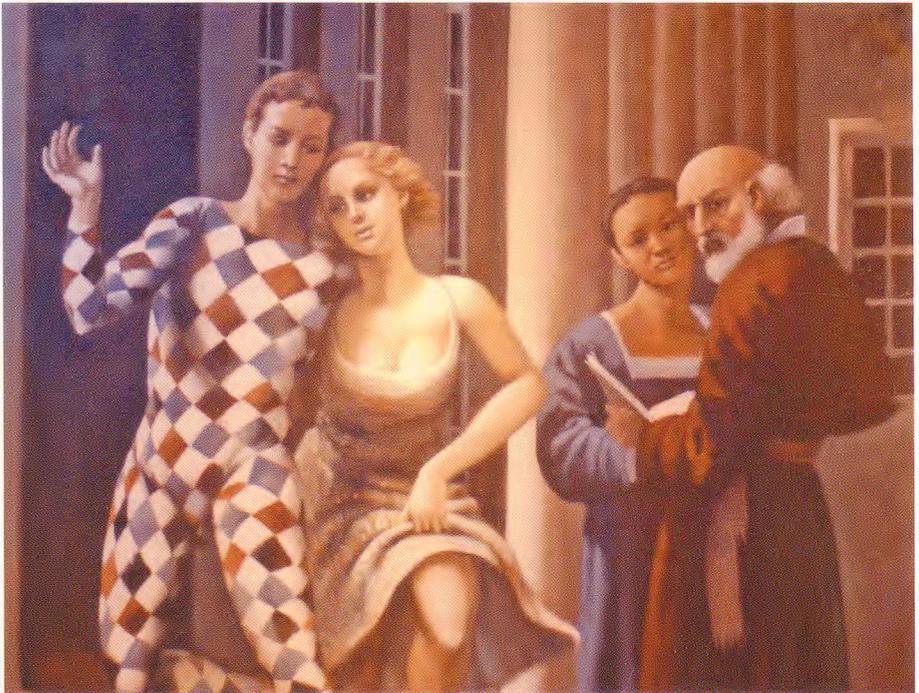


The
**Upstart
Crow**
A Shakespeare Journal



SHAKESPEARE ACROSS THE ARTS

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Dear Readers of *The Upstart Crow*,

Volume XXV (2005) of *The Upstart Crow* includes a wide range of offerings, including scholarly essays, performance and book reviews, poetry on and inspired by Shakespeare. I want to highlight several aspects of this volume that indicate new directions in which *The Upstart Crow* is moving.

First, it is my pleasure to welcome Professor Henry S. Turner, University of Wisconsin-Madison, to *The Upstart Crow* in the newly created position of Book Review Editor. Beginning with the current issue, Professor Turner has already begun to match specialist readers with books to review, and for future volumes he plans an expanded book review section featuring a review essay on the annual theme of the issue.

The theme of Volume XXV is "Shakespeare Across the Arts," which was the topic of the 2005 Clemson Shakespeare Festival. The keynote speakers, Professor Frances Teague of the University of Georgia, and Professor Courtney Lehman of the University of the Pacific, have adapted their lectures into the essays that open this volume. Both essays represent fresh cross-disciplinary approaches to the study of Shakespeare, a developing hallmark of *The Upstart Crow*.

Finally, we are happy to feature among this year's performance reviews a full consideration of the London Globe's 2005 season, by Michael Shurgot. We plan to continue this new tradition of including reviews of international Shakespearean productions alongside our reviews of prominent North American Shakespeare festivals. Our expanded focus on Shakespearean performances is another key part of our vision for the future of *The Upstart Crow*.

We thank you, as always, for your interest in *The Upstart Crow*.

**Yours,
Elizabeth Rivlin
Editor**

BEARDS AND BROADWAY: SHAKESPEARE AS UNACKNOWLEDGED AGENT

by Frances Teague

While a beard can signal masculine identity, that clear signal fades both in slang usage and in theatrical practice. The word “beard” may become a slang synecdoche for an identity as a man, but it may also be used as slang for female pubic hair and serve as a synecdoche for an identity as a woman. This complication—that a beard is a claim about gender identity, but we cannot be quite sure what the nature of that claim is—helps account for Banquo’s remark about the witches in *Macbeth*:

You should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so. (1.3.45-7)¹

The original actors playing the witches were men, but were understood to represent women; their masculine beards rendered their sexual identity as women uncertain, uncanny. A beard means differently in *Much Ado about Nothing*. When the character Benedick decides to be in love with Beatrice, he shaves, or rather the actor playing Benedick removes a false beard, so that the actors playing Don Pedro and Claudio may comment on his changed appearance:

D. PEDRO. Hath any man seen him at the barber’s?
CLAUD. No, but the barber’s man hath been seen with him, and the old
ornament of his cheek hath already stuff’d tennis-balls. (3.2.43-47)

In this instance, the character’s move away from the homosocial soldier’s world and into a heterosexual relationship is signaled by the actor’s removal of part of his costume, a false beard. Thus the early modern drama enacts the mixture of meaning found in late modern slang usage. In Shakespeare’s theater and in today’s world, a beard may serve not only to establish one sort of identity, but also to disguise or complicate identity.²

Twentieth-century American musicals use Shakespeare as a sort of beard, covering up anxiety about race and sexuality. By beginning with the term “beard,” I want to establish a theoretical position for regarding the American musical as a queer form, one that does not fit normative assumptions that academics make about drama.³ The complications of that cultural identity mean that critics may well misread (or perhaps under-read) musical comedy appropriations of Shakespeare. One recent Shakespeare musical *Play On!* used Shakespeare to serve as a beard for some of what it had to say about racial and sexual identities. The critical response to *Play On!* was largely negative, with critics complaining that the show was unrealistic and implausible, but the critics’ complaints are at odds with the historical record. Finally, I want to

consider the problems raised by such misperceptions.

I. Shakespeare as Beard

In the two portraits of Shakespeare that have some claim to authenticity—the Droeshout engraving in the First Folio and the memorial bust in Holy Trinity Church—we see Shakespeare as a working character actor and as a retired man of letters respectively. The Droeshout portrait of Shakespeare (1623) is accompanied by a verse, almost certainly by Ben Jonson, declaring, “This Figure, that thou here seest put, / It was for gentle Shakespeare cut; / Wherein the Grauer had a strife / with Nature, to out-doo the life....” In this portrait, we see Shakespeare in his middle years, a time when he was a working actor and sharer in the King’s Men. The costume he wears is traditionally said to be that of Edward Knowell in Ben Jonson’s 1598 play *Every Man in His Humor*, a role Shakespeare probably played.⁴ The subject has some facial hair, a moustache and a little fuzz on the lower lip, but the chin is clean-shaven. By contrast, the tomb bust (ca. 1614) that represents Shakespeare in retirement has a goatee as well as a moustache. The subject of the bust is older than that of the engraving, but they look quite a lot alike. The beard is one difference: in the bust it suggests a man of substance, a leading citizen virile enough to have a beard and able to keep it trimmed. In the engraving, the actor wears no beard.

It makes sense that a working actor would prefer not to wear a beard because he has to change his appearance to fit various roles, especially if he is in a repertory company as Shakespeare was. After an actor has left the stage with its demand for multiple identities, he might well prefer to grow a beard since he no longer needs to shave in order to play a clean-shaven character (or one who shaves in mid-action, like the actor playing Benedick). Beards are not simply facial decoration in the playhouse; they



Droeshout engraving in First Folio



Memorial bust in Holy Trinity Church

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are part of an actor's costume choice. That Shakespeare knew as much is clear from Bottom's speech in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, when he prepares for his role as Pyramus:

BOT....What beard were I best to play it in?

QUIN. Why, what you will.

BOT. I will discharge it in either your straw-color beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-color beard, your perfit yellow. (1.2.90-96)

Even so unsophisticated a performer as Bottom knows that different beards allow the actor a choice about how to present a role. Once again early modern theatrical practice, the beard as part of an actor's kit, can be seen in late modern slang usage. *The American Thesaurus of Slang* (1953) defines a "cross-over beard" as "a beard used by an actor to double in a secondary part, or to cross the stage for an entrance on the other side." The beard disguises the performer long enough to let him move through the on-stage action with one identity and then return in another identity.

The "crossover beard" usage may well be related to another slang usage, for a beard is "an unacknowledged agent." J. E. Lighter records this sense both in the context of gambling, "I played horses, using men as betting commissioners, or 'beards' as they were called at the race track," and in the context of sexuality, i.e., "an escort or companion of the opposite sex whose presence is intended to conceal a person's homosexuality."⁵ (I have also heard this term used in reference to a heterosexual relationship. When a woman with an unwitting husband attended a party to which her male lover had also been invited, the lover brought a date to "beard" for him.) The beard serves as a screen for someone who wants to engage in an activity, but cannot do so directly. The beard screens the proscribed activity from public view, giving the impression of respectability.

I would agree with cultural critic David Miller that "Long before its kind was manifestly endangered, the Broadway musical took on a protective coloration," and add that a musical's protective coloration is not limited to sexual preference.⁶ In musical comedies, Shakespeare can also serve as a beard for transgressive desires about race or female independence. If Miller is also correct in seeing "the Broadway musical [as] the unique genre of mass culture to be elaborated in the name of the mother", what is one to make of Shakespearean musicals, invoking the literary father?⁷ Whatever else happens in a Shakespearean musical, he does not become a fabulous diva or a peculiar presence; he remains what he has always been in American theater, a mainstay of the legit stage. In musicals, Shakespeare plays his role as a beard, an unacknowledged agent, for other playwrights. Yet musical theater, especially musical comedy, is from the outset a culturally queer form. For example, if one considers a hallmark of post-modernism to be the way in which it collapses elite and popular, high and low cultures, what is one to do with musical com-

edies, which perform that collapse throughout the modernist period, only to go slack and lose power during the post-modernist period?⁸

The use of Shakespeare in musical comedy should signal to us that something unusual is happening. When a team writing a musical comedy wishes to push convention in some way, they may invoke Shakespeare as a cultural icon. Under the cover of Shakespeare's beard, a show can safely explore bawdy humor as in *The Boys from Syracuse* (1938), sometimes said to be the first Shakespeare musical comedy. The same process occurs when a musical employs a mixed-race cast (*Swingin' the Dream*, 1939), casts doubt on conventional ideas about marriage (*Kiss Me, Kate*, 1948), uses racial tensions (*West Side Story*, 1957), toys with homosexuality (*Your Own Thing*, 1968), or examines sexual and political freedom (*Two Gents*, 1971).⁹ Alternatively, one might argue that once Shakespeare has been invoked in a musical comedy, the creative team finds it much easier to take risks. My concern is not so much with the order that the process takes for a musical comedy, i.e., whether invoking Shakespeare leads to unconventionality or desire for unconventionality leads to invoking Shakespeare, but rather with the effect. What occurs when Shakespeare is a beard?

If Shakespeare is the quintessential figure of English theater, then musical comedy is the quintessential form of American theater. Of course musical theater is found world-wide, often with national inflections. Whether one considers satyr play, opera, zarzuela, or Broadway show, the work is clearly musical theater. The book musical is the kind of musical theater most strongly associated with Broadway, and the most powerful theatrical form (and export) in America's theatrical history. In a recent column, Terry Teachout observes:

. . . no other genre remains so central to American theatrical life. Of the twenty 'top Broadway shows' listed in the April 23 *Wall Street Journal / Zagat Theater Survey*, a weekly poll of New York theatergoers, sixteen were musicals. Among movies, *Chicago* (2002), the most recent film version of a Broadway musical, won six Oscars, including Best Picture. Most of the best musicals of the 20th century continue to be revived regularly, on Broadway and elsewhere, just as their songs continue to be sung and recorded.¹⁰

Certainly if one asks a friend to name a "Broadway show," the friend is apt to name a musical rather than a play by Lillian Hellman, Tennessee Williams, or August Wilson. Tourism commercials for New York City feature chorus lines of current musicals, while the export of such musicals (both on national and international tours) generates millions of dollars each year. Yet musicals are not limited to elite tastes, for although the price to the Broadway audience can make them a luxury item, the standard musical shows are also the mainstay of innumerable high school, college, and community theater companies.

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II. *Play On!* Misperceived

Two Shakespearean musicals demonstrate the difficulty of “reading” musicals: *Play On!*, a fairly recent production, and *Swingin’ the Dream*, one that is almost forgotten. Both are unabashedly American, celebrating American music and dance, incorporating American concerns about race and gender, and referencing moments in America’s cultural history. Yet these two musicals, sixty years apart, both depend on Shakespeare’s cultural cachet to make their claims. One reason to appropriate Shakespeare, after all, is to appropriate his power, his authority. In both cases the appropriation sprang from love for Shakespeare’s work and a double yearning: to be like him and to make him like us. Let me begin with *Play On!*

Play On! was a great hit at San Diego’s Old Globe Theatre in 1997, but a tepid non-hit on Broadway in 1997, although it has enjoyed regional success and one regional production was included in the prestigious Public Broadcasting Service series *Great Performances* (2000). The show is a derivative of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, re-setting the plot to the Harlem Renaissance and dropping Shakespeare’s language, while adding the music of Duke Ellington. In this project, the creators were not breaking new ground: several recent musicals have provided a book for songs written decades before: *Fascinating Rhythm* (1999) and *Crazy for You* (1996) raided the Gershwin songbook, while *Happy New Year* (1980) and *High Society* (1990) used Cole Porter’s material. Using Ellington’s songs in an original musical comedy fits that pattern, which has sometimes proven profitable. The idea for the show came from Sheldon Epps, and the joyful choreography from Duke Ellington’s granddaughter, Mercedes Ellington; the writer of the book was Cheryl West, a noted African-American playwright whose dramas *Jar the Floor* and *Before It Hits Home* have enjoyed success and won awards. There is a sort of cheeky pun in re-setting the Renaissance comedy to the Harlem Renaissance. In a sense, theater-goers who regard Shakespeare’s culturally elite work as stuffy and dull were being offered a light-hearted substitute. By appropriating Shakespeare’s cultural capital and joining it to that of the Harlem Renaissance, the creators sought to make an American show that revitalized *Twelfth Night*, by infusing it with features like swing music and dancing. Beneath that ostensible purpose, that beard, one can see a second goal. Clearly the creative team wanted to equate the two sorts of Renaissance. By joining the Harlem Renaissance and the English Renaissance, Shakespeare and Ellington, the creative team was implicitly setting the African-American experience as a parallel to and a surrogate for the culturally elite action of a Shakespearean play. West’s book was strongly crafted to privilege African-American culture, both in her emphasis on the Harlem Renaissance setting and in plot changes that signaled her refusal to let a black man be humiliated.

The alterations that the show’s book required were sited in cultural shifts; the critics largely ignored these very interesting changes. Instead critical comment focused on the show’s unlikeliness. In short, the critics wanted nothing to

do with that implicit equation between the two cultural worlds. For the reviewers, the American and British elements were not of equal value, nor did they fit together well. The reviewers may have been correct in thinking the production had weaknesses, but in describing the incompatibility of the American and British cultural values, they were wrong.

Since *Play On!* is not well-known, I shall summarize its action. (The creators use twenty-one songs by Duke Ellington throughout the show, but in this plot summary I shall mention only a few.) A young woman named Vi comes to New York from the country, arriving on "The 'A' Train" determined to make it as a song-writer by learning from the Duke, Harlem's finest song composer. Her uncle Jester tells her she cannot succeed as a woman, so she cross-dresses to gain employment with the Duke, who is having a dry spell. All the Duke can think about is the beautiful night-club singer, Lady Liv, so he laments, "I've Got It Bad and That Ain't Good." The Duke sends Vi-man to woo Lady Liv, and—after managing to get past Liv's club manager, the Rev—Vi-man tries to persuade Liv to care. Liv falls for Vi-man, who has fallen for the Duke, while the respectable Rev yearns for Lady Liv.

By himself, the Rev sings "Don't You Know I Care." Jester and his friends overhear him and tell him that he needs to loosen up because "It Don't Mean a Thing, If It Ain't Got That Swing." Dressed in a yellow zoot suit, Rev sings and dances up a storm with Lady Liv in "I'm Beginning to See the Light." When she rejects him, Rev is heart-broken and returns to his navy-blue manager's suit. Liv pursues Vi-man until the untimely entrance of the Duke. Duke renounces both Liv and Vi-man, Vi rejects Liv, and everyone is unhappy. The show ends with Vi's revealing her female identity to the Duke by asking him to help her complete "Prelude to a Kiss." Meanwhile Rev and Liv fall in love in a duet, "I Want Something to Live For." Everyone lives happily ever after.

The alterations that the show makes to Shakespeare's play are similar to those made by other Shakespearean musicals, since they streamline the plot, providing more room in the production for musical numbers. But these changes have other effects worthy of note. One major plot change, for example, is the elimination of Viola's twin brother Sebastian and his loving rescuer Antonio. Cutting those characters reduces the size of the company, but it also brings a consequent reduction of homoeroticism in the show's subtext. Another change is that Sir Toby and Feste are combined in the person of Jester, who is given a familial connection to the Viola figure rather than to Olivia/Lady Liv. That shift reduces the danger that Vi-man runs, since her secret is known early on by the benevolent Jester, but isolates Olivia more thoroughly than in Shakespeare's play. The sweet country girl has family on whom she can draw; while the sultry singer must stand alone. That alteration affects what may be the most significant change: the Rev, serving as the Malvolio figure, ends up with Lady Liv, rather than as the object of humiliation.

Such changes may make sense in terms of African-American culture. Resistance to homosexuality, after all, has been called "the greatest taboo" among African Americans.¹¹ Thus, reducing such homoerotic elements as

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Antonio's declared passion for Sebastian neatly trims the production budget and eliminates social discomfort. The image of the isolated Lady Liv recalls the "tragic mulatto" stereotype, yet reclaims it: this woman has agency and concludes with love as well as her career. As for Malvolio/Rev, surely the idea that a black servant becomes a partner and wins his love is, within this cultural context, more bearable than that a black servant is humiliated, imprisoned, and finally driven away. In his final scene with Lady Liv, the Rev tells her that he has allowed others to call him "Boy" for her sake, and the racially-inflected insult serves to make him sympathetic and worthy of her love. When Lady Liv embraces him, the audience is pleased. Altering the outcome, while suppressing the possibility of homoerotic desire by eliminating Sebastian and Antonio, does underscore a concern for race and the emasculating effect of servitude.

The change also underscores the class tensions found in Shakespeare's original work. Scholars have long argued whether *Twelfth Night* is a golden or bitter comedy, and their contention has centered on the difficulty of understanding how class and gender operate in the play. Specifically, Malvolio poses a problem because he is simultaneously unsympathetic and badly treated. (In the Arden edition's twelve-page discussion of the play's critical history, J. M. Lothian and T. W. Craik spend about a quarter of the section on the character of Malvolio and how one is to understand the steward.)¹² In other words, the musical offers an interesting alternative reading of Malvolio. The show's reviewers, however, never mention these alterations or what they imply, although the reviewers are quick to register the importance of Shakespeare's original. Instead, they focus on the Shakespearean original as offering a fantasy world.

To be sure, alterations make political sense, but does the history that West fictionalizes seem at all likely? Does the show in any way resemble what went on in the Harlem Renaissance or in Duke Ellington's life? Reviews of the New York production pointed to the fantasy feeling of the show. In the *New York Times*, Ben Brantley called *Play On!* a "romantic fable," asking "why not substitute a bygone Harlem, nostalgically remembered as a stylishly self-contained cradle for dazzling musical talent, for the fantastical dukedom of Illyria?" Brantley considered West's manipulation of the Lady Liv-Rev relationship clumsily handled, and complained that "This awkwardness wouldn't matter as much if the show could create, as it obviously means to, a fluid, fairy-tale sense of Harlem as a hip Brigadoon." Some critics were skeptical about Vi's cross-dressing. Jack Kroll called the device "silly fun," and the show "a cartoon" (*Newsweek*), while Mark Steyn, more irascible, dismissed Vi as a "budding lady Songwriter" and the show as "necrophilic" (*New Criterion*). In *Variety*, Greg Evans complained, "'Play On!' maintains (loosely) the Bard's storyline and characters, but replaces complexity with sketch-comedy mechanics," adding that "A chance to visit the famed Harlem nightclub [Ellington's Cotton Club] remains, like most of 'Play On!', a missed opportunity." Clearly the critics thought that the show's events were unlikely. I want to argue that considering what actually happened in Harlem, the events in *Play On!* are plausible. The "cartoon" or "fantasy"

comments seem directed at the plot device of a woman's cross-dressing to participate fully in the world of music and at the idea that the Harlem Renaissance has anything to do with William Shakespeare, so I shall concentrate on these points, arguing that such skepticism is not only unwarranted, but also condescending and ignorant.

III. *Swingin' the Dream*: Shakespeare in the Harlem Renaissance

Harlem in the 1930s and 1940s was not simply the source of the hot swing music from Duke Ellington, Dizzie Gillespie, Count Basie, and Louis Armstrong that was fast replacing the sweet jazz played by such popular bands as Guy Lombardo and his Canadians. The Harlem Renaissance had been in full swing since 1919. African Americans came to New York from across the nation for its opportunities in education, business, and the arts. Many understood an interest in Shakespeare's works to be an indicator of their privileged status as members of the talented tenth. Thus Langston Hughes published a collection of poems, *Shakespeare in Harlem*, while the late Erroll Hill has written of important African-American Shakespearean productions in the Harlem Renaissance.¹³ That Shakespearean interest was included in the world of swing, most notably in the interest and affection that Ellington and his collaborator Billy Strayhorn felt for Shakespeare. But Ellington and Strayhorn were not the only swing musicians to care about Shakespeare.

In 1939, a musical comedy version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, entitled *Swingin' the Dream*, re-set the action to Louisiana around 1900, with white performers playing Theseus' court (Theseus becomes governor of Louisiana) and African-American performers playing the mechanicals (New Orleans firemen) and fairies. The production of *Swingin' the Dream* employed an impressive group of musical artists: Louis Armstrong, the Bud Freeman band, the Benny Goodman sextet, with Don Voorhees conducting.¹⁴ But music was not all the show offered. Agnes de Mille choreographed the production for such notable dancers as the Rhythmettes and Bill Bailey. Louis Armstrong played Bottom, Bill Bailey played Cupid, the Dandridge sisters were attendant fairies, Juan Hernandez played Oberon, Moms Mabley played Quince, Dorothy McGuire played Helena, Butterfly McQueen played Puck, Maxine Sullivan played Titania. These are important performers, either in the African-American theatrical tradition (Moms Mabley never really broke through with a white audience, for example, but was enormously influential in African-American clubs, performing until the 1970s), or in the broadest popular spectrum (Louis Armstrong and Butterfly McQueen are obvious examples).

The show was preceded with talk about how important it would be. Donald Bogle notes that "During rehearsals, word spread among jazz aficionados and fans that *Swingin' the Dream* was a progressive production that made excellent use of its often underemployed Negro talents."¹⁵ Special effects were plentiful:

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The huge Center Theatre's stage was exploited for various tricks and interesting effects, with sets and costumes modelled after Walt Disney's cartoons. Titania made an entrance in a World's Fair "World of Tomorrow" electric wheelchair, a Murphy bed emerged from a tree in the forest; microphones (to help audibility in the cavernous playhouse) sprang up in the shape of caterpillars and snails; and there was a noteworthy scene of plantation life on the lawn of the governor's... mansion, with a cast of jitterbugging celebrants.¹⁶

In a column he wrote for the Washington, D.C., newspaper, *The Afro-American*, Lionel Hampton wrote with excitement about the upcoming show and his high hopes for it (4 November 1939, 20). He also commented that "It's in 'Swingin' the Dream' that the sextette really puts over to you how much wider a scope and opportunity for each man for better playing we now have" (2 December 1939, 24).¹⁷ The leader of the show's other swing band, Bud Freeman talks about the show's promise:

We were at Nick [Condon]'s for about six or seven weeks when we got an offer to do a Broadway show called "Swingin' the Dream." The show was produced by Eric Charell, who had tremendous success in Europe with a show called "White Horse Inn." He came to American with enormous financial backing to create a revue mixing *Midsummer Night's Dream* with black vaudeville. He had just about the finest talent you could get. Just about everyone in the show became world-renowned. He had Louis Armstrong, Nicodemus, Troy Brown, Oscar Polk, Butterfly McQueen, Bill Bailey, Dorothy Maguire, and Maxine Sullivan. If Charell had known the greatness of the black people he could have had a revue that would still be running.

There was some excellent music in the show. Jimmy Van Heusen wrote a number of pieces for it, and one of them, "Darn That Dream," has become a classic.¹⁸

If prominent names and promising talk were all that a play needed to succeed, *Swingin' the Dream* would have had a long and happy run. It failed. The production closed in less than two weeks. *The Afro-American* reported that the total loss was over \$80,000 (23 December 1939); Bogle says the total lost was over \$100,000. Theater historians generally think that the 1939 show failed because it kept too much of Shakespeare's text, unlike the successful *Boys from Syracuse* (1938). It was too respectful of its original, in contrast to the hugely successful African-American production of Gilbert and Sullivan, *The Hot Mikado* (1938). In short, the problem was not racism. No contemporary account shows any sense that African-Americans were inappropriate performers in a Shakespeare musical. To the contrary, the musical evoked great anticipation. The problem was a show that seemed endless in a huge theater that swallowed up the production. When the reviewers of *Play On!* wrote that the show offered an implausible fantasy, when they implicitly rejected the links between

Shakespeare and the Harlem Renaissance, they are actually writing against America's theatrical history. Their complaints about Vi-man's cross-dressing are equally misplaced.

Historian Louis Erenberg has demonstrated that swing was an agent of remarkable social change in America, especially in precipitating racial integration.¹⁹ There was popular recognition that the best music and the best dancing in America was African-American, leading to white customers visiting Harlem's clubs (most notably Ellington's Cotton Club) and to the success of New York's first integrated club, Café Society. But if addressing racial inequity was part of the swing movement, and Erenberg makes a compelling case that it was, gender inequity was ignored. In *Play On!*, Viola/Vi-man's fictional case mirrors what actually occurred to women who tried to succeed as musicians. Erenberg discusses the general misogyny of the scene in the 1930s, but I want to cite just two cases that seem to me especially interesting because both involve a woman musician who cross-dressed.

In the 1930s, when Anita O'Day wanted to be recognized as a musician instead of simply the vocalist, she asked if she could wear a jacket like the men in the band. To be sure, simply wearing a musician's jacket can hardly be regarded as a transvestite act, yet the response to O'Day's request was to generate powerfully negative rumors about her, rumors that could have threatened her career. "She wanted audiences to 'listen to me, not look at me. I want to be treated like another musician,' not a trinket 'to decorate the bandstands.' Soon, however, rumors circulated 'that I preferred ladies to men!'" so O'Day went back to glamour gowns.¹⁹ In the heyday of swing bands, "girl" vocalists were not recognized as musicians, nor were women instrumentalists welcomed. To signal that lack of welcome, the rumors that circulate are not claims that O'Day is a weak musician or a difficult co-worker, but rather that she is a lesbian. The incident gives a clear sense of how difficult it was for a woman musician in the 1930s and 1940s.

Indeed, to get jobs as a pianist, Dorothy Tipton began passing as a man in the 1930s, and did so successfully until after her death in 1989, when the coroner informed her startled third wife and three (adopted) sons that Billy Tipton was in fact a woman. Diane Middlebrooks' recent biography of Tipton, *Suits Me*, makes it clear that women were not easily admitted into the world of swing, although Tipton's case is complicated by personal desires.²⁰ In *Play On!*, when Vi turns herself into Vi-man, the show is not simply imitating Shakespeare: it's imitating life.

Play On!, with its evocation of the Harlem Renaissance, suggests a nostalgic fantasy to most reviewers, not a reconstruction of history. I've tried to suggest that the show is, in fact, closer to the historical record than its creators probably realized. But in this version of history, Duke Ellington and William Shakespeare are recognized as equals, and swing is a triumphant force in America's culture. And that finally is the fantasy, more's the pity.

