesting that both scientists and artists think aesthetically and reflectively at different moments in their process; as Bruner also argued (see p.75). The Warwick Commission (2015) report on cultural value promotes an education which is inclusive of these differences in tempo, calling for 'a curriculum that is infused with multi-disciplinarity, creativity and enterprise' if schools are to not only identify, nurture and train 'tomorrow's creative and cultural talent', but also 'produce creative, world-leading scientists, engineers and technologists' (2015, p.15). The more we learn about how we learn, and how we construct meaning, the less division there seems between dancing and thinking.

Chapter six: Analogies with theatre practice

Meaning grows from our visceral connections to life (Johnson, 2007, p.xi).

From Henry Caldwell Cook through Rex Gibson and the work of the RSC, Folger and Globe, the potential for using theatre-based practice to teach Shakespeare in schools is identified with the analogy of a classroom as a rehearsal room. In order to consider the extent to which the rehearsal room of theatre practice can provide a useful analogy for the Shakespeare classroom, I review in this chapter the themes of quality, democracy and experience discussed in chapter three in light of the thinking of three theatre directors from three generations who have developed their own theories in a substantial way through working with Shakespeare.

As with all analogies, the differences the comparison of a rehearsal room and classroom provokes are at least as interesting as the similarities. The relationship between a professional director and actor is generally between adults and can assume a level of talent and motivation. By contrast the relationship between a teacher and student entails inequality of age and experience and can include a wide spectrum of ability and motivation. The model of theatre-based practice is in reducing these differences through a dialogic, inclusive exploration to build meaning, which values the plurality of experiences in the room. It would seem that a director should have an easier job than a teacher in shaping and guiding this process, however the impact of relationships requires careful management in both cases and can be key to successful practice. It is also worth noting the complication of the analogy that a classroom is not just being compared to a rehearsal room and the process of making theatre, but also to the space where the product of those explorations is shared and evaluated. The teacher's role can at different moments be compared to a director working in a constructivist way with actors, or an actor, using 'direct instruction' and responding to an audience who each bring their own private worlds to bear on the experience. Blending these roles perhaps comes closer to Hattie's definition of an 'expert' teacher, where an' expert' teacher shares with' expert' directors and actors the ability to respond adaptively and flexibly in the moment as a result of high levels of preparation and motivation.

The three directors I have chosen to focus on are: Peter Brook, Michael Boyd, and Aileen Gonsalves. Boyd was Artistic Director of the RSC from 2002 – 2012. He has described Brook as one of the triumvirate of directors (with Peter Hall and Michel St Denis)

responsible for developing the foundational ensemble ethos of the company Boyd consciously returned it to (Boyd, 2004). Brook directed eight Shakespeare productions in Stratford between 1946 and 1970 before setting up Le Centre International de Recherche Théâtrale (CIRT) based in Paris. Gonsalves is an associate director with the RSC who has also played a role in the development of their education work. She leads her own company, Butterfly Theatre, specialising in site specific Shakespeare, and until recently, ran the MA in Acting at ArtsEd, London.[27] I am interested in each of these directors as acknowledged experts in their field who also seem to meet Hattie's definition of expert teachers, and conclude this chapter with a consideration of how an expert teacher is like an expert director. Each of the directors has a clear vision of the cultural value of theatre encapsulated through their practice of ensemble and each embraces risk and challenge in their search for qualities of meaning in ways which can inform the value of theatre-based practice for the classroom.

6.1   Quality

Expert teachers and expert directors continually review and revise their practice in what might be described as a restless search for quality. Our sense of quality involves making judgements. We may describe something as 'quality' if we feel it is a superior example of its kind; or we may describe 'a quality' that we feel represents a certain kind of something that instinctively feels good or bad[28]. An influential report from Harvard's Project Zero into excellence in arts education plays on both these meanings in its title: 'The qualities of quality' (Seidel et al, 2009). The report finds that what constitutes quality is hard to define because it is inextricably linked to personal identity, values and meaning. Quality involves judgements but cannot be easily measured. Richard Deasy's introduction to the report describes how 'quality is a constant and persistent quest and not an end game' (2009, p.i). The report concludes that it is the continuous quest itself which is valuable: 'An overarching theme across many of the findings of this study is that continuous reflection and discussion about what constitutes quality and how to achieve it is not only a catalyst for quality but also a sign of quality' (2009, p.iv).

The OECD report on 'Teaching Excellence', authored by Andreas Schleicher (2016), recognises the 'intangible qualities that are difficult to quantify' in how teachers work

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[27] Quotations for Gonsalves are taken from an interview with her carried out on 03/06/16 and subsequent email correspondence to confirm that her views are fairly represented in this chapter.
[28] *qualis* in Latin meaning 'of what kind'

with their students (2016, p.3) and explains how today's teachers need to 'do more than transmit educational content: they have to cultivate students' ability to be creative, think critically, solve problems and make decisions,' and in order to do this they need to 'nurture the character qualities that help people to live and work together' (2016, p.9). Schleicher asserts that the 'quality of education can never exceed the quality of teaching and teachers' (2016, p.12). In defining the quality of teachers, his report cites Hattie's definition of expert teachers as those who 'make better use of knowledge': using their subject and pedagogical knowledge flexibly and adaptively in response to each student's needs in a collaborative environment (2016, p.26). Schleicher emphasises that today's teachers are preparing today's students for unknown tomorrows, suggesting that striving for quality and reflecting on what it can be is therefore a useful and continuous process. A director's process of helping actors work together and strive for quality may then be a useful model of practice for the classroom. Introducing himself to a New York audience who had come to hear him speak about 'Theatre and new communities' Boyd (2008) explained, 'I'm here to talk about theatre and that's not what I do. I make theatre. I'm a practical person. I make it. I stumble through the dark and feel my way along and make things.' This analogy is disingenuous since Boyd's stumbling is borne from rich experiences of international practice and attention to scholarly work, but he is emphasising the quality of his role as pragmatic, a 'doer' rather than a 'speaker', which might mark him as a 'dancer' not a 'thinker'. Boyd's expertise in 'making', however, comes from the synthesis of dancing *and* thinking as he leads a company in a creative and critical engagement with an inherited culture.

Brook connects a sense of quality with a sense of rhythm and traces this back to a question planted in his mind by a music teacher who asked 'Why is rhythm the common factor in all the arts?' (1998, p.19). Brook describes how his sense of rhythm developed through his experiences as he made decisions about design, proxemics and intonation based on what 'feels right': 'I became more and more convinced that behind taste, artistic judgement and cultural habits lay proportions and relationships that touched us because a quality of emotion is integral to their nature' (1998, pp.63-4). Brook terms this 'the dimension of quality'; and claims rhythm as 'the common factor that underlies all human experience,' a living tempo that connects how the ''here' and 'now' are always arising out of what was and transforming themselves into what will be' (1998, p.132). This poetic phrase is reminiscent of Dewey's understanding of quality and his continuity of experience; like Dewey, 'quality' is a word Brook returns to often in his writing. Brook's

great admiration for John Gielgud as an actor comes from what he describes as 'an intuitive sense of quality' (1998, p.103) and a restless search to find it. Quality, as Dewey asserts, and Seidel's team find, is individualised and hard to define but it is not often found easily or accidentally. In a rehearsal process directors support actors in working hard to explore possibilities for how their character might think and feel and respond, in order to discover what 'feels right' in a moment of performance; something like Oscar Wilde's definition of spontaneity as 'a meticulously prepared art.' In every essay of *The Empty Space* (1968), Brook returns to Shakespeare to illustrate his ideas emphasising how the quality of any play lies in the rhythms, the rise and fall of tensions, at which Shakespeare excels. Dewey (1938) describes our response to quality as an often ineffable response to rhythms and harmonies. Brook (1998, p.131) explains how a director must consciously tune into these rhythms, noting: 'the five acts of a play by Shakespeare make up one long phrase, a phrase that accelerates, slows down, pauses, but never stops […] Whatever the way in which it is staged, even when the order of the scenes is rearranged, or the text is drastically cut, this pulse needs to be there.'

For Gonsalves the tacit knowledge of a director is in being aware of the different energies of her actors and how to balance them within the rhythms of conflict and harmony, 'the pulse' of the play. Expert directors tune into the rhythms of Shakespeare's plays created from the juxtapositions of words, lines, scenes, characters and plot, but also the rhythms of how their actors work together. They evolve a visceral sense of these rhythms which Gonsalves describes as 'a strong sense of things spatially not being right. I literally wince if people are standing too close together – it's like with Shakespeare when the scansion's not right, it jars really deeply and you go 'eeurgh'.' This 'eeurgh' factor she identifies seems a more visceral term for Brook's 'dimension of quality'. Gonsalves is passionate in her belief that 'The use of theatre is to get people to feel – and feel real feelings' in order to 'tune them into what's opposite them in the world' so that they can notice and try to understand the condition of fellow humans around them. As a director, she sees her job as 'to get the actors to act truthfully onstage because it helps people in the audience connect to truth in their own lives'. Her technique requires actors to truthfully feel an emotional response moment to moment, which is given verbal expression through the words spoken and non-verbal expression in the behaviour that it causes. Meisner (1987, p.34) himself described this as the principle of 'pinch and ouch': if someone pinches you, your response is to feel and instinctively speak the ouch. He advises his actors: 'Don't do anything unless something happens to make you do it.' In performance that ouch should

be 'magnified to suit the optics of the theatre', but it should be truthful because 'It's the reality of the emotion which makes the lie [the act] convincing' (1987, p.110). In this way 'as ifs' can be seen as tapping into an actors' somatic markers.

Gonsalves follows Meisner in making her actors learn their lines flat, so that the quality of the emotion can be found in the rhythm of the moment rather than pre-learned through a fixed interpretation of the text. She describes how emotions in Shakespeare are magnified and the actor has to match them: 'they have to have permission, they have to go there because it's so big, so full, the actor's experience is expanded so then the feeling for the audience is expanded. Shakespeare pushes you beyond your everyday experience of hurt or anger or jealousy.' She gives as an example Lady Macbeth and how her plan to kill Duncan is not a common experience but watching her provides 'a magnifying glass for the audience because the audience certainly aren't experiencing wanting to murder people, hopefully - but it allows them to feel *that* jealous or *that* guilty – it connects them to real feelings.' She gives an alternative example of the balcony scene in *Romeo & Juliet* which, rather than being admired for its beauty 'should connect us right back up to these raw feelings of how we felt when we first fell in love'.

The pleasure of working with Shakespeare for Gonsalves is that ability to express emotion because:

> other writers just aren't good enough – they let other things get in the way. Something about Shakespeare's text is working on us in a way we don't understand – the rhythm and the vowels and consonants banging against each other in a certain way – I think they do create a vibration with the rhythms that goes underneath our awareness, into another level, which is just like music.'

Cicely Berry (2008, p.2) also compares Shakespeare's text readily to music, which allows character to emerge from how the rhythms of thoughts 'knock against each other'. Gonsalves compares Shakespeare's text to the direct emotional effect music can have on us but with the caveat that an artist 'must be rigorous in searching for the authentic specific truth of that moment which the 'music' can illuminate, not just lull the audience into generalized feelings' as, for example, a commercial musical can do. Meisner's central metaphor (1987, p.115) is of the text as a canoe which is carried on a river of emotion. The canoe can be used again and again but the journey will always be different according to the environmental conditions of the river just as each actor brings different conditions to playing the text. The quality of Shakespeare's text then becomes a pragmatic tool, a canoe shaping the emotion of the river it rides, expressing a quality of communication in

a cultural moment. Brook (1998, p.134) describes how his early work with Paul Scofield led him to understand and respect the instincts of an actor who is deeply connected to how meaning is expressed through the body. In response to Brook's esoteric theory on Lear's inability to let go, Scofield explained how such negative actions are unhelpful for an actor, allowing Brook to reflect, 'At that moment I saw unforgettably the trap of yielding to the intellectual excitement of "having ideas."' He concludes that although ideas must be expressed, it is important, 'to separate the useful from the useless, the substance from the theory', or what we might characterise as the pragmatic symbiosis of thinking and dancing. For Brook, 'Learning to assemble ideas and thereby live in a palace of glittering thoughts' should not be an end in itself divorced from empirical experience (1998, p.66). In books, the actions of Shakespeare's plays are carved up, dressed, prepared for the reader's digestion, but always referencing the ideal meal, the larger significance, with a gourmet's delight of glossaries and analysis. A production, by contrast, can merely supply the satisfaction of a hearty meal, enjoyable for that moment of company and context as much as content. A production provides a narrative for learning from a moment in a search for the quality of that moment and makes 'acquaintance with the past a means of understanding the present' (Dewey, 1938, p.78).

6.2 Democracy

6.2.1 Ensemble

The emancipatory principle of theatre is rooted in the practice of ensemble. Ensemble was Boyd's watchword for the RSC during his time as Artistic Director. He was clear that ensemble means a whole greater than the sum of its parts, but where each of those parts is also instrumental to the success of the whole. Boyd also favoured 'collective' as a descriptor, viewing it not as an antonym to democracy's focus on individual freedoms, but rather as egalitarian participation in a learning culture where the purpose of rehearsals is 'to learn and make art at the same time' (2008, p.4), similar to Leadbeater's idea of 'the collaborative exercise of individual responsibility' (2008, p.19). The education department of the RSC grew in numbers, confidence and reach as Boyd brought it into the heart of the company from its previous troubled existence on the fringes, and his

vision of ensemble strongly shaped the department's developing practice of working with young people.[29]

Through his work with an artistic ensemble brought together for three years to perform the eight plays of Shakespeare's epic Histories cycle, Boyd (2009) developed 'a set of values and behaviours' or conditions for ensemble working:

- Cooperation: the intense unobstructed traffic between artists at play; the surrender of self to a connection with others, even while making demands on ourselves
- Altruism: the moral imagination and the social perception to realise that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The stronger help the weaker, rather than choreographing the weak to make the strong look good.
- Trust: the ability to be appallingly honest, and to experiment without fear.
- Empathy: caring for others with a forensic curiosity that constantly seeks new ways of being together and creating together.
- Imagination: keeping ideas in the mind long enough to allow them to emerge from the alchemy of the imagination and not the factory of the will.
- Compassion: engaging with the world and each other, knowing there may be mutual pain in doing so.
- Tolerance: accommodating differences and allowing mistakes.
- Forgiveness: allowing and recovering from big and potentially damaging mistakes
- Humility: the expert who has nothing to learn has no need for creativity because the answer is already known.
- Magnanimity: the courage to give away ideas and love, with no thought of transaction or an exchange in return.
- Rapport: the magic language between individuals in tune with each other.
- Patience: this is only really possible over years. Art can be forced like rhubarb, but it tends to bend in the wind.
- Rigour: dancers and musicians take life-long daily training for granted, and theatre could do with catching up.

This list of abstract notions can seem idealistic, yet it is also deeply practical as a way not just to exist together but to flourish and achieve together. Boyd's extension on the notion of humility is that it contains a paradoxical arrogance, 'a collective arrogance that you can actually aspire to something that sublime, as opposed to just getting away with it and getting nice reviews' (2009, p.6); or in an education context, aspiring to far more than a stamp of approval from Ofsted. The sum of each condition can be seen as the emancipatory principle of theatre-based practice, and (with perhaps the exception of rigour) can be seen as a world where the activity of the right-hemisphere of the brain is

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[29] See Winston, 2015 for a more detailed account.

accorded full value unlike the dystopian vision of left-hemisphere dominance McGilchrist presents (2009, pp.428-434) which is disturbingly similar to our current systems of fragmentation and bureaucracy in education. Boyd describes an ensemble as requiring 'dynamic difference', celebrating a diversity of perspectives, ideas and cultural backgrounds with the confidence that such diversity builds a firmer foundation for innovative progress.

Boyd's ensemble values are reflected in Frank Cottrell-Boyce's (2016) moving defence of the importance of culture in our lives to reach out in an ethos of negative capability. Considering examples of creative generosity, including the gift of time and energy altruistically donated by so many for the 2012 Olympic Opening Ceremony, he concludes:

> Innovation doesn't come from the profit motive. Innovation comes from those who are happy to embark on a course of action without quite knowing where it will lead, without doing a feasibility study, without fear of failure or too much hope of reward.

Through living generously, taking the time to listen, learn and share, moment to moment, we cannot predict what opportunities for progress and innovation may arise, but, as Nussbaum (2010, p.81) points out, 'ignorance [of others' cultures] is a virtual guarantee of bad behaviour'. She calls for a focus on culture in education that supports young people 'to understand both the differences that make understanding difficult between groups and nations, and the shared human needs and interests that make understanding essential if common problems are to be solved', a call repeated by many, including the OECD (Schleicher, 2016).

