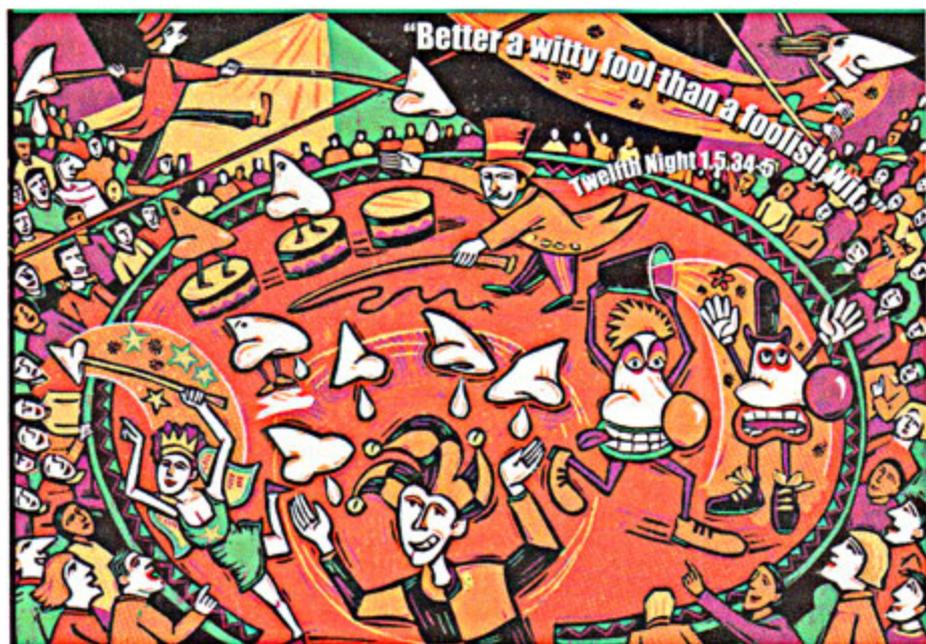


The
**Upstart
Crow**
A Shakespeare Journal



SHAKESPEARE'S JESTS AND JESTERS

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Editorial Note: Beginning with this volume, Elizabeth Rivlin (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004) joins the staff of *The Upstart Crow* as co-editor with Wayne Chapman, who herein concludes his tenure as interim editor, returning to the ranks as an associate editor and maintaining primary responsibility as the journal's publisher. Professor Rivlin is also the director of Clemson's Shakespeare Festival.

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CHANGEABLE TAFFETA: RE-DRESSING THE BEARS IN *TWELFTH NIGHT*

by John R. Ford

The various inhabitants of *Twelfth Night's* Illyria are almost as preoccupied with speculating *about* the complex intrigues they weave—or find themselves woven into—as they are in *performing* those plots.¹ And when they do speculate, they think in terms of a wide variety of metaphors all pertaining to games or pastimes with which John Manningham, or any of his fellow auditors in the audience, either at Middle Temple or the Globe, might have been familiar. The *nature* of those pastimes, however, varies widely. Sometimes the theatre itself comes to mind, as when Fabian, swept up by the over-ingeniousness of his own plotting, announces, “if this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction” (3.4.108-09). Or when Feste, donning his costume as Sir Topas, confides to the audience that he might be a little o’erparted for his new role: “Well, I’ll put it on, and I will dissemble myself in’t, and I would I were the first that ever dissembled in such a gown. I am not tall enough to become the function well, nor lean enough to be thought a good student” (4.2.4-7).

Feste may well be, as Viola attests, a canny actor, “wise enough to play the fool” (3.1.50), but the details of Feste’s own tropes remind us that play-acting was only one of many pastimes that suggested themselves to these revelers and anti-revelers. If the first performance of *Twelfth Night* was indeed held before an audience of law students, teachers, and lawyers at Middle Temple, perhaps Shakespeare, through Feste’s (or Robert Armin’s) costume and girth, was playfully mocking his audience with a comparison to the rule-bound games of the university and legal professions, complete with gowns, academic or judicial, and thin-faced students who knew how to keep to the windy side of the law.

Those costumes and performances, of course, also suggest the wild decorum of revelry itself, those matters for May mornings that Fabian remembers and that C. L. Barber long ago established as the shaping force behind festive comedy.² Angela Hurworth has explored a less savory festive presence behind the language and conventions of *Twelfth Night*.³ Her evidence suggests that these characters were just as likely to think of their behavior in terms of the underworld sport of gull-catching, a kind of rule-bound thievery, not entirely unknown to either actors or lawyers, and marked by conventions that link it to other games and sports as well as to disguises, traditional roles, and plotting strategies that shaped theatrical performances.⁴ Maria, Fabian’s “noble gull-catcher” (2.5.154), plays the role of “mistress of the game,” or “barnard” while Toby and Fabian act as her lesser accomplices, roles described by Robert Greene in *The Art of Cony-Catching* as “the setter” and “the verser” respectively.⁵ Andrew and Malvolio are described throughout the play as “gulls.” Indeed, Malvolio, this anti-theatrical “kind of” Puritan, assumes the role himself. He has been “made,” as he insists in the play’s final scene, “the most notorious geck and gull / That e’er invention played on” (5.1.322-23). Moreover, the “performance” of gull-catching, like that of a play, required an appreciative audience to take pleasure in such a “common recreation.”⁶

Perhaps the sport that is most consistently on the minds of all these comic aggressors and victims is, as both Stephen Dickey and Jason Scott-Warren have argued, the “sportful malice” of bear-baiting.⁷ Several characters in *Twelfth Night* imagine themselves or others in the role of bear, the baiting dogs, or both. Early in the play Orsino’s

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infatuated comparison of himself to Actaeon spying on his Diana/Olivia metamorphoses into the language of bear-baiting, or, at the very least, to hart-baiting. Appropriate to Orsino's self-love, his metaphor casts him as both pursuer and pursued. When invited to hunt the hart, Orsino responds:

O when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
 Methought she purged the air of pestilence;
 That instant was I turned into a hart,
 And my desires like fell and cruel hounds
 E'er since pursue me. (1.1.19-23)

Olivia too imagines herself as "baited," not by Orsino the bear but by Cesario the "dissembling cub" (5.1.153): "Have you not set mine honour at the stake / And baited it with all th'unmuzzled thoughts / That tyrannous heart can think?" (3.1.103-05). Fabian whets his appetite for revenge against Malvolio by remembering an old injury when the steward "brought me out o'favour with my lady about a bear-baiting here" (2.5.6-7).

It is, of course, Malvolio who is most associated with bear-baiting. Ralph Berry observes that Malvolio's final lines—"I'll be revenged on the whole *pack* of you" (5.1.386)—addressed to concentric rings of on- and off-stage taunters—explicitly blocks out a bear-baiting.⁹ "At *pack*," Berry argues, "the subliminal metaphor discloses itself. It is a bear-baiting. The audience becomes spectators, Malvolio the bear."⁹ Indeed, several recent studies have explored the multi-faceted connections between bear-baiting and theatrical performance, in particular, that of *Twelfth Night*. For both Stephen Dickey and Jason Scott-Warren, bear-baiting informs, not just the vocabulary of *Twelfth Night* but its structure, blocking, and rhythms, both critics hinting at a kind of dark extension of C. L. Barber's *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*. Dickey argues that "Shakespeare uses [bear-baiting's] bloody routines most intricately, both to illuminate the psychology and relationships of his characters and to explore the dramatic medium itself."¹⁰ These two distinct pastimes, then, became intimately connected in the minds of early modern audiences, who "considered baiting and playing as kindred entertainments, and that the experience of attending the one closely resembled the experience of attending the other."¹¹ Jason Scott-Warren, citing evidence of bear-baiting audiences' penchant for anthropomorphizing both the bears and the dogs, establishes a kind of interpretive practice whereby the bear and individual dogs are seen to act out a range of identifying character traits, much as would occur in a tragedy or, even more likely, a comedy of humors such as *Epicoëne* or *Twelfth Night*. Some of these bears, indeed, had *names*, like the comic Sackerson, whom young Slender had seen "loose twenty times," or Harry Hunks, the famous blind bear. Robert F. Willson argues that Shakespeare may have had blind Harry in mind when Gloucester, about to be blinded himself, cries out, "I am tied to th' stake, and I must stand the course" (*King Lear* 3.7.57).¹² Or, as Scott-Warren points out, just as a "humorous" character like Morose or Malvolio, when placed in comic distress, would reveal a dominant inward trait, so the bear, tied to the stake, or the English mastiffs at his heels, would reveal "characteristics" that an audience could both recognize and enjoy. Some in the audience might empathize more with the bear, who, like so many theatrical heroes, must stand his course. For others the tenacity of the dogs might remind them of personal and nationalistic qualities worthy of praise.¹³ Like Dickey, Scott-Warren also sees an intimate relationship between these two "sports": "What is clear is that the overlap between the rival entertainments was not just a coincidence of space; it was also a matter of converging spatial practices. The interpretive activities promoted by blood

sports and drama in late-Elizabethan and Jacobean England were altogether too close for comfort."¹⁴

I want to examine here just *how* uncomfortable *Twelfth Night* may have been for its Puritan critics. Certainly this play taunted those critics with representations of *individually* transgressive personages and behaviors—romantic lovers, allowed fools, cross-dressed heroines, various kinds of forbidden desires, bear baitings. More threatening, however, was the slippery ease with which these individual figures and activities could “translate”—or “re-dress”—themselves from one form to another. Finally, and most disturbingly, the play in performance required even its critics to *participate* in such diabolical pleasures. In order to redress the bears, to condemn the immoral behavior on stage that Phillip Stubbes so forcefully excoriated—“such wanton gestures, such bawdy speeches, such laughing and fleering, such kissing and bussing, such clipping and culling, such winking and glancing”—these critics first had to submit themselves to those Elizabethan stage practices that helped them *imagine* these happenings, to will them into existence, complete with local habitation and name.¹⁵ Worse, such staging indeterminacies as doubling, cross-dressing, and an open stage, were threatening *in and of themselves*, for they required even such a hostile audience to implicate itself, through a kind of unholy transubstantiation, in the dismantling of two of their most valuable Puritan tenets: the essential, fixed “signs distinctive” that marked the integrity of an individual and the unambiguous authority behind the interpretation of holy texts.

What is most interesting, then, about all these self-conscious metaphors for such multifarious happenings on stage is their volatility. These widely different activities—play acting, May games, litigating, gull catching, and bear baiting—activities that, moreover, would seem to appeal to vastly different, and irreconcilable tastes, become in this case *fluidly interchangeable*, a changeable taffeta that offers effortless substitution in the minds of actors and audience members alike. Glynne Wickham observes that in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the terms “play,” “sport,” and “game” freely substituted for one another.¹⁶ So they do in *Twelfth Night*. We might remember that while the entrapment of Malvolio may *begin* as a kind of bear-baiting, with Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian often in production surrounding Malvolio as he reads the forged letter, nonetheless the sport will later evolve, even in Fabian’s mind, as a *performance*, however improbable, that might be “played upon a stage now” (3.4.108). Moments later, Fabian, who has become a kind of impresario for these diverse entertainments, responds to Sir Andrew’s sudden entrance, challenge in hand, by re-conceiving events in terms of a different kind of “play,” the topsy-turvy world of May-day festival: “More matter for a May morning!” (3.4.120). Finally, Malvolio’s treatment takes the form of yet another “sport,” the rule-bound ritual of Catholic exorcism in the dark house. Interestingly, in his 1987 RSC production of the play, Bill Alexander linked Malvolio’s inquisition back to bear-baiting. In his dark house Malvolio could be seen chained to a stake.¹⁷

That such divergent metaphors and behaviors should so easily substitute themselves for one another should not surprise us. This is, after all, a play of ventriloquisms, where no one speaks for him or herself. Viola, defining herself to Olivia as her “servant’s servant,” speaks on Orsino’s behalf words so passionate that Olivia falls in love with their reverberate echo, “the babbling gossip of the air” (1.5.228). Maria, who can “write very much like my lady,” concocts in *her* voice a love letter for Malvolio so “feelingly personated” that he falls in love with “her very c’s, her u’s, and her t’s” (2.5.95). Little wonder that the favorite standard of comparison for almost everyone in this play is the phrase “as any man in Illyria,” a comparison that dissolves all difference. Indeed, sometimes it seems that characters serve as fluid substitutes for “any man [or woman] in Illyria.” For Olivia and Antonio—as well as for herself—Viola serves as a substitute

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for Sebastian. For Orsino, Viola, at least while in her woman's weeds, serves as a substitute for both Olivia and Cesario. One might even add that, for Orsino, Cesario, "while [she is] a man" (5.1.395), will serve as a substitute for Viola, or that Viola, as Cesario, will serve as substitute for Olivia's lost brother. Feste absorbs Cesario's role as singer. And Fabian becomes a hasty, though quite adequate, replacement for Feste, who himself represents Sir Topas so convincingly that the two figures succeed in having an animated conversation with one another about, of all things, the dangers of bible babble. Malvolio's ambitions notwithstanding, one looks in vain for "singularity" in Illyria. All is semblative here. In the strange ontology of this world, it is "singularity," not "double-ness" that constitutes an illusion, a "trick." Seeing double, by contrast, requires a "natural" perspective.

Such duplicity, of course, made *Twelfth Night* an especially dangerous play. Elizabethan and Jacobean theatrical practices, as well as the playhouses in which they occurred, not only seduced audiences into the abominable pleasures of doubleness, but were themselves radical examples of such equivocation. Laura Levine has shown that, as anti-theatrical discourse grew increasingly feverish, the deep anxiety at the heart of Puritan opposition to cross-dressing on stage in the sixteenth century gave way to an even deeper terror throughout the early decades of the seventeenth century.¹⁸ Early opposition to both theatrical cross-dressing and theatrical impersonations had focused on stage practices that desecrated God's unambiguous "signs distinctive" that distinguished man from woman, self from other. However, Levine observes an "increasing anxiety" over the course of some sixty years of anti-theatrical writing by writers such as Stephen Gosson, Phillip Stubbes, and William Prynne, "that behind the charge that the boy actors' behaviour on the stage violated the 'signs distinctive between sex and sex,' was the fear that there might not be *any* essential gender or identity at all, but instead merely—to borrow from Viola-Cesario's description of herself—'a blank.'" For Levine, "[a]t the heart of the logic that endows theatre with magical powers is the idea which violates the notion of discrete and individual identity, the belief that one person can literally be turned into another."²⁰

All of this brings us back to bear-baiting. Aside from the travesties of cross dressing, the characteristic of theater that made it most vulnerable to Puritan attack was the unruly aggregate, or to borrow a phrase from Phillip Stubbes, "a confuse[d] mingle mangle," of the multiple pleasures and desires it offered, pleasures that were no less offensive than those of a variety of other illicit enjoyments and desires that melted one object of desire into another, and another.²¹ Pleasure, after all, was pleasure, whatever specific form it took. Consequently the effect of such promiscuous pleasures and desires was to lose the "natural" singleness of things. Stephen Dickey points to "an Act of 1625 that unambiguously links gaming and [playgoing] in its resolve to fine anyone involved in Sunday 'Bearebaiting, Bullbaiting, Enterludes, common Playes, and other unlawfull exercises or pastimes."²²

On this point, the theatre could not have agreed more readily. As we have seen, the theatrical profession also made little distinction between "play," "game," and "sport." Ralph Berry, citing the close association between bear-baiting houses and playhouses, states that "the original audience [of *Twelfth Night*] would have witnessed enough bear-baitings, whether in the specific theatre of *Twelfth Night* (Globe), in other theatres such as the Hope, or elsewhere. The connections between theatre, bear-baiting, and festivity were well established."²³ Michael Hattaway points out that "[p]lays had historical as well as categorical relationships with games. The customary Elizabethan word for actor is 'player,' and Elizabethan plays draw upon the traditions of popular and aristocratic sports and revels. A printed text of c. 1560 gives us 'The Play of Robin Hood, very proper to be played in May Games.' The Bankside playhouses lay right by the

bear-baiting rings and were associated with them by the City fathers and doubtless by many members of their audiences. The first Blackfriars playhouse had been used as a fencing school.⁷⁴

This reference to the Blackfriars building raises another point about the threatening indeterminacy of theatre. Any theatre space, similar to the actors who performed within that space, was, in a sense, "cross-dressed," for one of the most important structural features of a theatre was its plastic adaptability, its capacity to re-invent an empty space to accommodate a variety of popular desires. Glynne Wickham believes that several baiting houses and playhouses, at least into the seventeenth century, could, with minimal adjustment, transform their spaces from that of one kind of entertainment to another.⁷⁵ This is partly because the staging area, the seating, and the price structure were similar from one space to another, as was the case with one Southwark bear-house, re-built in the 1580s, and the two triple galleried theatrical models it imitated, the Theater and the Curtain.⁷⁶

Phillip Henslowe and Edward Alleyn, owners of both the Bear Garden and the Hope Theatre, had secured licenses for both play performances and bear-baitings.⁷⁷ While there is no unequivocal evidence that the Rose was used for baitings, Wickham speculates that, given Henslowe's interest in bear-baiting, he might have intended to use the Rose as both a playhouse and a gamehouse.⁷⁸ At any rate, the Rose, as Andrew Gurr points out, "adjoined two bear-baiting and bull-baiting houses."⁷⁹ And 1989 marked "the discovery, at the recent Rose excavations, of the skull of a bear."⁸⁰

The most celebrated example of a space that over a long period of time continually re-fashioned itself as baiting house and playhouse was the Hope Theatre, which, according to the Hope contract, included "a fitt and convenient Tyre house and a stage to be carried or taken awaie."⁸¹ Andrew Gurr writes that "Alleyn and Henslowe planned a regular alternation of baiting and playing."⁸² Apparently, however, it was not an entirely happy arrangement. Glynne Wickham observes that the actor-tenants' competition with the bears for space and schedule "was [in 1615] proving sufficiently irksome for the company first to deliver a formal complaint to Henslowe in writing and then to quit the building."⁸³ Nonetheless, the very competition for playing space argues for an ambivalent definition of such houses as dangerous places of strange translation. On an open stage, with universal lighting, with cross-dressed actors transforming themselves into all varieties of moral, social, and sexual beings, all taking place in a multi-purpose, easily changeable space, who knows what one might see or, more disconcertingly, what one might become? When one enters into such a world, nothing that is so is so. Puck might have been speaking either for the actors, the space they occupy, or the audience who desires to imagine them when he says, "Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound, / A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire; / And neigh and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn, / Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn" (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 3.1.103-06).

There is no evidence that the Globe, and certainly not Middle Temple or the Blackfriars, were ever used for bear baiting. But a crossed-dressed bear might be another matter entirely. As we have seen, any theatrical space was a site of notorious transformation. The history of the Globe in particular is a history of self-fashioning and changeability. It began its life in 1599 by literally becoming the Theatre, the timbers of the Shoreditch building secretly transported across the Thames, re-naming itself, not the Theatre, whose name referred to "an atlas, a book of maps," but its linguistic double, the Globe.⁸⁴ And it ended its life in 1613, consumed in fire only to re-invent itself, a year later, phoenix-like, as a second Globe. Similarly, the Blackfriars, though a less "public" and more "substantial" theatrical space, could invent and re-invent itself at will. It could become the Globe well enough to take on its repertoire during the winter

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months.³⁵ The building itself had an opalescent history, transforming itself into schools of dance and fencing, sites of Parliamentary law and court refinement, and, of course, of religious piety. *Twelfth Night*, invested with the language and stage practices of bear-baiting, with the “signs distinctive” of *all* its characters dissolved and mirrored through cross-dressing and doubling, and moreover acted in a volatile space of opalescent changeability, offers a fitting opportunity to “have the bear again.” This time the bear would be re-dressed as not one but two of the play’s major characters, Orsino and Malvolio.

“Pleasure will be paid, one time or another,” Feste tells an Orsino still swooning in the dying fall of “Come Away, Death” (2.4.72-73). And, for the most part, Feste is right. *Twelfth Night* is a play whose sometimes ruthless festive economy invites us all—characters and audiences alike—to indulge our most secret wills, only to require of us that we remember exactly what we did, and with whom. But, as critics such as Jean Howard have observed, there is at least one figure in Illyria who seems exempt from Feste’s injunction, and that is the Count himself: “Orsino,” Howard points out, “while being roundly mocked *within* the play, especially by Feste, is ridiculed only lightly by the play itself, by the punishments meted out to him.”³⁶ In this play of gendered and social topsy-turvy, what allows Orsino to emerge from *his* “folly-fallen” madness with all his greatness intact? Who pays for Orsino’s dark pleasures? Who allows Orsino to recover from the ridicule of his self-love in 1.1? Or from the ambiguous sexualities he explores with Cesario? Or from the submerged violence that resides within his sentimental language? We might remember that Orsino’s very name means “bear.” Who could tame such bestial rage and redeem Orsino to the status he enjoys at play’s end?

Orsino’s benefactor could be Malvolio, in many ways a natural perspective of Orsino. The steward who rules Olivia’s household desires above all else “to be *Count* Malvolio” (2.5.40). Indeed, Malvolio’s sentimental appetite has as much “retention” as Orsino’s. Moreover, his class encroachments are as entangled as Orsino’s sexual desires. In fact, those twinned desires express themselves in an echoing language that halloes to the reverberate hills. When Orsino instructs Cesario how to approach Olivia, his words betray his own unacted romantic fantasy: “Be not denied access; stand at her doors, / And tell them there thy fixed foot shall grow / Till thou have audience” (1.4.15-17). When Malvolio, sent by Olivia to “dismiss” Cesario and his message, returns to report Cesario’s “fortified” resistance, his language entwines itself into Orsino’s figurative language, with the single exception that Orsino’s *romantic* trope has been replaced by Malvolio’s *authoritarian* one: “and he says he’ll stand at your door like a sheriff’s post, and be the supporter to a bench, but he’ll speak with you” (1.5.122-24). Both men require a language that will allow them to “write” their own romanticized masculine identities, what they will. And for both, that re-written self must be displaced onto and into women’s bodies and language. This is, of course, precisely the kind of “will-fulness” that Olivia parodies as she imagines re-writing *her* will—“*item*, two lips, indifferent red” (1.5.202)—for all who might mourn her body’s inventory.

Both of these would-be lovers of Olivia, then, use Cesario as a surrogate for their own quite different idealizations of masculine behavior, setting their forms, or texts, in Viola’s waxen heart, itself obscured by a “masculine usurped attire” (5.1.234). Changeable taffeta indeed! Later, Cesario’s exegesis of Orsino’s sacred texts will anticipate the “comfortable doctrine” that the Puritan-lover Malvolio will recognize in the plain and “open” text of Olivia’s letter. For both Malvolio and Orsino, writing is desired for a similar conflation of powers: its ability to construct and possess female sexuality and its ability to construct and possess religious truth.³⁷ Again it is Olivia who whimsically deconstructs and disarms both of these linguistic powers that mark their erotic “divinity”:

Olivia: [W]e will hear this divinity. Now, sir, what is your text?
 Viola: Most sweet lady—
 Olivia: A comfortable doctrine, and much may be said of it.
 Where lies your text?
 Viola: In Orsino's bosom.
 Olivia: In his bosom? In what chapter of his bosom?
 Viola: To answer by the method, in the first of his heart.
 Olivia: O I have read it. It is heresy. (1.5.179-87)

But there is, of course, a difference between these two evangelical lovers. Malvolio, unlike Orsino, is baited for his social and sexual transgressions, humiliated in a dark house. Still, the very form of Malvolio's humiliation might make us think of Orsino. The revelers themselves conceive of Malvolio's punishment as a kind of bear-baiting, a sport royal whose very name echoes the count's. The justice of it pleases Fabian, who was himself "brought . . . out o'favour with my lady about a bear-baiting here" (2.5.6-7). "To anger him," Sir Toby assures Fabian, "we'll have the bear again; and we will fool him black and blue" (2.5.8-9). And in many late twentieth-century stagings of the dark house scene (4.2), such a bearish transformation literally occurs to the bruised, blackened, and bloodied Malvolio we see. But productions need not be quite so brutal for the audience to see Malvolio's more orsinic features. Feste's ironic serenades to Orsino and Malvolio ("Come Away, Death" and "Hey, Robin") share a satiric strategy that further links these two fantastics, each sick with self love. Indeed, Feste's song to Malvolio, who has become a lover suffering in an embowered prison for the sake of an "unkind lady" who "loves another," actually physicalizes the lyrical setting of Orsino's song, where another "sad, true lover" languishes in another dark house, "slain by a fair cruel maid" (2.4.52). In fact, in the play's final recognition scene, Malvolio will once again serve as surrogate, or scape-bear, for Orsino. Only moments after vowing, in a rarified display of romantic posturing, to "sacrifice the lamb that I do love / To spite a raven's heart within a dove," the count recovers enough to re-assert his social and sexual claims (5.1.119-20). It is Orsino's good fortune that at the moment he makes those claims, both on- and off-stage audiences are diverted to the entrance of Malvolio, who is forced to become the better for *his* foes, who tell him plainly he is an ass. Malvolio, then, must "become" the Bear, if Orsino's own "ill wishes," to borrow this time from the meaning of *Malvolio's* name, are to be properly exorcized.

How might a production reinforce this notion of Malvolio as surrogate, or scape-bear, for Orsino? One possibility, of course, would be to double the two roles. It is a seductive choice. Orsino disappears from the play after 2.4, not to return until the play's final scene. These are the very intervening scenes that make up most of the Malvolian subplot. One wonders how the actor playing Orsino might have been employed during such a long absence. But as tempting as it might be to double the roles, there remains the resistance of the play's final scene, the only scene where both characters are on stage together.

But what if we doubled, not the characters themselves, but *the empty space around them*: the blocking and design of separate but parallel scenes that allow an audience to recognize the mirrored self-indulgence of both of these characters? Trevor Nunn used such a tactic in his film version of *Twelfth Night*.²⁸ By replacing "Come Away Death," the song Orsino and Cesario hear in 2.4, with "O Mistress Mine," the song Feste sings to Sir Toby and Sir Andrew in 2.3, and then having both scenes occur simultaneously with the camera cutting back and forth and Feste's voice echoing from one household to another, Nunn in effect "doubles" the two scenes. As a result, the two

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would-be gentlemen lovers, Toby and Andrew, as they sit together drinking and absorbing Feste's "sweet and contagious" lyrics, begin to resemble another pair of lovers in masculine usurped attire, Orsino and Cesario, as they drink their brandy and smoke in quiet male bonding while the same music wafts around them. And, of course, both pairs of imitators, lost in their different fancies, miss the irony of Feste's lyrics. Such directorial sleight of hand creates the *illusion* of doubling while keeping the actors distinct, a natural perspective that is and is not.

Nunn was trying to replicate the transformative powers of an Elizabethan bare stage. Without physical settings to distract an audience's eyes, an open stage like the Globe could suggest a thematic or psychological mirroring of two quite different characters, not by doubling their parts but by "doubling" two scenes in which those characters perform a similar action. If a production wanted to establish Orsino and Malvolio as twinned self-absorbed mis-readers, it might "double" the play's opening scene and 2.5, the "box tree scene." In these two scenes, first Orsino and then Malvolio defines the scene with an opening aria that gives the very echo to the seat where self-love is throned. Then, caught up in the high fantastical state of mind induced by their own words, both attempt to interpret one of Olivia's messages, each crushing it a little in the process. The symmetry of these two interpretive moments might be sharpened if, as in some productions, such as Nunn's own film, Valentine is not merely reporting the *gist* of Olivia's rejection, but quoting her exact, "seasoned" words, perhaps from a written announcement Olivia has sent through her handmaid. Orsino and Malvolio might, as they read and interpret Olivia's words, occupy the same position on the stage. These mirrored scenes could be further heightened by doubling Orsino's on-stage audience (Valentine and Curio) with Malvolio's (Toby and Fabian), both pairs of observers listening and even "baiting" from the same on-stage vantage point. Such an experiment with these two scenes I conducted in 2001 with the aid of members of Shenandoah Shakespeare at the newly reconstructed Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton, Virginia.³⁹ In the first scene, Curio and Valentine were already in place stage right when Orsino entered through the upstage left door, lost in the reverie of "[i]f music be the food of love, play on"; Orsino paid no heed to his attendants, who exchanged a quick, furtive glance. When Valentine presented Olivia's latest refusal, he produced a pink manuscript at the words "but from her handmaid do return this answer" and then *read* Olivia's reply (1.1.25). At "shall not behold her face at ample view" (1.1.27), Orsino, stage center, snatched the letter with his right hand and read aloud, at first dejectedly, then with sudden passion as he uncovered a new interpretation:

O she that hath a heart of that fine frame
 To pay this debt of love but to a brother,
 How will she love, when the rich golden shaft
 Hath killed the flock of all affections else
 That live in her; when liver, brain, and heart,
 These sovereign thrones, are all supplied and filled,
 Her sweet perfections with one selfsame King! (1.1.33-41)

We then jumped directly to 2.5, where, now performing Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, the same two actors watched from the same stage right position they had occupied as Curio and Valentine. Then Malvolio entered from the same upstage left door as had Orsino. Malvolio, oblivious to the unhidden presence of his auditors, ambled downstage, lost in *his* reverie: "Tis but fortune; all is fortune; Maria once told me she did affect me" (2.5.20-21). At "what employment have we here?" Malvolio, at last, noticed the letter in Andrew's hand (but not, of course, Andrew himself), and snatched it with

the same sweeping movement Orsino had earlier used (2.5.91). It was the same hot pink stationery we had seen in the first scene. This time Malvolio read, at first hesitantly, then with growing confidence as he began to piece out the interpretive scheme, and finally with unfettered exuberance: "Daylight and champain discovers not more. This is open. I will be proud" (2.5.133-34).

Other scenes might also "double," suggesting, for example, an on-stage visual link between Malvolio's dark house, where he will pay for *his* love-thoughts, and Orsino's own imagined dark house, "canopied with bowers" (1.1.41). Malvolio's prison might even be made of the same "sad cypress" Orsino so yearns for during Festé's song. The baiting of Malvolio, then, established in such "mingle-mangle" scenes, whose characters and blocking mirror Orsino's own Malvolian fantasies, will suffice to set the Bear free. In fact Orsino himself will pronounce his own release in a moment of parodic epiphany that will mimic the more wondrous discoveries and recognitions around him. Orsino listens carefully and sympathetically to Fabian's reading of Malvolio's letter, as well he might. His response, "[t]his savours not much of distraction," could not be more apt, spoken by a count who, like Malvolio, knows the pain of spurned misreadings (5.1.322). In the mirrored world of this play, where interpretation is always disabled by signs *indistinctive*, both Orsino and Malvolio are "as well in [their] wits as any man in Illyria" (4.2.91).

I'd like to conclude with some thoughts about the relationship between my subject and my method. Both have much to do with the volatile semiotics of reading texts and open spaces. Moreover, those created texts invite the fused interpretive codes of three quite different "reading" experiences, three kinds of "recognitions": those of romantic desire, theatrical transformation, and religious exegesis. Although almost everyone in *Twelfth Night* reads with a distempered appetite, Orsino and Malvolio distinguish themselves as the play's chief mis-readers, not merely in their willful distortions of Olivia's letters, but also in their zeal to re-inscribe "blank" female bodies into texts intended to be open only to them. Yet at the same time those interpretive moments also demonstrate how comically resistant those textualized bodies are to close readings. Malvolio presumes to know the most intimate spaces of Olivia's body as he reads "her very c's, her u's, and her t's," to say nothing of her "great P's" (2.5.72-73). But the very sexualized text he interprets is a tissue of corrupted words, a counterfeit text written by Maria, whose carefully coded language—"the color of his beard, the shape of his leg, the manner of his gait, the expresseure of his eye, forehead, and complexion"—are all designed to "most feelingly personate" not Olivia but Malvolio (2.3.132-34). Similarly, Orsino, as he sends Cesario off to woo for him, reads "his" body with proprietorial confidence: "Diana's lip / Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe / Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound, / And all is semblative a woman's part" (1.4.30-33). For Orsino, revolving on such phrases as "small pipe," "maiden's organ," and "woman's part," Cesario's body becomes a plain text, as open as champain and daylight. But Orsino's sexualized language only demonstrates how "unreadable" Cesario's body is, and not just for Orsino, unaware of Cesario's gender disguise *within* the play, but for the audience as well, who "knows" that Orsino's reading is both wrong and right, that the boy Cesario is "really" a girl, and that the girl Viola is "really" a boy.⁴⁰ Yet the audience's own reading of the boy actor's body is similarly suspect, conditioned as it is by our desire to participate in a play of wondrous sexual transformation and indeterminacy. To paraphrase the gnostic critique of another mis-read Shakespearean heroine, we think we know that we ne'er knew Cesario's body, but know, we think, that we know Viola's.

Such textual hazards have an even further reach in a play so absorbed with miracles and recognition and so infused with religious vocabulary. Critics have pointed out

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that the many references to mariology, priests, miraculous transubstantiations, and ritual may be satirically directed towards Catholic ideology and iconology—or toward Queen Elizabeth's appropriation of them.⁴¹ But what about a world where *all* words, *all* texts, are corrupted by readers determined to uncover their own sacred truths, what they will, in whatever texts they interpret? This is, after all, Illyria, where Protestant readings—even those of the plainest of styles—are comically directed by desire, or, as Malvolio might put it, “the full prospect of my hopes” (3.4.72).⁴²

Finally, the directorial strategy of spatial doubling to suggest the mirroring of one character “yet living in [the] glass” of another seems especially, one might say providentially, apt for *Twelfth Night* (3.4.415). Such a method is not exactly doubling but the *imitation* of doubling, the illusion of an illusion. For all its gesturing outward toward the strange, religious powers of Time, the sea, or toward epiphanic visions and recognitions, *Twelfth Night* has just as many inward gestures, the secular secrets of magicians and tricksters: not *natural* perspectives, but the artifice of imitation, the sportive games of mimesis and rehearsal. Salt waves may be fresh in love, but salt tears may be “seasoned” or as Joseph Summers has it, prolonged “by the process of pickling.”⁴³ Sebastian's sudden appearance is miraculous enough, but its effects, both theatrical and religious, are prepared for by Viola's crafty imitation. Her brother “lives” in her glass because Viola employs his wardrobe, “[f]or him I imitate” (3.4.334). These crude imitations haunt the mysterious transfigurations of this play like figures in an anti-masque, or like gargoyles in a cathedral.

The mysterious recognition scene between Viola and Sebastian, then, is shadowed by another, somewhat less sacred one, between two characters who never say a word to one another, nor recognize the slightest resemblance between them. Yet they share a vocabulary, certain high fantastical habits of reading, and a sentimental self-indulgence that simmers towards bestial rage. At the play's end, one will be gagged and estranged by the whirligig of time, a foolish upstart chased away by laughter and shame. The other will become the articulate convener of “golden time” and “solemn combination[s]”—and, of, course, Viola's husband, at least when she is in her woman's weeds (5.1.390-391). But husbands and fools, Feste tells us, are never that far apart, useful knowledge if we ever hope to recognize Orsino, or Malvolio, or ourselves. “[F]ools are as like husbands as pilchards are to herrings—the husband's the bigger” (3.1.28-29). Even if neither Orsino nor Malvolio note the small distinction, we certainly will, as we observe these twin fools together on stage. We are, after all, as well in our wits as any. On the other hand, we might remember the picture of “We Three.”

How easy is a bush supposed a bear. Many early modern plays, of course, were steeped in the language and situations that bound those plays to bear-baiting and other illicit sports and games. And many plays were performed in multi-purpose theatres whose space could be transformed into bear- and bull-baiting arenas. But *Twelfth Night*, by self-consciously using language, not so much *meta-theatrical* as *meta-playful*, to transform playgoing pleasures into a wide variety of equally illicit, and hence equally *interchangeable*, games and sports, especially bear-baiting, seems a special case, especially when one considers the extended bear-baiting of Malvolio, re-dressed in the dark, bear-like Puritan robes of Malvolio's kindred attackers, re-dressed again all in yellow, the color of festive foolery and melancholic lovers.⁴⁴ It is as if the Chamberlain's Men, in performing *Twelfth Night*, were baiting *all* their anti-theatrical enemies by transforming their play, their space, even their most steadfast critics into a disorderly succession of Puritan *bête-noires*, each as interchangeable and reversible as a cheveril glove. These unholy transformations, for Malvolio, assume their most fiendish shape in the play's recognition scene. At the same moment that Viola and

Sebastian would discover their separate identities, Malvolio must endure the radical loss of his, baffled by a theatrical trick into "becoming" Orsino. In doing so, Malvolio is forced, on stage, to validate "the opinion of Pythagoras," that his soul "might haply inhabit a bird," or, in this case, a bear (4.2.40, 41).

Feste and his competitor plotters could not have asked for more. Their Puritan critics, through their substitute Malvolio, had participated in the dissolution of their own "signs distinctive," to become a "blank," and then to see themselves transformed, out of aery nothing, into surrogate revelers, part of Toby's "element." And yet, like so many of the characters they impersonated, the Chamberlain's Men may have over-reached themselves. Forty years later, in an ironic display of indeterminacy, the Puritans would return to the English theatres, this time re-dressed as the unmuzzled dogs. Thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.

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Notes

1. William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night or What You Will*, ed. Elizabeth Story Donno, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985).
2. C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1959).
3. Angela Hurworth, "Gulls, Cony-catchers and Cozeners: *Twelfth Night* and the Elizabethan Underworld," *Shakespeare Survey* 52 (1999), pp. 120-32.
4. Hurworth, p. 125.
5. Quoted in Hurworth, p. 126.
6. Hurworth, p. 128.
7. Stephen Dickey, "Shakespeare's Mastiff Comedy," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42 (1991), pp. 255-75; and Jason Scott-Warren, "When Theaters Were Bear-Gardens; or, What's at Stake in the Comedy of Humors," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 54 (2003), pp. 63-82.
8. Ralph Berry, *Shakespeare and the Awareness of the Audience* (New York: St. Martin's, 1985).
9. Berry, p. 74. See also Glynn Wickham, *English Stages 1300 to 1660. Volume Two 1576 to 1660, Part II* (New York: Columbia UP, 1972). The bear-baiting analogy would be recognized, not only by audiences at a public theatre like the Globe, but also at venues, such as Middle Temple or the Blackfriars, often associated with more sophisticated audiences. Wickham observes that audiences for bear-baitings often crossed social boundaries: "Like cock-fighting, the gory spectacle of fights between dogs on the one hand and either bulls or bears on the other, enjoyed royal patronage through most of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," p. 48.
10. Dickey, p. 255.
11. Dickey, p. 262.
12. Robert F. Willson Jr., "Gloucester and Harry Hunks," *The Upstart Crow* 9 (1989): pp. 107-11.
13. Willson, p.71
14. Scott-Warren, p. 82.
15. Quoted in Bruce R. Smith, ed., *Twelfth Night: Texts and Contexts* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2001): p. 225.
16. Wickham, p. 34.
17. Scott-Warren, p. 66.
18. Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994).
19. Levine, pp. 19-20.
20. Levine, p. 16.
21. Quoted in Berry, p. 147, note 9.
22. Dickey, p. 22.
23. Berry, p. 23.
24. Michael Hattaway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre: Plays in Performance* (London: Routledge,

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- 1982): p. 80.
25. Wickham, p. 57.
 26. Wickham, p. 58.
 27. Wickham, p. 50 and p. 71.
 28. Wickham, p. 60.
 29. Andrew Gurr, "Shakespeare's Playhouses," *A Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. David Scott Kastan (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999): p. 363.
 30. Dickey, p. 261.
 31. Quoted in Wickham, p. 73.
 32. Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574-1642*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), p. 152.
 33. Wickham, p. 75.
 34. Gurr, "Shakespeare's Playhouses," p. 365.
 35. See Gurr, "Shakespeare's Playhouses," p. 371, as well as Roslyn L. Knutson's qualifications in "Two Playhouses, Both Alike in Dignity," *Shakespeare Studies* 30 (2002): pp.111-17. Concerning the likelihood that plays performed at the Globe could accommodate themselves to the Blackfriars's space, Wickham argues: "I do not believe that the move from the large, open-air first Globe to the smaller, candle-lit Blackfriars can of itself have created any serious difficulties for the King's Men since they were already fully familiar with a wide variety of palace and provincial halls," p.137. As for the possibility that revivals of *Twelfth Night* might have been performed at the Blackfriars, see Peter Thompson, *Shakespeare's Theatre*, 2nd ed., *Theatre Production Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1992): p. 107.
 36. Jean E. Howard, "Crossdressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 (1988), pp. 418-40.
 37. For discussions of *Twelfth Night's* position in the discourses of religious conflict, see especially Donna B. Hamilton, *Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1992): pp. 86-110; and Maurice Hunt, "The Religion of *Twelfth Night*," *College Language Association Journal* 37 (1993), pp. 189-203.
 38. Trevor Nunn, *William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night: A Screenplay* (London: Methuen, 1996); as director, *Twelfth Night* (Alliance Video; Fine Line Features, 1996).
 39. John R. Ford, "'To anger him we'll have the bear again': Recognizing Orsino in *Twelfth Night*," Blackfriars Playhouse Inaugural Conference, Staunton, VA, 12 Oct. 2001.
 40. See Dymphna Callaghan, *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage* (London: Routledge, 2000). For Callaghan, discussing both of these sexual "readings," the misogynist intentions proceed without ironic restraint or inversion, helping to define the play's representation of femininity, where, "without [Olivia's] consent, her private parts will be on display for everyone's amusement," p. 38. Similarly, for Callaghan, the effects of the boy-actor's gender impersonation are also misogynistic, "an elaborate, fanciful instance of patriarchal ventriloquism," p. 46.
 41. See Charles Boyle, "Allowed Fools: Notes Towards an Elizabethan *Twelfth Night*," 1996. 29 Dec. 2001. <<http://www.everreader.com/twelfth2.htm>>.
 42. Donna Hamilton discusses how frequently the language of *Twelfth Night* appropriates the religious disputes, often involving Biblical reading practices, between Conformists and Non-Conformists during the last years of Elizabeth's reign. See especially pp. 100-01.
 43. Joseph H. Summers, "The Masks of *Twelfth Night*," *The University Review* 22 (1955): 25-32, rpt. in *Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism*, rev. ed., ed. Leonard F. Dean (New York: Oxford UP, 1967), pp. 134-43.
 44. See Hurworth, p. 128, and William Shakespeare, *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eighth*, ed. S. Schoenbaum (New York: New American Library, 1967), p. 44, note 16.