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Notes

1. All quotations from Shakespeare's plays are taken from the Riverside edition, ed. G. Blake-more Evans, et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).
2. A full discussion of Renaissance practice vis-a-vis stage beards can be found in Will Fisher's essay, "Staging the Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern English Culture," in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, eds. Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). The slang meanings for beard are given in either *The American Thesaurus of Slang*, eds. Lester V. Berrey and Melvin Van den Bark, 2nd edn. (New York: Crowell, 1953) or J. E. Lighter, *Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang* (New York: Random House, 1994).
3. John Clum, *Something for the Boys: Musical Theater and Gay Culture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999) makes the argument that musical comedy is a gay rather than a queer form. It seems to me to have been straight (i.e., created by and for heterosexual men) in the nineteenth century, although that identity was certainly shifting after the First World War. Certainly during the century the double vision of the musical, allowing the audience to understand it according to various assumptions about sexuality, is both one of the musical's strengths and certainly one of the form's most interesting features. When I speak of it as a queer form, however, I principally mean that musicals do not fit the normative assumptions of academics.
4. Samuel Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives* (N.Y.: Oxford, 1970), 13.
5. Lighter, 115.
6. D. A. Miller, *A Place for Us: Essay on the Broadway Musical* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1998), 1.
7. Miller, 83.
8. For this feature of post-modernism, see Andrew Milner, *Literature, Culture, and Society* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 56, or *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism*, ed. Joseph Childers and Gary Hentzi (New York: Columbia UP, 1995), s.v. "Postmodernism." Shakespeare's central position in the legitimate theater is underscored by the *OED*'s definition of "legit" as "the legitimate drama: the body of plays, Shakespearian or other, that have a recognized theatrical and literary merit.... Also in other collocations. So as sb., an actor of legitimate drama." The first instance the *OED* offers is from the late eighteenth century.
9. There are others that I do not discuss here, but consider in *Shakespeare and the American Popular Stage*, forthcoming from Cambridge University Press, 2006.
10. *Commentary*, June 2004, 47.
11. I take the epithet from Delroy Constantine-Simms and his anthology, *The Greatest Taboo: Homosexuality in Black Communities* (Los Angeles: Alyson Publishers, 2001), with contributions from bell hooks, Henry Louis Gates, and *Rolling Stone*'s Touré.
12. J. M. Lothian and T. W. Craik, eds. *Twelfth Night* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988). The discussion of criticism runs from l-ixi, and Malvolio is their subject on pp. lviii-ix.
13. Hughes, *Shakespeare in Harlem* (New York: Knopf, 1942) and Hill, *Shakespeare in Sable: A History of Black Shakespearian Actors* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984).

14. Accounts of the show's music are confusing. Jimmy van Heusen composed some of the music, Goodman did much of the arranging, and Eddie De Lange wrote the lyrics. One finds the occasional claim that Jimmy van Heusen created all the music, basing his compositions on Mendelssohn's music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but I cannot find support for that. According to Ross Firestone, *Swing, Swing, Swing: The Life and Times of Benny Goodman* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1993), Jimmy van Heusen wrote only half a dozen songs, one of which, "Dam that Dream," has become a standard. Gerald Bordman's *American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) credits van Heusen and Goodman with "Spring Song," Alec Wilder and van Heusen with "Love's a Riddle," and lists "Peace Brother," "There's Gotta Be a Wedding," "Moonland," "Comedy Dance," "Dream Dance," and "Dam That Dream" as being by van Heusen. Unfortunately, no script for the show survives, although four surviving pages are shown in *Borrowers and Lenders* < <http://atropos.english.uga.edu/cocoon/borrowers/>> 1(2005).
15. Donald Bogle, *Dorothy Dandridge, a Biography* (New York: Amistad, 1997), 72.
16. Samuel Leiter, *Encyclopedia of the New York Stage 1930-40* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1989), 502.
17. Lionel Hampton, Lionel Hampton Column, *Washington Afro-American*, November 4, 1939 and December 2, 1939.
18. Bud Freeman and Robert Wolf, *Crazeology, the Autobiography of a Chicago Jazzman* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 49-50.
19. Lewis A. Erenberg, *Swingin' the Dream: Big Band Jazz and the Rebirth of American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
20. Erenberg, 200.
21. Diane Middlebrooks, *Suits Me: The Double Life of Billy Tipton* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

**THE PASSION OF THE W:
LOCALIZING SHAKESPEARE, GLOBALIZING MANIFEST DENSITY FROM
KING LEAR TO KINGDOM COME**

by Courtney Lehmann

[It is] our manifest destiny to over spread
and to possess the whole of the continent which
Providence has given us for the development of
the great experiment of liberty.

—John L. O'Sullivan¹

Companies can no longer barricade the doors,
keep the faith, and assume competitors from
all over the world will pass over them in the
night like the angel of death . . . what we call
global manifest destiny . . . [—] the complete
and inevitable economic integration of all human-
kind [—] . . . has its hands everywhere, and it is
here to stay.

—John A. Caslione²

Once a provincial phenomenon associated with the settling of the American West, “manifest destiny,” a phrase coined by John O’Sullivan in 1845, has given ground to an increasingly global variation on this theme that has extended its reach to Western culture at large: *manifest density*. In contrast to the clarity of purpose and Providential design associated with its gun-toting, God-quoting predecessor, *manifest density* implies both a transparency and opacity of feeling, a decoupling of words and meaning which, as John Caslione’s vision of a corporate rather than biblical “angel of death” suggests, derives from the bizarre resurgence of the sacred within the economic sphere. This phenomenon is typified by the “war on terror,” throughout which religious rhetoric has been deployed on both sides. Fought largely on foreign soil but waged in the domestic imagination as a battle against the “enemies of freedom”—that is, of the free market—the war on terror pledges to thwart the return of the Dark Ages while obscuring the real medievaldoers: namely, those so-called leaders of the free world from “W” to the World Bank who are playing globalization’s “two bodies”—democracy and capitalism—against each other, the upshot of which is nothing less than global civil war.

Reminiscent of the clash between King and Commonwealth that precipitated the seventeenth-century English Civil War, this precarious moment in the history of modern power has been described as an “interregnum.”³ Although there is no longer a king proper to depose, the current interregnum involves a

similar battle for sovereignty between the neo-imperial law of the market, or *lex mercatoria*, and the democratic potential of the multitude—not a commonwealth per se but what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri call “the common”—the life that springs from globalization’s connective, rather than divisive, energies. The question, then, is will *lex mercatoria* become *rex mercatoria* or will the iconoclastic energies of the multitude prove capable of subverting what the authors characterize, appropriately, as global capitalism’s predatory, “sacred core”?⁴

That is a question not unfamiliar to another “W,” William Shakespeare, whose plays, beginning with *Henry VI*, have explored the problems that inhere in a singular concept of sovereign power, staging clashes between competing claimants to the throne as well as crises within the multitude itself. In the hands of filmmakers, Shakespeare has been employed to mark key political thresholds ranging from World Wars to women’s rights, and the current interregnum is no exception; for the two plays most frequently adapted to the screen since the advent of the new millennium have been *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, both of which revolve around a crisis of sovereignty. In an era marked by the rise of “rogue regimes,” both great and small, *Macbeth* is a particularly apt candidate for adaptation as the story of upstart political ambitions gone horribly awry. Somewhat harder to account for is the popularity of *King Lear*, the resurgence of which conspicuously coincides with George W. Bush’s first term. Indeed, why, despite the media’s relentless comparisons of W to Shakespeare’s prodigal prince Hal, does the most recent adaptation of *Henry V* appear during George Sr.’s presidency, whereas *King Lear*, a play seemingly better suited to this elder statesman, is the film most associated with Jr.’s administration?⁵ Simply put: because it is the son—and not the father—who is senile.

W suffers from a form of cultural memory loss that goes by the name of “senile capitalism,” a capitalism, in Dean MacCannell’s definition, that has literally forgotten its once-constitutive partnership with democracy. “Having defeat[ed] its external enemies, fascism and communism,” capitalism, MacCannell observes, begins to turn “against its own partner, democracy, for harbouring and promoting a historically antiquated, inefficient ideological surplus.”⁶ This surplus is none other than freedom, “the great experiment of liberty” once identified in the discourse of manifest destiny as the very motor of economic expansion, through which capitalism and democracy have historically worked together to subvert aristocratic entitlement and convert socialists. Once this mission is accomplished, however, and “everyone is involved in the same system of global economic relations,” capitalism has “no further need for democracy.”⁷ This selective amnesia explains why John Caslione’s definition of global manifest destiny does not so much as mention the “great experiment of liberty” that galvanized its predecessor; rather, Caslione’s vision revolves around the exclusively economic and divinely-ordained dominance of the West at the expense of “developing markets” everywhere else. Senile capitalism and global manifest destiny are thus two sides of the same coin: both refer to a perversion of democracy in which inequality and exploitation are available to everyone, but the fringe benefits—the freedom and liberty formerly

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pledged to all—are reserved for a happy, chosen few. And as tempting as it is to argue otherwise, the George W. Bush administration is merely a symptom of this broader cultural pathology.

What I wish to explore here is the role of another “W,” namely, the role of the *will*, which is consistently ignored in the debate over the historical legacy of capitalism. For to ascribe the rift in globalization’s two bodies either to senility, as MacCannell does, or to divinity, as Caslione does, is to suggest that we are passive victims of this process rather than part of the surprisingly vast “coalition of the willing” that fosters the ongoing division between capitalism and democracy. Similar to what Peter Sloterdijk calls “enlightened false consciousness,” namely, the cynical philosophy of a culture that routinely acts against its better judgment by claiming: “We know what we’re doing, but we’re doing it anyway,” what I am calling manifest density proudly declares: “We don’t (want to) know what we’re doing, but we’re doing it anyway.”⁸ Like the strategic mystification of economic interests embedded in phrases such as “Operation Iraqi Freedom”—a war which, as W has often intimated, was instigated at the prompting of God—manifest density is a profoundly willful leap of faith that conceals distinctly secular motives.⁹ And what distinguishes this post-Cold War phenomenon as a structure of feeling without a clear exit strategy is the passion, that is, the alibi of the sacred, which is its prime mover.



Significantly, the late medieval Passion play surfaced during a period when Christ himself had two bodies. Sometime around the eleventh century, a shift in visual representations of and cultural attitudes toward the Passion occurred in which the prevailing image of the crucified Christ as distinctly God-like, that is, as “the *Christus triumphans*, the Pantocrator, Lord and Master of the Universe,” gave way to a preoccupation with Christ’s humanity.¹⁰ A marked departure from the erect, uninjured, head-up and open-eyed Christ of old, the new vision of the Passion portrayed a limp, bleeding man with his head lowered and eyes closed, ushering in a “preference for emotional rather than intellectual apprehension of dogma.”¹¹ The Passion play emerged as an extension of this new religious *zeitgeist*, enabling worshippers to supplement the mystical experience of Churchgoing and Mass with a more material, interactive, and distinctly vernacular experience of the sacrament of the Eucharist which, in and of itself, was intended to be a “*memoria passionis*,” or, “an actual repetition of Christ’s passion.”¹² As a genre that evolved into a distinctly participatory, community-based form of drama, the late medieval Passion play thus brought together Christ’s two bodies—both the spectacle of his human suffering and subsequent, divinely-ordained victory over death—in a performative realization of the Eucharistic doctrine of humankind as “one ‘mystical body,’” indeed, as “an all embracing corporation”¹³

If the primary goal of the Passion play is celebratory, serving to organize the enjoyment of the masses around “the perfect kingship of Christ,” then its secondary function is admonitory.¹⁴ Not unlike the Medieval Morality Play, the

Passion play predicates its spectacle of unity on the ability to promote obedience to the “One Law (*lex*) and One Government (*unicus principatus*)” personified by Christ’s indisputable sovereignty.¹⁵ Serving as a warning to earthly kings in particular, the Passion play thus conspires directly with Church doctrine to stipulate, as Bracton claims in *De legibus*, that “the king is under the law as well as under God; there is no king where there is no law.”¹⁶ Inverting the moral of this story, the films of *King Lear* that I will explore here assert that “there is no law where the king is,” that is, where the king—be it a country, a Commander-in-Chief, or a transnational corporation—fashions itself as an *exception* to the law. Filmed in places essential to globalization but left behind by its promises, *The King is Alive*, *My Kingdom*, and *King of Texas* begin with spectacles of unity only to devolve into so many crimes of passion, assaying a genre that I will refer to as the passion *film* with a lower case “p.”¹⁷ Adopting an iconoclastic approach to the sacred, this new cinematic genre explores the mechanisms of mystification that link the premodern experience of Christianity to our postmodern experience of politics, exposing the false piety, indeed, the manifest *density*, which masks brutal self-interest in a culture where everyone would be king.



Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are . . .
 How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
 Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend
 You from seasons such as these? (*King Lear* 3.4.28, 30-32)¹⁸

If *The King is Alive* sounds like the title of a film documenting Elvis sightings, this association is not entirely unwarranted, since Shakespeare, like “the King” himself, has long been the subject of a similar transubstantiating quest. A film about British and American tourists whose bus runs out of gas in the Namib desert, this *King Lear* spinoff situates the Shakespearean corpus within an economy of religious sacrifice that fails to fulfill its ritual function. Thrust into a virtually uninhabited wasteland that they describe, appropriately, as “God-forsaken,” the stranded travelers undertake a production of *King Lear* as an exercise in dignity that brutally backfires, progressively reducing them to the “poor, bare, forked animals” (3.4.101-2) which, the film ultimately suggests, these privileged Westerners have always already been.

The setting of *The King is Alive* in a country that is the fourth largest producer of diamonds in the global market is particularly significant, furnishing the filmmakers with several opportunities to play cruel, location-based jokes on the accidental tourists. Forced to occupy an abandoned mining compound, they are left with only canned carrots for food, now more precious to them than all the karats left languishing in the sands beneath their feet. The ambivalent status of the carrots as both a means of subsistence and an agent of death (many of the cans are sources of botulism) alludes to the “blood diamonds” that come from this region, which are used to finance civil wars within and between African

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nations as well as to maintain high prices in the global diamond trade.¹⁹ Despite efforts to boycott the traffic in diamonds from conflict-torn regions, demand for the precious stones remains high in North America and Europe, whose purchases effectively finance the ongoing homicide. At least at the outset of their desert disaster, then, the tourists function as a synecdoche for the attitude of advanced industrial nations toward African nations in particular, whose global exports are precious but whose local populations are expendable.

In Giorgio Agamben's terms, the missing natives of this deserted diamond mine are classified as *homo sacer*. A deceptive word, "sacer" means both "sacred" and "damned," a duality that accounts for the paradoxical status of *homo sacer* as a life that can be killed but not sacrificed. Long removed from its redemptive role in ancient socio-religious rituals such as scapegoating and sacrifice, *homo sacer* has evolved into a juridico-political entity, functioning as "the referent of the sovereign decision," or, the means by which sovereign power reinforces its own exceptionalism vis-à-vis the law.²⁰ The conversion of *homo sacer* to a purely secular identity is, according to Agamben, the founding gesture of modern political power and "the root of the equivocations that have marked studies of both the sacred and of sovereignty in our time."²¹ Producing a subject whose murder can neither be punished nor celebrated, *homo sacer* thus refers to a category of being that is purely performative, invoking a species of life has been engineered, paradoxically, for death. In the first half of the twentieth century, this classification corresponds to the figure of the Jew, "the representative par excellence of . . . the bare life that modernity necessarily creates within itself, but whose presence it can no longer tolerate in any way."²² What distinguishes the second half of the twentieth century is the increasingly *indiscriminate* nature of this process, which is the hallmark of the political condition that Agamben identifies as the "state of exception" (a point to which I will return), wherein the gap that separates the political subject from *homo sacer* narrows to the point of indistinction.

The King is Alive slouches toward this apocalyptic scenario as the tourists come to identify themselves as *homo sacer*. At first, however, they take pains to present themselves as exceptions to the laws that govern their savage environs, condescendingly certain that "some tribal chief" will see the debris they burn and speed to their rescue. When the first week goes by without so much as a whisper of life from the sea of sand that surrounds them on all sides, the incidental occupants of this desert outpost tighten their grip on the material possessions that distinguish them as subjects within global capitalism's cult of ownership—the most stunning illustration of which is Charles, an impeccably dressed, retired British man, breaking out his golf clubs and practicing his chip shot in an endless sand trap. Like the others, Charles's sanity is tied to his sense of himself as a tourist, a figure whose travels "bind together the high points of global culture as framed by global capitalism" and whose journey, more importantly, is always circular, because it is predicated on the certainty of returning home.²³ But as the things, that is, the sundry commodities that bind each character to the familiar haunts of economic privilege, remain indifferent

to the tourists' desire for them to point the way back home, the stranded travelers become increasingly invested in a "thing of nothing"—Shakespeare—who represents all that separates them from the "poor naked wretches" who are indigenous to this forgotten landscape.

Shakespeare's sacred status in the film brilliantly illustrates the workings of commodity fetishism, exposing the leap of faith whereby "things of nothing" acquire surplus value at the high end of a culture framed by global capitalism. Based on nothing other than Henry's painstaking act of memorial reconstruction—and his conviction that "good old *Lear*" will redeem "all those lost souls" from spiritual death—the play is indeed the thing that replaces relations between people in *The King is Alive*, as the Namibian narrator observes in voiceover: "I don't know if the desert crept into their minds at night, but during the day, it wasn't there. . . . Together they said words," he adds, referring to the play. "They still didn't say them to each other. . . . I didn't understand a word they said. Nor did they." A veritable encomium to manifest density, the tourists don't know what they're doing, but they're doing it anyway.

Like the dwindling carrot supply that both nourishes and kills, Shakespeare comes to embody the capricious loyalties of the commodity form itself, for the more text the cast is given to work with, the more they are prompted to *work against* each other. The most egregious example of this tradeoff occurs when the production is threatened by Charles's refusal to supply the missing role. Gina, the Cordelia character, is subsequently forced into a Faustian bargain with the bitter old man, who will perform only on the condition, as he informs her, that "I get to fuck you—fuck you till this madness ends." Too horrified to speak, Gina stares at him in disgust, as Charles chortles: "Well, isn't that what you're supposed to do? Sacrifice yourself for your art." Whereas we expect Gina's bodily sacrifice to sustain this community of would-be thespians by allowing the show to go on, the rehearsals progressively dissolve into disunity, mirroring the betrayals, adultery and, even, murders featured in the play itself. Indeed, the steady deterioration of Gina's morale, born of the daily humiliation to which she is subject, culminates in her slow death by poisoning at the hands of Katherine, who is jealous of Gina's status as Henry's favorite protégé. Far from serving as a saving grace, Shakespeare becomes an excuse for the very savagery that the tourists perform toward one another in the name of perfecting their parts.

In fact, it is only when the tourists gather around the fire to burn their dead that manifest density gives way to something resembling honest communication, as they begin to utter the words of the play as though they were actually addressing each other. It is particularly telling, then, that no one responds to Ray's question, "Is this the promised end?" by replying, "Or the image of that horror?" Their silence answers the question, tacitly acknowledging the lesson the desert has taught them about the horrors which, before, they encountered only as images on TV. Though never stated in the film, this lesson resembles what a teacher from nearby Congo told reporters when asked to explain why the dictatorship and human rights violations in his own country go unnoticed by the rest of the world: "Our misfortune," he explained, "is that we have gold,

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diamonds and precious wood, but, unfortunately, no white farmers."²⁴ In *The King is Alive*, the Western tourists ultimately learn that they are not "white"—farmers or otherwise—either, for their production of *King Lear* leads only to the production of *themselves* as "bare life," indeed, as *homo sacer*. Unable to reach into the deep pockets of their own favored nation status, they have been left to founder in the gap between capitalism and democracy and, hence, have become the unlikely natives of this "God-forsaken" desert—as victims of the same desertion lived by the local population in the global economy every day.



They have made for themselves gods of gold.
(*Exodus* Ch.32. v.21)

As the name of *My Kingdom's* Lear character, "Sandeman," suggests, this desert of neglect is his destination as well. Sandeman's inauspicious fate is implied by the film's setting in Liverpool, a city that has become synonymous with the specter of long-term, cataclysmic decline as one of the earliest casualties of the globalization of capital.²⁵ Once the preferred residence of more millionaires than any other place in England, contemporary Liverpool is a place where just under half of the population lives at or below the poverty level; moreover, although home to the country's most diverse African immigrant population, Liverpool remains one of the most segregated cities in the world, a distinction that is very likely due to its one-time status as the capital of the slave trade. Hence, while Liverpool is no Namibia, it is, as Ronaldo Munck observes, "a post-colonial city as much as any metropolis of the so-called third world."²⁶ Not surprisingly, then, Liverpool has recently been named one of the U.K.'s priority urban rehabilitation sites, with plans underway for the city to qualify as a European Capital of Culture by 2008 and a European Renaissance City by 2010—successful examples of which include nearby Glasgow and Dublin. But residents of Liverpool remain skeptical of such "rebirth" initiatives which, more often than not, have devolved into demolition and redlining, driven not by communal imperatives but by corporate expedients such as outsourcing and expropriation. Set in a Liverpool characterized by terrorism, crime, addiction, racism, and poverty, Don Boyd's *My Kingdom* performs its own kind of urban renovation project through its nihilistic vision of globalization as a local war of attrition, indeed, as a life-and-death struggle over resources that exposes the "third world" *within* advanced industrial nations.

My Kingdom, as its title implies, explores this endgame by dramatizing the decline of the "sovereign exception" into a generalized "state of exception." The phenomenon of exceptionalism may be traced back to its imperial origins in the figure of the monarch, who, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri explain, once served as the singular embodiment of "the notion that one who commands need not obey."²⁷ At least at the start of Boyd's film, Sandeman is exclusively identified with this privilege; for his kingdom, which is financed largely by heroin trafficking and, therefore, dependent on the city's most desperate population, is the lone exception to Liverpool's otherwise vast geography of

disadvantage. Accordingly, *My Kingdom* begins by establishing Sandeman as the city's unofficial divine-right monarch in the opening credit sequence, which culminates in a dissolve that pictures Liverpool's most famous landmark—its spectacular Anglican cathedral—fading into the palatial contours of his suburban home. Built during the apex of Liverpool's commercial prosperity to symbolize the glory of God rising above the worldly business below, the lavish, gold-laden Cathedral interiors soon provide Sandeman with a stage for inverting this hierarchical principle, when he is shown attending Church only to place calls to his multinational drug cartel from his front-row pew. As collective disdain ripples through the congregation, Sandeman causes further clamor by abruptly exiting the Cathedral in the middle of the service, impulsively deciding to take his wife Mandy on a short-cut home through the Granby-Toxteth ghetto, notorious for the highest crime rate in all of Liverpool. Moments later, a hooded black youth in search of fast cash and a quick fix pulls a gun on Mandy and demands her purse. While Mandy remains frozen with fear, Sandeman, utterly convinced of his ability to tour the city's meanest streets with impunity, incredulously stares back at the young man and repeatedly demands: "Do you have *any idea* who I am?" Although as king of Liverpool's organized crime scene Sandeman has long served as the singular embodiment of—and exemption from—the law, the fact that his assailant *does not know who he is* indicates that times have changed: either Sandeman is no longer the exception to the rule, or, worse, there simply are no rules.

The paradox that defines the "state of exception"—a condition wherein the sovereign exception has been globalized—is, according to Giorgio Agamben, "a law that is in force but does not signify."²⁸ Far from the impotence implied by its lack of content, such a law is "limitless [in its] severity" precisely because "its force lies essentially in its undecidability."²⁹ Offering an example of this constitutive inscrutability, indeed, of the manifest density that operates under the aegis of the law in the state of exception, Agamben explains that "a person who goes for a walk during the curfew is not transgressing the law any more than the soldier who kills him is executing it."³⁰ *My Kingdom* poses a similar scenario in the encounter between the heroin addict and Sandeman; for when the would-be mugger points a gun at the city's leading drug lord (who, unbeknownst to the youth, is the very source of his addiction) and proceeds to threaten his life, it is difficult to ascertain whether Sandeman's assailant is transgressing the law or, in fact, executing justice. The more important lesson learned from this standoff between the two criminals, however, is that determinations of guilt are irrelevant in the state of exception—a point that is demonstrated by the fact that neither Sandeman nor his assailant is at the receiving end of the bullet when the gun fires—but Mandy *is*. As this scene makes painfully clear, if *My Kingdom's* Liverpool is a place where no one "knows what they're doing, but they're doing it anyway," then it is also the case that *no one* is innocent and *anyone* can become *homo sacer*.

Like the tourists stranded in the Namib desert, Sandeman responds to this fatal affront to his own exceptionalism by engaging in a series of desperate

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attempts to ascribe meaning to the loss of his wife. Refusing to acknowledge Mandy as *homo sacer*, that is, as a figure whose life is unworthy of sacrifice and whose death cannot be punished, Sandeman endeavors to master his loss through recourse to religious ritual. Emulating ancient theistic practices, he makes a ceramic death mask of her face, converting her into an object of idolatry even as her mortal body is shown engulfed in flames inside the crematorium. Sandeman even goes so far as to make Mandy into a kind of martyr; by claiming that the bullet that killed her was really intended for him, Sandeman spins his personal tragedy into a public revelation: the exposure of a city-wide conspiracy against his life. Yet the fact that everyone else, including his own family, asserts that the episode was “just a mugging” is no subtle indication that Mandy’s death does not reflect the workings of an ultimately beneficent divine plan but, rather, the indiscriminate and often violent whims of *lex mercatoria*. Appropriately, then, the only real revelation that springs from the murder is an economic one, as Sandeman’s daughters discover that Mandy’s name is on the bank account containing all of the family’s assets. Devolving into the antithesis of the medieval Passion play, which celebrates the communal ownership of the risen body of Christ, Boyd’s film becomes a nihilistic parable of private ownership that takes place over Mandy’s riven body, as each and every family member seeks to claim her inheritance at one another’s expense.

Realizing their father is no longer of value to them without his assets, Kat and Tracy turn him out into the streets to sing for his supper—a punishment oddly fitting for a deposed king played by Richard Harris, who, more than three decades earlier, played another abused monarch, King Arthur, in the film musical *Camelot*.³¹ Much more akin to Malory’s darker vision of the abject king in *Morte d’Arthur*, however, *My Kingdom* quickly abandons any hope of a happy ending to focus on Sandeman’s revenge. Hence, whereas *The King is Alive* concludes by conceding that we are all, potentially, *homo sacer*, *My Kingdom* adopts the cynical motto: better *homo sacer* than *homo sucker*, to cite Žižek’s clever pun.³² In this spirit, Sandeman orchestrates an epic revenge scheme that brings all of his enemies together to worship a golden calf—a herd of young cows, that is, whose hides are rumored to contain an enormous shipment of heroin. Whether or not the cows actually contain the sacred cargo is never established, for the point of this ambiguity, similar to the ambivalent status of Shakespeare in *The King is Alive*, is to demonstrate the workings of commodity fetishism. In and of themselves, of course, the farm animals are of no value to Sandeman’s urban-based enemies; rather, it is the presumption of the mystical surplus value which exceeds their physical properties that succeeds in convincing everyone that the cows are not only worth killing for but, more importantly, worth killing each other for.

Appropriately, the meeting point along the M4 highway where the various factions converge in an effort to intercept the shipment is marked by a conspicuous product placement for “Maiden Milk.” Confronting the spectator with the slogan—“THE WHITE STUFF: Are you made of it?”—the giant billboard advertisement plays on the sacred theme of immaculate conception

while simultaneously alluding to Sandeman's dirty deals by invoking the street name for heroin, also known as the "white stuff." The more disturbing meaning of the Maiden Milk slogan, however, is implied by the victims of the apocalyptic melee that follows, whose profiles suggest the insidious ways in which commodity fetishism becomes a form of population control. By the end of the film, the death toll includes a black teenager (Delroy), a cancer-stricken senior (Quick), a mulatto boy (Jamie), a Sikh émigré (Jug), a white, blue-collar criminal (Dean), several white women (Mandy, Kath, Tracy), and a disabled black man ("The Chair," who is jailed and, perhaps, as his name suggests, eventually electrocuted).³³ It is no coincidence that all of the victims are representatives of oppressed groups within global capitalism, a system which, so long as it derives its strength from the scarcity of resources, will continue to damn the meek—quite literally—to inherit the earth.