Boyd (2004) acknowledges criticism that ensembles can result in a 'beige homogeneity' or a mediocrity where potential stars are squashed. He argues that ensemble does not mean 'imposing false glass ceilings on talent, charisma or charm' but instead inspires each individual to greater achievement through the greater challenge of collaboration; a form of Leadbeater's (2008) 'We Think'. A contrast can be seen here in the more traditional views of policy makers who believe that all young people can be successful 'stars' of society 'like me' - *if* they sufficiently apply themselves to individual achievement regardless of their peers, an attitude that generally supports divisions in schooling along lines of wealth, faith and ability as providing for quality. Hattie's (2009) data, however, suggests students are more likely to succeed in a more diverse and co-operative learning environment where competition is with the self to continuously improve (Boyd's 'rigour')

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rather than through achieving at the expense of, or separated from, others. Commenting on the ensemble that Boyd brought together, experienced actor Richard Cordery describes, not a beige homogeneity, but 'a family […] where the protective shields between the individuals have been lowered' allowing innovation and risk alongside encouragement and appreciation (RSC, 2007, p.51).

Boyd's vision of an ensemble is not just about a company of actors working together, it is about the personal growth and practical development that being part of an active ensemble creates and the strength of shared meaning that an ensemble can bring to an audience. In a similar way, a class can be a group of students learning in the same space or an ensemble of young people learning in collaboration with each other to achieve more than they could have done alone. What characterises Boyd's ensemble as a vision rather than a strategic plan is his investment in the human narratives told on, off and beyond the stage. He poses the question, 'can an ensemble company act in some sense as a maquette version of the real world; a better version of the real world on an achievable scale which celebrates the virtues of collaboration?' (2004). Boyd's vision is a role for theatre, not in solving the world's problems but in collaboratively understanding them, a vision tempered by pragmatic concerns for the professional development of actors, and for teachers. He believes that rigour and risk-taking go hand in hand, reflecting the hemispheric duet our brains have evolved to dance.

Gonsalves describes directing as a phenomenological art form arising from making conscious the continuous unconscious human processes of social interaction, particularly our pragmatic responses to the needs and desires of others, and shaping how these responses are expressed. She explains: 'The first ensemble is the family, the family dynamic. It was about conflict of course – I was very tuned into conflict in my family and how to avert it, but in plays you're continually trying to provoke it. Although, as in life, the elusive search for harmony drives us on.' All young people experience moments of conflict and harmony in their own circles of family and friends and increasingly recognise those moments in the wider world around them; a safe classroom can provide the ensemble 'family' Cordery describes to explore and rehearse those moments.

6.2.2 Plurality

Western democracies are built on a principle of free will, an ethical consequence of which is that we should have agency in how we are governed. Our choices, however, are rarely

rational (Tversky and Kahneman, 1981; 1986) and instead are shaped by myriad influences, one of the most important of which is our perception of the intentions of others. Hattie (2009, p.254) observes that education can never be a neutral space and teachers must be aware of the power dynamics and ethical issues their classrooms create. As Dewey, Vygotsky and Bruner realised, theatre can be an educational space for exploring those influences and issues; and as Boal showed, following Freire, theatre can provide a space, not just for exploring but for challenging power dynamics. Bruner (1966, p.163) confesses a revelation in realising the power of drama after hearing 'the intensity of the discussion of moral philosophy' from a group of 14 year olds after watching a film of *Billy Budd*. He urges 'that in fashioning the instruction designed to give children a view of the different faces and conditions of man, we consider more seriously the use of this most powerful impulse to represent the human condition in drama and thereby, the drama of the human condition'.

Theatre is a continual process of readjustment of perspectives. Greenblatt (1985, p.33) recognises it as a social event, influenced both by the time of its production and of its reception because 'artistic form itself is the expression of social evaluations and practices'. Seidel (2013, p.7) comments on how literary study can be solipsistic, looking back to the author's intentions rather than forward to how the book is received. By contrast, he suggests, drama study is more inclined to be outward looking, focussing as it does on the ability to make connections with the plurality of people around you and what's going on in the world. Berry describes the purpose of theatre as:

> to provoke us and make us want to talk, to discuss, to think – to communicate through language. It can make us question not only our beliefs and the way we live, it can make us question ourselves. And surely this primal need to exchange ideas and desires is basic to our sense of community (2008, p.13).

Brook (1998, pp.140-141) describes how a living theatre must be alive and political but is the opposite of politics: while politicians are required to smooth away nuance and defend big ideas, good theatre 'must show that political absolutes are painfully relative and many commitments dangerously naïve'. Unlike the superficial sureties of politics, the illusions of theatre provide a space to explore possibilities:

> In life the heat of conflict makes it almost impossible to enter into the logic of one's adversary, but a great dramatist can without judgement launch opposing characters against one another, so an audience can be at one and the same time inside and outside them both, successively for, against and neutral […] For a few

hours it is possible to go very far; social experiments can take place that are far more radical than any that a national leader can propose. Utopian experiences that we will never see in our lifetime can become real within the time span of a performance, and underworlds from which no one returns can be visited in safety. Together with the audience we can make models to remind ourselves of the possibilities that we constantly ignore.

Through these experiments, creating these models of experience, theatre and theatre-based practice may not directly effect political change but can stimulate dialogue affecting the imagination with tiny cultural moments that may shift paradigms. Brook describes how, through an engagement with alternative sympathies and attitudes illustrated on a stage, 'spectators can be given a moment of perception beyond their normal vision'. This recalls Vygotsky's observations that a child becomes a head taller through imaginative play. An imaginative engagement with the plurality of perspectives of others' lives can expand our social, emotional and cognitive understanding as we search for the *quality* of democracy rather than becoming numbed by political wrangling over the rights of different interest groups.

Brook, Boyd and Gonsalves share a passion that good theatre invites an audience into an active engagement, as Rancière (2009) described, however quietly they may sit in their seats. As an example, Brook (1998, p.142) offers an anecdote about the ending of his devised response to the Vietnam War, *US,* which presented the audience with a current political situation but challenged them to consider the breadth and depth of the effects of that situation for different people's lives. He describes how the show ended ambiguously with the company in tableau as one actor burned a (fake) butterfly, suggesting that we will constantly ask yet never answer the play's key questions: 'What is this endless chain of slaughter? How can we live with it?' The moment was held so that it was unclear when, or if, the audience should applaud. On the first night, renowned theatre critic Kenneth Tynan impatiently called out 'Are you waiting for us, or are we waiting for you?' Brook takes the wider relevance of Tynan's question as 'the uncomfortable moment of doubt that a political performance should arouse'.

As a situation investigated through a plurality of voices, a Shakespeare play creates analogies for the political questions that compare human needs and responses across contexts of time, geography and cultures and can help us think about what we can do differently. Brook founded CIRT because he believed in the pragmatic, democratic principles of ensemble working. He describes human culture as dividing into three broad

areas: 'the culture of the state', 'the culture of the individual' and 'the culture of links' where the latter digs beneath the first two in a search for what makes us all human (1996). CIRT was established to find the intercultural potential of theatre through exploring this 'culture of links.' Brook brought together a company driven by a sense of open curiosity and a search for the quality of truth, but with a conviction of negative capability that truth is contingent and ephemeral because 'the moment a society wishes to give an official version of itself it becomes a lie, because it can be pinned down. It no longer has that living, endlessly intangible quality that one calls truth' (1996, p.65).

This returns us to Dewey's sense of quality as a consciously felt moment in a flow of perception. For Brook, this means that in a moment of theatre, 'All that matters is that the action should ring true at the moment of execution. At this instant, it is 'right'. This is the absolute test. *This* is theatrical reality' (1998, p.169, italics original). Brook's 'culture of links' finds purpose in exploring the plurality of human perspectives, revealing human truths, McConachie's 'biocultural universals' (2015, p.13), that are common across all cultures but are ever shifting in their cultural nuances. His description suggests a butterfly, a creature that seems to concentrate the sheer beauty of being when it is alive, and the loss of that quality when it is skewered in death as a museum piece. The comparison with school Shakespeare hardly needs making.

6.3 Experience

In a College address, Maya Angelou told her audience 'The poetry you read has been written for you, each of you—black, white, Hispanic, man, woman, gay, straight' (cited in Swallow-Price, 2013). Each of us can find ourselves reflected in a work of art if we pay attention to the intention of the art rather than the intention of the artist (Eco, 1992); employing a pragmatic, inspired reading of what the work is doing and what we are doing with it, rather than the more methodical approach of what we are learning about it (Rorty, 1992). For Angelou when she was a young girl, suffering racism, sexism, poverty and abuse, she believed 'Shakespeare must have been a black girl' because when she read Sonnet 29, (*When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes*) she felt the text spoke directly to her experience. A literary text provides metaphors, and the empirical reader draws, from the conjectures possible, only those they are able to at that time and place. They make *in vivo* comparisons with their own experiences to form an understanding about what is portrayed by the text. At another time, with other experiences, their conjectures may be different; in dialogue with others, their conjectures may shift again.

As Dewey explained in defining his concept of the continuity of experience, 'every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after' (1938, p.35). In order to create a four-dimensional being from a text, an actor can only consider the intentions of the text. Even with a living author in the room to express his/her intentions, the actor can only inhabit the text from their own empirical perspective. The job of a director is to work with the actor in response to other actors, and the audience, to find the right quality of experiences for the embodiment of a character as a coherent and culturally resonant reading of the text.

Eco (1992, p.78) argues that an author knows that a text will be interpreted according to 'language as a social treasury', that social treasury being the reader's perspective on the accumulation of meanings, conventions and connotations around the words and phrases used; what Vygotsky (1934, p.259) recognised as the 'complex, mobile, protean phenomenon' creating the 'sense' of words. An author cannot control how their texts will be interpreted, just as a playwright cannot control how their texts will be embodied. Evidence of this appears on the Shakespeare stage every day as companies create coherent readings of the plays which the author can never have intended, having no knowledge of the modern world through which lens his texts are interpreted. Empirical actors and directors cannot control how empirical audience members will receive their productions, just as empirical teachers cannot control what empirical students will learn from their lessons, but through a 'sympathetic understanding of individuals as individuals' (Dewey, 1938, p.39) they can stimulate, guide and challenge the quality of the experience gained.

Brook describes the purpose of the international company he formed in 1968, which became CIRT, as not searching for a patchwork common language but more a commonality of meaning: 'The signs and signals from different cultures are not what matters, it is what lies behind the signs that gives them meaning' (1998, p.144). His ambition was to develop 'something inexpressible' which was 'the capacity to listen through the body to codes and impulses that are hidden all the time at the root of cultural forms' (1998, p.167). Through the practicality of theatre, Brook is as fascinated as Vygotsky in the connection between language and meaning. He describes one experiment where two actors improvised from an ancient Greek text with no literal understanding of the words they were speaking, but through listening to each other they found an

emotional understanding. In a sentence reminiscent of Vygotsky, Brook explains: 'Words and actions were not a 'showing' to others of the performer's previously developed understanding; what was projected outwards came from what was heard within, and the two were inseparable' (1998, p.167).

The internationalism of the company was vital for Brook's search, not just internally as a company of actors from different cultural backgrounds but also externally as the company toured Iran, West Africa and the US, processing interactions and responses from the varied audiences. This touring confirmed for Brook the immediacy of theatre to communicate. Reflecting on his African adventures, he considers that a year of sitting, smiling and exchanging gifts could still not achieve the communication of a shared performance: 'a theatre performance is a strong action; it has an effect on all who are present. The image vanishes, but something has begun' (1998, p.182). And he senses that the actors' abilities are enhanced by becoming 'the projection of a collective imagination far richer than our own' (1998, p.183). Brook writes of the ineffable but tangible quality of human communication which he views as beyond codification and social science taxonomies. He recognises that the feeling behind every gesture is felt deep within us. A greeting may be a shaking of the hand, a hand to the heart, palms brought together or a bow, but although culturally different, these gestures carry the same meaning 'provided that the actor is capable of finding the necessary quality within his movement' (1998, p.183).

That quality is connected to the universal capacity of our social brains to read intention. Brook observed that hostility concealed behind a smile is instantly detected but a genuine desire to express friendship, even by offering a clenched fist is understood. Perhaps what Brook observes is how willing encounters can strip away cultural glosses and preconceptions. If each side wants to communicate and expects to encounter difference, allowances can be made that open up perception to deeper emotional intentions, allowing a 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 1975). Brook found playing with a cardboard box in open sunlight more rewarding than the trappings of a European theatre because it is when 'the audience sees and begins to trust the actors as ordinary human beings that it opens to their imagination and willingly enters into their play' (1998, p.184). The intention of the actor towards anyone or anything is what makes a performance worth watching. Brook claims: 'We do not need to do what is so hideously unconvincing in bad opera, to make fake jewels and fake golden goblets. We can take any stone, any mug, and

if in playing with it we can bring the necessary quality and intensity, we can temporarily transform it into gold' (1998, p.188).

It is our intention towards each other that most affects our encounters. Young people's learning is shaped by the intentions of those around them. The Hay McBer report (2000, 1.3.7) concludes that 'Respect for others underpins everything the effective teacher does' and Schleicher (2016, p.9) is clear that an effective teacher needs to 'nurture the character qualities that help people to live and work together'. Hattie emphasises the importance of the relationship between teacher and student in appropriately shaping the quality of learning experiences, because as Dewey (1938, p.27) said 'Everything depends on the quality of the experience.'

6.4   How is an expert teacher like an expert director?

Brook's reflective practice and restless search for quality made him realise that imposing his own 'intellectual ideas' could 'block or hamper the actor's own creative process'(1998, pp. 83-87); that if a director thinks in terms of the results he desires rather than facilitating an actor's discoveries, he will not get the best from that actor. When Binkie Beaumont suggested that his role as director was to teach his actors to play, Brook balked at the idea of being a teacher, his own schooling having provided teachers as 'experts' transmitting knowledge; but he is forced to consider what his role is and finds a parallel instead with an orchestral conductor whose greatest skill, honed through experience, is to listen very actively in order to lead his orchestra. Another time, Brook reports how an international group of directors all complain at the inadequacy of their titles in their own languages: the bossiness of 'director'; the simplicity of 'metteur-en-scene', the prosaicness of 'instructor' or 'regisseur'. The group are talking in the building of an Italian distillery and find agreement that their profession would be better described as 'distillatori' (1998, p.224). Active listening and distilling are the pragmatic skills Brook identifies for a director and can be found reflected in Hattie's (2012, pp.26-7) definition of expert teachers:

- Can identify the most important ways in which to represent the subject that they teach
- Are proficient at creating an optimal classroom climate for learning
- Monitor learning and provide feedback
- Believe that all students can reach the success criteria
- Influence surface and deep student outcomes

In identifying 'the most important ways in which to represent the subject that they teach', directors draw on their knowledge of Shakespeare, whether of social historical context, performance history, narrative or rhetorical effects. They use their knowledge first to frame an idea, a design concept, then to support the actors exploring that concept to make choices as appropriate. In his 2013 production of *Macbeth*, for example, Boyd's concept to explore the tensions of beliefs and principles in the play was to emphasise the religious tensions, setting the play within the design of an old church as a metaphor for the production's conversation between the Catholic and Protestant sectarianism of Shakespeare's time and the divisions by faith in our own. Gonsalves set her 2015 *Macbeth* in Colonial India, with Macbeth as a high ranking British officer married to an ambitious Indian princess. Her concept allowed exploration of the tensions not just of different cultural beliefs, but also cross-cultural gender politics. For a teacher, the design concept equivalent would be a well-structured scheme of work, containing a line of enquiry with key questions or themes narrow enough to provide focus for the time allocated but broad enough to allow exploration and interpretation. Ideally an ensemble director or teacher would allow the key questions, themes and design to emerge from a collaborative process of exploration but pragmatically time and resources require them to make choices and part of their expertise is the leadership skill to make decisions ahead of the process which are designed to bring out the potential of their students/actors, supporting them in regulating their own learning in order to 'influence surface and deep student outcomes'.

Brook, Boyd and Gonsalves 'are proficient at creating an optimal classroom climate for learning' because they are passionate about their ensemble ethos to create a space of shared humanity where it is safe to be vulnerable and open to challenge and difference. They are passionate that the ensemble ethos of actors and audience in a shared space of safe exploration is, what Brook describes as, 'the force that can counterbalance the fragmentation of our world' (1996, p.66); a way of sharing what we have in common, and of understanding why we think differently. When I asked Gonsalves how she might define her role as a director, her first response was that she gives actors permission, 'permission to take risks, permission to be free' which they need in order to feel safe to try out ideas.

> My job is to set up a safe environment. I give a framework and inspire with an
> initial idea. I often just give one idea - which can be the venue – this part of the
> cave rather than that part - creating the parameters in which to play, and then

actually instigating play. But I think that's about giving permission – you instigate an environment where people feel safe. I think this is where the whole ensemble/company thing really works for me, that I have to create a company first. It's not about anything else actually, because once you create a group of people and tell them they can play, they do it.

