

Freedom was indeed his life's message to the world, but it was not political or civil freedom to which he aspired; it was the freedom to live and work on land not subject to a master and landlord. His was the great lost cause of free land. And yet, even today, the cause is not finally lost. Clare's poetry, with the aid of such books as Rosemary Attack's, may reveal to a new generation the need to return the land to its true heirs, the people of England.

A pithy conclusion reflects upon this forgotten but vital issue. Clare had 'highlighted the loss of a most important and basic human freedom; that of access to land in order to have a home in which to live and the space in which to work.' The author sees in the 19th century migration to the urban slums that provided cheap labour for the Industrial Revolution a close parallel with the landless poor huddled around major conurbations in developing countries and offering similarly cheap labour to the multi-nationals. It is a comparison that John Clare would have instantly recognised, for there lies the same injustice that led him to write so lyrically and yet so potently of the spoliation of his beloved Northamptonshire countryside.

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“Speak What We Feel Not What We Ought To Say”: King Lear Lecture Podcast by Vanessa Redgrave (including The Killing Fields documentary screening)

Reviewed by Jesper Raundall Christensen

If modern-day politics repulse you just a little bit, the quick-fix solution could be to turn towards just about any Shakespeare play for some gloomy perspective. That is of course if you want to become even more discouraged about human appetite for power, privilege, corruption and monopoly.

Discouraging or not, English actress Vanessa Redgrave does exactly that in this lecture podcast; and in the most eloquent way as one would expect. The podcast is part of the Humanitas visiting professorships at the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge. In addition to Redgrave's professorship in Drama the series has so far included such distinguished visiting professors as Jonathan Sacks in Interfaith Studies and Norman Foster in Architecture.

In this particular lecture Redgrave turns her attention to the treasured Shakespeare classic King Lear and gives insight into her interesting career in the film and media industry before switching the focus towards the issue of land economics.

The lecture shows Redgrave's genuine affection for King Lear acquired through an extensive Shakespearian acting career. Her insight and knowledge is splendid. Her presentation skills even more so. The early part of the lecture therefore shouldn't just be considered a treat for current or prospective drama students. The Oscar-winning actress captures an auditorium with her commendable presence and dignified demeanour. This was not only palpable for us attending the lecture at the Examination Schools in Oxford, even in the unforgiving format of a video podcast it is instantly recognizable.

In the latter part of the lecture we are presented with a documentary screening followed by a panel discussion. The documentary in question is *The Killing Fields*, narrated and presented by Fred Harrison of the Land Research Trust. The podcast can be recommended for the screening of this film alone. It takes a straightforward, honest – if slightly sentimental – look at the negatives externalities surrounding privatisation of natural resources and the consequent speculation in the economic rent with a conspicuous eye for the environmental damage found in its trail.

The concluding panel discussion is centred on both the Shakespeare-inspired part of the lecture and the political, economic and environmental issues raised in the documentary. In the debate Redgrave arguably comes through as a LVT proponent, although Fred Harrison and Carlo Nero, the latter being the producer of the documentary, head most of the economic discussion.

All in all the whole lecture is a thorough and kind-hearted effort from Vanessa Redgrave showing both her genuine passion for drama, and Shakespeare in particular, alongside her well-known social and political awareness in this case with a legitimate emphasis on the need for land reform.

Editor: This specific podcast (amongst others) can be viewed for free at: podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/humanitas-visiting-professorships-universities-oxford-and-cambridge

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