A sinister parody of the participatory democracy that global capitalism advertises as its principal fringe benefit, *My Kingdom's* concluding spectacle of people participating in their own death calls the bluff of such appeals to higher principles, by demonstrating what Slavoj Žižek identifies as the "new racism of the developed world." Deviating from formerly strict associations with skin color, this new articulation of racism is born of "the simple awareness that the present model of late capitalist prosperity *cannot be universalized*" and, therefore, its discriminatory practices are transparently based on "unabashed economic egotism."³⁴ Nevertheless, as *My Kingdom* boldly asserts in its nihilistic portrait of urban "renewal," the manifest destiny of both the old and the new racism is exactly the same: a "renaissance" or, better put, a "born again" city whose population is *exclusively* made of the white stuff.

Fittingly, the only excerpt from *King Lear* cited in Boyd's film is the prophecy that "humanity must perforce prey upon itself / Like monsters of the deep" (4.2.48-9) a line which, in its audible pun on "prey" and "pray," invokes a world wherein people have become transubstantial to—and therefore consumed as—things. The only other citation of Shakespeare in the film reinforces this apocalyptic prediction, when the final murder is staged as a battle between the Bard, who is represented as an angel of mercy, and the Old Testament's vindictive God. When Desmond, the grieving father of Mandy's inadvertent killer (who, against Sandeman's orders, is ritualistically tortured to death by Jug), confronts his son's executioner with a gun, Jug cites the "quality of mercy" speech from *The Merchant of Venice* (4.1.184), which takes its cues from the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament.³⁵ Desmond responds by quoting *Deuteronomy*: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay" (32.25). Rather than adding the standard attribution, "saith the Lord," however, Desmond adds: "Tonight, I *am* the Lord." In a brilliant example of the status of the law in the state of exception, Desmond appropriates the speech-act reserved for God alone—the biblical "*I am*"—and proceeds to fire three bullets into Jug's abdomen: one for himself as the wronged father, one for his murdered son, and one for the holy spirit of *rex mercatoria*—the "king" not of kings but, rather, of the things which, based on the logic of exchange values, are always-already ghosts of their

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material properties. An appropriate end for a commodity fetishist, Jug dies quoting from the ghostly corpus of Shakespeare only to eat his words—the final act of consumption in a passion film that represents global capitalism as a Eucharistic feeding frenzy.



I'll teach you differences. (*King Lear* 1.4.87)

Created amidst rumors to extend the campaign in Afghanistan to Iraq, Uli Edel's 2002 western *King of Texas*, set in 1842 on Texas Independence Day, cleverly hearkens back to a vision of Texas as the original rogue state to suggest the current status of the U.S. as a rogue nation. That *King of Texas* has more in common with 2002 than 1842 is implied by a title that invokes both the British monarchy and the short-lived republic of Texas—two mutually exclusive political systems that not only allude to the present antagonisms between King Capital and democratic pluralism but also to our reigning king of Texas, whose habit of blending unilateralism with machismo makes for a model of the presidency best described as “the madness of King George” meets “Walker, Texas Ranger.” Indeed, references to George Walker Bush are scattered throughout Udell's film—one of the more obvious examples of which is the wrought iron “W” that looms above Henry Westover's ranch—the place where, not coincidentally, the plot to launch a preemptive war for Menchaka's oil-rich land is sewn. More compelling are the personality traits that the former Texas governor and the filmic King of Texas have in common, such as a disdain for subtlety and a penchant for ultimatums, typified in dictums like Lear's “nothing will come of nothing. Speak again” (1.1.90) and W's “if you're not with us, you're against us.” What I wish to focus on by way of conclusion, however, is the critical difference between John Lear and George W, which has to do with the personal mantra they share, “remember the Alamo,” the nineteenth-century expression that points backward to manifest *density's* primal scene, as well as forward to its canonization in post-9/11 political culture.³⁶

The phrase “remember the Alamo,” which refers to the overnight stand waged by Colonel Travis and his band of some two-hundred rag-tag men against nearly eighteen hundred Mexican troops, is shorthand for revenge. Yet, like the ambiguous legacy with which Hamlet is faced when his father's ghost, a figure both sacred and sinful, admonishes him to “Remember me” (1.5.91), the imperative to “remember the Alamo” resounds with a similar ambivalence. Though most commonly associated with the greater glory of the underdog, the Alamo is equally a story of the far less romantic, distinctly undemocratic realities of unilateral decision-making and bureaucratic impasse. For example, when the Mexican General Santa Anna urged the grossly undermanned garrison to surrender peacefully, Colonel Travis replied—in the face of overwhelming odds—with a cannon ball and the rejoinder “Victory or death!” Given the fact that death carried the day, as every single defender of the Catholic mission-turned-makeshift-fort perished within its walls, this famous battle

cry is, in point of fact, more homicidal than heroic.³⁷ Still more problematic is the role of the Texas Legislature in the fate of the Alamo. Despite recognizing the importance of the Alamo as an early warning station strategically located along the *camino real* (the only road between Mexico and the “Texian” province of San Antonio de Béxar), the armchair warriors who gathered at the 1836 Convention preferred partisan bickering to the practical dispatching of provisions and reinforcements in the weeks leading up to the fatal siege, condemning the Béxar garrison to die an incremental death as an unfunded mandate, long before the actual fighting began. Hence, shortly before he died, Colonel Travis vowed to revenge his most cruel and unnatural murder at the hands of his compatriots, claiming that “my bones shall reproach my country for her neglect.”³⁸ To “remember the Alamo,” then, is not only about a willingness to forgive but, more importantly, about the *will to forget* the facts that compromise its ritual function as a wellspring of patriotic zeal.

The highly selective and historically tenacious memory of the Alamo as an enduring source of nationalistic fervor becomes even more remarkable when we realize that it was not the Alamo but the Goliad massacre shortly thereafter that ignited the quest for Texas independence and led to the definitive victory over Mexican forces at San Jacinto in 1836—a charge which, in *King of Texas*, John Lear is credited with having led. Referring to the surprising decision on behalf of the typically gallant Santa Anna to transport nearly 350 prisoners of war to Goliad and summarily execute them after the battle of Coletto, this tragedy is invoked in *King of Texas* when we learn that John Lear’s only son was “martyred at Goliad,” a phrase that is evocative of Christ’s crucifixion at Golgatha. Indeed, by adding a deceased son to the already dysfunctional family dynamic of Shakespeare’s play, Udell’s film situates the silver-haired, battle-hardened Lear in the tradition of an Abraham or, even, the New Testament God, as a figure who so loved the land of Texas that he sacrificed his only son to the cause. A more subtle allusion to Goliad emerges in the film’s representation of the Cordelia character, Claudia. Like the “angel of Goliad,” a mysterious Mexican woman who took pity on the doomed soldiers and helped to smuggle several of them to safety, Cordelia ministers to those on the other side of the Rio Grande, helping to defend the Mexicans from the tyranny of her own father and, later, the rest of her family during the invasion of their territory to the south, the stronghold of the aspiring Santa Anna figure in *King of Texas*, known as Menchaka.

Nevertheless, in *King of Texas* as in American history it is the Alamo, not Goliad, that maintains pride of place, “kind[ing] a righteous wrath” that “Americans on battlefields all over the globe have responded to” ever since, despite *never again* having the odds against them.³⁹ Remembering the Alamo thus corresponds to a logic similar to that of senile capitalism, for both thrive on a combination of selective memory and willful amnesia that enables the ongoing suppression of context. Subject to such misappropriation, the injunction to “remember the Alamo” is nothing less than the root of the American state of exception, invoking the process through which an already favored nation positions itself not only as the underdog but, more disturbingly, under God. In

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other words, the Alamo may have fallen but the “mission,” that is, the sense of divine purpose, still stands, leading to premature declarations of victory—from Béxar to Baghdad—where there is, in fact, only death. The founding gesture of manifest density, “remembering the Alamo” is the rallying cry of a culture that embraces mystification because it *doesn't want to know* what it's doing, so it can *keep on doing it anyway*.

King of Texas, more so than any other recent film adaptation of *Lear*, adopts an iconoclastic approach to the veneer of the sacred that conceals neoimperial intentions. For example, shortly before kicking Lear off his own land, Susannah, the Goneril character, plays “What child is this?” on the piano, giddily exposing her patently un-Christ-like plans for her unholy father. Later, in an attempt to reassert his authority during the storm on the desert heath, Lear reprimands the thundering heavens above, exclaiming “I'm still my God in my saddle!” only to be answered by a massive thunderclap that strikes him to the ground. When he awakens in his enemy's hacienda, Lear persists in his hubris, impulsively reaching for a rifle which, fortunately, is nowhere to be found. This violent reflex is the bookend to Lear's more disturbing response to the sight of Menchaka's men at the beginning of the film, which opens with a tableau of two lifeless bodies hanging from a lone tree. Banished to the more arid land beyond the Texas Republic, the starving *vacqueros* have been caught butchering one of Lear's cows. When Menchaka learns that Lear has imposed capital punishment for a petty crime, his incredulous response—“You hung two men for one cow!”—succinctly testifies not only to the status of the Mexicans in Lear's imagination as *homo sacer* but also to Lear's God-like ability to preside over life and death as the lone sovereign of the frontier. By the end of the film, however, the tables have turned, as Lear learns that Menchaka has rescued him from the raging elements on the heath as well as from his predatory family. Henceforth, he must choose either to ally himself with “the enemy of our blood,” as Lear proceeds to describe Menchaka to Claudia, or to fight against his own flesh and blood. In choosing the former, Lear takes the path of most resistance, which is to cross over to the other side and to side with the Other, in order to undertake the passage from *homo sacer* to *neighbor*. In so doing, Lear, as Žižek argues of the Israeli *refuseniks*, adopts the only ethical stance available to post-9/11 culture, which is to “love thy neighbor,” by acknowledging that either we are all full members of the polity or none of us are. In light of the recent Israeli-Lebanese war, such a stance—which Žižek describes as “the miraculous moment in which eternal Justice momentarily appears in the temporary sphere of empirical reality”—would be a miracle indeed.⁴⁰

Bringing us back to the rift between globalization's two bodies, the ensuing battle provoked by the “Texians,” whose expansionist fantasy of acquiring Menchaka's land through force explicitly violates the treaty forged by the two nations, emerges as an allegory of the present battle between democracy and capitalism, respectively. Keenly aware of the mounting tensions between the two camps, Lear's sidekick Rip shakes his head and exclaims: “looks like the damn Alamo all over again.” Yet the Alamo is not so much remembered as

it is dismembered in this anti-climactic battle, which is marked by neither a teleological surge toward victory nor, for that matter, death, but only by an “obscene inertia.”⁴¹ This inertia is the defining feature of the Messianic moment, a temporality of expectation wherein, as Žižek explains, nothing “happens” because everyone awaits the “Event.”⁴² Wading out into the carnage in long white robes, the Moses-like Lear assumes the messianic function of rupturing the bizarre symmetry of the casual slaughter—the almost business-like exchange of life-for-life between the two sides—by commanding a ceasefire. Raising his hands up over his head and peering down at the combatants from the battlements, he issues his commandments, shouting repeatedly: “No! No! Stop it. Damn it. Stop!” But Lear knows not what he does; for the only Event he precipitates is the death of Claudia. That the inertia of the battle is broken not by a memory of the Alamo but by flashback to Goliad is all too fitting, as Claudia, the ministering angel who protects the Mexicans from her fellow Texans, is killed by an errant bullet while rushing to protect her father from the same fate. Unlike Lear’s son, however, whose life is worthy of sacrifice and whose death is punished at San Jacinto, Claudia dies as *homo sacer*, as the “nothing” that “comes of nothing” in wars that have only losers. In this instant, then, the Alamo is violently dismembered, as the *camino real* leads John Lear into the “desert of the real”—the place where he confronts the limit of his own exceptionalism as a sacred cowboy—as he learns the hard way that the wars we start don’t always end when we declare “mission accomplished.”



That all of these adaptations of *King Lear* have been made in countries that imagine themselves as local exceptions to the global rules is central to the message that they purvey. Taken together, *The King is Alive*, co-produced in Sweden and Denmark, and *My Kingdom*, made in the United Kingdom, represent the three remaining countries that refuse to adopt the Euro in order to keep poorer EU member nations from sharing their wealth; meanwhile, the US, from which *King of Texas* hails, simply denies the existence of the international community altogether, playing the maverick and, more often than not of late, the fool. The “passion of the W” that informs such policies—whether it takes the form of the World Bank’s one dollar, one vote proceedings, or the WTO’s conversion of world hunger into a competition to produce cheap exports, or even, to our own W’s self-righteous war to install exchange values in the name of human values—is a powerful opiate. But the passion films I have examined here urge us to adopt a new religion. Indeed, they strive to persuade us that as long as we serve and protect our consumerist vision of democracy, which is predicated on the right to purchase “indulgences” of all kinds, we are complicit in the brutal shell game through which “the passion of the W” becomes self-perpetuating, by insuring that *someone else*—a Cordelia, a Christ-figure, or an entire country—will die for our sins.

Is it any wonder, then, that *The Passion of the Christ* is the eighth highest grossing film of all time?⁴³ Released one year after Udell’s adaptation, *The*

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Passion of the Christ serves as an unlikely sequel to *King of Texas* as a film that remembers the Alamo in the form of an orthodox Catholic “mission” to represent Christ as the original underdog. Placing its stock in the ultimate corporation, the Corpus Christi, Mel Gibson’s film provides us with a glimpse of what global manifest destiny holds for us when we run out of real estate and all that remains is the prospect of invading the body itself. Indeed, this is the frontier where the “passion of the W” seeks to make the world safe for capitalism once and for all. Here in the US, the battle to micro-manage the body—to legislate the functioning of our organs, including our hearts, minds, and soul(mate)s—is well underway, as the ongoing challenges to Roe, the Terry Schiavo case, and the bans on same-sex marriage respectively demonstrate. What makes *The Passion of the Christ* complicit in this insidious process its appeal to the manifest density of its audience. For while we sit in the theater watching the blood of Christ pour out of his divine body, what we don’t see is its distinctly human counterpart—the real body-in-pain—a democracy that is being tortured everywhere in the world there are red states of exception and blue states of mind. As the adaptations I have examined here conclude, the directors of *this* epic passion film are the real “sinephiles,” for they have been given the opportunity to produce a global compassion play on behalf of the underdog, and they have responded by returning to business as usual—by wagging the God.

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Notes

I wish to thank Elizabeth Rivlin, Mark Thornton Burnett, and John Ford for their ongoing encouragement and input, and especially my husband and parents, who cared for my newborn as I grappled with drafts, deadlines, and motherhood.

1. John L. O’Sullivan, *The New York Herald*, September 15, 1845.
2. John A. Caslone, *Global Manifest Destiny: Growing Your Business in a Borderless Economy* (Chicago: Dearborn Trade, 2001), pp. 1-2 (emphasis mine).
3. In *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, (New York: Penguin, 2004), Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri liken the present political moment to the Interregnum of the seventeenth century, invoking the “institutional chaos” of both periods (162).
4. Hardt and Negri, p. 206, emphasis mine.
5. For a synopsis of the many Shakespearean references that have been used in conjunction with George W. Bush, see Scott Newstrom’s essay, “Step aside, I’ll show thee a president”: George W as Henry V,” available for downloading from poppolitics.com (<http://www.poppolitics.com/articles/2003-05-01-henryv.shtml>).
6. “Democracy’s Turn: On Homeless Noir,” *Shades of Noir*. ed. Joan Copjec (London and New York: Verso, 1993), p. 284.
7. MacCannell, p. 284.
8. I am paraphrasing Sloterdijk’s statement “They know what they are doing, but they do it

[anyway] because, in the short run, the force of circumstances and the instinct for self-preservation are speaking the same language," p. 5. *Critique of Cynical Reason*, trans. Michael Eldred. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

9. See Ron Suskind's article titled "Faith, Certainty and the Presidency of George W. Bush" as well as Maureen Dowd's more lighthearted treatment of W in *Bushworld: Enter at Your Own Risk*. Dowd cites Bob Woodward's interview with Bush Jr., wherein Woodward asked George Jr. why, in considering a possible intervention in Iraq, he "did not consult the only other president to go to war with Iraq," to which the president replied: "He is the wrong father to appeal to in terms of strength; there is a Higher Father that I appealed to" (13).
10. Sandro Sticca, *The Latin Passion Play: Its Origins and Development* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1970), p. 44.
11. Sticca, p. 44.
12. Sticca, p. 40.
13. Otto Freidrich von Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, trans. F. W. Maitland (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 10.
14. Jerome Taylor, "The Dramatic Structure of the Middle English Corpus Christi, or Cycle, Plays" in *Medieval English Drama: Essays Critical and Contextual*, eds. Jerome Taylor and Alan H. Nelson (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 151.
15. Gierke, p. 10.
16. Quoted in Sir R. W. Carlyle and A. J. Carlyle, *A History of Mediaeval Political Theory in the West*, vols. I-VI (Edinburgh: Blackwood and Sons, 1930-36), p. 461.
17. *The King is Alive*, dir. Kristian Levring (Dogme 95 Films, 1995); *My Kingdom*, dir. Dan Boyd (Close Grip Films Ltd./Primary Pictures/Sky Pictures), 2001; *King of Texas*, dir. Eli Udell (Flying Treehold Productions/Hallmark Entertainment/2002), 2002.
18. All references to *King Lear* are to *The Oxford Shakespeare*, Vol. 3, eds. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 1233-1306.
19. I am indebted to Iska Alter for this perceptive observation regarding the film's setting.
20. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 85.
21. Agamben, p. 85.
22. Agamben, p. 179.
23. MacCannell, p. 295.
24. Quoted in Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (London and New York: Verso, 2003), p. 125.
25. For a thorough account of Liverpool's rise, fall, and prospective future, see Ronaldo Munck, ed., *Reinventing the City? Liverpool in Comparative Perspective* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2003). See also my extensive analysis of Boyd's film in relation to Liverpool, past and present, titled "The Postnostalgic Renaissance: The 'Place' of Liverpool in Dan Boyd's *My Kingdom*" in *Filming Shakespeare in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Mark Thornton Burnett and

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Ramona Wray (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2006); 72-89.

26. Munck, p. 4.
27. Hardt and Negri, p. 9.
28. Agamben, p. 51.
29. Agamben pp. 58, 54.
30. Agamben, p. 57.
31. *Camelot*, dir. Joshua Logan (Warner Bros./Seven Arts, 1967).
32. Žižek, p. 83.
33. Though an unlikely recourse, the death penalty remained legal in Great Britain through 1998, making it one of the last European countries to abolish capital punishment.
34. Žižek, p. 149, emphasis his.
35. *The Merchant of Venice* in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. G. Blakemore Evans, et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 288-317.
36. For a thorough exploration of W's use of and identification with this phrase, see Nicholas Lemann, "Remember the Alamo: How George W. Bush reinvented himself," *The New Yorker* (18 Oct. 2004), 148-61.
37. The only survivors of the Alamo were what we might think of as "enemy non-combatants," who included women, children, and slaves. I am indebted to Teresa Bergman for pointing out that the lesser-known survivors of the siege included messengers, a French pacifist, and any other occupants of the garrison who made their intent to surrender clear.
38. Stephen L. Hardin's *Handbook of Texas*, available in print as well as online versions, offers a moment-by-moment account of the fall of the Alamo. *The Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "ALAMO, BATTLE OF THE." <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/AA/aa2.html>. Last accessed May 29, 2006.
39. *Hardin*.
40. Žižek, p. 116. Throughout his chapter titled "From *Homo sacer* to Neighbor," Žižek invokes the courageous act of the young Israeli citizens, of whom Army service is required, who refused to police Palestinian-occupied territories.
41. Žižek, p. 8.
42. Žižek, p. 7.
43. *The Passion of the Christ*, dir. Mel Gibson (Icon Productions, 2004).

OBSERVING SHAKESPEARE'S LIGHTING EFFECTS

by Yu Jin Ko

With technology becoming increasingly sophisticated in both film and theatre, audiences can look forward to more dazzling translations of Shakespeare's dramatic poetry into absorbing sensory experiences. When applied to Shakespeare, however, technology can exact a great price, not because special effects are inherently inferior to poetry, but because so many of Shakespeare's poetic effects issue from theatrical maneuvers that exploit the very stage conditions we now tend to look at as severe limitations and thus redress with sophisticated equipment. This is not merely a matter of asserting that a visual effect simulating dawn can never be as beautiful or suggestive as, for instance, Horatio's famous verbal picture of the dawn, "But look, the morn in russet mantle clad / Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill";¹ even the eerie if nuanced sense that the entry of the personified morn "echoes... the two entrances of the ghost," as Stephen Booth has remarked, can be conveyed, perhaps even more directly, by a skilled lighting designer or cinematographer.² Rather, the issue concerns, to paraphrase Hamlet, what necessary question of the play gets obscured in a typical modern production when theatrical effects that are produced by a precisely calculated poetry get lost.

Hamlet can be a misleading guide, however, for reflecting on this issue. In characterizing groundlings as "barren spectators" (3.2.41) who are "capable of" little more than "dumb shows and noise" (3.2.11-12), he clearly anticipates the terms with which modern defenders of poetry tend to dismiss films like Baz Lurhmann's *Romeo and Juliet*.³ And this is precisely the problem. By emphatically privileging the sense of hearing over sight, in the way that Renaissance apologists for "poesie" like Ben Jonson contrast the "learned ears" of "auditors" to the "weaker beams" (or sight) of the "vulgar,"⁴ Hamlet reinforces a dichotomy between auditory and visual experiences that belies and obscures Shakespeare's—and his own—dramaturgical practices.⁵ This dichotomy persists even in modern defenses of spectacle on the Renaissance stage, from Alan Dessen's analysis of the "experience offered to the viewer's eye"⁶ to Frederick Kiefer's more recent readings of the symbolic content of "visual display";⁷ even as the visual and the verbal are said to reinforce each other to "enhance" the playgoer's experience of the play's "meaning," the two elements are treated as being fundamentally separable.⁸ An analysis of the "cunning of the scene" (2.2.589-591) in the play that Hamlet calls for ("The Mousetrap") reveals, however, how slippery the categories of the visual and the verbal can be. At first glance, "The Mousetrap" might seem only to reveal how the two elements work together to advance the play's purpose. To start with the play's visuals, they are insistently recursive, and include not only a dumb show prologue, but also a fuller staging within the play proper of the dumb show's actions,

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the importance of all of which Hamlet underscores with continual reminders to Claudius that what he “see[s]” will be the “*image* of a murder done in Vienna” (3.2.238-240). At the same time, the “guilty creature” seems fully to get “strook...to the soul” (2.2.589-591) only after dialogue—or “poesie”—gets introduced, seemingly suggesting the redoubling power of combining language and images.⁹ However, we are also to understand that “The Mousetrap” ultimately succeeds as a trap because the King has in his “mind’s eye” (1.2.185), or imagination, a prior image of a murder, done not in Vienna but in the castle orchard, that uniquely colors his perception of the stage image. As such, the scene raises the possibility that poetry’s power of suggestion spurs the King’s imagination, not merely to recall an existing image, but to reshape what he *actually* sees. Hamlet’s division between the visual and the auditory comes under question, that is, if one considers how listening to words can color the act of visual perception.

Ironically, a modern film version helps to make this point. For “The Mousetrap” sequence in his 1996 film of *Hamlet*, Kenneth Branagh rapidly splices together close-ups of Claudius with short flashbacks to Old Hamlet’s murder scene (which had itself appeared earlier in the film as a flashback sequence accompanying the Ghost’s account of the murder). This trick of film editing primarily provides a visual window into the inner state of Claudius, but it also suggestively reproduces the trick of imagination behind the experience of an optical illusion. What Claudius actually perceives during the Mousetrap remains unknowable, of course, and importing the suggestion of an optical illusion is something of a stretch. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that when Hamlet sees the Ghost in Gertrude’s closet, she says of his vision,

This is the very coinage of your brain,
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in. (3.4.137-139)

In this, Gertrude follows rather standard psychology, anticipating Burton’s account of how “the force of imagination,” “most especially... in melancholy persons,” overtakes the “*apprehensive faculty*” of sight to produce “visions” and “chimaeras.”¹⁰ More importantly, much as Burton links artistic “fictions” (140) with a melancholiac’s delusions, the language of *Hamlet* draws parallels between dramaturgical practices—the “cunning” of a scene—and the “cunning” power of ecstasy. That is to say, the language of the play subtly intimates that the Mousetrap’s cunning leads Claudius to experience a vision that is at least partly a coinage of his brain. If Claudius’s unique experience contains something fundamentally illustrative about the nature of perception, it can serve as a useful model for reflecting on the kinds of theatrical experiences that may have been empowered by Shakespeare’s dramaturgical practices.

More specifically for this essay, I propose to examine how one particular visual effect—scenic lighting—is verbally created at key dramatic moments in some of Shakespeare’s plays, and further to speculate on what some

Renaissance spectators might actually have perceived. I propose to examine, that is, how Shakespeare brings moonshine on stage for his particular audience, and so will naturally begin with the literal-minded decision by the mechanicals in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to get Starveling "to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine" (3.1.60-61) for their performance of *Pyramus and Thisbe*. The joke here clearly gains resonance from being self-reflexive in a mischievous and elegant way. At one level, it dangerously highlights the openly visible and creaky mechanism of the illusion-making that sets a moonlit green world on a bare stage under undifferentiated light; on another level, by contrasting the mechanicals' dramaturgy with the play's open reliance on the audience's imagination, the joke emphasizes that this theatre confers ultimate creative agency on the audience. It is crucial to stress, however, that the joke seems to go beyond, for example, the incontrovertible point (made by theatre historians like R. B. Graves and Alan Dessen) that, for the nighttime scenes in the forest, the confusions of identity work as comedy only if "the audience [can] see clearly actions that were supposed to be obscure to the characters onstage."¹¹ In such a critical comment, the audience members remain perceptually outside the illusion, and are only required, in David Schalkwyk's words, to go "along with" all "the pretending."¹² The play's daring seems to me to rest on the possibility that, even if for only flickering moments, the "shaping fantasies" of the most attuned audience members can be kindled to visually "apprehend / More than cool reason ever comprehends" (5.1.5-6). Indeed, in drawing insistent analogies between what the lovers undergo and what the audience experiences, the play seems intent on inducing a theatrical experience that is analogously hinted at in Helena's rather pitiable declaration to Demetrius, "It is not night when I do see your face, / Therefore I think I am not in the night" (2.1.221-222). The trick of the play would then consist in exposing the mechanism of illusion, not only while requiring self-conscious assent from the audience, but also while bringing about imaginative apprehension of the illusion.

As an aside, I would note that it would matter little whether the play was staged in an outdoor or indoor theatre.¹³ As R. B. Graves has shown, in both hall playhouses and amphitheatres like the Globe with canopied stages at the southwest, a remarkably similar ambient, or indirect, light would filter through the stage because the primary source of stage illumination would be sunlight entering at continually descending angles through high windows or the overhead opening. Differences in *measurable* illumination would certainly be large, but given the mechanism of light adaptation in the human eye, the *perceptual* experience of general illumination would be highly comparable. Indeed, prior to twilight, candles and other artificial lights in the hall playhouses would add relatively little to overall illumination, but would articulate contrasts in a way that approximates the higher contrasts produced on outdoor stages by greater absolute light intensity. Further, as sunlight grows dimmer, the overall effect of a general diminution in light intensity in outdoor theatres would be repeated in indoor theatres because the more accelerated, absolute decline in sunlight

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illumination indoors is offset by the increasing relative intensity of artificial illumination. In either case, that is to say, light merely serves the function of providing undifferentiated, overall illumination.¹⁴ Thus, whether performed indoors or outdoors, the moonlight magic of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* depends for its efficacy on the quality of the audience member's imagination. The question still remains, then, as to whether Shakespeare's original audiences were so differently attuned to the performances that some might have experienced lighting effects that are generally invisible to us in the theatre today.