Creating this sense of ensemble is built on trust – trust between the actors and between the actors and their director to lead them. Gonsalves sees this relationship as fundamental to anything else in her rehearsal room. From trust grows a shared language of professional practice but also of personal understandings, forgiveness and joy in working together; the aspects captured in Boyd's ensemble conditions and Cottrell-Boyce's (2016) proposal that 'the engine of innovation is reckless generosity.'

As a young actor in Boyd's Histories company, who began with minor roles in the first tetralogy and played Hal and Henry V in the second, Geoffrey Streatfeild described the ensemble ethos Boyd created:

> Our ever growing trust enables us to experiment, improvise and rework on the floor with an astonishing freedom and confidence. This ensemble is a secure environment without ever being a comfort zone. All of us are continually challenging ourselves and being inspired by those around us to reach new levels in all aspects of our work (RSC, 2007, p.13).

This quotation was taken up by the education department as an explanation of what they aimed to achieve in the classroom. The key themes of trust and challenge are key themes of Hattie's concept of Visible Learning which has much in common with an ensemble ethos. For Hattie, a classroom environment should be one that 'not only tolerates but welcomes errors, attention to the challenge of the task, the presence of feedback to reduce the gaps, and a sense of satisfaction and further engagement and perseverance to succeed in the tasks of learning' (2009, p.199).

When Brook set up CIRT, it was after more than twenty-five years of directing during which time he had shifted from choreographing his actors in beautiful but 'deadly' theatre into a practising belief in the ensemble working of 'immediate' theatre, exemplified in his celebrated 1970 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* Brook (1999, p.152) describes the test of that ensemble as their performance at the Roundhouse in London, where, divorced from the structural resources they were used to working with in Stratford with their highly physical production, the actors were able to quickly adapt and transfer their shared meaning to the new space. Through the trust and

collaboration built through the ensemble process, the actors were able to take risks and abstract their learning into a new situation in a parallel to the extended abstract stage of SOLO taxonomy (Biggs and Collis, 1982). Gonsalves' company's specialisation in site-specific Shakespeare represents the same process at work. The level of trust her process engenders in her actors allows a high level of play which requires actors to abstract their knowledge of their lines and inferences on character relationships into the moment to moment reality of responding to each other, the audience, and the space around them.

Through education projects working with young people, Gonsalves has noted young people's ability to engage imaginatively with the text, easily abstracting their understanding through the motivation of theatre practice to make a performance appropriate for a mutually agreed context, just as her professional actors do. She finds it is often easier to build trust quickly with young people than with adults:

> Professional actors have their own monitor that you're always trying to kill off in order to do anything because their own monitor is really depressing – it tells them they're bad. Kids are more likely to give up monitoring themselves if they think you're going to reassure them it's going alright – they trust the outside eye.

David Bainbridge (2009, p.130) explains how the well-established proposal that young animals are "hard wired" to copy adult behaviours' is 'a suggestion so simple that it is easy to underestimate how important this process can be in humans.' If young people are evolutionarily disposed to look to adults for models of behaviour, it follows they will look more to adults they feel they can trust for those models and for approval. An important element of that trust is a reciprocal respect which gives practical encouragement, building a belief in success. A major difference the analogy of expert teacher and director brings out is that directors work with a cast, while teachers work with a class. 'Believing that all students can reach the success criteria' should therefore be much easier for a director. Actors are cast for their abilities to play certain roles and for their abilities to work together in creating those roles; students, usually, are thrown together through accidents of time and geography. Diversity has many advantages but a director should clearly have an easier job creating an ensemble with chosen participants than a teacher whose job is to conjure the potential from every student placed in front of them. Nevertheless, the success of both lies with the individual relationships they create, balanced within the needs of the whole, and this depends on the passion they bring to their work to care about the success of each part of the whole.

An expert director 'monitors learning and provides feedback' through 'notes' which are immediate formative feedback given in constructive dialogue with the actors, and with an eye on any additional training that may be required, perhaps with a voice or movement specialist. Hattie (2012, p.127) places a great deal of emphasis on the value of immediate dialogic feedback and monitoring of progress in comparison with summative assessment which he regards mainly as justification for grading rather than directly useful for the students' progress. Monitoring what feels right in a rehearsal process can be compared to monitoring the quality of learning as it happens in the classroom, and practical dialogic feedback is instrumental to the success of both.

Hattie's emphasis on the value of teachers and students working collaboratively is echoed in Schleicher's OECD report, particularly in a section entitled 'Prioritising approaches that matter most' (2016, pp.47-9). The report finds that professional development embedded in schools with the full support of leadership is far more effective than teachers individually attending external courses. It calls for 'structures and processes that encourage teachers to co-operate' and highlights the need for teachers to work better together in order to help their students 'work better together by developing their ability to communicate and collaborate', since, 'put simply, the world no longer rewards people just for what they know' (2016, p.13). Increasingly the world needs what Schleicher terms 'versatilists' rather than specialists or generalists, those with a flexibility of approach and ability to make connections across previously unrelated ideas and who can function effectively in a world of plural values. Today's education should develop students' skills to flourish in 'a world where trust will have to bridge those differences and a world in which their lives will be affected by issues that transcend national boundaries' (2016, p.16).

Exploring the qualities of an 'expert' director in this chapter, and comparing them to the qualities of an 'expert' teacher, there seem clear parallels in the focus of both on providing guidance and stimulus in a climate of trust, challenge and collaboration. Expert teachers and directors might then be considered to share a quality of practice that reflects a tacit knowledge developed through attention to the needs and rhythms of their students/actors in guiding their learning. They share a pragmatism that responds to 'how' as well as 'what' a student/actor needs to learn as they connect to the text, and they create an ensemble in a climate of trust and collaboration that values individual experiences in building an understanding of the intentions behind interactions. Crucially

the parallel of a how an expert teacher and director run their classroom and their rehearsal room is in the importance of the relationships they create and promote in supporting learning and performance. Hattie's (2012) conclusions on the high value of the climate of trust and collaboration created by expert teachers (compared to the more ineffectual structural issues of school systems) are echoed by Ken Robinson. Robinson (2013) offers an analogy with Brook's (1968) assertion that theatre essentially requires an actor to walk across an empty space and a spectator to watch. Where Brook argues that 'theatre' happens in this human collaboration, and that set, costume, props, lights, are extra, sometimes enhancing, sometimes distracting, Robinson argues that classrooms, books, uniforms, smartboards, are extra to the collaboration of teacher and students that creates learning. Through the opportunities these relationships create, questions can be explored in grappling with issues of democracy.

Brook explains how 'deadly theatre' results from a 'deadly' director who can create work that is admired and respected but is complacent, relying on 'old formulae, old methods, old jokes, old effects' (1968, p.44). A parallel can be drawn with Hattie's conception of an experienced rather than expert teacher. From experience, the deadly director and the deadly teacher know how to get the job done but there is wasted potential in the lack of personalised challenge for the actors/audience/students. Brook observes how the busyness of theatre 'trundles on' so that 'we are too busy to ask the only vital question which measures the whole structure. Why theatre at all? What for?' (1968, p.44). Under constant changes and pressure, the busyness of school also trundles on with barely time for teachers to ask 'Why education at all? What for?' Expert directors and teachers need to keep asking these questions, restlessly chasing a sense of theatrical and pedagogical quality as cultures turn and shift. The answer to the questions: 'Why Shakespeare at all? What for?' shifts with them.

Chapter seven: Embodying Shakespeare's language

To understand how language works does not reduce the pleasure of speaking, and of listening to the eternal murmur of texts (Eco, 1992, p.148).

An experience of Shakespeare in performance can profoundly deepen an appreciation of his texts for young people by situating it in contextually bound living bodies, allowing them to explore how that visceral experience gives intention to the words spoken. Performing Shakespeare's text means interpreting a model author's intentions in order to create an empirical character, an embodied presence made palpable through an actor's own connotations when speaking the words. This provides an experience of breathing life into the text which motivates close reading and supports understanding of how that text is crafted.[30] In order to better appreciate how embodying Shakespeare's facility with language can help young people to not just understand Shakespeare, but also how we communicate more generally, I review in this chapter findings from linguistics and cognitive science about the functioning and purpose of language that illuminate how Shakespeare's language affects us. I look particularly at how conceptual metaphors and mental framing result from our sensory connections with the world around us and our readings of others' intentions; how this happens in constant shift according to our cultural influences; and how young people's social brains can be engaged and developed through playful exploration of and metacognitive reflection on these processes by embodying Shakespeare's text.

7.1   Musilanguage

We can be deeply moved by certain rhythms and the way the music of a speech can build and take us with it (Berry, 2008, p.4).

RSC Director of Voice Cicely Berry describes listening to Shakespeare as 'a collective act between the actor, the text and the audience' (2008, p.23). The primary purpose of language can be thought of as sounds made to share feelings in a moment of time and Berry describes a 'primal need' in all of us for cadence and rhythm (2008, p.16). Her professional experience of the relationship between voice and body and between voice, body and rhythm is supported by recent studies of the shared evolution of music and language. She believes it is obvious that language 'started as noises expressing a need, a

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[30] a process which seems to engage our brains' instinctive pleasure for sense-making (Chater and Loewenstein, 2015).

feeling, an intent, whether of anger or frustration or desire, to another living being; and that noise, that sound, that rhythm, came from the body as a whole' (2009, p.3). This implied belief in the evolution of language as vocalization of embodied emotion is also supported by recent scientific research.

On a neurobiological basis, emotion is now recognised to be at the core of how we think and reason in a complex relationship of response and stimulus with the world around us (Damasio, 2004; 2006; Trimble, 2007). Mark Johnson (2007, p.9) concludes, 'There is no cognition without emotion, even though we are often unaware of the emotional aspects of our thinking.' Shaun Gallagher (2008, p.444) reviews studies that show the innate abilities of babies to perceive expressions of emotion and intent from movements of the face and body of other humans, interacting with them through what he calls 'contexts of shared attention – shared situations – in which they learn what things mean and what they are for'. He argues that we learn how to interpret and share meaning through pragmatic, emotionally coloured interactions with others not through passive observation of others' behaviour; and the more varied the social contexts we are exposed to, the more we learn. This suggests that the emotions expressed by a performer in the shared situation of live performance can act as a catalyst for learning.

It seems we understand each other by unconsciously but closely observing physiological changes reflecting emotions, and mirroring them so that we effectively inhabit how another person feels. Gallagher cites Decety and Grezes in summarising how mirror neurons (Rizzolleti, 1996) are understood to contribute to our abilities for ToM:

> By automatically matching the agent's observed action onto its own motor repertoire without executing it, the firing of mirror neurons in the observer brain simulates the agent's observed action and thereby contributes to the understanding of the perceived action (2006, cited in Gallagher, 2008, p.447).

Gallagher argues that mirror neurons create an instinctive, subconscious response to how someone else feels, rather than an assessment of their feelings based on simulation as other ToM researchers have suggested (Carrington and Bailey, 2009). He explains:

> When I see the other's action or gesture, I see (I *immediately perceive*) the meaning in the action or gesture; and when I am in a process of interacting with the other, my own actions and reactions help to constitute that meaning. I not only see, but I resonate with (or against), and react to the joy or the anger, or the intention that is in the face or in the posture or in the gesture or action of the other (2008, p.449, italics original).

McGilchrist (2009, p.122) explains, 'communication occurs because, in a necessarily limited, but nonetheless crucially important sense, we come to feel what it is like to be the person who is communicating with us'.[31] Trimble (2012, p.109) reviews neurobiological evidence supporting Damasio's theory that 'Viewing an emotion thus activates the neuronal core of the individual's own experience of the emotions' and concludes that mirror neurons are 'an unconscious system for monitoring the intentions of others' (2012, p.108).

There are resonances here with what we might call the *in vitro* and *in vivo* processes of studying Shakespeare, first mentioned in chapter four. In reading the text, our perceptions of the characters are more distanced, decoding their intentions in two dimensions because we have no actions or gestures to perceive. We infer patterns through a cognitive engagement and sometimes that can stimulate affective connection but we always lack the direct sensory perception of interaction. Embodying the text through theatre-based practice provides an *in vivo*, four-dimensional approach as we perceive the language in the context of living flesh in time, and respond using our skilled embodied resonance capacities, whether as audience or actor.

To understand how the language in Shakespeare's plays works to communicate meaning we need to situate it back in the body where it has evolved over tens of thousands of years of human history to make us the highly social species we are. Language has long been regarded as a unique human activity and fundamental to what makes us human. Current best guesses estimate that verbal language appeared between 40,000 – 80,000 years ago, alongside an increase in archaeological evidence of symbolic thought, demonstrated through objects revealing a sense of mortality and aesthetics (Trimble, 2007; McGilchrist, 2009). An impulse for social communication is found in other, non-verbal, mammals[32] (McGilchrist, 2009, p.125) but the sophistication of our social brains suggests a drive to refine our systems of communication, adding lyrics to the score of our expression.

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[31] A startling example of this has been shown by research findings that people injected with Botox to allay the lines caused by laughter and frowning often have impaired ability to recognise emotions in others (Neal and Chartrand, 2011). This correlation supports other findings that the subtle physical changes we make in our instinctive mirroring of someone else allow us to read and understand their emotional state.

[32] The drive to communicate has been located in the anterior cingulate rather than in Broca's area where the motor speech act happens - whales and dolphins, for example have highly developed anterior cingulates.

Theories about the shared evolution of music and language are becoming widely accepted and focus on language as an embodied process of communicating nuances of emotional response. Reviewing these studies, Trimble (2009, p.121) says: 'Clearly, music and spoken language are both communication devices used to express emotional meaning through high register socially accepted patterned sound.' Stephen Mithen (2005) has proposed a 'musilanguage' of the Neanderthals as pre-verbal communication depending on tone, pitch, and rhythm. Aniruddh Patel (2008) has explored the close relationship of music and language in human evolution, noting that both are uniquely and universally human. In considering the biological features that make us capable of speech, McGilchrist (2009, p.102) notes that 'music and language have a shared architecture' both in terms of how we produce and how we interpret the sounds. Patel (2008, p.411) additionally notes how synchronised rhythmic movement appears to be unique to humans and relies on the same connections between auditory and motor areas that allow vocal learning. Of other animals, only parrots show potential for synchronised rhythm and, notably, like us they have advanced vocal capacities and, relatively, a highly social brain. McGilchrist (2009, p.123) observes: 'Everything about human music suggests that its nature is sharing, non-competitive' and therefore must be the result of evolutionary group selection, an activity, akin to language that benefits the group rather than the individual.'

Walking on two legs freed our hands to develop gestural language[33] and our ability to transmit and perceive emotional states through our facial expressions also developed as the complexity of our facial muscles evolved. All of these elements appear to have worked in harmony to create the communicative abilities we now enjoy through physical bodily and facial expression, and musical sounds of tone and pitch. Gallagher (2005, p.128) concludes that: 'Across evolutionary time-frames, the links between movement, language, and thought would have influenced the structure of the brain itself', establishing how crucial our interactions with others are in co-creating verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication. Verbal language was the extension that brought the fine distinctions as needed that have allowed us to build the complexities of human cultures; written language came much later, about 6000 years ago, and then was not widely accessible until very recently. An experience of Shakespeare in performance

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[33] Mithen (2005) connects freedom of arm movements to the dancing that would accompany singing. McGilchrist (2009, p.111) reviews research showing that 'restricting hand movements produces an adverse effect on the content and fluency of speech.'

situates the text as living language expressing emotionally coloured interactions and emphasising the musical and rhythmic qualities of how we communicate. Watching others perform, or responding in role to another's performance means inhabiting another's emotions by engaging our mirror neurons. This pragmatic understanding of how language evolved, however, has not always been the accepted view.

7.2   Thought and language

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis,[34] named after Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, was influential in the twentieth century as the theory of linguistic determinism proposing that we cannot conceive of or understand a concept until it has a linguistic label. Guy Deutscher (2010) explores this idea in his study of 'blue'. In our earliest written records, the concept of blue does not appear; *The Odyssey*, for example, describes the sea as 'wine coloured'. For many years, serious study was devoted to whether our ancestors were physiologically different to us and unable to distinguish blue from other colours. With increased knowledge of the range and scope of languages existing across the world, linguists have discovered that blue is the last colour to be named in the evolution of a civilization because it is the colour least likely to appear naturally. Words for red come first, followed by browns, then greens and yellows and finally blues as a culture becomes complex and its need to distinguish more colours becomes necessary. Homo Sapien eyes have almost certainly always been able to distinguish the same range of colours, but we create words for the subtle differences only as needed; only in very recent times have we felt a need to distinguish 'duck egg' from 'teal'. This suggests that language is created to express what we need to share, rather than controlling what we are able to think.