**"THE FONDNESS, THE FILTHINESS":
DEFORMITY AND LAUGHTER IN EARLY-MODERN COMEDY**

by Andrew Stott

One of the principal issues with which *A Midsummer Night's Dream* concerns itself is the question of what belongs properly to comic form. We see this in the bifurcated structure of the play as it posits two possibilities even while it blends them: Bottom's burlesque on the one hand, and the aristocratic comedy of love and metre on the other.¹ The play weighs the merits of these distinct and separate forms, one informed by Roman New Comedy and ideas of literary decorum, the other reflecting a variety of comic techniques accumulated over decades of successful theatrical practice. Of course, neither category remains discrete nor inoculated from the other, and one of the most powerful metatheatrical effects of the play is to demonstrate the interconnectedness of fictions on a series of representational planes. Traditionally, Titania's infatuation with translated Bottom has been seen as the most intense point at which the play moves across authoritative centers, Bottom's head and Titania's misplaced, misrecognizing desire representing acute distillations of the categories of base-bodily and aristocratic-visual that organize the comedy, amplified to the point of *absurdum*. Yet while Titania's "enthralled" eye amuses because of the ludicrousness of its collapsed class/species distinctions, its lowering of the fairy queen and the hint of intercourse between "mortal grossness" and "airy spirit" (3.1.152-153), it might also be read as an inflated version of another wish, namely the desire of Hippolyta to show the Mechanicals a little respect. Hippolyta voices her sympathy for the uneducated actors before the prologue of "Pyramus and Thisbe": "I love not to see wretchedness o'er charged, / And duty in his service perishing" (5.1.85-6), to which her newly-wedded husband replies, "The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing. / Our sport shall be to take what they mistake: / And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect / Takes it in might, not merit" (5.1.89-92). Hippolyta's brief moment of concern reveals an apparent contradiction that at once understands the class system as an ascending scale that begins in buffoonery and ends in nobility, but that also seeks to afford some compensation for this thought in demonstrations of inclusiveness and magnanimity. Indeed, the fact that "Pyramus and Thisbe" is even performed in court is an effect of this contradiction. After hearing Egeus report that the rehearsal "Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears / The passion of loud laughter never shed" (5.1.69-70), Theseus requests to see it, not just for its potential hilarity, but to demonstrate his ducal gratitude to its performers: "For never anything can be amiss / When simpleness and duty tender it" (5.1.82-3). Like Titania kissing the donkey, social position is confirmed by the encounter of the humble with the lofty and guaranteed when the lofty treat the humble with condescension masquerading as respect.²

The treatment of the Mechanicals in Theseus's court, I would argue, reflects a broader movement in late sixteenth-century literary theory, which, while not necessarily reflected in practice, seeks to discredit burlesque comedy—the comedy of clowning, physicality, and rusticity—and redefine it as something to be pitied. The first explicit statement of an early-modern "ethics" forbidding laughing at those that should warrant our sympathy appears in a famous passage of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, formulating an opinion that will be shared by many in the seventeenth century. Attributing it to morally questionable impulses that explode in a fit of "*Sudden Glory*," laughter, he says:

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is caused either by some sudden act of their own, that pleaseth them; or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves. And it is incident most to them, that are conscious of the fewest abilities in themselves; who are forced to keep themselves in their own favour, by observing the imperfections of other men. And therefore much Laughter at the defects of others, is a signe of Pusillanimity. For of great minds, one of the proper workes is, to help and free others from scorn; and compare themselves only with the most able.³

As laughing is a product of a false belief in pre-eminence, triggered by deformities in the body, manners or thought, of others, it is thus indicative of an acute anxiety whose product is the need to declare the laugher as superior to the object that he or she finds risible. Hobbes notes the absence of high-mindedness, charity and generosity of spirit in this urge, which, rather than separating the laugher from the object of scorn, partakes of the malformed things it mocks. Indeed, in *Human Nature*, he suggests that propriety in laughter can only be attained when it is distanced from human matter entirely. "Laughter without offense," he writes, "must be at absurdities and infirmities abstracted from persons, and when all the company may laugh together."⁴

This ethical injunction to restrain oneself on the grounds of decency stands in clear opposition to earlier attitudes that permitted the pressing of the physically or mentally disabled into employment as fools or jesters, or oversaw various kinds communal shaming, such as the pillory or charivari.⁵ Each used laughter, in Keith Thomas's phrase, as a "crude form of moral censorship."⁶ In Chris Holcomb's view, the early-modern "sociology" of laughter enlisted jesting, laughter and mockery as a means of reinforcing identities and differences, providing a space "in which deformity and conformity divided the social world into those who laugh and those who are laughed at. As the primary function of laughter in a world thus divided would be to keep the deformed and delinquent at bay, while bolstering the solidarity of those who do laugh."⁷ The place of laughter in the regulation of order and chastisement of delinquency has been similarly noted by Michael Bristol, who argued that ridicule constituted an

element in law enforcement, in the punishment of insubordination and in the everyday feeling of superiority enjoyed by nobles in respect to their servants. Laughter [was] also an important element in the strategies of social appeasement used by servants in respect of their masters. Self-abjection and self-ridicule are significant elements in an elaborate system of deferential gesture and compliment.⁸

Such a deferential system is clearly in place in the final act of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where the self-abjection that constitutes the willing participation of Bottom and company in the pageant of state is rewarded by the good-natured support of their Duke, who insists that even "If we imagine no worse of them than they of them / selves, they may pass for excellent men" (5.1.214-5). Yet, for all the changing standards of seemliness that altered perceptions of propriety in laughter in the sixteenth century, the apparently new awareness of its ethical responsibilities was not motivated by concern or a wish to be inclusive or to defray offense.⁹ Rather, it is a general by-product of an overhaul of the discourse of aristocratic conduct undertaken in the sixteenth century, and in specific relation to comedy, the redefinition of the uses of laughter attempted in works such as Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poetry*. Sidney's text, hoping to impose some kind of order on comedy via the purgation of all he considers "doltish," serves, as we know, an elitist aesthetics in which aristocratic virtues are self-consciously

reflected in literature. The ethical dimension of Hobbes' view can therefore be seen as an extension of sixteenth-century literary theory's desire to distance itself from the lowering pleasures of the mob: no longer is it necessary to ridicule those beneath you in the social scale, as true superiority is signalled by restraint from laughter rather than engagement with it. Even if this seems unfair to Hobbes, it is certainly the principal motivation in the many commentaries on laughter that followed him in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.¹⁰ The opening scene of William Congreve's *The Double Dealer* (1694), for example, sees the "solemn coxcomb" Lord Froth announce:

There is nothing more unbecoming a Man of Quality, than to Laugh; Jesu, 'tis such a Vulgar Expression of the Passion! Every body can Laugh. Then especially to Laugh at the Jest of an Inferiour Person, or when any body else of the same Quality does not Laugh with him. Ridiculous! To be pleased with what pleases the Croud! Now when I Laugh, I always Laugh alone.¹¹

Froth's objection derives from exactly from a perception of laughter as a shared experience, democratic and undifferentiating, as equally available to the lowly as to men of rank like himself. The target of Congreve's satire is the snobbish affectation that would prefer solitude and mirthlessness to assimilation within common passions, a view that would also feature strongly in Lord Chesterfield's instructional correspondence to his son. Here, Chesterfield claims that, "Since I have had the full use of my reason, nobody has ever heard me laugh," urging that he too

never [be] heard to laugh while you live. Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill manners: it is the manner in which the mob express their silly joy at silly things... In my mind there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill-bred as audible laughter... how low and unbecoming a thing laughter is. Not to mention the disagreeable noise it makes, and the shocking distortion of the face it occasions.¹²

Chesterfield's contempt for laughter combines the Biblical ("For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool" [Ecclesiastes, 7. 4-6]), with aristocratic obsessions with breeding, status, and classicist aversion to the grotesque.¹³ The Hobbesian "ethics" of laughter in the elite circles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, then, appears to be born of a strong belief in the innate deformity of the lower classes, a belief nurtured in the sixteenth-century debate over comedy and laughter.

Early modern versions of laughter largely agree that its triggers lay in the recognition of deformity and ugliness in others, either physical or conceptual, as long as those defects were not sufficient to invoke pity. Laurent Joubert announces as much in the opening passages of his *Treatise on Laughter* (1560/1579), writing that "what we see that is ugly, deformed, improper, indecent, unfitting, and indecorous excites laughter in us, provided we are not moved to compassion."¹⁴ Similarly, Thomas Wilson's *The Arte of Rhetorick* of 1567, explains:

the meane that maketh us merrie...is the fondnes, the filthiness, the deformitie, and al suche evil behaviour, as we se to bee in each other. For we laugh always at those thinges, which either onely, or chiefly touche handsomely, and wittely, some speciall fault, or fond behavior in some one body or some one thing.¹⁵

"Ofentimes," he adds, "the deformity of a man's body giveth matter enough to be right

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merry."¹⁶ The trope of deformity is an embellishment of Classical sources, most recognizably the excursus on wit in Cicero's *De Oratore*, where Caesar argues that the "seat of, the region . . . of the humorous . . . lies in a certain dishonourableness and ugliness. For the only, or at least the most important way of making people laugh is to point out and mark something dishonourable in a way that is not itself dishonourable," an echo of Aristotle's definition of comedy as a "species of what is disgraceful," and a theme that persists with few variations in discussions of laughter into the eighteenth century.¹⁷ For the Ciceronian orator, laughter is an invaluable tool, a means of strategically shaming and ridiculing opponents, while also demonstrating the orator's mental agility. As Caesar says:

it is indeed clearly fitting for the orator to stir up laughter, either because cheerfulness by itself wins goodwill for the one who has excited it; or because everyone admires cleverness (often a matter of just one word!), especially of someone who gives a retort, and not infrequently also of someone who provokes another; or because laughter crushes the opponent, obstructs him, makes light of him, discourages him, defeats him; or because it shows the orator himself to be refined, to be educated, to be well bred...¹⁸

As to the kinds of things liable to raise a laugh, he has fairly specific advice: the humorous "consists of defects found in the lives of people who are neither well esteemed nor wretched nor give the impression that some crime has earned them immediate punishment."¹⁹ Jokes should act, in other words, as a corrective to moderate deviations from the mean. By the sixteenth century, however, the idea of moderate deviation had been mapped onto a belief that physical deformity worked as an outward signal of inward moral deviance, expressed in such thoughts as Francis Bacon's proposition that "*Deformed Persons* are commonly even with Nature: For as Nature hath done ill by them; So doe they by Nature," or Shakespeare's characterization of Richard III.²⁰ For Helkiah Crooke's *Microcosmographia* of 1612, deformity is a mirror of the subject's divine censure, as God

doth sometimes set his brand and mark upon wicked men: First that we may know and avoid them: Secondly to shew his detestation of a minde which in his eternal wisdom, he foresaw would be so foule and ulcerated, and finally because so wicked a minde might have a proportionable habitation, to wit, a prodigious and deformed body.²¹

In the sixteenth century, therefore, the trope of deformity in laughter is a very specific trope of *embodied* delinquency, a construct that locates shame, and derision in the lumpen materiality of the body. Dividing his own laughing world into "airy spirits" and "mortal grossness," Egeus confirms this distinction for us when he describes the Mechanicals as "Hard-handed men that work in Athens here, / Which never labour'd in their minds till now" (5.1.72-3). Sixteenth-century illustrations of clowns draw attention to their physical aspect, either depicting them in the midst of some tumbling or contortion, or, like the famous print of flat-nose dwarf Richard Tarlton, with a pipe and tabor, preparing to jig. Will Kemp was famous for his dances; he was both performer and "author" of jigs, four of which were entered into the Stationer's Register in the period 1591-5, completing in 1600 his nine-days wonder, a one hundred and thirty-mile jig from London to Norwich, the narrative account of which bears a frontispiece that shows Kemp virtually possessed by the dance.²² The ludicrous energy of Kemp's legs, then, channels his subjectivity through a hyperbolised awareness of the body as fooling vehicle. Performing in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Kemp's transformation into trans-

formed Bottom emphasises the ludic, asinine materiality of the body, and through the scatological puns embedded in his courtship with Titania, makes us similarly aware that the body is a fouling vehicle.²³

While early modern laughter theory was certain of both its objects and triggers, the place of the body in laughter caused its own identity to remain mysterious, what Hobbes calls a "passion that hath no name."²⁴ Joubert speaks of it as "empty, and often deceiving," an extension of joy that is foolish, "dissolute, debauched and lascivious," containing a trace of its opposite: "inasmuch as laughter is caused by something ugly, it does not proceed from pure joy, but has some small part of sadness, in such a way that it follows two contraries, one of which is superior to the other in its efficacy."²⁵ The inscrutability of laughter appears to be built, at least in part, on the idea of plurality, an incoherent emotion that has been contaminated by contradiction. Similarly enigmatic is laughter's origin in the body, manifesting itself in the mind only when it is already fully-formed as a physiological force, thereby circumventing the rational assessment of moral belief. "The brain," writes Joubert, "receives laughable matter without being stirred by it, and without changing or transmuting it, for just as it is presented to the brain, it arrives instantaneously right in the heart. There is, therefore, no sound reason to prove that the brain is first to apperceive the laughable."²⁶ As he writes elsewhere, laughter belongs to the organs: "We say commonly: he laughs heartily, and not brainily, thus denoting the place from which the risible emotion proceeds."²⁷

The construction of laughter as a suspiciously physical entity is undoubtedly related to the refinement of deportment undertaken in sixteenth-century courtesy manuals as they turn their attention away from detailing the rituals of lordship and establish deportment as an outcome desirable in itself.²⁸ The concomitant necessity of refining an idea of the abject that combs manners in order to reject all that it finds distorted or disgusting, finds laughter problematic because it is at once immediate but unknowable, visceral, and possessed of a doubled volatility.²⁹ For example, even as his *Arte of Rhetorick* endorses Cicero's recommendation that one use laughter in oratorical combat, Wilson is quick to add the caveat that since laughter is a product of "filthiness" and "deformity," the orator must be especially vigilant if he is not contaminated by these qualities himself, or, equally troubling, allow his use of laughter to betray uncharitable thoughts:

No suche should be taunted, or jeste withal, that either are notable evill lovers, and heinous offenders; or else are pitifull caitifes, and wretched beggars. For every one, thinketh it a better and meter deede, to punishe naughtee packes, then to scoffe at their evill demeanour: and as for wretched soules, or poore bodies, none can beare to have them mocked, but thinke rather, that thei should be pittied, except thei foolishly vaunte themselves.³⁰

Hippolyta's concern is of a similar stripe, but overall, the wish not to appear unfair or uncharitable is a question of social status. As Wilson makes clear, joking must be approached with delicacy, as, if misused, it might collapse the distinction between "a common jester and a pleasaunte wise man."³¹ Caesar similarly warns that while "ugliness and bodily defects are also rather neat subjects for joking," the orator must use caution, avoiding "two kinds of jokes, even if they would be extremely funny: namely, the sort that buffoons make and those of mimes."³²

Throughout courtesy literature, the figure of the buffoon—the wilful, vulgar, often rural, jokers against whom the refinements of the nobility were measured—hangs over joking as a constant threat.³³ In Castiglione's *Courtier*, for example, while wit is prized, it is also a dangerous invitation to be humiliated: "To cause laughter is not always fitting for the courtier," says Bernardo, "nor should he do so after the manner of fools and

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drunkards, or stupid clowns and buffoons.³⁴ Holcomb explains how the courtesy manuals often defined joking in terms of socially antagonistic interactions, brought about by the meeting of individuals from “divergent social and geographic origins,” as a means of expressing the fear of social mobility amongst elite groups.³⁵ By representing the buffoon as an innately foolish member of the lower classes, courtesy manuals could respond to the threat of widening social access with an insistence on aristocracy as an ineffable quality rather than an effect of wealth, preferment, or industry. The vilification of the buffoon was a means for the nobility to “establish their fundamental and absolute difference from the lower classes,” as it personified “everything that is to be absent in the courtier, and reciprocally, the courtier personifies everything lacking in the buffoon.”³⁶ The fear of contamination by the buffoon manifests itself in *1 Henry IV*, as the troubled monarch cites the evaporation of nobility into buffoonery as justification for his usurpation of Richard II. This “skipping King,” he says:

ambled up and down
 With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits,
 Soon kindled and soon burnt, carded his state,
 Mingled his royalty with cap'ring fools.
 Had his great name profaned with their scorns. (3.2.60-64)

Laughter, then, is not only deformed but deforming, lowering those contaminated by it. This is the complaint of the comic Muse Thalia in Spenser's *Tears of the Muses* (1591), who expresses her outrage at the abuse she has suffered at the hands of “base-borne men.”³⁷ “The Comick stage,” she says:

With seasoned wit and goodly pleasance graced,
 By which man's life in his likest image
 Was limned forth, are wholly now disgraced
 And those sweete wits which wont the like to frame,
 Are now despizd, and made a laughing game. (199-204)

Impaired by laughter, comedy is reduced to “Scoffing Scurrillitie” (211) and viciousness couched in the jiggling veins of imbecility: “scornfull Follie with Comtempt is crept. / Rolling in rymes of shameles ribaudrie” (ll. 212-213). With “Due decorum” and “goodly glee” displaced by “Barbarisme” and “Ignorance,” the ultimate consequence of the ingress of vulgarity is Thalia's usurpation and enslavement to the worthless and the ignorant: “So I am made the servant of the manie / And laughing stocke of all that list to scorne, / Not honoured nor cared for of anie; / But loath'd of losels as a thing forlorne” (223-226).

As Thalia complains against laughter, she replicates the view of literary theory that laughter did not necessarily belong in comedy.³⁸ During the medieval period, laughter and comedy were dissociated thanks largely to the use of Roman New Comedy in the grammarian commentaries of writers such as Diomedes, Evanthius and, especially, Donatus.³⁹ Favouring the work of the more modest Terence over the often lewd Aristophanes or sometimes chaotic Plautus, a small number of comic texts were preserved outside performance as pieces worth studying for their exemplary rhetoric and instances of the apocryphal Ciceronian formula that comedy was “the imitation of life, the mirror of custom, the image of truth.”⁴⁰ Indeed, by the later medieval period, there were so many scrupulously glossed analyses of Terence's rhetoric in existence that it was not unusual to find complaints that the entire process had become unnecessarily pedantic.⁴¹ Yet, given that “the history of literary criticism is also the history of attempts to make an honest creature...of comedy,” it is not surprising that in such custody New

Comedy should become academic.⁴² The preface to Maurice Kyffin's 1588 translation of Terence's *Andria*, for example, the first translation of Terence in English, reveals both the influence and persistence of the grammarian view of the pedagogic value of Roman comedy. "Among all the Romane writers," he says:

there is none (by the judgement of the learned) so much available to be read and studied, for the true knowledge and purity of the Lantin tong, as... Terentius: for, sith the cheefest matter in speech, is to speak properly and aptly, and that we have not a more conning Craft-master of apt and proper speech than Terence, well worthy is he then, even with all ease and diligence, to be both taught and learned before any other.⁴³

Kyffin's prologue extends the opinion of Nicholas Udall, who justified the composition of *Ralph Roister Doister* as a school play in accordance with New Comedy's perceived commitment to educational values: "The wyse poets long time heretofore, / Under merrie Comedies secretes did declare, / Wherein was contained very virtuous lore, / With mysteries and forewarnings very rare."⁴⁴

Udall's use of the word "merriness," like the often-used terms "mirth," "joy" and "delight," is intended to convey a form of amusement that stands apart from the scorn and scurrility of laughter. Defining the quality of this decorous amusement is one of the tasks of Sidney's *Defence of Poetry*. Throughout the *Defence*, Sidney emphasises the Horatian principle of poetry as "delightful teaching" that "sets virtue out," with the aim of aligning all literary forms to this ideal. Like Spenser, Harrington, Puttenham and Webbe, all of whom advanced Ciceronian theories of comedy as the mirror of human weakness, Sidney believes in the ability of comedy to amend by example, what he calls "an imitation of the common errors of our life, which he representeth in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be, so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one."⁴⁵

However, the anxiety about the place, purpose and propriety of comedy, what Marcia McDonald calls its "representations, effects and moral purposes," refused to abate, chiefly because of the problem of laughter.⁴⁶ Even though "the whole tract of a comedy should be full of delight," Sidney laments, "our comedians think there is no delight without laughter."⁴⁷ Clarifying the difference between these terms requires the use of a familiar metaphor: "delight we scarcely do but in things that have a conveniency to ourselves or to the general nature; laughter almost ever cometh of things most disproportioned to ourselves and nature. Delight hath a joy in it, either permanent or present. Laughter hath only a scornful tickling."⁴⁸ Disproportionate, visceral laughter, "tickling" the subject with scorn, can only be redeemed when it is drawn away from the body and overseen by the mind, instructed by delight, virtue and didacticism: "that all the end of the comical part be not upon such scornful matters as stir laughter only, but, mixed with it, that delightful teaching which is the end of poesy."⁴⁹

The motive driving this separation is of course Sidney's well-known distaste for the "mongrel tragi-comedy" of the English stage, a metaphor of deformed literary embodiment that we see in many early-modern discussions of proportion in the arts of poetry. In the Spenser-Harvey correspondence, for example, Spenser describes Harvey's poetic contortion of the words "carpenter" and "heaven" as "a lame Gosling, that draweth one leg after hir," and "a lame Dogge that holdes up one legge," respectively.⁵⁰ Uneasy lest "we overthrowe one an other, and be overthrowne of the rest," Spenser encourages Harvey to amend these deformities by conforming to the rules of proportion provided him by Sidney.⁵¹ In comedy, the rules of form amount to the imposition of New Comedy character-types, held to be realizations of the truths of human personal-

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ity, the “busy loving courtier and a heartless threatening Thraso,” or “a self-wise-seeming schoolmaster [and] awry-transformed traveller.”⁵² That these characters behave without deviation from strict, predetermined boundaries in relation to their individual motivations and spheres of action, reveals what Bristol has called Sidney’s insistence that “members of society must live their hierarchically ordered relationships inwardly, with full emotional engagement.”⁵³ Also, we might argue that Sidney would find them desirable because the character types of New Comedy are disembodied in comparison to clowns, preferring acting over clowning and yielding to the overall demands of narrative over improvisation. As such, when placed within a proper literary form, they offer considerable protection against lapses in propriety.

But what of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*? Clearly, Bottom and his colleagues are buffoons, ciphers of the “palpable-gross” who infiltrate the court offering carnivalesque alternatives to literary culture and its conventions. The aristocrats, meanwhile, voyeurs here as they had been in the wood, use them to corroborate their own conduct, manners and sophistication. From this good-natured antagonism, an idea emerges of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* as a transitional play, a play that understands that the nature of comedy itself is changing, bringing together two styles as one form makes way for the other. That comedies such as Haughton’s *Englishman for My Money*, Chapman’s *An Humorous Day’s Mirth*, Jonson’s *Every Man in His Humour and Every Man Out of His Humour*, and even Shakespeare’s own *Merry Wives of Windsor* were written within two or three years of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* tells us that the appetite for pastoral fantasies was waning, overtaken by the first wave of character-driven satires and city comedies that did not require the services of a traditional fool. In the *Chamberlain’s Men*, at least, this shift is underlined by the retirement of Kemp around 1600, and the promotion in the company of Robert Armin. The result is a fundamental change in Shakespeare’s use of the clown role, one Richard Helgerson has described as a growing alienation between skilled improvisers and a playwright who had begun to imagine himself as an author who asserts an enlarged degree of moral control over his work and insists, increasingly, on the inviolability of the written text.⁵⁴

While clowns remain emphatically present in Shakespeare’s plays after 1600, their energies are devoted less towards clowning than the consolidation of broader themes. In the tragedies, for example, they are uniquely positioned as the only characters whose marginality, perpetual proximity to punishment, and paradoxical circumlocutions allow them to express the inexpressibility of death. In *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Othello*, the clowns appear in only one scene each, but, while there, their presence either looks forward to, comments upon, or assists in someone’s demise. While the trope of deformity may not be entirely responsible for this change, it certainly changed the propriety of certain types of laughing, and with it, ushered in an age of significantly less physical comedy. Perhaps we might think of the crazily deformed tragical-mirth of “Pyramus and Thisbe,” “a sound, but not in government” (5.1.123), as Shakespeare’s nod to its passing.

SUNY—Buffalo

Notes

1. See, for example, Marcia McDonald, “Bottom’s Space: Historicizing Comic Theory and Practice in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*,” *Acting Funny: Comic Theory and Practice in Shakespeare’s Plays*, ed. Frances Teague (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1994): pp. 85-108.
2. William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in *Complete Works*, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). All further references are to this

- edition.
3. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. C.B. Macpherson, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), part. 1, ch. 6, p. 125.
 4. Thomas Hobbes, *Human Nature*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. W. Molesworth, 11 vols., (London: John Bohn, 1860), vol. 4, pp. 46-47.
 5. For an excellent, though dated, survey of the uses of the fool, see Enid Welsford, *The Fool: His Social and Literary History* (London: Faber, 1935). In *The Spectator*, (No. 24, April 27th, 1711), Addison notes that while every grand house used to keep a fool, the practice was now largely finished, with the exception of one or two locations.
 6. Keith Thomas, "The Place of Laughter in Tudor and Stuart England," *Times Literary Supplement*, January 21st 1977, p. 77.
 7. Chris Holcomb, *Mirth Making: The Rhetorical Discourse on Jesting in Early Modern England* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), p. 85.
 8. Michael D. Bristol, *Carnival and Theatre: Plebian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Early Modern England* (New York and London: Methuen, 1985), p. 126.
 9. Thomas, p. 77.
 10. See Stuart M. Trave, *The Amiable Humorist: A Study in the Comic Theory and Criticism of the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 76-84.
 11. William Congreve, *The Double Dealer* (London: 1694), Act 1, scene 1, p. 7.
 12. Philip Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield, *Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son and Others*, (London: Dent, 1929), p. 49.
 13. Some argue that this view persisted in academic opinion well into the twentieth century, bluntly characterized by Northrop Frye as the belief that, "comedy and satire should be kept in their proper place, like the moral standards and social classes which they symbolize." Northrop Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), p. 22.
 14. Laurent Joubert, *Treatise on Laughter*, trans. Gregory David De Rocher (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1980), p. 19.
 15. Thomas Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorick* (London: 1567), f. 69, verso.
 16. Thomas, f. 87, verso.
 17. Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator*, trans. James M. Mary and Jakob Wise (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 186. Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Malcolm Heath (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996), p. 9.
 18. Cicero, p. 186.
 19. Cicero, p. 187.
 20. Francis Bacon, "Of Deformity," in *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), p. 133. It is important to note that the purpose of Bacon's essay is to propose the idea that deformed people are obliged to work hard to "free themselves from Scorne" in the eyes of society and that "therefore, let it not be Marvelled, if sometimes they prove Excellent Persons," p. 134.
 21. Quoted in Charlotte F. Otten, "What's Wrong With His Feet?," *Shakespeare Newsletter* 46 (1996): p. 88.
 22. *Kemps nine daies wonder*, ed. Susan Yaxley, (Fakenham: Lark's Press, 1997).
 23. Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 125. For a discussion of the centrality of tropes of anality to satiric comedy, see Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 64-99.
 24. Hobbes, *Human Nature*, p. 45.
 25. Joubert, p. 39.
 26. Joubert, p. 38.
 27. Joubert, p. 36. This is almost a direct inversion of Henri Bergson's view that "To produce the whole of its effect...the comic demands something like a momentary anesthesia of the heart. Its appeal is to intelligence, pure and simple." Henri Bergson, "Laughter," in *Comedy*, ed. Wylie Sypher (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1980), pp. 61-190, pp. 63-4.
 28. See Anna Bryson, "The Rhetoric of Status: Gesture, Demeanour and the Image of the Gentleman in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England," in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture, 1450-1660*, ed. Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (London: Reaktion, 1990): pp. 136-153.

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29. See Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Urizen, 1978). In Mikhail Bakhtin's famous account of the waning of the laughter of the marketplace, intolerance of the grotesque, or "the body in the act of becoming," results in a re-organization of intellectual categories whose aim is the complete extraction of laughter from "official" culture. Laughter, which in the form of folly had been a valuable tool of philosophical inquiry, a demonstration of a subtle intelligence that understood the antagonisms between riot and ritual as fundamental aspects of existence, was exorcised entirely from an ecclesiastical administration that sought to distance itself from corporeality altogether and subsequently coined the bureaucratic axiom: "That which is important and essential cannot be comical." *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswsky (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984), p. 217.
30. Wilson, f. 70, verso.
31. Wilson, f. 70, recto.
32. Cicero, p.187.
33. Recall "Aristotle's influential formulation of the buffoon as one who 'will not keep his tongue off himself or any one else, if he can raise a laugh'" (*Ethics*, 4.8.10). Quoted in Holcomb, *Mirth Making*, p. 15.
34. Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. George Bull (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p. 156.
35. Holcomb, p. 8
36. Holcomb, p. 131, pp. 139-140.
37. Edmund Spenser, *The Tears of the Muses*, in *Poetical Works*, ed. J.C. Smith and E. De Selincourt (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 119.
38. See Laurel L. Hendrix, "Mother of Laughter, and Welspring of Blisse': Spenser's Venus and the Poetics of Mirth," *ELR* 23 (1993), p. 122.
39. The most famous example of comedy without laughter is of course Dante's *Divina Commedia*. In the "Epistle to Can Grande," Dante explains his title by citing the etymology of *comos* and *oda*, translating them as "a village" and "a song," "so that comedy is, so to speak, a 'rustic song.' Comedy, then, is a certain genre of poetic narrative differing from all others." *Comedy: Developments in Criticism*, ed. D. J. Palmer (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984), p. 31. See also Paul G. Ruggiers, *Versions of Medieval Comedy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), and Danuta Shanzer, "Laughter and Humour in the Early Medieval West," in *Humour, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Guy Halsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 25.
40. Marvin T. Herrick, *Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1950), p. 60.
41. Herrick, p. 7.
42. David Daniell, "Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, ed. Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 107.
43. Maurice Kyffin, *Andria: The First Comedie of Terence, in English* (London, 1588), sig. A1, recto.
44. Nicholas Udall, *Ralph Roister Doister*, in *Four Tudor Comedies*, ed. William Tydeman (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), Prologue, 15-18.
45. Sidney, p. 44.
46. McDonald, p. 92.
47. Sidney, pp. 67-68.
48. Sidney, p. 68.
49. Sidney, p. 68.
50. Edmund Spenser, *Three Proper, and Wittie, Familiar Letters: Lately Passed Between Two University Men....*, in *Poetical Works*, p. 611.
51. Spenser, p. 612.
52. Sidney, p. 69.
53. Bristol, p. 127.
54. Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 226.

LOOKING FOR LIBERATION AND LESBIANS IN SHAKESPEARE'S CROSS-DRESSING COMEDIES

by Tamara Powell and Sim Shattuck

In the five plays with cross-dressed heroines—*Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1594), *The Merchant of Venice* (1597), *As You Like It* (1599), *Twelfth Night* (1601-2), and *Cymbeline* (1609)—Shakespeare appears to have no developing plan or motive for changing his cross-dressed female characters in terms of their attitudes toward their own transvestitism, toward the possibilities of attracting and loving other women the way men might, toward the benefits they get from cross-dressing, or toward what, if anything, cross-dressing makes them think about living in a world that judges and controls them by what is between their legs rather than between their ears. It is interesting to note that of the cross-dressing females, only Portia has anything thoughtful to say about her re-entry into female life after her pants role, and even then she submits to a marriage in which she loses at least some control of her fortune. Indeed, at first glance we wonder if Shakespeare had these characters dress as men merely to serve the purposes of the individual comedy at hand, or if some subtle change in his approach to cross-dressed female characters developed over the fifteen years he wrote these plays.¹

We contend that Shakespeare does establish a loose pattern of assigning these cross-dressed female characters certain traditionally “male” freedoms in each play, then replaces those freedoms with others in the next—a pattern of assignment and revocation reaching an early height of female power and self-assertion in *The Merchant of Venice*. Though feminist and cultural studies have examined the importance and meaning of the cross-dressed heroines in each play, little attention has been paid to Shakespeare’s development of these characters from play to play. A look at this change yields subtle clues regarding Shakespeare’s considerations of women’s place and men’s prerogatives. Through further examination, it can also be seen that although female characters can retain more privileges in the early plays, the only instance of lesbian narrative occurs, paradoxically, in *Twelfth Night*: one of the least liberating plays in terms of patriarchal recuperation.

First, we must ask which freedoms were principally male privileges. Throughout the comedies (and the romance *Cymbeline*), Shakespeare allows cross-dressed heroines to indulge in an enjoyment of physical mobility, development of their intellectual powers, love of adventure, and pursuit of worldly honors and careers. Women, who had to be immured for fear of rape and their consequent ruination as a marriageable commodity, could not enjoy these freedoms during Shakespeare’s time or for centuries afterward. Thus, to create comic heroines who would voluntarily return to submission to their husbands or fiancés, Shakespeare had to grant his cross-dressed heroines certain of these freedoms when they appeared to be men. Yet in creating strong-willed, even cunning female characters, Shakespeare came dangerously close (particularly in *MV*) to creating a female character not easily returned to submission and who created sympathy for herself as a thinking character with an independent life of her own, free of the constant supervision and control of men. *The Merchant of Venice* in 1597 marks an early Shakespearean interest in and development of the comic and social consequences of female freedom. Oddly, after 1597, the number of cross-dressing heroines

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is reduced to one per comedy, and the economic consequences of female freedom are also diminished. Placed sequentially [see chart], the process of Shakespeare's practice emerges.

THE PLAY:	WHAT SHAKESPEARE GRANTS:	WHAT HE REVOKES:
<i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> (1594)	Julia gets mobility, has a job. Feels shame for cross-dressing [c-d].	(Not applicable.)
<i>Merchant of Venice</i> (1597)	Portia philosophizes, gets mobility for sake of husband, has profession (not just a job). No shame for c-d. Two other c-d heroines.	No privileges revoked.
<i>As You Like It</i> (1599)	Rosalind attracts potential lovers, takes male clothing <i>not</i> for a man's sake but to achieve liberty. Scant shame for c-d.	Profession, intellectual life.
<i>Twelfth Night</i> (1601-2)	Viola stays in male clothing almost throughout play, has job, achieves honor even after discovery. Scant shame for c-d.	Liberty for its sake, profession, intellectual life.
<i>Cymbeline</i> (1609)	Imogen stays in male clothes longer than all other heroines, has varied experiences as a man, has a job.	Liberty for its sake, profession, intellectual life.

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Julia asks Lucetta how she might honorably go in pursuit of Proteus. Lucetta suggests waiting until Proteus returns, but Julia answers: "A true devoted pilgrim is not weary / To measure kingdoms with his feeble steps; / Much less shall she that hath Love's wings to fly / And when the flight is made to one so dear" (2.7.9-12).² Knowing what she wants to do is unconventional, Julia pauses to ask Lucetta about whether Julia should be ashamed of making the journey: "But tell me, wench, how will the world repute me / For making so unstaid a journey? I fear it will make me scandalized" (60-1). Lucetta eventually concedes that Julia need not fear for her reputation because her motives are pure and involve the fulfillment of true love. Julia thus pays attention to the problem that her new freedom will create, and she shows some shame at her own behavior.

However, in *Merchant of Venice* Portia and Nerissa show no shame and even a kind of excitement in their cross-dressed travel plans: "When we are accoutered like young men, I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two, / And wear my dagger with a braver grace" (3.5.63-5). However, the less important character, Jessica, does show shame

at her cross-dressed escape from Shylock's house when she tells her love "Cupid himself would blush / To see one thus transformed to a boy" (2.5.38-9).

Though Viola in *Twelfth Night* does obtain freedom and employment, she shows some scant remorse for cross-dressing. When she realizes that Olivia has paid no attention to Orsino's suit and has instead fallen in love with Viola / Cesario, Viola finally comes to terms with the negative consequences of her deceit:

Disguise, I see thou are a wickedness
Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.
How easy it is for the proper false
In women's waxen hearts to set their forms!

And I (poor monster) fond as much on him,
And she (mistaken) seems to dote on me. (2.1.27-30,34-5)

The term monster at the time meant a hermaphrodite, and Viola feels some shame at the complications that life between Orsino and Olivia have brought her to. Only when her twin brother appears can she extricate herself from Olivia's love and win Orsino.

Similarly, Rosalind in *As You Like It* finds herself caught between Phebe, a peasant woman who falls in love with Rosalind disguised as Ganymed, and Orlando, the man Rosalind really loves. Curiously, though, Rosalind does not so much show shame for cross-dressing as she decries her inability to live up to her male role. In 2.4 she exclaims in prose after her exhausting journey into the Forest of Arden, "I could find in my heart to disgrace my man's apparel and to cry like a woman, but I must comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat . . ." (4-8). In act 3, scene 2, she learns of a man's love for her and chides Celia for holding back information from her: ". . . dost thou think, though I am caparison'd like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition?" (194-6). Finally, learning that the man is Orlando, she wishes she could be quit of her man's attire: "Alas the day, what shall I do with my doublet and hose?" (219-20). This regret amounts to an admission of the difficulties caused by cross-dressing, but the admission does not rise to full shame. It is well to bear in mind, however, that when Rosalind and Celia began their journey, they did so not to find a man, but instead to pursue liberty (1.3.37-8). Rosalind's realization of the problems of disguise has made her wish she had not taken on her male persona.

In Shakespeare's last play with a cross-dressed heroine, *Cymbeline*, Imogen sets out looking for her husband Posthumus but can do so only in male disguise. Unlike the other heroines, Imogen is strangely silent about her newfound male state. It is Pisanio who advises her to take on male traits and to go in search of her husband. Later, her most telling comment begins scene 6 of act 3: "I see a man's life is a tedious one. / I have tir'd myself, and for two nights together / Have made the ground my bed" (1-3). Other than this offhand comment, Imogen never mentions again any observation about her male state, even if she spends most of the play in male clothing and becomes a servant to Lucius. Imogen's lack of interest in the benefits and drawbacks of her cross-dressed state leads to the belief that Shakespeare was perhaps growing tired of the convention and could make no more observations about it.

Aside from the absence of revocations coming in 2GV and MV, most obvious from the list is the revocation of intellectual attainment in the last three plays as well as the retraction of liberty for its own sake in the last two. It is as though Shakespeare abandoned liberty and intellectual attainment because they became irrelevant or, more likely, problematic after 1602, coinciding with Queen Elizabeth's last year. Further, the

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number of masculine privileges seems neither increased nor decreased, but the kinds of liberties themselves have changed since *Merchant*. Throughout his works, Shakespeare appears to have mixed emotions about women and their place in the world.

We see Shakespeare's ambivalence about females in Linda Bamber's study of his monstrous, tragic women and his cross-dressed, comic women.³ Understandably then, Marianne Novy pertinently describes Shakespeare as "profoundly ambivalent" toward women.⁴ This ambivalence toward them stems mostly from contemporary male anxieties about women's changing status in English society. A man of his time, Shakespeare did not allow his cross-dressed heroines to become consistently more complex and powerful characters, relegating them instead to roles as dual-natured pawns in a complex game of heterosexual romance.

Over the fifteen years that Shakespeare wrote plays with cross-dressed heroines, the roles of the heroines and the uses of their disguises do not develop consistently into more interesting or fully independent women. For example, Imogen, the heroine of *Cymbeline*, stays in men's clothing longer than any other heroine, and her experiences as a male last longer and are more varied than any other heroine; however, the reason for her change has reverted to the traditional "woman in search of her man" role of the other non-*Merchant* plays. Instead, each play adds a certain "privilege" or freedom to its cross-dressed heroine, only to revoke that freedom in the next play and put another in its place. Shakespeare never lets Rosalind show us her intellectual ability or pursuit of self-interest, as Portia did in *Merchant of Venice*. Both Julia and Viola achieve employment, but Viola's passivity creates problems that remain unsolved until her brother Sebastian arrives.

