Book Review/Recension d'ouvrage

Dissonant Methods: Undoing Discipline in the Humanities Classroom
edited by Ada S. Jaarsma and Kit Dobson
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Dissonant Methods emerged from a workshop hosted by Mount Royal University to consider an important issue: the increasing outcomes-based focus of university teaching. While Jaarsma and Dobson outline several goals of the book, an examination of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) is noted as being (and certainly struck this reviewer as) the book's focus. Grouped into several sections (The Event, Embodiment, and The Political), each essay reflects the author's experience of being in a university classroom as either a professor or a student.

Contributors to section one examine the various ways in which university professors and students engage with one another. Martin Shuster addresses a long-standing argument: that universities should prepare students for the world. Shuster rightly observes that this euphemism means preparation for employment, and this limited interpretation overlooks the real-world value offered by the humanities. Kyle Kinaschuk addresses the uncertainty in humanities classrooms as professors and students study and engage with complex subjects. Kinaschuk is right that professors, to a large extent, set the tone for their classes and shape the event of teaching. Kathy Cawsey puts flesh on Schuster and Kinaschuk's theoretical bones by relating the experience of teaching Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* at Dalhousie University in the wake of the scandal at the Dalhousie Dentistry School. Some male students posted misogynistic and violent posts about women on Facebook, and Cawsey relates a class in which she teaches "The Wife of Bath's Tale," the story of a knight raping a woman, and links it to Dalhousie's restorative justice approach to the students and their victims. It was, in the common parlance of secondary school educators, a 'teachable

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moment.' Ely Shipley's essay is more personal. Shipley outlines the experience of being a "gender-nonconforming kid" in high school and the critical role played by the teachers who, in Shipley's words, "let me be me." Shipley also relates an interesting writing exercise that teachers can try themselves and with their students.

Section two, "Embodiment," examines how teaching and learning coalesce in the classroom. Katja K. Pettinen compares her study of taijutsu, a Japanese martial art, with how science instruction in university classrooms. Teaching taijutsu requires instructors to be active and engaged with both their students' learning and their own. Once a person becomes an 'expert,' they continue to study and train to improve their knowledge. Guy Obrecht relates his experience designing a new music course for non-music majors. Obrecht replaced the chronological structure of a typical music history course with a study of the musical elements that engage listeners. Obrecht admits his approach faltered when the students' essays failed to reflect the understanding he hoped they would achieve. Largely he received essays that related the students' personal relationship to music or a particular artist; the students didn't use the musical elements studied in class "as tools to unpack and reflect in a critical way upon their use" (88). This outcome caused Obrecht to reflect on what popular music is and how his students consume music. Kaitlin Rothberger, an undergraduate philosophy student, looks at classroom dynamics from a student perspective. Each classroom is different since each teacher is different. She draws upon the work of bell hooks to question what she calls the "neoliberal model of radical individualism" and argue in favour of community in the classroom.

In the final section, "The Political," Namrata Mitra. Mitra relates a common experience for many professors: students who interpret a text in a manner utterly baffling to the instructor. Teaching *The Glass Palace*, Mitra recognizes that her students are unacquainted with the British colonization of Burma. It is not uncommon for professors (myself included) to assume too much about their students' general knowledge. Rachel Jones examines the need to create dissonance in the classroom and how to handle those students who react against this type of teaching without "resorting to a moralizing seriousness" (120). Jones is correct. If there is one truism I've noticed about teaching, students don't want a preacher at the front of the classroom. However, most professors have encountered students whose ideas reflect more than just a young mind's ignorance. Jones outlines her thinking on the issue, how best to engage with students who react against dissonant pedagogies and concludes her article with an interesting cross-temporal/cross-cultural example of how this might be accomplished.

Dissonant Methods is an interesting collection of how different teachers in the arts and humanities reflected upon their pedagogy. If there is a failing, it is the use of the "tomato" as a metaphor, which found distracting rather than illuminating. However, this one criticism aside, I recommend this book to those humanities professors struggling with how to engage students in their classrooms.