Western colonial expansion highlighted linguistic differences between human cultures, in some cases admiring their complexities and similarities to root European languages, as with Sanskrit, and in others denigrating their difference as 'simplicity' (Bellos, 2011). Colonisers who couldn't directly translate the concepts they associated with civilized behaviour such as their government, laws, religion and linear time tended to assume inferiority in such a culture. 'More particularly,' says David Bellos, 'the difficulty of expressing 'abstract thought' of the Western kind in many Native American and African languages suggested that the capacity for abstraction was the key to the progress of the human mind' (2011, p.165). Sapir's radical assertion in the early twentieth century was

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[34] Although now largely discredited, and never subscribed to by Edward Sapir himself, versions of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis continue to divide linguistic philosophy.

against this assumed hierarchy of languages and, by extension, cultures. He observed that the syntax of languages evolves to suit the context, so that, for example, the directions of right and left centred on the position of our forward gaze makes sense for us, just as directions centred on east to west or the position of a salient landmark make more sense to another culture. The language of different cultures presents us, literally as well as metaphorically, with a plurality of perspectives. Translations between cultures - between gestures and cultural references, as much as between words – can break down assumptions and prejudices, providing, as Brook noted, there is a genuine intention to communicate. Rather than determining thought, Sapir found that languages create 'mind grooves' or 'habitual patterns of thought', because as Bellos (2011, p.168) explains, 'Different languages, because they are structured in different ways, make their speakers pay attention to different aspects of the world.' This highlights the interdependence of language and thought. As an example, Sapir proposed that the grammatical features of Latin and Greek that easily allow the construction of abstract nouns (e.g. humanity from human; civilization from civil) provided an environment for abstract thought in a way that the evidential, more subjective languages of, for example, the Native American Hopi tribe his student Whorf studied extensively, could not. McGilchrist (2009) argues this is one of the reasons for the growth of cultural dominance in the West of the abstracted and fragmented approaches of the left-hemisphere of the brain which need to be rebalanced with the prosodic approaches of the right.

Neologising is an essential and universal feature of our social brains as we reach to find expression of meaning to share. The dictionary tradition of 'words of the year' gives us 'overshare' and 'photobomb' for 2014 (Flood, 2014). Both are portmanteau words to metaphorically explain modern concepts and they give an example of how the left and right hemispheres of the brain work together, the left searching the categories it knows and the right open to new ideas and nuances of meaning. 'Overshare' is described by the editorial director for Chambers dictionaries as 'beautifully British' and 'subtle, yet devastating' (Flood, 2014); a description that captures a cultural intention behind the word in use which is not immediately apparent from a more neutral reading of it. The metaphorical use of 'bomb' linked to the fact of a 'photo' to make a new verb describes a cultural trend. A high degree of contextual knowledge is required to decode the implied meaning but the average teenager will barely blink before adopting the phrase. The concepts of 'oversharing' and 'photobombing' were not inconceivable before the words were invented but their popularity in contemporary culture made the concepts they

describe more noticeable, creating Sapir's mind grooves. By giving something a label we are more likely to acknowledge it and intuit shared meaning more easily. As McConachie (2006, p.21) summarises, 'humans put together cognitive categories on the basis of salience, meaning that they grant precedence to ideas that are familiar and prominent within their own cultures.' These annual surveys of newly popular words illustrate the playful flexibility with which we engage with language in order to share what we mean. Young people encountering Shakespeare through theatre-based practice often enjoy playing with the qualities of the sounds and complexities of his language to discover meaning; their teachers often note a significant shift in those students' ambitions with both oral and written vocabulary (RSC, 2016).

In discussing the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, Pinker and Bellos denounce it from interestingly different perspectives. Pinker (2007, p. 149), from the perspective of a neuroscientist, explains how investigations into memory 'suggest that stretches of language are ordinarily discarded before they reach memory, and that it is their meanings which are stored, merged into a large database of conceptual structure'. This suggests that language is how we marshal internal meaning into a form we can share. Pinker concludes that 'Language is only usable with the support of a huge infrastructure of abstract mental computation' (2007, p.150) or an ability to interpret language in context despite problems such as polysemy: the way we intuitively recognise someone's intention when speaking of 'a newspaper' to mean a format of physical paper or an organisation employing hundreds of people; or whether 'Shakespeare' is intended to mean a person, a canon of work or a subject area. Bellos (2011, p.156), from the perspective of a translator, offers Jerold Katz's 'axiom of effability' which he explains as:

> Any thought a person can have […] can be expressed by some sentence in any natural language; and anything which can be expressed in one language can also be expressed in another […] One of the truths of translation – one of the truths that translation teaches – is that everything is effable.

Fauconnier and Turner (2002, p.180) term this effability 'equipotentiality' and see it as evidence that language resulted when humans developed the capacity to instinctively combine abstract concepts into conceptual blends, as for example with polysemy. From an earlier perspective of psychology, Vygotsky was interested in Sapir's contention that in speech, words are symbols of concepts not fixed meanings. In considering effability in the context of his research into child development, he observes that children can struggle to learn a new word, not because the sound is difficult but because they are not yet able to

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grasp the concept behind the word. He quotes Tolstoy's own axiom of effability: 'There is a word available nearly always when the concept has matured' (1934, p.9). Allowing young people to play with Shakespeare's language allows them to embody mature concepts and find words to convey concepts perhaps just out of reach, increasing their store of 'language as a social treasury' (Eco, 1992, p.78). Sexual innuendo, for example, may not be understood, but family relationships are ever present. 'How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child' (*KL*, 1.4.236-7) gives words to an emerging concept that parents have feelings that can be hurt. Embodying and moving with those words opens up possibilities of connection in what Maxine Sheets-Johnson (1999, p.xviii) describes as 'languaging experience'; in an example of how functional shift, often used by Shakespeare, grabs our attention in its playful approach to language.

Eve Tavor Bannet (1997, p.656) describes as Wittgenstein's 'analogical bridge' our ability to leap from one meaning to another of words according to context, explaining 'the gaps, the discontinuities, and the differences are as important as the likeness because, Wittgenstein insists, we are always moving meaning from one situation to another which might not be quite the same'. She describes how religious and political leaders have attempted to fix values and sets of behaviours but how Wittgenstein challenged this by pointing out the subjective interpretation individual minds present to such 'laws': an instruction may seem completely clear and bounded by those who set it but understood differently by those who hear it. Indeed interpretation of law itself rests on 'precedents' where lawyers consider past 'cases,' effectively analogies with the current situation under examination.

Learning which does not take into account the potential for individual interpretation through what Bannet (1997, p.664) describes as 'error, personal agendas, reinterpretations, duplicity, or sheer quirkiness' can lead to what Wittgenstein (1953, p.155) calls 'philosophical disease' where 'one nourishes one's thinking with only one kind of example'. Language functions through the flexibility of our social brains, allowing us to ascribe intent and adapt meaning to context since 'words have those meanings which we have given them; and we give them meanings by explanations' (Wittgenstein, 1958, p.27). The constructivist pedagogies of theatre-based practice set out in this thesis celebrate the ambiguity of Shakespeare's language as supporting young people to explore the symbiotic relationship between thought and language as we all struggle to communicate what we want to express.

7.3   Sense and meaning

[Ambiguity] is at once a device for compression of language and for exploitation of its richness (Trimble, 2007, p.81)

In his exploration of the relationship between thought and language in the early twentieth century, Vygotsky concluded that we have an 'inner speech' which develops socially through cultural needs as we mature, but which is a distinct plane of expression from the external speech we use to communicate with others. He explains how 'In inner speech, one word stands for a number of thoughts and feelings, and sometimes substitutes for a long and profound discourse' (1934, p.263). In *1984*, his dystopian exploration of linguistic determinism, George Orwell (1949, p.28) writes: 'Winston woke up with the word Shakespeare on his lips' where 'Shakespeare' sums up a world of internal associations dimly remembered by Winston but deliberately suppressed by the Party. An empirical reader's inner discourse on 'Shakespeare' will inevitably be different to Orwell's but 'Shakespeare' stands as a metaphor, an analogical bridge, between Smith/Orwell's world and our own.

Vygotsky references French psychologist Frederic Paulhan's distinction between the 'sense' and 'meaning' of a word, where 'sense' is 'the sum of all the psychological events aroused in our consciousness by the word […] a complex, mobile, protean phenomenon; it changes in different minds and situations and is almost unlimited' (1934, pp.259-260). 'Meaning', on the other hand, is just one aspect of 'sense': 'The dictionary meaning of a word is no more than a stone in the edifice of sense, no more than a potentiality that finds diversified realisation in speech' (1934, p.259).

Considering the relationship between inner 'sense' and externally articulated 'meaning', Vygotsky (1934, p.263) writes:

> It is evident that the transition from inner speech to external speech is not a simple transition from one language into another. It cannot be achieved by merely vocalizing silent speech. It is a complex, dynamic process involving the transformation of the predicative, idiomatic structure of inner speech into syntactically articulated speech intelligible to others.

Merleau-Ponty (1945, p.187) argues for speech as organic expression dependent for meaning on various inter-related contexts. He states that 'speech is not the "sign" of thought' nor 'the envelope or the clothing of thought' but that 'sense is caught in speech

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and speech is the external existence of sense'. This is clear, he suggests in the case of artistic performance where:

> The musical signification of the sonata is inseparable from the sounds that carry it: prior to having heard it, no analysis allows us to anticipate it. Once the performance has come to an end, we cannot do anything in our intellectual analyses of the music but refer back to the moment of the experience (1945, p.188).

In the same way, he says, an actor becomes a character not a sign of that character. For the actor and the musician, 'the expressive operation actualises or accomplishes the signification and is not merely a matter of translating it' and 'the same is true for the expression of thoughts by speech' (1945, p.188); in giving human voice to text, an actor completes its meaning in that moment.

Eugene Gendlin developed Merleau-Ponty's ideas into a conception of a 'bodily sense', an embodied meaning where language is merely the most salient aspect of meaning making. Johnson (2007, p.80) summarises Gendlin's ideas as through language:

> we are seduced into mistaking the forms for that which they inform, and we fool ourselves into thinking that it is the forms alone that make something meaningful, real, and knowable. We think that if we have succeeded in abstracting a form – conceptualising some aspect of our experience – then we have captured the full meaning

This can lead us to an 'illusion that meanings are fixed, abstract entities that can float free of contexts and the ongoing flow of experience' (2007, p.80). Shakespeare studied in the English classroom as 'inert parcels of curriculum knowledge' (Coles, 2013, p.63) about 'an art product' of 'classic status' (Dewey, 1934, p.1) can lead to an understanding of Shakespeare's language as having such fixed, abstract meanings. Studying Shakespeare as a performance text, however, places the language in the physical contexts of human feelings and the ongoing flow of experience where meaning can be completed in that moment.

7.4   How we understand the world

Speech is like a quintessence of action (Langer, 1994, p.314)

In recognising drama as an art form where 'verbal utterance is the overt tissue of a greater emotional, mental and bodily response', Langer (1994, p.314) distinguishes drama from other literature as being language in action, written poetically to concentrate

patterns of experience, but incomplete without 'emotional, mental and bodily response'. Language comes from the mind, but as Darwin said, 'the mind is function of the body' (cited in Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p.435). Damasio (1994, p.xxvi) explains how, 'The mind exists in and for an integrated organism,' since 'our minds would not be the way they are if it were not for the interplay of body and brain during evolution, during individual development, and at the current moment.' Yet what Johnson (2007, p.2) calls 'the illusion of disembodied mind' perpetuates. He finds that: 'Mind/body dualism is so deeply embedded in our philosophical and religious traditions, in our shared conceptual systems, and in our language that it can seem to be an inescapable fact about human nature.'

The Western tradition of mind-body dualism was most famously argued by Descartes in 1641, who concluded, 'it is certain that I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it' (cited in Cottingham, 2011, p.25).[35] The concept of mind is culturally connected with identity and an immortal essence, but the possibility of the existence of a consciousness separate from a system of sensory input (provided by a body) now appears logically impossible. The persistence of mind/body dualism derives from the common-sense thinking, illustrated by Descartes, that our conscious perceptions function without awareness of the unconscious processes behind them; what phenomenology calls 'intentionality'. The perceived separation, however, implies a distinction between emotion and cognition with the traditional perceived superiority of reason (located in the mind) over feeling (located in the body). Culturally this results in the situation Dewey (1934, p.21) summarises as: 'Prestige goes to those who use their minds without participation of the body and who act vicariously through control of the bodies and labor of others.' Linguistic fluency is associated with this wielding of reason over feeling. McGilchrist (2009, p.120) describes a broader trend in Western cultures 'towards the ever greater repudiation of our embodied being in favour of an abstracted, cerebralised machine-like version of ourselves'.

McGilchrist (2009), through a comprehensive exploration of the lateralisation of the human brain, argues that this preference for abstracted reason results from an abstraction of language from the body into ordered written form (such as with the construction of abstract nouns) reflecting a division of labour between the right and left hemispheres of the brain. Mapping of the brain reveals a remarkable plasticity in how

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[35] John Cottingham points out that Descartes is arguing for the logical possibility that the mind can exist separate from the body, not that it actually does.

neurons can adapt to different roles, but also a dominance in each hemisphere for how we understand our world. McGilchrist summarises this difference as: 'The right-hemisphere underwrites breadth and flexibility of attention where the left-hemisphere brings to bear focused attention' (2009, p.27). This results in the right-hemisphere being where 'we *experience* – the live, complex, embodied world of individual, always unique beings, forever in flux, a net of interdependencies, forming and reforming wholes, a world with which we are deeply connected'; while the left-hemisphere is where 'we "experience" our experience', isolating, examining and taxonomising it into stored knowledge (2009, p.31, italics original). Both the reaching, exploratory nature of the right and the grasping, ordering nature of the left are necessary in a fully functioning mind and damage to either hemisphere can result in serious issues. Damage to the right-hemisphere, for example, can result in 'perservation' where someone cannot solve a problem but only repeat an already learned action (2009, p.40). 'Intelligence', defined as adaptation to environment to solve problems, requires the work of the right-hemisphere, as does Gibson's (1993) emancipatory principle, reaching out and experiencing the 'other-sidedness of things'. McGilchrist argues that 'the right-hemisphere pays attention to the Other, whatever it is that exists apart from ourselves, with which it sees itself in profound relation' (2009, p.93), making constant comparisons between this external source of knowledge and the internal stored knowledge of the left-hemisphere. Damage to either hemisphere can have a profound effect on how that person uses and understands language. Damage to the left side, specifically the areas identified as Broca's and Wernicke's areas, can result in syntactical and categorical malfunctions, while damage to the right side can result in an inability to understand the more emotional content of language, humour, rhythms, metaphors and tone; those aspects that characterise Shakespeare's texts. The distinction between the acquisitive value of Shakespeare as cultural capital and the more inquisitive valuing of him as a living artist can also be seen reflected in McGilchrist's account of how the right-hemisphere reaches out in a 'drive towards co-operation, synergy and mutual benefit' while the left grasps in a 'drive to acquisition, power and manipulation' (2009, p.128).

The acquisitive value of Shakespeare that tends to dominate our education systems can be seen as a symptom of McGilchrist's wider picture that the abstract, alienating tendencies of the left-hemisphere have become dominant in Western culture over the embodied, inclusive tendencies of the right. McGilchrist's findings value uncertainty in warning of the dangers of dogma, the 'left-hemisphere chauvinism' (2009, p.129) of our

current cultural trends. He provides comprehensive evidence to support this theory, which abstracts what is known about the divided functions of the brain into identifying the broad sweeps of cultural history as dominated by the approaches of one or other side, but he concludes, 'if it turns out to be "just" a metaphor, I will be content. I have a high regard for metaphor. It is how we come to understand the world' (2009, p.462). In a similar way to Hattie (2009, p.237), he acknowledges his theory as a plausible narrative, carefully constructed from the available data but an argument that can be developed and challenged. Engaging critically and creatively with our cultural inheritance of received knowledge is how we progress learning, as we employ the metaphorical nature of language to create analogies between new experiences and old to build meaning.

McGilchrist follows other cognitive experts like Hofstadter in positioning metaphor at the core of our understanding. Hofstadter (2006) claims: 'analogies happen all the time for no purpose. They're fleeting. They're transitory. They appear and go away. Your mind is filled with them.' His description of everyday speech as a meandering pathway through limitless potential ideas where real or imagined scenarios are perceived, adjusted and re-perceived in the light of triggered memories describes the connective buzz between the balanced workings of the two hemispheres. The individual denotations classified by our left-hemisphere are constantly reassessed in the light of the new connotations our right-hemisphere absorbs in relationship with the biographical memories it lays down. The process is usually too fast to notice it happening on a conscious level: 'Around and around in such a loop, alternating between fishing in long-term memory and unpacking and reperceiving in short term memory rolls the process of cognition'[36] (Hofstadter, 2001, p.521).