In trying to answer this question, one encounters a difficulty that results from the simple fact that English has failed, as Andrew Gurr has noted, to develop a term for playgoer that "acknowledges the full experience of both hearing and seeing" a play.¹⁵ Our understanding of the playgoing experience would benefit at some level if a term evolved that was comprehensive enough to include the particular experience intimated, for instance, by Simon Forman's use of the word "observe" in his famous accounts of visits to the Globe. Regarding *Macbeth*, Forman notes that Macbeth and Banquo were "observed... riding through a wood," and that on the "night and the day before" Duncan's murder, "there were many prodigies seen." Similarly, he ends the account as follows: "Observe also how Macbeth's queen did rise in the night in her sleep, and walked and talked and confessed all." His account of *The Winter's Tale* begins in like form: "Observe there now [how?] Leontes the king of Sicilia was overcome with jealousy of his wife."¹⁶ Forman obviously could not have literally seen some of the scenes reported—like Banquo and Macbeth on horse-back, or the prodigies alluded to (including presumably the eclipse mentioned by Rosse, 2.4.9-10)—because they exist only as verbal descriptions; yet everything is indifferently said to have been "seen" or "observed." Certainly some of the "observations" are attributable to a faulty memory, and on its own, the report of a plot detail like Lady Macbeth's rising "in the night" would represent the effort merely to recount the story following narrative conventions; however, the confused report also interestingly suggests an imaginatively apprehended visual impression—an impression informed subliminally by an imaginative ear. Forman seems somehow to have apprehended more than cool reason ever comprehends.

I do not wish to put too much pressure on the word "observe," but it bears mentioning that for someone with an interest in astrology and (quack) science like Forman, the word is an especially resonant one; its range of meanings include watching attentively and attending closely to, as when he asserts, in his *Groundes of the Longitude*, that he has discovered "the true place of the fixed Starres...vpon experience and iufte obferuation."¹⁷ Beyond the word "observe" itself, however, and of equal relevance to this essay and to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in particular (as will shortly be seen), are the instruments by which observation was aided in the Renaissance. One such mechanical instrument (which does date to classical times, however) was the *camera obscura*, literally a darkened chamber with a hole in one wall, through which an image from the outside is projected onto the inner opposite wall, and by which special

lighting effects like solar eclipses were observed. The mechanism worked, in other words, by bringing sunshine into a chamber. By the time of Shakespeare, the science of optics and lens-making had developed to such a point that in Giambattista della Porta's 1589 edition of *Magiae Naturalis*, he mentions only in passing how one may "observe...the Suns Eclipse" in a *camera obscura*, but elaborates on how new lenses allow one to create highly theatrical "delusions" in one.¹⁸ More specifically, della Porta notes that "in a dark Chamber by white sheets objected...one may see as clearly and perspicuously, as if they were before his eyes, Huntings, Banquets, Armies of Enemies, Plays, and all things else that one desireth" (364). He declares further that he has "often shewed this kind of Spectacle" (365) to his friends, and explains the mechanism:

Let there be over against that Chamber, where you desire to represent these things, some spacious Plain, where the Sun can freely shine: Upon that you shall set Trees in order, also Woods, Mountains, Rivers, and Animals, that are really so, or made by Art, of Wood, or some other matter. You must frame little children in them, as we use to bring them in when Comedies are Acted. (364)

Clearly an illusion approximating a theatrical scene is in mind.

I mention all this because of the association Shakespeare might have had in mind between the theatrical illusion in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the "delusions" possible in a *camera obscura*. As the mechanicals deliberate on how to "bring the moonlight into a chamber" (3.1.47-48), they consult an almanac and resolve, for the moment, to "leave a casement of the great chamber window (where we play) open," so that "the moon may shine in at the casement" (ll. 56-58). As editors have noted, the joke looks to the name of Shakespeare's company ("The Lord Chamberlain's Men"); but more interestingly, projecting light through an opening in a chamber also simulates how the *camera obscura* works in its simplest form. The mechanicals quickly abandon this possibility, of course, but another opening plays a prominent role in their play: the "hole" in the "vild wall" (5.1.200) through which Pyramus and Thisbe communicate. Significantly, on hearing Thisbe on the other side, Bottom's Pyramus says, "I see a voice! now will I to the chink, / To spy and I can hear my Thisbe's face." The sensory muddle in Bottom's speech certainly continues the confusion seen earlier when he awakened from his "dream": "The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen... what my dream was" (4.1.211-214). Nonetheless, if the play-within-the-play reflects on the larger play, it suggests that theatrical illusion is a kind of vision projected into a chamber, not by means of mechanical devices, but through imaginative hearing – through seeing the vision articulated by the voice. I would note further in this context that one of the competing Renaissance theories of visual perception followed classical tradition in positing that images (variously called *imagines*, *species*, *simulacri*, or *idola*) were thrown off objects as sensory forms and entered the eye. Porta subscribed to this theory, but added a critical twist in being the first,

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in *De refractione* (1593), to apply the model of the *camera obscura* to the eye's function.¹⁹ Psychologists like Burton clearly drew on this model when studying how the mind distorted or even produced "images" in the eye – how the optical chamber became the site of what Helena calls "*idolatry*" (1.1.109). Theseus is thus following established thinking in asserting that the "poet's eye" receives "the forms of things unknown" that "imagination bodies forth" (5.1.12-15). Imaginative hearing in the theatre, then, is simply a variation of the "tricks" that "strong imagination" (5.1.18) plays, tricks that lovers are especially prone to in this play. If a playgoer experienced such a trick—in the way that Forman observed plays or Claudius experienced the *Mousetrap*—the theatre would become an imaginary *camera obscura* in which illusory phenomena are actually observed. Equally significantly, the playgoer would fully experience what the play posits as the ultimate end of imaginative participation—the kind of self-transformation the lovers undergo as their "minds [are] transfigur'd so together" (5.1.25) by their experiences in the forest. One should remember that when the fairies bless the lovers at the conclusion of the play, they sing of blessing "this place" and "each several chamber" (5.1.400, 417), suggesting that the chamber of the theatre itself is an enchanted space. To an observer who has fully apprehended the stage illusion, one might repeat the words of Peter Quince to Bottom: "Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee! Thou art translated" (3.1.118-119).

As an aid for further speculation, if not proof, I would like to turn here to Henry Jackson's well-known letter describing a 1610 performance of *Othello* at Oxford in order to examine how subtly, and unexpectedly, Shakespeare uses poetry and props to light the stage. Because *Othello* is a play that rests on a fundamental opposition between darkness and light, lighting effects take on thematic and moral resonances. In the scene that has become the pictorial emblem of the play, Othello enters Desdemona's bedchamber with what Q1 (1622) stage directions call "*a light*," and as he is seemingly about to extinguish it, distinguishes between it and the light that is Desdemona:

Put out the light, and then put out the light:
 If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
 I can again thy former light restore,
 Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
 Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
 I know not where is that Promethean heat
 That can thy light relume. (5.2.7-13)

Theatrical tradition has Othello carry a candle here and put it out before killing Desdemona. This departs from the original staging, I believe, in a significant way. Othello talks only conditionally of putting out the real light, and is not thereafter provided with a verbal cue for the action, which would make sense because, given that no one else who enters the scene seems to carry a light, it alone must "illuminate" the bedchamber for the whole of 5.2. This would addi-

tionally mean that Desdemona's reaction to being awoken by Othello—"Who's there? Othello?" (5.2.23)—would result from initially being blinded by a bright light held to her face. In thus troping Desdemona as a light and putting *only* her out, then, Othello would reverse, but not complete, the order by which he declared he would put out the two lights.²⁰ Othello's action would thus cue the audience to frame its response by reference to a shared regime of theatrical experience—their imagining darkness descending on the scene. When Desdemona is killed, that is, the audience would implicitly be asked, to use the language of the Chorus from *Henry V*, to "entertain conjecture of a time / When... the poring dark/ Fills the wide vessel of the universe" (Prol. 4.1-3). Henry Jackson's letter, which has mainly been used by scholars as evidence of "naturalistic" impersonation by boy actors, provides some indication of contemporary imaginative capacity, for it recreates the death scene in a hitherto unnoticed way that subtly recaptures the ambient lighting I am suggesting:

Desdemona illa apud nos a marito occisa, quanquam optimè semper causam egit, interfecta tamen magis movebat; cum in lecto decumbens spectantium misericordiam ipso vultu imploraret.

[T]hat famous Desdemona killed before us by her husband, although she always acted her whole part supremely well, yet when she was killed she was even more moving, for when she fell back upon the bed she implored the pity of the spectators by her very face.²¹

Geoffrey Tillotson, who discovered the letter, has argued that this performance must have taken place indoors, because "the tone of Jackson's remarks... suggests an intense and intimate performance which would surely have been impossible out of doors."²² The venue was probably indoors, but I would argue that the subdued or darkened tone is more the result of Jackson's borrowing figurative language from the play; indeed, in referring specifically to Desdemona's death, he uses not only "interfecta" but "occisa"—a figurative word used literally for the setting of the sun (and hence our word "occidental"). Jackson seems to have experienced, that is, the lighting effects figured in Othello's own response to Desdemona's death: "Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse / Of sun and moon" (5.2.99-100). Jackson's response indicates, in other words, a doubleness of vision that combines clear-sighted physical perception—which is possible only when sufficient light illuminates the pitiful expression on the actor's face—and imaginative apprehension of darkness.

Speculative as this may seem, there is some evidence that even modern audiences are capable of this kind of imaginary perception in the theatre. At the recently built Blackfriars theatre in Staunton, Virginia, the resident company (formerly Shenandoah Shakespeare Express) performs all its shows under universal lighting. The performances are, in fact, an ongoing experiment in exploring conditions original to Shakespeare's stage. For a series of performances of *Much Ado About Nothing* in the fall of 2003, audience mem-

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bers completed a post-performance survey designed by a graduate student (Danielle Hofstetter) from nearby Mary Baldwin College.²³ These audience members were largely junior and senior high school students with little experience of live theatre but who were thoroughly apprised by their teachers prior to the performance about the unique conditions at the Blackfriars. They knew, for example, that the lights would stay on during the show, and were given the opportunity to demonstrate this knowledge on the survey. However, of the 185 responses, fully 37% indicated that “it got lighter” at a particular moment and 15% answered that the “theatre [got] dark” at specific moments (especially at moments when actors carried torches on stage, as “at Hero’s funeral”). These students weren’t merely confused by semantics and convention; answers to questions like why Dogberry and his constables couldn’t see each other clearly indicated that these students possessed the sophistication to distinguish between pretend darkness on stage and actual darkness effected by turning down the lights. Equally tellingly, as Hofstetter writes, “more than three quarters of the students who imagined a lighting change sat close to the stage or had been directly engaged by an actor through eye contact or speech” (18). That is to say, the more engaged the student was in the performance, the more prone he or she was to experiencing a form of remarkable cognitive dissonance. Clearly, even kids steeped in films in the mode of Luhrmann’s *Romeo and Juliet* proved capable of observing imaginary lighting effects.

With the model of possible audience response developed here, I will now turn to considering more fully how one play—*Romeo and Juliet* itself—exploits the imaginatively engaged, participatory relationship between audience and stage illusion. No scene is probably more famous than the balcony scene from this play, though its particular theatrical strategy seems not to have been noticed. To understand the strategy, one must recall how the scene is set up by immediately preceding ones. Rather obvious visual and verbal cues continually emphasize that it is night. When Romeo, Mercutio and their friends enter in 1.4 on their way to “crash” the Capulet ball, the stage directions in the Folio and the various Quarto texts call explicitly for “TORCH BEARERS,” whose torches then give occasion for verbal play. Having never met an oxymoron he didn’t like, the gloomy Romeo calls for a torch, saying, “I am not for this ambling; / Being but heavy, I will bear the light” (1.4.11-12). Not to be outdone, Mercutio adds, “we burn daylight,” by which he means, as he explains to Romeo, “in delay, / We waste our lights in vain, like lights by day!” (ll. 43-45). This little quip also reflects metadramatically, however, on the situation, as torch lights must in fact wastefully burn in daylight to make the point that in the playworld it is night. The quip thus recalls George Wither’s *Faire-Virtue*, in which the narrator says of a lady’s gaudy accessories,

You may liken every Gem,
To those lamps, which at a play,
Are set up to light the day.
For, their lusture adds no more,

To what *Titan* gave before.²⁴

The torch lights onstage then act as visual aids not only to imagining darkness, but also to becoming conscious of theatrical lighting strategies. Once the scene shifts inside to the Capulet ball, more torches get called for as Capulet rushes about directing affairs: "A hall, a hall! give room! and foot it, girls. / More light, you knaves, and turn the tables up" (1.5.26-27). These lighting effects are only slightly less insistent than those attempted by Bottom's Pyramus:

O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
 O night, which ever art when day is not!
 O night, O night! (5.1.170-73)

The comically emphatic repetition of "night" is an extravagant, verbal counterpart to bringing Moonshine on stage.

It is as the audience is continually asked to imagine artificially illuminated night scenes in this way that Juliet enters the field of Romeo's vision during the dancing, and prompts him to say:

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
 It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
 As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear—
 Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear! (1.5.44-47)

I believe these lines indicate a heartfelt emotional shift in Romeo's experience of love, as revealed by their contrast with previously uttered Petrarchisms that figured his experience with Rosaline in terms of tortured darkness, and which were echoed in his father's lament that his son "Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out, / And makes himself an artificial night" (1.1.139-140). Earnest as Romeo's words may be, however, the often-repeated judgment that he merely "reverts to stereotype" and rehearses yet more clichés from the "stock-in-trade of Renaissance poets" is fully understandable.²⁵ After all, very little time has elapsed since his repeated vows of eternal devotion to Rosaline ("When the devout religion of mine eyes / Maintains... falsehood, then turn tears to fires," 1.2.88-89). The remembered vehemence of his protests must surely separate, even if only partially, Romeo's perspective from that of the audience when he so quickly switches allegiances, and make the audience consider the conceit of someone burning brighter than the torches a version of romantic hyperbole. I believe the self-consciously insistent use of real props to create imagined lighting effects reinforces this separation and skepticism: on the one hand, the reality of the torches highlights by difference what Mercutio would call the "vain fantasy" (1.4.98) of a lady's luminescence; on the other, insofar as the torches are props that create an artificial night, they further point to the artifice in Romeo's figurative strategy. This instance illustrates the "discrepancy" that Hugh Richmond sees in Shakespeare's plays between "the heroes' illusions"

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and an “alienating awareness” induced in the audience by “the consciously artificial modes of the Elizabethan stage.” Though perhaps he overstates the case in maintaining that “*Romeo and Juliet* can only be authentically and effectively performed when its relationship to *Pyramus and Thisbe* is recognized,” a parallel at the level of exposing self-conscious artifice is apparent.²⁶ The scene of the Capulet ball is hardly a farce, but its potential for inducing skepticism in the audience does rely partly on “mechanical” devices.

During the balcony scene, however, a crucial change occurs in the dramaturgy that makes it possible for the audience’s perspective to be aligned with Romeo’s. Again, the immediately preceding scene emphasizes the night as Romeo hides in the dark while Mercutio, suggesting that romantic rhetoric is reducible to sexual desire, conjures him by Rosaline’s “quivering thigh, / And the demesnes that there adjacent lie” (2.1.19-20). Benvolio’s remarks in reply depict the stage picture clearly:

Come, he hath hid himself among these trees
To be consorted with the humorous night.
Blind is his love and best befits the dark. (2.1.30-32)

Besides his skill in hiding, one reason that Romeo remains unseen is that his friends are again carrying torches; torches illuminate the area around the bearers well but throw very little light into the distance, and thus would leave the revelers in much the same position as someone at a window at night who can see very little outside but is clearly visible even from a distance. If my stage picture is right, and the audience has imaginatively entered it, then the audience would for the first time literally share the perspective of Romeo in seeing the others from a “darkened” position. It is at this moment that, as the others leave the stage, Romeo says, “But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?” (2.2.2). In films and modern productions, Juliet customarily enters the balcony at these lines illuminated in a way that suffuses her with a romantic glow. Zeffirelli’s 1968 film is typical in casting a rose-tinted light from a side window onto Olivia Hussey, though one also often sees in the theatre Juliet back-lit so that an angelic halo emanates from her hair. Beautiful as these renderings can be (and Zeffirelli’s version is ravishing), they belie the very important next line (which Zeffirelli tellingly cut): “It is the east, and Juliet is the sun” (l. 3). This line indicates that Juliet herself is the source of illumination, whereas modern lighting effects place the source elsewhere. If the audience in Shakespeare’s theatre has been fully engaged in creating the night, and they see Juliet enter the space above at this moment—as inevitably they must—they would also enter the world colored by Romeo’s imagination in which Juliet is physically radiant. The visibility that is inevitable even when darkness is thoroughly imagined would suddenly take on a charged significance. As such, the clearly maintained distinction between the figurative and the literal, which further reflected and reinforced the distinction between romantic illusion and sex-driven actuality, would blur, and the audience would experience the spe-

cial magic of a theatre of imagination. As Romeo, hidden again behind "night's cloak" (l. 75) and thus "bescreen'd" (l. 52) from the illuminated Juliet's view, directs an unheard address to her, the dramatic action would then be driven by a light that only poetry and imagination can provide:

O, speak again, bright angel, for thou art
 As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,
 As is a winged messenger of heaven
 Unto the white-upturned wond'ring eyes
 Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him,
 When he bestrides the lazy puffing clouds,
 And sails upon the bosom of the air. (26-32)

When technology provides the moonshine in the modern cinema and theatre, we miss the chance to recapture the experience.

A further dramaturgical strategy behind the scene becomes visible, I believe, if we recall that the Capulet ball is a "mask" (1.4.48), and that Mercutio and the others exit before the balcony scene still dressed as "maskers" (1.5.16, S.D.). The term "mask" as used in the play certainly refers primarily to Italianate aristocratic revels, and is thus consistent with its predominant usage elsewhere in Shakespeare; but the term also recalls masque in its Elizabethan use for a loosely defined genre of courtly pageants and entertainments.²⁷ If a feature of these entertainments could be called a defining one, it would be that the fictional narrative or situation relied for its completion on the actual presence of the person for whom the entertainment was devised. Given the association of Elizabeth with such mythical figures as Diana, Gloriana, and Astrea, entertainments in her honor often turned on the ubiquitously employed trope of her glorious radiance. It has been argued by Roy Strong that the so-called "Rainbow Portrait" (c. 1600), with its motto of "*Non Sine Sole Iris*," is a direct pictorial realization of the central trope behind Sir John Davies' *Hymns to Astrea*: "Royal Astrea makes our day / Eternal with her beams" (vi).²⁸ In the pageants, a more direct realization of the trope becomes possible in that the sovereign is present to assume, *in propria persona*, the qualities of the mythical figure. The question then becomes whether the spectators had what could legitimately be called a perceptual experience of the Queen's glory. The painter of the Rainbow Portrait sets Elizabeth against a dark background and manipulates the painted surface to give the impression of suffused but sharp light emanating from the Queen herself. Would the spectators looking on Elizabeth have had a similar experience?

Two written descriptions of entertainments for the Queen, one in daylight and one at Gray's Inn under artificial illumination, give an indication. The Queen's Progress in 1591 famously passed through Elvetham, where she was entertained by the Earl of Hertford. On the final day of her stay, the Queen was met at her "Gallerie window" by the Faery Quene, who saluted her with a speech that predictably addressed her as "Bright shining Phoebe, that in

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human shape, / Hid'st heaven's perfection."²⁹ As Elizabeth prepared to depart shortly thereafter, however, a "most extreme rain" began to fall; nonetheless, we are told, "it pleased her Majesty to behold and hear the whole action" (119) of the final offering. In passing I would note here that equal emphasis falls on looking and listening ("behold and hear"). In the event, the farewell device consisted of "a consort of musicians hidden in a bower" singing a "dittie" (120) that included the following verses:

Come again, worlds chief delight,
Whose absence makes eternal Night.
Come again, sweet lively Sun,
When thou art gone our joys are done. (121)

The written account's emphasis on the weather seems intended to suggest that the darkening and dampening effect of the rain had, in some measure, literalized the trope of light employed throughout the entertainment. More remarkably, we are told of Elizabeth's reaction to the song in a parenthesis that sets off the Queen in a frozen montage, as if to isolate and sustain the final glimmer of her light: "(As this Song was sung, her Majesty, notwithstanding the great rain, stayed her coach, and pulled off her mask, giving great thanks.)" (121). This parenthetical picture seems clearly intended, in its dramatic narrative of unmasking, to leave an impression of her glory. In today's world of celebrity, charisma is a kind of star power that one perceives as an aura, especially when one comes across a celebrity in everyday life; in understated form, the writer of the above account seems to assume such a charismatic brilliance that is visually observed.

Something similar can be seen in the *Gesta Grayorum*, an account of the Christmas revels at Gray's Inn in 1594-95.³⁰ The central device here is that the entertainments are offered for a fictitious guest of honor called the Prince of Purpoole. However, all things change and come to a definitive end on the final night when a masque (commonly called "The Masque of Proteus") is presented in the presence of a genuine Prince—Elizabeth herself. In the final dance, or "masque" proper, masquers emerge from behind a rock, led by "Pygmies with Torches" (66); after the dance, they return to the rock, and while hidden, sing a song whose first stanza is as follows:

Shadows before the shining Sun do vanish...
And Councilors of false Principality
Do fade in presence of true Majesty.

The emblem of one of the masquers—"A Torch by the Sun"—perfectly captures the idea behind the song as well as the action of the masquers returning to the rock; "So doth the greater glory dim the less" (1.5.93), as Portia says in *The Merchant of Venice*. In relation to the "gest" or entertainment as a whole, the Prince of Purpoole becomes revealed as a "false Principality" in the light

of "true Majesty." As the writer puts it at the very end, "But now our Principality is determined; which, although it shined very bright in ours, and others Darkness; yet, at the Royal Presence of Her Majesty, it appeared as an obscured Shadow: In this, not unlike unto the Morning-star, which looketh very cheerfully in the World, so long as the Sun looketh not on it" (68). The writer is certainly being metaphorical, extending the trope of brightness to the Prince; but I would suggest that, because the dramaturgy of the masque literalizes the trope, it is possible to think of the metaphor as an expression of a visual experience. Such is the particular charisma that majesty radiates.

I believe the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* attempts to create an imaginatively visual experience that parallels the perceptions of the Queen intended by the two masques. Again, especially with boy actors, and not Princes, to act the scene, it's not entirely clear how many in the audience would have had such an experience. Further, having the experience would not necessarily mean that the problems that trouble this scene would entirely disappear for the audience. For one, Romeo's language still remains, as M. A. Goldberg suggests, "formal, contrived, artificial."³¹ However, it is critical to notice that in asking the audience to exercise its "imaginary forces" (*Henry V*, Pro. 18), the play also gives the audience an opportunity to experience directly the figurative power in Petrarchan utterance that shapes the lovers' insular reality. Indeed, only if this power is shared can the lovers' tragic emotions and their world be fully experienced and not merely acknowledged or even derided.

The second scene on the balcony (3.5), or the "aubade," which as a topos might be thought a valediction forbidding *morning*, makes clearer the connection I have been positing between the lovers' tragedy and the theatrical experience. This scene follows the wedding night during which, presumably, consummation has taken place, though in the full knowledge that the morning after will bring Romeo's banishment. As a result, the scene recalls Juliet's quibble during their betrothal that their flushed exchange of vows is "Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be / Ere one can say it lightens" (2.2.119-120). Her words prove unwittingly prophetic as the scene opens with Romeo set to leave (the lightning rapture of the night now over), while Juliet insists that the sky has yet to lighten:

Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day.
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear. (3.5.1-3)

The poignancy of the scene consists in the delicate desperation behind Juliet's attempt to delay the dawn verbally, or manipulate the lighting effects, which Romeo momentarily consents to join in despite his protest that "envious streaks / Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east" (8-9). The emphasis on the imagined verbal *fiat* is telling in Romeo's resigned cheer—"I'll say yon grey is not the morning's eye, / 'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow" (19-20)—for it now underlines a renewed distinction between poetic assertion and

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material reality, a distinction that reflects the widening gulf between the adult reality of Verona and the private world of youthful passion. But this distinction also grows out of the transience of intense passion in the temporal world of continual daybreaks. That is, the lovers' inability to sustain the night speaks of a larger inability to evade temporality and points to the play's widely noted association of love and death. The tragic irony in Juliet's *prothalamion* of 3.2 now becomes visible; the "fiery-footed steeds" whom she entreated to "gallop apace" (3.2.1) now gallop apace indeed, and suggest that the night when "Lovers can see to do their amorous rites / By their own beauties" (3.2.8-9) can only be a short-lived flash. When Juliet herself abandons the effort to prolong the night and says, "O now be gone, more light and light it grows" (3.5.35), she also abandons the world that she and Romeo entered in the balcony scene, and ironically confirms the nominalism that she asserted in her earlier meditations ("What's in a name?" 2.2.43); at the same time, metadramatically, she points to the actual daylight of the London afternoon and relinquishes the power of verbal figuration that defines the experience of the theatre. The fact that the "stage picture" of the first balcony scene is "reduplicated" further "lends emphasis to the pathetic alteration in the speakers' tones and circumstances," as James Black has shown.³² Now a fatal logic is recognizable in the leap that Juliet's "ill-divining soul" makes from saying farewell at dawn to picturing Romeo "dead in the bottom of a tomb" (3.5.54, 56); being forced to say farewell too soon only anticipates the always-too-early arrival of death.

The lighting effects that operate when we do find the lovers in a tomb suggest again how subtly the play works to create imaginative sympathy with the lovers. The final scene of the play opens in darkness, as emphasized by Paris's demanding light ("Give me thy torch, boy," [5.3.1]) and later "muff[ling]" himself in "night" (21) when Romeo enters; Romeo himself takes a torch from his man Balthasar before proceeding to the "rotten jaws" (47) of the Capulet tomb (presumably the "discovery space"). After the ensuing fight between Romeo and Paris, it appears Romeo somehow manages to take the torch, along with the dead body of Paris, into the tomb. For, some lines later, when Friar Lawrence enters the scene a few minutes too late, he asks,

What torch is yond, that vainly lends his light
To grubs and eyeless skulls? As I discern,
It burneth in the Capels' monument. (125-127)

As if to emphasize the torch within the tomb, the play also has the Page who brings the Watch say, "This is the place, there where the torch doth burn" (171). However, upon first entering the tomb with the dead Paris, Romeo says,

I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave.
A grave? O no, a lanthorn, slaughter'd youth;
For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes
This vault a feasting presence full of light. (83-86)

Once again Juliet's presence, even when "dead," is said to illuminate the darkness, but the physical presence of the torch would undermine the figurative energy of Romeo's words while the audience's knowledge that Juliet is alive would further separate its perspective from Romeo's. However, whereas at the Capulet feast the poetic hyperbole could have occasioned derision, at this moment it seems to me to confer an urgent pathos to the deluded desperation that takes refuge in poetic vision. As such, if the scene makes the audience experience frustrated anguish and suspense as it watches the last chance to avert the stars' crosses being painfully squandered, it also gives the audience the opportunity to experience—with its vision blurred by passion—the delusion that the flickerings of a torch are coruscations from Juliet.

Nonetheless, the imagined lighting effect in the tomb itself becomes a momentary burst of poetic illusion that ceases to be in a flicker, as Romeo's words following this "flash" intimate:

How oft when men are at the point of death
 Have they been merry? Which their keepers call
 A lightning before death? O how may I
 Call this a lightning? (5.3.88-91)³³

In the shift between the second and final questions, Romeo seems to acknowledge that no actual lightening has occurred, signaling again a defeat of poetic vision that looks back to the aubade at their initial parting. However, in a touching irony, Romeo next addresses Juliet in charged words which, because they spring from delusion, bring poetic protest and truth together:

O my love, my wife,
 Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
 Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
 Thou art not conquer'd, beauty's ensign yet
 Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
 And death's pale flag is not advanced there. (91-96)

Because, of course, she is not dead. When she does die, moreover, and the passion-lit world the lovers had imagined itself goes out, the irony continues in darkness descending at daybreak as if in response: "A glooming peace this morning with it brings, / The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head" (305-306). R. B. Graves has suggested that Shakespeare set the final act of many of his plays in darkness to exploit the natural darkness that descended in London, from about early fall to late spring, before the plays ended.³³ This suggestion is intriguing, but I believe it arises because it remains difficult for us to imagine an audience so remarkably sensitive to lighting cues that Shakespeare could design poetically charged effects that relied on such sensitivity. Indeed, for anyone in the audience who has shared the lovers' world, the final, "glooming"

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stage picture would seem informed by his or her emotional state as well, and accordingly appear as something of a consolation; if the characters in the play are pledged golden statues as memorials of the lovers, the audience would be left with a trace of the lovers' poetic vision in its own figurative powers.