This lack of consistent "growth" toward freedom and unstereotyped personhood on the part of the cross-dressed heroines evokes two plausible explanations: first, Shakespeare simply never gave systematic, incremental thought to problems of chastity versus mobility in his cross-dressed heroines; second, he deliberately chose instead to explore, according to the demands of the individual dramatic situation, only random consequences of giving women unaccustomed freedom. We feel the second is more likely: he could not devote more attention to the machinery of female disguise because the heroine's motives seldom deviated from pursuit of love, and because the main issue of these plays—male and female constancy—bears scant relationship, as such, to cross-dressing.

As mentioned, the play showing women taking the greatest advantage of turning into men and then thinking about the human situation they find themselves in is *MV*. In this comedy as in no other, Shakespeare creates an intelligent, even philosophical Portia, and adds along with her the more radically independent Jessica and the companion Nerissa. Three cross-dressed characters are the greatest number in any comedy of Shakespeare, all others having only one. As amply shown by Karen Newman, Portia barely returns to a female passivity at all, and she uses her newfound experience of freedom and the ring trick to keep some control of her inherited fortune.⁵

The pattern of assigning and revoking male liberties begins with *Merchant* because no male freedom is revoked from *Two Gentlemen of Verona*—the first comedy to have a cross-dressed heroine; however, in all comedies following *Merchant* Shakespeare does revoke at least one important freedom granted to Portia, changing the nature of the present heroine's quest and thereby tinting or shading the nature of her adopted freedoms. Some of the post-*Merchant* plays present us with freedoms that would have surprised more orthodox audience members, and some of those freedoms are not found in *The Merchant of Venice*. Even so, dramas were also seen by those who would not have found these freedoms surprising.⁶

Why did Shakespeare decline to pursue more consistently complex and interesting heroines? Though purely speculative in themselves, three answers are possible: the use of boy actresses, Shakespeare's inability to see that women might want something from life other than love and children, and a growing Puritan intolerance to the theatre in general and specifically to sexual ambiguity onstage as well as in the streets.

The boy actresses—though generally accepted as women by audiences—might color Shakespeare's considerations toward the female characters they are to represent, making the playwright think of them necessarily as males in disguise, not as real women in difficult, demanding circumstances. That is, the effect of stage representation itself might undermine Shakespeare's potential concern with the differences between female restriction and male privilege. More likely, we feel, is Shakespeare's inability—and that of his society—to envision women wanting any more from life than love and family. Polemicists from the time of Henry VIII, such as Juan Vives, and through the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, rejected all notions of female social equality with men. Shakespeare could not have been blind to these opinions, nor would he necessarily have understood why a woman might seriously wish to defy convention.

Last, and most appealing historically, is the notion that due to growing Puritan influence, sexual ambiguity on stage became less acceptable under, ironically, a bisexual male monarch. Shakespeare's use of cross-dressed heroines disappeared after Elizabeth's death in 1603 and was not revived until *Cymbeline*, and then only under the circumstances of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*—a woman in man's clothing trying only to find her husband. Ironically, the development of the cross-dressed heroine had come full circle with a woman looking for a man and tricking people with a ring. Shakespeare prepared the way for more complex women, especially in *The Merchant of Venice*, but he withdrew from deeper exploration of sex roles for reasons which must involve speculation.

So upon close investigation it seems that Shakespeare plays with giving women rights only for the sake of the plot, and for the sake of the plot he takes them right back again. The audiences thrilled to potential "free choice on the part of the female character," and recognized it as "an inevitable sign of irrational lust, and as the inevitable prelude to disorder and disaster."⁷ Patriarchal recuperation, then, staves off chaos and restores order. The audience is relieved. The play is a success. However, if the texts are investigated without the limiting qualification of the author's intent, could they be found to harbor subversive elements? Could something so disruptive as lesbian narrative have made its way into Shakespeare's work, perhaps without his knowledge or intent?

At the end of Michael Taylor's recent work *Shakespeare Criticism in the Twentieth Century*, Taylor writes:

I doubt that the Shakespeare critics of the twenty-first century will be silent or reverential in their reception of the gift of Shakespeare, but if their millennially influenced forebears are anything to go by, they may well continue to respond imaginatively to those free dimensions in his work that simply are there.⁸

Although the patriarchal recuperation at work shows that elements feminists have sought may not be there, lesbian feminists might find a treat after all if a search for a lesbian narrative is employed. Taylor also puts the reader on this path as he writes: "What cannot be said at all apparently—with or without shame—is an expression of desire for the conjoining of a woman's body with that of another woman. . . ." Lisa

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Jardine sees the actors differently, positing that “these figures are sexually enticing *qua* transvested boys, and that the plays encourage the audience to view them as such.”¹⁰ Taylor further hypothesizes regarding the audiences’ responses to the males playing female parts as he writes: “Although is it not impossible for the boy actors playing girls disguised as boys to convey in their flirtation with the boy actors playing girls a suggestion of lesbian erotics?”¹¹ Can lesbians exist in a play where all of the actors are male?

The obvious place to start searching is with cross-dressed characters with whom other female characters become enamored. In *As You Like It*, while Rosalind and Celia are in disguise, Rosalind takes the name of Ganymed. That she takes the name of the catamite demigod seems to make her character a promising lead in the search for lesbian elements. However, when Rosalind says to Phebe, “You to his love must accord / Or have a woman to your lord” (5.4.133-4), Phebe seems to quickly reject the second option in favor of heterosexuality. No lesbians here.

A second search in another cross-dressing play, *Twelfth Night*, might begin with an analysis of butch-femme aesthetics, starting with a view of Viola as “butched up” to attract Olivia’s femme character. Valerie Traub points to a possible path when she notes:

Cesario’s oft-cited bawdy joke just prior to being forced into a duel with Sir Andrew—“A little thing would make me tell them how much I lack of a man” (3.4.302-03)—has been interpreted as a comically abject *double entendre* that resounds against women’s anatomy. Critics have neglected to notice that these repeated invocations of anatomical “lack” implicitly invite the audience to perform imaginatively the kind of scopic investigation a woman accused of tribadism might face.¹²

However, the idea of Viola / Cesario as tribade or lesbian quickly unravels, as Viola as Cesario clearly has no interest in attracting Olivia at all. Further, in “early modern attitudes toward female homoeroticism: any woman desirous of another woman could only be viewed as monstrous” and in need of “patriarchal recuperation,” which is indeed, as proven in the first part of this essay, what happens in all the plays where women are given opportunity to woo other women.¹³

Because all the actors are boys, it might make more sense to look not at the body of the character or the actor but instead at the speech of the character. In *Come As You Are*, Judith Roof writes that to disrupt the heterosexual narrative, a lesbian narrative employs “repetition.”¹⁴ It also “constantly . . . ignore[s] or devalue[s] the end as a way of challenging and altering the reproductive ideology that shapes this particular “notion of progress.”¹⁵ In short, a lesbian narrative would halt the text’s progress toward the resolution.

With this new set of search criteria, an analysis of *As You Like It* fails again. Throughout *As You Like It*, Phebe’s attraction and wooing of Rosalind / Ganymed only provides Rosalind / Ganymed an opportunity to bring Silvius and Phebe together. Rosalind is never distracted from her mission to obtain Orlando. Every reaction to Phebe’s approaches moves Phebe closer to Silvius. At the end of 5.2, Rosalind seems to give in to Phebe’s desires when she says, “I will marry you, if ever I marry a woman, and I’ll be married tomorrow” (113-4). But it is simply one more step toward the “natural” heterosexual conclusion: marriage. As Rosalind reveals herself, she tells Phebe: “You to his love must accord, / Or have a woman to your lord” (5.4.133-4). The heterosexual narrative moves to its conclusion with every element in the play in its service. Though Phebe’s attraction to Rosalind / Ganymed may seem to have lesbian over-

tones, it is in truth in service to the heterosexual narrative, as every attempt she makes to woo Rosalind / Ganymede brings her closer to being Silvius's wife.

Can we find a lesbian in *Twelfth Night* if we find a character who speaks in lesbian narrative? And if we do, so what? Much has been said about male homosexuality in Shakespeare. Marilyn R. Farwell in her essay, "The Romantic Lesbian Narrative" in *Heterosexual Plots and Lesbian Narratives* discusses the male and female figures in Shakespeare's sonnets: "The male speaker or narrator is the mover of the plot by virtue of his right to speak and woo; the passive female figure is the recipient of that wooing and often the narratee."¹⁶

In the case of Olivia and Viola / Cesario, Olivia is the wooer. Far from being the classic femme, Olivia takes on the man's role in the classic sense. But unlike Orsino, who is obviously a male wooer, Olivia does not always treat Viola / Cesario as something to be conquered. And at first, Viola as Cesario does not serve only as the "silent position" that women who were being wooed had to occupy, "Except for the important and enabling word, 'No,' which in turn causes and inspires the lover's many poems on love's anguish and the transcendence of his sexual obsession."¹⁷ Farwell is discussing here the sonnets, not the plays. However, we think her point applies to the plays equally well. And for a few moments, on two occasions in Olivia's and Viola's / Cesario's dialogue, we find a lesbian.

In two of Olivia and Viola's dialogues, we find noncompetitive, repetitious speech that does not seek an end. These are the qualifications for the lesbian narrative. While obviously Olivia cannot keep up the small lesbian rebellion for long, especially with the impending patriarchal recuperation on its way, she does for a few lines manage to transform Illyria into Lesbos.

Every line in Shakespeare's play *Twelfth Night* either directly or indirectly works toward an end and moves toward the purpose and end of the play—as do all lines in all (traditionally deemed) good plays in Western culture. Every word serves to move the plot forward to heterosexual closure—with two exceptions. The first occurs in 1.5, and the second occurs in 3.1. Both occurrences involve Olivia with Viola disguised as Cesario. That both actors are boys does not matter to this analysis since lesbian narrative relies on structure, not on gender.

In 1.5, Viola asks Olivia, "Good madam, let me see your face" (216). Olivia complies and after some words, Viola says:

Excellently done, if God did all
 Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white
 Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on
 Lady you are the cruell'st she alive
 If you will lead these graces to the grave
 And leave the world no copy. (222-229)

It is in this conversation that Viola steps outside the heterosexual narrative to praise Olivia. We say "steps outside" not because it is a woman praising another woman's beauty, but because Viola's words serve no purpose in working toward the closure of the story. Viola, in fact, stalls the plot progression for a few seconds by her speech.

If Viola had not asked to see Olivia, there would have been no pause in plot progression. The play could have moved from that point to 229 with no delay in the plot. If Viola had used this opportunity to say, "Oh, you're no prettier than I am" and unmasked herself, or at least let the audience know she was sizing Olivia up, it would have served to move the plot along. Instead, Viola sincerely praises Olivia to no clear purpose. Orsino has already commented on her beauty. The audience has already

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seen her face. Therefore, it disrupts the heterosexual narrative with a lesbian element that does not work toward an end.

The second example of lesbian narrative occurs in 3.1. Again, Viola, as Cesario, visits Olivia. This time, Olivia takes on what Farwell calls a masculine role as she attempts to woo Viola. Viola says, "Of't we pity enemies" (122), clearly showing Viola's competition against Olivia for Orsino's love. However, after the clock strikes—and this action is significant for this analysis—the plot seems to stop, as well, for a few lines. Olivia says:

The clock upbraids me with the waste of time.
Be not afraid, good youth, I will not have you,
And yet, when wit and youth is come to harvest,
Your wife is like to reap a proper man.
There lies your way, due west. (127-131)

It must be pointed out that the symbolism of the clock points perfectly to the heterosexual narrative's impatience at yet another disruption of its progress. In these lines, Olivia, though perhaps she would certainly accept if Viola / Cesario leapt into her arms, praises Viola / Cesario to no purpose. She compliments "him" and sends "him" on his way. To see the contrast between the lesbian narrative and the heterosexual narrative clearly, examine Orsino's entreaties to Olivia. Never does he praise for kindness' sake only. Always, Orsino approaches Olivia with conquest in mind. To him, it is a battle to be won, ultimately, with the release of orgasm. It makes one wonder what Viola sees in Orsino. Orsino's lines of romance as conquest move the viewer toward the play's end. However, Olivia's words to Viola signal no such purpose. They do not serve to amuse the audience. They do not hint at Viola's future success as wife. They stall the heterosexual narrative for a few seconds as the lines trail into nowhere.

Of course, one might argue these are simply falters in Shakespeare's plot. Had he more time to edit, he would have taken them out. In fact, such an argument proves precisely why these two scenes are scenes of lesbian disruption. Like sex without a penis, lesbian narrative seems to many to be purposeless.

In the end, of course, the lesbian narrative pause is pushed toward the heterosexualizing resolution that the heterosexual plot demands. So what's the purpose of finding the lesbian narrative at all in *Twelfth Night*? Does it prove Shakespeare was a feminist? We would say it only proves that lesbians are everywhere, even where Shakespeare did not intend. Shakespeare does, as expected, show Olivia a "real man" and give her "what she's been asking for" to "straighten her out," as it were. Yes, it seems all Olivia needs is a "real man" to cure her of her attraction to Viola. But for a few short lines, there were lesbian erotics in Shakespeare. Olivia's choice is, as Marjorie Garber points out, "heterosexualized in the nick of time."¹⁸

Is an instance of lesbian narrative structure sufficient to proclaim a lesbian found? Annamarie Jagose has noticed that "the diagnostic recognition of lesbian invisibility" is many times "critically countered by attempts to negotiate for lesbianism a more straightforward relation to the cultural rubrics of legibility, as if the problems of lesbian invisibility might be shortcircuited by the reversal of that paradigm."¹⁹ If Jagose is correct, then finding lesbians in narrative structure rather than in character representation might be one of the few legitimate ways to declare victory in the search for lesbian elements in Shakespeare.

When patriarchal recuperation clamps down, lesbian narrative leaks out, like steam out of a pot that gets heated and then clamped down tighter. As Isaac Newton averred, for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. In the case of the

relationship between patriarchal recuperation and lesbian narrative, the delay in movement toward heterosexual culmination stands out even more strongly for being a non-heterosexual, nonreproductive-inducing idyl.

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Notes

1. Cross-dressing in literary women characters comes from a long tradition in Italian literature, the *cantari* of the late Middle Ages with a resuscitated form of the classical virago, as noted in Margaret Tomalin's *The Fortunes of the Warrior Heroine in Italian Literature: An Index of Emancipation* (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1982). England did not have such a long tradition in its emergence from the medieval era, so it is likely that cross-dressing women in literary plots (as in the streets) would be perceived more as a contemporary than ancient phenomenon. We do agree with Jean Howard ["Crossdressing, The Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 (1988): 418-40] that cross-dressing in English Renaissance drama for the most part reinforced rather than destroyed rules of patriarchal authority. However, a literary construct for the sake of comedy does not answer the question of why some women chose to wear men's clothing in the streets. Such behavior met with condemnation from John Knox's *The Monstrous Regiment of Women*, Philip Stubbes's *Anatomie of Abuses*, apparel decrees of Elizabeth I, later by the anonymous *Mulier-Vir* texts and even by order of James I. Also of value in understanding the issues and problems created by female cross-dressing are Karen Newman's "Portia's Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38 (1987), 20-33; and Henderson and McManus's *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985).
2. All quotations from Shakespeare are taken from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans, 2nd ed. (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1997).
3. Linda Bamber, *Comic Women, Tragic Men: A Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982).
4. Marianne Novy, "Demythologizing Shakespeare," *Women's Studies* 9 (1981), p. 23.
5. Karen Newman, *Shakespeare's Rhetoric of Comic Character: Dramatic Convention in Classical and Renaissance Comedy* (New York: Routledge, 1985).
6. Mary Bly, *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage* (London: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 19, 143-5.
7. Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Sussex: The Harvester Press Limited, 1983), p. 72.
8. Michael Taylor, *Shakespeare Criticism in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 224.
9. Taylor, p. 207.
10. Jardine, p. 29.
11. Taylor, p. 207.
12. Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 56.
13. Traub, p. 56.
14. Judith Roof, *Come As You Are: Sexuality and Narrative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 183.
15. Roof, p. 183.
16. Marilyn R. Farwell, *Heterosexual Plots and Lesbian Narratives* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pp. 110-111.
17. Farwell, p. 111.
18. Marjorie Garber, *Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), p. 466.
19. Traub, p. 34, quoting from Annamarie Jagose, *Inconsequence: Lesbian Representation and the Logic of Sequence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

"THE SALT FISH IS AN OLD COAT" IN *THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR* 1.1

by Rodney Stenning Edgecombe

Near the start of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shallow, Slender, and Evans discourse at cross purposes about the justice's coat of arms, an exchange that resembles Samuel Beckett *avant la lettre*:

Slen. All his successors, gone before him, hath don't, and all his ancestors, that come after him, may: they may give the dozen white luses in their coat.

Shal. It is an old coat.

Evans. The dozen white louses do become an old coat well; it agrees well, passant; it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies love.

Shal. The luce is the fresh fish; the salt fish is an old coat. (1.1.14-21)

However, despite Shallow's obvious malapropism ("ancestors for successors"), I am by no means convinced, as other commentators and editors are, that Shakespeare means us to conclude that Evans, too, is ignorant, and does not know the difference between lice and luses. It would seem that the joke turns not upon a misprision so obvious, but rather on the speaker's being unaware that his Welsh diaphonemes are so eccentric as to have produced a near collapse of meaning (as in that old chestnut, the Chinese pronunciation of "fried rice" as "fled lice," where the native English listener, while acknowledging the diaphonemic conversion of [r] to [l], is also aware of the bizarriere of words they engender outside the consciousness of the speaker—a species of dramatic irony). The audience thus laughs at Evans for *apparently* talking about lice, whereas he is actually talking about fish.

Evans is a pedant, however, and he also gets things wrong. Even though luce=louse seems too gross an error for him to have committed (and far better suited to Mistress Quickly, who construes the genitive as "Ginny's case"), he is not beyond winging it with a little improvised discourse on heraldry, about which, it is clear, he knows very little. So he offers us a comic "appreciation" of Shallow's coat of arms, couched in the language of an aesthete, and concerned not with technical conventions, but with generalities of structure. Hence the appreciative comment on the disposition of the fish on the shield, harmoniously arranged toward the right ("passant" describes an animal that faces the dexter side of a crest). He is clearly vague about the meaning of "passant" which would require the fish to have limbs, and has thrown it in as a piece of heraldic jargon, and he is also better able to discuss the wider ("familiar") meaning of the fish in Christian iconography (baptism and redemption, which add up to an agapaic definition of "love") than with their historical significance in relation to the crest. All the while, however, the diaphonemic joke about lice releases a running commentary of lewd meanings in "familiar" and "love" that mocks the surface discourse.

It is in the context of Evans's showy and specious account of the coat of arms that Shallow, not to be upstaged, chips in with his own display of learning. I would suggest that "passant" has triggered in his mind a vague recollection of another heraldic term, "saltant," a synonym for "salient." Both terms signify "leaping" (which better accords with fish than "passant"). Not certain of the derivation of "saltant" (actually from the Latin saltare, "to jump"), he offers a folk etymology in a way that harmonizes with David Crane's gloss of the line in the New Cambridge Shakespeare: "Shallow muses that

kind of fish that would suit an old heraldic coat would not be the fresh one (. . . meaning recently dead rather than found in inland waters) but the salted and preserved one ('salt' in the sense salted, not in the sense found in the sea')" (35). The joke doesn't work without a context to make sense of "salt," and indeed some editors, as witness the Arden note, are uncertain if there is one: "The joke, if any, would seem to depend on Evans's mispronunciation of 'coat' as 'cod' or 'coad'" (5-6). I think the joke *is* there, but that it depends not on Evans's mispronunciation, but on Shallow's suggesting that a fresh luce is what one finds at a fishmonger's stall, and that, once saltant on a crest, it has been salted into a state of rigid preservation. He might, as Crane suggests, be musing, but I think it more likely that he is attempting to cap Evans's dicey learning with "learning" of his own. The comedy thus centers on three self-important men who are trying to upstage each other—the first a Malaprop, the second a plausible fraud, and the third an absurd purveyor of a folk etymology. The nonsense that results verges on Absurdism.

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WHY BODIES MATTER IN MOULDY TALES: MATERIAL (RE)TURNS IN *PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE*

by *Eve-Marie Oesterlen*

Shakespeare in his romances accentuates the imaginary quality of his gardens in order to contain very real toads.¹

The most memorable moments in the plays commonly known as Shakespeare's romances involve bodies that flout the criteria of verisimilitude and decorum in ways that rival even the imaginative flights of cyberculture. Bodies in this dramatic realm possess a corporeality that is curiously flexible, almost grotesque in its polymorphic potential: the dead come back to life, stone becomes flesh, and solid flesh dissolves into thin air; bodies become animal, try on and discard different identities, and are capable of literally losing their heads. Such material turns would seem to form an intriguing topic of analysis for the "Shakespeare Corps" of criticism that has in the last two decades assembled around the early modern body as privileged object of inquiry.² And yet, surprisingly enough, the major trajectory of this critical "body boom" has somehow managed to bypass the romances. Bodies that matter, it seems, have to be "split, suffering, diseased, tortured and transgressive."³ In other words, they have to be tragic. Bodies in the late plays, however, are rarely seen as such. While the morphic, or, as Simon Palfrey has dubbed it, "amoeboid" quality of bodies in the late plays has been noted, this insight so far has only played a supporting role in the general consensus that there is more at stake in these plays, to use Kiernan Ryan's words, "than meets the eye and the ear."⁴ As a brief glimpse at any survey of romance criticism will confirm, the critical appreciation of these plays is still riveted to the metaphysical base or bias that has been used to describe and contain the stylistic peculiarities of "these naive and impossible romances" in the last two centuries.⁵ When G. Wilson Knight in 1929 argued that *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, and *Pericles* express "a state of mind or soul in the writer directly in knowledge . . . of a mystic and transcendent fact as to the true nature and purpose of the sufferings of humanity," he paved the way for what was to become an all but axiomatic truth in Shakespeare criticism.⁶ The elusiveness of these plays is directly related to their transcendental significance. After all, these were the plays written by the most mystical of bodies, William Shakespeare, at the peak of his career as principal playwright for the King's Men. Accordingly, generations of critics devoted themselves to the formidable task of deciphering the master(s) text only to find in it a faithful reflection of their own preconceptions, be they Christian, genetic, psychoanalytic, historical or poststructuralist. As Ryan puts it: "We have not left the realm of ulterior allegory so dear to Knight and Frye at all, but merely swapped one myth for another."⁷

Instead of pursuing the heart of the mystery in the realms of the metaphysical, the purpose of this essay is to put the *meta* aside for a moment to consider the question of *matter*. After all, these plays, whether classified as romances, tragicomedies, pastoral romances, or simply late plays, are unique in the Shakespearean canon for making the immaterial become material before our very eyes (and ears). In what follows, therefore, I shall concentrate not so much on what it *is not* but on what it *is* that meets the eye and the ear when we read, listen to, or see the romances performed. Putting the cart before the horse, the material before meta, this article strives to dislocate the

transcendental impasse by looking “awry” at one of the plays in question. The governing idea is that a (re)turn to bodily matters contributes to an understanding of the romances as complex anamorphic texts, or—to appropriate Ben Jonson’s more contemporary dictum—“mouldy tales,” that explore the relation between language and the body in ways that push not only belief but also conventional dramatic form to its very limits. Before I embark on this wayward journey, a note of caution ought to be given. My objective is not to crack the problem of the romances, it is also not to deny that they represent, as Ryan has argued, “a frontal assault on what counts as reality and the tyranny of realism itself.”⁸ It is to assert, however, that material reality remains the touchstone against which such a visionary display is tested. In the limited space available, I will restrict my analysis to the first and perhaps most controversial exponent of the romances, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (1607-8), a Jacobean bestseller, nowadays more famous for its omission from the First Folio, its questionable authorship, and stylistic incongruity than for its dramatic merit.⁹ Focusing on the play’s investment in narrative, recovery, and recognition in relation to the bodies that perform them, the article will take as its starting point the conspicuously “mouldy” body of the play’s most striking figure—the poet-presenter Gower—with the aim of showing that his bodily conception (in more than one sense) provides a key to understanding the innovative nature of a play that still tends to be unjustly neglected and dismissed as a dramatic freak, a misshapen experiment in a new genre, or blueprint for better plays to come.

I

To sing a song that old was sung
 From ashes ancient Gower is come
 Assuming man's infirmities
 To glad your ears, and please your eyes. (I. Ch.1-4)¹⁰

Gower’s speech is as arresting as his appearance. Both herald an acute disruption of the normal, the expected. Even before he identifies himself, the stylistic eccentricity of Gower’s octosyllabic lines mark him as a figure that has come from a different, more ancient era, and as if this linguistic deviance was not in itself startling enough, it is visually surpassed by what, according to the laws of nature, is impossible: the play opens with the phoenix-like resurrection of John Gower, the well-known medieval poet whose tomb was on display at the church of St. Saviour just around the corner from the Globe. His mortal form, he claims, has been restored to these “latter times” to re-story an archaic tale that has been “read . . . for restoratives” (I. Ch.11; 8). The play’s impetus towards spectacular bodily and textual “restorations” is clearly not to be missed. Nor is its evident investment in ancient rites (and rights), something that prompted Ben Jonson’s notorious dismissal of *Pericles* as “a mouldy tale . . . and stale.”¹¹ Disagreeing with Jonson on his view of the play’s staleness, the coinage “mouldy tale” could not be more apt for a play that flaunts its fabrication from a shifting spectrum of literary discourses. The language of folktale, moralistic poetry, and prose romance form the mold out of which something new is created, something that is both narrative and drama. As embodied literary allusion, Gower himself is unique amongst Shakespeare’s choric figures in that he represents not only the play’s poet but also its principal source, John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*. His ancient pedigree is clearly not emphasized for mere nostalgic gratification. As the play unfolds across un-representable expanses of time and space, it requires an author(itative)-figure like Gower who “stand i’ th’gaps to teach . . . / The stages of our story” (IV.iv.8-9), to hold together this romantic *bricolage* with a “body of knowledge” that is conceived at the interstices of page and stage, death and life, nature and art. The project that Shakespeare

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(and his collaborator/s) pursues with *Pericles* is an ambitious one: on the one hand, Gower's interventions in outmoded verse deliberately estrange the audience from the dramatic action, drawing its attention to the contrivance of what it sees and hears. On the other hand, this same artifice is used to secure its imaginative participation, without which neither Gower nor his tale could be infused with dramatic life. "It is requir'd/ You do awake your faith," (V.iii.94-5), as Paulina says in *The Winter's Tale*, before any resurrection can take place.¹² Throughout the play, we are asked to intertwine these incongruous angles of vision in our response to such an anamorphic text. Molding the literary and the lifelike under the auspices of restoration, shape-shifting Gower offers us a first glimpse of what it means to enter the protean realm of Shakespearean romance in which, to appropriate Herbert Marcuse's words, the "encounter with the truth of art happens in the estranging language and images which make perceptible, visible, and audible that which is no longer, or not yet, perceived, said, and heard in everyday life."¹³ By accepting Gower's bodily resurrection, we also accept the re-creative power of (his) art, something that effects our transition into a world less ordinary in which, once we have reconciled our ears to our eyes, the "quaint fairy tale" is transformed into a play that matters.¹⁴

II

As if to test the audience's newly acquired faith in his "restorative" powers, Gower's tale begins with the unspeakable sin of incest, "a crime," as the Victorian editor Henry Tyrell comments, "not to be recorded by the poet."¹⁵ Accordingly, the *mise en scène* that Gower uncovers to the "judging eyes" of his audience is framed by a visual display of "dumbness and dismemberment": a number of skulls comprise the onstage audience of *Pericles'* love-quest at Antioch.¹⁶ Their "grim looks" and "speechless tongues" (I.Chorus.40; I.i.37) eloquently testify to what Pericles has yet to discover: in this kingdom, "Sharp physic is the last" (I.i.73)—incest, not spiritual love, forms the basis of Antiochus' riddle and, by extension, of his legislative system. The primal scene thus serves as an eye-opener to Pericles, who discovers that Antiochus' daughter, the admired "Fair glass of light" (I.i.77) is foul, corrupted from within, "as black as incest" (I.ii.76). While appearances in Antioch turn out to be deceptive, language proves to be ineffective. Pericles deciphers the riddle only to find himself in a hermetic court where "breath is gone" and "sore eyes see clear" (I.i.100): Antioch, as Palfrey has observed, represents "a theatre of narcissism, paralysis, and, if not silence, then verbal atrophy."¹⁷ The radical doubt about the reliability of perception and its physical mediators, the eye and the ear, wreaks havoc in the play. *Pericles*, together with its titular hero, is literally lost in a sea of uncertain meanings. The repetitive dramaturgy, the traumatic re-stagings of the opening scene, the episodic plot, the abstract monuments and animated corpses that spawn the play might be understood as symptoms of an ongoing dramatic struggle with the implications of such knowledge. The restorative work of the play climaxes in the double recognition scene, where, as I will try to show, the integrity of body and language that was violated in Antioch is redefined and given "repetition to the life" (V.i.243).

In act five scene one, speech occupies center stage in the climactic meeting between father and daughter. Recognition here is not achieved in the blink of an eye but is instead staged as a painstaking verbal process, the effect of a dialogue that takes the length of about 160 spoken lines (longer than most scenes in the play). In a scene in which, as Inga-Stina Ewbank puts it, "Pericles begins as an apathetic deaf-mute and ends up hearing the music of the spheres," the power of the word is effectively demonstrated where it would perhaps be least expected.¹⁸ Immersed in his grief and literally entombed within his ship, Pericles is dead to the world. The task, as

Helicanus and Lysimachus see it, is to "make a batt'ry through his deafen'd ports" (V.i.45-6) and to "win some words of him" (V.i.42) – a suitable job, it is soon agreed, for a woman like Marina. Having already demonstrated her verbal skills in the brothel, Marina's task this time is to "allure" (V.i.45) a king to textual intercourse, to penetrate Pericles' shield of silence with her "chosen attractions" (V.i.45). Language in this scene is thus used to multiple purposes. While the sexual overtones alert us to the potentially incestuous relation into which father and daughter are maneuvered on stage, the emphasis on the animating power of language connects with the theme of Pericles' loss: he is heirless and airless, his grief literally having taken his breath away.

Neither spectacle nor the harmony of music, stimulants that usually allow the characters in Shakespeare's plays to achieve some kind of anagnorisis, strikes home. What does strike Pericles, however, is Marina's verbal demeanor, the therapeutic mixture of unaffected style and literalness of speech. Set against the backdrop of a romance plot that verges on the incredible, Marina's language has such an impact because it "successfully mediates between the strange and the true, often by simply stating the impossible, as the truth which it is."¹⁹ Thus, when Pericles asks Marina whether she originates from "these shores" (V.i.102), Marina replies with a riddle-like answer that must nevertheless be interpreted literally to enable recognition to take place: "No, nor of any shore; / Yet I was mortally brought forth, and am / No other than I appear" (V.i.103-4). If not before, the listening audience should at this point experience an uncanny feeling of *déjà-vu*, or rather, *da capo*, since the device of the riddle has been notoriously employed before, a circumstance that compels the critical listener to take a closer look (the sensual confusion here being intended). The cryptic quality of Marina's statement serves several purposes at once: as a linguistic device that demands decipherment, it functions as a narrative stimulant. As a positive foil for the regressive feeding of incest, Marina's speech increases the appetite and thus provides the only possible nourishment to a ship "not destitute for want, / But weary for the staleness" (V.i.56-57). A redemptive analogue to the Antiochian riddle that is set down in disembodied print, Marina's riddle is spoken by herself, a narrative embodied. Whereas the referent of the anti-riddle is the silenced daughter, who, in symbolic extension, becomes a mere cipher of the unspeakable sin of incest, Marina's riddle contains her autobiography as encoded in her name: born at sea. It is the articulation of this name that enables Pericles to discover Marina from his vantage point as a father, not as suitor nor as husband, a discovery that paves the way for the final showdown and reassertion of natural law, curiously enough in the form of a supernatural figure.

The spell of silence is broken when Pericles gradually manages to reconcile his eyes to his ears: while he conflates Marina and his wife linguistically, working his way from the past to the present tense (cf. V.i.106-13), Marina's gaze in a sense becomes Pericles' "corrective prism," a mirror that allows him to perceive her for the first time. The effect of such a device is described by Pietro Accolti in his 1625 treatise on anamorphic images in terms which serve equally well for an oblique commentary on the structure of the play as a whole:

We are . . . marvelously enchanted . . . because . . . we are unable to guess what the painter meant to represent . . . unless we solve the enigma with the help of a mirror placed so we can direct our gaze at it (because the mirror shows something other than what we see with our eyes directly). We immediately recognise with astonishment that the picture is usually a portrait of people who are known and very dear to us – such is the strength, value, and power of perspective, in which everything entirely depends on appearances.²⁰

As Phyllis Gorfain has argued, "[e]xploring the epistemological problem that knowledge

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may be no more than perception yields both doubt and celebration in *Pericles*.²¹ It is certainly a cause for celebration in this scene, where the impossible reality of Marina's sensual presence triumphs over the stony evidence of her death:

I will believe thee,
And make my senses credit thy relation
To points that seem impossible; for thou look'st
Like one I lov'd indeed. (V.i.122-25)

Finite voice is eventually privileged over the infinite sign when Pericles declares that he is ready to "believe you [Marina] by the syllable / Of what you shall deliver" (V.i.167-68). Marina's tale is also Pericles' tale; its telling recovers their common origin. Speech promises delivery in more than one sense. Verbal relief is accompanied by the delivery of tears that re-connect the circumstances of Marina's watery birth to his own, both joyful and painful, deliverance:

Give me a gash, put me to present pain,
Lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me
O'erbear the shores of my mortality,
And drown me with their sweetness. (V.i.191-94)

In the belly of the ship, the father-daughter intimacy turns out to be re-creative, something that Pericles acknowledges when he calls out the answer to Marina's riddle:

O, come hither,
Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget;
Thou that wast born at sea, buried at Tharsus,
And found at sea again.
.....: this is Marina. (V.i.194-99).

It is a restoration that is significantly achieved through what Elaine Scarry has called "the lifting of body into language."²² The verbal structure of paradox connects the literal with the metaphorical, the act of giving birth with the telling of a tale, thus matching natural and cultural (pro)creation, something that is particularly apt for a play which opens with both a textual and a bodily resurrection. Whereas familial involution in the hermetic court of Antioch gives rise to verbal atrophy, the discovery of a common origin in this scene turns out to be vital for the recovery of meaningful speech, an ideal language that, in Terry Eagleton's terms, is "at once metaphorically transformative and sensuously precise."²³ Intimacy here is not gained at the cost of bodily integrity, nor by eradicating maternity. And just as if to make sure it never will, the virginal goddess that has been evoked both by mother and daughter in the play intervenes. Without much ado, Diana confronts Pericles with an ultimatum that leaves him in no doubt about what to do next: "To mourn thy crosses . . . give them repetition to the life./ . . . perform my bidding, or thou liv'st in woe;/ Do't, and be happy" (V.i.243-46). Again, there is the suggestion that speech has a cathartic effect, an effect that is significantly located in the power of the (repeated) re(ve)lation. In order to restore, therefore, Pericles' tale (just like Gower's) needs to be re-storied in as life-like a manner as possible: in the immediacy of dramatic action.

Although the anticlimactic effect of the double recognition has been stressed by several critics, I believe that Doreen DeVecchio and Antony Hammond are right in drawing attention to the fact that this scene builds on the narrative insights gained in the last, only to top them with a "redefinition of death and resurrection on a different and more immediate theatrical level."²⁴ Pericles' embodied narrative, and particularly his "Voice and favour" (V.iii.13), incites a re-enactment of an end and a beginning on stage when Thaisa's miraculous revival is re-staged in front of the spectators' and Pericles'

eyes. It is the bodily re-enactment of the incredible that compels belief, for, as Pericles has put it, "truth can never be confirm'd enough" (V.i.201). The dramatic significance of the delayed ending, however, necessitates further inquiry. The contrary impulses of romance, "its quest for, and simultaneous distancing of, an end or presence," that Patricia Parker has so convincingly "dilated" on seems most suitable for a play like *Pericles*, which is propelled by the sabotage of closure: courtships are aborted or delayed, travellers seldom reach their intended destination, bodies are displaced or cast away, actions that seemed unstoppable are miraculously prevented, while things never deemed possible actually occur.²⁵ When the action comes to a standstill, it is narrative desire that is variously refused (Marina, who "never would tell / Her parentage" [V.i.187-88]), forestalled (Helicanus, who is prevented from recounting the story of Pericles' grief by the entry of Marina: "But see, I am prevented" [V.i.63]), or interrupted (by Gower's comments and dumb shows). "Story-telling," as T. G. Bishop has put it, "is everywhere in *Pericles*," and yet it is ultimately deferred from one scene to another, from one storyteller to the next, a deferral that persists beyond the play's ending.²⁶ The final scene intrudes on the progress towards narrative closure by a seemingly superfluous theatrical re-enactment of a recognition, a re-enactment, however, that creates a performative space apart from the succession of the plot. In this space, the visual impact of the scene once again becomes paramount. The forbidden sight/site that had tormented Pericles at the beginning of the play is restaged only to be revalued: this time it is Thaisa's actively desiring eye, the eye that "presumes to reach," that uncovers truth and brings the lawful family reunion on its way, allowing Pericles' "sore eyes" (I.i.100), eyes that have learned to shun pleasures, to heal through the sensual contemplation of her spectacular presence.

Thaisa's exclamation of wonder upon reawakening not only resounds Pericles' previous anagnorisis but also thematises a contest between meaning and its refusal which is at the heart of the dynamic of the play:

O, let me look!

If he be none of mine, my sanctity
Will to my sense bend no licentious ear,
But curb it, spite of seeing. O, my lord,
Are you not Pericles? Like him you spake,
Like him you are. Did you not name a tempest,
A birth and a death? (V.iii.28-34)

The desire for signification, the desire to know, is set against the immediacy of an embodied experience, something that is articulated even more clearly in Pericles' request that "on the touching of her lips I may / Melt and no more be seen" (V.iii.43). The primacy of the present fulfilment is here established over a knowledge of the past, just as the dramatic experience is established over narrative desire. It is an extremely fragile moment: "In the final reunions of *Pericles*, the tangibility of recovery stands in delicate balance with the bare sufficiency of time and flesh to hold the visible shape of a narrative embodied."²⁷ Linear time is momentarily suspended when the expansive plot of the play is condensed into what Parker has called "the cartography of a single moment" where, as in the extended space of Renaissance paintings, "the whole plot is revealed at once."²⁸ The logic of linear sequence is confounded by the paradoxical re-birth of a dead queen (cf. V.iii.64), a paradox that is framed by the similarly anachronistic presence of Gower as narrator. The play delays the need for explanation long enough to let the performance dominate the desire to know: "we do our longing stay / To hear the rest untold" (V.iii.83-84).

While Pericles' growing beard must eventually be "clip[ed] to form" (V.iii.74) just as

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Gower needs to come up with a moralistic finish for his vagrant fairy-tale, such trimming is exercised at the cost of dramatic presence. When his last lines are spoken, Gower must return to the ashes from which he came. In a play which from the beginning deconstructs the very notion of an original story both in form and content, the assumption of closure is as misleading as Marina's glittering monument. As meta-authorial presence, Gower is the guarantor of an ending, but the story, as he concludes it, is ultimately only his own: "New joy wait on you! Here *our* play has ending" (Epilogue 18, my emphasis). Through his "death," Gower, just like all the other major storytellers within and beyond the play, makes possible a "repetition to the life." Each time the curtain falls, therefore, one particular narrative ceases to be bodied forth, but the protean body of texts stays behind, promising "new joy" with every new performance.

III

What we witness in *Pericles*, therefore, is not only a series of literal but also of literary metamorphoses, metamorphoses that culminate in a disclosure, as Knight concedes, more "visionary than metaphysical."²⁹ The revelation of a visible and palpable presence is both "mortally brought forth" and conjured by an "art/ Lawful as eating" (*Winter's Tale*, V.iii.110). It has been the purpose of this essay to argue that the romances, despite their generic investment in the impossible, stage "manifestations of intense realities," realities which, as the plays make clear, are ultimately a matter of perception.³⁰ Thus, to quote another passage from *The Winter's Tale*:

That she is living,
Were it but told you, should be hooted at
Like an old tale; but it appears she lives,
Though yet she speak not. (V.iii.115-18)

Various disrupting and occasioning the proliferation of narrative abstraction through its sensual presence, the recognition of the material body proves vital for an appreciation of the "rich strangeness" of Shakespearean romance, in which language both questions and creates an essential nature of bodily matter. Since this essay began with an oblique reference to Judith Butler's work, it is only appropriate to end it with a direct quote which, in a more substantial and eloquent manner than I am capable of, gives expression to the reciprocity between language and the body that, as I have tried to suggest, is so creatively explored in the romances:

Language and materiality are fully embedded in each other, chiasmic in their interdependency, but never fully collapsed into one another, i.e., reduced to one another, and yet neither fully ever exceeds the other. Always already implicated in each other, always already exceeding one another, language and materiality are never fully identical nor fully different.³¹

Reassessed from such a point of view, therefore, *Pericles*, whatever the circumstances of its composition, is a tightly knit fabric that is made up of a juxtaposition of material and symbolic elements, a dramatic narrative, or, to invoke Ben Jonson once again, a "mouldy tale," that is forever prone to all kinds of textual and bodily (re)turns.