On this basis, Hofstadter (2001) dismisses as 'the just adding water syndrome' the belief that information can be passed from one mind to another unchanged. In a classroom for example, learning does not happen by the ingredients of a concept being freeze dried and packaged in the teacher's brain and sent to the pupil's brain where application and effort can add the water to reconstitute it. Instead, meaning results from a cognitive loop of infinite refinement across the connections of right and left hemispheres as the words and

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[36] Hofstadter claims that our uses of analogy divide into three main types of 'perceptual attractors' or mental containers. These are: 1) standard lexical items – the words, names, phrases we employ to label, express and interpret concepts; 2) shared vicarious experiences which we meet through various media: newspapers, books, film, radio, the internet; 3) unique personal memories. In building our understanding of the world around us, we draw on all three of these types of perceptual attractor to create a constant flow of analogies that shape our unique experience.

the analogies, emotions and memories they spark, work together to create individual sense. Trimble (2012, p.137) summarises this as: 'The construction of meaning involves a metaphorical transformation of data', working in close harmony with our sophisticated abilities to create highly individual and emotionally coloured memories. Words are always symbols, and therefore metaphoric embodiments which nevertheless enable us to attempt to share more precisely our feelings and concepts with others. The constructivist pedagogies, explored in chapters three and six, that encourage students to find personally relevant analogies in a pragmatic search for a quality of truth, are simply more in alignment with how our brains work.

7.5   Metaphors in cognition

Linguistic analysis of language, any language, reveals a dependence on metaphors; indeed metaphors are found in our earliest examples of writing from the epics of Gilgamesh onwards. Pinker (2008, p.237) asks: 'What should we make of the discovery that people can't put two words together without using allusions and allegories?' and examines two oppositional perspectives which he terms metaphorically 'the killjoy theory' and 'the messianic theory'.

What Pinker describes as the more generally accepted 'killjoy theory' is that neologisers do not just invent words randomly but instead select, whether consciously or not, words that have a metaphorical relationship with the concept they want to name: 'The metaphorical hint allowed the listeners to cotton on to the meaning more quickly than if they had had to rely on context alone, giving the word an advantage in the Darwinian competition among neologisers' (2008, p.237). Over the years, however, this original relationship becomes either buried or commonplace so that the etymology is lost in normal communication. In that last sentence for example, 'buried' has become such a conventional metaphor for something no longer at the surface of our comprehension that we barely notice it in a sentence. Pinker's metaphorical use of 'cotton on' is another example. It appears to be a phrase deriving from the way unprocessed cotton sticks to things, therefore forming a close relationship, but the etymology is unsure. Pinker uses an apt metaphor of his own, 'killjoy', to convey the central tenet of this theory that metaphors are conceived through relatively random contingency and become embedded in our everyday language as 'semantic fossils'. Semantic fossils enter our language on a regular basis. Many come from analogies used to progress scientific thinking, for example the term 'field', applied to electricity or magnetism, was adopted from images of sport,

agriculture and warfare (Dunbar, 2001). A related example is the invitation to 'charge' our glasses at a celebratory event, the term allegedly deriving from Noble prize winning scientists celebrating and using an analogy with charging a battery by filling it with power (Rosen, 2014).

The second theory Pinker examines, 'the messianic theory', argues that our minds can only think through the concrete terms of the sights, sounds, objects, forces and customs in our immediate experience. Primary metaphors are laid down in our brains from early childhood such as: *power is up, affection is warmth, knowing is seeing, argument is war, love is a journey* (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Ever more complex abstract thinking occurs through metaphors derived from these primary metaphors but all our thinking is rooted in our concrete sensory experiences, or as Pinker (2008, p.238) summarises: 'Human intelligence, with its capacity to think an unlimited number of abstract thoughts, evolved out of primate circuitry for coping with the physical and social world, augmented by a capacity to extend these circuits to new domains by metaphorical abstraction.'

The practical outcome of this theory of conceptual metaphors, first consolidated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), is that human meaning is built from a shared sensory experience of the world but that differences in cultures are based on differences in mental framing. Find the right metaphorical concept and you change people's perceptions of an issue, hence Pinker's framing of the theory as 'messianic'. Lakoff has taken this theory into practice, becoming an adviser to the US Democratic Party and writing *Don't Think of an Elephant* (2004) which explores the contrasting conceptual metaphors: 'strict father' and 'nurturant parent', (for right versus left ideologies) which derive from the primary metaphor, *society is a family*. Lakoff argues that we vote according to our identity rather than our self-interest and our identity stems from our mental framing, our subconscious metaphorical connections to concrete experiences which can override rational self-interest.[37] Trump's highly successful 2016 presidential campaign approach of indirectly identifying himself as the rebellious teenager in the establishment's dysfunctional family underlines how conceptual metaphors are in constant cultural shift. The success of the 2016 Brexit campaign with its simple metaphor of 'take back control' offers another illustration of the value of understanding the effect

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[37] The fact that Lakoff brought out a new edition of the book which addresses why the Republicans are still winning the arguments despite all his work reminds us of the complexity of seeking to influence the human mind.

of metaphorical framing.[38] Embodying Shakespeare's texts with their rich employment of metaphorical framings can support young people in understanding the power of words connected to deeds in how we communicate – and manipulate.

As discussed in chapter one, Lakoff and Johnson's work has inspired a growing community of cognitive linguists, scientists and philosophers. It has also, however, attracted criticism for proposing that conceptual metaphors add up to a form of associative conditioning which implies, as Pinker (2008, p.246) summarises that: 'Western philosophy, then, is not an extended debate about knowledge, ethics, and reality, but a succession of conceptual metaphors.' This is indeed what Lakoff and Johnson propose in *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999), arguing that our faculties of reasoning are entirely embodied, largely unconscious, and mostly based on 'various kinds of prototypes, framings and metaphors' (1999, p.5). In *Morality for Humans* (2015), Johnson provides a more nuanced exploration proposing that morality is a necessary function of social living, observable in simplistic ways in other social animals who apparently live without concepts of deities or universal reason. Johnson reviews studies which confirm the observable phenomenon that our social brains tend to make intuitive moral judgements which we then justify in retrospect rather than rationally evaluate against moral absolutes. He argues that human morality progresses through 'imaginative moral deliberation'; that by creating analogies about the consequences of our own and others' actions, we justify our morality appropriate to our cultural context. This speaks to Gadamer's (1975) concept of 'prejudices' that need to be challenged by expanding our horizons and so widening our source of analogies.

Boyd describes working with Shakespeare as 'a playful engagement with conflict in a profoundly moral context' (Irish, 2009) where the texts can be stimuli to explore the consequences of actions ranging from the relatively mundane teasing of Beatrice and Benedick by their friends in *Much Ado About Nothing* to the most extreme we can imagine: rape, mutilation, physical and mental torture in *Titus Andronicus*. As

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[38] The concept of mental framing is now well established in cognitive psychology. Tversky and Kahneman explored the topic, publishing findings in 1981 which indicated that framing a problem in terms of loss and gain elicited very different responses even though the problem remained the same. For example people were happy to pay by credit card even though paying cash would earn them a discount but were not happy when the difference in price became a surcharge for using the credit card. Another of their findings questions the objectivity of scientific reasoning. Doctors were presented with exactly the same scenario of options to help 600 people but in one case it was framed as saving the lives of 200 and in the other as resulting in the deaths of 400. Doctors were far more likely to choose the former option (Tversky and Kahneman, 1981).

performance texts, the plays can provoke our imaginations into 'embodied moral deliberation'. As Gonsalves said, 'We *feel* the jealousy or guilt of Lady Macbeth and can use this emotional response to evaluate the morality of her actions.' Our mirror neurons allow us to identify the intentions of the characters as embodied by the actors. Language provides refinement, allowing us to analogise those intentions in more detail to our own experiences. We use language to share our responses because as McGilchrist explains, 'language originates as an embodied expression of emotion that is communicated by one individual "inhabiting" the body, and therefore the emotional world, of another' (2009, p.122).

Pinker (2008, p.277) remains sceptical that metaphors account for all our understanding of the world but he does recognise the power of analogy as a human birth right that supports our understanding and allows us to 'eff the ineffable', adding, 'Perhaps the greatest pleasure that language affords is the act of surrendering to the metaphors of a skilled writer and thereby inhabiting the consciousness of another person.' It seems, however, that conceptual metaphors can allow us to share complex abstract thoughts by building on shared concrete associations. Romeo takes us into a complex extended metaphor about Juliet as the sun by first associating the light from her bedroom window with the first light of dawn; Hamlet takes a conventional metaphor of death as sleep into a complex relationship with an unforgiving god. We build from our physical experiences of time, space, cause and effect to create comparisons that allow us to understand and share ever more complex concepts; so that, for example the course of time across a clock face, which was inspired by the basic physical movement of shadows, can be used to explain an absurdly complex concept like quantum physics (Cox and Forshaw, 2011).

From a performance perspective, the idea of primary metaphors influencing mental frames is interesting when dealing with text as rich in metaphor as Shakespeare's. Understanding the concrete, sensory connection within each seemingly abstract allusion can support an actor in embodying that text to communicate with an audience; understanding the influence of mental frames can support them in understanding relationships between characters and between characters and the audience. As Pinker (2008, p.242) puts it: 'Combinatorics allows a finite set of simple ideas to give rise to an infinite set of complex ones.' Exploring Shakespeare's language in performance allows a finite set of words to give rise to an infinite set of culturally contingent interpretations.

7.6   Physicalizing imagery

[Shakespeare's imagery] is not just descriptive, it is of paramount importance because it is where the character is living at that moment; and the actor has to take us there (Berry, 2008, p.22).

Meisner (1987) advised actors to be themselves but with someone else's baggage. Through reading the text, Shakespeare's language can often appear as locks on that baggage, obscuring understanding. Engaging physically with the text, however, can reveal the rhythms and imagery as keys, unlocking deeper connections to the qualities of a character's imagined existence and relationship with the world around them. An underpinning principle of Berry's work is that 'By physicalizing the underlying motive of the text in some way, you are able to find your own personal connection' (2008, p.137). Then, as Rancière (2009) suggests, an audience interpret a performance in the light of their own baggage, composing their own poem from the elements of interpretation of the text they hear and see. Theatre requires a constant metamorphosis as the writer's meanings are mediated through the actors' minds and bodies into the thoughts of the audience, which themselves are adjusted as they are shared with fellow audience members. An actor's need to physicalize text in order to find meaning can inform how young people can find meaning in the rhythms and metaphors of Shakespeare's language for themselves.

Two of the MA actors I interviewed, Becky and Ashden, expressed very low levels of confidence at the start of their Shakespeare module having struggled with reading the text at school and college. Both became passionate about working with the text when encouraged to physically engage with the imagery. They described how this 'brought the text alive', and resulted in a reversal of a previous sense of exclusion. Becky explained: 'it completely came alive. I don't know, it was like a door opened.' She said this made the text 'fuller…as in, if a line is being said it's being said for a reason and it's not just being said to add some - I don't know - it's like it's not just being said for the sake of it - it's in there because it's adding something'. She explained her process as:

> I sat there and every single word, I would - so I had like - if I had a line like 'from the East to Western Ind', I'd do something physically with my hands – so I'd be like 'from the east..' and I'd move my hands about or if it was a rat I'd make a rat face or something so I'd physically do it instead of drawing a picture or something – but I find that I get into stuff physically - if I physically do stuff that helps me so much more to like get the lines in and to understand it.

This process of consciously bringing pre-verbal gestural language to bear on the sense of words allowed Becky to understand the text as living language used in a moment with emotional intention, not just to sound beautiful. Ashden's conclusions were similar although his process was different:

> When the character was describing different, different things you know, whether it be in like an ocean, or bunch of roses, or a dog, you know, I would basically draw out what they was saying so I could understand it – so I could see it. I could close my eyes and actually see it and storyboard it for me to understand it and then I would put - I would break up the text and put the text in each of the images that it represented so, for me anyway that helps me – and I coloured it in as well so - to help it be more vibrant – for me to connect to it more. Whereas if it was just black, just ink - I wouldn't really connect to it – I wouldn't really want to do it whereas if I put colours in the actual storyboards then it just, it brought a different feel to it. It brings it alive.

Ashden was a highly talented actor but was struggling to find consistency. In the two performances completing the module, his first performance as Suffolk was hugely outshone by his second attempt. Here he describes how he felt the difference:

> I feel it in my body and I feel it travel through my body and I'm okay, cool, this is working, this is working. So that's how I felt in the second performance. So with the images – whenever I was really focused on Lucy, or whoever I was in the scene with, I was focussing on them but it just opened out the imagery of what I was saying - so I was still connected with them but it was, you know, coming to life around – around - if that makes any sense?

The physical sensation of a 'high' when it feels text and body are working together was a common theme for all the actors, many of whom described a similar experience to what Ashden expresses here:

> everything that you want to do or that you need to do with it is just there for you, you don't need to force it and do something else so crazy and I think in my mind I was thinking oh this is so like really, ah, so hard for me to do and this mysterious language and stuff like that and really it's just - I have to shut the f up, sit down, really understand what I'm saying, connect to it and I can move on from there.

These actors discovered for themselves the advice Berry offers to 'trust the language, give it its right weight, and keep it simple' (2009, p.23).

Applying the findings and theories of cognitive neuroscience to actor-training, Rhonda Blair (2006, p.172) suggests that: 'The fluidity and reciprocity of the processes linking brain, mind, culture, and behaviour, and the questions these raise about consciousness and self make it necessary to reconsider what it is we do when we're acting.' She assesses

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the implications for actors of Damasio's explanations of emotions and his belief that emotions begin with actions (2006, pp.175-177), and applies her knowledge of cognitive processes to ensuring her actors create a stream of personal and specific physical images to connect the text of a play to the visceral moment of their performance, in a similar process to what Becky and Ashden describe. Blair explains how this leads actors to focus on 'feeling *what* they are doing' rather than on 'a feeling *about* what they are doing' (2006, p.179, italics original). In this way the lines the actor speaks are given meaning in the moment of delivery as 'the actor does not "play" [her] choices but merely reacts to the stream of images she has set up as they arise' (2006, p.180). Blair describes the text of a play as the 'information of the story' which is 'incomplete dramatically without the feeling' (2006, p.180). The purpose of the actors' stream of images 'is to have psychological *efficacy* in engaging and moving the actor and thereby the audience' (2006, p.180, italics original) since it mirrors authentic communication in linking brain, mind, culture, and behaviour.

7.7   Embodying metaphors

Pinker (2008, p.263) describes how in science metaphors are employed to simplify, allowing a generalised approximate understanding against which specific comparisons can be made. As the relationship between parts is explored further, the comparisons either correlate or are discarded. Literary metaphors on the other hand close a gap of understanding by surprising us in their incongruity as one thing is compared to another. Understanding of Shakespeare's famous mixed metaphor, 'to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them', perhaps is deferred until we hear the phrase, 'To die, to sleep', (*Hamlet,* 3.1.62-66) then we understand, if only subconsciously, that what Hamlet is proposing is that the only way to fight back against overwhelming force is to turn the weapons on yourself. The emotional power of the image depends on surprising us. How do you fight a sea? Oh, you can't. Consciously we have very little time to process that idea if we are listening to Hamlet speak. Advocates of close textual study might argue that this is why Shakespeare should be read, to allow for proper appreciation of such imagery and indeed this is what an actor needs to do, but their embodied understanding then supports an audience's understanding of Hamlet's words as anguish in action. Partly this is achieved by the syntax. Pinker (2008, p.262) argues that the power of metaphors comes from their form as noun phrase predicates: 'A noun phrase, when predicated of a subject, conveys a trait that is felt to be essential to the subject's very being. The trait defines a category that pigeonholes the subject in a way that is sensed as deeper, longer-

lasting and farther-reaching than the mere ascription of a trait' So, in our example, if Hamlet suggests taking arms against troubles 'which are so numerous they overwhelm us like a sea', he dilutes the comparison, making us define the image by introducing a verb: are we drowning in the vastness of the sea or being threatened by a huge wave? Either way, the strength of the surge is reduced. Hamlet's line has also, however, become a conventional metaphor, a 'semantic fossil' indicating suicidal anguish for audiences familiar with the text. To breathe life into the text, an actor must have done his homework, understood the imagery and internalised its meaning, as Blair and the MA actors describe, so that the reciprocal cognitive processes of the audience are engaged by the actor's embodiment of the text. In her work with acting teacher, Michael Connolly, Blair's interest in cognitive science has led to a reassessment of acting as 'not how vulnerable or "expressive" or passionate an actor is but how easily and fully he or she enters into a theatrical or performative world, how free his or her imagination is to allow him or her to embody it' (Blair, 2006, p.181). If an actor has found a personal identification with the sensory images of Hamlet's line, a sense of ocean or tsunami, then he or she can convey this to an audience as an expression of meaning in that moment. In this way, an actor's approach to using literary metaphor can be seen as closer to how scientists use metaphor, examining it for its practical use in comparing the source with the target, testing the metaphor until it bends or breaks. For an actor the text is the blueprint to study and learn from in the way a scientific metaphor is a theory to examine.