Many things about Shakespeare's theatre remain difficult for us to imagine. Like how actors managed to hold thirty to forty plays in repertory while performing a full schedule and mounting a new production each fortnight. Or how a boy actor could have pulled off a Cleopatra. Or how three thousand spectators jammed into a space like the Globe could have maintained focus. To these wonders we recognize but cannot fully fathom, I would add lighting effects, if only to suggest further exploration and speculation. After all, though we today have much more sophisticated ways of bringing moonshine on stage than Shakespeare could possibly have imagined, insofar as the poetics of Shakespeare's theatre rested on the flexibility of the imagination, that theatre's audience must have observed lighting effects that no technology could ever produce.

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Notes

1. *Hamlet*, 1.2.166-167. *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997). All further references, unless otherwise noted, will be to this text.
2. "On the value of *Hamlet*," in *Reinterpretations of Elizabethan Drama*, Selected Papers from the English Institute, ed. Norman Rabkin (New York and London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1969), p. 146.
3. For opposing views on whether the film is a travesty or not, see James Michael Welsh, "William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*," *Literature/Film Quarterly* 25.2 (1997): 152-153, and José Arroyo, "Kiss kiss bang bang," *Sight and Sound* 7 (March 1997): 6-9.
4. *Cynthia's Revels* (Pro. 6-20) in *Ben Jonson*, vol. 4, ed., C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932).
5. For a concise summary and analysis of this issue, see Andrew Gurr, "Hearers and Beholders in Shakespearean Drama," *Essays in Theatre* 3.1 (1984): 30-45, and *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), esp. 86-97.
6. *Elizabethan Drama and the Viewer's Eye* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 22.
7. *Shakespeare's Visual Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 8.
8. *Viewer's Eye*, 29, 27.
9. I should note that I am not attempting, in this paper, to re-open and settle the vexed question of why the dumb show seems to have no effect on Claudius. For a good introduction to the long history of this question, one could begin with W. W. Robson, *Did the King See the Dumb-show?* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975).

10. Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (1628, New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1951), pp. 137, 220-221.
11. R.B. Graves, *Lighting the Shakespearean Stage, 1567-1642* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1999) p. 219. For Dessen's thoughts, see, *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984), p. 79.
12. "The Role of Imagination in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," *Theoria* 66 (1986): 51-65; p. 62.
13. Though the nature of the play continues to drive scholars to speculate that a private, indoor occasion provided the original venue, the only certain reference to actual performances occurs on the frontispiece to Q1, which notes that the play "hath beene fundry times publickely acted, by the Right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his fervants." For a brief history of scholarly speculations, see the Oxford *Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Peter Holland (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), esp. 110-117.
14. See Graves, esp. chs. 5 and 6. This was confirmed for me by comparing the experience of attending afternoon vespers in various chapels of Cambridge University and attending afternoon performances at the new Bankside Globe.
15. Gurr, 30.
16. Rpt. in Gamini Salgado, *Eyewitnesses of Shakespeare: First Hand Accounts of Performances 1590-1890* (N.p.: Harper & Row, 1975), 31-33.
17. *The GROVNDES of the Longitude* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1591), Biii.
18. Though it is far from ideal, I have used the 1658 anonymous English translation, *Natural Magick* (London: Thomas Young and Samuel Speed), ed. Derek J. Price (New York: Basic Books, 1957): pp. 364-65.
19. See *Science, Optics and Magic*, esp. 218-220.
20. This reversal adds not only an element of surprise, but also fits in perfectly with the figure of "hysteron proteron," or "prepost'rous conclusions" (1.3.329), that Joel Altman has brilliantly shown works as a rhetorical and dramatic scheme in this play ("Preposterous Conclusions": Eros, *Enargeia*, and the Composition of *Othello*," *Representations* 18 [1987]:129-57). Among the instances he cites are the conflicting references to time that led to the widely accepted theory of "double time." Significantly, the murder scene also provides perhaps the most tragic and absurd instance of *hysteron proteron* in the preposterous sequencing imagined when Othello says, "I will kill thee/ And love thee after" (5.2.18-19). For another illuminating study of the "Shakespearean preposterous" in *Othello*, see Patricia Parker, "Preposterous Events," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 43.2 (1992): 186-213, esp. 207-211.
21. Salgado, both Latin and translation, p. 30.
22. "*Othello* and *The Alchemist* at Oxford in 1610," *TLS* 20 July 1933: p. 494.
23. "Rediscovering the Imagination of Shakespeare's Audience: A Study in Student Audiences at the Shenandoah Shakespeare Blackfriars Theatre," an unpublished essay provided by the author.
24. *Faire-Virtue The Mistress of Philarete* (London: John Grismand, 1622), sig. F4^r.
25. Ralph Berry, *The Shakespearean Metaphor* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1978), p. 40; M. A. Goldberg, "The Multiple Masks of Romeo: Toward a New Shakespearean

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Production," *The Antioch Review* 26 (1968), p. 409.

26. "Peter Quince Directs *Romeo and Juliet*," in *Shakespeare and the Sense of Performance: Essays in the Tradition of Performance Criticism in Honor of Bernard Beckerman*, ed. Marvin and Ruth Thompson (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1989), pp. 222, 226, 225.
27. On Shakespeare's use of the term, see Suzanne Gossett, "The Term 'Masque' in Shakespeare and Fletcher, and *The Coxcomb*," *Studies in English Literature* 14 (1974): 285-295. On the evolving and elusively defined nature of the genre under Elizabeth, see Stephen Orgel, *The Jonsonian Masque* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1965), esp. Part One.
28. *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (Hampshire: Thames and Hudson, 1977), p. 50. The quotation from Davies also appears on this page.
29. *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. 3, ed. John Nichols (London: John Nichols and Son, 1823), pp. 118-19.
30. *Gesta Grayorum*, The Malone Society Reprints, ed. W.W. Greg (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1914).
31. "The Multiple Masks of Romeo," p. 408.
32. "The Visual Artistry of *Romeo and Juliet*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 15 (1975), p. 247.
33. Here I follow the punctuation of Q2 (*Romeo and Juliet: Second Quarto, 1599*, Shakespeare Quarto Facsimiles, No. 6, W. W. Greg, ed. [London: The Shakespeare Association, 1949]) and the Folio, because *Riverside's* editors have needlessly converted the question marks—which suggest genuine and interesting questioning—into exclamation points.
34. See "Shakespeare's Outdoor Stage Lighting," *Shakespeare Survey* 13 (1980): 235-250.

**A BIRD OF ANOTHER FEATHER
WILL SHAKE-SCENE'S BELATED REVENGE**

by David Lucking

Towards the conclusion of his *Groatsworth of Wit*, purportedly composed under the baleful but spiritually therapeutic influence of the illness that would shortly bring his life to a close, the dramatist Robert Greene called upon several of his former colleagues to abjure their literary debaucheries and return to the fold of orthodoxy. It is one of the minor ironies of literary history that the pamphlet owes its significance today not to any qualities it possesses as a piece of writing but to the fact that it affords us our first glimpse of a disturbing new element agitating the London theatrical world, one that had evidently aroused a considerable amount of bitter anxiety in the ailing author, and against which he was much concerned to put his friends on their guard. This was the sudden advent on the scene of what Greene denounced as a thoroughly unscrupulous rival, emerging from the lowly ranks of actors and other stage minions, and garnering undeserved popularity as a playwright through the devious expedient of imitating his betters. In what has become the most famous passage in his *Groatsworth of Wit*, Greene inveighs against this literary parvenu in terms of the most scathing contempt, likening him to the crow in Aesop's fable that fatuously decks itself out in borrowed plumage:

Base minded men all three of you, if by my miserie you be not warnd: for unto none of you (like mee) sought those burres to cleave: those Puppets (I meane) that spake from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange, that I, to whom they all have beene beholding: is it not like that you, to whome they all have beene beholding, shall (were yee in that case as I am now) bee both at once of them forsaken? Yes trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Johannes fac totum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey.¹

The pamphlet in which this warning was contained appeared in 1592, only a few weeks after Greene had succumbed to the malady brought on by what his enemies snidely reported to have been a surfeit of pickled herring and Rhenish wine. The *Groatsworth of Wit* was prepared for the press not by Greene himself, but by the printer Henry Chettle, who claimed to have pieced it together from notes found among the dead man's personal effects. The pamphlet might therefore be viewed as the product of joint authorship, although Chettle himself issued a disclaimer in which he strenuously denied that the publication contained anything other than Greene's own words.

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While there is no way of knowing what impact Greene's exhortations to repentance had upon the minds of those to whom they were purportedly addressed, what *is* abundantly clear is that the outward tokens of spiritual reformation were conspicuously wanting. At the time that one of these prodigal sons, Christopher Marlowe, was killed in a quarrel the year following Greene's death, he was under official investigation for an impressive array of offences including atheism, blasphemy, heresy, and treason, crimes that might well have brought him to the scaffold had the case been proven against him. Another beneficiary of Greene's deathbed admonitions, Thomas Nashe, though perhaps not quite as sedulous as Marlowe in flouting orthodox opinion, nonetheless found ways and means of falling seriously foul of the authorities before dying in 1601, so he too seems to have taken Greene's advice very little to heart. But if Greene's strictures fell upon deaf ears in the circle for which they were ostensibly intended, perhaps they continued to reverberate in the memory of the rising playwright who is so viciously lambasted in the notorious passage I have quoted, and perhaps in his own way he responded to them.

That the presumptuous player to whom Greene was referring in the "upstart crow" passage was William Shakespeare is signaled clearly enough in the fairly transparent parody of lines contained in the third part of *Henry VI*: "O tiger's heart wrapp'd in a woman's hide!"² But it is indicated even more directly, and one imagines more offensively, in the decidedly unsubtle play upon the rival dramatist's name in which Greene could also not resist indulging. The allegation that the interloper regarded himself as being the only "Shake-scene" in the country most probably alludes to some of the more hyperbolic passages contained in the *Henry VI* trilogy, which however are hardly typical of Shakespeare's style even in his early works. And indeed, quite aside from the unfairness of the criticism itself, Greene's barb was a deeply ill-considered one in a number of respects, not the least of which is the fact that the author of *Love's Labor's Lost* was too deeply aware of the malleable nature of language not to be able to turn such crude verbal distortions to his own advantage. He had to bide his time, however, for in the year in which Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* was published, the London theatres were closed as a prophylactic measure against the plague, and apart from one or two very brief intermissions they remained barred to the public until 1594. During this hiatus Shakespeare would have had little opportunity of responding to Greene's aspersions in the medium most congenial to himself, however much they continued to rankle.

Shakespeare did not of course remain inactive during this period, and in addition to composing *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* may have begun work on *Romeo and Juliet*, which was probably among the first plays to be performed after the theatres were reopened in the autumn of 1594.³ And what is to be noted is that in *Romeo and Juliet* an anecdote is recounted which has an only tangential bearing on the context in which it is situated, and which might therefore have been inserted with the specific intention of calling to mind Greene's sneering remark about the playwright's estimation of himself as being "the only Shake-scene in a country." This is to be found in the Nurse's

recollection of an earthquake that took place on precisely the day on which Juliet was weaned some eleven years previously:

On Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.
 That shall she; marry, I remember it well.
 'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years,
 And she was wean'd—I never shall forget it—
 Of all the days of the year upon that day.
 For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,
 Sitting in the sun under the dove-house wall.
 My lord and you were then at Mantua—
 Nay I do bear a brain. But as I said,
 When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple
 Of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty fool,
 To see it tetchy and fall out with the dug.
 Shake! quoth the dovehouse. 'Twas no need, I trow,
 To bid me trudge. (1.3.21-34)⁴

Not only is the scene evoked in this anecdote well and truly shaken, in the most literal possible sense of the word, but the building that is most violently affected is the “dovehouse” near which the Nurse had been sitting with her charge. As interesting as the event itself are the words employed by the Nurse to describe the effects wrought by the earthquake upon the dovehouse, the abode of a useful species of bird of proverbial docility, and the genuineness of whose plumage could not readily be impugned. What the curious phrase “Shake! quoth the dovehouse” suggests is that it was the shaker of scenes that had the final word, and that rather than resisting this assault the bastion of doves was reduced merely to echoing the name of the shaker. Might this be construed as a mocking shaft directed by the upstart crow at the memory of the man who had so superciliously derided him, and in whose feathers he was accused of disporting himself? Was he in effect proclaiming that, all joking aside, he was a shake-scene in good earnest, and that in matters pertaining to the theatre it would be he who would henceforth be calling the tune? Other elements are to be found in *Romeo and Juliet* which suggest that this may in fact be the case.

There are a number of allusions to birds in *Romeo and Juliet*, and on two occasions these references hinge on contrasts involving crows as one of their terms. It might appear, then, that Shakespeare is using a figure virtually identical to Greene's for purposes that are entirely his own, appropriating as it were the dead man's metaphorical birds—together, presumably, with the plumage in which they are appareled—in a way that could not have been foreseen. Thus, when Romeo encounters Juliet for the first time, one of the images he uses is that of a dove seen in the company of crows:

So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
 As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows. (1.5.47-8)

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There would be nothing in the least remarkable about this comment in itself, were it not for the inadvertently ironic reference it contains to the words that Benvolio has earlier pronounced when he urges Romeo to attend the Capulet feast in order to observe Rosaline's beauty in its proper perspective:

Go thither and with unattainted eye,
Compare her face with some that I shall show
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow. (1.2.87-9)

The identical rhyme on the words *show(s)* and *crow(s)* in both passages helps to underscore the point. All things are relative, it would appear, and what is to be classified as a crow will depend exclusively on what other birds are available for contrast. Even a swan will seem to be a crow when set beside specimens of the avian world more dazzling than itself. One fire, as Aufidius remarks in *Coriolanus*, drives out another.⁵ Although the swan to which Benvolio is specifically referring is Rosaline, Shakespeare perhaps has another swan in mind as well. This is the swan alluded to in the letter addressed to his "Gentlemen Readers" that prefaces Greene's *Goatsworth of Wit*:

Gentlemen. The Swan sings melodiously before death, that in all his life time useth but a jarring sound. *Greene* though able inough to write, yet deeperly serched with sicknes than ever heeretofore, sendes you his Swanne like songe.⁶

It may not be wholly beside the point to note that Shakespeare would use the image of a character making "a swan-like end, / Fading in music" in *The Merchant of Venice*, written a few years after *Romeo and Juliet*.⁷

The recollection of Greene's melodious malady brings us to another minor but perhaps relevant point, one that concerns Greene's own name. A purely mechanical analysis of word frequencies in those plays by Shakespeare that were produced prior to, or more or less in the same period as, *Romeo and Juliet* turns up a number of instances of the word *green*, as is of course entirely to be expected. Although in *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and the first and third parts of *Henry VI* the word is entirely absent, in both *The Merchant of Venice* and the second part of *Henry VI* it appears on a single occasion. In each of *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard III*, *Richard II* (discounting references to the character named Green), *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *King John* the word appears twice. In *Love's Labor's Lost* there are five instances of the word, and in *Midsummer-Night's Dream* nine. In *Romeo and Juliet* the word *green* appears on five occasions, but what is chiefly of interest is not so much the frequency with which the word occurs as the figurative use to which it is put at one particular juncture, a use that has no parallel in any of the other plays belonging to the same period. In *Love's Labor's Lost*, *Midsummer-Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice* the word is used to refer to the lover's jealousy, the "green-ey'd monster" that Iago will lecture Othello about

somewhat later in Shakespeare's career.⁸ But in one of the most memorable scenes in *Romeo and Juliet* it is used to connote another emotional state, one that would not seem entirely extraneous to Robert Greene's own sentiments with respect to his inconvenient rival:

Arise fair sun and kill the envious moon
 Who is already sick and pale with grief,
 That thou her maid art far more fair than she.
 Be not her maid, since she is envious,
 Her vestal livery is but sick and green
 And none but fools do wear it. (2.2.4-9)

Thus, green is unambiguously identified as the color of *envy*, and is associated with the ailing moon that is sick with grief before the ascendancy of a metaphorical sun that is more resplendent than herself. Once again the underlying idea is that what once seemed preeminent dwindles before something greater than itself, just as Greene's talent must inevitably pale before the magnitude of Shakespeare's gift. "So doth the greater glory dim the less," as Portia points out in *The Merchant of Venice*.⁹ But what is of course significant in *Romeo and Juliet* is that this greater glory appears where it is least expected, assuming the form of an effulgence that grows out of darkness, the metaphorical dawn that overwhelms Romeo's vision of the world when Juliet opens her window on the night.

The process whereby "all things change them to the contrary," as Juliet's father expresses it at one point (4.5.90), is one that informs *Romeo and Juliet* in all of its aspects. Everything has the potential of becoming the opposite of itself, which is one of the reasons why oxymoron, based on the conjunction of contradictory terms, is the dominant rhetorical figure in the play.¹⁰ It is interesting, in view of the fact that the play was written in the shadow of Greene's insinuations about Shakespeare's being an upstart crow flaunting stolen feathers, that a number of these oxymora should pivot on ambiguous plumage. One of the most striking of these occurs when Juliet, after learning that her husband of a few hours has killed her cousin Tybalt, rails against Romeo in an elaborate sequence of oxymora that includes the epithet "Dove-feather'd raven" (3.2.76). Here once again we would seem to be in the presence of a kind of crow (*Corvus corax*) that is decked out in feathers not his own, an interloper on the scene who provokes only destruction. The epithet would seem to recall, and deliberately to invert the sense of, other words that Juliet has pronounced only a few moments before, when in the course of her epithalamium she says that Romeo will "lie upon the wings of night / Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back" (3.2.18-19). If Romeo is at one moment likened to a white mantle laid upon the feathers of the black bird, he is at another transformed into the same black bird dissembling its true nature under a cloak of borrowed feathers.

Part of the dramatic point of the "dove-feather'd raven" image is, of course, that Juliet is mistaken about Romeo, and that she will swiftly realize her error.

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And this is essentially what happened in the case of Shakespeare as well. Greene might have represented himself in picturesque terms as a dying swan fading in his own distinctive kind of music, but his swan song survived him by only a few years, unless we count the topical interest that it has had for later readers as an aperture through which his detested rival's triumphant advent on the scene can be witnessed. Ironically enough, it is Shakespeare himself who would be apostrophized by Ben Jonson as the "Sweet Swan of Avon" in a commemorative poem prefaced to the First Folio of 1623, and indelibly inscribed by that name in the imagination of ensuing generations. Not only can a swan become a crow, as Benvolio remarks, but the man who had been stigmatized as an upstart crow would in the end be apotheosized as a swan. Shakespeare could not have anticipated this particular development in the evolution of his future reputation, of course, but the potentiality for such a metamorphosis, presciently represented in terms of the transformations that birds can undergo, is the idea inspiring much of the imagery in *Romeo and Juliet*. It would therefore not perhaps be too far-fetched to see in this work Shakespeare's vindication, ironically destined to prove itself a prophecy, of his own powers as a playwright, comparable to the boasts concerning the immortalizing power of his art that are found in the Sonnets. As such, it perhaps constitutes Shakespeare's reply to the shade of Robert Greene, who lived long enough to witness his own eclipse as a dramatist, and whose affectations of righteous anger were only a disguise for envy. And thus the rising dramatist affirms himself to be, if not the crow that Greene had inveighed against, then certainly a bird of another feather, and one destined indeed to be the only real Shake-scene in the country.

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Notes

1. *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance*, ed. D. Allen Carroll (Binghamton, New York: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1994), ll. 932-43.
2. *3 Henry VI*, 1.4.137. The lineation is that of the Arden edition edited by Andrew S. Cairncross (1964; rpt. London and New York: Routledge, 1994).
3. See Giorgio Melchiori's discussion of the possible date of composition of the play, which he assigns to the period between 1592 and 1594. *Shakespeare: Genesi e struttura delle opere*, 2nd ed. (1994; Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1998), p. 213. The Arden editor places the date at between 1594 and 1596. Brian Gibbons, Introduction to *Romeo and Juliet* (1980; rpt. London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 31.
4. All references to *Romeo and Juliet* are to the Arden edition of the play edited by Brian Gibbons.
5. *Coriolanus*, 4.7.54. The lineation followed here is that of the Arden edition edited by Philip Brockbank (1976; rpt. London and New York: Routledge, 1990).
6. *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*, 2.3-16.

7. *The Merchant of Venice*, 3.2.44-5. The lineation followed here is that of the Arden edition of the play edited by John Russell Brown (1955; rpt. London and New York: Methuen, 1985).
8. *Othello*, 3.3.170. The lineation followed here is that of the Arden edition of the play edited by M. R. Ridley (1958; rpt. London and New York: Methuen, 1979).
9. *MV*, 5.1.93.
10. I have discussed this strategy at length in my paper, "And all things change them to the contrary': *Romeo and Juliet* and the Metaphysics of Language," *English Studies*, 78 (1997): 8-18.

Michael H. Lythgoe

BRASS REFLECTIONS

*When sometimes lofty towers I see down-razed
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage
Sonnet LXIV, William Shakespeare*

Wars teach warriors to atone for art—cold bronze
Sculpture old as imperial Rome's spit & polish.
Spanish Armada, a half-moon formation, eclipsed.
Top brass-officers—polish their rank but lead
The rank & file in sandy camouflage to storied
Immortality wearing black bars & stars to war;
Dull cloth does not shine in the sniper's eye—
Like a brass tack—
Nor sparkle as a mirror from the desert floor.

The soldier's stuff is flesh & blood, not brass
Knuckles. Men are weaker than metals—with flak
& tracers flying—vests plateless to repel shrapnel
From flesh & bone. Thick & thin all bleed the same.

Invaders historically deface the saints—holy statuary—
Steal the art of the conquered, rape the treasury.
Often, in religion's name, warriors make martyrs
Of the faithful, break off angels' wings, slash
Calligraphy, burn books & wooden icons, liberate
Enemy gods, leave spent brass in ruined temples.

part of 1598.⁶

The quip sparks Benedick's answer: "The body of your discourse is sometimes guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither" (1.1.234-37), a mystifying line, unless one allows its array of sartorial metaphors to be prompted by the Prince's choice of a date. But for an indirect reference to the Proclamation, the exchange would be "slightly basted on," and its association of text and textile seem contrived.

Don Pedro's opening statement: "Good Signor Leonato, are you come to meet your trouble? The fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it" (1.1.77-79) rehearses—and invalidates—the royal concern in the 1597 Proclamation that "the decay and lack of hospitality appears in the better sort in all countries, principally occasioned by the innumerable charges and expenses which they are put to in superfluous apparelling of their wives, children and families."⁷ At a time when too many courtiers declined the privilege of playing host to their sovereign on her progresses, Leonato's lavish hospitality gives the lie to the royal critique: "Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace; for trouble being gone, comfort should remain, but when you depart from me, sorrow abides and happiness takes his leave" (80–83). The visiting Prince is given ample proof that sumptuary expenses in Messina—a place of fashion-mongers—are no obstacle to hospitality.

The presses—and the language—of Messina's fashion-mongers are full of apparel. The fashion of Benedick's hat "ever changes with the next block" (1.1.61); love turns Claudio into a fantastick, lying "ten nights awake carving the fashion of a new doublet" (2.3.15-16), while the smitten Benedick cuts an extravagant figure:

There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises, as to be a Dutchman today, a Frenchman tomorrow, or in the shape of two countries at once, as a German from the waist downward, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet. (3.2.26-30)

Dogberry has two gowns, a good enough ground not to be writ down an ass (4.2.77), and Beatrice will have no husband like Don Pedro, unless she can have "another for working-days. Your grace is too costly to wear every day" (2.1.286-287). Their overindulgence takes its cue from the charges of Ascham, Gosson, and Stubbes, later ironized by Dekker, in ways that make the "Homily" appear as a synopsis for the play:⁸

... we are never contented... Wee must have... one [gowne] for the working day, another for the holie day, one of this colour, another of that colour, one of cloth, another of Silke or Damaske. We must have change of apparell, one afore dinner, and another after, one of the Spanish fashion, another Turkie: and to be briefe, neuer content with sufficient. Our Sauiour Christ bad his disciples they should not have two coates.⁹

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There is no fitter occasion to talk fashion than when dressing the bride for her wedding, except perhaps when plotting her ruin. Hero's gown does not compare with that of the Duchess of Milan: "Cloth o'gold, and cuts, and laced with silver, set with pearls, down sleeves, side sleeves, and skirts round underborne with a bluish tinsel" (3.4.17-19). The text reads like an article out of a sumptuary proclamation.¹⁰ No woman below the degree of a countess being allowed to wear cloth of gold, and none under the rank of a baroness to wear tinsel (silk embroidered with gold or silver thread), the absent dress of the absent Duchess defines Hero negatively, and upstages her.

Elizabeth made provisions to enforce her statutes, setting up a system of surveillance of which the Messina watch is a local branch. The statute of May 1562 provided that, in the city of London and in the Liberties, the Mayor, and the Court of aldermen were to appoint in every ward

four substantial and well meaning men to see the said statutes executed in such sort as is ordained in the court. And the said four, or any of them, to examine all offenders in the sort above written; and apprehending them, to bring them to the alderman of the ward, he to commit them to prison, and to certify the examination and confession, and such knowledge of judgment of the truth of the matter as he can attain unto, as well touching the master and the man, to the mayor and Court of aldermen.¹¹

Dogberry's watchmen, after listing possible delinquents—vagabonds, drunkards, thieves, careless nurses and the odd prince—eventually stumble upon the arch-offender of the play, Fashion/Deformed, or rather they conjure him up out of the fumes of their befuddled brains, as insubstantial a dream as is the Duchess of Milan's dress, and as pivotal.¹² A phantasm converts the night watch into a dress squad, committed to redress the emblematic crime of the play:

BORACHIO.... Thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

CONRADE. Yes, it is apparel.

BORACHIO. I mean the fashion.

CONRADE. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

BORACHIO. Tush, I may as well say the fool's the fool. But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?

WATCHMAN 1 [ASIDE]. I know that Deformed. A has been a vile thief this seven year. A goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name. (3.3.102-12)

The lunacy is so common, however, that the whippers are in love with fashion, too. Pursued by a Constable that has two gowns, Deformed is a man with a future.

Elizabeth's endeavors to curb inordinate apparel and to evolve a fixed, reliable semiotic system, are undeniably a fit backdrop for a play that makes fashion into an allegory, and questions the reliability of signs and "exterior shows" (4.1.38), sartorial or otherwise. Yet beyond mere topicality, it is functional as well.

Until the early 1980's, criticism of the play read it as the site of an interpretive crisis, focusing on how mediated knowledge—messages, reports, eavesdropping—disconnects the sign from its referent, and renders meaning unstable, disjunctive, and open to (mis)interpretation.¹³ Yet, perception and interpretation are only the primary and secondary mechanisms of the play, to use David Lucking's phrase. "Tertiary mechanisms" follow, consisting in "exploiting the disjunction between interpretation and event."¹⁴ These, and the cultural manipulation of response, i.e., "fashioning," have become the focus of recent critical discussion in the wake of Jean E. Howard.¹⁵

Perceptions, blushes, or clothes, which would appear to be nothing *per se* ("Yes, the fashion is the fashion" [3.3.107]), are always already enmeshed in a system of collective representations and invested with predetermined signification, the aim of which is eventually to strengthen and reproduce the existing social system. A woman's blushes are interpreted as signs (of shame, or of modesty, etc.) supporting the cultural representation of woman in a male-dominated society. The body itself is always already a "pattern," Benedick punningly suggests (1.1.234). In this perspective, the question of meaning is secondary to the question of who arbitrates meaning. Empowerment resides in the control of codes. The powers that be, Don Pedro and Don John, authorize the codes, while lesser mortals, Claudio, Beatrice, Benedick, Dogberry, are left to read the signs, in keeping with Bourdieu's division of semiotic practice between *auctores* and *lectores*. They are mistaken, however, in deriving any sense of mastery from their interpretations, for these are merely the signs of their susceptibility to predetermined representations and of their eventual subservience to the larger system.