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Notes

1. Susan Snyder, "The Genres of Shakespeare's Plays," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, eds. Margareta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ.

- Press, 2001), p. 95.
2. Keir Elam, "In What Chapter of His Bosom?: Reading Shakespeare's Bodies," in *Alternative Shakespeares Vol. 2*, ed. Terence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 144. The landmark books referred to include such diverse works as Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (London: Routledge, 1984), Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990), Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1993), and Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995). For more recent contributions to this topic see also the collection of essays in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), and *The Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Darryll Grantley and Nina Taunton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000). The complex and contested relations between early modern bodies and current Shakespearean scholarship form the subject of the essays assembled under the heading 'Body Work' in *Shakespeare Studies*, 29 (2001).
 3. Elam, p. 144. Although this article owes much to the feminist and psychoanalytic work on the late plays that has placed the matter of bodies (sexed and gendered) on the critical agenda, it moves beyond these readings to consider the performative potential of dramatic bodies in the widest sense. What is it, in other words, that bodies do in the late plays, both with and beyond words? It is thus with the forms of materialisation rather than with the meaning of the material site itself that I am concerned with. For a classic instance of an approach that fuses psychoanalysis with a feminist critique, see Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, "Hamlet" to "The Tempest."* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
 4. Simon Palfrey, *Late Shakespeare: A New World of Words* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), p. 19; Kierman Ryan, Introduction, *Shakespeare: The Last Plays* (London: Longman, 1999), p. 6.
 5. S. L. Bethell, *The Winter's Tale: A Study in Shakespeare* (London: Staples Press, 1947), quoted in Ryan, p. 6. For useful overviews of critical approaches to the romances that have also been "material" to the conception of this essay, see Philip Edwards, "Shakespeare's Romances: 1900-1957," *Shakespeare Survey*, 11 (1958): 1-18, as well as the introductions to the following anthologies: *Shakespeare's Late Plays: New Readings*, ed. Jennifer Richards and James Knowles (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1999), Ryan, and the very recent *Shakespeare's Romances*, ed. Alison Thome (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
 6. G. Wilson Knight, *The Crown of Life: Essays in Interpretation of Shakespeare's Final Plays* (1947; rptd. London: Methuen, 1965), p. 22.
 7. Ryan, p. 13
 8. Ryan, p. 15
 9. To get an impression about the diversity of positions that have shaped the authorship controversy in the last two decades, compare, for example, Nancy C. Michael, "The Usefulness of Narrative Sources and the Gower Choruses in Determining a Divided Authorship for *Pericles*," in *The Upstart Crow*, 2 (1979): 34-50, and Doreen DelVecchio and Anthony Hammond, Introduction, in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998): 8-15.
 10. All references to *Pericles* are from *The Arden Shakespeare*, ed. F. D. Hoeniger (1962; rptd. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2000).
 11. Ben Jonson, "Excerpt from *Ode to Himself*," in *Pericles: Critical Essays*, ed. David Skeele. (New York: Garland, 2000), p. 34.
 12. Quotations from *The Winter's Tale* follow *The Oxford Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998).
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 16. T. G. Bishop, *Shakespeare and the Theatre of Wonder* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press,

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17. Palfrey, p. 59.
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 19. Ewbank, p. 118.
 20. Pietro Accolti quoted in Ernest B. Gilman, *The Curious Perspective: Literary and Pictorial Wit in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1978), p. 39.
 21. Phyllis Gorfain, "Puzzle and Artifice: The Riddle as Metapoetry in *Pericles*," in *Pericles: Critical Essays*, ed. David Skeele (New York: Garland, 2000), p. 134.
 22. Elaine Scarry, Introduction, *Literature and the Body: Essays on Populations and Persons* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1988), p. xv.
 23. Terry Eagleton, *William Shakespeare* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 102.
 24. DelVecchio and Hammond, p. 75.
 25. Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1979), p. 226.
 26. Bishop, p. 94.
 27. Bishop, p. 94.
 28. Parker, p. 35.
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 31. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 69.

A POLYNESIAN SHAKESPEARE FILM: THE MAORI *MERCHANT OF VENICE*

by Gretchen E. Minton



Figure 1

The year 2003 saw the release of a film entitled *Whale Rider*, which tells the story of Maori people struggling to preserve their culture and heritage amid the pressures of our modern world. This film was widely acclaimed at festivals worldwide, and is at the forefront of a resurgence of interest in Maori language and culture.¹ The legend upon which *Whale Rider* is based is about Paikea, who rode on the back of a whale until he came ashore on the island of Aotearoa when there were no people there. This narrative of the original Polynesian settlers as symbolized by Paikea has long been superseded by a narrative of another famous settler of New Zealand—Captain James Cook, who arrived on a ship called the *Endeavour* in 1769. These settlement narratives are an integral part of the identity of New Zealand peoples today, who are genetically as well as culturally interwoven. The Maori side of the story is one that was, as so many indigenous voices have been, silenced for many years. Until recent decades, anything representing culture in New Zealand was most assuredly English, and as we have all come to expect, such cultural colonization always includes Shakespeare.

When Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh toured New Zealand in the 1940s, they

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were revered by many as icons of British high culture, bringing civilization to the furthest colony. By mounting Shakespeare productions, they were engaging in a cultural colonization that would fill a perceived gap in New Zealand. Long after this, there was still an assumption that New Zealand had "no living culture of its own," and therefore the indigenous Maori needed to be made culturally aware through the medium of Shakespeare.²

Even more recently, many writers who have focused on the "indigenous theatre" in New Zealand have concentrated entirely on the theatre of the Pakeha (white people), with no real inclusion of the Maori, and no sense of the irony of using the term "indigenous" in this way. In his article on New Zealand theatre in the 1980s, Sebastian Black lamented the lack of Maori actors in major performances in Auckland, noting that "despite the increasing quantity of Maori writing . . . no significant plays have yet been written for the stage."³ This situation is now changing, for several Maori plays have gained prominence in the past few years; a notable testimony to this development is that in 2002 the Wellington Fringe festival included Taki Toru, a season of Maori theatre.⁴ The box office hit *The Lord of the Rings* (2001-3) helped to popularize New Zealand's landscape, but *Whale Rider* is the first popular film to depict Maori characters since *The Piano* (1993), though in this earlier movie the Maori were a peripheral presence. The success of *Whale Rider* furthers an understanding not just of Maori culture, but also of the place of Maori art (the dances, ceremonies, chants, etc., depicted in the movie and the film itself).

Another avenue that some Maori artists have taken, however, is the reappropriation of European symbols that have greatly affected New Zealand. This type of appropriation deals more thoroughly with the interweaving of cultures that has comprised the story of Aotearoa/New Zealand since Captain Cook's arrival nearly two and a half centuries ago. Such is the case with the drawing displayed on the cover of the Winter 2001 *Shakespeare Quarterly* [Figure 1]. Here the Droeshout portrait is pictured with tattoos (moko) and jade Maori ornamental jewelry—a design that was made to promote the Sixth Biennial Conference of the Australia and New Zealand Shakespeare Association (Auckland, 2000). Michael Neill's introduction to this issue (entitled "Dislocating Shakespeare") discusses the "cultural reinscription" that this revised icon represents: "Seen from one perspective, Shakespeare's portrait can seem to stand for the processes of colonial usurpation and displacement, with their recentering of native values; seen from another, his tattooed face can be read as a statement of counter appropriation."⁵ In the latter case, Shakespeare as a symbol of the colonizers' oppression becomes a palimpsest that reasserts the voice of the colonized native. This counter-appropriation is a natural element of what Christopher Balme calls "syncretic theatre," which he defines as "those theatrical products which result from the interplay between the Western theatrico-dramatic tradition and the indigenous performance forms of a postcolonial culture."⁶ Balme sees recent Maori theatre as an especially poignant example of this syncretic theatre. Although Maori culture has its own dramatic rituals, they are distinctly different from those of Western drama, so now there is an increasing effort to merge elements from Eastern and Western dramatic cultures (as has been done in Japan and India, for instance).

At the meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America (SAA) in Victoria, British Columbia, in April, 2003, many Shakespearean scholars had the opportunity to view an example of syncretic theatre in the form of a new Maori film version of *The Merchant of Venice*—a project that has been, in some sense, nearly sixty years in the making. In 1945 (just before the Olivier tour), the noted scholar Pei Te Hurinui Jones translated *The Merchant of Venice* into formal poetic Maori.⁷ Decades later, in 1990, Don Selwyn directed a production of this play for the Kaonga Festival in Auckland.

Encouraged by the success of this version and his belief in its power, Selwyn spent the next ten years raising money to make it into a movie, which premiered in Waikato on 15 February 2002. It has been shown at several festivals and won the prestigious Blockbuster Video Audience Award for Best Feature at the Louis Vuitton Hawaii International Film Festival in 2002. What Selwyn has achieved in this film is a way of speaking about Maori culture through this consummately British icon. By making a film in the Maori language that is also an adaptation of a Shakespeare play, Selwyn is engaged in the kind of counter-appropriation that the tattooed Droeshout portrait represents.

Michael Neill's brief comments on the Maori *Merchant* in the above-mentioned issue of *SQ* serve as an important introduction to the relevance of this film and the nature of the project. However, in light of its North American premiere at the 2003 SAA and its wider release in New Zealand in the past two years, including a feature spot at the Wairoa Maori Film Festival in June 2005, the politics and art behind Selwyn's impressive venture deserve a more thorough exploration.

Te Reo Maori

The Maori *Merchant of Venice* (*Te Tangata Whai Rawa o Weneti*) stars an entirely Polynesian cast and follows the story, characters, and plot of Shakespeare's play, including a fairly close translation of each line. The Venetian setting looks appropriately European (although it was filmed in and around Auckland). However, Belmont (here named Peremona) is unmistakably set in pre-Cook New Zealand. The Maori *Merchant* is the first Shakespeare film to be made in New Zealand as well as the first full-length film in Te Reo Maori (the Maori language).

When the Maori Language Act of 1987 made Te Reo Maori an official language in New Zealand, it was a major victory for Maori people and heritage, and it allowed artists like Selwyn much more opportunity to claim their own heritage. Selwyn was one of the founders of He Taonga Films, which was established under the Department of Maori Affairs and specifically aimed to "give Maori and Pacific people the technical skills to enable them to tell their own stories."⁸ The story may be Shakespeare's, but the Maori language and scenes make it a syncretic piece of theatre that comments on the situation in the Pacific as well.⁹ As Balme points out,

Bi- or multilingualism is also a distinguishing feature of syncretic theatre in general. Although the main language of communication is invariably a European one, at strategic points in the action, the indigenous language(s) is/are adopted. This can serve to exclude sections of the audience. An exclusion-inclusion dynamic is particularly evident in songs and heightened lyrical address, or in the performance of ritual acts.¹⁰

What Balme describes here is exactly the case with *Whale Rider*, which is a predominantly English language film with occasional Maori parts added, but in the Maori *Merchant*, we have an entirely Te Reo Maori play, with English relegated to the subtitles. This centralization of the Maori language is reinforced by the lush scenes that take place in the New Zealand setting of Belmont/Peremona. Just as Portia is in control of the trial, the Maori language is the governing utterance of this film.

One scene in the Maori *Merchant* that alludes to the language issue is when Portia is commenting to Narissa on each of the suitors and says of the English one: "You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him" (1.2.65-6).¹¹ In a Maori language film, this joke becomes quite different from what it was for Shakespeare's

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audience (for whom this scene would underline the fact that these supposed Italians are speaking English on the stage). Here, what becomes emphasized is the difference of the Maori language, represented by the untranslatability of its culture and speech to the British. Even the names of the Shakespearean characters alter for the sake of the Maori language. Selwyn refers to these as "Maori translations or adaptations" of the Shakespeare characters.¹² For instance, Shylock becomes Hairoka, Antonio Anatonio, and Portia Pohia.¹³

Similarly, English subtitles accompany the movie, but they are an unusual mix of Shakespearean and modern language that is difficult to characterize. The following passage from 1.3.103-25 illustrates the types of differences that are typical between the subtitles and the Shakespearean text:

Maori <i>Merchant of Venice</i>	Shakespeare's <i>Merchant of Venice</i>
<p>Many times in the Rialto you have rated me about my moneys, yet I have borne it and shrugged it off. Sufferance is the plight of my people. You call me misbeliever, a cut-throat! A dog! You spit upon my gaberdine, which use is mine own; now you need my help...you come to me and say, "Shylock, we want moneys..." You did spit upon my beard and kick me as you would a dog. Money is your suit, what should I say? Should I say, "Hath a dog money? Can a dog lend three thousand ducats?" Or shall I bend low, bonded, with bated breath and with humbleness say, "Fair sir, you spat on me Wednesday last, you spurned me such a day, another time you called me a dog! For these courtesies I'll lend you...moneys?"</p>	<p>Signor Antonio, many a time and oft In the Rialto you have rated me About my moneys and my usances. Still have I borne it with a patient shrug, For suffrance is the badge of all our tribe. You call me misbeliever, cut-throat, dog, And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine, And all for use of that which is mine own. Well then, it now appears you need my help. Go to, then. You come to me and you say, "Shylock, we would have moneys": you say so— You, that did void your rheum upon my beard And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur Over your threshold, moneys is your suit. What should I say to you? Should I not say "Hath a dog money? Is it possible A cur can lend three thousand ducats?" Or Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key, With bated breath and whisp'ring humbleness, Say this: "Fair sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last; You spurned me such a day; another time You called me dog; and for these courtesies I'll lend you thus much moneys"?</p>

In this example, clearly the passage has been condensed, and there is no longer adherence to Shakespeare's verse. An occasional simplification or modernization does happen, but key Shakespearean words such as "gaberdine," "moneys" and "courtesies" remain intact. Similarly, the early modern turns of phrases such as "Hath a dog money?" clearly represent an attempt to retain some of the direct language in the sub-

titles, especially in the more famous passages.¹⁴ Like the tattooing on the Droeshout portrait, this translation gives Shakespeare a distinctively New Zealand voice, while underlining the slippage in translation.

Giving voice to Shakespeare's play through Te Reo Maori was the objective of Pei Te Hurinui Jones, who did the translation because he loved Shakespeare and wanted Maori people to hear the beauty of his poetry in an equally poetic language. Ironically, now this translation is being used as a way to bring the beauty of the Maori culture and language to a wider audience, using Shakespeare as the vehicle.

Selwyn emphasized the importance of the language as a central objective of this film when he introduced it in Victoria, making the cultural politics of this venture clear. One reviewer explains that "Selwyn grew up in small-town New Zealand, in Taumarunui, a place dominated by sport, a place where everyone knew everyone else's business, but also a politically aware place. In a way, it seemed, the mere fact of being Maori made you political, the mere fact of wanting to claim your own heritage was a political action."¹⁵ In 2002, expressing one's Maori heritage might be a political act, but it is also one that garners considerably more support and allows for a wider range of artistic possibilities that go beyond the politics.

A Polynesian Belmont

The initial collage of scenes that open the Maori *Merchant of Venice* illustrates how Selwyn's film achieves its rich texturing and incorporates Polynesian elements. The opening showcases a portion of Shylock's most famous speech. As he ascends a staircase while looking toward a threateningly stormy sky, Hairoka says to himself, "Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions?" (3.1.55-7). Then the storm overhead gives way to a storm at sea on which a ship is tossed among the waves, foreshadowing the supposed plight of Antonio's vessels as well as the upcoming turmoil within the community. Then the scene rapidly changes to show a full moon rising in a clear sky over a dense forest inhabited by fairies who magically fly through the forest and scuttle up trees while they watch the Prince of Morocco approaching Peremona (Belmont) to the sound of a Maori chant. Then we see Peremona itself by day—a distinctively Polynesian place where women dance around a fountain with flowers and gourds as more music accompanies them. This scene is witnessed by Portia's European suitors, who look on uneasily, clearly out of place in this setting. Because these actors are three of the handful of non-Polynesians in this film, they look particularly conspicuous, especially because they are dressed in uncomfortable Renaissance European clothing as opposed to the loose-flowing dresses of the Polynesian women. Fading from Peremona to Venice, the camera prepares us for another part of the plot by showing Lorenzo and Jessica in each other's arms in a gondola. This archetypically Venetian moment seems strangely jarring after the Polynesian scene that precedes it; furthermore, we are never allowed to settle in our view of the lovers, for the camera returns us to the forest long enough to see an ostentatiously European-dressed Prince of Arragon, wearing a long white wig, tights, a ruffled collar and a feathered hat, who is pausing next to a stream on his journey to Belmont and vainly attempting to keep his hands clean. Finally, as the music swells, Antonio's ship comes safely into port, at which point the title of the film at last appears on the screen—appropriately introducing first the Maori and then the English title of Shakespeare's play.

This opening scene is an excellent overview of the elements of the story, but it is also indicative of the tendency of this film to increase the frequency of the play's juxtaposition between Belmont and Venice. Most notably, the film interweaves 2.1/2.2 as

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well as 2.6/2.7 by doing them in smaller segments, giving the sense of simultaneous action in these two very different places. The pace set in the opening sequence in which the places, people, and plots are already set on a converging course is carried through the film until they meet and slow down at the trial. The scenes of Venice were filmed in Auckland, but an Auckland that is very European in its architecture, "with Italianate facades and wrought-iron railings" as well as "Marble Renaissance statues stand[ing] on pedestals."¹⁶ Likewise, Antonio's ship cannot help but recall Cook's Endeavour, which the Maori greeted with hostility when it arrived on the shores of New Zealand at Poverty Bay. Belmont/Peremona, on the other hand, stands in sharp contrast because of its waterfalls, lush gardens, and Maori dances that suggest a utopian pre-Cook Polynesia that is noticeably free from the money, lawyers, and racial tensions of Venice.

The entrance of the Prince of Morocco (begun in the opening sequence but completed in its usual place) includes the most strikingly Maori elements of the film. The camera takes us through an enchanted forest populated by turehu (Maori fairy people) who are floating through the trees in a manner reminiscent of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.¹⁷ The lush forest scene gives way gradually to the arrival at the traditional kaima (village), where the ceremonies include a conch call, a karanga (formal cry of welcome), and elaborate dances by bare-chested young men with torches and spears performing a wero (warrior challenge). This beautiful scene manages to convey the mystery and wonder of Portia's world, while also recalling the deep cultural roots of Maori ceremonies. During much of this movie, Peremona serves as a clear contrast to European culture, most notably with the European suitors and the Prince of Arragon. However, the ambiguous place of a prince from Africa complicates this dichotomy. The Prince of Morocco is dressed in a long white robe and a red fez, and is attended by bare-chested men in turbans. Occasional Moroccan instruments also punctuate the Maori music as he approaches Peremona. Such a scene creates an interestingly multi-cultural atmosphere, but ultimately the African is still a clear outsider, not desired by Portia. He does not look as ridiculously out of place as the Prince of Arragon, but neither does the film include Portia's derogatory comments about his dark skin—this would indeed be out of place here.

The suitors enter Portia's realm to choose caskets in a room that is decorated with carved wooden Polynesian figures, open flames, and tropical plants. During each of the three casket scenes, a different singer provides background music while the suitor considers his choice (whereas only Bassanio is provided with music in the play). The Prince of Morocco's accompanist is the same woman who walked next to his horse and sang in the forest. For Arragon and Bassanio, Italian-style operatic arias with Maori lyrics are performed by Maori opera singers. Arragon's incorrect choice is punctuated by the strong presence of singer Mere Boynton, who wears a grass dress; this song has an edge that sounds more like a warning than anything, matching Portia's subtle disgust at the idea of marrying Arragon. An obvious contrast is set up as noted opera singer Wiremu Winitana sings a much more melodious and victorious aria as Bassanio chooses correctly.

What emerges most clearly from these Peremona scenes is a Portia who seems queenly indeed—powerful and beautiful at once. Her portrait in the lead casket is in an oval-shaped wooden frame and depicts her with a flower in her hair, recalling portraits of famous Polynesian queens. Bassanio is not an equal match for her, so it is no surprise when she takes control of the situation by turning into the "learned doctor" who saves Antonio. Similarly, in the final scene about the rings, Portia's control is absolute and somewhat heavy-handed. There is no teasing here, but instead a strict moral lesson for the men. Portia's character in a Polynesian setting tends to suggest a pre-Cook

Aotearoa, or at least a cultural exchange with Europeans in which Polynesia clearly has the upper hand.

A Maori Holocaust

Choosing *The Merchant of Venice* as the Shakespeare play to translate into Maori language and context opens the door for potentially contentious post-colonial interpretations. There would be predictable ways to handle this issue, such as the angle taken by the 2001 Court Theater production of a Maori *Othello*, for instance. This version retained Shakespeare's English, but changed the setting to nineteenth-century New Zealand and cast Othello as a Maori general who was "fighting alongside the British in Waikato, a man caught between two conflicting cultures."¹⁸ This type of political statement through a racial change in the protagonist is relatively easy to make, but the Maori *Merchant* avoids such simplified racial commentary. Of course the film could have cast Shylock as the Maori in the midst of Pakeha, but instead it has its full cast of Polynesians who play Italian characters, and a Maori actor also plays the Jew Shylock. Yet the racial implications of this play cannot be erased, nor does the film attempt to do so. As Neill points out, "Jones's version differs from its English original not just in its linguistic medium but in the fact that it presupposes an audience that will sympathize with the Jew as representative of an oppressed minority."¹⁹

Indeed, it is difficult not to make at least some sort of connection between the plight of the Jew and the long-standing oppression of the Maori people. The actor Waihoroi Shortland, who plays Shylock (Hairoka), sees it as relevant that "there are so many similarities between [the Jews'] oppression and what Maori feel about their situation here."²⁰ However, despite these obvious resonances, Selwyn is more inclined to focus on the general themes of discrimination and oppression in the play. One interviewer noted that "Selwyn spoke in general terms about themes of revenge and justice" and concluded that "there was to be no radical post-colonialist reinvention of the Merchant."²¹

However, the "bond scene" (1.3) is filmed in a way that does indeed highlight the racial difficulties associated with any modern production of this play. The scene is shot in what appears to be a public gallery where a painter is at work. This character is played by Selwyn Muru, a well-known Maori artist (who is also the associate producer of this film). Muru has had an extremely political career; the paintings displayed in this scene of the Maori *Merchant* depict the sacking of the Parihaka community by the government in the nineteenth century.²² One could certainly overlook the significance of the setting (especially if not familiar with Muru or his work). Indeed, at first there is no emphasis upon the art, but instead upon the mounting tensions between Shylock and Antonio, the latter never looking the Jew in the eye but resolutely glaring haughtily over his head. However, Shortland's performance of the "Hath a dog money?" speech (1.3.103-25) is not only poignant, but it also redirects our attention to Muru's work; as Hairoka bends his head in mock submission and says "Hath a dog money? Can a dog lend three thousand ducats?" (1.3.118-19), the canvas next to him shows a haunting picture of a misshapen blue human head. As the scene draws to a close, more people enter the gallery and begin to look at the paintings, thus inducing us to pay more attention to the art and to consider its connection to the scene. Finally, as Shylock exits, we have a clear view of the canvas on which the artist has been working, and see the word *Holocaust* written there. As Michael Neill explains, "For a New Zealand audience the moment causes a double displacement, with its allusion not simply to the twentieth-century slaughter of Shylock's people but to the recent controversy stirred up by the politician Tariana Turia when she had the temerity to use the same

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word in describing the nineteenth-century decimation of the Maori.²³

This is the only moment when the movie comments on this parallel directly, but its power is enough to connect questions of persecution to the Maori situation in particular. Certainly for Shortland, the connection runs throughout his portrayal of Shylock; he says of Shakespeare's play, "It's a classic story of prejudice, it's a classic story of oppression, it's a classic story of justice not done, and that's all things that Maori today may certainly relate to."²⁴ Indeed, Shortland's portrayal of Shylock/Hairoka elicits genuine sympathy.

The courtroom scene also emphasizes the racial tensions through its setting in a church in which Christians sit on one side and Jews on the other. The outside of the structure depicted in the trial scene is, in fact, the Auckland High Court building, and the inside is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. As MacDonald Jackson notes, filming the scene in this play emphasizes the fact that "A secular event is enacted in a religious setting."²⁵ The two groups of people file into the building and sit on their separate sides, also distinguished by their clothing; organ music accompanies this procession. During this scene, Antonio wears an outfit with a red cross across the breast, but this costume does more to accelerate the tensions in the courtroom than to suggest any real martyrdom of the merchant. The entire audience at the trial becomes involved in this two-sided debate—at some points during the deliberation, the anger erupts and the members of the group yell at one another.²⁶ At 4.1.125, after Gratiano yells, "Can no prayers pierce thee?," Tubal stands up and says, "Sit! Sit down! Finish this small talk here!" A woman from the Christian side of the audience stands up and says to him "Sir! Enough of your arrogance! For this day is for you to see the power of Christ! Calm yourself!" After this interruption, Shylock and Gratiano continue their argument. Similarly, later, at line 221, after Shylock yells, "A Daniell," he incites his fellow Jews to join in with the cry, and they all repeat, "Ay...a Daniell!" Someone from the Christian side responds, "No! Sit!" And the Jews chant "Hairoka, Hairoka!" until the Duke has to restore order. These added outbursts turn the trial into a larger racial battle within the community that Shakespeare's play does not necessarily suggest. This is an entirely public event: Shylock's "These be Christian husbands?" is said not as an aside, but directly to the Jewish portion of the audience, directing it to question the morality of these Christians.

The scene in which Shylock/Hairoka walks out of the church, slowly, in the silence after Gratiano has stopped screaming at him, is the most powerful in the film. Shylock takes his yarmulke off when ordered to convert, kisses it, looks at his adversaries with hatred, then puts it back on. Turning back to the audience as he follows his friend out, Tubal says an interpolated line, "Eaten by fire! All thieves, rogues!" This has the effect of making Hairoka not an outcast in the sense of a lone outsider, but instead clearly part of a larger group of outcasts. After Hairoka walks out of the courtroom/church, we hear the continuation of the speech from the beginning: "If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge!" (3.1.64-7). There is no question of this Shylock converting to Christianity. As Shortland says,

My playing of Shylock is saying, this is a Jew. The Jewishness is inside him....They couldn't reach inside me and rip the Maori out of me, and you can't reach inside Shylock and rip the Jewishness out of him....for me, all of the things that Shylock perceives about the world around him and his own faith tell me that he would never change....As he leaves the court, his mind is already working on how he's going to overcome this particular problem.²⁷

However, because this film deals with the complex problem of a Maori oppressed by

Maori, the place of Jewishness in this scenario is difficult to quantify. Shortland himself had a Jewish grandfather, so in a sense he also cannot rip the Jewish ancestry out of himself. Most importantly, the inevitable mixing of races and ethnicities that results from the contact between cultures highlights the inconsistencies inherent in racism itself. This film does not present a clearly defined relationship between Jews, Europeans, Africans, and Maori because there is no such thing.

Jessica's Last Word

The final lines of Shakespeare's play are assigned to Gratiano, who playfully meditates upon the importance of never losing Nerissa's ring. Actor Sonny Kirikiri delivers these lines as a way of lovingly teasing Nerissa, whom he is quite clearly anxious to take to bed. In this film, Gratiano (Karatiano) is comic and clowning; his childlike desire to accompany Bassanio to Belmont and his grin when they leave early is infectious. Similarly, the way he stands closely behind Nerissa, poised to whisper in her ear during Bassanio's casket scene, gives their relationship a sense of tenderness that the one between Portia and Bassanio lacks. In fact, because Portia remains stately all of the time, there is a certain professional coldness to her.

In addition to the playfulness that Gratiano expresses throughout most of the play, he is also the most angry Christian at the trial. His continual outbursts and his final scathing speech as Shylock walks out of the church/courthouse are nothing short of vindictive. Gratiano is clearly moved by his passions—whether joking, in love, or irate, he is always in danger of flying into excessive emotional outbursts. Ending this film with his words would have made this version of Shakespeare's play one that rests upon the unique performances of its actors, not necessarily returning to the realm of the political.

However, Selwyn does not end his film here, but instead gives Jessica the last word. The others walk two by two into the palace, but Jessica pauses to read the legal document she has just been handed. After learning of the inheritance and the outcome of the trial, she remembers her words from the night of her escape: "Farewell, and if my fortune be not cross'd. / I have a father left, you a daughter, lost" (2.5.55-6). Jessica's entry into the palace at Belmont/Peremona is tinged with sadness; she seems to pause before agreeing to follow Lorenzo inside. As the double doors close behind them, the image is reminiscent of the two sides of the trial, irreparably separated by hatred and misunderstanding. This action also recalls an earlier time in the movie when Jessica shut a door—at the end of 2.3, when she sadly contemplates what she is about to do and says these very same words, then slowly closes the door to her father's house. Similarly, the closing doors at the end of the film suggest a division and a hatred that has not entirely been overcome.

Because Jessica's final words and motions bring us back to the memory of Shylock, we return to the theme of oppression. As much as we would like to end happily with Gratiano, we are instead reminded of the holocaust of the bond scene and the division of the trial. Once again, the parallels between the racial tensions in Shakespeare's play and those still apparent in Maori-Pakeha relations cannot be ignored. The camera stays focused on these closed doors as the final music plays. This too is unsettling, because the first song we hear is the one sung during the Prince of Arragon's choice, full of angst and warning. Finally, the music changes to Bassanio's, at last giving us a sense of contentment, but it is a measured one.

Given the status of the Maori *Merchant of Venice* as the first full-length film to be made in Te Reo Maori, perhaps the subject matter could appear to be secondary to this impressive cultural feat. The lush presentation of this Maori world is beautiful—the costuming, scenery, people, music, and language are all gorgeous and magical. The film

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is certainly a complex and moving testimony to the work of He Taonga, which managed to produce it on a remarkably small budget (\$2.4 million NZ), not to mention with many actors who had no previous experience with drama but were chosen because of their skill with the language. However, the appropriation of Shakespeare for this endeavour is what makes the film so remarkable. Rather than choosing Maori characters or legends (as in the case of *Whale Rider*, for instance), Selwyn appropriates the ultimate British literary icon to speak Aotearoa's indigenous language. The result is a complex and interwoven story of New Zealand—one that involves and acknowledges its past as a British colony. At times a work like this can point out the oppression of its colonization, and at other times it builds upon its colonizer's own cultural past to create something entirely syncretic. Thus this film manages to speak in tongues Shakespearean, Maori, and modern English, and to speak about the complex social interactions that have marked the exchange between the cultures represented by these languages. One of the great benefits, and dangers, of the Shakespearean subject is that it is always already both colonizer and colonized. The pleasure of this film is that it allows such a rewarding view of Maori culture as well as of Shakespeare's play.

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Notes

1. Although the film is primarily in English, it does have occasional Maori language parts, with accompanying English subtitles. It received awards in 2003 at the Lake Placid Film Festival, the Maui International Film Festival, the Seattle International Film Festival, and the San Francisco Film Festival, among others. This film can be ordered from the following website: <http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~hetaonga/merchant/>. My thanks to Timothy Billings and the members of the "Shakespeare in Asian Tongues" panel at SAA (Victoria, 2003), who gave me helpful feedback on an earlier version of this paper; to Don Selwyn for his willingness to answer questions about his project and to provide me with an advance copy of the film; and to Brent Whitted for his thoughtful critique of this paper.
2. In a biography of the Oliviers, Garry O'Connor describes the situation thus: "In 1948 not only was New Zealand geographically the most isolated country in the world, it had also virtually no living culture of its own. . . . As in Australia, alongside a nostalgia for Great Britain, a strong residual desire for theatre existed. New Zealand, too, as a loyal colony, felt starved of royal visits—no 'royals' had toured since the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester in the mid 1930s—and therefore the 'substitute royal' factor of the Oliviers was again to play an enormous part in their attraction." Garry O'Connor, *Darlings of the Gods: One Year in the Lives of Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984), p. 139.
3. Sebastian Black, "Aggressive Laments: New Zealand Theatre in the 1980s," *New Literature Review* 13 (1984), p. 15.
4. See, for instance, Simon Garrett, "The plays, playwrights and playhouses of recent New Zealand theatre: an overview," *Australasian Drama Studies* 18 (1991): 30-46; Manson Bess, "Young Maori playwrights put to the test," *The Dominion* (Wellington), March 14 (2002), p. 12; Heiko Stahl, "Extending the Code: New Forms of Dramatic and Theatrical Expression," CDE website: <http://fb14.uni-mainz.de/projects/cde/conferen/dresden/report2003.html>.
5. Michael Neill, "From the Editor," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52 (2001): p. v.
6. Christopher Balme, "Between Separation and Integration: Contemporary Maori Theatre," *Centre for Research in the New Literatures in English* 1 (1993), p. 42.
7. Pei Te Hurinui Jones (1898-1976) was a prolific writer and respected Waikato elder who contributed substantially to the preservation of Maori language and heritage.
8. "The Film Makers," Maori Merchant of Venice Website, at http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~hetaonga/merchant/The_Film_Makers/the_film_makers.html.
9. A similar project was undertaken in 2000 by Merimeri Penfold, who translated nine of Shakespeare's sonnets into Maori, entitled *Nga Waiata Aroha a Hekepia* ("Love Sonnets by Shakespeare"). See also MacDonald P. Jackson, "Translating Shakespeare's Sonnets into

- Maori: An Interview with Merimeri Penfold," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52 (2001) 492-98.
10. Christopher Balme, "New Maori Theatre in New Zealand," *Australasian Drama Studies* 18 (1991): p. 156.
 11. Personal communication with Don Selwyn, 29 July 2003.
 12. Throughout this paper, when I refer to the Shakespearean characters in general, I shall retain their names, but references to the film's characters will adapt their Maori equivalents.
 13. *The Merchant of Venice*, Oxford World's Classics edition, ed. Jay L. Halio (Oxford Univ. Press, 1993). For the purposes of this paper, when I am referring to dialogue from the movie, I will be quoting the subtitles directly, with accompanying line references from the Oxford edition.
 14. For a discussion of some of the problems the filmmakers had with the subtitles, see MacDonald Jackson, "All Our Tribe," *Landfall* 204 (2002): p. 156.
 15. Richard Walker, "Maori *Merchant*" Review, *Waikato Times*, 27 July 2002: 7.
 16. Jackson, "Tribe," p. 158.
 17. A comparison made on the *Maori Merchant* website itself, clearly trying to capitalize on the overwhelming success of another foreign film that emphasizes the magical.
 18. "Maori *Othello*" Review, *Christchurch Press*, 2 May 2001.
 19. Neill, p. vi.
 20. http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~hetaonga/merchant/Media_Files/Audio_Clips/audio_clips.html "The Making of the Film."
 21. Walker, p. 7.
 22. On November 5, 1881, the small settlement of Parihaka was invaded by an army of 1500, thus putting a brutal end to a stand-off between the government and the Maori people who lived there.
 23. Neill, p. vi.
 24. "Making of the Film" website.
 25. Jackson, "Tribe," p. 161.
 26. This detail was added to the film because "On the opening night of the 1990 staging, an elderly kuia interrupted the trial, rising to harangue Shylock for his heartlessness," so Selwyn "built this testimony to the scene's primitive power into his film through small additions to Shakespeare's script" (Jackson, "Tribe," p. 161).
 27. "Making of the Film" website.

TRIBAL SHAKESPEARE: THE FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT'S "VOODOO MACBETH" (1936)

by *Melissa Green*

In 1935, American President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Works Project Administration (WPA) to help combat the Great Depression. Several departments comprised the WPA, including the Federal Theatre Project (FTP). The FTP, under the direction of Hallie Flanagan, offered work to various, often unemployed, theatre professionals. During its existence, the FTP financed over one thousand productions and had branches in forty states. One of its most acclaimed and well-remembered productions, William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1936), was produced in New York City's Harlem.

As part of the WPA, the FTP was set up to provide jobs for unemployed actors on relief. This program was also to include black actors; therefore the Negro Units were established. There were sixteen FTP Negro Units across the United States, most of them found on the northeast coast. The largest unit was in New York City and was established in the Lafayette Theatre in Harlem on February 5, 1936. This unit was headed up by John Houseman. Though Flanagan preferred a black director for the theatre, Houseman was chosen for his ability as a white man to work with black actors.

There was a huge number of participants within the FTP Negro Units, especially within the Harlem branch. In *A History of African American Theatre*, the Harlem FTP group was discussed as "the largest and most productive of all the black units. About 150 members were true professionals. Many of the other five hundred actors, singers and dancers had never appeared on the stage. Another 250 signed up for other theatre crafts." Within the Harlem Unit, it was divided into two groups dealing with different content. One group produced works by, for, and about black people. The other focused on classical works on a universal scale, not focusing on color or race. It was within the confines of the classical unit that the *Macbeth* production took place under the supervision of twenty-one year old Orson Welles.

The FTP's production of *Macbeth* in 1936 was one of the first cases in American theatre history of reinterpreting Shakespeare. Adding a sense of black nationalism and pride to the play, the production was set in an island nation within the auspices of voodoo culture. Rena Fraden wrote, "A *Macbeth* set in Scotland played by African-Americans would have been inconceivable, unrealistic, unauthentic, while the voodoo seems not at all to be a stretch."² The "Voodoo *Macbeth*," as it was known, appealed to the people of Harlem and performed to a sold-out audience opening night (an unprecedented feat for black theatre of the time). It brought "Broadway patrons and critics to Harlem in droves," and after its successful sold-out ten week run in NYC, it went on a nationwide tour and was invited to perform in London.³

Orson Welles, who had already directed and acted in Shakespearean works in Dublin and London, still had a lot to learn about theatre. However, he was very experienced within Shakespeare theatre. In his late teens, he had already written a book on the Bard entitled *Everybody's Shakespeare*. This title would later describe Welles's goal within the FTP Classical Negro Unit, to make Shakespeare universal. Houseman asked Welles to direct for him within the unit, and the two decided upon Shakespeare's Scottish play. Houseman and Welles "decided on that play in part because the Negro actors wanted to prove that they could successfully perform the classics...to play a

'universal character.'⁴ Houseman also felt that Welles was aptly matched with Shakespeare due to his energy, theatrical nature, and interest in the Bard. He felt the play sure to be a success under Welles' guidance.