Mark Turner (1987) took Lakoff and Johnson's theory of conceptual metaphors into literary criticism, claiming that metaphor should be understood as a form of cognition rather than aesthetic flourish: how we think not just how we express what we think. His assessment is that 'writers constantly explore our conceptual and linguistic structures and push these structures to see how they respond and where they break' (1987, p.9). As a detailed example, Turner explores the metaphoric inference patterns of kinship and how our fundamental social experiences of family influence how we think and how we express what we think through our frames of reference associated with kinship. For Turner, 'Good literature is powerful because it masterfully evokes and manipulates our cognitive apparatus' (1987, 9). This mastery implies a level of control over a reader's mind and returns us to Lakoff's somewhat deterministic relativism which suggests we can all be manipulated through framing language in a particular way. Turner's implication, however, is that good literature is powerful because it provokes our cognitive apparatus, presenting us with analogies which invite us to create our own. Theatre takes these *in vitro* thought

experiments and puts them into four dimensions, and into the public forum. Shakespeare as a performance rather than literary text puts literary metaphors into the mouths of actors who must make them concrete felt *in vivo* experiences.

Turner has continued to build on the findings of cognitive scientists that 'analogy, as a cognitive operation [is] intricate, powerful and fundamental' (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002. p.14). Working with Gilles Fauconnier he developed the concept of 'conceptual blending' which explores the human brain's instinctive abilities to create categories and unities out of disparate elements; whether that unity is a cup of coffee, a person, or a noun phrase predicate. Fauconnier and Turner (2002, pp.180-182) propose language as resulting directly from the evolution of our advanced capacity for conceptual blending which allowed the creation of grammar and the flexibility of all languages to translate any concept. They describe the sophistication of our blending abilities, whether applied to the concrete or abstract realms, as distinctly human and far more cognitively complex than more consciously seeming complex activities such as using mathematical formulae or playing chess:

> In the common view, taking cube roots is hard but finding the door out of a room is no work at all. In fact, extracting cube roots is extremely easy to model computationally, but present-day robots waste a lot of time trying to get out of rooms, and often fail. Understanding the room you are in by comparing it with rooms you already know is an everyday analogy. We find such analogy trivial because the complex cognitive processes that provide the solution run outside of consciousness […] Because we have no awareness of the imaginative work we have done, we hardly even recognise that there was a problem to be solved (2002, p.12).

If an actor strips lines back through the accretions of conceptual blending to their primary metaphors using Blair's image streaming, Becky's physical gesturing, Ashden's storyboarding or other ways of making associative physical connection, he or she digs beneath the layers of cultural accretion, working their imaginations, to find personal, effective analogies. Another MA actor Marianne explained:

> Once you've understood it as an actor I'm sure the audience does. And because there is so much in the text, because it is so rich that - okay maybe there is going to be specific reference to Greek mythology or the bible […] the audience might not get exactly that because they don't know the research but the way it's laid out, they will understand the image, I think.

As an example, Marianne offered Hamlet's comparison of his father and his uncle to 'Hyperion and a satyr' (*Hamlet*, 1.2.140) arguing that although the classical allusion may not be understood by the majority of an audience, the context of the analogy supports understanding, both in how Shakespeare presents the allusion within the rhythm of his writing, and how the actor takes on that rhythm, embodying the line with their own understanding of the allusion to convey a felt meaning.

The Captain in *Twelfth Night* describes Sebastian as like 'Arion on the dolphin's back' (*TN*, 1.2.15). A modern reader will be supplied with a gloss telling them that Arion charmed a dolphin with his music and hitched a ride on said dolphin to avoid both murder on his ship and drowning in the sea, but is the line meaningless for an audience member with no such gloss? Was it meaningless for the largely illiterate audience in Shakespeare's time who could not read Ovid? If the actor understands the allusion, he can convey the hope derived from an analogy which moves us on from being attached to inanimate wood to an animate being capable of delivering Sebastian safely on the shore. An experience of Shakespeare in performance allows an actor to inhabit the allusion, finding meaning in the contextuality of its utterance, and an audience member to read the contextual interaction stimulated by the words. Performing the text can provide stimulus for Bruner's 'problem finding', giving a reason to wonder who Arion was and a motivation to find out. In a similar way, Shakespeare's association between Richard II and Elizabeth I, inherent in the text, was visually symbolised by the actor in Boyd's 2007 production. It was noted as 'less commonplace symbolism' by McLuskie, as discussed in chapter five, but must have provoked questions or other associations in the minds of the audience.

Fauconnier and Turner (2002, p.266) describe dramatic performances as 'deliberate blends of a living person with an identity.' McConachie (2006, p.18) finds their theory of conceptual blending 'offers a material and experiential explanation for the inherent doubleness of theatricality – the fact that performing human beings exist simultaneously in both real and fictional time-space.' He observes that 'performing Hamlet requires actors who can mentally project themselves into a blend of self and character' (2015, p.60) and notes that there is no evidence that non-human animals can 'project themselves into subjunctive, as-if situations, constitute a complex series of actions as a whole event, or manage the kind of role-playing that involves conceptual integration' (2015, p.63). Other animals play but it seems only humans are capable of taking their play into conscious performance.

We are all the sum of our influences and experiences, drawing on what we see, hear and read to formulate analogies and metaphors to express meaning, sometimes directly quoting those sources, sometimes half remembering or synthesising, in a way Shakespeare must also have done. His contemporaries, closer to his own experiences and context may well have recognised the conscious and unconscious analogies in his work, but today many of his cultural references are seen through a glass darkly. Editorial glosses support our understanding of Hyperion and Elizabethan associations of their queen with Richard II, but we need to accommodate them to our own mental schema, paraphrasing, or translating them into our own experiences, as Libby Purves did in associating Boyd's Histories with the contemporary situation in Pakistan (see chapter 5.2.3).

In considering how verbal language supports non-verbal communication of emotion, Thagard and Shelley's (2001, p.344) conception of emotional transfer through metaphor can also be helpful. They schematise persuasive analogy, for example as:

> You have an emotional appraisal of the source S.
> The target T is like S in relevant respects.
> So you should have a similar emotional appraisal of T

They add that we are more likely to map elements across domains that we perceive as having the same positive or negative valence. This structure can be useful in examining how Shakespeare employs metaphor. In *Julius Caesar*, for example, we understand that Caesar's initial decision to stay away from the Capitol on the Ides of March is reluctantly taken, through his comparison of himself, with a negative valence, to a 'beast without a heart' if he should stay away (*JC,* 2.2.44). When Decius Brutus makes Calphurnia's dream into a metaphor for Caesar's greatness, Caesar leaps on the positive emotional transference as more fitting to his own mental schema and is easily persuaded.

Later in the play we find Shakespeare's most famous persuasive speech, Antony's address to the mob following the assassination of Caesar, and here Shakespeare complicates this structure of persuasive analogy. Antony blends together a series of concepts with positive emotional connections: a faithful friend, a successful general, a wealthy man who displays compassion, a leader who exhibits modesty and democratic deference, comparing each of these to his target Caesar, and thereby creating a positive valence towards his murdered friend. But through his constant ironic interjections about Brutus, Brutus himself becomes the target of the analogy with the resulting emotional transference that if Caesar's qualities are associated with positive emotion and Brutus killed him for those

qualities, then Brutus is wrong. If we are attracted to Caesar, we must therefore have an aversion to Brutus. Thagard and Shelley note how identification is highly effective in emotional analogies: if we identify with someone, we are likely to transfer a positive attitude to them. If we identify with Antony mourning his lost friend we become more open to what he has to say; something Shakespeare and his classical forefathers would have known as ethos. These schematisations of emotional transference through analogy can support understanding of actors' daily work as they blend concepts and images into verbal and non-verbal communication. We could express this using Thagard & Shelley's formula as:

> My character, C (target) wants revenge
>
> I wanted revenge when X happened (source)
>
> So I can use X to inhabit the words of C.

7.8   Theatre-based practice as reverse engineering

Eugene Gendlin offers a description of a common experience:

> The poet reads the written lines over and over, listens and senses what these lines need (want, demand, imply, ….). Now the poet's hand rotates in the air. The gesture says *that*. Many good lines offer themselves; they try to say, but do not say – *that*. The blank is *more precise*. Although some are good lines, the poet rejects them.
>
> That …. seems to lack words, but no. It knows the language, since it understands – and rejects – these lines that came. So it is not pre-verbal. Rather it knows what must be said, and knows that these lines don't precisely say that. (cited in Johnson, 1997, p.151, italics original)

We do not have to be writing poetry (although Gendlin says he knows that at some point we have all tried) to have felt this 'tip of the tongue' syndrome; the felt sense of frustration and inertia and the converse sense of relief and release when the right words come.

One usable value for Shakespeare, as the continuing popularity of his quotations suggests, is in providing the 'right' words; the right *quality* of language to express what we want to express. An enjoyment in speaking aloud the text is a common factor in people's experience of Shakespeare, whether children, adults, or professional actors. A common rehearsal room exercise has actors paraphrase Shakespeare texts to find their own expression, and often find that Shakespeare's words are better. The MA actors

described them as more efficient or more expressive but with a general sense that they 'just feel right'. This 'rightness' is associated with the physicality of language Berry observes, that somehow the sounds and rhythms work through our bodies, simultaneously conjuring and completing emotions in language that feels like music.

The MA actors had followed a Meisner based process which taught them to 'live truthfully under imaginary circumstances' (Meisner, 1987, p.87), and in applying this to Shakespeare, they had been encouraged to gain a thorough and personal, rather than generalised understanding of the text; for, as Berry (2009, p.18) describes, understanding an overall sense 'inevitably leads to a generalised and prethought' rather than live, felt response. The actors all commented on how this gave them 'freedom' in performance, a word that was used frequently during the interviews. Lucy D's comment could be considered typical in explaining, 'If I ever do Shakespeare again, that's how much work I have to do on it to feel comfortable with it. That's brilliant – like it doesn't daunt me at all - but once you've done that you can be really free with it.' There was a common feeling that it is the responsibility of the actor to understand why they are saying every word in order to communicate meaning to an audience. Phoebe explained it in this way:

> The extent we broke down every single word and explored all the possibilities - it meant you as an actor could make your own choices, like really educated choices – because if you get a script and you learn it and, you know, if it's Shakespeare you kind of understand what you're saying but if you don't understand every single word, I don't think you can be free in knowing exactly why you're saying it.

For these actors, a 'kind of understanding' of the text was not enough because that limited the meanings available to them. Joe offered a metaphor: 'At university it was like digging for a sandpit whereas here it's like digging for an oil well – it's just so much richer!' Tom explained it as: 'So many choices and options to choose from and – not necessarily options but question marks to explore in rehearsal and yeah, that really helped me find my version, or my choice of Shakespeare.' Kitty said: 'All this pre-work gives you that freedom to make the choices and make it your own rather than being like oh I'm being Juliet. I'm being *me,* but I'm *playing* Juliet.' Lina captured the difference generally expressed between working with Shakespeare and modern writers:

> It's kind of written erm very poetic - and yes you can work out the meaning but there's so many different versions of the meaning - whereas in modern language you know what the words mean and to say, with Shakespeare it gives you a much wider choice of what you as a person want to say, what the words mean for you.

There was a strong sense of ownership in all the comments deriving from the personal connections made: 'my version', 'my choice', 'make it your own', 'you can', 'you have to', 'what the words mean for you'. The actors claimed that Shakespeare gave them a particular sense of freedom to inhabit the characters with the meaning of their own lives and imaginations. Berry describes how Shakespeare's writing particularly, provides variety and dynamics of rhythm and sound that 'quickens the reflexes of the speaker and gives the actor a great freedom of response' (2009, p.37).

Through their deep relationship with the text, the MA actors were finding a paradoxical value in Shakespeare's writing that the complexity of the metaphorical layers can support an actor in capturing and communicating simple, personal emotional meaning to an audience. The actors explained this as a physical response to how 'right' the words feel, not because there is a 'right way' to say the text but because there isn't. Instead the words create an emotional structure for personal experience to fill. In a process of reverse engineering to the normal relationship of thought and language, Shakespeare supplies the words and instead of searching for the right words to express meaning, an actor must search for the right meaning to express the words. This actors' process of exploring the possibilities of the words to express meaning can provide insight into how those words work. Experiencing this process as part of theatre-based practice can support young people in metacognitively reflecting on Shakespeare's craft; considering why and how the words and phrases he writes achieve their effects. Experiencing those effects as embodied communication rather than the more detached process of reading can support young people in developing their own immediate and interactive communication skills as they speak and listen to others.

Johnson examines Gendlin's proposals that the viscerality of inner meaning is too intricate to be understood by forms and patterns and our attempts to translate internal sense or meaning into the symbolic features of language we can articulate is a highly limited understanding of how meaning works. Gendlin's blank requires precision; when we are reaching for the right words, finding approximately right words is often not the problem; there are plenty of possibilities, but we feel that these words will not do. Johnson explains:

> When you are considering how to continue a line of poetry, or a line of thought in a philosophical argument, or an episode within a narrative, or an argument with a friend, the felt sense of the qualitative whole is what determines how well

various candidates for the next thought, word, or symbol will carry forward the thought (2007, p.82).

He argues that meaning is always embodied and resides in 'situational relation as that relation develops and changes' (2007, p.83). It is this movement through possibilities that Shakespeare's writing captures, supporting an actor to reach for the precise articulation of what each word means to carry them into the next moment, where each moment is shaped by a physical relationship with other actors and their environment. Without an experience of Shakespeare in performance these momentary possibilities of meaning are less easy to capture. Theatre-based practice shares these experiences with young people, guiding, stimulating and challenging them to find meanings in Shakespeare's texts that are culturally relevant and useful for them.

Berry (2009, p.138) argues that an actor should find and clarify the thought and arguments in a text, claiming it is those initial thoughts which give rise to the feelings, and not the other way round. She quotes from a letter written to her by Brook: 'Only when the thought pattern gradually becomes clear can a new level of fresh, ever-changing impulses inform the words. The thought brings with it the feeling that in turn makes the word patterns' (cited in Berry, 2009, p.23). In life, feeling comes first, and from feeling thought and word patterns are co-created. The process of reverse engineering Shakespeare offers means investigating possible thoughts in the word patterns so that language and feeling are co-created in a moment of expression.

Gendlin's concern is greater attention to how we think through our embodied minds. With Shakespeare's text an actor is not reaching for a word to fill the blank since the words are already in his/her head; instead the actor is reaching for the emotional blank in order to convey why only that word will fit. The actor moves moment to moment through the text channelling the intricacy of possible responses the viscerality of the moment suggests into the words they have been given; their embodiment of a role shapes and is shaped by what and how they speak. Embodying a text through theatre-based practice allows exploration of the possibilities of sense behind the meaning of the text. In real life we are constantly reaching for the right words, the right metaphors, allusions and rhythms to express what we want to express. Speaking Shakespeare gives us the right words, words crafted to catch the attention of our right-hemispheres, and allow us to embody other possibilities outside the knowledge our left-hemispheres have carefully

stored. Shakespeare's exceptionalism is the potential in his writing to make us feel our own exceptionalism as we inhabit his language.

7.9   Searching for the quality of truth

The emancipatory potential of Shakespeare's metaphors in portraying 'the other-sidedness of things' (Gibson, 1993) is in focusing our minds on specifics that lead to generalisations. A performance of a play leads into an intimate relationship with characters as people we might meet; we get to know them and think of them as more than embodied marks from a page. We form a relationship with Hal or Macbeth, but we are left with general principles to apply to issues of leadership and war. Analogies are how we examine and understand our world, comparing new experiences with familiar in order to accommodate them to our personal mental schema. In McGilchrist's terms, our right-hemisphere reaches out to new possibilities and our left grasps and orders those possibilities to fit our internal sense of the world. In this ordering, however, metaphors can become fixed, as in religion, and tropes devised to provoke us can instead dominate us. When Shakespeare is taught in the classroom through normalised readings to convey 'universal' or 'fixed and enduring' values we pin down his metaphors and lose 'that living, endlessly intangible quality that one calls truth' (Brook, 1996, p.65). I remain stung by an experience of studying *Othello* as an undergraduate. I was 19 and struggling to understand the rules of sexual relationships and institutional sexism. At that time, racism was not at the forefront of my connections to the play, especially having never seen it performed. I brought my personal experiences to an essay finding a metaphor in Othello's treatment of Desdemona for my own concerns and subsequently wrote a reading of Othello as a misogynist. My lecturer, a middle-aged white man, was not impressed, telling me that I had misunderstood and that Othello is not a misogynist but a tragic hero manipulated by a villain, 'one who loved not wisely but too well' (*Othello*, 5.2.387), implying that Desdemona is merely collateral damage. My argument is not about which of us was right, but that he was unwilling to consider the value of my limited experience against the volume of his received wisdom. Today I have many more experiences and many more connections to draw on in how I read *Othello,* but he remains a metaphor of misogyny for me, albeit a more complex metaphor of how and why misogyny arises.