The bait in the Prince's interpretive lures is the persuasive force of social constructs, Howard suggests.¹⁶ The Beatrice whom Benedick falls for in Act Two, Scene Three, as a result of Don Pedro's friendly deception, is a coy, inarticulate woman, a cultural construct closer to Caesario's imagined sister, pining in thought, than to the spirited, sharp-tongued lady who spells men backward. In the parallel scene, Beatrice is appalled to find herself "so odd and from all fashions" (3.1.72)—the fashion set by conduct-books. Collective cultural codes fulfill a hidden agenda: "the disciplining of social renegades" and "their successful interpellation into particular positions within a gendered social order."¹⁷

Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is instrumental here. Don Pedro's playlets uniquely figure not so much a system of *acquired* dispositions functioning as

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categories of assessment, as one in the process of being acquired, *habitus* in the making, a scale model of the educational process, a crash course in social reproduction. Engineered by the Prince in the form of a comic interlude, it is in fact, though not in appearance, an instance of cultural coercion, all the more efficient because it goes unnoticed: "This can be no trick" says Benedick from the very bottom of the pit in which he has fallen (2.3.196), while Beatrice claims she will tame her wild heart (3.1.113), unaware that the occasion much rather warrants the use of the passive voice, and that this "will" is not her own. The effectiveness of cultural coercion is conditional on its invisibility, Althusser noted, a characteristic that earned it the label of "symbolic violence" in Bourdieu's system. Bourdieu specifically locates symbolic violence in education, which he maintains plays a key part in the reproduction of the social system.¹⁸ Don Pedro's use of the stage to achieve what Bourdieu situates in schoolrooms and lecture halls points to "the overt didacticism of a homiletic tradition," from which "Renaissance plays... never totally separated themselves."¹⁹

Don John relies on the equally powerful cultural encoding of woman as whore to work on Claudio, and frustrate his brother's bid for social control. He "deforms," while Don Pedro "fashions." The allegorical figure of Deformed thus provides a unifying paradigm for what is, in both instances, the arbitration of meaning. The scene as a whole, involving Dogberry as a licensed spy and a professional interpreter of clues, encapsulates in one emblematic moment the three stages described by Lucking. Deformed certainly "wears a key in his ear and a lock hanging by it" (5.1.292), possibly the lock and key to the play.

Fashion is the site of fashioning in early modern culture, and Elizabethan sumptuary statutes are both the paradigm and the working instrument of what Greenblatt terms "the fetishism of dress."²⁰ In *Much Ado about Nothing*, the enigmatic Deformed, Don Pedro's fictions, and Elizabeth's fashion laws figure identity as an effect of fashion and of fashioning; of habits, donned or induced; of custom and of costume; a social fabric-ation. The word "fashion," with twenty-three occurrences in assorted forms and meanings ("style," "make," "manner" and "manners," "form" and "counterfeit"), is the nexus of the process.²¹ Crossing the semantic threads, Shakespeare weaves two fashioning experiments, one discursive, based on custom, and the other visual, based on costume. Recovering their common origin, he brings together paper and fabric, text and textile, for what is actually a "sumptuary play."²²

The playhouse where the Proclamation is rehearsed, however, was the very place where it failed to apply *onstage* and was notoriously flouted *offstage*, a place where a vile thief was licensed to go up and down like a gentleman, or, in Peter Stallybrass's words, "a site of crisis."²³ *Much Ado*, taking as a functional device the legislation upon the exemption of which its own practice depended, proves self-reflexive in so far unexpected ways.

Whether it authorizes or challenges the status quo is more difficult to pinpoint, however. It would be a curious, not to say an improbable paradox, if Shakespeare's most societal play appeared to uphold state policy from a place that was exempt from it. Yet it is dangerously close to achieving just this, and

understandably so. The stage, as a site both of artifice and of visibility, is an awkward place from which to subvert a cultural construct (en-gendered affection) posing as an instrument of nature (unacknowledged love at last brought to light), and one that is moreover premised on its own invisibility. The play's difficulties lie in the elusive nature of the mechanism it proposes to expose. Subversion is constantly in danger of losing its object, as "possession... must constantly efface the signs of its own power."²⁴ This is why a reference to Elizabeth's clothing laws, a publicized and immediately *visible* system of *cultural* inscription, is so instrumental in the understanding of the play's rationale. With "the sixth of July," *Much Ado* graphically, and almost *epigraphically*, signals the fashioning process at its center. But the sixth of July, like the hobby horse, is forgot, and the play is left to grapple unaided with the task of bringing the invisible to view, in danger of appearing to be truly about nothing.

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Notes

1. *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, eds. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1969), 3: 175; hereafter *TRP*.
2. Wilfrid Hooper, "The Tudor Sumptuary Laws," *The English Historical Review*, 30 (July 1915), 433-49, p. 436. See also Frances E. Baldwin, *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1926); Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1983), pp. 141-68.
3. Roland Barthes, *Système de la mode* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), p. 263. My translation.
4. *TRP*, 3: 175.
5. All textual references are to Shakespeare, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: Norton, 1997).
6. The play is not mentioned by Francis Meres in *Palladis Tamia*, which was entered in the Stationers' Register on September 7, 1598. Should the enigmatic *Love's Labours Won* in Meres's list actually refer to *Much Ado*, then the Proclamation of July 6, 1597 would conveniently substitute as the *terminus a quo* for the play's composition.
7. *TRP*, 3: 175.
8. Roger Ascham, *The Schoolemaster* (1570); Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579); Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomy of Abuses* (1583); Thomas Dekker, *The Gulles Homebook* (1609).
9. "An Homily against Excess of Apparel," *Certain Sermons and Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches in the Time of the Late Queene of Famous Memory*, 1623, eds. Mary Ellen Rickney and Thomas B. Stroup (Gainesville, FL: Scholars' Facsimiles, 1968), 2: 6: 96-110. Also available online, *Renaissance Electronic Texts*, ed. Ian Lancashire, University of Toronto Library, 1997, www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/ret/homilies/bk2hom6.html (accessed August 15, 2005).

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10. The scene begins with an exchange on Hero's ruff, a delicate point with Stubbes, and one that was regulated by a statute dated 6 May, 1562, repeated in 1580.
11. "Enforcing Statutes of Apparel [Privy Council], [Westminster, 6 May 1562, 4 Elizabeth I]," *TRP* 2: 187.
12. On fashion, see David Ormerod, "Faith and Fashion in Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*," *Shakespeare Survey*, 25 (1972), 93-105; Michael Friedman, "'For Man is a Giddy Thing': Fashion in *Much Ado about Nothing*," *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 13 (1993), 267-82.
13. Anthony B. Dawson, "Much Ado About Signifying," *Studies in English Literature*, 22 (1982), 211-21, focuses on "the process of interpretation imposed by the delivery of messages," p. 211; Robert Lane, "'Foremost in Report': Social Identity and Masculinity in *Much Ado about Nothing*," *The Upstart Crow*, 16 (1996), 31-47, discusses how "the dynamics of report" forge the subject's social identity through a set of unreliable signs.
14. David Lucking, "Bringing Deformed Forth: Engendering Meaning in *Much Ado about Nothing*," *Renaissance Forum*, 2:1 (Spring 1997), www.hull.ac.uk/renforum/v2no1/lucking.htm (accessed August 5, 2005).
15. Jean E. Howard, "Renaissance Antitheatricality and the Politics of Gender and rank in *Much Ado about Nothing*," in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, eds. Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor (1987; London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 163-87. Nora Myhill, "Spectatorship in/of *Much Ado about Nothing*," *Studies in English Literature*, 39 (1999), 291-311, argues that the spectatorial position of the gulls, which they assume to be one of power, "leaves them vulnerable to having their readings controlled by the play's internal dramatists Don John, Borachio and Don Pedro," p. 294.
16. Howard, p. 179.
17. Howard, pp. 175-76, 178.
18. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Gage Publications, 1990), first published 1970.
19. Jean E. Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 48.
20. Stephen Greenblatt, preface to *The Norton Shakespeare*, p. 57.
21. See Ormerod, p. 94.
22. For a discussion of the role of the cloth industry in the development of early modern theatres, see Peter Stallybrass, "Worn Worlds: Clothes and Identity on the Renaissance Stage," in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, eds. Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 289-320.
23. Stallybrass, p. 308.
24. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 234.

HENRY V AND THE INVASION OF FRANCE: RETHINKING THE MORAL JUSTIFICATION

by Clayton G. MacKenzie

Matthew Sutcliffe, in *The Practice, Proceedings, And Lawes of armes* (1593), ranks moral righteousness as the top priority in preparations for war: "First wee are to consider, that our cause be good, and iust. For warres without cause are nothing, but robbery and violence contrary to humantie, and reason."¹ This comments appositely on the ethical issues raised by the Archbishop of Canterbury's much discussed discourse on the legality of Henry's claim to France (I.ii.33-95).² A canon of critical review has evaluated Canterbury's exposition, with declamatory suggestions ranging from the assertion that it is mere double talk to the claim that it succeeds only in proving that Henry is not the rightful king of England. Andrew Gurr's exposition on Salic Law in the introduction to his edition of *Henry V* provides a valuable commentary on the issues in question; and the argument has been taken further by Michio Tokumi's more recent essay in *Shakespeare Studies*.³ No doubt the matter of Salic Law is important to the moral issues at play, but this paper suggests that the exchanges that take place *after* that argument are equally revealing.

Recent criticism on Shakespeare's *Henry V* has suggested that Henry Monmouth's invasion of France is driven by power-mad ambition cloaked in a deceptive gown of piety. Elyssa Y. Cheng has written of Harry's unswerving "determination to conquer France and possess the title of the King of England and France"; A. G. Harmon has observed the king's "split personality" as a benign monarch and evil manipulator; and Deats, Lenker and Perry have anatomized Henry's function as both a model Christian king and a model Machiavell.⁴ Why then does King Henry seek the views of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishopric before embarking on his French adventure? Is this simply part of his Machiavellian ruse, shoring up church support for his enterprise, or is there a more genuine reason at play? After Canterbury has completed his lengthy genealogical exposition (the "Salic Law" argument), the king asks obtusely: "May I with right and conscience make this claim?" (I.ii.96)—and this after the Archbishop has just spent sixty-three lines attempting to answer that very question. Immediately, Canterbury abandons the Salic Law argument and, joined by the Bishops of Ely and Exeter, appeals instead to a second source of moral justification.

CANTERBURY: . . . Gracious lord,
Stand for your own, unwind your bloody flag,
Look back into your mighty ancestors;
Go, my dread lord, to your great-grandsire's tomb,
From whom you claim; *invoke his warlike spirit,*

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*And your great-uncle's, Edward the Black Prince,
 Who on the French ground play'd a tragedy,
 Making defeat on the full power of France,
 Whiles his most mighty father on a hill
 Stood smiling to behold his lion's whelp
 Forage in blood of French nobility.
 O noble English, that could entertain
 With half their forces the full pride of France,
 And let another half stand laughing by,
 All out of work and cold for action!*

ELY: *Awake remembrance of these valiant dead,
 And with your puissant arm renew their feats.
 You are their heir, you sit upon their throne;
 The blood and courage that renowned them
 Runs in your veins; and my thrice-puissant liege
 Is in the very May-morn of his youth,
 Ripe for exploits and mighty enterprises.*

EXETER: *Your brother kings and monarchs of the earth
 Do all expect that you should rouse yourself,
 As did the former lions of your blood.*

(l.ii.100-124, emphasis added)

As military exemplars, Edward III and the Black Prince were unsurpassed in the Elizabethan imagination. In the first scene of *1 Henry VI* Shakespeare had presented Edward III (Hal's "great-grandsire" at line 103, above) as the origin and Lancastrian model of regenerating English military excellence in campaigns against the French. Plantagenet and Tudor historians lauded Edward III's exploits abroad with unfailing enthusiasm, ranging from John Rastell's populist *The Pastyme of the People* to Caxton's rather more sober *Chronycles of Englande*.⁵ A plethora of Elizabethan works on military prowess and skills made standard reference to Edward III as the primal illustration of the traits they advocated—as in William Wyrley's *The Trve Vse of Armorie* and Matthew Sutcliffe's *The Practice, Proceedings, And Lawes of armes*.⁶

The Black Prince (line 105 in Canterbury's exhortation), eldest son of Edward III, is so named not because of his legendary black armor, for which there is no historical evidence, but because, as Froissart records, he is "styled black by terror of his arms."⁷ Tudor artists warm to the familial memory with something approaching piety. A late fifteenth century painting entitled "Adoration of the Magi," in a private collection, portrays Edward the Black Prince as one of the three Magi.⁸ *The Mirror for Magistrates*, describing the sons of Edward III, insists that

A more royall race was not vnder heauen,

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More stowte or more stately of stomacke and person,
 Princes all pereles in eche condicion:
 Namely syr Edwarde called the blacke prince,
 Whan had Englande the lyke before eyther since? (92)

Sir Walter Raleigh celebrates the heroic qualities of the Black Prince, suggesting that even the French historian, John de Serres, was forced to admit that although the odds were loaded against the English at the Battle of Poitiers, the young English hero, the Black Prince, was still able to win a miraculous and famous victory.⁹ And Henry Peacham in *Minerva Britannia* describes a dream in which he sees a glorious landscape: "Great Edward third, you might see there, / With that victorious Prince his sonne."¹⁰

The concept of a glorious but deceased ancestry is prominent in the second scene of *Henry V*. Canterbury takes us back to Henry's "great-grandsire's tomb" (103); Ely speaks of "these valiant dead" (115); and Exeter remembers Edward III and the Black Prince as "former lions" (124) of Henry's race. Balanced against this emphasis on physical mortality is the powerful notion of regeneration. The word "spirit" (104) has Biblical connotations but it is here pressed into an Anglicized mythology of heroic earthly renewal. It becomes a metaphor for a fine quality of military conduct and competence that can and ought to be passed on from one generation to the next. The "warlike spirit" (104) of Edward III and the Black Prince stands outside the domain of physical mortality, never irretrievably lost in the death of the individual but, paradoxically, relying for perpetuation on the human ability to procreate. King Henry is not simply the physical progeny of his great ancestors, but their "spiritual" inheritor as well. The Archbishop insists that he must stand for his own (101) and "Look back into your mighty ancestors" (102), for, in aspiring to their "warlike spirit," he may awake remembrance of them (Ely at line 115) and, with his puissant arm "renew their feats" (116).

The "renewal" of heroic actions, of the warlike spirit, parallels the physical "renewal" of the progenitor in the lives of his offspring. The relation of Edward III to his great son the Black Prince is the best possible exemplification of this—and Henry V is of their lineage. "You are their heir, you sit upon their throne," Bishop of Ely tells the king at line 117, and adds: "The blood and courage that renowned them / Runs in your veins" (118-9). It is this peculiar mix of "blood and courage," as Ely puts it, of the physical and the abstract, that defines the nature of heroic English inheritance. Henry does not stand in isolation. His debt to the past and, particularly, to the English ideal, is profound and unavoidable. Those, his ancestors, who have afforded him earthly life, he must reciprocate with heroic spiritual renewal. In fact, the Duke of Exeter, adding his testimony to the strength of the argument, observes that Henry's brother kings and monarchs "expect that you should rouse yourself, / As did the former lions of your blood" (123-4). This statement of open "expectation," following hard upon the string of imperatives that Canterbury and Ely have leveled at the king, proposes that the emulation of past heroic deeds is a kind of moral

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obligation. The genuine resurrection of an ancient military spirit becomes an expression of moral propriety.

This last idea is not original in Shakespeare's work. Of all the populist works published on the subject of expeditions abroad during the reign of Elizabeth I, George Peckham's *A True Reporte Of the late discoueries, and possession, taken in the right of the Crowne of Englande, of the New-found Landes* (1583) must rank as one of the strongest statements of the need for an aggressive foreign policy. Purporting to describe the exploits of Sir Humfrey Gilbert, Knight, it evolves, instead, into an open exhortation to conquest. In his preface, Peckham invites comment from well-known contemporaries. The need for foreign acquisitions is explained variously, and some of the reasoning is questionable. But beneath the lure of gold and the ostensible desire to spread the Christian faith (presumably the True Church version!), there is a sense of real frustration that Englishmen are not living up to the heroic ethic bequeathed to them by dint of historical precedent and breeding. Sir William Pelham's commendatory poem, for example, may view the New World as a casket of riches waiting to be pilfered, but there is an indignation that goes beyond mere avarice in his line "While pent at home, like sluggardes we remaine."¹¹ So, too, Sir Francis Drake sees the book as a "way to purchase golde" but, almost in the same breath, strongly recommends it to those who "thirsteth after Fame" and "an euerlasting name."¹² On the matter of foreign annexation, Richard Hakluyt had written a year earlier, in a dedicatory epistle to Sir Philip Sidney, that the "desire to aduance the honour of our Countre ... ought to bee in euery good man."¹³ The advancement of the English conquering spirit in foreign places is here understood as the duty of a "good man." Conquering achievement becomes a measure of an individual's moral worth, and Hakluyt's argument hinges on the crucial equation of foreign acquisition and virtue. Fourteen years later, Lawrence Keymis is still complaining in his introductory address "To the fauourers of the Voyage for *Guiana*" that Englishmen "in twelue monethes space haue done, or sought to doe nothing woorthie the ancient fame, and reputation of our English nation."¹⁴ For him, the expansion of England's realm is the most honorable and virtuous of pursuits, and the failure to achieve it an ignominious breach of duty.

The persistent concern with "ancient fame and reputation" in the works of Tudor commentators reflects a desire to express an ideal of military conduct and conquest. The morality of such ambitions is vindicated by nationalistic precedent. If England's ancient reputation is to be revered, then a present that fails to aspire to, and achieve, similar heights mirrors not simply a military but a moral decline. The morality of King Henry V's enterprise against the French (as formulated in I.ii) may not, then, hang in the doubt that a tradition of critical commentary has presumed. It is unlikely that Salic Law is of much moral benefit to Harry's cause, but the legacy of Edward III and the Black Prince, recited by the clergy immediately after the Salic Law account, presents him with an unassailable justification for the invasion of France. Here is the precedent that will satisfy Matthew Sutcliffe's demand that "our cause be good, and iust."

Henry V and the Invasion of France 69

Awake remembrance of these valiant dead,
 And with your puissant arm renew their feats.
 (Ely, 115-116)

Ely's admonishment, and the blood-line disputations of Canterbury and Exeter, immediately persuade Henry to the correctness of a French enterprise. In the emulation of ancient greatness, and in the perpetuation of an ancestral "warlike spirit," Henry's assumption that he has a right to assail the French would have been understood by Elizabethan groundling and cognoscente alike.

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Notes

1. Matthew Sutcliffe, *The Practice, Proceedings, And Lawes of armes, described out of the doings of most valiant and expert Capitaines, and confirmed both by ancient, and moderne examples, and praecedents* (London: Christopher Barker, 1593), sig. C2^v-C3^r.
2. All quotations from Shakespeare's text are taken from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).
3. Andrew Gurr, ed., *King Henry V* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992); Michio Tokumi, "The Salic Law in *Henry V*," *Shakespeare Studies*, 37 (1999): 45-61.
4. Elyssa Y. Cheng, "He Stoops to Conquer: Linguistic Denial and Linguistic Conquest in The Henriad," *NTU Studies in Language and Literature*, 13 (2004): p. 31; A. G. Harmon, "Shakespeare's Carved Saints," *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 45.2 (2005): 315-331, p. 326; Sara Munson Deats, Lagretta Tallent Lenker and Merry G. Perry, eds., *Henry V at War: Christian King or Model Machiavel* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2004).
5. John Rastell, *The Pastyme of the People. The Chronycles of dyuers realmys and most specially of the realme of England* (London: no publisher, 1529), sig. C5^v-D3^r. William Caxton, *Chronycles of Englande* (St. Albans, no publisher, 1483).
6. William Wyrley, *The Trve Vse of Armorie, Shewed by Historie, and plainly proued by example* (London: J. Jackson for Gabriell Cawood, 1592), pp. 5-35; Sutcliffe, sig. B3^r.
7. *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, Centenary Ed., revised Ivor H. Evans (1970; rpt. Cassell & Co. Ltd., 1977), p. 119.
8. The painting, titled "Adoration of the Magi," is indexed in the visual collection catalogue of The Warburg Institute, at the University of London, with the three Magi identified as Edward the Black Prince, Edward III and Richard II.
9. Walter Raleigh, *Selections from his Writings*, ed. G.E. Hadow (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1917), pp. 93-4.
10. Henry Peacham, *Minerva Britanna: Or A Garden of Heroycal Devices* (London: W. A. Dight, 1612), p. 211.

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11. George Peckham, *A True Reporte Of the late discoveries, and possession, taken in the right of the Crowne of Englande, of the New-found Landes: By that valiaunt and worthy Gentleman, Sir Humfrey Gilbert Knight* (J. Chartewood for John Hinde, 1583), p. 7.
12. Peckham, p. 8.
13. Richard Hakluyt, "The Dedicatorie Epistle," *Divers voyages touching the discoverie of America, and the Ilands adjacent vnto the same* (Thomas Woodcocke, 1582), p. 1.
14. Lawrence Keymis, "To the faouurers of the Voyage for *Guiana*," *A Relation of the second Voyage to Guiana* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1596).

James Magorian

THE BOOKBINDER'S DAUGHTER

I am Juliet on the utmost balcony.
 I am Titania, Queen of the Fairies.
 I am Lady Macbeth on the dark stairs.
 I am Ophelia in the willow above the water.
 I scrape old glue from the spine.
 London, 1855, this edition, 38 volumes.
 Morning light shoulders through the one window.
 The workbench, like a beach at low tide.
 Scattered tools, leavings of board and cloth.
 A moth stuck on the lip of the glue pot.
 In place of enfeebled thread, I sew
 new cord, sing the knots snug.
 The new cover is percale, lapis blue.
 The end-papers and fly-leaves a middling red.
 I am Desdemona in anguished plea.
 I am Rosalind, wise and witty.
 I am Cordelia, dutiful, truthful, hanged.
 I am Miranda in a brave new world.
 And I will be others if I have time
 before the owner comes for his books.

Priscilla S. McKinney

TABLEAU VIVANT

His mother's image rose from the page,
standing by firelight in their low-ceilinged home,
his father at his workbench, sewing gloves,
and Ann, Shakespeare's betrothed, with child,
Susanna first, then twins, one dying soon,
the couple's only son, before the age of twelve.

Each grew from, transcending, facts I scanned
about the playwright's life, and *Hamlet*,
subject of tomorrow's class, our focus turned
from poems on which students now wrote,
with quiet energy, their analysis to conclude
with "relevance to the modern reader."

I knew details before, familiar to the ear,
names, birth and death dates, mere numbers
on the page, context dry, historical;
but figures rose, enfleshed before me,
real once, seeming so now: vibrant, suffering
full of life's concerns, each other's and their own.

My present vision raised another from the past,
seldom thought of: Shakespeare's visitation
at my desk, electric, palpable, standing by me
as I wrote, comparing texts to find his source
for lines which he transformed, entering, I sensed,
into the amazing process of his mind.

Exhilarating, alive, like Hamlet's father's ghost,
he honored my immersion in his thought, lived again
to me, who owed homage to him, his family,
actors, audience, friends, and court: all those
who formed the fabric of his world, once as living, bright,
as friends and loved ones of my own world are to me.

Surprised before, this time again, I welcome now
those once alive, seeming living still, perhaps
appearing more to me, if I invite them more:
familiar spirits—mother, father, loved ones past—
and guides familiar, known through words,
unbound by the flesh, inviting me to them.

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OPHELIA

Hanging garlands,
 she slipped from rocks
 into a watery grave;
 where borne aloft
 by her ample gown,
 she floats supine,
 her flowing beauty
 captured by Millais.

Haunting vision,
 absent of repose:
 her frightened face
 and outstretched hands,
 with flowers interwoven,
 still seek the peace
 that only comes
 before or after love.

Gilbert Allen

THE BARD OF AVON

Her customers are nothing like the sun.
 Each day, she misses her concordance more.
 O bloody period! Her life's a pun,
 hauling her soggy ass from door to door.

She liberates her latest sample cases
 so their eternal summers shall not fade.
 She'll be the lord and steward of their faces
 until her last tuition loan's repaid.

*Allow not nature more than nature needs,
 she tells the trophy wives, and life's a bitch.
 Lilies that fester do smell worse than weeds—
 he won't sniff dandelions in a ditch.*

She hopes divinity rough-hews her end
 because she has her thesis to defend.

W. Dale Nelson

ANOTHER COUNTRY

The accident was not unlike a dream.
 A tornado, against all rules of nature,
 was bearing down on *Othello* in the auditorium
 of the College of Education. We looked for an indoor
 basement room with no windows. In the nearest
 thing to be found, we waited for the ruffian
 chiding of the wind we had not rehearsed
 for, that could turn and turn and yet go on
 to denouement, the great contention
 of the sky headed south from Rock River,
 Wyoming. Hushed in that hollow mine,
 Iago and Desdemona listened. The clamor
 did not come. The dreadful bell was silent.
 Upstairs, we returned to strangeness and unquiet.

A DRAWING OF THE SWAN THEATRE

The trumpeter sounds his blast (The third?, the first?)
 to summon the audience to a play that has already started
 but that no one is watching, except for the solemn figures above,
 who may be actors offstage, or perhaps the author and his friends.

Could it be a rehearsal? If so, why is the flag flying
 for a play not ready to perform, that perhaps never will
 be ready. If that's the author, he looks worried,
 unnerved maybe by the blares of the trumpet. The first
 is a warning that the play is about to begin; the third
 is to say it has started. Nobody knows what play is on.

The author (if that's who it is) doesn't look like Shakespeare,
 but that figure at the front of the stage could be Antony,
 not perfect yet in the words that embrace Cleopatra,
 or Malvolio, adrift in this palace, garden, room
 with doors to anywhere. Practice or mere performance,
 the flag and the trumpet warn us: It is time for exits and entrances.



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Performance Reviews





**Gemma Larke as Desdemona and George Mayfield as Cassio
in the Clemson Shakespeare Festival's production of *Othello***



THE GLOBE 2005 SEASON

by Michael W. Shurgot

The 2005 season at London's Globe was intriguing for several reasons. In his introductory note to the programs distributed for the plays, Artistic Director Mark Rylance introduced spectators to "The Season of the World and Underworld." Under this rubric, the Globe companies produced three of Shakespeare's late romances—*Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*—plus *Troilus and Cressida*, and then as a coda to the regular season *Measure for Measure*, a production that Rylance and company will take on tour later this year, including to the United States. As befitting Rylance's status as the company's Artistic Director and leading actor, he starred in two roles, Duke Vincentio in *Measure* and Prospero in *Tempest*. As this is Rylance's last season at the Globe, his prominence in this season's plays is certainly understandable, and after the final performance of *The Tempest* his fellow players and spectators applauded him heartily not only for his superb work this season but also for his leadership during the Globe's first decade.

Another intriguing aspect of this year's season was the opportunity to see a true repertory company in action, a theatrical phenomenon that has all but disappeared, both in the United Kingdom and the United States. As one watched the five plays, one saw actors appearing in similar roles in different plays, and one could sense how Shakespeare's company must have functioned and pleased spectators who expected to see actors, such as Burbage and Kempe, appearing in similar roles. While this practice might lead today to "type-casting," especially with comic roles, and while actors' individual skills, voice, and body type certainly influence the kinds of roles they play, nonetheless the Globe actors are generally so accomplished that the opposite effect occurs: i.e., Roger Watkins as Ajax in *Troilus and Cressida*; Abhorsen, Elbow, and Friar Thomas in *Measure for Measure*; and Perdita's shepherd father in *The Winter's Tale* was as convincing in his many roles as Rylance was in his leading roles. Equally accomplished was the company's extensive use of doubling and all male casts in both *Measure* and the three-actor *Tempest*, where Mark Rylance, Alex Hassell, and Edward Hogg played all characters with astonishing dexterity.