Welles took some artistic liberties in his direction of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Based on a suggestion from his first wife Virginia, Welles set the action in an environment that resembled 19th century Haiti, paralleling the career of Henri Christophe, the black king of Haiti, "a tyrant who was brought down by intrigue and misrule."⁵ Welles stated that the island was not specifically Haiti, instead it was "like the island that 'The Tempest' was put on – just a mythical place which, because our company is composed of Negroes, may be anywhere in the West Indies."⁶ To Welles, the parallels came from the people in power and not the setting: "the Elizabethan tragedies and histories of Shakespeare...offered a critique of fascism's worship of power, and their giant protagonists paralleled the 'great dictators' of modern times."⁷ Yet, what attracted Welles to the voodoo environment "was that it enabled him to make the supernatural scenes a credible center of the play."⁸ Welles's vision of a Haitian-like country combined with the supernatural would prove to be a good combination: "the production evoked the bloody revolutions of nineteenth-century Haiti, adding an uneasy mixture of Christianity, voodooism, and witchcraft."⁹

It also featured an almost all-black cast, a rarity within classic productions of the time. The role of Hecate, which is often left out of the text, was played by a bullwhip trashing male ringleader of the forces of darkness. To accent the voodoo theme, Welles also dramatically built up the role of the witches within the play, focusing on their black magic and supernatural powers. Their scenes were of more importance than in other productions of *Macbeth*, due to the mysterious, magical mood he wanted in the play. Welles's final touch included authentic voodoo drummers and choir. His originality "took advantage of an African dance group that was stranded in New York and a practicing African witch doctor to create a mood of frenzied evil."¹⁰ All of the elements came through his vision and "created a primitive aural violence that went beyond mere ethnicity to speak of an immemorial evil that has existed since the fall of man."¹¹ Yet Welles himself joked about putting "The Scottish Play" into the island, voodoo context stating that, "the only point in shifting the scene from Scotland was because the kilt is naturally not a particularly adaptable costume for Negro actors."¹²

Despite his artistic interpretation of the text, Welles remained true to Shakespeare's language, yet through his own means. Welles directed his actors to speak Shakespeare in a straightforward, very simple manner, and not on the typical elevated performance level, "the proper Shakespearean manner."¹³ Richard France praised Welles's language by saying, "So strong is the textual grounding of the 'Voodoo' *Macbeth* that its production was not only a reconstitution of Shakespeare but a distillation as well."¹⁴ Yet other critics disagreed. He was often criticized for this direction of Shakespeare language. Simon Callow wrote of Welles's direction of language:

[Since] most of his actors [had] no experience whatever on blank verse, and...indeed many of them [had] very little experience of acting...there was no question of turning the Negro Unit into the Old Vic and...what was required were not tutorials in the iambic pentameter but leadership of a galvanizing, inspirational kind.¹⁵

Pierce de Rohan wrote, "The scholarly critics, steeped in the tradition of the Bard, reviewed our Negro Theatre's production as a conventional revival...This is not Shakespeare, in the tradition of Irving and Booth and Macready. Perhaps it isn't even Shakespeare at all, except for his lines."¹⁶

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John Houseman and Orson Welles's intent in staging *Macbeth* was twofold: 1) handling a Shakespearean text would give many black actors a new and challenging obstacle, and 2) if successful, the production would solidify the shaky reputation of the FTP. The newly established FTP had been given thousands of dollars in government subsidy, yet had not produced a successful work. Many Americans were wondering what their money was going to, and due to that, the FTP was even put on probation during the show's rehearsal process.¹⁷ That added weight was also placed on Houseman's and Welles's shoulders. Their goal was not to produce "propaganda or social realism for socially minded black people in Harlem," but instead to use the Negro Unit "to reinvent Shakespeare with their voodoo *Macbeth*."¹⁸

Macbeth went into production with a cast and crew of one hundred and thirty-seven, in which thirty-seven served as leading actors in the production. Despite the large number involved, very few of them were skilled theatre professionals. As the fledgling Welles directed the piece, FTP designer Nat Karson worked on the scenery and costuming while Abe Feder, one of America's first full-time lighting designers, "[bathed] the whole affair in an unearthly glare."¹⁹ The show was in rehearsals for eleven weeks, with several rehearsals beginning at midnight due to Welles's radio career, and taking place all over the city. Welles described the rehearsal settings as, "this theatre (Lafayette), auditoriums, hallways, fire escapes, paper bags, coal scuttles, trash barrels and my apartment."²⁰ The schedule showed dedication from the cast and crew, as well as the director Welles who "was working 20 of the 24 hours."²¹

Technically, the production was full of spectacle, yet all of it was designed to mesh with the cast of black actors. The costumes' fabrics, the set design's colors, and the lighting were adapted for the darker skin tones within the cast. The designers wanted to destroy the racial visual stereotype of "Amber for the Negroes" which was used previously within black theatre productions.²² For example, Nat Karson's designs used bright blues and reds in the military apparel for the noblemen, "an idealization of Negro extravagance," and jungle green within the island setting, "luxuriant and savage ominous with shadows."²³

As opening night neared, word spread across New York City of the spectacular production that was coming to Harlem. One week before opening, the first performance was already sold out despite the fact that the audiences did not know what they were going to see.²⁴ Scalpers were selling tickets around 7th Avenue in NYC at higher prices than tickets for the popular shows then on Broadway. Tony Buttitta wrote:

About four days before the premiere, Harlem discovered *MACBETH* stenciled in luminous letters on street corners from 120th to 140th streets, between Lexington and Broadway. Two nights later, a dress rehearsal was thrown open to project people and friends. Police were called to hold back an estimated 3000 trying to crash after the house had exceeded the capacity fixed by the fire department.²⁵

Houseman and Welles found all this attention and controversy "splendid."²⁶

On April 14, 1936, *Macbeth* opened in the Lafayette Theatre, Harlem. The play opened with the "fanfare and the excitement of a Hollywood premiere."²⁷ Hallie Flanagan described opening night:

A flash of ten thousand people clogging the streets, following the scarlet and gold bands of the Negro Elks, marching with flying banners bearing the strange device: *Macbeth* by Wm. Shakespeare—flash of police holding back the crowds, of newsreel men grinding their cameras on sound trucks—flash of

jewels, silk hats, ermine.²⁸

Brooks Atkinson from *The New York Times* reported that, "as the curtain rose the box office men revealed that the theatre was filled to capacity and about 100 men and women were standing."²⁹ At the end of the play, Orson Welles "was virtually dragged out of the wings by members of the company and forced to take a bow" and the applause went on for "a quarter of an hour."³⁰ The success of opening night only grew during the run of the production. *Macbeth* ran for ten sold-out weeks at the Lafayette, and Welles claimed that actors such as John Barrymore "saw the show every night of its ten-week run."³¹ After leaving Harlem, the production "transferred to the Adelphi on West 54th Street, where it played for 11 performances."³² The production continued to travel across New York City for various performances: "After its run at the Lafayette Theatre, *Macbeth* toured local high schools where admission could be had for as little as ten cents."³³ The production then went cross-country and performed in various cities across the United States including Bridgeport, Hartford, Chicago, Indianapolis, Detroit, Cleveland and Dallas.

Though the critical response varied, *Macbeth* was overall deemed a success. One reviewer, Roi Ottley, wrote that the play was a "spectacular production' and proved the worthiness of both the FTP and black actors."³⁴ Bosley Crowther of *The New York Times* commended the black cast by saying:

[E]very one of the actors seemed as alert and enthusiastic as they must have been the day – or night – they started. The New Deal, not only in the theatre but also in Shakespeare, was meat and drink for them. And any actor who will rehearse from midnight until dawn, the rosy-fingered, every night for eleven weeks must be interested in something more than a paycheck.³⁵

Brooks Atkinson, however, gave an overall positive review with backhanded negative comments intermingled. The review stated that, "since the program announces 'Macbeth' by William Shakespeare, it is fair to point out that the tragedy is written in verse... [but] There is very little of any of that in the current Harlem festival."³⁶ He also attacked Welles's interpretation of the text, stating that "this reporter is inclined to think that in their rearrangement of the play they could have been more considerate of the text than such a free-hand occasion warrants."³⁷

Other reviews focused on the play's supernatural theme, and how the leading character was controlled and destroyed by the forces of darkness rather than his own blind ambition. Welles's artistic principles were attacked by saying that this *Macbeth* was "a shameless degradation of the cosmic tragedy, the scene of which was transferred to Haiti, and its profound metaphysical background was converted into a frenzied voodoo jamboree."³⁸ Some critics felt that Welles's ending no longer suggested the reconciliation and rebirth that came from *Macbeth*'s death. Instead, they felt that the voodoo witches would continue to destroy lives and go after Malcolm next. Bernice W. Kliman wrote of the various critical comments on Welles's vision, stating that "His [Welles's] vision is no more one-sided than many a scholarly article. For him, the essence of the play is the controlling role of the supernatural in a militant society."³⁹

The most controversial review came from Percy Hammond of *The Herald Tribune*. Hammond wrote that, "The Negro Theatre, an offshoot of the Federal Government and one of Uncle Sam's experimental philanthropies, gave us last night an exhibition of deluxe boondoggling."⁴⁰ More notable than Hammond's words were the events that happened after the review's release. Several members of the cast were voodoo practitioners and did not take Hammond's words so lightly. They "had a pow wow and

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decided to take care of the man...they remained in the theatre after the evening performance and beat out voodoo in a candle-lit wing of the basement, calling on their gods to punish the critic. A few weeks later Percy Hammond was stricken with pneumonia and died."⁴¹ Hallie Flanagan commented on the incident by saying: "[T]he legend grew that from a small upper room their terrible pulsing ended the life of a dramatic critic who had underestimated either the production or the occult powers of the performers."⁴² It is rumored that Macbeth received their invitation to perform in England on the day that Hammond died, building to the legend that surrounded the events of the voodoo practitioners towards the disapproving critic.

The frenzy and the popularity created by the play helped solidify the shaky foundation of the new and controversial FTP, leading to other successes under its supervision. The opening night applause "meant more than the success of Macbeth: its real significance was that the Negro Unit, the Federal Theatre Project, John Houseman and Orson Welles were all endorsed."⁴³ Hallie Flanagan was extremely pleased with the success of Macbeth: "She considered Houseman and Welles her two most original showmen; their voodoo Macbeth delighted her with its backdrop of the world's largest skeleton arch, its African drum beat, and jungle throbbing with sinister life."⁴⁴

The play also popularized New York City's Negro Unit director John Houseman, as well as Macbeth's twenty-one year old director, Orson Welles: "The Macbeth production did what it was supposed to do for Houseman and Welles. It made them marketable...What Houseman really wanted was to produce more plays like *Macbeth* with Welles."⁴⁵ Houseman had established the Lafayette Theatre through *Macbeth*, "and the black unit would continue to produce a series of hits for the FTP."⁴⁶ Welles's career was set into motion with the FTP success. He was hailed a genius of the stage, which later ushered him into a stellar film career.

Most importantly, the success of Macbeth gave black performers a chance to tackle Shakespeare. Before this production, black performers were largely restricted to dancing and singing for audiences. The FTP's *Macbeth* made great strides, which benefited not only those involved, but ultimately those in the audience watching:

In 1936, though African-Americans had suffered so much injustice and open prejudice, they were also, it seems, more hopeful about the future and what could be proved by actors excelling in this important production. It was indeed the point of entry not so much for black actors as for black stagehands, several of whom were enabled to join the unions formerly closed to them; and in its tour around the country after its twelve-week engagement in New York, it gave African-American audiences even in the American South opportunities to see black actors in classical drama.⁴⁷

Macbeth proved that they were capable of performing the classics and performing them triumphantly. It inspired other "Negro Units across the country to adapt previously 'white-only' plays, from Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* in Seattle, to Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado* in Chicago."⁴⁸

Another historical landmark that came with Macbeth's success came in the form of the national tour. The FTP put over one hundred black actors on the road in a largely segregated society in which black people were not a part of the accepted norm. John Silvera, the company manager wrote: "And travel for black people at that time...was not the most pleasant or easiest thing in the world. We were living in a strictly Jim Crow situation where hotel accommodations for blacks were non-existent in many cases. But there were no incidents."⁴⁹ The tour itself became as much of a spectacle as the production was.

The FTP was one of the first times in American history that the government gave subsidy towards theatre development. *Macbeth*, “though a success de scandal, was achieved completely outside the commercial theatre: it was, with Uncle Sam as angel, very probably the most heavily subsidized production of Shakespeare in American theatrical history.”⁵⁰

The FTP’s *Macbeth* transformed American theatre history by being one of the first productions to reinterpret a classic work in order to relate it to a modern audience. It reinvigorated Shakespeare for the New York stage and its audiences. The use of voodoo in the translation of the story was unique in putting Shakespeare out of context and into a black perspective for its largely black audience.

Macbeth was one of the first productions to break down the racial barrier within American theatre. It was also one of the first productions of its time to encourage non-traditional casting, which was part of Welles’s vision. Though the play stood as a focal point of the Harlem Renaissance and brought blacks into the theatre, it also served as a turning point for the status of the FTP and the careers of Orson Welles and several of the black actors in the show, such as American theatre and television personality Rosetta LeNoire.

“Voodoo *Macbeth*” radically transformed Shakespeare’s play into a story focused on myth and legends in an ethnic context. Welles’s vision connected Shakespeare with the representative Haitian environment to reflect immediate social and political issues of the time: “His concept may have devolved from elements implicit in Shakespeare’s play, but the working out of it as a tapestry of sight and sound made the ‘Voodoo’ *Macbeth* a discrete and original work of art.”⁵¹ Welles wanted Shakespeare to be universal. The FTP production proved that Shakespeare’s plays were not just for the upper class white man, but for anyone. The FTP’s “Voodoo *Macbeth*,” through Orson Welles, showed Shakespeare to be “Everybody’s Shakespeare.”

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Notes

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4. O’Connor and Brown, p. 8.
5. Hill and Hatch, p. 317.
6. Bosley Crowther, “*Macbeth*.” *New York Times*, 5 April 1936: 1.4.
7. Michael Anderegg, *Orson Welles, Shakespeare, and Popular Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 19.
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15. Callow, “Voodoo *Macbeth*,” p. 37.
16. Pierce de Rohan, “FTP’s *Macbeth*,” *Federal Theatre* 1.6 (April 1936): 23.

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25. Tony Buttitta and Barry Witham, *Uncle Sam Presents: A Memoir of the Federal Theatre, 1935-1939* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), p. 64.
26. Callow, *Orson Welles*, p. 229.
27. Buttitta, p. 64.
28. Flanagan, p. 74.
29. Atkinson, p. 25.
30. Callow, *Orson Welles*, p. 237.
31. Callow, "Voodoo Macbeth," p. 42.
32. Callow, "Voodoo Macbeth," p. 42.
33. Kliman, p. 89.
34. Fraden, p. 152.
35. Crowther, p. 4.
36. Atkinson, p. 25.
37. Atkinson, p. 25.
38. Callow, *Orson Welles*, p. 249.
39. Kliman, p. 94.
40. Qtd. in Buttitta, p. 65.
41. Buttitta, p. 65.
42. Flanagan, p. 74.
43. Callow, *Orson Welles*, p. 237.
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46. O'Connor and Brown, p. 9.
47. Jane Dehart Matthews, *The Federal Theatre, 1935-1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 88.
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49. Qtd. in Callow, "Voodoo Macbeth," p. 42.
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51. Richard France's editorial comment in Welles, p. 32.

**"SEND THE HEAD TO ANGELO":
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN *MEASURE FOR MEASURE***

by Robert Zaller

There were many ways to die a violent death in Jacobean drama: on the battlefield, in the dungeon, in a palace chamber or a bedchamber; by sword or by stealth; as a hero, or a victim, or a villain. The most public and familiar method of all, however, civil execution, was scarcely represented at all. This was unsurprising. Most of those executed in England, as elsewhere in early modern Europe, were felons of the lower orders whose deaths signified the routine administration of justice.¹ The exceptions to the rule were the occasional nobleman convicted of treason, condemned priests, and Jesuits. The quasi-dramatic staging of public death as a morality tale that was so popular in the West from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth century had not yet come into fashion, and executions of political import that touched the monarchy were off limits for obvious reasons. Sensational executions such as those of Mary Queen of Scots or the Gunpowder plotter Guy Fawkes were represented in ballad and woodcut, while those of the Smithfield martyrs, burned at the stake under Queen Mary, were lovingly detailed in John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. The workings of the law on ordinary felons were taken for granted.

Discussion of capital punishment as such was limited to learned arguments, based on Scripture, about which crimes it was appropriate to or mandated for. These crimes were known collectively as "the judicials of Moses," and included such offenses as homicide, adultery, blasphemy, and idolatry. The Reformation gave fresh impetus to discussions of the capital code. Luther rejected the Mosaic law as repugnant to Christian liberty, although he continued to favor the death penalty for blasphemers, idolators, and witches (of the latter he said, rather chillingly, "I would burn all of them"). Calvin, too, was emphatic that the Gospels had abrogated the old law, but Melancthon and Zwingli were both more sympathetic to Mosaic law, and Martin Bucer, whose views were influential in England, commended death for false teachers, Sabbath-breakers, blasphemers, and dishonorers of parents (including fornicators), as well as for murderers, rapists, and adulterers. Mainstream Anglicans held the old law to be superseded, but thought its tenets applicable where they were compatible with natural law. This meant both that capital offenses cited in the Bible could be waived and new ones added; it was on this basis that the death penalty for theft in English law, though specifically exempted from such punishment in Scripture, could be defended. Puritans tended to take a harsher view than others in the English church. Thomas Cartwright upheld the Mosaic law, and insisted that blasphemers and stubborn idolators must be put to death. William Perkins felt that while the old law was the basis of a capital code, the civil authority could add more crimes to it. Thus he demanded the death penalty for adultery, which the English penal code did not prescribe, as well as defending it for theft.²

Occasionally, social critics such as Sir Thomas More criticized the condemnation of the poor for petty theft, but even in More's enlightened and rational utopia the death penalty was still envisaged.³ This was significant in that More's Utopians had no knowledge of Christianity, and consequently did not face the stumbling-block of biblical texts that prescribed death. More's assumption was that a society based on reason, no less than one based on Scripture, would find capital punishment indispensable. As Henry

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VIII's Lord Chancellor, he himself was a zealous prosecutor of heretics, who faced and routinely suffered death.

Against this background, *Measure for Measure* is distinguished in Shakespeare's corpus, and in Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy generally, by its preoccupation with the theme of capital punishment, which serves both as a structuring device for the play and as a symbol of the abusive and corrupting effects of state power generally.⁴ Shakespeare should not, of course, be regarded as an abolitionist or even as a proto-abolitionist. The political vocabulary of his time did not permit such a position; the only terms of debate, as we have indicated, were whether the death penalty was restricted to crimes specified as capital in the Scripture, or whether it was a civil device that could be exercised at the discretion of the magistrate. Nonetheless, capital punishment (or, more broadly, the forfeit of life) crops up repeatedly in Shakespeare's works, notably in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*, all of which turn upon such a forfeit. Its recurrence suggests its centrality as an issue in Shakespeare's moral universe, and its particular function in *Measure for Measure* is to call into question the nature and limits of political authority as such.

Vincenzio, Duke of Vienna, who serves both as the embodiment of power and as its principal interrogator in the play, sets the scene by his sudden and mysterious decision to leave the city for an indefinite period. He admits, or rather condescends to acknowledge, that his departure is untimely and even inopportune: "Our haste from hence is of so quick condition / That it prefers itself, and leaves unquestion'd / Matters of needful value" (1.1.53-55). He offers no explanation of his decision, however, nor any instruction for dealing with those "Matters of needful value" he leaves behind. He appears to take no minister, retinue, or guard with him, and promises only to write, not to inquire of affairs in the city, but "As time and our concernings shall importune" (5.6; emphasis added).

In his place Vincenzio leaves a junior deputy, Angelo, with plenary powers, specifically including those over life and death: "In our remove be thou at full ourself./ Mortality and mercy in Vienna/ Live in thy tongue and heart" (43-45). This appears as willful a decision as his peremptory one to quit the city itself, since in doing so he not only passes over a more senior and qualified minister, Escalus, but places Escalus under Angelo's command. To rub salt in the wound he asks Escalus what he thinks of this; the latter, of course, can only praise his subordinate and accept his own demotion. Angelo himself protests his lack of experience, but the Duke brushes this objection aside, and, declining escort, quits the stage, leaving both his servants nonplussed. As an example of the conduct of high office, Vincenzio's behavior appears as deliberately arbitrary and capricious as possible.⁵

The next scene sees the arrest of the gentleman, Claudio, and his condemnation for having impregnated his betrothed wife, Juliet. This seems to all concerned an outrageous punishment for a minor, and, in Shakespeare's England, a commonplace infraction of church law. Claudio's betrothal, as appears by its description, is a *sponsalia per verba de praesenti*, a matrimonial contract binding in the eyes of the law. He and Juliet are thus husband and wife, and only forbidden to consummate their marriage until it has been consecrated by church ceremony. The appropriate punishment for their conduct would have been the imposition of a minor penance. The church could shed no blood and the matter was not of civil consequence; a child born under such circumstances was fully legitimate. Angelo's sentence is thus from an English perspective, even a Puritan one, both unnatural and unjust: as a taking of life for the "crime" of creating it, and as an intrusion of civil power into ecclesiastical jurisdiction. To be sure, the Vienna of *Measure for Measure* is not England, and Shakespeare imagines it as a place with a strict if laxly enforced moral code.⁶ He would, however, have fully pre-

sumed his audiences to be judging Angelo's actions from the perspective of their own ethical presuppositions and mores.

One of the critical oppositions in the play is that between "natural" behavior and "lawful" conduct.⁷ Claudio's premature consummation of a valid marriage is a borderline example; he acts according to natural necessity, but in doing so skirts the boundaries of the lawful. Society, in Shakespeare, is a perpetual oscillation between these two modes of conduct, and law is partly a correction of, partly an accommodation to, the facts of life. It is thus Mistress Overdone, the madam, who as representative of the "natural" announces Claudio's condemnation, only to learn from her tapster, Pompey, that Angelo has ordered all brothels not only closed but demolished. Her pithy observation encapsulates the view of society from the bottom: "what with the war, what with the sweat, what with the gallows and what with poverty, I am custom-shrunk" (1.2.75-77). From Mistress Overdone's perspective, "the gallows," capital justice, is simply another hazard of life to be dealt with, a random occurrence without moral character in itself. Claudio, although as a gentleman far removed from the world of Mistress Overdone, finds in captivity a similar sense of the law as a capricious exercise of power:

Thus can the demigod Authority
Make us pay down for our offense by weight
The words of heaven; on whom it will, it will;
On whom it will not, so: yet still 'tis just. (112-115)

Claudio's comment acknowledges, as Mistress Overdone's does not, a moral order within which he has, indeed, committed an offense; an order, moreover, derived from divine sanction. His reproach is all the more bitter for that, however, and the verse he seems to quote, God's declaration to Moses that "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Romans 9.15), contrasts the mercy of God as a thing beyond understanding and therefore beyond question with the abuse of discretion by men who use their commission to play the role of "demigod" and impose law without charity. Lucio, the fantastic who speaks for the natural man, fills in the story. Angelo, he says, is "a man whose blood/ Is very snow-broth; one who never feels/ The wanton stings and motions of the sense/ But doth rebate and blunt his natural edge/ With profits of the mind, study and fast" (1.4.57-61).. Deciding to reform morals by searching the laws for one with capital application, he has made Claudio his example.

When Escalus suggests to Angelo that he can accomplish his purpose with less severity and that justice must always be tempered by the acknowledgment of common frailty, Angelo responds that he will gladly be judged as he himself judges, and repeats his sentence on Claudio: "Sir, he must die" (2.1.31). A comic scene follows in which Pompey and Escalus debate the application of the death penalty. When Escalus points out that Pompey's trade—pimping and fornication—is punishable by hanging, the latter replies cheekily that "If you head and hang all that offend that way but for ten year altogether, you'll be glad to give out a commission for more heads" (235-237). Escalus replies that if Pompey is brought to him again on any offense he will have him whipped—whipped, but, significantly, *not* hanged. Escalus knows that laws of moderate penalty in restraint of vice are necessary, but that draconian laws to abolish it are futile. It is a lesson Angelo has yet to learn.

The first interview of Claudio's sister Isabella with Angelo is a further colloquy on the death penalty which once again plays on the themes of appropriateness, proportionality, and mercy. Isabella points out that the law which Claudio has broken has been

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violated time and again, yet never enforced. The implied though unstated point is that a law that fails to allow for nature is a dead letter, and that a law unenforced against all is doubly unjust when invoked against one. Claudio's crime, then, however reckoned by law or by nature, pales into insignificance before Angelo's abuse of authority. As Isabella puts the matter, bitterly:

So you must be the first that gives this sentence
 And he, that suffers. O, it is excellent
 To have a giant's strength, but tyrannous
 To use it like a giant! (2.2.107-110)

Against this, Angelo repeatedly replies that he is but the law's agent: "It is the law, not I, condemn your brother"; "He's sentenced: 'tis too late"; "Your brother is but a forfeit of the law" (80; 55; 71). These evasions climax in a metaphor of the law itself as a kind of roused giant: "The law hath not been dead, though it hath slept./ . . . Now 'tis awake,/ Takes note of what is done, and like a prophet/ Looks in a glass . . ." (91; 93-95). Angelo must resort to personification because he cannot, like the the death penalty's modern functionaries, appeal to the law as a process that transcends the will of any particular individual: it is nakedly dependent on him. This fact makes him vulnerable to Isabella's other line of appeal, which is to mercy. When Angelo declares that Claudio is "a forfeit" of the law, Isabella replies that "all the souls that were were forfeit once,/ And He that might the vantage best have took,/ Found out the remedy" (73-75). If God himself gave the example of mercy in remitting sin, why might not Angelo, himself a creature of sin, follow suit? But Angelo refuses to be drawn, priggishly satisfied in the virtue that enables him both to take refuge in the law and to distance himself from its consequences. This calls from Isabella the play's most memorable tirade: "man, proud man/ Dress'd in a little brief authority,/ Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd—/ His glassy essence—like an angry ape/ Plays such tricks before high heaven/ As makes the angels weep" (118-123). Here is the germ of the now-familiar abolitionist argument, that final judgment is God's alone, and mercy the quality of his justice that he bids us share.

Angelo and Isabella both exhibit an indignant virtue—what Isabella's is he will soon discover—and what attracts Angelo to her is the icy intellectual core he finds in himself. Assured of his rectitude, he is challenged by one whose unshakeable sense of conviction is a match for his own. Shakespeare captures the moment of his fall in a masterful pun: "She speaks, and 'tis/ Such sense that my sense breeds with it" (2.2.142-43). Of course the plot requires just such a resolution, but it is Shakespeare's own stroke to set these two supremely obdurate personalities at odds with each other.⁹

The Duke now returns, disguised as a friar. He interviews Juliet, saying coolly, "Your partner, as I hear, must die tomorrow," a phrase she echoes in horror (2.3.37). In the next scene, Angelo repeats variants of this doom to Isabella: "Your brother cannot live"; "he must die"; "Your brother is to die"; "Then must your brother die" (2.4.33; 36; 83; 104). Each successive iteration seems to toll the inexorable judgment, even while it becomes an increasingly forceful counter in Angelo's brutal seduction. Finally repulsed by Isabella, he threatens to "prove the tyrant" indeed and deliberately prolong Claudio's suffering (168). The Duke too counsels Claudio, "Be absolute for death," offering him a long homily on the suffering an early death will spare him, and Isabella joins him as well, praising him for choosing death in preference to her dishonor (3.1.5). Poor Claudio has now been brought to the point where his unmerited death is presented as a moral and philosophical necessity to which only a cad would refuse assent, at which he pleads, protestingly, for his life (3.1.117ff.). The Duke then twists the knife further, assuring Claudio that Angelo had only been testing Isabella's virtue and that his

death is certain (159-169).

Our knowledge that the Duke is in disguise and our trust that he intends to make matters right in the end—that this play is in some sort a comedy—tempers what would otherwise be a scene of Websterian sadism. It is Lucio, the natural man, who, speaking to the still-disguised Duke, restores the moral balance, tilting it a bit in the process: “Why, what a ruthless thing is this . . . for the rebellion of a codpiece to take away the life of a man! Would the Duke that is absent have done this? Ere he would have hang’d a man for the getting a hundred bastards, he would have paid for the nursing a thousand” (3.2.110-115). Vincentio bridges as Lucio goes on to describe him as a lecher himself—a gross insult from the sovereign’s point of view, of course, but cheerful slander and even a kind of man-to-man praise from the unsuspecting Lucio. Lucio’s antic permissiveness again illustrates the tension between nature and law, but his remark about taking a man’s life for “the rebellion of a codpiece” and his pointed question, “Would the Duke . . . have done this?” sharpens the darker dramatic tension of the play. The Duke, after all, *is* doing this; it is he who has given Angelo power, and, having seen the result, has to the moment merely abetted him. However he intends to make things right, he will have done so at the cost of prolonging a grave injustice and the suffering it entails. In Kantian terms, he will have committed the ethical sin of treating another person as a means rather than as an end. From this perspective, it is not clear how his presumable intention to use Claudio’s condemnation as an instrument of moral reformation differs from Angelo’s intention to use it as an agent of seduction.

We now discover that there is another prisoner awaiting execution, Barnardine. The Provost of the gaol enlists Pompey as an assistant to the now-busy executioner, the punningly named Abhorson. Pompey consents, and a colloquy ensues on the relative professional standing of the pimp and the hangman. Abhorson is offended by this, but the Provost remarks contemptuously that the two “weigh equally” and that “a feather will turn the scale” (4.2.28-29). Since the pimp is a miscreant and the hangman an instrument of the law, this comment seems surprising, but it again illustrates Shakespeare’s problematization of those who serve nature and those who serve justice. It reflects as well the aversion for the hangman even in those who directly employ him. The Provost comments in an aside that Claudio has his sympathy but Barnardine does not (59-60), but his revulsion at Abhorson extends to both cases. Where justice not only constrains nature but, in the most literal sense, cuts it off, the dialogue between them breaks down, and the resulting tension, the instinctive horror that the taking of life induces, is displaced onto the person of the executioner. We must “abhor” the “whore’s son” who carries out the law’s commission, because it violates in so profound a sense the natural compact that is the basis of society itself.

Angelo has ordered Claudio executed at dawn, giving him virtually no opportunity to prepare himself spiritually for death, but Barnardine has spent nine years awaiting his own execution. This is one of the most remarkable details of the play, for such suspension of justice seems far more characteristic of a contemporary American Death Row than a Renaissance gaol. The Duke himself is surprised at it, but the Provost explains that Barnardine’s friends “wrought reprieves” for him, and that the evidence against him was not conclusive until Angelo assumed power. This of course begs more questions than it answers, for if Barnardine’s guilt was not fully established his condemnation seems unjust, and a nine-year’s inquest would presuppose either corrupt intervention or the kind of bizarre judicial machinery that operates in American capital cases.

Barnardine is, in any case, representative of the natural man in his most degraded aspect. He sleeps and drinks his days away, perfectly content with his lot in prison and equally indifferent to warrants for his execution or opportunities to escape. The

Duke, planning to trap Angelo, orders Barnardine executed summarily and his head, suitably dressed, brought to Angelo in Claudio's stead. Barnardine, however, refuses to present himself for execution, and the Duke, still disguised as a friar, is thwarted by this recalcitrance, since as his self-appointed confessor he cannot absolve him in his reprobate condition. The Provost solves the problem by suggesting that the head of Ragozine, a prisoner who has just died of natural causes, be substituted for Barnardine's, and the Duke piously exclaims that Ragozine's demise is heaven-sent. Ragozine's corpse is accordingly decapitated, the Provost brings the head onstage, and sets off to deliver it personally.

The play's long final scene—the whole of Act V—encompasses the Duke's "return," his withdrawal into the guise of the friar and subsequent unmasking, and his final dispensation of justice. This scene witnesses two further condemnations, and four pardons. Vincentio, still keeping up the imposture of Claudio's execution, declares it "The very mercy of the law" that Angelo forfeit his life for having wrongly taken another's (5.1.405). Another biblical quotation is embedded here, for when the Duke proclaims that "Like doth quit like, and Measure still for Measure" (409), he invokes Matthew's "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (7.2). As he impersonates a religious, however—and, it might be added, prolongs still further Claudio's agony and Isabella's belief that he has already been executed—so he misrepresents Scripture. Matthew 7 does not deal with judicial standards, but rather with charity toward one's neighbors; indeed, it begins with the famous injunction to *avoid* judgment: "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (1). The New Testament, then, does not reinforce the Mosaic code of an eye for an eye and a life for a life at this point, but speaks rather of the obligation of forbearance, or, in judicial terms, of mercy. This would have been an important point for Shakespeare's audience, since the Bible, as we have seen, was regarded by many as the prescriptive authority on the bounds of capital punishment. Instead, Vincentio not only misreads a passage on charity as if it justified the rigors of the Mosaic law, but does so in the name of mercy itself: "The very mercy of the law cries out/ most audible, even from his proper tongue [that is, from Scripture]/ 'An Angelo for Claudio, death for death!'" (5.1.405–407). It is a willful perversion of the sacred text.

The second person condemned in this scene is Lucio. Certainly he is a meddling person, an inveterate liar, and a man otherwise full of faults: but he is also the first to point out the injustice of Claudio's sentence, and to urge Isabella to seek a reprieve from Angelo. His crime is to have slandered the Duke in the Duke's disguised presence. Shakespeare's contemporaries would have recognized his offense as a serious one, but the Duke's own imposture has led him into it, and in any case his remarks are not truly a *lèse-majesté* because he does not mean to disparage the Duke by accusing him of lechery but rather to judge him according to his own measure. The natural man sees his sovereign by his own lights; it is because he takes the Duke as a man of the world that he cannot believe he would condemn a fellow creature for a venial sin. Vincentio, however, sentences him to the triple punishment of being married (to a prostitute on whom he has fathered a child), whipped, and hanged. Lucio tells him that he prefers the whipping to the hanging, and the hanging to the marriage.

But *Measure for Measure*, which so often skirts the executioner's axe, sheds no blood in the end. Angelo is pardoned at the suit of Isabella, who is guilty herself for having consented to the Duke's stratagem of sending Angelo's disguised fiancée Mariana to gratify him in her place. Lucio is spared the hanging he is willing to undergo, but forced to marry his erstwhile mistress, as is Angelo to accept Mariana. Claudio, formally pardoned by the Duke, goes off with Juliet. Barnardine too is pardoned, even though his guilt (for what crime we never learn) has at last been established. The Duke has

reasons of his own both for his leniency and his sudden interest in matrimony as a quit-claim for all punishments: he takes Isabella as a bride for himself. Nothing, however, is really settled, and Vincentio's sudden proposal to Isabella—she is given no opportunity to refuse—suggests an elaborate ruse by the Duke to win for himself as a “just” reward the prize denied to Angelo. One is left to ponder what Isabella's true feelings must be for the man who permitted her brother to be condemned by his agent, deliberately deceived her with news of his death, induced her to plead for his supposed executioner under false pretenses, and presumed to make the whole charade right by exposing his own lies. She, too, however, will have little choice but to accept the fate the Duke has dictated for her.

Measure for Measure, for all its often ribald wit and despite the forced gaiety of its ending, is in many respects a parable about the arbitrary power of the state. In Shakespeare's construction, capital punishment, the prime signifier of that power, becomes not the agent of a morality tale about the use and abuse of justice, but the ultimate weapon in the arsenal of Machiavellian statecraft. If the state exercises legitimate authority in mediating between nature and law, the temptations it exerts are such as only the wisest and the best can resist, and even they imperfectly. Angelo illustrates this in obvious ways, but Vincentio in subtler ones. The Duke gratifies himself in almost every way a tyrant can, except for the shedding of blood: he humiliates worthy servants and raises up unworthy or unready ones; provokes and enjoys the suffering of others; assumes false identities and forces others to do so. Above all, he sows the terror of prospective death and then enjoys the sanctimonious pleasure of granting reprieve. He is the author of the play's action, which proceeds from his apparent decision to desert his office and his subsequent manipulation of persons and events, and he not only escapes judgment or censure but wins the gratitude of those whose lives he has turned upside down. The grisly business of lopping off heads is the ultimate exemplification of this arbitrary and unaccountable conduct; and it should be remembered that Barnardine, who is spared in the general reprieve, was to have lost his life precisely to furnish such a head. Yet it is also Barnardine who, in the end, frustrates the Duke and the power of the state he represents, for he is too insensate to feel fear. In pardoning him, the Duke sentences him to discover it, and thus to become his true subject: “Sirrah, thou art said to have a stubborn soul,/ That apprehends no further than this world,/ And squars't thy life according. Thou'rt condemned:/ But, for these earthly faults, I quit them all,/ And pray thee take this mercy to provide/ For better times to come” (478-483). To know the hereafter is the first step in coming to fear the here and now.⁹

Capital punishment remained an emblem of the fallen world for Shakespeare; one of the gaolers in *Cymbeline* says, “I would we were all of one mind, and one mind good. O, there were desolation of jailers and gallowses!”¹⁰ The gallows is thus figured as an evil that exists because evil itself exists. It is not only an antidote for the latter, but also its reflection. In the hands of a tyrant, or even a temporary magistrate, it can be the greatest and most unconscionable evil of all. Shakespeare sees this predicament, and in *Measure for Measure* he represents it feelingly. But there is a deeper suggestion in the play as well. Angelo, whose condemnation of Claudio is the moral crux of the action, is a flawed rather than a wicked man. He is a man carried away first by pride, and then by passion. His faults are actually the obverse of his virtues, for he wishes to govern conscientiously and in part does so; we must not forget that it is he who establishes Barnardine's guilt. What he lacks is the temperance and humility to deal with power. Denying the natural man in himself, he is unable to recognize it in others, and so makes the fatal mistake of severing law from nature. Vincentio, a much cleverer man, wields power far more ably but in many ways more troublingly. He makes pawns

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of his subjects for purposes of his own, thereby violating the Kantian norm, or, in Shakespearean terms, the obligation of charity. Angelo's passion for Isabella leads him to abuse the law, but the Duke conceals his own desire for her under a friar's cloak, exhibiting it finally to her—and to us—only when she cannot evade its grasp. Whereas, then, power should mediate between nature and law, balancing the necessary claims of each, both Angelo and Vincentio use public law to gratify private desire. There is no worthy model of power or of law in *Measure for Measure*, and the spurious harmony the Duke concocts at the end leaves us, finally, not with the sense of comic resolution but of a sham display.¹¹ Power cannot be dispensed with lest anarchy prevail, but abused power is as bad as any anarchy, and the ultimate abuse of power is its instrumental use over life and death. We cannot say that Shakespeare went so far as to suggest that this power, given human frailty, was too great to entrust to human judgment, but we can state that *Measure for Measure* gives us good cause to ponder the subject, and that Shakespeare intended his contemporaries to ponder it too. In this sense the play unmasks Machiavellian sovereignty as the power not to rule but to kill.¹² By demonstrating where that power could lead, not as wielded by tyrants but by ordinary men dressed in their brief authority, it put the legitimacy of capital punishment in question as far as the discourse of the age permitted. It would not be for another fifty years that a moral visionary, Gerrard Winstanley, was to propose its actual abolition.¹³ It is within that context that for us, three and a half centuries after Winstanley wrote, the issues of life and death posed by *Measure for Measure* now attain their sharpest meaning and relevance.

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Notes

1. J. A. Sharpe, "Last Dying Speeches: Religion, Ideology and Public Education in Seventeenth-Century England," *Past and Present* 107 (1985): 144-167; Thomas W. Laqueur, "Crowds, Carnival and the State in English Executions, 1604-1668," in *The First Modern Society: Essays in English History in Honour of Lawrence Stone*, eds. A. L. Beier, David Cannadine, and James M. Rosenheim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). For a European overview of the early modern era, see Pieter Spierenburg, *Spectacles of Suffering: Executions and the Evolution of Repression from a Preindustrial Metropolis to the European Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), and Richard J. Evans, *Rituals of Retribution: Capital Punishment in Germany, 1600-1987* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
2. This paragraph is based on P. D. L. Avis, "Moses and the Magistrate: A Study in the Rise of Protestant Legalism," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 26 (1975): 149-172. The Puritan obsession with punishing sexual immorality climaxed in the passage of an act by the godly-dominated Rump Parliament in 1650 that prescribed the death penalty for adultery; see Keith Thomas, "Puritans and Adultery: The Act of 1650 Reconsidered," in *Puritans and Revolutionaries: Essays in Seventeenth-Century History Presented to Christopher Hill*, eds. D. H. Pennington and Keith Thomas, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978): 257-282.
3. David Harris Sacks, ed., *Utopia* (Boston and New York: Bedford/ St. Martin's Press, 1999), 105-111.
4. J. W. Lever, ed., *Measure for Measure* (London and New York: Methuen, 1965). All citations are to this edition.
5. Vincentio's character has been read along the full spectrum that ranges from the virtuous Christian prince to the Machiavellian deceiver. It will be apparent that I view him as one of Shakespeare's darker creations, particularly from the vantage point of this essay. It would be mistaken, however, to see him as a villain in any simple sense; he represents not so much power abused for personal ends (Angelo's sin) as the arbitrary element within authority as such. As such, he resists any final demystification. For a comparison of Vincentio and Angelo, see N. W. Bawcutt, "He Who the Sword of Heaven Will Bear: The Duke Versus

- Angelo in *Measure for Measure*," *Shakespeare Survey* 37 (1984): 89-97.
6. Mary Lascelles's comment seems apt here: "Stage law, it must be remembered, resembles the law of no country known to history" (*Shakespeare's Measure for Measure* [London: The Athlone Press, 1953]), p. 122.
 7. Cf. David Thatcher, "Mercy and 'Natural Guiltiness' in *Measure for Measure*," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 37 (1995): 264-284.
 8. Cf. Lascelles' judicious discussion of the duel between Angelo and Isabel, pp. 64-77.
 9. Lawrence J. Ross offers a far more generous view of the Duke's pardon of Barnardine (*On Measure for Measure: An Essay in Criticism of Shakespeare's Drama* [Newark and London: University of Delaware Press/Associated University Presses, 1997], pp. 138-139).
 10. See 5.3.295-297 of *Cymbeline*, ed. Roger Warren (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
 11. The trope of the disguised or absent prince in *Measure for Measure* is repeated in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Winter's Tale*; *Hamlet* and *King Lear* are variations on it as well. The most pertinent comparison with *Measure for Measure*, however, may be *The Tempest*, in which Prospero, like Vincentio, deceives the other principals, including his daughter Miranda. It is true that Prospero is trying to recover the dukedom from which he has been dethroned, and if there is an unpleasantly sportive element to his magic we are apt to discount it in view of the play's general exoticism and the ultimate beneficence of his intentions. Even in Prospero, however, we must note a general tendency to abuse power, and a corresponding pleasure in subjecting others to it (Ariel).
 12. Jean Bodin cites the power over life and death as one of the distinctive marks of sovereignty (*Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, trans. Beatrice Reynolds [New York: Columbia University Press, 1945], p. 175, quoted in Debora Kuller Shuger, *Political Theologies in Shakespeare's England: The Sacred and the State in Measure for Measure* [Houndmills and New York: Palgrave, 2001], p. 78). Cf. Shuger's comment on Vincentio's ultimate clemency: "The Duke's justice is strange—stranger than Angelo's," p. 133.
 13. See Robert Zaller, "The Debate on Capital Punishment During the English Revolution," *American Journal of Legal History*, 31 (1987): 126-144.