Shakespeare's metaphors can become fixed if we interpret the work of influential scholars as asserting they have found what Shakespeare means, rather than what he means for them. Writing not long after my undergraduate experience, Ann Thompson

(1988, p.84) suggests it was the rise of feminist criticism that shifted critical opinion towards an appreciation of the 'many ways of discussing Shakespeare'; that the meanings of the text are 'not "timeless" or "universal" as is sometimes glibly constructed but historically and culturally constructed, both in Shakespeare's time and also in all subsequent times.' New generations will have new experiences; individuals will have their own unique experiences within the influences on their own generation. The value of Shakespeare as a performance text is its mediation through the unique experiences of the actors who play it as they find their own accommodation with the inherent metaphors, whether those actors are professionals, amateurs or school children. For the life of the ice-sculpture of a performance (Boyd, 2009), the metaphors are fixed and the audience emerge with their own understanding, but the next day brings a new convergence of experiences, a fresh ice sculpture with slight differences. The next production brings a convergence of experiences which will be very different, meeting the metaphors in different ways. So it goes on with each reading of the play as an infinite reinvention process, like a game of football always played by the same rules but never with the same outcome, as infinitely variable as the convergence of factors and experiences of the players and crowd, but with a drive to find a quality of truth. Describing the ephemerality of theatre, Brook (2015) concluded, 'We can only give you courage and hope by saying yes, if it once was possible in one way, of course it's possible in another'.

In this chapter I have explored ideas and evidence from linguistics and cognitive science about how language works and what it achieves in order to consider how theatre-based approaches to studying Shakespeare's text can develop not only motivation and enjoyment, but also metacognitive reflection on how and why we communicate. I have found that the musicality and metaphorical nature of language is critical in how we express, share and shape our sense of the world. Embodying Shakespeare's language and physicalizing his imagery can provide greater access to the rhythms and tropes as a cultural treasury of expression, which can be used to explore the possibilities of sense behind the meaning of words. Through inhabiting Shakespeare's words, young people can experience reverse engineering the need to speak as they fill the visceral emotional blank behind the words with their own connections and breathe life into the text as actors do. As performance texts, Shakespeare's plays provide a high quality resource to explore how we use language creatively and flexibly to communicate intentions and manipulate our environment. Through theatre-based practice young people can embody Shakespeare's

language, bringing their own experiences into a collaborative, dialogic search for the quality of truth in human communication and the exceptionalism of each individual.

Chapter eight: Shakespeare as intercultural dialogue

Schools need to prepare students for a world in which they will work and live among people of diverse cultural origins who hold different ideas, perspectives and values; a world where trust will have to bridge those differences; and a world in which their lives will be affected by issues that transcend national boundaries (Schleicher, 2016, p.16).

The Arabic appropriation of Shakespeare, 'Shiek el Zubair', is an example of a common attitude to Shakespeare around the world of claiming him for their own. Stories that Shakespeare was really an Arab have appeared over time, just as stories that Shakespeare was Indian, African or German. Anyone who works with Shakespeare, critics, biographers, directors, readers, tend to create him in their own image and many cultural groups are keen to claim him because they see themselves clearly reflected in his work: he can't possibly have known what he did about Arabic culture, Italian culture, life at the court, life at sea unless he was Arabic, Italian, a noble, a sailor etc, etc. The simple truth is more likely to be that Shakespeare was well read, had a highly active social brain and an excellent metaphorical imagination; plus the immense skill, as Brook (2013, p.16) describes, to give 'an endless multitude of points of view with their own fullness of life, leaving the questions open both to the humanity and to the intelligence of the spectator'. However he achieved his masterpieces, Shakespeare's work now has global appeal. For me, his genius lies in this ability to be interpreted in infinite ways through a language whose foreignness to all of us (Kennedy, 1993) allows the words room to breathe. As Leggatt (2009, p.70) says, our understanding of the Early Modern Period is a construction based on who we are now so that: 'The question is not whether anyone thought like that in 1603 but whether one can show that the text thinks like that. Is there an idea here that was present all the time, and just had to wait a few centuries to be released?' To which I would add 'or jump a few countries?'

In this closing chapter I offer experiences, taken from my own practice, of working in the very different cultures of Oman and India,. I consider how these examples of intercultural dialogue using Shakespeare's texts reflect on the useable value of Shakespeare for young people growing up in the world of increasingly diverse ideas, perspectives and values Schleicher identifies in the quotation above. We all carry with us personal concentric circles of culture which shape how we connect to each other, but entering a dialogic relationship with different cultures can open up a higher level of metacognition about our own assumptions, a 'fusion of horizons' in Gadamer's (1975) terms, and an under-valued function of our right-hemispheres in McGilchrist's (2009). I then offer the abductive

conclusions I draw from this exploration of the values that can be ascribed to Shakespeare's work to consider his possible value in our classrooms today.

8.1   Conversations across cultures

8.1.1   Oman

Oman is a very young country which in the last forty years has grown into a state keen to compete on the world stage. Omanis are predominantly Arab Muslims and with their proud, centuries old local traditions are culturally distinct from Europe. My project in Oman was part of my work for WSF and took place in four phases: three trips to Oman, leading CPD and workshops with students, and one with Omani students and teachers coming to the UK. During each phase I was surprised at how easily Shakespeare can function as a site for intercultural dialogue, a shared resource we can use to build mutual understanding and shared meaning, so long as we go into that dialogue, as Brook found, with a cosmopolitan attitude, a recognition of value pluralism (Berlin, 1958), and a willingness to listen, share and negotiate. This describes a working attitude that could otherwise be defined in my theatre-based practice model as a search for quality within an ethos of negative capability. Intercultural dialogue requires an interest in what happens in the progressive spaces between our intersecting and constantly evolving cultures, constructed as they are through time, space, race, gender and class (Cantle, 2012). Navigating the cultural interstices is what we all do all the time in greater or finer detail as we interact with friends, colleagues, and strangers. The more diverse the interactions we are presented with, whether real or imagined, the more we can build our capacity to navigate. Working in a culture as different as Oman provides broader gaps to negotiate.

My colleagues and I were aware of the baggage of post-colonial issues around liberally educated English women promoting a democratic pedagogy, working with a white male Western literary icon in a former British territory, now a patriarchal benign dictatorship. We didn't tiptoe around those elephants in the room but we didn't openly address them either. Instead we progressed through tacit knowledge, aiming for the expertise that Hattie (2012) describes in negotiating our roles as teachers/directors, and accidentally embracing Cottrell-Boyce's (2016) concept of innovation through reckless generosity. We found eventually that we all liked and trusted each other enough to see what happened when we worked together in a practical and dialogic way. What follows are three

examples of how the resulting dialogue and our negotiating of values developed during the life of the project.

Although I had developed an interest in how Shakespeare is translated, working in Oman was my first experience of working with a translator. For the first week of CPD I had with me a colleague, who had worked successfully in Japan and based on that experience, specified the need for a translator who was also an actor and therefore understood the language of theatre. The subsequent painful process and later far better experiences led me to believe that what a translator needs, more than subject expertise, are strong interpersonal skills, much as Hattie discovered for effective teachers. Our first translator was an accomplished actor but she was not a facilitator. She had set ideas about how things should be and was more often communicating what she thought we should be saying rather than what we were trying to get across.

The evening before we began the course we had arranged to meet the translator and we took the opportunity to raise our cultural concerns with her, one of which was about the mixed group and whether male and female teachers would be happy to work together. Her response was 'Of course they will'. They weren't. We began with gentle, active warm-up games as we would on any professional development day and quickly found that men and women kept to their own sides of the room. We tried to put them into randomly assigned groups which mixed genders. It was resisted and complaints broke out. We tried a different tack encouraging mixing but without enforcing it. The situation still felt uncomfortable and a lot of discussion was happening between the teachers and the translator. As the activities proceeded it felt like working with a difficult Year 8 group: they would stick with their friends, whispering to each other or hiding behind pillars and in corners of the room, or taking out their mobile phones. In the break, we spoke to the translator, to our British Council contact and to the representative of the Ministry of Education also present. It emerged that the Ministry hoped the teachers would mix and the translator thought they should, but nobody was surprised that so many refused. The behaviour now made sense; we had inadvertently begun with disaffection and resentment because we had blithely accepted what we were told by well-meaning authority figures and we had fallen into the trap of seeing the teachers as 'Other' (Said, 1978), a coherent otherness speaking with one voice rather than a collection of individuals with their own local cultural identities meeting in a new and strange situation,

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feeling embarrassed and uncomfortable. Once we acknowledged this, we could create a better dialogue.

In examining her own experience of working in the Gulf States to develop CPD with higher education institutions, Jean McNiff (2013) describes her unease at being flown in as the expert in an international maketized education economy. She hoped to support local teachers to develop their own indigenous knowledge economy rather than borrowing directly from the West but confesses to moments of doubt along the way. She asks:

> Could I have been practising a form of cultural imperialism? I was always aware of the need for cultural sensitivity, and took care to respect fully the values of the host culture [...] however did I, albeit unwittingly, position the teachers as Others who needed help to become 'normal' (i.e. do and think as I did, from my own cultural heritage)? (2013, p.508)

McNiff researched her concerns by interviewing her colleagues on the project who explained that rather than feeling values were being imposed on them, they were 'encouraged to explore their own [pedagogical] values and reflect critically on why they held them'. Our eventual feedback from the Omani teachers suggested they felt the same; certainly the project made me reflect on my own practices and cultural assumptions in a useful way.

A different, text based example comes from my third visit to Oman, when I was accompanied by Aileen Gonsalves to run a three day CPD course on directing young people. Gonsalves had also accompanied me on the second phase when we toured the regions to see the students' performances of Shakespeare and work with them. Most of the teachers on this third phase had been with the project from the start, so this visit meant we already had a familiarity with each other and a far better understanding of where these teachers were coming from; literally, having visited their regions and worked with their students. The major cultural clash when it came was then perhaps a surprise for us all.

The incident came when working on *King Lear*. The nuances of Shakespeare's writing give Lear many flaws that can provide motivation for his daughters' behaviour, and uncovering and exploring these motivations allows young people to connect to their own experiences of parent-child relationships. As an exercise on interpretation and intention, we wanted to challenge the teachers' received views of Goneril and Regan as evil sisters and gave them a number of statements to agree or disagree with. On my first visit, using

statements proved to be a key moment in how we negotiated the range of values within the room and a spectrum of attitudes emerged in response to the situation of Romeo and Juliet and their relationships with their families. The dilemmas the lovers faced were real and relevant in the Omani culture and there was a genuine interest and enjoyment in debating them. Using this activity again with *King Lear* we had a good discussion around the first two statements: 'It is acceptable for a parent to have a favourite child' and 'Children should always be grateful to their parents.' But a problem came when we asked them to respond to 'It is acceptable for a father to stay with his grown-up children for a month.'

The teachers struggled to understand because for them it was culturally unacceptable to question that a father has an absolute right to stay with his family. The fact that we could suggest it seemed to bring up residual distrust of the dissolute and disrespectful Western culture we represented. Heated exchanges ensued, not all of which we could follow but eventually we negotiated an agreement that such unquestioning respect was indeed due to Lear in the culture of the play but that Shakespeare ups the stakes for all characters and therefore it is at least worth considering why Goneril responds as she does. We suggested an analogy: If my father comes to stay for a week, of course I am happy to have him because I love and respect my father. If he stays for a month with his friends, making noise and work for me, I might feel that although I love and respect him, he is not respecting me. There began to be some murmuring of understanding that the father's behaviour could cause resentment. We added a further line: I ask my father to be quieter and more considerate; we have a disagreement and he curses me never to be able to have children. This last development had a strong effect. Most people thought this a step too far from the father since both cursing and childlessness are taken very seriously in Omani culture.

Despite all our sensitivities we had stumbled into this. Several teachers flared quickly in defence of their cultural expectations against a perceived clash with us, but our relationship, built through dialogue, meant they were as quick to listen when we modified our position. Our mistake was not in attempting the exercise, but in assuming a shared value, assuming a spectrum of feeling that a child might feel disrespected by a parent as well as a parent feeling disrespected by a child. Our desire to provoke thoughts about the complexities raised by the text had strayed towards simplified translation of it, but as a stepping stone in what Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p.231-2) describe as using

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'metaphorical imagination' to create rapport. They explain: 'When the chips are down, meaning is negotiated: you slowly figure out what you have in common, what it is safe to talk about, how you can communicate unshared experience or create a shared vision' in a journey towards mutual understanding.

Fundamental values of fairness and justice are inherent in all cultures but conventions of fairness are highly contingent and Shakespeare proved his value as a site to explore that. Each individual's understanding is contingent on a symbiosis or blending of their own experiences with the structures and concepts of the culture around them. In Bruner's words: 'Interpretations of meaning reflect not only the idiosyncratic histories of individuals, but also the culture's canonical ways of constructing reality' (1996, p.14) since, 'The object of interpretation is understanding, not explanation' (1996, p.90). Bruner is, however, careful to assert that 'a perspectival view of meaning making does not preclude common sense or "logic"'; sometimes we must identify that things are right or wrong. The challenge for education is in finding the balance between upholding dominant, coherent values and challenging them to ensure cultural progress. Using Shakespeare to 'make acquaintance with the past a means of understanding the present' (Dewey, 1938, p.78) provides a commonly owned site to allow young people to compare cultures across time, space, race, gender and class and ask 'What's the same?' 'What's different?' 'What should be different?'

My last example from Oman returns to the second phase of the project when we were touring the regions. One teacher, Fatima, was perhaps the most religiously observant of the whole group. She had confessed to us in phase one that she felt she was risking damnation by being in the same room as men and certainly could not speak in front of them, yet she was fascinated by the work and came to talk to us in the breaks. All the student performances we saw were exceptional in their quality because of the emotional commitment of the students and their lack of self-consciousness, but the performance created by Fatima's students was the most surprising. She had adapted the ideas of non-literal performance and democratic pedagogy to suggest a concept of a split personality Juliet, one pessimistic and the other optimistic, and then worked with her students to develop the idea. Her girls (all schools are single sex) added a narrator, not as a voice on the sidelines as other groups did, but as an integral part of the action moving between the two Juliets, acting as the audience focus and cueing each into action with a 'magic touch.' Fatima's pride as she described the girls' ideas and debates about Juliet's situation

was a visceral moment of the shared values we had built through theatre-based practice, despite our very different cultural perspectives.

8.1.2 India

On my visit to India for WSF in 2012, I went to a school in Kolkata where students had prepared display boards to greet me. One included images of Shakespeare and Rabindranath Tagore, including extracts from their work and a heading: 'Two bards, both ours'. The heading was symbolic, not just for the students' pride in their national poet and ownership of mine, but also for the dialogic pedagogy we were drawing from both. Tagore is celebrated widely for his poetry and philosophy but his education work is now sadly less well known. He was passionate about dialogic pedagogy, setting up a school in his home town and later devoting the funds from his Noble Prize to founding a university on progressive principles. From her work in India, however, Nussbaum (2010) draws the conclusion that his influence has not taken hold, with rote learning dominating Indian schools. She observes: 'Teachers all too rarely try to innovate, to inspire children. Their highest hope is to stuff them full of facts so that they perform well on national examinations' (2010, p.140). As part of the WSF project, students at the Kolkata school had created their own culturally distinct versions of scenes from Shakespeare plays and enthusiastically told me of the discussions they had had about the human condition, stimulated by the ideas they found in the text (Irish, 2012). They also told me about the stresses they experienced caused by societal and institutional pressures to conform and to achieve top grades on those national examinations. The Shakespeare project had proved a risky but enriching experience and they valued it highly, but they acknowledged it had been an exception in a schooling focused on competitive, technical skills.