Staging techniques were equally exciting. For *The Tempest* a heavy rope with a noose at its end dangled from the theatre's roof, and throughout the play the various characters, including three very athletic female dancers, engaged the rope to signal stage business, such as the opening storm, or to signify characters' emotional states, such as Caliban's or Ferdinand's imprisonment under Prospero's power. For *Pericles* an extensive web of ropes was strung from the oak beams at the corners of the theatre out over the yard where they were tied firmly together, and as *Pericles* set sail for his many destinations, "sailors," swaying precariously in front of spectators sitting in the front rows of the second and third tiers, swung from other ropes that dangled down the

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Pericles: Aerialist (Matt Costain). Photo by Andy Bradshaw.

sides of the theatre. The ropes, to which were attached sails, and swaying sailors converted the entire yard and thus the theatre and its spectators into passengers on *Pericles*'s perilous journeys. As Marcello Magni, Master of Physical Play, remarked, "Our aim [was] to make the Globe move as the sea."¹ Musicians were also prominent this season; for all but *Pericles*, for which they played American jazz and blues, the musicians wore period costumes and played authentic Renaissance instruments. They played before each performance, either down stage center or in the musicians' room above, and after each performance they were duly recognized by the actors, so that spectators' concluding applause enveloped all of the theatre's "players." Equally applauded were the three acrobatic dancers who supplemented *The Tempest*, and the "sailors" who risked their necks on the swaying ropes in *Pericles*. Rylance's approach to his productions emphasizes the wholeness of the many "spaces" that comprise The Globe, including those occupied by the spectators in the seats and on the ground, as well as the open air above the theatre, which for *Pericles* became the space above the masts of *Pericles*'s ship from whose ropes his many sailors swung as his—and our—imagined ship traversed the seas. While the five plays of this Globe season may not have pleased the

million, certainly one must praise Rylance and his Masters of Play—Kathryn Hunter (*Pericles*), Giles Block (*Troilus and Cressida*), John Dove (*Measure for Measure* and *Winter's Tale*), and Tim Carroll (*Tempest*)—for their imaginative grasp of the Globe as a dynamic and inclusive theatrical space.

The Tempest was the most controversial of the five plays. In addition to the three actors playing all the characters, three wonderfully athletic female dancers, identified by the symbols on the backs of their black leather jackets as the three fates—Clotho's wheel, Lachesis's needle, and Atropos's scissors—supplemented the play's actions. They manned the sinking ship during the opening storm, whirling around the stage on the rope and climbing it to survey the seas as Prospero's storm assaulted their ship. On the island, the fates manipulated the rope to bind characters literally and symbolically in their various emotions: Prospero in his anger at Caliban and suspicion of Ferdinand; Caliban in his rage at Prospero; Trinculo and Stephano in their drunken rebellion; Ariel and Miranda in their chafing at Prospero's continual control. The combination of three actors constantly changing roles, the dancers running about the stage and often whirling among the actors on the rope, and the unbroken action with no intermission created an engaging, often frenetic, and certainly entertaining performance, but the very ingenuity of the production also failed to tell its story clearly. If one did not know the plot of *The Tempest* well, one could quickly get lost in this production. While one could appreciate the sheer verbal brilliance and superb athleticism of the production, the subtleties of the plot soon became obscured.

This problem was most evident in the scenes involving Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, and Gonzalo. As actors altered their voices, postures, or stage positions to play yet another character, even if one knew the script well one sensed that one was watching a tour de force of acting technique and clever intellectualism, as if this were a training session for RADA or the RSC rather than an honest effort to tell clearly one of Shakespeare's most compelling stories. Because of the multiple personae of the actors, who did not change clothing as they changed roles, and their very rapid shifts among their many personae, Prospero's relationships with these four characters were not clear because as he spoke to his fellow actors one could not always tell to which character he was speaking. Ironically, this difficulty in following the dialogue was heightened by the very skill with which the actors shifted rapidly from playing one character to playing another, often with no pause between different characters' lines. Depending on how well one knew the script, this production element could easily have created confusion about the crucial scene of the play: Prospero's immensely difficult forgiveness of Antonio. Because the actor who played Antonio also played other characters, one was not sure for which actions the actor was being forgiven. The significant actions of the crucial characters were lost in the whirlwind of altered voices and moving heads during 5.1. Rylance was immensely moving as he forgave Antonio, as he was in Prospero's farewell to magic in 5.1, but the terrible difficulty of Prospero's forgiveness was lost because seconds before Antonio had been somebody

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else, I think Alonso, and seconds later became Sebastian. Creative theatre, yes; convincing theatre, no.

Despite the blurring of this crucial moment, there were some fine moments. As the ship floundered, the chorus above intoned "Kyrie Eleison," and Prospero entered balancing a chessboard, its figures presumably the characters of the play in the hands of a magician who was not quite sure how his magic would work; or if he could forgive his brother. Some intriguing doubling emerged in several scenes. In 2.2, Prospero's magic cape became Caliban's and Trinculo's cover from the storm, and seeing Rylance as the drunken Stephano who so poorly manages the trio's insurrection against Prospero suggested the underside of human ambition even in a magician's powers. Having the actor who played Caliban (the actors' roles were not identified in the program) double as Ferdinand also suggested the potential for violence in male sexuality. The conjured visions in 3.3, and the "vanity of [Prospero's] art" in 4.1, were enacted by Ariel and the three dancers who climbed and then whirled around the stage on the rope and danced wildly before the amazed eyes of the King's party and then Ferdinand and Miranda. The sheer athletic exuberance of these scenes was exciting, but seemed again an exercise in stage technique for its own sake, rather than an intricate part of a story well told.

As Prospero's magic approached its climax in Act Five, he and Ariel re-introduced the chessboard on which Ferdinand and Miranda play later in the scene. Ariel's "Mine would, sir, were I human" (5.1.19) was especially poignant as the Ariel actor also played Miranda, who is initially overwhelmed by this "brave new world" and must be warned about its "newness" by her father.² This doubling suggested that within the play's fiction we are to see in "one" of us both the wonder of humanity and the pity one must have for even its most wretched. Kyrie Eleison, indeed.

Master of Play Kathryn Hunter took extreme liberties with her modern dress *Pericles*. Gower was played by Patrice Naiambana, an energetic and multi-talented actor from Sierra Leone. Hunter sees the play as being essentially about healing, and she and Naiambana thus conceived Gower as both a narrator and a healer in the tradition of the West African *groit*, a traveling oral historian and musician. Throughout his narration, Gower played a one-string instrument called a *goge*, which Naiambana calls the "kind of instrument from which ancient melodies came."³ *Pericles's* story is thus one such melody, accompanied wherever he traveled by Gower's narration and healing music. This narration was often freely improvised. On the night I saw the play Naiambana waxed humorously but pointedly about how big countries, specifically America under George Bush, eat up little countries (as per an engraving by Pieter Breugel reproduced in the *Program*) and thus form empires, as he saw Antiochus doing. *Pericles's* gift of grain to Cleon and Dionyza prompted Naiambana's lecture about the moral value of western countries—he mentioned England and America—providing food aid and debt relief to African and Asian countries devastated by natural and political disasters. Dashing around the stage in bare feet, Naiambana often interrupted his story to engage the groundlings who



Pericles: Members of the *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* company. Photo by Andy Bradshaw.

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surrounded the wide platform extending into the yard from the main stage. His infusion of humor into his improvised political commentaries entertained spectators from the start, and their laughter and clapping approved Gower's story, his political values, and thus his vision of healing. When he wasn't actively engaging spectators, Naiambana assumed a very different role; for example, he sat quietly upstage left, gently playing his *goge*, during the final reconciliation scenes in Mytilene, as if the healing power of his narration and playing were now unfolding before us.

Hunter used two Pericles, an older and a younger, and staged the play as the older man's often painful memory of his youthful adventures. Gower led Corin Redgrave, the older Pericles, about the stage as he unfolded his story. Redgrave did not speak initially, but his reluctance to revisit the painful parts of his journey was evident in his refusal to look at what Gower forced him to see. Several of these moments were especially powerful. As he watched his younger self in Antioch, he tried vainly to prevent him from solving Antiochus's riddle, knowing that all of his later painful journey would emanate from that moment. At the tournament in Pentapolis, which Pericles comically fought in his underwear, the elder man first laughed at his youthful ambition. Then, recalling both the joy of winning Thaisa's hand and the pain that would follow his victory, he first pleaded with his younger self not to perform and then, when he performed marvelous athletic feats on the rope suspended from the top of the stage, the elder man turned away, as if not able to watch his younger self perform with no knowledge of what his "winning" would mean. Hunter's use of the older and younger Pericles provided the structure for healing that she saw as the central motif of the play; would that we all could look back, not in anger, but in joy, knowing that ultimately we had learned from our mistakes.

As with *The Tempest*, there were several exciting moments in *Pericles*. Antiochus was one mean dude; his music was loud, nasty rap; his flag bore a skull; and his bodyguards, as he spoke to Pericles, sported machine guns. The "tournament" at Pentapolis was thrilling; accompanied by Klezmer music as befit the Mediterranean setting, each suitor for Thaisa was an aerialist who performed intricate and dangerous acrobatic routines on a rope hung from the ceiling, the same rope that was used so cleverly in *Tempest*. In a superb doubling choice, Naiambana also played the physician Cerimon, who chanted solemnly and intensely as he revived Thaisa while strumming his *goge*. This doubling suggested not only the magical powers of the West African *groit*, but also the healing powers of story-telling itself.

Equally compelling, but for different reasons, was the brothel scene in Mytilene. After speaking Gower's narration for Act Four, Naiambana walked down the extended platform into the audience and improvised lines about the multi-cultural cast of his play, pointing to his fellow actors and mentioning the various countries from which they came. He then waved his hand around the perimeter of the theatre and said, "This is the Globe. Here we present life. If you want art, go to a museum." Thus did he prepare his audience for the powerful scenes involving Marina. In the brothel scene, Marina, dressed only in

ragged and revealing undergarments, was first chained to a chair as the Bawd and Boulton "appraised" her, and then hurled onto a bed. Gower, watching all from downstage, asked if any men in the audience would like to take Marina; after all, he said, she is a virgin. Gower's cleverly placed question silenced the theatre, as spectators, men especially, realized that they were being drawn into the world of the play and invited to participate in a scene of rape that, as Naiambana reminded us, women still experience around the world. Suddenly, this ramshackle of a play became much more than a mythological quest for lost children. The elder Pericles hid behind a post, ashamed at what his initial choices were leading to, wishing, like all of us, that he could have known what he had begun. As Lysimachus slowly undressed before Marina, her rape seemed imminent; he was down to his underpants before he stopped.

As the successful *groit* whose words and music have healed his charges, Gower retreated to upstage left for the reunion scenes and played his *goge* while chanting softly. Now the elder man played Pericles, for this was his reunion with his daughter and his wife, and the younger man was now subsumed in his joy.

The Winter's Tale was the most traditional of the three romances, played in gorgeous attire that recalled the extensive costume lists in *Henslowe's Diary*. Here were two immensely wealthy courts of the high Renaissance. Large woven curtains bearing pastoral scenes hung over the stage doors and the large center opening. Center stage stood a gold table adorned with golden goblets from which flowed abundant wine that Leontes served his guests. Polixenes adamantly refused to stay despite Leontes's intense pleading, thus setting up superbly the latter's shock when Hermione succeeds where he failed. Hermione's success revolved around play: as Leontes stood frozen center stage, Hermione, despite being very pregnant, gleefully chased Polixenes around the stage as he laughed at her obvious enjoyment of her "persuasion." The crucial lines were Hermione's



Winter's Tale: Perdita and Florizel (Juliet Rylance and David Sturzaker). Photo by Andy Bradshaw.

about her twice purposeful speech: "The one forever earned a royal husband, / Th' other for some while a friend" (1.1. 107-08). On "friend," she and Polixenes kissed, and Leontes, having drunk wine, saw the spider. His aside "Too hot, too hot!" was agonizing, as his fervid imagination created images that arose from deep within his jealousy. Leontes

stood rigidly center stage as Hermione and Polixenes, stage left, giggled and mingled fingers. When Polixenes and Hermione exited together (185), Paul Jesson's disjointed speech and broken rhythms in Leontes's following lines,

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beginning with "Gone already!" signaled a mind already maddened by its own poison. Jesson spoke directly to the audience, scanning both the groundlings and the tiers as he asserted that there were many men, "even at this present," whose pond has been fished by his neighbor Sir Smile. No one laughed.

As any successful production of *Winter's Tale* demands, both Hermione (Yolanda Vazquez) and Paulina (Penelope Beaumont) were Leontes's verbal equals. During her trial, Hermione stood center stage, where Leontes had stood as he succumbed to jealousy, and in a soft but firm voice, asserted her



Winter's Tale: Hermione and Leontes (Yolanda Vazquez and Paul Jesson). Photo by Andy Bradshaw.

innocence with crisp diction and absolute control. Vasquez's dignified self-defense, and her resolute stance before her husband, assured that Apollo would proclaim her innocence. After the trial, Paulina's rage at Leontes, her passionate assertion that Hermione was dead, and her challenge to anyone to look at the queen's dead body ("I say she's dead. I'll swear 't. If word nor oath / Prevail not, go and see" [3.2.203-04]), a line whose importance in the

play is often missed) overwhelmed Leontes, who wilted from Paulina's fury. No one dared move when she challenged them to look at Hermione's body. Thus, as Daniel Seltzer used to argue should occur in every production of this play, there was no reason here to doubt Paulina's bold assertion of Hermione's death, and thus no reason not to believe in the miracle that Paulina claims to create in Act Five.

Antigonus was devoured by a bear that first clambered up from beneath the stage, and then, after he and the bear had run offstage and he thought he had eluded the beast, suddenly grabbed him from behind the center curtain. Such are the perils of pastoral. Autolycus was played by Colin Hurley, who played a more scurrilous version of Autolycus as Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida*, another example of the distribution of similar roles—here comical and vicious vagabonds—to the same actor within the Globe's repertory company. Hurley's Autolycus was immensely funny, and, in the tradition of Richard Tarlton and Will Kempe, he improvised constantly. He sat on the edge of the stage while devising his plots, and sought approval from the groundlings for his exploits, often pointing to specific spectators and waiting for them to answer. After robbing the first shepherd, he returned for the feast wearing spectacles, a long stringy beard, and a beat-up version of a gentleman's grand feathered hat. Apparently he thought this outfit would make him look scholarly, and his entrance to the feast, with a basket overflowing with ballads and handkerchiefs, was the funniest moment in the production. For the sheep-shearing feast, a long wooden table, reminiscent of Leontes's gold-decked table from 1.1, stood center stage stacked high with food that the shepherds—and Autolycus—ate throughout the scene. Camillo and Polixenes dressed in black robes, and looked like mendicant friars who had been on a pilgrimage and lost their way. However, the good-hearted Camillo could not resist the festive atmosphere, and danced among the shepherds just before Polixenes's rude disruption. As in Leontes's court, so here Camillo's common sense and courage were necessary to counter Peter Forbes's furious Polixenes, whose rage matched Leontes's jealous tirades in Act One. Here were "twinned lambs" as alike in "ill-doing" as Polixenes had claimed (1.1.67-69) they were in innocence.

Perdita's shepherd father and his son, recently 'scaped hanging and made gentlemen, heralded the joyous consummation of the play in fantastically elaborate clothing. They strutted to centerstage in color-coordinated shoes, hose, doublets, breeches, vests, jackets, and finally huge feathered hats that threatened to topple them. Autolycus's jealousy was palpable. For the statue scene, Leontes entered in his regal clothes from Act One. He stood stage left, the others stage right, as Paulina prepared for the statue's emergence. Hermione, in virginal white, stood on a marble pedestal that slowly rolled out from behind the central curtain. As Paulina spoke, "I am sorry, sir, I have thus far stirred you; but / I could afflict you further" (5.3.74-75), one heard again the powerful voice of earlier scenes, but now its slower rhythm and gentler tone soothed, rather than scolded. Paulina's "It is required / You do awake your

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faith" (94-95), a line as much about Leontes's faith in miracles as spectators' belief in theater's ability to stage them, hushed the open air. On Paulina's "Music, awake her; strike!" (98), Hermione dropped a handkerchief from her right hand, and miracle filled the Globe. Paulina's defiant assertion of Hermione's death in 3.2—"I say she's dead. I'll swear it"—assured us of that. Polixenes's "She embraces him," so impossibly wonderful in any decent production, was exceptionally so here: Polixenes was genuinely shocked at Hermione's embrace, and Leontes shook as Hermione held him and stroked his wet cheek. On Paulina's "Please you to interpose, fair madam," Perdita, visibly crying, walked slowly towards Hermione. Hermione turned, they both stopped, then moved towards each other, and then finally embraced. Given the women's slow, hesitant movements, their actual physical reunion was overwhelming; the very joy of their embrace only heightened spectators' sense of what had been lost to Leontes's maddening jealousy.

Master of Play Giles Block's *Troilus and Cressida* was a contemporary affair, employing considerable doubling and gender neutral casting, most notably Penelope Beaumont as Ulysses and Yolanda Vasquez as Agamemnon. Trombones, trumpets, and drums heralded the play, as if it were to be a pageant of brave soldiers engaged in heroic battle. Mixed clothing suggested that the play's horror spanned the ages. Some of the Greek captains sported attire reminiscent of Trafalgar star Lord Nelson, this year's favorite British hero, while others wore modern military uniforms. Cressida appeared in a striking evening gown and high heels, Pandarus was a Broadway dandy straight from *Guys and Dolls*, and Cassandra and Thersites wore shredded clothes lifted from a charity shop on Kings Road. Here was a tale, fit for barbarous times, of two countries mauling each other's men—and women.

The appearance of order in the two council scenes brilliantly undermined their sordid reality. The Greeks sat like school children in a semi-circle of folding chairs as the peripatetic, smooth-talking Ulysses convinced them that degree, once properly restored, would make recovering Helen a worthy cause. Her later appearance, nearly naked and lounging in bed with Paris, strongly suggested otherwise. In the Trojan scene, Hector's assertive "Brother, she is not worth what she doth cost / The keeping" (2.2.51-52), among the play's more honest lines, became in this production hideously ironic: in 5.8, weary from battle, Hector lay his sword against the stage left pillar, turned, was shot point-blank by Achilles, and then mauled by Achilles's savages. Trumpets did not accompany this scene.

In a bold choice, Block cast Juliet Rylance, Mark Rylance's talented stepdaughter, as both Cressida and Andromache. In both roles Rylance portrayed superbly the conflicting joy and terror of her characters. As Cressida, Rylance was deeply ambivalent about and truly frightened by her love for Troilus. She dismissed Pandarus's praise for Troilus as the soldiers paraded beneath them in 1.2, but in Cressida's soliloquy Rylance was visibly traumatized by her fear of what she desired: "Men prize the thing ungained more than it is" (1.2.291). Troilus's deliberate denial to Aeneas of his night with Cressida, "And, my lord

Aeneas, / We met by chance: you did not find me here" (4.2.72-73), given Troilus's arduous desire for her surely among the cruelest lines in the play, reified Cressida's prophetic fears. The fury of Cressida, once "gained," then quickly lost in 4.2 was palpable; she tore at her night clothes and scratched her face as she raged in terror at becoming yet another woman made a pawn in war. The general kissing of Cressida was brutal, partly because of the scene's blocking. She was passed among the "merry Greeks" across the entire stage, as if across a large military camp. The entire Globe became a stage of war, and Cressida an emblem of what war has always done to women. As Andromache in 5.3, Rylance pleaded heroically with Hector as if from within what war had made of Cressida. The juxtaposition of Cressida in 5.2 and Andromache in 5.3 within one actor intensified the terror and insanity of this war, as Andromache pleaded with Hector to cease combat, lest more men—let alone women—be brutalized.

The assignation scene also employed the entire stage. Ulysses and Troilus watched from above as Diomedes and Cressida met center stage and Thersites watched first from the stage right post, and then scurried to the left. Throughout the scene, Colin Hurley as Thersites, in his scurvy rags, reveled in the roguery and lechery he watched voyeuristically through binoculars, as if magnifying the squalid scene. Because Thersites was far downstage, and Ulysses and Troilus above, this staging suggested that the men's combined view of Cressida was accurate—she is a faithless whore—and left no room for ambiguity about Cressida's motives, including her simple need to survive amid an absurd war fought by men such as Achilles and Ajax, and even Hector, who dismisses Andromache's pleas only to die unarmed and ingloriously. This blocking thus minimized an essential point about this scene: in this play, where all sense of absolute value is skewered beyond recognition, how can anyone label anyone else a traitor, or a whore?

After Pandarus's promise to bequeath us his diseases, soldiers dragged to the back of the stage the "Most putrefied core, so fair without" (5.8.1) spied by Hector just before he is killed. As the body was unwrapped, Juliet Rylance emerged, now a fitting symbol of what this war has done to love. And to women.

The season finale was John Dove's bare-stage, all-male, richly attired *Measure for Measure*, a production that later toured the United States. Mark Rylance played a gorgeously dressed and later very angry Duke Vincentio, and as this was Rylance's last role as Artistic Director of The Globe, the ten consecutive nights of the run sold out quickly. Like all of the plays this season, *Measure* included a musical introduction, here traditional Renaissance musicians who played downstage while Rylance as Duke watched from above, surveying the initial players whose stage he would soon dominate. Dove's cross-gender casting was especially effective. Peter Shorey was a robust Mistress Overdone, whose girth, like Falstaff's, wonderfully symbolized the monstrous vice in Vincentio's Vienna. Michael Brown played Francisca and was quite convincing as Mariana, while the exceptionally talented Edward Hogg, who

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played Miranda in *The Tempest*, was superb as Isabella. Hogg wore throughout a simple, black, floor-length dress with a wide skirt, and given his thin frame he resembled a fragile china doll. Hogg moved with small, quick steps that resembled the movements of the tiny porcelain figures that are moved by magnets beneath the surface on children's toy skating rinks. Yet when aroused by Angelo's perfidy, Hogg unleashed a fury that belied his character's physical fragility.

Rylance as Duke Vincentio wore an astonishing outfit: white boots and red hose, gold and green silk breeches, white blouse, black and gold inlaid paisley doublet, an ermine fringed black and red cape, and a glorious feathered hat, all worthy of King James I at his finest. Rylance and Dove had obviously visited the National Portrait Gallery. This Duke was in love with his image and his power; Rylance strutted across the stage brandishing his jeweled scepter, especially upon his return in Act Five. Yet Vincentio was also notably vulnerable. He exited 1.1 quickly, and returned as a friar in 2.3 carried onstage in a wash basket, like Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The effect was humorous, but suggested a man desperate to hide his face in town. Lucio, played with tremendous bravado by Colin Hurley, also plagued Vincentio. Lucio's yellow clothing was only a slightly less grandiose copy of the Duke's, including a gargantuan feathered hat, and this similarity, plus Lucio's constantly shadowing Vincentio when they were onstage, suggested that here Lucio symbolized a repressed part of the Duke's character, one who chafed at enforcing the laws of Vienna. Perhaps the Duke "would have dark deeds darkly answered" (3.2.170–71). Vincentio's emerging from the wash basket in a friar's robe perhaps suggested a cleansing process within the Duke, with Lucio a comic version of his presence throughout the play. As the friar Vincentio carried with him a small notebook and pencil, and wrote down not only Lucio's scurrilous comments about him, but also information he learned about Venice's citizens while attending to Juliet and other prisoners in jail. Vincentio apparently knew little about the lives of his citizens. From Act Three onwards, as his knowledge of his citizens grew and Lucio's comments became increasingly acerbic, Rylance exuded increasing anger, until in Act Five he exploded at the full revelation of Angelo's hypocrisy.

In 2.2, Liam Brennan as Angelo wore black and spoke precisely. He initially sat at a desk and stared directly at Isabella, but rose and began pacing as Isabella's arguments became more logical and passionate. Lucio, comically prominent in his outrageous clothing against Angelo's and Isabella's solemn black, stood near the stage left post, behind the diagonal line that Isabella and Angelo traversed, and urged her vehemently in both words and gestures. One sensed that Lucio was here speaking and "directing" Isabella more for his own profession—the price of hats, you know!—than for Claudio's or Juliet's sake, much less their child's. Angelo's soliloquy was a desperate debate with the groundlings; he hurled his questions at them as if begging them for answers to his sudden dilemma. During his final sentence, "Ever till now, / When men were fond, I smiled and wondered how" (185-86), Angelo moved his hand

across the theatre, drawing all men into the passion they all recognized. That passion erupted violently in 2.4. Brennan spoke quickly, conveying superbly Angelo's rising tension as Isabella sharply refuted his arguments about power, mercy, and above all frailty. When Angelo gave his sensual race the rein, he kissed Isabella roughly and fondled her breast, then nearly fell backwards as Hogg slapped him hard and pushed him away. Isabella's emotional and physical strength stunned Angelo, whose near fall evoked laughter. But Isabella's soliloquy did not. Hogg stood downstage and appealed to the same groundlings as Angelo had; none answered her questions, thus leaving her alone in a play dominated by angry and powerful men.

This moment crystalized two fundamental questions about an all-male production of this play. The first, and more easily answered, was whether a man could convincingly play so emotionally complex a character as Isabella, whose severally repressed sexuality becomes a commodity bartered between Angelo and Claudio and who is later assumed to be amenable to Vincentio's will. Hogg so skillfully evoked the range of Isabella's emotions that his gender disappeared within his ability to communicate Isabella's complete isolation and her realization that all men, brothers included, are capable of reducing female sexuality to a pawn: Lucio as Everyman. The second, deeper question was how an all-male cast contributed to the play's larger appraisal of female sexuality. Consider the women's roles: Mistress Overdone, here an overpowering Falstaffian bawd; Juliet the pregnant bride; Froth's wife, apparently insulted off stage at a bawdy house; the nun Francisca; and finally Isabella and Mariana who engage in a bed trick that notoriously assumes that Angelo will not be able to tell one woman from the other "in the dark," that women's (sexual) parts are interchangeable, and then beg on their knees for his life, thus playing into the Duke's assumption that women have an unlimited capacity to forgive. Casting men in all of these roles, especially given this production's final moment, suggested recognition of how men's dominance over and abuse of female sexuality licenses bed tricks and sweaty bawds. Standing alone after Isabella's soliloquy, emotionally naked before twenty-five hundred spectators, Hogg embraced within himself male culpability in Isabella's terror: "To whom should I complain? Did I tell this / Who would believe me?" (3.1.172-73).⁴

Venice's prison was dangerous. Claudio seemed to have been beat up, presumably on Angelo's orders; Abhorson was filthy; and Pompey carried around a huge ax. As Vincentio attempted to minister to his "subjects," he became increasingly angry, not only at their perfidy but also at the evidence of his lax rule. He beat Pompey, yet was himself comically shoved down by Mistress Overdone, suggesting that his power as a friar was still less than that of Vienna's most powerful bawd. Vincentio's fierce anger at Lucio was thus anger at himself. Upon learning that Angelo had ordered Claudio beheaded despite Angelo's tryst with Mariana, Vincentio flung into the audience an apple he had been eating, and paced furiously as Provost read Angelo's orders. When reminded that Barnardine lived because "His friends still wrought reprieves for him" (4.2.136), Vincentio seethed.

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Music played and banners waved as Duke Vincentio returned in full regalia. Rylance strutted and waved his staff, enjoying his little brief authority. He brutally dismissed Isabella's and Marianna's claims against Angelo, despite Hogg's passionate pleas. When Lucio pulled off his friar's hood, the anger that had obviously been boiling inside the Duke from Act One exploded. He struck Lucio hard across the mouth, then grabbed Angelo and furiously hurled him to the ground. Mariana had to admit to being contracted to a man lying prone beneath Vincentio's feet. As Claudio was unmuffled, Vincentio smiled at Isabella, expecting that his surprised deliverance of her brother would surely win her hand. Having forgiven Angelo and stage-managed both repentance and forgiveness, Vincentio turned to Lucio and then appealed to spectators: "If any woman wronged by this lewd fellow—/ As I have heard him swear himself there's one / Whom he begot with child—let her appear" (520-22). As no woman volunteered, Lucio was led away to marry an anonymous punk. Rylance paced nervously as he spoke the Duke's final lines, not knowing Isabella's mind but assuming his merciful pardoning of nearly all offenses would win her. Finally, Vincentio knelt to Isabella, but she did not move.