WITCHCRAFT, RACE, AND THE RHETORIC OF BARBARISM IN *OTHELLO* AND *1 HENRY IV*

by Richard W. Grinnell

It takes no ghost come from the dead to tell us that early modern England uses the term "Barbarian" as one of the many ways it defines and understands the racial and geographical Other. Certainly, for the stage, the barbarian is one of the powerful links between the dynamism of early modern culture and the stability of the classical past. We find it scattered throughout Shakespeare's drama in a variety of contexts, all referring to outsiders and others. For example, Iago calls Othello an "erring barbarian" as he discusses with Roderigo Othello's marriage to Desdemona (I.iii.350); Thersites describes Ajax's wit as being as powerless as a "barbarian slave" (*Troilus and Cressida* II.i. 45-46); and Coriolanus says "I would they were barbarians" after he has been rejected by the Roman senate (*Coriolanus* III.i. 237). Similarly, Berowne contrasts barbarism with the labor of intellect that Ferdinand has prescribed at the beginning of *Love's Labors Lost* (I.i. 114); Thersites uses it to describe the chaotic state of affairs in the Greek camp toward the end of *Troilus and Cressida*; Leontes uses it to describe a world in which rank has disappeared, as he discusses what he believes is the infidelity of his queen, Hermione (*Winter's Tale* II.i. 84); and York uses it to describe the scene of humiliation endured by Richard II as he is led by Bolingbroke through the town: "Had not God for some strong purpose steeled / The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted, / And barbarism itself have pitied him" (V.ii. 34-36).¹

York's use of "barbarism" is typical of conventional usage of the term. In one elegant move, Shakespeare associates the English with the uncivilized roughness of barbarians, and gives us an image of the power of the fallen Richard's pathos. Both depend upon the audience associating barbarism with some non-English, non-civilized, other. Indeed, a quick look at the uses to which Shakespeare puts the term leads us to no very surprising conclusions about his assumptions about what is barbarian. Like Othello, or like Thersites' barbarian slave, the barbarian is an outsider in opposition to the civilized man. In *Love's Labors Lost*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *The Winter's Tale* barbarism opposes intellect, order, and authority. For Shakespeare, then, the barbarian is other and occupies a psychological, cultural, or physical space outside of the dominant ideology and culture being represented in the play.

But the barbarian, for all its long history as a term for describing the geographical other, comes to early modern England in need of specific cultural fortification. Just what is a barbarian for Shakespeare's England, and what language is useful for Shakespeare as he constructs geographical others? How important is race to the definition of the barbarian, and of what is racial language constructed? The following analysis suggests that witchcraft plays an unusual, if not surprising, role in defining barbarism for Shakespeare, and suggests as well that witchcraft is initially intertwined with ideas of race as a defining feature of the geographical other.

In *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, the anthropologist Mary Douglas notes that societies have both geographical and psychological borders that separate them from the rest of the world.² In the Greco-Roman rhetoric of the English Renaissance, the barbarian world is that territory outside of "the area inhabited by the Greeks or by men of a like nature."³ But Douglas' analysis yields us another important formulation: power lies at society's margins. "The man who comes back from these inaccessible regions brings with him a power not available to

those who have stayed in the control of themselves and of society."⁴ Consequently, to formulate the barbarian as a geographical, cultural, or psychological alien is to endow that barbarian with dangerous power. In an anthropological sense, the barbarian brings the power of the margin into a social system that is concerned with protecting itself from that margin. That power must be understood in language that has meaning for the culture in question. For the early modern period, witchcraft is one such language.

One might imagine that race would be another. But race poses problems for the early modern period which witchcraft does not. Many commentators have noted the insecurity of racial discourse during this period. The historian Audrey Smedley tells us that the conception of "race" "evolved from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries," and Ivan Hannaford argues that the conscious idea of race develops in three stages, the first of which does not take place until 1684-1815.⁵ Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker note in their introduction to *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period* that "race" as that term developed across several European languages was a highly unstable term in the early modern period.⁶ "Race," then, and its use as a definitive element of "barbarian," is still unstable. As the concept of the barbarian develops, and particularly as it develops in the contentious arena of the early modern theater, it partakes of the rhetoric of racial difference, but because that rhetoric is still undeveloped and unreliable, it relies as well upon the rhetoric of witchcraft: a far more familiar and codified language for the English stage.

The language of witchcraft is ubiquitous, though often encoded in the drama of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Though only a handful of witches make appearances on Shakespeare's stage, the language of the witch-hunt (accusations of witchcraft, that Richard III uses to demonize Hastings, for example), the language of demonology (that Lear and poor Tom use to understand Regan and Goneril), and the assumptions that underlie witchcraft itself (for example, Joan la Pucelle's association with the fiends of hell, or on a less serious note, Antipholus' distress over a world turned upside down, which he explains by noting: "this town is full of cozenage: / As nimble jugglers that deceive the eye, / Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind, / Soul-killing witches that deform the body," etc. [*Comedy of Errors* I.ii. 97-100]) intertwine throughout Shakespeare's drama.⁷ Witchcraft itself was a relatively high profile historical and cultural phenomenon, drawing intellectual argument from as illustrious a commentator as James VI of Scotland, and though England's persecution of witches was less theoretical and less virulent than its continental neighbors, the witch-hunt and the rhetoric of witchcraft remained as a powerful language for dramatists of the period.⁸

Witchcraft's strategic appeal as a language is that it brings together a variety of challenges to the dominant patriarchal ideology of late Renaissance England, conflating gender, class, and hierarchical challenges with religious and political ones. The summative power of witchcraft as a language of opposition can be seen in the pamphlet literature, particularly in its strident calls for punishment. A contemporary commentator on witchcraft writes in the introduction to *A True and Just Recorde*:

If there hath been at any time, Right Honourable, any means used to appease the wrath of God, to obtain his blessing, to terrify secret offenders by open transgressors' punishments, to withdraw honest natures from the corruption of evil company, to diminish the great multitude of wicked people, to increase the small number of virtuous persons, and to reform all the detestable abuses which the perverse wit and will of man doth daily devise —this doubtless is no less necessary than the best: that sorcerers, wizards (or rather dizzards), witches, wise women (for so they will be named), are rigourously punished.⁹

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The extraordinary need to punish witches that W. W. records above is evidence of witchcraft's perceived danger, and of the perceived importance that the witch-hunt had for Shakespeare's time. Witchcraft inverts traditional gender, class, and power roles, it threatens the social structure, it conflates all manner of social evil and provides European culture with scapegoats upon which to hang (often literally) these evils.¹⁰ This language is well developed, well established in religious, legal, intellectual, and popular culture, and becomes an integral part of the early modern period's attempts to define the racial and cultural others with whom it increasingly comes in contact.

In *Othello*, Shakespeare initially appears to construct Othello's barbarism primarily out of racial language. Iago wields race as a weapon against Othello, clearly intending it to define Othello as a barbarian other. From the first scene, Othello is defined as a racial outsider, a moor, "thick-lips," "an old black ram," "a Barbary horse" (I.i.63, 85, 108). This language of animal otherness defines Othello in explicitly racist terms. But what is interesting is that those terms do not make the transition from street-corner vilification to charges in the more culturally proper senate. Instead, as Brabantio reworks the charges against Othello, he transforms the racism into something more understandable to Othello's world:

[Desdemona] is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;
For nature so prepos'trously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not. (I.iii. 60-64)

For Brabantio, witchcraft, spells, and medicines, rather than race, stand against reason and nature. They are the intellectual equivalent of Othello's barbarism, the spiritual consequence of his geographical otherness. When Brabantio brings his charges against Othello, they are not charges of racial impropriety, but of witchcraft and spiritual poisoning. Being barbarian implies for Brabantio a spiritual otherness best characterized by witchcraft. In a moment that refers back to Brabantio's accusations and helps to crystallize Iago's relationship to his superior, Iago tells Roderigo:

If sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and supersubtle
Venetian be not too hard for my wits, and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy
her. (I.iii. 349-52)

Though Othello, as a racial other, has coexisted productively with the Venetians up to the point that he marries Desdemona, his relationship to his adopted society changes at the moment he is brought before the senate on charges of witchcraft. Though the senate dismisses those charges, and reaffirms Othello's position in their society, the charge of witchcraft powerfully rewrites Othello in terms of inversion and the feminine, the two defining characteristics of the English witch-hunt.¹¹ That inscription ultimately helps to explain the relationship that emerges between Othello and Iago.

In the play's formulation, Othello is transformed by the witchcraft accusation from the masculine general and prop of the state, to a feminized outsider. We get additional evidence as the play goes on to suggest that Othello is no longer the man he once was. For example, Iago tells us that Othello has failed to consummate his marriage to Desdemona ("he hath not yet made wanton the night with her" [II.iii. 15-17]); and Valerie Traub notes that Othello makes himself symbolically impotent when he tells the senate that "the young affects / In me [are] defunct" (I.iii. 266-67).¹² These elements

remind us that the feminizing impulse begun by the accusation of witchcraft has taken hold.¹³ This feminization, of course, leads inevitably to an inversion of power as well. As Iago's relationship with Othello spins out in the play, Othello increasingly adopts the subordinate, feminine, position relative to his lieutenant, consistent with Madelon Gohlke's argument that "the feminine posture for a male character is that of the betrayed."¹⁴ Iago constructs this betrayal in the same way that he constructs the language of racial difference. Othello increasingly adopts this feminine position as he forgoes reason (indeed, as Peter Sallibrass notes, increasingly, Iago's is "the voice of 'common sense,' the ceaseless repetition of the always-already 'known,' the culturally 'given'" and falls into an increasingly disordered psychological state.¹⁵ His loss of control over his reason, his emotions and his body, all mark him as symbolically feminine, and place him increasingly in Iago's control. This subordination is rhetorically ordered by the initial witchcraft accusation, and is reinforced by Iago's insistence on Othello's inherent difference as a barbarian, and as a subordinate and irrational other. Like Berowne assuming that barbarism is opposed to western intellectualism—"I have for barbarism spoke more / Than for that angel knowledge you can say (*Love's Labors Lost* I.i. 112-13)—the audience sees Othello no longer as the powerful upholder of the Venetian state, but as an easily tricked and innocent savage.

Thomas Harriot describes the native Americans he finds on his journey to the new world in 1585 in *A briefe and true report, Of the new found land of Virginia*: "In respect of us they are a people poore, and for want of skill and judgement in the knowledge and use of our things, doe esteeme our trifles before thinges of greater value."¹⁶ Othello will associate himself with just such barbarians in his final speech when he tells Ludovico that he has become "Like the base Judean, [who] threw a pearl away / Richer than all his tribe" (V.ii. 346-47).¹⁷ Making Othello a barbarian invests him with the inability to descry what is valuable, what is not, and he manifests that inability throughout the play.

Othello's breakdown—in authority, in reason, in civilization, in body—is consequent on the appropriateness of understanding the barbarian in terms of witchcraft. Shakespeare reaffirms this dynamic in *The Winter's Tale* in one of the handful of times he uses the term "barbarism." In his speech to Hermione when he believes her unfaithful, Leontes uses barbarism to describe the destruction of social class: "O thou thing, / Which I'll not call a creature of thy place, / Lest barbarism, making me the precedent, / Should a like language use to all degrees, / And mannerly distinguishment leave out / Betwixt the prince and beggar" (II.i. 82-87). This social breakdown, incumbent in the definition of both witchcraft and the barbarian, the result of allowing a character from the margin to be taken into the heart of society, is one that is in the forefront of Iago's mind as he plots against Othello. For Othello has violated what Iago calls the "old gradation, where each second / Stood heir to the first" (I.i. 34-35). In Iago's mind, Othello demonstrates himself a barbarian by not following the old rules of seniority. The hierarchical degradation feared by Iago, used as a definition of barbarism by Leontes, is part of the rhetoric of witchcraft that invests Othello's barbarism with meaning.

A clear indication of Othello's deterioration into feminine disorder, into the definition, if not the power, of witchcraft, is the handkerchief which he gives to Desdemona. This handkerchief is highly charged with marginal power, having come from an Egyptian, "a charmer" who "could almost read / The thoughts of people" (III.iv. 57-58). Indeed, Othello himself tells Desdemona that "there's magic in the web of it" (III.iv. 69). The handkerchief is an artifact from the world of the barbarian, and it serves a nominally gendered function, and a specifically symbolic one. Othello tells us that the handkerchief has the power to subdue men to their wives' desire, and to make women always attractive to their husbands. Indeed, the loss of the handkerchief provides

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Othello with the evidence that he needs to believe that Desdemona is unfaithful to him.

Like the initial witchcraft accusation by Brabantio, the supernatural power of the handkerchief is never actually demonstrated, nor does it need to be. Othello's acknowledgment of the handkerchief's supernatural power over him, his acknowledgment of the link between him and alien witchcraft, catapults him deeper into the subordinate position he will occupy by the end of the play. Iago, of course, ultimately controls the handkerchief, in the same way that he controls the rhetoric of alienation triggered by the initial witchcraft accusation. All he must do is mention the handkerchief and Othello falls into disorder. As they discuss Desdemona, Iago tells Othello, "Her honor is an essence that's not seen; / They have it very oft that have it not. / But for the handkerchief—" (IV.i. 16-18). The mention of the handkerchief sends Othello into incoherence:

Handkerchief—confessions—handkerchief!—To confess, and be hanged for his labor—first to be hanged, and then to confess!...Pish! Noses, ears, and lips? Is't possible? Confess—Handkerchief?—O devill (IV.i. 38-44).

Othello loses the coherence of verse, drifts into prose, into incoherence, and collapses into an epileptic fit. The handkerchief is a charm to control Othello, but it is a rhetorical charm wielded by Iago, just as the symbols unleashed by Brabantio's initial witchcraft accusation come also into Iago's hands and lead, eventually, to his complete domination of Othello. The tragedy comes with Othello's association with the language of witchcraft, and the rhetorical use that others make of it.

The witchcraft rhetoric that helps to transform Othello into a vulnerable barbarian works in a similar way in *1 Henry IV* in the character of Owen Glendower. The discourse of racial difference is again insufficient to contain Glendower. He is Welsh, and Shakespeare's audience would acknowledge him as alien. But without a well-developed rhetoric of racism, Shakespeare must turn to other sorts of language to characterize, and locate, Glendower in the social geography of the play. Already a cultural other, Glendower is introduced early in the play in the rhetoric of witchcraft that Brabantio claimed for Othello. Glendower, however, makes the case against himself, insisting on his difference from all others, claiming the ritual power of the outsider. He tells Hotspur:

At my nativity

The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes
Of burning cressets, and at my birth
The frame and huge foundation of the earth
Shaked like a coward . . .
I am not in the roll of common men.
Where is he living, clipped in with the sea
That chides the banks of England, Scotland, Wales,
Which calls me pupil or hath read to me?
And bring him out that is but woman's son
Can trace me in the tedious ways of art
And hold me pace in deep experiments. (III.i. 12-16, 42-48)

Though associating himself with the art and the experiments of masculine alchemy and magic (along the lines of Prospero, perhaps), Glendower's claim that "I am not in the roll of common men" haunts the play with an anti-masculinity associated immediately with the feminine. Though Glendower makes a case for his uniqueness, in the symbolism of Shakespeare's play Glendower represents all of Wales and the Welsh. To define

Wales, Shakespeare gives us Glendower and Welshwomen.

"The noble Mortimer," the Earl of Westmoreland reports to the king at the beginning of the play,

Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight
 Against the irregular and wild Glendower,
 Was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken,
 A thousand of his people butchered;
 Upon whose dead corpse there was such misuse,
 Such beastly shameless transformation
 By those Welshwomen done, as may not be
 Without much shame retold or spoken of. (I.i. 38-46)

In this introductory passage, the Welsh are made up of Glendower and "those Welshwomen," the "those" being particularly interesting as it seems to refer to Glendower himself. "The irregular and wild Glendower" is grammatically linked to the Welshwomen who occupy Wales with him, and both are responsible for graphically emasculating a thousand Englishmen by killing and castrating them in the field.¹⁸ Even without his own efforts at naming himself a witch, Glendower is connected from the beginning with the castrating witch, and with the indeterminately sexed bodies of the Englishmen who are castrated in his realm.¹⁹ Because he occupies a role traditionally reserved for women, in a place that Phyllis Rackin has described as:

the country of the Others, a world of witchcraft and magic, of mysterious music, and also of unspeakable atrocity that horrifies the English imagination, Wales is defined in terms very much like those that define the woman,

Glendower too is a feminized figure.²⁰ Like Othello, he is the male warrior whose identity as a barbarian leads directly to his association with witchcraft and the feminine.

In a recent essay, Ian Smith argues convincingly that a distinguishing characteristic of the barbarian is an inability to use language eloquently; that broken or disordered language itself is an important marker of the barbarian for the early modern period.²¹ Shakespeare's portrayal of the Welsh, and of Glendower in particular, highlights the role that language plays in pushing Glendower to the periphery of the English world. Though Glendower is eloquent throughout the play (much as Othello is in his defense before the senate, and then again in his closing speech before his death), Hotspur pokes fun at Glendower's awesome pronouncements about his supernatural significance, finally dismissing him with the line: "I think there's no man speaks better Welsh. / I'll to dinner" (III.i. 49-50). For Hotspur, who as a character spends a good part of his stage time refusing to be seduced by his wife, the Welsh ladies, or Glendower (all representatives of the feminine in the play), Glendower's most significant trait is that he speaks a foreign language. Mortimer, too, finds that he cannot understand the Welsh lady who will be his wife, and throughout their stay in Wales, the English characters find themselves up against language that is largely incomprehensible.²² The nature of his language helps to define Glendower in the dynamic of the play. The power of language is also an important element in the ideological construction of witchcraft. As Christina Lamer writes, the witch "has the power of words—to defend herself or to curse," but that language is always mysterious and does not derive from the established order.²³ Though Othello and Glendower control eloquent language, they are also associated with broken language, language that is not good English, at moments when Shakespeare is emphasizing their relationship to the feminine and to the barbarian.

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In the structural dynamic of the play, Hotspur and Glendower oppose Prince Hal and Falstaff. Both Falstaff and Glendower provide dangerous challenges to the masculine world represented by Hotspur and Prince Hal, and both Hal and Hotspur must resist and finally deny the other to emerge as the masculine champions they are.²⁴ When Glendower disappears from the play, and he does so without fanfare, he enables the final conflict between Prince Henry and Hotspur to be a conflict between two masculine heroes who have distanced themselves from the feminine, barbarian, other.

Shakespeare uses the language of witchcraft to begin the process of constructing the barbarian, because in Shakespeare's time, the language of race is inconsistent, new, and difficult to wield. The language of witchcraft, including the language of gender and of class, had been culturally prominent for two hundred years. That is not to say that Shakespeare uses witchcraft exclusively or even primarily. Like his culture, he is in the process of constructing a language of cultural, geographic, and racial difference. But witchcraft gives him a stable language to start with, and it begins the construction of Othello and Glendower as barbarians, opening up the language of alienation and giving Shakespeare stable symbols with which to work.

Interestingly, however, there seems to be no actual witchcraft in either of the plays I have discussed above. Shakespeare adopts the language of witchcraft, borrowing it from the pamphlet literature, from the formulations of English demonologists, from the popular culture of the world around him, but does not accept the supernatural power with that language. Instead, witchcraft is symbolic, a way of demonstrating and understanding the social and psychological breakdown suffered by Othello in the hands of Iago; it becomes a way of understanding Glendower's position relative to the masculine heroic history being worked out by the kings and princes in *1 Henry IV*, and a way of ascribing value to that masculine history. Othello is not a witch and does not use witchcraft to win Desdemona. Shakespeare makes that clear to us even as he shows us the danger into which the accusation precipitates Othello. Shakespeare, ultimately, is aware of the power of the language he is using, and his use of it asks his audience, and us, to be aware of the multiple and political uses to which such alienating language can be put. This self-conscious use of the language of demonization calls into question the authenticity of all of the language types used to define and control the barbarian, even those of race and cultural difference being developed by Shakespeare and others in this period.²⁵ Shakespeare shows the language of witchcraft, of racial difference, the language of the barbarian, to be self-conscious and politically (or personally) motivated, and he challenges his own uses, and his culture's uses of them, as he constructs the barbarian in his plays.

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Notes

1. All references to Shakespeare's texts are from *The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare*, ed. Sylvan Barnet (New York: Harcourt, 1972).
2. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 1966), p. 115.
3. Boies Penrose, *Travel and Discovery in the Renaissance, 1420-1620* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967), p. 2.
4. Douglas, p. 96.
5. Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1999), p. 26.
6. Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996), p. 187.
7. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker, "Introduction," *Women, "Race," and Writing in the*

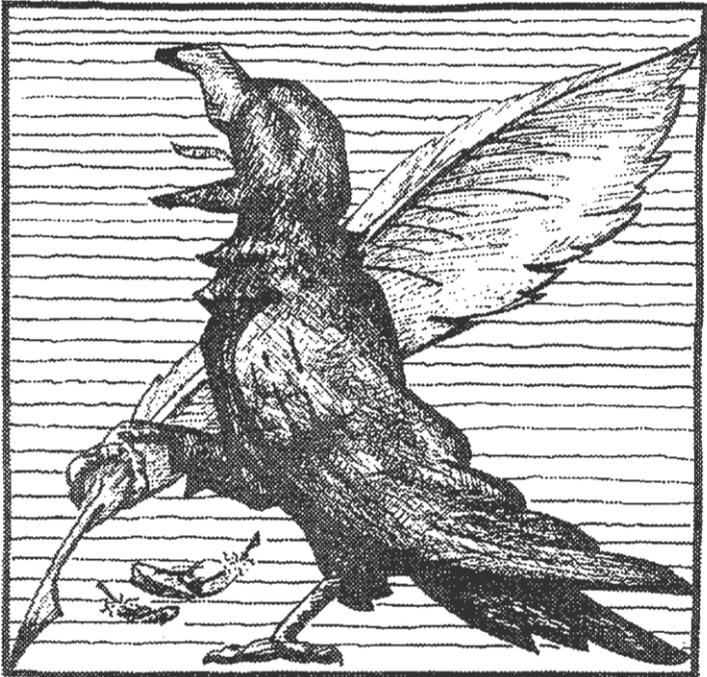
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- Early Modern Period*, eds. Hendricks and Parker (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 1.
8. Stephen Greenblatt has noted that "Witches...—imagined as real or imagined as imaginary—are a recurrent, even obsessive feature in Shakespeare's cultural universe. It seems that he could not get them out of his mind or rather out of his art, as if he identified the power of theater itself with the ontological liminality of witchcraft and with his own status as someone who conjured spirits, created storms, and wielded the power of life and death. But how he represented witchcraft in any given play—as metaphorical projection or metaphysical reality—depended on his specific and local theatrical needs." "Shakespeare Bewitched," *New Historical Literary Study: Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History*, eds. Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993), p. 120.
 9. For recent discussions of this cultural phenomenon, see for example, Anne Llewellyn Barstow, *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts* (New York: Pandora Press, 1994); Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (New York: Penguin Press, 1996); Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Diana Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (New York: Routledge Press, 1996); Christina Lamer, *Witchcraft and Religion: The Politics of Popular Belief* (New York: Blackwell, 1984); G. R. Quaife, *Godly Zeal and Furious Rage: The Witch in Early Modern Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); and Deborah Willis, *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-Hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1995); among others.
 10. W. W., *A True and Just Recorde, of the Information, Examination and confessions of all the Witches Taken at S. Oses in the Countie of Essex* (London, 1582; rptd. Delmar, NY: Scholars Facsimilies and Reprints, 1981), p. A3.
 11. Christina Lamer tells us, in *Enemies of God: the Witch-Hunt in Scotland*, that it is an "anthropological truism that witch-beliefs represent a direct inversion of the values of the society in which they are held" (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1981), p. 134. Many commentators on witchcraft note the same.
 12. That witchcraft was, and remains, associated with the feminine hardly needs documentation. Robin Briggs notes that in England, 90% or more of known witches were women. *Witches and Neighbors* (New York: Penguin Press, 1996), p. 261. That inversion is a formal principle in most witchcraft beliefs was argued convincingly by Stuart Clark in "Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft," *Past and Present* 87 (1980): pp. 98-127. See also James Brain, "An Anthropological Perspective on the Witchcraze," *The Politics of Gender in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Jean R. Brink et al. (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Press, 1989), p. 15, and Quaife, *Godly Zeal and Furious Rage*, p. 63, for other formulations of this principle.
 13. Valerie Traub, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 36.
 14. Othello argues, of course, that age and maturity have put to rest his sexual prowess. But Shakespeare gives us here a character that should represent the highest attainment of masculine power—the military general. Instead, he is at best asexual, and, in the semiology of the play, is feminine.
 15. Madelon Gohlke, "'I wooed thee with my sword': Shakespeare's Tragic Paradigms," *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, eds. C. R. S. Lenz et al. (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1983), p. 155.
 16. Peter Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed," *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, eds. M. W. Ferguson et al. (Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 139.
 17. Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (London, 1590; rptd. New York: Dover, 1972), p. 25. I have modernized the original typography.
 18. Note that many editors use the Q1 reading of "Indian" for "Judean." Both "Indian" and "Judean" work as signs for the barbarian in early modern England.
 19. The "beastly shameless transformation" Shakespeare refers to is, in Holinshed (Shakespeare's source), castration.
 20. Castration is one of the assaults of which Renaissance writers about witchcraft were most afraid. See, for example, Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584; rptd. New York: Dover, 1972), p. 82, or James Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer's *Malleus Maleficarum*, ed. Montague Summers (1482; rptd. New York: Dover, 1971). See also any of the many recent

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discussions of the witchcraft phenomenon in note 9.

21. Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1990), p. 170.
22. Ian Smith, "Barbarian Errors: Performing Race in Early Modern England," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 49:2 (1998), 168-86.
23. The role of Glendower's language is a larger issue than I have space to deal with here. What is significant to this argument is that Glendower is partly defined in terms of the inappropriate language he uses, as Smith argues is true of barbarians in general.
24. Lamer, *Witchcraft*, p. 85.
25. Terry Eagleton has argued in *William Shakespeare* that Falstaff is a natural opposite to Prince Hal. Falstaff, he says, "represents a danger to political stability apparent at once in his body and speech. His body is so grossly material that he can hardly move; his language so shifty that it resists all truth" (New York: Blackwell, 1986), p. 15. These traits, I would argue, connect him to the feminine as well.
26. For a more sustained argument about Shakespeare's acknowledgment of the political uses of witchcraft rhetoric, see Richard Grinnell, "Witchcraft and the Theater in *Richard III*," *Upstart Crow* XVII (1997), 66-77.



RAYMOND LUCZAK

LOVE POEMS

Love poems are never done when the day is.
 They are snakes uncoiling with tongues flicking
 until their loud rattles leave you kicking,
 leaving behind their molten scales of hiss.
 Once struck and heard, they inject in your vein
 where it speeds up the beating of your heart.
 The jungle twitters with birds in depart.
 Insects bigger than your hands strike pain
 with their mandibles like machetes swinging.
 Hot mists rising become your second skin.
 Strange shrieks reverberate and make you spin.
 When you're able to sleep, your head's ringing.
 Please, God, somebody write me a love poem.
 Until then I will wander lost from home.

PREMATURE ELEGY

Is it too soon to share an elegy
 for someone who once laughed but died of greed?
 Or is it best not to say what's decreed
 while quietly among ourselves we agree
 that loss is a terrible thing to feel,
 but not so bad if he was an evil man?
 Do we now pay tribute to his lifespan
 as if he hadn't been driven to steal?

No sadder truth than a suicide there,
 is it, if it could've been prevented?
 If we don't know how to be contented,
 how could we show that we did truly care?
 Elegies are symphonies to the dead
 and single notes for those who would've fled.



A n n o u n c i n g

**Clemson Shakespeare Festival XV (2006)
Shakespeare and the American South
Sunday, March 12–Wednesday, March 15**

**The 15th annual Shakespeare Festival, featuring
The National Players Touring Company, is on the theme
“Shakespeare and the American South.”**

Lectures

**by Douglas Lanier,
The University of New Hampshire,
&**

**by Christy Desmet,
The University of Georgia,**

**on “Shakespeare and the American South”
Sunday, March 12, 3 pm**

Performances

The Taming of the Shrew

by William Shakespeare

Monday and Tuesday, March 13-14, 8 pm

The National Players

\$18 adults / \$10 students (general seating)





Festival Reviews





Clemson Shakespeare Festival XIII
FEBRUARY 16-24, 2004



S H A K E S P E A R E ' S
J E S T S & J E S T E R S



"THE VIRTUE OF THIS JEST": THE PRODUCTIONS OF CLEMSON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL XIII

by John R. Ford

The theme of the Clemson Shakespeare Festival XIII, February 16-24, 2004, was "Shakespeare's Jests and Jesters." The three productions for the festival, the Clemson Players' *Twelfth Night* and Shenandoah Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, all explored Shakespeare's ambivalent attitude toward jests and jesters.¹ The Clemson Players explored the pleasures of revelry against the background of a social world in metamorphosis. Shenandoah Shakespeare, in *Henry IV, Part I*, explored the surprisingly and uncomfortably close relationship between festival humor and political power, the razor-thin line separating the tavern and the court, and, in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the pleasures and shame of procreative language.

What first struck me about the Clemson Players' *Twelfth Night*, directed by Kristin Kundert-Gibbs, was the geography of its Illyria. For such an opalescent place, where "nothing that is so, is so" (4.1.8-9), this was a world surprisingly rooted in architecture, a world of bridges traversing streams, of porches and patios, small gardens, a Christmas tree, and what looked like a weeping willow—or was it a sad cypress?—marking the boundary between Orsino's world and Olivia's, complete with competing front porches.² It was a landscape that grounded the world of festive riot in the architecture of social community. Dominating the stage, left and right, were two households, more or less alike in dignity. Orsino's house defined one side of the stage (stage right), Olivia's house the other. Olivia's house was somewhat larger than Orsino's, a little surprising given Toby's—and Orsino's—attention to the social space between Olivia and Orsino (George Kitchens), all that "quantity of dirty lands" (2.4.82). Between the two large front doors of Olivia's house hung a broad banner on which was embroidered a coat of arms, perhaps a signal of the world of social distinction only slightly hidden by revelry, perhaps a memento of Olivia's dead father and brother, perhaps both. Most of the frenzied action of this production took place in the exterior space outside these two domestic households.

Consequently, the timing of mistaken identity was reinforced by the choreography of movement on stage as characters kept missing one another on this set's complex traffic patterns. But what also came across was the sense of a community in constant motion, an energy that certainly contributed to the play's comic collisions, but also hinted at a fluid social structure itself in uneasy metamorphosis. It was against this background of social instability that this production presented a number of tentative moments of intimacy between characters of different social status. In the play's opening scene (this production, like many others, reversed 1.1 and 1.2), there were moments of tenderness between Viola (Lindsey Mann) and the sea captain (Peter Gutierrez). When he told Viola of Olivia's (Emily Perkins) history, he hesitated, just for a moment, before speaking of Olivia's brother, "who shortly also died," a gesture acknowledging a sensitivity to Viola's own grief. After the captain offered his silence and support, the two embraced. This moment, of course, marked the last time these two would meet in the play. But the very brevity of the gesture established a poignant and fleeting social connection. There were other such moments. After Feste completed his catechism and once again commanded, "Take away the fool," the clown and lady embraced, a moment perhaps borrowed from Trevor Nunn's film. There were sim-

ilar moments between Toby (Casey M. Cregan) and Maria, of course, but also between Feste and Maria (Katie Jones), who joined the fool in harmony during the second stanza of "O Mistress Mine." Those hints of mixed consanguinity—social realignments that *Twelfth Night* would sometimes sanction, sometimes repress—were reinforced by the director's crossed racial casting. Orsino, for example—and much of his household—were of African derivation in this production, suggesting rich possibilities of recognition for the comic communities of both Illyria and Clemson.

Twelfth Night is a play that willingly sacrifices matters of exposition and linear plotting in order to achieve a multiply woven balance of tones and actions. The play begins, not with the exposition of 1.2 but with the audience's sudden engagement with an unidentified man lost in lyrical melancholy. This production, like many others, re-ordered several early scenes for clearer and more immediate exposition as well as a more straightforward story line. Moments before the play began, a solitary figure dressed in black emerged, shaking a tabor. It was Feste. Quickly he began to accompany himself as he sang lines from a song he would sing as an epilogue: "For the rain it raineth every day." Suddenly the stage was overtaken by fog and thunder. So the storm, a haunting verbal echo in the play, was literally present here, complete with some spoken off-stage dialogue from the opening of *The Tempest*. The scene that followed the storm, Viola's entrance, was itself followed by a symmetrically balanced short scene of Sebastian (Billy Stignor) emerging ashore, accompanied by Antonio (Mike East). Only then, within a dramatic context of wind and rain, or storm and loss and mourning, do we hear the first words of the play: "If music be the food of love, play on!" These changes gave the audience a clearer introduction to the play, and to its destination, but at a price. We lost something of the lyrical tempo both within and between scenes as well as an element of mystery and wonder. That was also true of the final recognition scene, when Viola's and Sebastian's liturgical sequence of lines was accelerated, perhaps for a more naturalistic effect. Nonetheless, this production, the first of the three CSF productions, was a fine introduction to a festival determined to celebrate, and at times to critique, Shakespeare's world of jests and jesters. Appropriately, this cast of spirited and engaging actors was led by Mike Trehay as Feste.

Jesting had a political urgency in the Shenandoah Shakespeare's production of *Henry IV, Part I*, directed by Joyce Peifer and Jim Warren. The production was marked from the very beginning with fierce competition—not merely among the characters in this play about civil conflict, but among the actors who played them. Who would tell this story? Whose voice would shape the history? These were questions brilliantly enacted by Shenandoah in terms that got at the political heart of theatre and the theatrical heart of politics. All theatre is contestatory—and not merely in the sense that its plots are filled with conflict. At the heart of theatrical performance is a struggle over the very shape of the story. In theatre, unlike film, there is no single controlling voice, or eye. Instead, the play's multifarious voices contend with one another over possession of their own stories. Is *Henry IV, Part I* the celebration of the education of a great hero? Or is it the chronicle of political self-fashioning, the maturation of a skillful political player who has learned how he may "so offend to make offense a skill"? Different Hals, different Henrys, different Falstoffs attempt to settle that question from production to production, even from performance to performance. Essential to this struggle is the presence of an audience. Throughout this production of *Henry IV, Part I*, both the characters in the play and the actors who impersonated them were actor-politicians attempting to shape, before a judging audience, their memory of past events. It might have been Hotspur (J.C. Long) remembering Mortimer's heroic actions against Glendower (Aaron Hochhalter) in the council scene (1.3), here a speech directed as much to us as to the King. Similarly, when Falstaff (Benjamin Curns) recollected history, whether

of the Gad's Hill robbery or of Hotspur's "wound in the thigh," this double man spoke to a double audience. Even the actors, competing with one another for top theatrical billing in the mind of the audience, were engaged in political as well as theatrical seduction. For whoever won our affections helped shaped our memories of these events.

Often arguments between characters were blocked in such a way that the actors faced the audience as much as one another. In the tavern, for example, as Hal (Gregory Jon Phelps) and Falstaff rehearsed the prince's performance of his conversion before the King, they first presented the scene as a kind of "preview" aimed not just at the tavern audience but at us. When Falstaff pleaded that to "banish plump Jack" is to "banish all the world," the knight confidently gestured toward the audience. For "we," Falstaff hoped to persuade us, *are* the world who cannot live without fat Jack. Indeed, Shenandoah Shakespeare's trademark habit of inviting members of the audience into the performance, either singly or en masse, had a political valence here. When Falstaff presented his army of "pitiful rascals" to Hal and Westmoreland (Joann Sacco), he drew several audience members on stage in a kind of conscription. Our laughter at these "mortal men" was all the stronger, given our involvement in the joke. Our merriment implicated us in the cold-blooded ethic that reduces human beings to "food for powder" (4.3.64, 67, 66). The conspirators were no less solicitous. As Hotspur related to Sir Walter Blunt (Alyssa Wilmoth) his revised history of *Richard II*, he looked hopefully at us.

Soliloquies were especially dangerous. We were, for example, deeply implicated in the famous catechism on honor. Just as this Falstaff had earlier "coached" Bardolph (Aaron Hochhalter) and Peto (Christopher Seiler) in the tavern, cueing them in their supportive responses during the Gad's Hill narrative, so he coached us toward a definition of "honor." It did not take much rehearsing for us to learn our lines. Can honor set to a leg? "Nooooooo!" we boomed. Perhaps the most effective use of the audience was by Hal during his "I know you all" soliloquy (1.2). He was neither speaking to himself nor confiding in the audience. Rather, he was *implo*ring us, as he would later implore his father, to support a rationale to which he himself did not entirely subscribe. The soliloquy, then, very effectively mapped out the dissonance between Hal's outward confidence and a more ambivalent subjectivity.

Shenandoah's practice of doubling roles also had political implications as it blurred the moral distinctions among the dominant political groups. Doubling especially sharpened the parodic relationship of several scenes. King Henry (James Beard), for example, doubled as both one of the Canterbury pilgrims and Mortimer. In the first instance, the pilgrim's loss of his crowns hinted at the indirect way that Henry had inherited *his* crown. Moreover, the scene brought into uncomfortable symmetry the image of two martyrs murdered by kings: Thomas à Becket and Richard. Similarly, by having the same actor play Henry and Mortimer, this production gave the lie to the king's two bodies, as the usurper Bolingbroke and the "heir to the crown" Edmund Mortimer literally inhabited the same body. J. C. Long, as both Hotspur and Poins, was wonderfully adept at metamorphosing from the King of Honor to its most cynical debunker with nothing more than a quick flip of a reversible vest and a shift in accent. The implication was that two such diametrically opposed characters might indeed be cut from the same cloth. That Aaron Hochhalter played both Glendower, the famed warrior-magician, and Bardolph also blurred the distinction between hero and coward. Glendower also, as it turned out, ran when he saw others run.

One other strength of the production deserves note. *Henry IV, Part I* is a play where no two members of the same family seem to speak the same language, where all speakers are in search of "a commodity of good names" (1.2.83). In 3.1, where the

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conspirators meet in Wales, Lady Mortimer (Joann Sacco) both spoke and sang in Welsh with passion and clarity. Part of the effect here, as always, was to present a linguistically torn nation to our ears. And yet her voice, particularly her singing voice, had such power and beauty that we could not help but be moved by its feeling disputation. Learning to drink with any tinker in his own language may turn out to be more difficult than Hal had anticipated, even if he does acquire some pieces of French. But such singing, sending its strange words across cultures and language, raised the possibility that new words might redeem us yet.

The *Two Gentlemen of Verona* is a play marked by a very busy itinerary. It moves briskly from interior to exterior settings, shuttling us back and forth from Verona to Milan several times, ending up in a surreal forest, presided over not by magical fairies but by the equally enchanting romances about romantic outlaws, fictions that look backward to Robin Hood and forward to the Pirates of Penzance. The sheer variety of imagined worlds might keep a stage designer busy. But Shenandoah Shakespeare, under the direction of Fred Nelson, took a different tack, deciding to stage this play on an entirely empty stage. Not even the company's signature boxes were used. For this production, finally, was not about Verona or Milan, or about Proteus, Valentine, Julia, or Sylvia, or even about love. Instead, Shenandoah Shakespeare invited its audience to participate in the sheer exhilaration of *inventing* "Verona" or "Proteus," or "Julia," and certainly "love" out of nothing but words. This is also, of course, a play about the dangers of such verbal re-creations, the inconstancies to which our love of words, and words of love, may lead us. But in this play even the most forthright expressions of shame are dressed in taffeta phrases. Proteus, confounded by shame and guilt after his treachery and attempted rape have been exposed, looks in his heart and writes: "O Heaven, were man / But constant, he were perfect!" (5.4.107-08).

In a short essay included in the program for the Shenandoah Shakespeare Express Excellent Motion Tour, 2003-04, Fred Nelson, the director of this production, noted that "Shakespeare uses the word 'love' more times in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* than in any of his other plays" (n. p.). Other plays might explore love more deeply or more widely than this one. But no play is as fascinated with the *words* of love as is this one. From the opening moments of the play, Shenandoah Shakespeare would tutor us in the creative play of words. At every shift in setting, a group of singers would stride on stage and sing a one line verse, "Welcome to Verona!" And there we were! Similar song lyrics would banter us from one locale to another. "Welcome to Milan!" "Welcome back to Milan!" "Welcome back to Verona!" "Welcome back again to Milan!"

Characters proved just as easy to create. When we entered the forest, we were greeted by a merry band of leather-jacketed youth. Looking like a gentlemen's chorus from Gilbert and Sullivan, or a rowdy high school pep squad, they arranged themselves and burst into song: "We are the outlaws! Beware the outlaws!" The pleasures of verbal theatricality were also the pleasures of theatrical creativity. Lance (Aaron Hochhalter), trying to tell the story of Crab's indifference to human suffering, attempted to create a kind of pageant out of shoe leather and words: "Nay, I'll show you the manner of it. This shoe is my father. No, this left shoe is my father; no, no, this left shoe is my mother. Nay, that cannot be so neither. Yes, it is so, it is so: it hath the worsor sole" (2.3.13-17). Lance's attempts to create characters out of his own wardrobe anticipate and parody any number of Proteus's attempts to define a Sylvia out of song, or to rationalize his own "threefold perjury," even his very self, out of the fabric of his own desires: "Julia I lose, and Valentine I lose; / If I keep them, I needs must lose myself. / If I lose them, thus find I by their loss" (2.6.5; 19-21). Yet even as we critique these constructions, we are also participating in the joyful wish fulfillment of an actor, or a direc-

tor, creating a world out of words.

