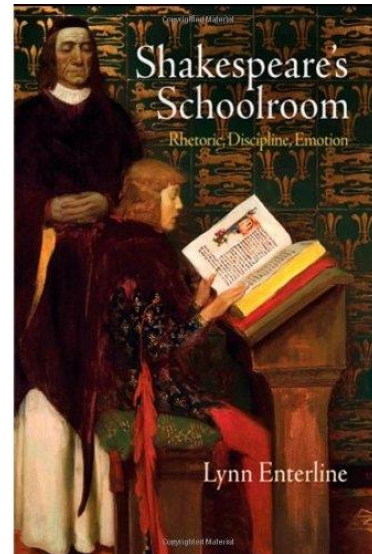


Review

Lynn Enterline. *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion*. Philadelphia: U Penn P, 2012.

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Lynn Enterline argues that the pedagogical practices of schoolmasters, inculcating Latin into their young charges in Elizabethan England, had a great effect on William Shakespeare, and that he infused rhetorical strategies and content from his schoolboy existence into some of his poetry and drama. Enterline examines the already complex social and materialistic world of early modern England by successfully showing that Shakespeare often invoked traditionally excluded voices, like those of women, in his best art. Enterline's central assertion is that "when Shakespeare creates the convincing effects of character and emotion for which he is so often singled out as a precursor of 'modern' subjectivity, he signals his debt to the Latin institution that granted him the cultural capital of an early modern gentleman precisely when undercutting the socially normative categories schoolmasters invoked as their educational goal" (1). She explores how works such as *Othello* and *Venus and Adonis* draw upon schoolroom texts and practices to personify passions at some considerable distance from the socially normative positions for which English schoolboys were actually trained. Her detailed look at rhetorical training indicates that the cumulative effect of grammar school instruction in socially sanctioned language, expression, and bodily movement was to establish a dichotomy between narrated events and emotions.



Enterline's study blends feminist scholarship with psychoanalytic theory. In this regard, her work is similar to that of Kathryn Schwarz, whose recent book, *What You Will*, examines the intersection of rhetoric, sexual and gendered identities, and the individual psyche in sixteenth and seventeenth century England. For early modern narratives, writes Schwarz, intentional compliance poses a complex problem: it sustains crucial tenets of order and continuity but unsettles the hierarchical premises from which those tenets derive. Enterline's study echoes some of the key ideas of Schwarz's work due to the nature of compliance between schoolboys and the Latin master. Like early modern narratives focusing on women, schoolboys unsettle the classroom hierarchy through role-playing and regendering while maintaining the façade of order. As with Schwarz respecting female agency, Enterline asks important questions utilizing Shakespeare's works, such as: What types of ideological constraints are in place for English Latin students, and How did

William Shakespeare identify with and depart from feminine values in his writing and characterizations? These questions and their answers have important implications not only for early modern studies but also queer theory, histories of gender and sexuality, and ideology.

Another similar vein of research revolves around the role of rhetoric in Shakespeare. Joel B. Altman's *The Improbability of Othello: Rhetorical Anthropology and Shakespearean Selfhood*, argues that Shakespeare's *Othello* indicates that probability, and not certainty, governs the lives of men and women, an indication by Shakespeare tantamount to accepting the value of rhetoric on its face. Enterline agrees that Shakespeare, as a Latin schoolboy, exposed to rhetorical skills, practiced them in the classroom and out of it. While Altman's text makes the impact of audience reception a key to its thesis, Enterline traces psychological and ideological instances throughout the schoolboy's day, generalizing them to Shakespeare, thereby tracing crucial interactions such as reimagining gender roles that would later manifest themselves in his creative work. Enterline's work follows in the tradition of scholars looking to reexamine and to recover an existent, vibrant subjecthood for women, and to undermine previous beliefs in feminine subordination through identity.

Shakespeare's Schoolroom is a valuable revision of the views of "masculinist" rhetoricians such as Walter Ong, who believe that Latin education was a puberty rite of boys in English society. While Enterline does not object to Ong's insight that masculinist drives animated cultural and linguistic norms of the Elizabethan grammar school, she does question, "whether a finished identity or ego we can call definitively 'male' was ever finally consolidated

by the school's methods of induction into Latin" (142). Enterline makes her case that advocates of masculinist humanism fail to take into account the actual experiences of the students and teachers in Latin grammar schools. She indicates that the *habitus* of the schoolroom influenced not only Latin proficiency and rhetorical power, but also the fluid gender movement through *imitatio*, whereby students took on male and female roles while practicing Latin. Through these actions, students gained access to emotions of "others" (women), and therefore, Enterline succeeds in refuting established scholarship omitting the role of these transgendered moves.

In the second chapter, Enterline employs psychoanalytic theory in order to put schoolmasters' claims about the effects of rhetorical training to the test of material, archival, and literary scrutiny. She states that, "motivation reveals the student's identification with, or desire for, the place from which he is seen—which is also the place from which he is judged and loved—as well as the accompanying internalized divisions that characterize Freud's topographic description of a composite, fractured psyche" (36). Enterline accounts for simple rebellion in the boys of the school, and her establishment of psychological reasons for student actions is reasonable; however, she accounts for the power differences between student and master in a fashion different from recent scholars, through the transference of pain into future creative energy.

Enterline does discover that learning Latin rhetorical facility through the school's intense regime of imitation and punishment could not but aggravate the gap between a boy's experiences of bodies and emotions and his grasp of what they

signified in the social world around him. The master judged rhetorical display, and he either persuaded students nicely to recite their passages, or beat them senseless as punishment or “motivation.” Unlike Foucault’s argument, that the daily practices of the master would install a kind of self-monitoring in the student, crushing his attempts to rebel, Enterline’s feminist analysis emphasizes the creative energies unleashed by each boy’s transgendered role-playing. William Shakespeare was one such boy. Enterline contends that Shakespeare, like many other grammar school students, resisted the controls employed by the hierarchy at the school. His rebellious behavior dovetailed with his initial artistic energies, and he later utilized the facility of Latin and its historical texts as sites for future artistry. Thus, Enterline illustrates in *Venus and Adonis* his theme and perspective, linking the content of the poem to some of his childhood interactions and gender transference. Instead of surveillance from a disciplinary perspective, surveillance becomes more like the watching of a performance, a play, which makes Shakespeare’s acts of resistance so inviting and “modern.”

What remains an issue is Enterline’s emphasis on the transference of punishment into creative energy, as opposed to linking the discourse in the classroom rhetorically to a discourse of power. Boys responded to threatened violence more than

with creative outbursts; they replicated this violence in future interactions as adults, replicating the very hierarchy they sought to oppose as children and charges. What became instantiated in the boys of the Latin schoolroom was that power won out, and their proficiency in Latin was the hard-fought result of the battle with authority that they were bound to lose. Enterline, while rejecting traditional scholarship on the manifestations of a principally male nature of Elizabethan schooling, denies the historical dynamic of power clearly at play in schoolrooms, and the almost sexual nature of sadism and masochism that drives the relationship of teacher and student. As Foucault would argue, the aspect of agonistic display in the Latin schoolroom is an interstitial event positioned in England’s social, gender and political history. Not only is power manifested in future creative acts; power appears prior to the classroom conflicts. Enterline’s reading invokes the androgynous nature of sexuality on the part of the students, taking both gender roles in response to their declarations of rebellion against schoolmasters. Concluding that this move involves sexual expression, and not a version of historical, discursive rhetoricity, provides a highly specialized view of English literary history, and one that will surely engender debate about this significant period and subject.