There are many Indian teachers, however, who are keen to innovate and inspire and I have been privileged to meet some on several visits to India. Returning to Kolkata in February 2015, I led a workshop for 'Goalz', a local police initiative for boys living in the slums, who are described as 'at risk', mainly because their fathers are in prison (British Council, 2015). The programme was founded on using sport as a way to provide structure and develop social skills, but had recently expanded to include drama, and had staged an adaptation of *Romeo & Juliet*. In my workshop, I introduced the boys to the complex relationship between Prospero, Miranda and Caliban and found them to be enthusiastic, thoughtful and often surprisingly mature in their responses to the questions raised in the text. How much these boys learned about Shakespeare I don't know but using this highly

respected artist as a vehicle for developing their own sense of self-respect seemed as tangibly effective here as with their more privileged peers at the high school; and with their peers in the UK, struggling with their own pressures of finding identity in the modern world.

In his examination of the role of beauty in education, Winston (2010) references a story told by Luiz Eduado Soares in 2006 about arts projects for street children in Brazil that succeeded from this same principle of allowing adolescents a structured space to explore their identities and receive affirmation. Soares described how a boy who feels that he is socially invisible can gain visibility, admiration and power by joining a gang and wielding a gun; or he can gain admiration and respect for skills of performance. Winston observes how the arts can 'offer a different dynamic for self-assertion, with languages and forms of expression to help them provoke powerful emotions and hence become visible without the need for a gun' (2010, p.137). McLuskie and Rumbold (2014) question the role of success stories as evidence for the value of arts in people's lives, as discussed in chapter five, but each story of individual success becomes a metaphor for what is possible in other cases. Each case gives us hope.

As part of a national event run by the British Council in 2015, I worked with nearly a hundred teachers from contexts ranging from rural Primaries to international further education. Through these workshops, we explored the role dialogic pedagogy could play in their teaching, and used the first scene of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as our stimulus. Following exercises setting up democratic principles, we moved on to image work, with groups asked to create still images which contrasted concepts of hierarchy and egalitarianism, and took these idea into the cultural effects of status within families. Their images of extended family units particularly began to bring out different cultural references, such as children receiving blessings from their parents. Participants readily offered narrative interpretations of the relationships they observed in each other's work, provoking reflection on what family means. In each case the influence of primary metaphors was apparent. Our instinctive use of levels and eye contact in creating images of status, for example, can be linked to 'control is up' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), which derives from our childhood learning that the adults who have the power to encourage or punish us are bigger than us. Alongside this, we learn from our own bodies that we feel more powerful when we stand tall, shoulders back, than when we sit hunched over; the first position reflecting a confidence in not being hurt while the second protects our vital

organs from harm. We learn from embodied experiences that eye focus reflects security because we know we can feel either safe or threatened under the gaze of another. From the primary metaphor 'knowing is seeing', we derive metaphorical language such as being 'looked after', 'watched over' or 'spied on'.

Following a basis of reflection provoked by shared experience, I offered the Indian teachers a statement: 'Children should always do what their parents tell them to do', and asked participants to stand along a diagonal line from one corner of the space to the other according to how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement. In response, the teachers tended to cluster towards the middle with a few outliers. Responses were generally qualified: 'It depends how old the child is'; 'It depends what the parent is asking the child to do.' But there were also strong statements such as: 'Parents have more experience and know what's best'; 'Children are responsible for their own lives and need to work out what's best for themselves.'

Groups were then given brief character descriptions for Theseus, Hippolyta, Egeus, Hermia, Lysander and Demetrius in the opening scene of the play and asked to create a still image, bringing out the attitudes of the characters to each other. The images created were detailed and thoughtful as the participants were ready by this stage to invest in them. Reflection on this experience elicited analysis of how proxemics, body language, facial expressions and eye contact were used and how it felt to inhabit this character's circumstances. Each of these moments of reflection built up understanding of the visceral experience through what Bruner termed 'going meta' (1996, p.62) as they were encouraged to step back and reflect metacognitively on their experience. Groups went on to create performances of an edited version of the scene by way of close examination of Egeus' long speech and a series of exercises designed to explore the rhythms of the text and the intentions and objectives of the characters. For example, we emphasised the pronouns in Egeus' speech by reading chorally and tapping our chest when we said 'I, me, my' and pointing across the circles when we referred to Hermia. This exercise proved particularly useful in illustrating the connection between language and thought and provoked a wide range of adjectives to describe how Egeus feels including: dominant, selfish, hurt, angry, humiliated, illustrating the possible nuances of sense behind the meaning of his words.

Finally, participants were given another statement and asked to stand along the diagonal line according to their level of agreement. This statement was 'Hermia should marry Demetrius as her father wishes.' This second provocation made the first generalised statement into a specific example. This time there was a much wider spectrum of opinion and many strong and forceful opinions expressed along the length of the line. In each of the four sessions this proved a rich discussion as participants could illustrate what were generalised ideas in the first provocation with discussion of how and when parents should tell their children what to do. Some teachers used specific language from the text to illustrate their points, for example Egeus' use of the word 'dispose' and how this suggests an attitude of property towards his daughter, or how Lysander says 'I am beloved of beauteous Hermia' putting the emphasis on her feelings rather than his own. When we discussed how students would respond, they continued to use analogies deriving from the text. There were some strong voices that students should be told what to think by their teachers who had more life experience, just as Hermia should listen to her father who had her best interests at heart in selecting the better husband. There were many more voices who wanted to equip their students with skills to think and judge for themselves, just as Hermia should be allowed a say in her own future. Those in the first group (who were noticeably more likely to be male and older) tended to value the dialogic approaches for themselves but not for their students, whereas those in the second group were keen to adopt more dialogic principles in their own classrooms. If, as Bruner and others suggest, narrative is fundamental to our cognition, using a story that we have explored and embodied together allows us to share ideas that can then bring in further illustrations from our own experiences, whether personal or from other sources. In the case of this workshop, the embodied metaphor of Hermia and Egeus encouraged *in vivo* analogies from the teachers of relationships with their students and their own children, as well as thoughts on marriage and contemporary news stories about honour killings. Seeing Shakespeare as relevant to modern life rather than a dusty text to learn for examinations was a significant shift for the teachers, and a group of them embodied this very entertainingly in a presentation of what they had learned which linked situations from Shakespeare plays to popular Bollywood songs.

8.2 Possible Shakespeares

[Shakespeare's] main stylistic tool is antithesis, unresolved antithesis, an argument which is never resolved is why his work has survived to this day (Boyd, 2008, p.8).

In *The Long Revolution* (1961) Raymond Williams is intrigued by contemporary and revolutionary ventures into neuroscience and the growing evidence that human experience is an interpretation of reality filtered through our complex but fallible senses. This scientific perspective that 'reality as we experience it is in this sense a human creation; that all our experience is a human version of the world we inhabit' (1961, p.18) seems both discomfiting and fascinating to Williams. He goes on to consider how human biological and cultural evolution combine within individual brains to create how we each read the world around us and how this in turn feeds and is fed by community perceptions of and perspectives on reality. This leads him, in a similar way to Dewey, to conclude that the purpose of art is to communicate our perceptions, so that art both provokes and allows a sharing of our internal creations of reality, our 'sense' in Vygotsky's terms. Williams (1961, pp.25-6) argues:

> Art cannot exist unless a working communication can be reached, and this communication is an activity in which both artist and spectator participate. When art communicates, a human experience is actively offered and actively received. Below this threshold there can be no art.

If we take on board this definition of art that it must communicate; that on some level a human experience is shared, the 'inert parcels of curriculum knowledge' described by Coles (2013, p.63) as Shakespeare's legacy in schools become more disturbing. The Shakespeare Coles finds is no longer communicative art but fossilized metaphors to be decoded; a Shakespeare to be learned as per Gove's list of core knowledge (Evans, 2013), not as a creative activity which offers an experience to be interpreted.

Williams continues: 'To succeed in art is to convey an experience to others in such a form that the experience is actively re-created – not "contemplated", not "examined", not passively received, but by response to the means, actually lived through, by those to whom it is offered' (1961, p.34). The reception of art defines its success. A canon is established as works of art are tested through reception over a period of time and found to speak to a significant critical mass of people, creating the intrinsic value of a cultural object identified by Holden (2006). However, as Williams points out, a work of art may at first fail to communicate but gain traction as common meanings evolve to allow it a significance, or it may speak to its own time but then lose relevance. Inevitably, it seems

art will communicate within some cultures more than others. The exceptionalism of Shakespeare seems to be the linguistic ambiguity and moral complexity of his art to reflect so many different cultures, allowing a wry recognition of the line spoken by Chancellor Gorkon in *Star Trek VI* that 'You have not experienced Shakespeare until you have read him in the original Klingon' (Meyer, 1991). Williams posits that 'Human community grows by the discovery of common meanings and common means of communication' (1961, p.54) and that art supports this by helping us to find, express and share meanings. A work of art divorced from 'the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognised to constitute experience' becomes the isolated art product of classic status Dewey describes (1934, pp.1-2).

Throughout this thesis I have aimed to show that setting received knowledge and creative interaction, Shakespeare as literary heritage and living artist, as binary positions in teaching Shakespeare is unhelpful when considering the usable value of Shakespeare in today's classroom. Divergence requires the knowledge that a heritage approach demands and a heritage approach must open doors to creativity and criticality, or disappear in a puff of illogic. In a Shakespeare rehearsal room, led by an expert director, progress can only be achieved through marrying both. Actors work to gain a deep understanding of the text, how it works and what it might have meant to Shakespeare's original audience, whilst allowing an interplay of metaphorical imagination around the various cultural references. This leads them to discover what the texts can mean for audiences now. They necessarily engage in a dialogue between Shakespeare's Elizabethan culture and their own, exploring the analogies provided by ambiguous and unstable texts to create and convey shared meanings. When we read, we enter other worlds and other points of view but still we interpret them from our own perspective. Discussion can help us *appreciate* others' perspectives about what we have read but theatre helps us *understand* those other points of view in a multi-sensory, embodied way. Actors have to take all the metaphors in the text and synthesise them with their own experiences, making sense of why they are spoken by an emotional human being that communicates with other emotional human beings. As Rancière (2009, p.3) describes: 'Drama means action. Theatre is the place where an action is taken to its conclusion by bodies in motion in front of living bodies that are to be mobilized.' Metaphors mutate through the minds of the writer, actor and spectator and at each stage there is a complex energy flow as each unique human being brings their lived experiences to bear on what the words mean.

The success of the human species is now widely regarded as depending on two skills: our ability to cooperate, and our creativity with tools. Language is regarded as our greatest tool, not least because it has so strongly aided our ability to cooperate. Shakespeare is widely acclaimed as our greatest wordsmith. More than any other writer it seems, he was able to craft language as an expression of 'meaning' found and understood through the organic, emotive whole of 'sense' within an individual's mind and body. An actor's work with Shakespeare's text can give us insight into how language works, both to connect us so that we can share ideas and points of view, but also how language allows us to differentiate ourselves. Berry (2008, p.3) reminds us that 'speaking is in itself a positive, if not aggressive, act, for simply by making sound we are asserting our presence'. In the concluding pages of his account of how language works, Bellos (2011, p.351) looks at the metaphor of the tower of Babel and concludes that the wrong message has been drawn because 'the most likely original use of human speech was to be different, not the same'. This is because humans working together through language, building on the findings of others through language, have discovered that:

> Individual diction and forms of speech do not vary because they need to for any physical, intellectual or practical reasons [...] Individual speech varies because one of the fundamental and perhaps original purposes of speaking is to serve as a differentiating tool – to differentiate not only where you come from, what rank and clan or street-gang you belong to, but to say 'I am not you but me' (2011, pp.350-1).

The purpose of language then might be described as allowing us both to share connections and distinguish difference. Dewey (1934, p.110) asserts: 'Language exists only when it is listened to as well as spoken. The hearer is an indispensable partner.' Even when we talk to ourselves, we are in conversation with others, attempting to define our understanding of the present against what we have heard and experienced in the past. A Shakespeare soliloquy is a heightened example of this but is the poetic extreme of a spectrum that makes us ask aloud why we have walked into a room when no-one else is there.

A principle way our language works is through what Bellos does - using metaphor to short circuit meaning as he assumes the cultural knowledge of his reader will include the story of Babel. Shakespeare's texts, mediated through performance, can provide our best resource for understanding how language works because of their strong track record of meaning in many ways to many different people. This makes his work a good resource for

continually seeking the connections that help us understand who we are. Shakespeare's metaphors are continuously reassessed and reinterpreted because his are texts for performance. Literary metaphors can become fixed concepts, regarded as 'universal truths', yet his work is a celebration of antithesis, posing dialectics and moral dilemmas, the answers to which depend on who's asking. Across our species we share a physiological architecture in how we understand each other and the world around us, but our cultures create interesting differences which progress our understanding if we listen to them. Culture is what we learn from others and evolves as we adapt to make what we learn best fit our changing environments. If it isn't challenged, and doesn't evolve, it becomes fixed as heritage: a repository of fixed truths or received knowledge which only the initiated can interpret.

In chapter one, I suggested four reasons for studying Shakespeare:

- Cultural capital is increased through knowledge of Shakespeare as cultural inheritance
- The capacity of our social brain is increased by dialogue through and about Shakespeare
- Our innate sense of aesthetics is engaged through Shakespeare's art
- Our understanding of how words communicate meaning is built through performing Shakespeare's language

Through this thesis I have argued that these reasons should complement each other in order to deepen the potential educational value of Shakespeare for young people. Examining the cultural history behind Shakespeare's current privileged position on the curriculum, it seems that Shakespeare is often prescribed as a cultural capital vitamin, with the idea that a healthy dose will democratise access to an objectively valuable cultural heritage. Eating a whole orange, however, is both more satisfying and more healthy than a tablet of vitamin C. Our social brains think through our interactions with the worlds we inhabit, creating meaning by conceptually blending ideas from the continuity of culturally inflected human experiences that surround us. Our negative capability is stimulated by an aesthetic appreciation of the musical qualities of metaphor, prosody and emotional tone in heightened language. Our ability to understand other points of view and grow a quality of democracy in our lives is developed through reflectively comparing our lives with others'.

A curriculum emphasis on examining Shakespeare as a test of reading an icon of literary heritage seems at best reductive and unambitious, and at worst the way to alienate

young people from Shakespeare as a living artist. I propose theatre-based practice, not as replacing reading skills but as deepening them, offering a bricolage of approaches which requires rigorous reflection from a teacher to shape and guide the experiences young people gain from collaboratively engaging with the text in this way. The practice requires recognition of language as an embodied process and uses the texts as sites of exploration for how language communicates meaning *in vivo*. Understanding this primary purpose of language is valuable in itself in building the metacognitive and collaborative skills education experts call for, but can also deepen understanding of the secondary purpose of language in its communicative function as written symbols.

Any study of Shakespeare, wherever it chooses to focus its beam, radiates out from the language. Shakespeare's words are not all we have to study the plays - we have a variety of documentary evidence in others' words and images to provide context on how the plays achieved meaning in their own time and up to our own - but, without the words of the plays, there is nothing to signify. Those words were written to support actors in creating four-dimensional human beings for audiences to connect with and inevitably find analogies with the relationships and situations portrayed. If we take into account that making and sharing should include creative and critical interaction with received knowledge, the personal, ever evolving connections individuals make and share through watching or performing the embodied metaphors adds up to the 'larger significance' of the plays which is beyond the ken of any individual, even Shakespeare himself. It is composed of possible Shakespeares, the possibilities as infinite as each reader and actor is unique. As John Russell Brown (2005, p.206) describes: 'His way was to conjure and lead audiences and readers to let the play have its own way, while the imagination of each one of them recreates what happens on stage to suit each occasion and to reflect their own lives.'

Theatre-based practice is about recognising the unique complexity of how each individual consciousness connects to the text, and how language, as an expression of that complexity, allows us to share meaning. At its best, it encourages a creative and critical engagement which allows young people to appreciate Shakespeare's value as both literary icon and living artist; feeling an ownership of this cultural capital, not as an acquisition but through a satisfied sense of connection. If a balance of difference and commonality underpins the strength of democratic societies, the 'unresolved antithesis' (Boyd, 2008, p.8) of Shakespeare's plays provides a site for exploration to engender skills

of understanding cultural differences whilst celebrating the commonalities of human experience. This can move us towards Brook's (1996) 'culture of links': celebrating the common conceptual language our brains and bodies have evolved, whilst seeking to negotiate the cultural differences we have created. In *Threads of Time*, Brook (1998, p.120) describes a moment in the Sufi poem, *The Conference of the Birds* which seems to encapsulate his 'culture of links'. The poem describes how the remorseful tears a man cries turn to stone as they hit the ground. Brook explains the man 'collects the stones, mistaking their frozen beauty for the feeling that had been there while they flowed', and adds: 'The whole history of religions and traditions has always seemed to me to be captured in this tale – and also of art, of writing, of theatre, of life. Unless a special quality of life is present all the time, forms lose their meaning; they rot and only attract flies.' If we try to fix meaning, it rots, or petrifies; but if we find meaning moment to moment in a restless search for quality, we build the fragile, shimmering human quality of hope.

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