The pleasures of deconstructing the language of love were just as sharp as the pleasures of deploying those words. More written correspondence gets shredded in this production than in any other play by Shakespeare. Not only does Julia (Joann Sacco) tear up Proteus's (James Beard) love letter to herself in 1.2, but, in this production, Valentine (Gregory Jon Phelps) tears up one love letter to Sylvia, and her father, the Duke (Christopher Seiler), discovering a rope and a letter in 3.1, rips up another. Finally, when Sylvia reads Proteus's love letter, given to her by the disguised Julia, Sylvia tears the letter, creating as she does her own rhetorical trope:

I will not look upon your master's lines.
I know they are stuffed with protestations
And full of new-found oaths, which he will break—
As easily as I do tear his paper. (4.4.128-31)

This literal deconstruction of lovers' vows is certainly a very effective satirical strategy that disassociates words from their purported meaning, that "unpacks" these holy words, revealing the shreds of desire and self-interest that lie behind them. And yet there is in these scattered verbal fragments a hint of pleasure at the thought of re-creating them into any number of meaningful designs. In this production, Julia, after tearing up Proteus's letter, was fascinated by the possibilities of rearrangement. There was excitement as well as regret as she first discovered her name, "kind Julia," then "Love-wounded Proteus" in the pieces of language (1.2.106; 110). There was in such verbal extravagance—as open to satire as it might be—something wonderful, like recognizing one's own name in a fragment written in another language, or the thrill of a playwright scrambling the words of his memory into characters and plots, and Verona.

This production kept reminding us how *young* these lovers were. When Proteus and then Valentine felt their first urgings of desire, they didn't have a *clue* about what was happening to them. They certainly didn't know how to express those passions, much less how to name them. So they bantered back and forth what "writers" say about whatever this odd feeling might be, either quoting memorized maxims or appropriating a fragment of rhetoric they had read somewhere.

Proteus: Yet writers say: as in the sweetest bud
The eating canker dwells, so eating love
Inhabits in the finest wits of all.
Valentine: And writers say: as the most forward bud
Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,
Even so by love the young and tender wit
Is turn'd to folly, blasting in the bud . . . (1.1.42-48)

If nothing else, all these famous quotations offered to their confused adolescent states a kind of intelligible respectability.

Shenandoah Shakespeare skillfully reminded us that *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is a play not so much about first love as first flush. Like their creator, these lovers found themselves in possession of wonderful words that offered strange powers, sexual as well as verbal, that they didn't quite know what to do with. There was a self-consciousness, especially in this production, to the way Proteus reasoned his way toward betrayal, and then to rape. Similarly, when Valentine, moved by Proteus's repentance, offered to give his friend "all that was mine in Sylvia" (5.4.83), there was that same earnest self-consciousness, as if Valentine had decided that somewhere in their texts, "writers" must have had *something* to say about this.

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There is, of course, a dark side to these verbal pleasures and jests. As always in Shakespeare's comedies, we should look to the women for such wariness. The restoration of Julia's and Proteus's love was particularly fraught with unease in this production, her hand clasping and unclasping the hand of her inconstant love. Moreover, as the play reminds us, the usually articulate and verbally playful Sylvia was silent from the moment of Valentine's offer to give her away until the end of the play. In this production Sylvia (Vanessa Mandeville Morosco) was so startled by Valentine's "gift" that, distraught, she wandered downstage right to an isolated spot, distancing herself from the group for several moments, although she finally recovered her passion and rushed across the stage to Valentine, kissing him on the lips with smacking force. Her initial skepticism may have been warranted. Proteus's or Valentine's youthful insecurity may, in a generation or so, harden into patriarchy, as when Sylvia's father gives his daughter to Valentine according to his station and gender: "Thou art a gentleman, and well derived; / Take thou my Sylvia, for thou hast deserved her" (5.4.146-47). Valentine's declared "gift" of Sylvia to Proteus uncomfortably anticipated this proprietorial language of the Duke, just as Hotspur's hot-blooded imagination of high-honored deeds on "the gentle Severn's sedgy bank" (1.3.98) was, finally, not that far removed from Worcester's cold-blooded revisionary re-enactment of civil war, or just as the transgressive imaginative excess of the revelers turned out to be awkwardly entangled with the transgressive sobriety of Malvolio's desires.

But for the moment all that borrowed rhetoric, all that verbal power, was steeped in boyish innocence. The play ends with a final jest, as the reunited boyhood friends celebrate their new bonding by playing a joke on the Duke, keeping him in the dark about Julia's sexual disguise by offering teasing comments about "Sebastian's" odd behavior and appearance, both young men blithely unaware that the sexual jest redounds on them. It's a schoolboy's joke that takes us back to that jesting contest of what "writers say" about love, and about women. But, oh, the places they've gone since then. Two young boys, fresh from their books, go off on the high adventures they've read about, and then come home to tell one another their stories. These are all lies, of course, gross as a mountain. But as Falstaff knew well enough, they are "worth the list'ning to" (2.4.21).

Delta State University

Notes

1. *Twelfth Night*, Clemson Players, directed by Kristin Kundert-Gibbs, Brooks Theatre, Clemson University, 21, 22 Feb. 2004; *Henry IV, Part I*, Shenandoah Shakespeare, directed by Joyce Peifer and Jim Warren, Brooks Theatre, Clemson University, 23 Feb. 2004; *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Shenandoah Shakespeare, directed by Fred Nelson, Brooks Theatre, Clemson University, 24 Feb. 2004.
2. All textual references are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

THE 2004 ALABAMA SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL'S *MACBETH* AND *TITUS ANDRONICUS*

by Craig Barrow

In the thirty-two year history of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, *Macbeth* has been done six times, while *Titus Andronicus* has not been previously performed and is no doubt part of the effort by the Festival to perform all of the Shakespeare canon. Overall the productions of *Macbeth* at the Festival have not been good. I am plagued by memories of a 1984 production set in World War I where a metal stage apparatus, with many creaks and groans, upstaged the actors, and a 1990 production in which the actor playing Macbeth appeared to think of the main character as a heavy in a gangster movie. The 1997 *Macbeth*, like the production this year, was directed by Kent Thompson, the Artistic Director of the Festival, who at that time conceived of *Macbeth* as a morality play, with the world of the Scottish Celts giving way to English Christianity. That production was graced by two of the finest actors in the company, Greg Thornton as Macbeth and Greta Lambert as Lady Macbeth, who both gave strong performances. The 2004 production, which in its costuming reminds the audience of Mel Gibson's *Braveheart*, features Harry Camahan as Macbeth and Kathleen McCall as Lady Macbeth. They are not the equals of Greg Thornton and Greta Lambert.

Camahan is the biggest disappointment. Physically Camahan looks like an athlete with a commanding presence; he does not mar his lines, but he fails to project Macbeth's interior reality, what Harold Bloom calls "a power of fantasy so enormous that it seems to be Shakespeare's own."¹ A. C. Bradley sees Macbeth plagued by mental images so real that they nearly become tangible, such as Macbeth's imagined dagger at first clean and then covered with "gouts of blood" in 2.1.² For the tragedy to work, the audience must feel Macbeth's weight of choice in the killing of Duncan as well as the horrible psychological burden of Macbeth's realizations that more killings appear necessary to assure his safety in power and later that no security is possible. What Camahan fails to do is project Macbeth's stirrings of conscience prior to and immediately after the murder of Duncan and Macbeth's subsequent loss of human solidarity and friendship as a result of his murderous treachery. Camahan's rendition of Macbeth's speech in 5.3.22-29, where he laments "that which should accompany old age. / As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends, / I must not look to have," does not contain the regret and emotional resonance that an actor like Greg Thornton can provide an audience.³

As Lady Macbeth, Kathleen McCall cannot project the raw will that Greta Lambert embodies and that she needs early in the play to spur Macbeth to kill Duncan, and she is not able to delineate the levels of emotional shock Lady Macbeth gradually suffers throughout the play as the horror of her own deeds and Macbeth's accumulate, deeds which culminate in the sleepwalking scene of 5.1. McCall seems much older than Camahan, so that the almost gross sexuality of Lady Macbeth's "unsex me here" speech in 1.5.40-54 and her more shocking behavior at the end of Act I, where she winds her legs about Camahan's waist as he carries her off the stage, presumably to make love and plan Duncan's murder, does not seem appropriate. The combined character of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth that Robert Lordi argues for in his excellent essay does not seem possible with this acting couple.⁴ McCall's Lady Macbeth is not "Macbeth's alter ego."



Kathleen McCall as Lady Macbeth.

Of course my response to this production is not helped by my response to the 1997 ASF production of *Macbeth*. In my forty years of theatre-going, that performance of the tragedy was the best that I have seen. While I have misgivings about the principal actors in the 2004 *Macbeth*, much in the present production pleases me, particularly the witches. Sonja Lanzener, who played one of the witches in the 1997 production, appears in this production as well, and she is joined by Libby George and Lauren Hender. Together they arise from a set designed by Peter Harrison as if they were a part of the land, a natural force. Three towering rocks, which appear on each side of the slab-like stone stage, resemble Stonehenge. The umber tones of smaller rocks, casually mixed with skulls just off the performance area, are highlighted by amber lights. Music, nicely created by Patrick Byers for flute, drums, cello and bass, accompanies their appearance. The apparitions in 4.1 are nicely handled by video projection, while the cauldron/trapdoor appears as a part of the earth itself and sometimes as hell. The witches, agents of equivocation, as Frank Kermode sees them, which Macbeth in 5.5.42-43 describes as "th' equivocation of the fiend/That lies like truth 'where' Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (1.1.11), ought to make clear the divisions in Macbeth's heart prior to and immediately after Duncan's murder.⁵ Thematically, Thompson's use of the witches' scenes is one of the best I have ever seen.

Banquo, ably played by Aaron Cabell, illustrates the significance of the weird sisters, giving Macbeth an early warning in 1.3.123-126:

... oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us the honest trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence.—

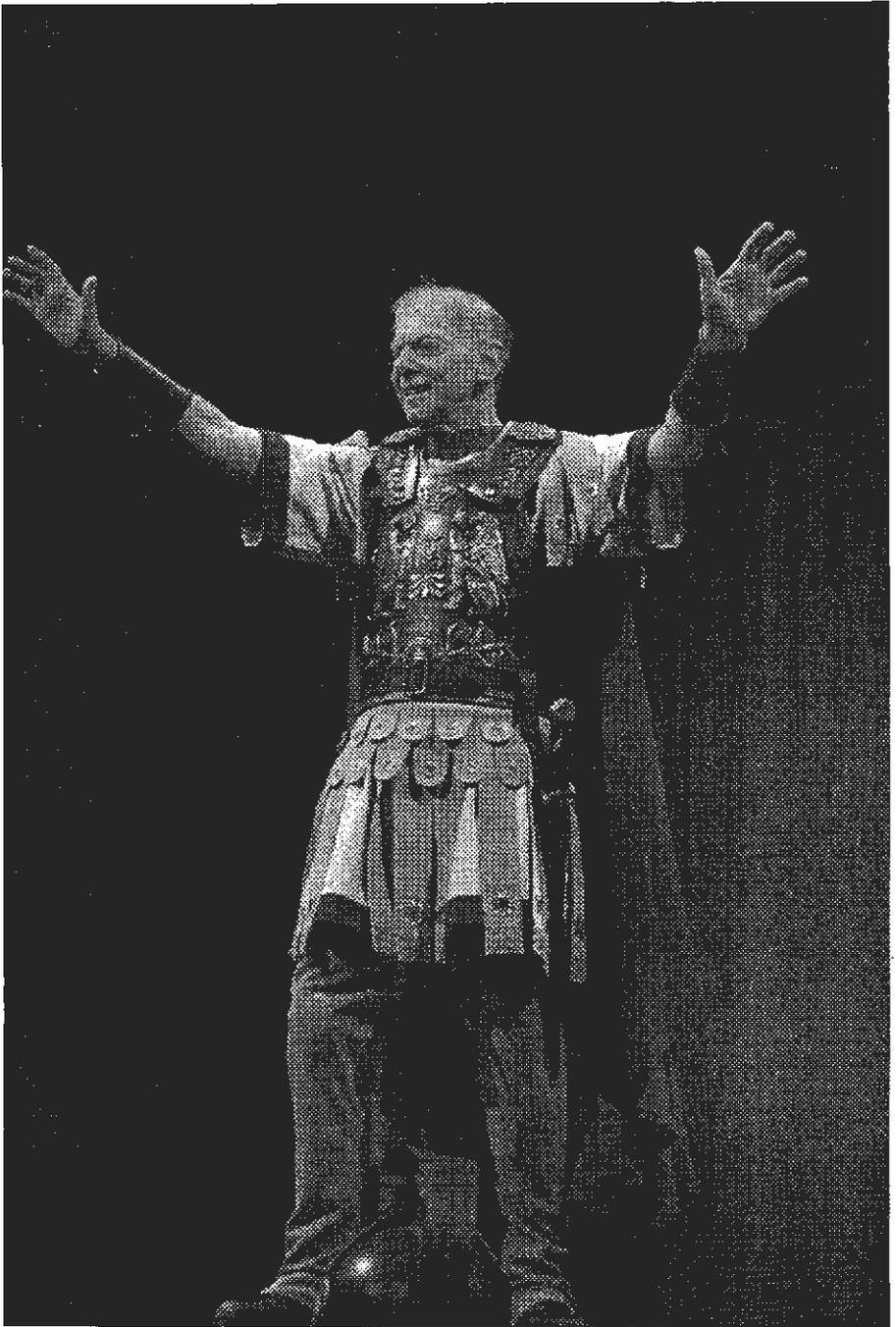
Cabell projects an inner life for his character, unlike Carnahan, who too often seems like a Johnny Depp action figure pulled from *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

Philip Pleasants, the most talented actor in the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, plays two roles, Siward, the general of the English forces, and the drunken porter. Despite the gross humor of the part of the drunken porter, Pleasants comically illustrates the equivocation of drink-inspired lechery: "it makes him, and it mars him; it sets him on, and it takes him off; it persuades him, and disheartens him; makes him stand to, and not stand to; in conclusion, equivocates him in a sleep, and giving him the lie, leaves him" (2.3.32-36). The role as Siward is no challenge to Pleasants, but some difficulty occurs with Young Siward, played by Suzanne Curtis. Because Suzanne Curtis makes an unconvincing soldier, Siward's grief on Young Siward's death takes more ability than it should, and the combat with Macbeth is ludicrous. The movements are so slow that the actors move as if under water. None of the fighting in the play is convincing despite the play's having a Fight Director and an Assistant Fight Director.

Mary Proctor as Lady Macduff, and Soren Geiger, as Macduff's son, die well, while Macduff is being tested by Malcolm in England. The testing of Macduff's loyalty by Malcolm always seems too long to me, and the fussiness of Michael Bakkensen's Malcolm does not improve the scene. Antony Hagiopian is a capable Macduff who handles the emotive response to the death of his wife and children well. He might have made a good Macbeth.

Despite some good choices in scenic design and some fine acting in minor roles, no production can overcome a faulty *Macbeth*. Too often Carnahan seemed to me like a Renaissance Vice in a morality play moving about the stage. The errors of Macbeth's choices and the consequences of Macbeth's actions thereby lack emotional weight.





Philip Pleasants as Titus Andronicus.

Harold Goddard, one of many Shakespeare critics not enamored of *Titus Andronicus*, suggests two possibilities to explain the play.⁶ One possibility is to see Shakespeare's imitating in *Titus* the success of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*; the other allows for humorous critique of such plays. Goddard imagines Shakespeare's thinking, "I'll make an experiment. I'll show how far it is possible to go with this sort of thing. On horror's head I'll let horrors accumulate. I'll write the tragedy of blood to end all tragedies of blood." Susan Willis, the Dramaturg of Festival, suggests in the introduction to the play in the program and in conversation that she thought that the double revenge play, where first one feels sympathy for Tamora in her loss of a son and then for Titus in his loss of two sons, the banishment of a third, and Lavinia's rape and disfigurement, was a critique of revenge tragedies where "to strike back is to become what we abominate."⁷ By shifting the audience's sympathy from Tamora to Titus, and then once again critically responding to Titus's revenge, Willis sees *Titus Andronicus* distancing itself from the standards of a revenge play. The audience's laughter is thus distanced from the standards developed by plays such as Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*.

Clearly the Alabama Shakespeare Festival has tried to give its production of *Titus Andronicus* every possible chance for success. An expensive outside director, Bruce Sevy, was hired to do the play, and the capable actor, Rodney Clark, was recruited to play Marcus Andronicus, while Kathleen McCall, less than effective as Lady Macbeth, made an admirable Tamora. Best of all, the most talented actor in the company for over two decades, Philip Pleasants, was given the role of Titus. Bob Cothran, the play's scenic designer, created the largest set I have ever seen constructed in the Octagon Theater, which seats only 200 people. Just as the set of *Macbeth* was a visual metaphor for Stonehenge, the set of *Titus*, with its multiple levels, suggests a decadent Rome of the fourth century A.D. No curve or straight line was complete; visually arches were broken, and structures appeared to be made of a composite of materials as if they had been inadequately repaired. The sand on stage, necessary for Lavinia to write the names of those who had raped and maimed her, appears early on to be an unrepaired building site. Even the table and chairs used in the banquet scene of Act V contained no right angles. The costuming, also, by Bill Black, was off center in terms of period dress. Roman soldiers wore khakis and loafers under their Roman soldier uniforms, and Tamora was decked out with pelts, boots, and a costume that would make an MTV rock video proud, while her son's costumes could grace a television wrestling match.

Of course there is much to overcome in any production of *Titus Andronicus*. Most bothersome to me are Titus's killing of Mutius and his drawing his sword on his other sons in the beginning of the play, and the killing of Lavinia in Act V. Pleasants does much to make both actions more understandable, since he emphasizes personal honor so much in his presentation of his character. In the beginning of the play, Pleasants appears to hesitate in giving in to the demands of his sons for Alarbus as a sacrifice over their brothers' graves, as if he is reluctant to do it. Even Titus's killing of his son Mutius becomes a matter of honor as Pleasants shapes this scene. Titus has just given his fealty to Saturninus when Mutius, supporting Bassianus' claim to Lavinia, opposes Titus and challenges Titus's honor. Titus's killing of Lavinia, who has been raped, watched her husband killed, and had her tongue and hands cut off, is made to seem like a mercy killing by Pleasants, who in his presentation of Titus, believes he gives his daughter an honorable death, though the violation of honor is mostly that of Titus. Giving Lavinia a choice about her death would certainly have been nice. Revenge justice is necessary to Titus, since no justice exists in the Roman state which should provide it. Thus, the production emphasizes such lines as Titus's to the tribunes when Martius and Quintus are led off to be executed for supposedly murdering Bassianus:

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Therefore I tell my sorrows to the stones,
 Who, though they cannot answer my distress,
 Yet in some sort they are better than the tribunes,
 For that they will not intercept my tale.
 When I do weep, they humbly at my feet
 Receive my tears, and seem to weep with me,
 And were they but attired in grave weeds,
 Rome could afford no tribunes like to these.
 A stone is soft as wax, tribunes more hard than stones,
 A stone is silent, and offendeth not,
 And tribunes with their tongues doom men to death. (3.1.37-46)

Despite the on-stage horrors of Titus's loss of his hand and the killing and bloodletting of Demetrius and Chiron to compose the meal that Tamora and Saturninus will eat, Pleasants manages to hold the production together.

The emotional centers of the play are Titus, Tamora, and Aaron. Aaron Cabell does a fine job with the role of Aaron. Aaron's pleasure in plotting evil, his frank enjoyment of his relationship with Tamora, and his love and defense of their bastard child are well presented in the play. Since his society counts him an outsider, he cares nothing for society. At times Aaron also seems like a Renaissance Vice in his pleasures, and at times he seems a forerunner of Edmund in *King Lear* and *Othello's* Iago. Harold Bloom sees the role of Aaron as similar to Barabas in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* in an action that is a bloody farce.⁸ Since no standard of value holds in this Roman play, Aaron's actions are the most logical comparison to Titus's. Titus at times longs for a justice that does not exist in his world, while Aaron enjoys the play of advantage in anarchy.

On the whole, the production of *Titus Andronicus*, a weak play, was good, while the production of *Macbeth*, a great play, was mediocre. I should say, however, that the production of *Macbeth* has been selected to be performed on American military bases throughout the world. The set was designed to be portable, since where the Alabama Shakespeare Festival is going, the company will have to bring everything necessary for a production—even generators for the lighting. The plan to tour may have been a factor in casting for the play, since not all actors are willing or able to travel. I appreciate the effort made to make *Titus Andronicus* as successful as the text allows, but I wish better choices in casting had been made with *Macbeth*.

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Notes

1. Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1998), p. 516.
2. A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (Cleveland and New York: Meridian 1955), pp. 280-282.
3. Quotations accord with *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).
4. Robert J. Lordi, "Macbeth and His 'dearest partner of greatness,' Lady Macbeth," *The Upstart Crow: A Shakespeare Journal*, 4 (1982): 94-106.
5. Frank Kermode, "Introduction to Macbeth," *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 1356-1357.
6. Harold Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare*: vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 34.
7. Susan Willis, "Reflections of Violence," *On Stage: Alabama Shakespeare Festival* (theatre program), p. 15.
8. Bloom, pp. 80-82.

THE 2004 STRATFORD FESTIVAL OF CANADA'S *TIMON OF ATHENS*

by Craig Barrow

When I expect quality, I sometimes am disappointed; when I expect nothing, I am sometimes pleasantly surprised. Despite my reservations about the play prior to performance, the 2004 Stratford production of *Timon of Athens* was excellent. The play was performed in the long, narrow Tom Patterson Theatre, where the stage space thrusts into seating in an elongated U. Aside from props, such as Timon's dining room table in Act 1, the set featured little elaboration. White fabric at the stage entrance sometimes was shaped into white pillars, sometimes into clouds, depending on the supposed place of the action. The pit where Timon discovers his gold and digs for roots is simply an adaptation of the stage entrance. The play was done in contemporary dress, relatively formal during Timon's early prosperity, but when Alcibiades and his



Peter Donaldson as Timon.

soldiers take the stage, they are dressed in contemporary battle fatigues and carry automatic weapons. In a brilliant touch in 3.2, the three strangers with Lucius, one of Timon's calculating "friends," are dressed as beauticians who are shaving Lucius, doing his nails, and caring for his "needs" when Lucius complains to Timon's servant that he cannot afford to lend Timon any money.¹ Cupid is a contemporary pimp with big hair and sleazy clothes, and his girls appear several times in the play in varying small roles. Few roles demand great talent in this play, with the exception of actors playing Timon, Apemantus, Flavius, and Alcibiades. Duke Ellington's music for the play, written for an earlier 1963 Stratford production, appears not to have been used. In the early party scene, the director chose to emphasize the hedonistic atmosphere with contemporary dance music. The Fool, as usual, was cut from the production.

When one reads *Timon of Athens*, Timon's misanthropic lines and behavior in the last two acts are wearying. When one sees the play, at least in this production, that does not happen. As Janelle Day Jenstad notes, the play has a "morality play trajectory."² Early in the play several "friends" and senators come to Timon for help or gifts, which he gives them; in the middle of the play, when Timon's servants appeal to these same people in Timon's name for loans, they are refused. However, once Timon discovers gold in the woods and is rich again, the same ungrateful characters appeal to Timon for help, and he sarcastically refuses them.

The action of the play is filled with comic inversions, which Henri Bergson describes as backfiring plots, and comic lies and equivocations that we see Everyman experience when his erstwhile friends and relatives desert him once Death requires a pilgrimage for a final reckoning.³ In *Timon of Athens* the duplicity of Timon's friends is comic, just as Timon's later equivocal traps for former friends who appeal for help when Timon pretends support only to savagely undercut it are also comic.

Critics vary in terms of the emotional signature of the play as a whole. Harold Bloom believes the play is not a tragedy but "somewhere between satire and farce."⁴ The farcical elements can be seen in the morality play inversions and comic ambiguity previously described, while the satire appears largely in Timon's descriptions of human nature following his loss of fortune and the failure of people in whom he believed to come to his assistance. However, D. Douglas Waters, in "Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* and Catharsis," interprets the play as a tragedy and not a satire.⁵ Waters' sense of catharsis is a clarification of Timon's motivation and action in the play's audience and not Timon's understanding of himself.

Unlike Lear, Timon experiences no recognition of his failings and errors; he simply changes from extreme generosity, where he believes in a league of friends who challenge fortune, as in 1.2.95-96, where he says, "O You gods, think I, what need we have any friends, if we should ne'er have need of 'em?" to extreme misanthropy, where he angrily says in 3.6.105-106, "henceforth hated be of Timon man and all humanity!" Waters' redefinition of catharsis as "intellectual, emotional and moral clarification" in his essay focuses on audience response and differentiates it from Aristotle's notion of a tragic hero's recognition.⁶ He worries about the seeming lack of development of Timon in the last two acts of the play, but in his view Timon experiences pain in his excess, pain in his anti-human stance. As Waters says, "Timon's intense misanthropy, which is a form of moral despair, is his suffering and as such it is a despair not really different in nature from Macbeth's or Lear's."⁷

What the play requires is an extremely capable actor to play Timon, and Peter Donaldson is more than equal to the task. Prior to Timon's disappointment in his friends following his loss of fortune, Donaldson fills the theatre with expansive generosity. His despair once their true nature is revealed to him is crushingly delivered, not in the loss of wealth itself, to which Timon is grandly indifferent, but in the failure of peo-

ple whom he believed would come to his assistance. To the real sympathy of Flavius and Alcibiades, Timon seemingly cannot afford belief for fear of that belief's being crushed. Donaldson manages to convey the emotional distinctions in what could be, in the last two acts, unrelenting ranting at the evils of humanity.

I was somewhat surprised at the casting of Alcibiades. Sean Arbuckle, bald and unprepossessing in appearance, is not what I think



Andrew Muir (left) as Philotus and Peter Donaldson as Timon.

of as a good Alcibiades, but his position in the play's underplot is similar to Gloucester's in *King Lear*. While I fail to see the warrior in this Alcibiades, I readily see the friend who supports both a fellow soldier and Timon. Arbuckle evaluates the action at play's end like an Edgar, and chooses a measured response to the evils that he and Timon have suffered, even allowing trials by laws which exist prior to his entry into Athens.

Bernard Hopkins as Flavius is born for a role as an accountant, a librarian, or steward. Small in stature and in voice, Hopkins, of course, has difficulty making himself heard in Timon's early prosperity. Because of his inconspicuousness, when Hopkins finally asserts himself, his assessment of Timon's character and virtues is all the more telling because of the surprise of it. Hopkins' best speech is 4.2.37-39:

Poor honest lord, brought low by his own heart,
Undone by goodness! Strange, unusual blood,
When man's worst sin is, he does too much good!

The role of Apemantus is important in the play, for it is he who warns Timon of the flatterers about him during Timon's initial prosperity, and when Timon removes himself to the woods, their rival misanthropies serve to sharpen Timon's self-definition as Timon asserts in 4.3.269-70: "Why shouldst thou hate men? / They never flatter'd thee. What hast thou given?" Tom McCamus does a fine job in his lines similar to Lear's Fool early in the play, and he does a good work in the exchanges between Apemantus and Timon later. His use of a bicycle in Act IV would have been more interesting if automobiles had been about. The bicycle as prop, as far as I could see, distracted from the action and did not characterize its supposed owner.

Few of the other roles, with the exception of the painter and poet, had much individuation, and so I will not comment upon them. However, many remarkable large scenes, whose merit should be noted, do occur in the play, such as the two banquets and Alcibiades' entrance into Athens at play's end. While the actors deserve credit for these scenes, the director, Stephen Ouimette, no doubt orchestrated each. Unlike some productions of *Timon of Athens*, I saw no hint of the Last Supper in the banquets

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and an attempt to see Timon as a Christ figure, but that did not make the scenes less telling. The first dinner, once the prostitutes come in, reminds one of Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*. Action with over a dozen characters on stage is difficult to orchestrate; the scenes



Peter Donaldson as Timon.

must mean something, and these do. While the first dinner is a group portrait, the focus of the covered dish dinner is appropriately Timon, who develops the meaning of the water and the rock in the hard hearts of his guests. The final scene of Alcibiades' entrance into Rome is quiet, despite the number of the cast on stage, since it seems to be Shakespeare's aim to show Alcibiades' measured response to wrong. Great credit needs to be given for a remarkable performance by the cast and the director of a difficult play.

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Notes

1. Quotations and textual references are based upon *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).
2. Janelle Day Jenstad, "Programme Notes," program for 2004 Stratford Festival production of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*, p. 5.
3. Henri Bergson, "Laughter," *Comedy*, ed. Wylie Sypher (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1956). See especially the chapter "The Comic Element in Situations and the Comic Element in Words."
4. Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1998), p. 589.
5. D. Douglas Waters, "Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* and Catharsis," *The Upstart Crow: A Shakespeare Journal* 8 (1988), 93-105.
6. Waters, p. 102.
7. Waters, p. 100.

OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL 2004

by Michael Shurgot

The 2004 season at Oregon Shakespeare Festival featured two comedies, *The Comedy of Errors* in the indoor Angus Bowmer Theatre and *Much Ado About Nothing* on the Elizabethan stage; three histories, *Henry VI Part One* in the New Theatre and *Henry VI Part Two* and *Three* combined brilliantly into one three hour drama in the Elizabethan theatre; and one tragedy, *King Lear*, also produced on the outdoor Elizabethan stage. As in previous seasons, these productions varied significantly in directorial approach and style, and produced plays of widely different theatrical quality: while *Comedy of Errors* was an absolutely hilarious romp, *Much Ado* crept across the broad Elizabethan stage; *Henry VI* dramatized sharply the lives of its main characters, while a heavily cut *King Lear* raced towards its immensely compelling final scene. As *Henry VI Part One* was not playing in Ashland the week I visited, that production will not be reviewed in this essay.

Near the end of 1.2 of *Errors*, Antipholus of Syracuse says: "They say this town is full of cozenage; / As nimble jugglers that deceive the eye, / Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind, / Soul-killing witches that deform the body, / Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks, / And many such-like liberties of sin" (97-102). Director Bill Rauch and set designer William Bloodgood used these lines as their cue for the entire production. Bloodgood's set wonderfully evoked Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, signaled by Caesar's statue and the date CMLXII carved on its base. Most of the action occurred downstage center while upstage a huge revolving circle turned constantly, revealing the casino's steel frame, furniture, and staircases painted in bright metallic colors where dwelled its denizens—gamblers sitting at crowded roulette tables; drunks; prostitutes wearing



***The Comedy of Errors*: Antipholus of Syracuse (Ray Porter) acclimates to his new surroundings with a drink (served by Waitress Laura Morache). Photo by Andrée Lanthier.**

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huge headdresses and little else; sexy ladies singing lascivious songs (including in the lobby during the intermission!); waitresses in skimpy outfits bustling drinks to customers; and traveling musicians loudly entertaining the "players" at the many tables. The second floor was decked in mirrors that reflected one illusion into another, reminiscent of the hall of mirrors in Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane*. As bright lights bounced off the metallic surfaces, the entire stage became a huge, noisy kaleidoscope that brilliantly evoked the essentials of casino life: a fun house of mirrors where nothing is real, where there seems to be no exit, and one can easily lose one self in a self-reflecting artificiality where there is no clock and everything, in this play including identity, is a gamble and/or for sale. Here the play's characters "wander[ed] in illusion" indeed.



The Comedy of Errors: Ensemble. Photo by David Cooper.

Egeon, a large Texan with an hilariously overdone southern twang played by Clive Rosengren, was arrested by thugs in black coats and dark glasses suggesting the Mafia—the joint needed protection, after all—or perhaps Frank Sinatra's Rat Pack of the 1950's and 60's. Never did a character seem so out of place, nor his words so appropriate: "Hopeless and helpless doth Egeon wend, / But to procrastinate his liveless end" (1.1.157-58). Egeon then "exited" into the play world as the stage opened to reveal the gaudy, noisy casino that swallowed him into its raucous interior. For the remainder of the play its main characters "entered into" and "exited from" the casino's interior, including a steep, brightly lit staircase stage left, as if coming from or retreating into the timeless illusion of casino life. Hence all of the play's characters, especially as the plot's confusions multiplied, "played" these confusions in a brilliantly symbolic setting.

Crystal Fox as Adriana and Aisha Kabia as Luciana were brightly dressed, somewhat shrill African-American women angry with missing husbands and missing men, period. The gem of the production was the doubling of the Antipholi by the amazingly versatile Ray Porter and of the Dromios by the very clever Christopher DuVal, and here the set functioned marvelously. As one Antipholus exited into the casino and the other then entered from the casino almost immediately after, one sensed that in this place of

illusion, this gigantic, revolving room of mirrors, it was entirely feasible that twins could just miss each other and, more wondrously, that two really could be one.

The final scene was equally improbable and wonderful. Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse "escaped" into Aemilia's priory by running up the staircase down which Luciana and several sexy ladies had earlier descended; i.e., the upper level of this fun-house suddenly became the priory situated "above" the devilish madness happening below. From the metallic doors through which had wandered sexy ladies belting bawdy songs stepped the Abbess, whose lecture to Adriana became a sermon delivered as from a pulpit, and the "sanctuary" which the Abbess provided in this upper room neatly symbolized order and righteousness "above" the casino below. Though certainly not an apotheosis as in later comedies (e.g., *As You Like It*), the Abbess's "He took this place for sanctuary" (5.1.94), spoken above the raucous casino, heralded the metamorphosis of the sinful den into a religious place. Further, "this place" also clearly includes whatever theatre this comedy is being played in, so that theatre itself becomes salutary, not only for the afflicted and sinful of the casino, but also for the multitude gathered together to watch and applaud.

Laird Williamson set his *Much Ado About Nothing* in a lavish, flower-strewn Mediterranean garden at the end of WW I, a European version of the Jazz Age. Big band music floated over the stage as the characters entered, and punctuated the performance at various intervals. Leonato wore a three-piece white suit to receive the messenger's news about the returning soldiers, while Beatrice, Hero and the other women wore beautiful formal dresses and high heels. As befitting the social circle to which they were returning the soldiers were highly decorated officers in high leather boots and smart wool uniforms plastered with insignia. Servants bustled in wine and food; this was to be much ado about love and romance among Europe's finest citizens.

Brent Harris's Benedick and Robin Goodrin Nordli's Beatrice really did not like each other. As Benedick entered, Beatrice moved stage left, away from the celebrations at center stage, and she stayed there until her exit. Initially she seemed unaware of her self-contradictory remark that "nobody" (herself excepted, of course) marked Benedick as he spoke, and his ending with a "Jade's trick" reminded her of why she professed to hate him; she apparently considered Benedick intellectually inferior. Benedick was truly annoyed that she was still alive; his fear of a "scratched face" was genuine. Beatrice's sparring about husbands and churches with Leonato and Antonio in 2.1 revealed an intelligent woman who loved witty dialogue and her ability to spout clever one-liners, such as being able to spot a church by daylight. Nordli's grasp of Beatrice's joy in her own wit revealed clearly her anger at Benedick's "Jade's tricks"; this couple's romance had a long way to go.

While the Hero-Claudio plot is certainly secondary, and meant to contrast sharply with the livelier Beatrice-Benedick clash, Jos Viramontes's Claudio and Tyler Layton's Hero were unconvincing as lovers. While a director may deliberately downplay the Hero-Claudio romance, perhaps to emphasize in Beatrice and Benedick the truth of Petruchio's assertion, "'Tis the mind that makes the body rich," some signs of love and passion must be evident if the Hero-Claudio plot is to be at all convincing in *the theatre*. Yet passion never developed between these two. Claudio was genuinely disappointed that Benedick could see no beauty in Hero, and then was relieved that Don Pedro agreed to woo for him. He sulked during the masked ball when he thought that Pedro was wooing Hero for himself, and in his soliloquy in 2.1 he seemed angrier at his friend's perfidy than at his apparent loss of Hero's affections. When told that he had misjudged both Pedro and Hero, he stood frozen on stage, showing no desire for the woman he claimed to love. Beatrice's "instructions" on kissing have never seemed so utterly necessary, nor so obviously wistful.

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Claudio was easily persuaded of Hero's "savage sensuality," which he denounced in 4.1 with such vehemence that he seemed relieved of the necessity of marrying her. At Hero's monument in 5.3, Claudio spoke his prayer with little audible or visible emotion; nor did he seem aware of the apparent "miracle" that brings Hero back to life. Tyler Layton's Hero was equally unemotional. In 4.1 she was shocked at Claudio's accusation, but showed little emotion when Leonato berated her; one sensed that she was sleepwalking through these frightening moments. While the contrast between Nordli's Beatrice and Tyler's Hero was clear, and highlighted the major differences between the romantic relationships in the two plots, nonetheless by downplaying the potentially devastating emotions present in the Hero-Claudio relationship this production robbed their love affair of sufficient theatrical vigor to make it believable.

The masked ball was festooned with balloons and wine, and the holiday atmosphere was emphasized by harlequin figures in baggy black-and-white-check gowns and red clown noses who peeked at the dancers from behind the stage posts. Beatrice certainly knew she was talking to Benedick, the "Prince's jester," as they danced, and she relished her witty triumph. Benedick was indignant at her sarcasm, especially because he thought his mask had hidden his identity. But Beatrice's spontaneous wit created a touching moment when, after complaining about having to cry "Heigh-ho for a husband," Jeffrey King's Don Pedro, on his knees, earnestly proposed to her: "Will you have me, lady?" Nordli's pause and mocking tone belied her having suddenly realized that witty jests and careless phrases can do much harm; Pedro was genuinely hurt by her rejection. Here was a thoroughly decent man, less witty than Benedick but far gentler and more appreciative of her, whom she suddenly had to invent a reason for rejecting. From this moment on, Don Pedro, the genius of the play's major plot, acted on behalf of two people whom he obviously loved. During the final dance, he stood alone stage left, Beatrice's spot in 1.1, watching the lovers he had hoped to join.

In complaining that Beatrice had misused him "past the endurance of a block," Benedick was truly angry. Thus, his soliloquy in 2.3, "I do much wonder," seemed genuine, rather than a ploy to hide his self-deception. He really could not fathom how any man "could become the argument for his own scorn by falling in love." His hiding in the arbor when his well dressed mates suddenly appeared suggested vanity and curiosity about his reputation among them, a motivation that works well at this moment in the play and also sets him up for a huge fall.

He lay prone beneath the front edge of the stage while Balthasar, a stylish crooner standing before a large microphone, serenaded Leonato et al., accompanied by violins offstage. The formal 1930's dance hall setting made Benedick's posture ridiculous. When the boy returned with his book he looked all over the stage for Benedick until Leonato pointed to him lying in front of the stage. The boy handed Benedick the book, and he grabbed it furiously, trying to pretend that his cover had not been blown. During the ensuing dialogue Benedick crawled towards stage right where a servant was dumping buckets of ice on flowers. Having watered all the available flowers, he dumped the last bucket over the edge onto Benedick, a visually clever symbol of his frozen emotions. Given his blown cover and the ice bath, Benedick's "This can be no trick" was hilarious, not only for its being so obviously wrong but also for its assertiveness. His "justification" to himself was that Beatrice's love must be "requited"; Benedick paused after this word, as if soliciting spectators' approval of his "logic" and justifying his being "horribly in love with her." Although he asserts that he must not be "proud" in loving Beatrice, when she entered to summon him to dinner he puffed out his chest and strode, military style, to meet her, as if relishing the loving attention he assumed she would bestow on him. Only the love-struck fool that Benedick had suddenly become could find marks of love in Nordli's angry invitation. His sincere insistence on



***Much Ado About Nothing*: Beatrice (Robin Goodrin Nordli) reacts to the news that Benedick loves her. Photo by T. Charles Erickson.**



***Much Ado About Nothing*: Hero (Tyler Layton, front), Beatrice (Robin Goodrin Nordli, center), Ursula (Pat Bowie) and Friar Francis (Juan Rivera LeBron) weather the accusations against Hero. Photo by T. Charles Erickson.**

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her "double meaning" was hysterical self-delusion. Beatrice entered 3.1 stage left, then dashed over the railing to occupy the same place where Benedick had hid himself, perhaps suggesting visually that both of them were in the same "place" emotionally—denial of their own desires and love for the other—but the repeated staging also indicated a lack of directorial imagination, especially given the Elizabethan Theatre's large and versatile space.

The remaining scenes were quite uneven. Benedick, minus his moustache and sporting a red scarf, was wonderfully pompous with Leonato, Claudio, and Don Pedro in 3.2. Later, in 5.2, he tried to write love tunes on a badly tuned guitar, and while obviously enamored of his own cleverness, he mostly just made noise. Beatrice entered 3.4 carrying a bouquet of flowers that she flicked away on Margaret's bawdy "A maid, and stuffed!" as if embarrassed by her own wishful thinking. James Newcomb's Dogberry was disappointing. He nearly drowned in his huge Prussian army coat, like a comic Macbeth a dwarf in a giant's robe, but his botched eastern European accent and his lackluster leadership of his watch were not nearly as humorous as they could have been. The Watch seemed bored, and Conrade and Borachio were not nearly drunk enough to make their arrest by the Watch at all credible. The actors in this entire sequence were simply not engaged with their characters, and thus this segment of the play dragged badly.

The men entered 4.1 in formal attire more suitable for a funeral; as Benedick observes, this scene "look[ed] not like a nuptial." Benedick stood apart from the other men during this chaotic scene, as did Beatrice once Hero was accused, signaling their mutual apprehension of what was happening. Benedick's supplication of Beatrice after the aborted wedding was touching and convincing; here both characters finally released their caged emotions (caged in rushes, that is, as Rosalind would say) and dropped their invisible armor in this production's finest scene. Benedick was stunned at hearing Beatrice actually admit how much she loved him, and he fell to his knees to protest his love for her. Here both Nordli and Harris showed superb emotional range. Benedick's "Bid me do anything" was self-assured and sincere; he was certain that he could fulfill *any* of Beatrice's wildest desires. Nordli paused for a few seconds, and her soft "Kill Claudio" sent Benedick roaring on "Not for the wide world"; a huge mistake. Nordli immediately exploded, left his side, and raged around the stage as Benedick tried vainly to keep up with her, both physically and emotionally. Only after she had circled the stage several times did Nordli stop moving, and Harris modulated his voice to convey just enough conviction in his promise to engage Claudio while struggling to realize what he was saying. When they appeared together again in 5.2, each was far more self-assured; they sat in rocking chairs thoroughly relishing each other's witty disclaimers about being in love, especially with each other's "bad parts," an obvious sexual pun, and accepting now that they were far too wise to ever "woo peaceably." No jade's tricks here; their verbal ease with each other captured their mutual intellectual attraction, surely a major point of this play, and emphasized the shallowness of the Hero-Claudio relationship, where each speaks more to their respective friends than to each other.

For the final scene the ladies wore the same dresses they had worn in the masked ball. Hero kissed Claudio dutifully, while clubs could not part Beatrice and Benedick after their final game of "I take you but for pity" was squashed by the discovery of their "own hands against [their] hearts." Amid the flowers, confetti, and dancing couples, Don Pedro stood alone, watching the outsider at the end of this otherwise joyous comedy.

Directors Libby Appel and Scott Kaiser superbly welded Parts Two and Three of *Henry VI* into a three-hour drama they called *Henry and Margaret*. Using Kaiser's

adaptation of Shakespeare's two plays, they narrowed the focus to the historical principles to create an energetic and tense drama of political and personal intrigue in a medieval setting. Kaiser's huge cuts, including Jack Cade's rebellion, created clear lines of conflict between the houses of York and Lancaster, and the exceptionally strong cast showed that within Shakespeare's historical pageant lie deeply passionate and terribly flawed characters.

Five huge posts, painted red and white, framed the portal through which King Henry VI and his large entourage marched to open the play and to welcome Queen Margaret to England. Cristofer Jean's lanky Henry VI, draped in an elaborately trimmed white robe ironically suggesting his innocence, timidly admitted that he had given away Anjou and Maine to Margaret's father. In Gloucester's long speech after the King's exit, in which Gloucester "unload[s] his grief," Mark Murphey immediately established his character's tragic dilemma as Henry's Protector. In this fractured kingdom loyalty would be fatal, and Murphey's commanding stage presence and powerful voice vividly dramatized that dilemma. After the nobles' quarrel, William Langan as York, speaking center stage with the red and white posts behind him, defiantly claimed the throne and announced his plots against Gloucester. Murphey's and Langam's equally fervid defense of their positions clearly established the political divide across which the play's characters would clash.

Robin Goodrin Nordli as Queen Margaret and Demetra Pittman as Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester were equally compelling as ambitious and treacherous women. Nordli's impatient, fiery Margaret was the perfect foil to Jean's lethargic Henry. She raged at Henry's incompetence and indecision, gloated in her political and military victories, and aggressively pursued her lover Suffolk; one thought of Goneril's line, "Oh, the difference of man and man." Her passionate farewell to Suffolk distilled how personal lives can be tragically entangled in and affect historical events, and in her holding of Suffolk's head to her breast one saw far more passion than she ever could have bestowed on Henry. Nordli's range is impressive, and her fierceness in pursuit of her goals, both political and sexual, emphasized an essential point of Shakespeare's histories: in the Realpolitik of Medieval England, indecision and delay, even loyalty, can be fatal. As can be ambition. Demetra Pittman as Eleanor was alternately seductive and furious with Gloucester's lack of ambition, and her intense persuasion reminded one of Lady Macbeth. The witch she consults appeared "above" as if supernaturally inspired, and her reliance on sorcery and the duplicitous Hume emphasized her destructive pursuit of royal power. When at Eleanor's trial Henry demands Gloucester's staff, and asserts his complete independence from his Protector, one sees familial ties become a political liability, as Henry simultaneously abandons the only man who could have saved him. Murphey's hunched shoulders and painful speech emphasized his sense of how his fall was about to herald the King's as well. Eleanor's humiliating march through London, in a dirty smock with her crimes etched across her back, was prologue to her husband's fate.

The sons of York, especially James Newcomb's Richard, were defiant of Henry and eager for battle. The casting of Newcomb as Richard was theatrically brilliant. Newcomb is rather short, muscular, and immensely energetic; in his high-pitched, gravelly voice and sinister smirk he conveyed an absolutely ruthless bloodlust. He scrambled across the stage with marvelous dexterity on wooden crutches that he wielded effectively in battle, killing Somerset with clever maneuvers of his right crutch and a knife. Despite his misshapen body, Newcomb's athleticism in battle was astonishing to behold, and his dominance of the stage—the fact that when he entered spectators immediately focused on him—perfectly paralleled his character's emergence as the apex of the relentless evil in this gruesome trilogy. Richard's physical feats, despite

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their brutal intentions, had their desired theatrical effect; his soliloquies, in which he indicates his murderous ambitions, became believable because spectators saw a man for whom no barriers, physical or psychological, exist.

Margaret's ecstatic mockery of "King" York with his paper crown from 1.4 of Part Three, and her and Clifford's frenzied stabbing of him, suggested that evil in this play had become demonic. During the battle with York's forces in 2.5, Henry wandered to center stage and sat down. Here Henry's pathetic incompetence as a factor in Richard's jovial brutality became tragically clear. Dejected, bent over, head down, Henry lamented being born to a role he could not fulfill. To his left and right entered the murderous fathers and sons, killing the generations that would suffer because ambitious men and women sought the "hollow crown" at any cost and could not control their internecine violence. Clifford's severed head seemed only natural now; how else was such violence to end but with another trophy placed triumphantly on the city walls?

The remainder of Part Three was heavily cut. Armando Duran, last season's excellent Antony, was dignified and stoic when informed of Edward's marriage to Lady Grey; as the last to be betrayed, his desperate alliance with Margaret seemed ironically logical. The ritual murder of Prince Edward crazed Margaret and delighted Richard. Again the ensemble acting for which the OSF is noted was evident as Nordli's raging Margaret and Newcomb's maniacal Richard fed off each other's maddening, centrifugal emotions. Richard's lustful violence was also evident in his repeated, vicious stabbing of Henry in the Tower, as if the knife were possessed of a perverted sexual will of its own. After the murder, Newcomb's twisted body lurched to center stage where he delivered *Richard III's* opening soliloquy with satanic glee. The sharpness of his diction, sinister delight in his own hypocrisy, and physical dexterity in defiance of his deformity framed him as the frighteningly logical heir to the bloodbath this superbly conflated history had dramatized.

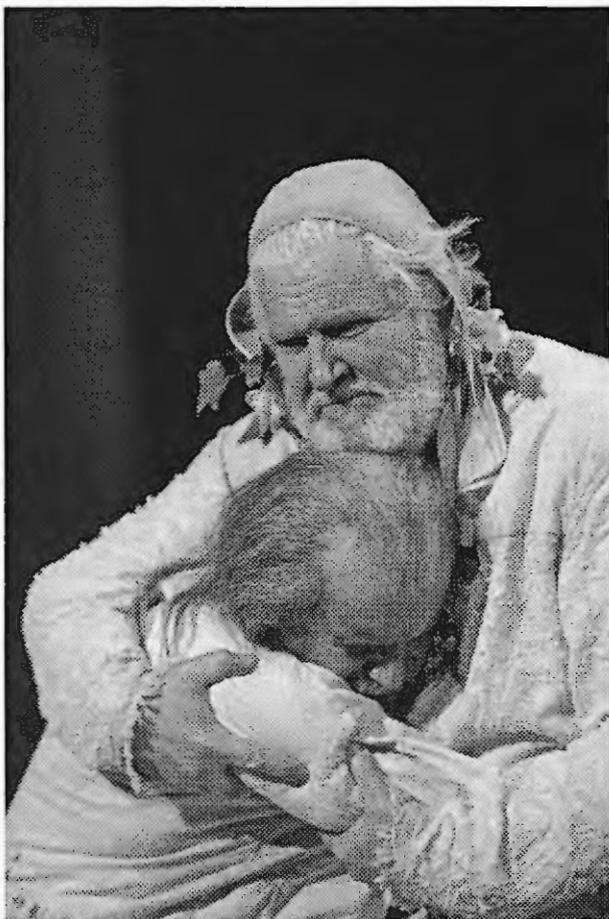
Marjorie Bradley Kellogg's set for James Edmondson's powerful *King Lear* was quite imposing. Upstage center was a mammoth wooden circle on which were painted ochre rectangular designs suggesting giant brackets; through this portal characters initially entered and exited. Heavy leather curtains hung to either side of the circle, and across the back of the stage wooden posts framed Lear's court. A wooden throne sat center stage, and two smaller chairs to its left. Rugs scattered across the stage framed a leather map laid out in front of the throne.

Tony DeBruno as Gloucester proudly introduced Jos Viramontes's Edmund to Ray Porter's Kent, but stressed that Edmund should "away" as soon as the court scene ended. Gloucester was obviously of two minds about his bastard son. Kenneth Albers as Lear was as imposing as his set. A large, robust man with thick white hair and a full beard, he entered wearing a long, heavy robe and quickly sat down, anxious to conclude his "darker purpose." Goneril, Regan, Albany, and Cornwall entered together, and Cordelia entered behind them with the Fool and Kent. The older sisters took the twin chairs, their husbands stood behind them, and Cordelia stood stage left behind them with Kent, while the Fool stood and then later, during Lear's rage, hid behind Cordelia. Given this entry, especially with the sisters entering behind Lear, there was no indication of how anyone expected Lear to divide his kingdom, thus supporting Gloucester's initial uncertainty about whom the king favored.

Goneril stood to Lear's left as she spoke, and Regan outdid her by kneeling to Lear as she spoke, causing Goneril to wince on Regan's finding Goneril's love "too short." Cordelia politely but firmly rejected her father's solicitation, prompting Lear to walk to her and guide her to the map, pointing to the territory she would lose if she refused to mend her speech. Lear's intentions became clear when upon Cordelia's intransigence he angrily ripped from the map a portion larger than a third. Lear loved

Cordelia best and had intended to spend most of his time with her and her more opulent third of the kingdom. Lear's anger peaked as Cordelia, the diminutive Julie Oda, dared confront him before the whole court. Lear's dismissal of Kent was furious, as was his bartering of Cordelia between Burgundy and France. As Lear exited through the portal, Edmund entered through the stage left vomitorium, and he soliloquized on top of the ragged map, now a symbol of not only the torn kingdom but also of the looming chaos. As Edmund exited through the portal, two of its timbers shifted; the circle was breaking, as was Lear's kingdom. Gloucester ruminated about the "late eclipses" to the audience, as if including us in his prophecies of evil. As first Gloucester and then Edgar and Edmund exited 1.2, the portal's timbers moved further apart; as chaos gradually enveloped the stage, these timbers split completely, and by intermission—Lear battling the storm—they lay akimbo on the stage: In Yeats's line, "Things fall apart; the center cannot hold."

Lear thought that Kent's insistence that he emulated "authority" was funny; Lear was already sensing his lack of authority and his errors. As the Fool, Robert Vincent Frank, in ragged early modern motley, genuinely feared Lear, as he had earlier when Lear railed at Cordelia. In 1.4 Lear sat center stage on a stool, like a truant schoolboy, as the Fool gently admonished him, ever aware of Lear's threatening whip. Lear's men were rowdy, thus supporting Goneril's complaints, and her attack on his retainers infuriated Lear, as he had hoped to retire with Cordelia and her larger share. Here, casting and set conjoined very well. A large man, Albers's Lear demanded proportional recognition of his royalty, which explained why he had intended his favorite daughter to receive the largest third. When he re-entered at 1.4.292 bellowing "What, fifty of my followers at a clap?" the rage was already upon him. Regan entered 2.4 wearing a sumptuous red gown that, as Lear later remarks, hardly kept her warm; surely her finery was meant as an affront to Lear. As Lear raged about Kent's being stocked, the Fool cowered behind his stool, and at one point, as Lear dashed between Goneril and Regan, Lear crashed



King Lear: Gloucester (Tony DeBruno), comforted by Lear (Kenneth Albers). Photo by T. Charles Erickson.

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into the stool and fell over. Grasping the Fool's pillow from the stool, and obviously terribly humiliated, Lear then crawled to Regan on "Dear daughter, I confess that I am old; Age is unnecessary." The contrast between the large, regal, robust patriarch from 1.1 and this raving old man crawling between his daughters was shocking.

As Goneril and Regan moved together upstage from Lear, the Fool's song to Kent about a wheel rolling downhill that breaks one's neck became poignant; Lear seemed "broken," like the circular portal, even before his exit into the storm. Lear stood to rage about quantity again, pathetically begging in turn more followers from the "hags" who now scorned him. The steely anger of Maya Thomas as Goneril and Catherine Lynn Davis as Regan, standing upstage, holding hands, and attempting to reason with their raving father who did not love them "best" created considerable emotional ambivalence. Clearly, Lear had done them wrong; clearly, they were doing him wrong. Albers's physical stature magnified his errors, and his verbal and physical violence as he hurled himself about the stage, terrifying the Fool, suggested some truth in Goneril's terse "'Tis his own blame hath put himself from rest, / And he must needs taste his folly." Only with Regan's "Shut up your doors," as Lear exited through the crumbling timbers into the crackling thunder, did the evil of these daughters truly outmatch his.

Despite the madness and desperation on the heath, some human kindness nonetheless persisted. Initially Lear raged alone at center stage, and when he divested himself of his "lendings," in a pitiful attempt at reclaiming his house, he and the Fool crawled under his discarded cloak. When Poor Tom entered in bloody rags, Lear then covered him with his cloak. Gregory Linington as Tom was terrified at Gloucester's presence, and as Gloucester peered at him with his "walking fire" Linington's ravings increased in intensity, lest Gloucester "see into" his "disguise." As Poor Tom's madness descended deeper into his imagined hell where dwelled his devils, the scenes became increasingly disturbing. The intensity with which Tom avoided recognition—or love, as Stanley Cavell would argue—reified Lear's madness. As Lear apparently grasped the totality of Tom's madness, his assertion that only Poor Tom's daughters could have so deranged him suddenly made sense. Yet Tom's humanity persisted; after the mock trial, as Lear lay on the ground, Tom removed Lear's cloak and placed it over him, the broken wheel run downhill and shattered.

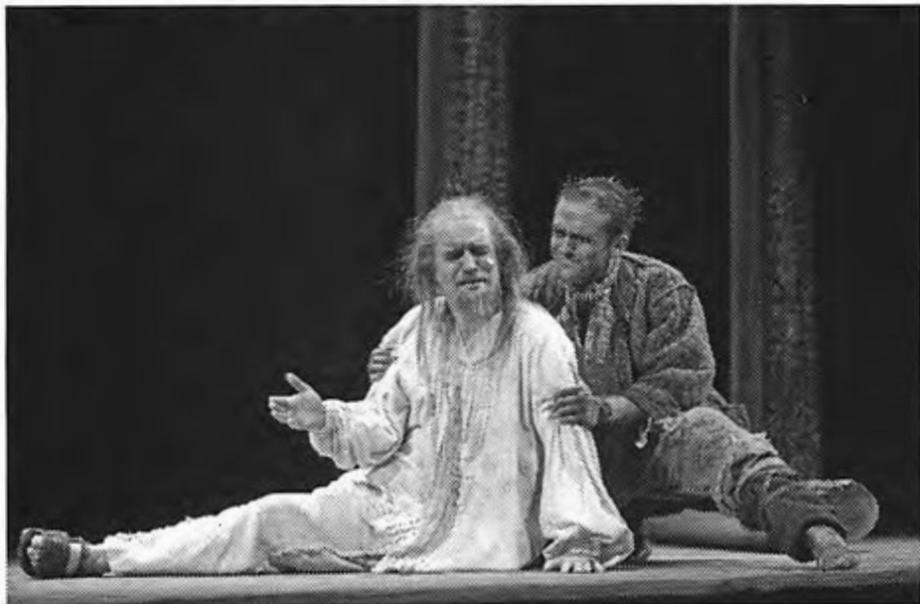
Regan, in a sexy red pants suit, presided over Gloucester's blinding, during which he sat in the chair used by Lear in 1.1, and she kissed Cornwall passionately after he stabbed Gloucester's eye, as if for her the bloody stabbing were orgiastic. Edgar led his father to the "cliff" of Dover past the fallen timbers and broken circle of the set, but given the versatile Elizabethan stage, his fall forward was surprisingly non-dramatic. In contrast, Gloucester's reunion with Lear in 4.6 was quite powerful. Lear entered in a dirty white smock, stained with (mad Tom's?) blood, wearing the Fool's hat, and covered in twigs, his latest version of the "house" he relinquished to his daughters. Gloucester sat to his right, and gingerly reached out to touch his king, who repulsed human touch. Lear wiped his hand on his bloody gown and then on the earth before touching Gloucester. Once assured that Gloucester could not see, which he determined by waving his hand in front of Gloucester's "case of eyes," Lear acknowledged their common state and mutual guilt by leaning on Gloucester and crying. Grasping Gloucester as he spoke, Lear's complaints about the hypocrisy of the world became their complaints, and ours: Lear's gesture towards the audience at the Elizabethan "great stage" embraced us all in a compelling vision of pitiful humanity, come at last—as we all must—to "see" our errors.

For 4.7 Lear again sat in his throne, carried in accompanied by a harp played off stage. Lear again cried as he recognized Cordelia, and painfully tried to kneel to her. Her "No cause, no cause" was so soft it was almost inaudible; surely this line is meant

only for him. When Lear tried to rise, and the slight Oda cradled his head, one saw literally the power of love to "carry" or "hold" another person, regardless of one's physical size.

The battle between Britain and France was limited to Edgar's telling Gloucester to leave because Lear has lost, and then Edgar's highly athletic defeat of Edmund. Given the symbolic power of their reunion in 4.7, watching Lear's and Cordelia's final scenes was excruciating. Edmund's relish of his duplicity with Goneril and Regan meant that even Lear's restored sanity and Albers's large stature could not protect him and Cordelia against Edmund's barbarity and the sergeant's cold description of what has become "man's work" in this play. Edgar's poignant description of his father's death, and his own guilt in not revealing his identity sooner, was so compelling that, as Shakespeare surely intended, the peril of Lear and Cordelia was conceivably "forgot" by most spectators.

The stage direction at 5.3.257, "Enter Lear with Cordelia in his arms," occurs immediately after Albany's "The gods defend her. Bear him [Edmund] hence awhile." The aural/visual juxtaposition here is powerful enough in most productions, but Edmondson increased its horror by having Albers begin Lear's "Howl . . ." (employing Q1's four reiterations, rather than F1's three) well behind the upstage entrance to the platform and during Albany's line. Thus spectators heard Lear's agony from well off-stage as if from a long way away, and Albers's powerful voice resonated back stage before he actually began walking towards center stage. Albers set Cordelia down on "Why then she lives," the line that contradicts his "She's gone forever" just four lines earlier. Because this last illusion was accompanied by Lear's gently laying her on the stage, its pain was visually enhanced. The feather was imaginary, and Lear looked up from his illusion only to scold Kent et al., as murders and traitors, yet another reminder of Lear's fatal misjudgments from 1.1. As the messenger spoke of Edmund's death, Lear bent over Cordelia again, and his terrible "Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life, and thou no breath at all?" was, finally, a calm, rational inquisition of the universe



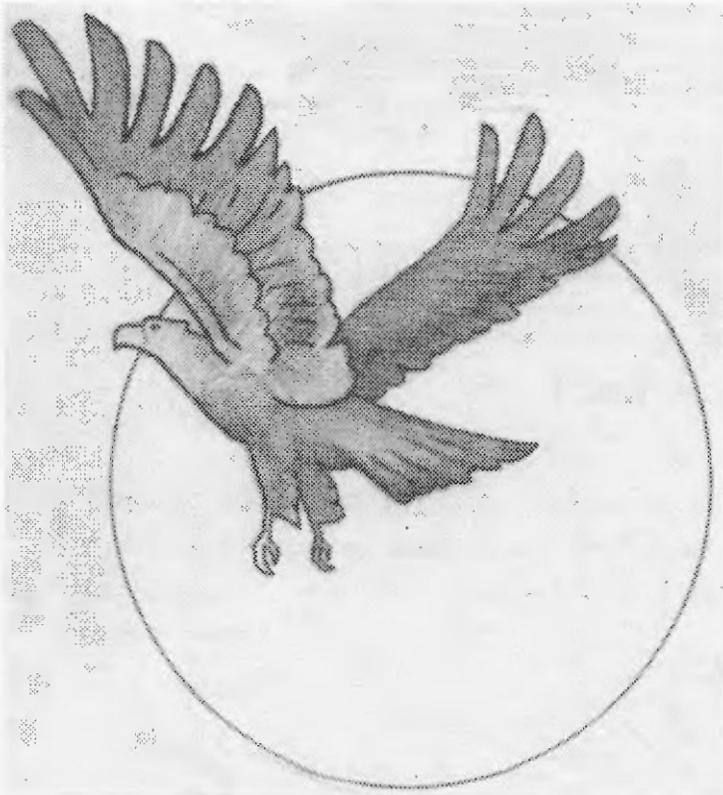
King Lear: The Duke of Gloucester (Tony DeBruno) tells his tale to his son Edgar (Gregory Linington). Photo by T. Charles Erickson.

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spoken by this large king over his tiny daughter that belied his rage of 1.1 and accentuated Cordelia's innocence. On his final "never," Lear looked up, and as Kent undid the button, Lear looked stage left, where Cordelia had stood in 1.1. His final lines, "Do you see this? Look on her! Look her lips, / Look there, look there!" defined his vision of Cordelia, her lips pursed, about to speak as he had wanted her to in 1.1. That he "sees" her words here, rather than hears them, in a staging that suggests an other-worldly vision, indicates that finally Lear heeds Kent's admonition to "see better."

South Puget Sound Community College

Note: All textual references are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).





Book Reviews



BOOK REVIEWS

James Stredder. *The North Face of Shakespeare: Activities for Teaching the Plays*. Stratford-upon-Avon: Wincot Press, 2004. Pp. xvi + 232.

Reviewed by James Mardock.

Books like *The North Face of Shakespeare* would be impossible without Cicely Berry, whose work as the Royal Shakespeare Company's voice director has influenced the practice of Shakespearean theater for decades. Not only does Berry provide a glowing foreword to James Stredder's book, but her fundamental idea—the conviction that the meaning of Shakespeare's language is only released through its physicalization and vocalization—inhabits nearly every page. Stredder's debt to Berry is clear and gratefully acknowledged, and *The North Face of Shakespeare* makes a useful contribution toward broadening the pedagogical applications of her approaches.

The book takes as its *raison d'être* the perception on the part of students and instructors alike of Shakespeare as a daunting, remote, and overwhelming object of study, a cultural monolith “as indifferent and unscalable now as the icy north face of the Eiger” (3). In order to overcome this perception, Stredder argues, students at all levels from primary school to graduate school can benefit from “active teaching,” an approach that draws upon the instructor's expertise and enthusiasm—which too often, he argues, contribute to the process of exclusion—to create instead the sense of a Shakespeare that can be shared by all participants in the classroom.

To this end, Stredder's book provides a kind of crash course in creating drama workshops in the classroom, primarily aimed at teachers of English rather than drama. The second half of the book, perhaps usefully read first by the intended audience of teachers with limited practical experience in drama, is geared toward transforming classrooms into rehearsal rooms. It includes a chapter on general workshopping strategies like building trust and accommodating different ability levels, and chapters on group formation techniques, warm-up games, and drama exercises developed by Stredder himself or taken from drama workshops run by English directors like Ed Berman, Charles Marowitz, and Buzz Goodbody in the 1960s and 1970s.

The book's first half, often cross-referencing the second half, draws these exercises together and applies them to the democratic, practical, interdisciplinary approach to teaching Shakespeare that Stredder promotes. He divides his teaching activities under three general rubrics: language, narrative, and character. Each of these sections follows an introductory essay with several examples of teaching approaches, ranged from simplest to most complex (and time-consuming). These three groups of exercises, as Stredder acknowledges, are not equally suited to the ability levels and time constraints of all teaching situations. Many of the “narrative” exercises require several class periods, with students discovering or investigating the plot as it unfolds; they would be ideal for high schools, but are less likely to be suited to university Shakespeare courses, where a play may be assigned to be read over a weekend. Similarly, while the “Character in Shakespeare” chapter provides extremely useful approaches to understanding character from an actor's point of view, emphasizing freedom of interpretation within a role, the “character” teaching activities often seem better tailored to rehearsing full productions of the plays than to the practicalities of teaching them in a group context. Since the perceived difficulty of Shakespeare's language is often the factor that most alienates students in their reception of the plays, the

"language" exercises are the most central to the aims of Stredder's book, and they are also the most broadly and easily applicable, at all levels of instruction.

"Language across the circle," for example, is a fairly basic and easy-to-implement game wherein students standing in a circle take turns walking across the circle and addressing a given line from a play to another participant, who then "takes" the line to someone else. The great benefit of this kind of work to the classroom—as those of us who struggle to find classroom volunteers to give their halting voices to the speeches under discussion will recognize—is that it slips the theatrical reality of spoken Shakespeare under the students' radar, as it were. Participants, Stredder writes, are often surprised to have "moved, almost without realizing it, into the world of the play" (28). "Language across the circle," like most of the language-based exercises, is intended to connect the sounds and shapes of Shakespeare's words to the physical movements associated with producing the words and the thoughts behind them. The language becomes not merely words on a page, but something four-dimensional and immediate; that is, it becomes theater.

The book's greatest strength, from the perspective of pedagogical theory, is its healthy injection of theatrical sensibility into the literature classroom. Stredder's years of experience with practical pedagogy and familiarity with theatrical practice offer literature teachers constant reminders that there is a world elsewhere, with frequent references to Shakespearean productions, snippets of wisdom from actors like John Gielgud, and endless anecdotes about the positive results achieved by Stredder and other practitioners of "active teaching." All of this material has the invaluable result of positioning the work of theater practitioners as an act of interpretation just as important as critical analysis or cultural contextualization, an essential supplement to the study of Shakespeare as literature.

In some ways, however, the way Stredder presents such material hinders his book's utility as a teaching tool. At times, his excitement to share his practical successes make his descriptions of workshop ideas so heavy with anecdote that they do not clearly outline how to implement the exercise. Moreover, those teachers likely to use the book are probably already invested in the process of demystifying Shakespeare for their students, and seem unlikely to require as much justification of Stredder's ideas as he provides. These justifications can be so vaguely presented as to sound almost circular, with "active work" becoming an end in itself. He argues that

once one thinks of the classroom or workshop as a kind of dramatic or theatrical laboratory, with all the participants as equal players, study of the formal aspects of Shakespearean texts, their language, narratives and characters, will generate a stream of ideas for active work—and...use of these will deliver a peculiar abundance of creative, emotional, and intellectual or critical insights and stimulation, to those that work with them. (7)

Such fuzzy (if lovely) formulations thankfully do not dominate the pages of Stredder's book, but they do give the sense of protesting too much, and they can encumber the reader intent on using the book as the teaching reference that it was intended to be.

The book's organization is another practical hindrance. It is no bad thing to be required to read a book cover to cover, of course, but I suspect that most teachers using *The North Face of Shakespeare* would like to use it as a quick reference for class preparation. The organization, with its two questionably ordered halves and its constant cross-references, makes that difficult, if not impossible. Most of us, after all, do not draw up our Shakespeare syllabi around sections on language, narrative, and

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character—though it may be arguable that we should—but around the study of individual plays. The biggest drawback of Stredder's book from a practical standpoint, one that future editions might remedy, is the lack of an appendix or other apparatus that would allow one to find activities most applicable to the plays and scenes that one needs to teach. There is an index that lists plays as they appear in the text in passing or as illustrative examples, but teachers planning a lesson or workshop around, say, the first three acts of *Hamlet* will still need to do the majority of the legwork themselves.

Given ample preparation time to sort through, organize, and apply Stredder's material to one's own purposes, however, *The North Face of Shakespeare* will provide a wealth of ideas for teachers who want, in Cicely Berry's words, to "keep Shakespeare alive and speaking in the classroom." My copy is dog-eared and ready to implement next semester.

Ripon College



Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*. New York: Norton, 2004. Pp. 430.

Reviewed by John Paul Spiro.

A biographer of Shakespeare has two sets of materials: the writings attributed to the man and the banal documents that refer to the man himself and/or his family, friends, and possible acquaintances. The wide gap between the two both frustrates and tempts: we encounter a shrewd, litigious businessman with interests hardly restricted to theater who somehow managed to write *King Lear*. We have (perhaps) John Shakespeare's will, Hamnet Shakespeare's death certificate, and other sundry documentation of varied and interesting people who may or may not have crossed paths with Shakespeare and, more importantly, left an impression on him. The Shakespeare biographer may simply present evidence, as Samuel Schoenbaum does in *William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life*; he/she may also write a history of Shakespeare's reputation, as in Schoenbaum's *Shakespeare's Lives* or Gary Taylor's *Reinventing Shakespeare*. The only other choice is to hypothesize.

But why write another biography of Shakespeare? Within the last few years, Stanley Wells, Michael Wood, and Anthony Holden have produced serviceable biographies aimed at a wide readership, while Park Honan has written the definitive scholarly biography for our time. But Stephen Greenblatt has never worried about entering a crowded field; he did, after all, publish a book on *Hamlet* a few years ago. Furthermore, Greenblatt has a distinctive writing style and critical method: he embraces his own subjectivity with an intensity and openness far exceeding most of his contemporaries. Humbly and without ostentation, he tells us how a text elicits a particular reaction in him and reminds him of something he read in another text; without asserting a direct connection, he proposes a possible "exchange" or "circulation." He hears the "traces" of "voices" or senses something "in the air" and will be the first to admit that he is only acknowledging his own feelings—feelings informed by copious research and skillful reading. He just puts it out there; we can take it or leave it.

Greenblatt's modesty has brought him considerable success and, in the case of his new Shakespeare biography, he distinguishes himself from more zealous scholars who are absolutely *positive*, after years of study and speculation, that Shakespeare *must* have been this or that kind of man. Greenblatt seems to take seriously Ralph

Waldo Emerson's claim that we (can) know Shakespeare's mind and heart through his works. Over a hundred pages into *Will in the World*, Greenblatt states, in a typical elision of the subjective with the definitive: "The whole impulse to explore Shakespeare's life arises from the powerful conviction"—not *my* (i.e., Stephen Greenblatt's) powerful conviction—"that his plays and poems spring not only from other plays and poems but from things he knew firsthand, in his body and soul" (119). So in *Will in the World* Greenblatt attempts to navigate the perilous triangle of Shakespeare's works, world, and mind, hoping that each will provide clues and insights into the other two.

The Shakespeare of *Will in the World* is, not surprisingly, a man of complexity and contradiction. Ambitious as well as cautious, he is filled with longing yet somehow cold. A public figure, he is cagey and guarded; he gains access to the highest levels of power while remaining an outsider. Greenblatt's portrayal of Shakespeare as subtle and paradoxical is convincing and, after the fact, seems obvious. A person does not write Shakespeare's works if that person is simple, direct, or preoccupied with a few concrete issues. Greenblatt is to be applauded for letting Shakespeare be complicated and refusing to let any one secret, personality trait, or personal experience explain everything.

Greenblatt's Shakespeare is Catholic by birth and culture; he is also bisexual in tendency if not behavior. These claims about Shakespeare's "inner life" are hardly new, and they are controversial only in that full consensus has not yet formed. However, given Greenblatt's standing in the academic community, his imprimatur may grant them the legitimacy they deserve. On the religion question, documentary and literary evidence are too easily doubted and disputed, so Greenblatt supports his case with skillful and informative sketches of the social history of Catholic recusance and radicalism in the Warwickshire of Shakespeare's youth. In what are probably the best chapters of *Will in the World*, Greenblatt explains how the young Will could have been initiated—probably by his schoolmasters—into a secret world of Catholic refugees and ideologues. That Shakespeare may have encountered Edmund Campion, or at least known of his deeds and eventual fate, is only the most intriguing biographical suggestion in *Will in the World* and it has already commanded much attention. As for speculation regarding Shakespeare's sexuality, Greenblatt treads largely familiar ground: he reads the *Sonnets* as an expression of frustrated desire for their patron, Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton. On this matter, Greenblatt does not add much to the case made by G.P.V. Akrigg, and though he mentions the work of Stephen Orgel, Bruce R. Smith, and Alan Bray in his bibliographical notes, he does not bother even to outline a social history of any kind of sexuality in Early Modern England—a curious omission.

Shakespeare's complex religious and sexual feelings are linked by the medium he used to work through them both: theater. Young Will almost certainly saw plays before he entered school, and Greenblatt artfully describes the boy's possible responses to documented productions. Whether or not his schoolmasters introduced him to Catholic radicalism, they probably did introduce him to theatrical performance and thus cemented the links between the two in the boy's mind. If there is a skeleton key to Shakespeare's personality in *Will in the World*, it is performance, as in this typical passage:

Will's life, if he actually sojourned in the north [among Catholic rebels], would have been a peculiar compound of theatricality and danger. On the one hand, a life of open, exuberant display, where for the first time Will's talents—his personal charm, his musical skills, his power of improvisation, his capacity to play a role, and perhaps even his gifts as a writer—were blossoming in performances beyond the orbit of his family and friends. (105)

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That Shakespeare was skilled in writing is the only thing about him we can be certain, and yet in the excerpt above Greenblatt seems more positive about everything else about him. Therein lies one of the central faults of *Will in the World*. Greenblatt can explain why Shakespeare wrote works of complexity and elusive meaning, but he cannot explain what's good about them, what makes them better than the works of his contemporaries (or predecessors or successors). Much of Greenblatt's prior work on Shakespeare contained quasi-apologies for writing about Shakespeare at all, as he has always refrained from judgments about their merit. They are worth writing about, it seems, because there is much to write about in them. Whether or not sheer quantity of *topoi* has anything to do with the quality of literary production, Greenblatt does not bother to conjecture. In *The Genius of Shakespeare*, Jonathan Bate offers a plausible theory for Shakespeare's cultural power: our current understanding of the concept of "genius" it itself shaped by the phenomenon of Shakespeare and the political supremacy of Elizabethan England. Greenblatt has no such theory. The subtitle of *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* apparently means, "How this particular man became someone that people write about," not "How (or why or if) this particular man wrote better than anybody else." Greenblatt does imply, however, that Shakespeare's relative lack of formal education (more than a 21st-century Classics undergraduate, less than Shakespeare's own poetic peers) and general outsider status (a country boy with Catholic origins) freed him from the dominant literary conventions of his time. He also suggests, more cannily, that Shakespeare's origins sensitized him to political realities and market forces, making him work harder, more carefully, and with more attention to the bottom line. It appears that Greenblatt's Shakespeare wrote so elusively (and allusively) so as to work through personal demons while staying out of trouble.

If Shakespeare had profound psychological conflicts regarding his religion and sexuality, then, Greenblatt asserts, "Anne Hathaway must have represented a startling alternative" (118). (This move from "if" to "must" is standard for Greenblatt.) Her age, religion, social position, and even her gender make sense in Greenblatt's narrative as "a reassuringly conventional resolution" to the young man's neuroses: his interests in theater, Catholicism, and males could all be averted. Marrying could make him "normal," and here Greenblatt is comfortable making psychological generalizations such as, "She was independent, in a way virtually ordained to excite a young man's sexual interest." Greenblatt also contends that Hathaway may have been a model for some of Shakespeare's comic heroines—or, at least, his attraction to her corresponds with his "lifelong fascination with women who are in this position" (119). These theories are worth consideration, indeed more than Greenblatt is willing to grant: he plants them in a general chapter about Shakespeare's personal and literary interest in heterosexual relations and then leaves them behind, never to discuss them again.

Aside from this chapter on "Wooing, Wedding, and Repenting," Greenblatt ignores Shakespeare's interest in women and gender as such. Greenblatt's theories about the origins of *Hamlet*, Falstaff, and Shylock have already commanded much attention, with responses varying according to individual attitudes towards New Historicism. But Greenblatt has no theory of Rosalind, for example, aside from his throwaway suggestion that Anne Hathaway may have been a model for her. One could easily read *Will in the World* and not know that Shakespeare created more compelling women than any of his contemporaries. *Hamlet*, Falstaff, and Shylock all have origins in Shakespeare's literary and historical context; but from whence Lady Macbeth, Portia, Helena, or Cleopatra? If these women have "inwardness" similar to or distinct from Shakespeare's men, Greenblatt does not say so.

Similarly, Greenblatt says little about Shakespeare's practice of comedy as a literary form and in a broader sense of humor and wit. He employs theories about Shakespeare's biography to explain *Hamlet*, but then he uses Shakespeare's comedies to explain his biography—as if the comedies are not interesting in their own right. Greenblatt acknowledges that Shakespeare had a dark view of marriage, but in that case he is more interested in Shakespeare's marriage, not in the comedies themselves. He has no position on the status of the later comedies or "problem plays," as he implies that Shakespeare's comedies did not develop structurally or thematically beyond *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *As You Like It*. As with nearly all Shakespeare biographers, Greenblatt does not care that Shakespeare was *funny*. His puns and entendres are integral to his enduring appeal and literary value. Greenblatt elucidates how Shakespeare's comfort with mixing genres and ideas—what Greenblatt calls Shakespeare's "strategic opacity"—gives his works some of their power, but he says little about Shakespeare's overall facility with language. Though *Will in the World* provides insights into Shakespeare's "inner life," its reader will learn little about Shakespeare's particular intelligence.

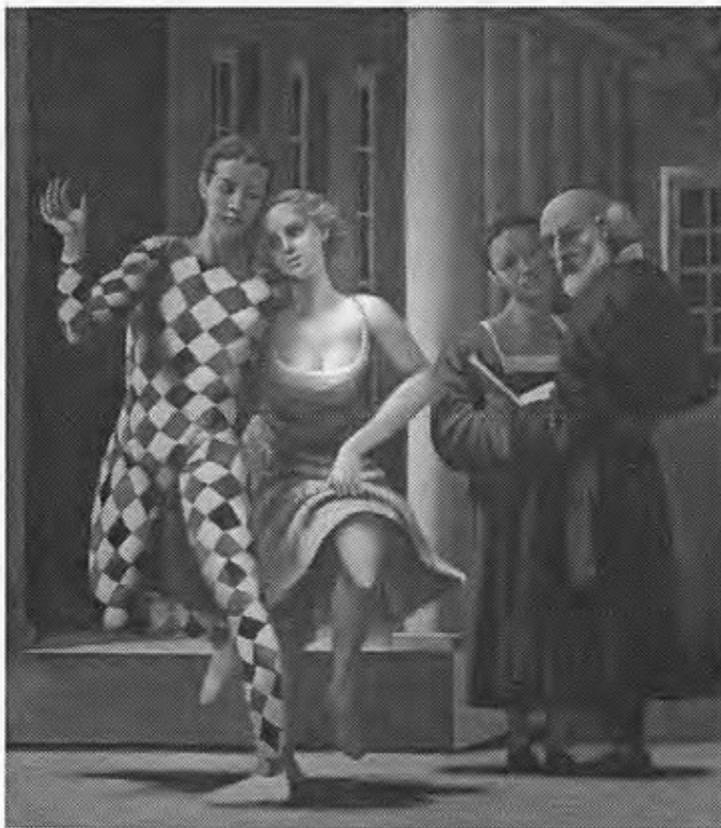
Will in the World is directed at a wide audience. Its bibliography is selective, and nowhere in the main text does Greenblatt refer to another scholar or scholarly text. It gives us Stephen Greenblatt's William Shakespeare, a man who, like his biographer, wants more than anything to awaken the dead. He is a portraitist who constructs people out of words. Greenblatt gives us a Shakespeare of possibilities, tenuous connections, fleeting associations. In the end, *Will in the World* is a house of cards. And yet it stands.

Villanova University



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Shakespeare and the Arts
The Upstart Crow, Volume XXV (2005)



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— Robert Greene, *Groatsworth of Wit* (1592)



For those persons who have become subscribers this year, I want to welcome you and extend my personal thanks to you, as well as to continuing subscribers, for your support. I know I speak for the journal’s editors, staff, and advisory board. Your help makes a great difference as the Center for Electronic and Digital Publishing (CEDP) endeavors to maintain high standards and strives to do new things with this publication for Clemson University Digital Press (CUDP). The two shoulders of our publishing house are *The South Carolina Review* and *The Upstart Crow*. The last is one reason Clemson is associated with William Shakespeare’s good name (and Greene’s epithet). Presently, *The Upstart Crow* is being transformed for the new millennium. Outwardly, the annual has generated a new appearance—starting with volume XXI (2001)—and, inwardly, a new organization, policies, and operating procedures. In memory of Jim Andreas, late editor and co-founder (in 1990) of the Clemson Shakespeare Festival, we have decided to change the cover each year to match the theme of the festival. Subscriptions and sales are crucial to running a successful journal. That’s why your help is appreciated. Tell your friends about us, visit our website, and watch us grow at <http://www.clemson.edu/caah/cedp>.

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