The company finished with a joyous and energetic dance, a Bergomask such as might have ended another comedy. But within this *Measure*, Hogg's gentle Isabella had perhaps seen too much of human hypocrisy and male abuse of female sexuality to embrace the Duke's offer.

One of the primary features of The Globe has been the concerted efforts of Globe Education, indefatigably directed by Patrick Spottiswoode, to blend production with scholarship. Continuing this trend, Dr. Farah Karim-Cooper, Globe Education Lecturer, introduced on November 23rd a new lecture series entitled The Shakespeare Globe Theatre History Seminar. Following a reception at the Rose Site, Professor Roslyn Knutson, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, inaugurated the new series with a paper asking "How Lost Are The Lost Plays?" Drawing primarily from *Henslowe's Diary* for the years 1594-95 and 1599-1600, Professor Knutson examined the kinds of plays produced by Henslowe's company, the Admiral's Men, at The Rose for these sets of years, and then extrapolated from Henslowe's list to what kinds of plays Shakespeare's company might have been producing at The Theatre or Curtain, and then later at The Globe. She also noted the repetition of several of Marlowe's plays at The Rose, and speculated on the nature of the lost plays listed in Henslowe's Diary that played either just before or just after Marlowe's plays, such as *The French Doctor* that often played just after *Dr. Faustus*. What does this schedule tell us about this "lost play," or why Henslowe played it after *Faustus*? While the texts of these plays are lost, one can still ponder what their juxtaposition with Marlowe's plays might tell us about popular theatrical taste in the late 1590's, and what effect the financial and theatrical success of Henslowe's schedule of plays had on the kinds of plays that the Chamberlain's Men sought and staged. Would that we had a Diary from Shakespeare's company, but as we (so far) do not, one must attempt to reconstruct the history of this company from the bits and pieces of evidence that Professor Knutson so

diligently investigates.

Professor Knutson's lecture was a fine conclusion to an exciting autumn of performance and scholarship. The entire staff of Globe Education, including Susie Walker, Events Officer, and Adrienne Gillam, Personal Assistant to Director Spottiswoode, along with Dr. Karim-Cooper, deserve high praise for programs that link the production and scholarly study of English Renaissance Drama.

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Notes

1. Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Program (London: 2005), p. 30.
2. All textual references are to *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 4th ed., ed. David Bevington. (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).
3. Globe Program, p. 31.
4. A similar moment occurred in Seattle Shakespeare Company's all-male production of *The Taming of the Shrew* in April, 2003. George Mount as Katherine broke down and wept during Kate's final speech. As I wrote of this production: "[T]he deeper insight was into the male actor who, having performed Kate's part in this macho taming, was now a man, speaking to other men, who could no longer endorse the view of women that he and his buddies had just staged." See my review in *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 21 (2003), 102-06.

OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL 2005 SEASON

by Michael W. Shurgot

For its 2005 season the Oregon Shakespeare Festival produced three plays by Shakespeare and one by his chief rival, Christopher Marlowe, in an unusual combination of comedies and tragedies that resonated in intriguing ways. In the outdoor Elizabethan Theatre Kenneth Albers directed a dazzling, 1930's *Love's Labor's Lost* that included unsettling undertones of impending war; Peter Amster directed a superb *Twelfth Night*; and James Edmondson directed Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* for the first time at the Festival since Jerry Turner directed him as Mephostophilis in 1979. The OSF dedicated its 2005 season to Mr. Turner, one of the Festival's most revered actors, directors, and Artistic Directors, who died in late 2004. The season's gem was Libby Appel's *Richard III*, starring James Newcomb in a physically astonishing and emotionally riveting portrayal of the disfigured, fascinating madman. Berowne's "Come on then, I will swear to study so, / To know the thing I am forbid to know" (1.1.59-60) echoed eerily among the plays: in his and his fellow gallants' misadventures in learning and love;¹ in Faustus's craving forbidden magic; in Malvolio's hopeless appeal to Olivia; and finally in Richard III's relentless, demonic pursuit of that "sweet fruition of an earthly crown."²

Kenneth Albers's *Love's Labor's Lost* was a great feast for both eyes and ears; the exquisite costumes easily matched the exuberant rhetoric. As Artie Shaw's clarinet and Lionel Hampton's vibraharp drifted over the garden patio, butlers hastily cleaned up after last night's party. This was the country estate where Navarre entertained his fellow scholars while they analyzed endlessly their myriad emotions. As they debated signing Navarre's oath, their black academic robes already seemed too austere for their rhetoric, especially during Berowne's initial critique of their resolve. Ray Porter's slovenly Costard immediately deflated their pretensions. Porter "dressed" throughout the play in baggy pants, dilapidated shoes, a dirty linen shirt, and an oversized plaid bathrobe that, with his black rim glasses and frizzy hair, permanently relegated him to the foggy outskirts of this estate. Yet his "Such is the simplicity of man to harken after the flesh" was hysterical; his honest desire for Jaquenetta, even in what Petruccio might call his "honest mean habiliments," belied the formal robes of his betters. Once Jaclyn Williams's robust Jaquenetta strutted across the stage one could appreciate Costard's pursuit of female flesh. Porter also had the evening's funniest line: in an improvised moment in 3.1 when Berowne asked Costard why he could not "immediately" deliver his letter to Rosaline, Costard looked down at his belly and, in a perfectly flat voice, said "Pilates." Spectators roared.

Albers's casting of the minor characters was superb. John Pribyl, one of the Festival's most versatile actors, played Armado's hyperbole to the hilt; military insignia and epaulets, mostly gold, covered every square inch of his daz-

zling red coat; it must have weighed ten pounds. Pribyl's fantastic pining over Jaquenetta was as overdone as his costume; just when I thought I had heard every possible modulation in Pribyl's heavily accentuated voice, he found another range above high C, and another flamboyant waving of his arms, to trace the pain of unrequited love. Julie Oda's tiny Moth tried earnestly to match her master's wit; her feathered hat added several inches to her stature. James Edmondson was a subdued Sir Nathaniel in simple country attire, and, in an interesting twist, Eileen DeSandre played Holofernes as a retired school mistress in a plain wool suit and black shoes. Her scenes with Sir Nathaniel were nostalgic and winsome, two aging friends reminiscing about their past, early versions perhaps of *Masters Shallow* and *Silence* in *II Henry IV*.



Love's Labor's Lost: Don Adriano de Armado (John Pribyl) laments his lovesickness for a country wench. Moth (Julie Oda), his page, hears him out. Photo by T. Charles Erickson.

The ladies strutted across the stage in dazzling dresses and huge hats that Gatsby would have admired. Katherine's hat alone sported feathers that must have measured four feet; others nearby had to duck when she moved too quickly. Their attendant, Boyet, was played by the tall and visually striking African-American actor Derrick Lee Weeden, who entered with the ladies wearing an elegant, all-white suit, black shoes and spats, a black fedora, and bearing a gentleman's walking stick which he twirled as a marker of his dominance among the women. Boyet's role in the play is enigmatic. He is the ladies' escort and protector, but several of his lines suggest some interest in their sexuality, and his undermining of the scholars' Muscovite dance may suggest that he sees them as potential rivals. Weeden's dominant presence onstage, plus his exceptionally strong voice and crisp pronunciation (qualities which have distinguished him in several past performances, especially *Othello* and *Brutus*), easily established him as the dominant male on stage, not only in his brief

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scenes with the anemic Costard but also in later scenes with Navarre, et al. Further, Weeden's impeccable suits and dominant bearing suggested a Broadway dandy, perhaps a "ladies man" with several of his "escorts" who would



Love's Labor Lost: Costard (Ray Porter, left) discusses the finer points of the fairer sex with Boyet (Derrick Lee Weeden). Photo by Jenny Graham.

do his bidding and might entertain an acquaintance. While this latter suggestion is probably too strong (his role in the play seems far less sinister than I am suggesting here), nonetheless just the hint of the Damon Runyon character, along with Boyet's sly smile when Berowne realized that he had foiled their game, suggested that Navarre's companions were far from realizing the love of these ladies who moved in circles the men did not understand.

Berowne's soliloquy in 3.1, "And I, forsooth, in love," was simple resignation that Jeff Cummings

delivered with no irony, and it anticipated well the lovers' unraveling in 4.3. Here the men's costumes were as elaborate as the ladies'; each wore top hat, brightly colored tails, and matching slacks: Berowne in radiant blue, Navarre in deep purple, Longaville in rich green, and Dumaine in sparkling turquoise. No black robes here! Berowne spoke his lines "above" befitting his witty superiority. He descended the stairs as he unmasked his buddies, pulling their poems from bushes, only to be hilariously undone by Costard, whose generally mangled appearance contrasted marvelously with the men's suits. Berowne tore his letter only to have Longaville and Dumaine gleefully reassemble it, and once exposed, Berowne launched into his "Have at you, then, Affection's men-at-arms" (4.3.286 ff) from a table-top center stage, running from the table to chairs and dancing feverishly, signaling the release of the libido among these four middle-aged men who had waited way too long to pursue that which Costard told them earlier was perfectly simple. This exuberance was marvelously revealed in the Muscovite dance in fake moustaches, elaborate costumes featuring wide red sashes and high furry hats, and hilarious leg kicks right out of a bad high school musical of *Dr. Zhivago*. It was all so deliciously silly!

John Russell Brown writes in *Shakespeare and His Comedies* that Shakespeare uses the attitudes of onstage audiences to amateur performances as a measure of those characters' readiness for love.³ Here, the aristocrats were cruel, and enjoyed being so; their jibes at the pathetic Worthies were one

more witty game in which they felt, at last, superior. Marcade's slow entrance stage left gradually muffled the laughter, and as the ladies firmly renounced the men's frantic appeals to love, Rosaline's references to the "speechless sick," "groaning wretches," and "pained impotent," given the 1930's setting, eerily suggested victims of the coming European war. Or any war, then or now. Isolation marked the close. Couples met, bid adieu, kissed, then parted, each man isolated in a spotlight as his lady left the stage. Armado sent spectators away, while he and his fellow Worthies disappeared into the blackness.

Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, combining scenes from the A and B texts, was a theatrical tour de force, complete with seven extravagantly costumed deadly sins; a majestic Lucifer appearing "above" in flowing white robes and gold trim; a tedious subplot that was way too long, with the exception of Josiah Phillips as a proud, gluttonous Pope Adrian who ironically questioned the Papacy's claim to moral authority; and a final explosion that marvelously symbolized the reputed hellishness of the Elizabethan theatre. Strewn about Faustus's study were the tools of his work: a table piled with skulls, a cadaver, dozens of books, candelabra, a large Bible on a pedestal, crosses; painted on the floor were the heavens with the signs of the zodiac. Jonathan Haugen as Faustus searched his books frantically for something challenging; as he dismissed each subject, he threw books about the stage, only to have Mephostophilis, in a clever irony, retrieve them when Faustus craved further knowledge.

Mephostophilis initially appeared from a trap door as a gigantic green dragon, all bulging eyes and scaly arms; Faustus's insistence that he return as a friar brought him back in a brown sack cloth and hood; *cuculus non facit monarchum*, indeed. Ray Porter as Mephostophilis was soft-spoken, clever, convincing, conniving, and patient. He was almost avuncular in his calm, assuring demeanor as he offered to help Faustus pursue forbidden knowledge. He knew where every book was located in Faustus's study, retrieving just the one he needed from the shelves, as if he had been watching carefully from below. Yet once Faustus had signed his deed with blood, Porter's powerful voice and intense anger emerged immediately. Here was a catch that Mephostophilis was not about to lose, knowing that his boss was watching. Faustus's "entertainment" was deliberately over-sized, suggesting his ego and the monstrous nature of human evil. The deadly sins were grotesque embodiments of their respective evil: Pride wore layers of gaudy clothes, Gluttony could hardly walk, Wrath fumed at the mouth, and Lechery, like Helen later, was virtually naked, clad only in a sheer body-stocking. Against these allurements the pleadings of the Good Angel, dressed in solemn black above, were useless.

In his stimulating essay "The Moral Tragedy of *Doctor Faustus*," Nicholas Brooke argues that Marlowe "chose deliberately to use the Morality form, and to use it perversely, to invert or at least to satirize its normal intention."⁴ Brooke argues that Marlowe's finest poetry occurs at those moments when Faustus aspires to greatness—of power, of knowledge, of sexual union—and that in the play's structure "Heaven is the subjection of self, Hell in this sense is the assertion of self."⁵ Marlowe is thus writing a play about Renaissance man's at-

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tempts to know, as Berowne might say, what he is forbid to know, much as Galileo did. The tragedy resides in Faustus's recognition that "had his Will [sic] been what he felt it to be, he would have been triumphant, independent of angels and devils; he would have realized his supreme urge to self-originated power, and Heaven and Hell remained mere fables. But as Faustus fails, greatness as Man imagines it can only remain outside human power, must reside in superhuman God and Devil; and so in the end it is extinction not mercy that Faustus craves."⁶ Haugen's performance as Faustus acknowledged this argument. Haugen's delivery of the verse, especially of those lines about building bridges through the moving air, of the mind of man stretching through the known universe until it becomes a demi-god, and what Brooke calls his apostrophe to Helen was powerful and inspired, as if through the medium of Marlowe's verse Faustus were achieving an ethereal level of knowledge and perhaps existence. If scholars who believe that Marlowe was murdered because Elizabeth and her henchmen feared that his aspiring rhetoric was dangerous to the social order are right, Haugen's performance of Marlowe's poetry in this twenty-first century theatre would support their view.

Haugen was equally compelling in Faustus's agony. Scene xix opened with the three devils aloft: Mephostophilis in his Friar's robe, Belzebub dressed in a fiery pants suit, and Lucifer as a magnificent angel in white pants and shirt, draped in long, flowing white chiffon scarves wrapped over his arms and unfolding down to his feet. He also sported an outsized codpiece, suggesting his imperial potency. Lucifer was easily the most imposing figure of this pro-



The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus: Mephostophilis (Ray Porter) and Faustus (Jonathan Haugen) disguise themselves to gain entry to Pope Adrian's private feast. Photo by T. Charles Erickson.

duction, befitting his eventual triumph over Faustus's meager powers, and his sheer magnificence and position aloft emphasized Faustus's impossible struggle against superior odds. Mephostophilis descended and laughed viciously at Faustus's curses. He then sat, patient and bored, stage right as Faustus once more engaged the good and bad angels in a contest the outcome of which Mephostophilis knew. Haugen spoke Faustus's final, long soliloquy with increasing power, as if believing that the very force of his voice, the actual execution of Marlowe's compelling imagery, could alter his fate. Panic set in only with his final eight lines, as he writhed in agony at the thought that he would

burn the books that Mephostophilis had given him as he initially sought more knowledge.

When the end came, it was theatrically tremendous and marvelously symbolic. After his agonizing soliloquy, Faustus, trembling, stood center stage. The huge clock in the tower struck midnight. Faustus, in absolute terror, waited one second, two, three, several; the theatre became still. Had Faustus beaten the rap? Suddenly, intense orange light streamed from beneath the stage, and a second later the entire back of the stage exploded to reveal a gigantic pit spewing hellish light and fog. The theatre itself had become what its Elizabethan critics said it was: the infernal place where Elizabethan political and social order was threatened and ordinary men aspired beyond their means to play magicians, nobles, kings—and queens! Into this theatrical hell Faustus walked, screaming as fire enveloped his study. Marlowe would have approved of this production, for while Faustus plunged inevitably into damnation, Haugen's performance of Marlowe's poetic fire ennobled Faustus's journey thither.

The banner above the stage of Peter Amster's Elizabethan *Twelfth Night* identified the play as *What You Will*. As with *Love's Labor's Lost*, the costumes were elaborate and sumptuous. Linda K. Morris as Viola and Gregory Lington as Sebastian were remarkably alike in colorful shirts and leather jerkins (amazing what similar clothes always survive those shipwrecks!). Even the staff, including Maria, Aguecheek (who initially wore yellow pants and a yellow feather in his hat and pathetically mis-matched stripes and plaids), and Toby Belch dressed remarkably well. Feste wore the motley of *Commedia dell'Arte*, especially his pantaloon pants and long jacket sewn with scraps of brightly colored ribbons, and Malvolio's bright yellow stockings set off perfectly his austere black robes from earlier. Olivia, not to be outdone, dressed in traditional black to mourn her brother, then switched to splendid sexy gowns once Cesario lit her fire. With the bare stage and lively costumes, this production, the Festival's fifteenth of *Twelfth Night*, evoked well its origins on Shakespeare's Globe stage.

Amster reversed scenes one and two, beginning with a loud tempest that tossed Viola and Sebastian ashore. As the captain dressed Viola for her new role in Orsino's court, he stuffed a shirt into her crotch; she was definitely to appear as a he, not as a eunuch. Michael Elich was as lethargic an Orsino as I have ever seen. Throughout the play, until Act Five, he wallowed in a melancholy that itself seemed sensual; his splendid clothes, excessive jewelry, and gentle speech evoked a totally self-absorbed aristocrat determined to make a lovely career of longing. Linda Morris as Viola was the perfect foil; her lively demeanor, rapid movements, and passionate speech indicated the intelligent, resourceful person needed to awaken both Orsino's and Olivia's dormant sexuality. Amster toyed with Viola's double identity early; in 1.4, as Orsino sent Cesario on his first mission to Olivia, he touched Viola's shoulder and then slid his hands down her arms, very nearly touching her breasts and suggesting Orsino's curiosity about Cesario's gender. In 1.5, Cesario's boldness piqued

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Olivia's interest immediately, partly as a reaction to Feste's having proved Olivia a fool. She irritably dismissed everyone else, and her vexation was evident in her impatience with Cesario's repeating Orsino's drivel that she has heard before. Viola's "willow cabin" speech emerged from her sense that Robin Goddard Nordli's Olivia was as frustrated with Orsino's doggerel as Viola was with his density. While the superb interaction here between Morris and Nordli clearly etched their characters, this scene also emphasized one of the play's major puzzles and theatrical challenges: how to make Viola's own longing for Orsino credible, especially in Act Five, and whether in fact that longing ought to appear credible at all.

Olivia's passionate blazon of Cesario left her breathless, and her emphatic "Run!" to Kenneth Albers's large, phlegmatic Malvolio created a fine comic moment: Albers simply looked at her as if to say, "Lady, I do not run." Malvolio contemptuously threw the ring at Cesario's feet and slowly ambled away. Malvolio's obvious disdain for Feste earlier in 1.5 and for Cesario set up perfectly the plot against him. Robert Sicular's Toby Belch was a thorough souse, and as Aguecheek Christopher DuVal's vain attempts to keep up with Toby's



Twelfth Night: Led by Sir Toby Belch (Robert Sicular), Maria (Suzanne Irving), Feste (Richard Farrell), and Sir Andrew Aguecheek (Christopher DuVal) cavort into the wee hours of the morning. Photo by T. Charles Erickson.

imbibing left him tipsy for most of the play. Suzanne Irving's frequent embracing of Toby showed Maria's obvious love for him, indicating that Feste was right about Maria being a "witty piece of flesh" if Toby would quit drinking long enough to notice. The revelers in 2.3 fetched stoups of wine from a cupboard and banged pots and pans. Feste drunkenly emerged from beneath the cupboard, as if hiding within the booze. As the revelry escalated, Malvolio, in black nightgown and nightcap, appeared above and slowly descended to the main

stage. Albers's deliberate, self-righteous descent, like an offended deity, brilliantly anticipated the impending explosion. Malvolio's authoritative voice was met by drunken insults and obscene gestures, and climaxed when Toby spit on him. Albers went rigid. Everyone knew Toby had gone too far, and the sudden silence was theatrically powerful. That Toby could so malign Malvolio's dignity, and that Maria's plot could be so readily embraced, indicated the depth of anger and uncivility among these characters. Albers's imposing frame, stolid persona, and dignified tone created a Malvolio too enamored of his dignity and position, and thus ripe for a fall. But the drunks were petty and revengeful, suggesting by Act Five that they deserved the beating Sebastian had given them.



Twelfth Night: Countess Olivia (Robin Goodrin Nordli, right) attempts to seduce Viola (Linda K. Morris) who is disguised as the boy Cesario. Photo by T. Charles Erickson.

In 2.4, Orsino, shirtless and muscular, surprised, then attracted, Cesario, and during their debate about men's and women's love Orsino lovingly stroked Cesario's back, imaging a central theme of this play: that human desire is essentially without gender. As he gave Cesario the ring to deliver to Olivia, Orsino suddenly kissed Cesario's lips and held "him" for several seconds. Was Orsino supposed to know that Cesario was a woman? Was this indeed a moment of pure ungendered desire? An anticipation of Orsino's strange line in Act Five about tendering dearly the "minion" whom he knows Olivia loves and whom he says he will sacrifice? An explicitly homosexual gesture in which Orsino signals his desire for Cesario's sexual love? Similarly explicit sexual gestures occurred between Olivia and Cesario in 3.1. Olivia abandoned all modesty, chasing Cesario around the stage, finally tackling her and falling on top of her and between her legs. They suddenly turned towards spectators in comic astonishment at what had just happened, and while we are to assume within the play's fiction that both women retain heterosexual desires, their amazement

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at an obviously sexual position signaled again how performance can evoke the many sexual permutations of this play. Desire is desire; as the banner proclaimed: "What you Will."

Malvolio's plunge into love was both funny and sad. In the box-tree scene he eagerly believed Maria's forged letter, but the glee of the sots behind him emphasized how far he would fall. Albers hysterically twisted his mouth to practice smiling, and he approached Olivia with dignity: black shoulder cloak, vest, breeches, and shoes; a white ruff; and yellow hose neatly cross-gartered. His proud strutting before Olivia was hilarious. Equally funny was the mock fight between Cesario and Aguecheek, who was so scarred that he nearly shook himself apart and actually gave his sword to Cesario so he would stop fighting. Sir Andrew was not for all markets; was he really adored once? The sexual play continued when Antonio, defending Cesario, grabbed her breast as he rescued her from Belch; Antonio's astonishment froze the scene. Less playful but symbolically complex was Malvolio's incarceration. The "dark house" was the inside of the cupboard where Toby stored his hooch. Had Malvolio's



Twelfth Night: Fabian (Robert Vincent Frank), Sir Toby Belch (Robert Sicular), and Maria (Suzanne Irving) play a wicked joke on Malvolio (Kenneth Albers). Photo by T. Charles Erickson.

suffering driven him to drink? Was he now the prisoner of Toby's liquor-driven revenge? Feste was playful as Sir Topas, but his voice was vicious; he too enjoyed revenge, and the muted laughter in the theatre suggested that most spectators realized the cruelty of this game.

Orsino entered Act Five in an elaborate white outfit and plumed hat that suggested not only immense wealth but also unlimited arrogance. He has no idea what Cesario has experienced since 2.4, and his egotistic actions here only emphasized the puzzle of Viola's love for him. She stood between him

and Olivia as Antonio spoke, as if, in her dual gender, she doubled for her brother and pulled between Orsino and Olivia. Michael Elich made genuine Orsino's ripeness for mischief and his threat to kill what he claimed he loved, and his anger grew visibly when Olivia summoned the priest. Bleeding, Andrew stumbled into and then out of the scene alone as Toby pushed him away. No gaillard, masques, or revels now; their games ended not with banging but with whimpers. Amster blocked the reunion with Viola far stage right; to her left were Orsino, Sebastian, who entered from the vomitorium stage left, and Olivia. Sebastian thus saw initially only Olivia, and did not see Viola until Orsino stepped forward in amazement at the "natural perspective." Nordli's "most wonderful" suggested obvious sexual ecstasy for Olivia; all that solemn mourning would be rewarded two-fold! Nordli and Linington coaxed beautifully from this scene its mixture of joy and pain; they moved cautiously towards each other, reaching out then withdrawing their hands, as if hesitant to believe what their eyes and words told them. This was truly most wonderful; their embrace evoked audible sighs and some applause from spectators who had obviously been drawn deeply into their emotions as they stepped across the empty space.

Malvolio pushed into the scene from back stage left. He was visibly beat up: bleeding, shirt and breeches torn, one yellow stocking "fouled, ungartered," as Ophelia describes Hamlet. Yet he retained his dignity; his threat of revenge, deliberate and forceful, was directed toward us who had laughed at his being locked in a dark room that smelled of booze. Spectators, in our larger dark room, tried, like those on stage, to ignore Malvolio's pain, but Albers's commanding performance made Malvolio's suffering unavoidable. Feste's melancholy final song reified Amster's sense that *Twelfth Night* forces spectators to embrace its contradictions.

The gem of this season was Libby Appel's *Richard III*, with James Newcomb as Richard. The sparse set and subdued lighting of the Angus Bowmer Theatre left the stage to Newcomb's thrilling physical ability and his astonishing vocal power. Throughout the play Newcomb performed amazing feats with his crutches, including leaping over the corpse of Henry VI, startling spectators as much as Lady Anne. Newcomb possesses immense vocal power that he can modulate within seconds, moving instantly from a soothing, melancholic tone to a shriek that startles yet never blurs syllables. Richard dominates vocally every other character on stage, even Buckingham, and I did not want this production to end because I did not want Newcomb's speech to end; mad devil though he be, listening to Newcomb's Richard was totally engrossing, almost hypnotic.

Newcomb's complete assimilation of his character was evident from the moment he ambled crookedly downstage in 1.1, a fierce, four-legged, deformed spider fled from his bottle and feeding upon England. Newcomb manipulated his two metal crutches with such dexterity that he seemed born to move on four legs, not two. Newcomb had so mastered the crutches that he moved rapidly and adroitly, even when darting at acute angles that might tumble a

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normal person. In fact, he often used one crutch as a fulcrum on which he spun rapidly, terrifying other characters as he instantly confronted them when they thought his back was to them. Newcomb matched these rapid physical shifts with immediate shifts in vocal tone, so that enormously powerful emotions exploded from him just as he changed instantly his position on stage. While other actors can certainly achieve similar effects, though perhaps not on crutches, Newcomb's ability to meld his voice and movements into absolute yet enticing evil was astonishing.

Steep stairs led from upstage towards the center. As fog shrouded the stage, four wretched women—Queen Elizabeth, Duchess of York, Lady Anne, and Queen Margaret—keened as a Greek chorus, lamenting their slaughtered kin. Richard crouched behind a post stage right, only to emerge, grinning, as the women left, and crept slowly downstage. Dressed in a black, patched leather jacket and pants, and black boots, he spoke his opening soliloquy downstage directly to spectators, enunciating each syllable carefully as he twisted across the stage, making sure every spectator heard him. Several times he halted and glared at individual spectators to ensure that they understood his “inductions dangerous” and sympathized with his motivations. Yet he was clearly embittered by his deformity; Newcomb's voice quivered as he spoke of being “unfinished . . . scarce half made up.” He gained intensity and rhythm as he neared the end, creating a chilling and



Richard III: Richard III (James Newcomb). Photo by David Cooper.

fascinating portrait of a man deeply and willingly evil.

Laura Morache's Lady Anne initially matched Richard verbally, creating a tense, powerful opening. When initially rejected, Richard leapt over Henry's

body to prove his affection, then cried when Anne spat at him. Newcomb's weeping, plaintive voice and sheer physical dominance overwhelmed Anne, but she still held the sword over his head for several seconds before dropping it. Similarly convincing was Morache's "With all my heart, and much it joys me, too, / To see you are become so penitent" (2. 222-23); Morache superbly portrayed the entire range of Anne's emotions through this immensely difficult scene and made her reluctance to kill Richard seem plausible. This opening scene established Newcomb's verbal and physical power and the pattern whereby he would dominate all challenges. Having won Lady Anne, Richard smirked and laughed with spectators, and his inflated ego justified his sudden desire for a looking glass, as if his wit could re-shape his shadow.

Appel's direction and casting created several memorable scenes. Throughout the play, Robin Goodrin Nordli as Queen Margaret moved stealthily among the characters, a demented Cassandra in rags and combat boots, warning others of Richard's murderous intentions, as in 1.3, but to no avail. During 2.1, when the feeble King Edward IV fell, Richard deftly helped him, then fell into the royal chair to plot his course with Michael Elich's superb Buckingham. Richard was also strangely vulnerable. In 3.1, as the two princes ran onto the stage, the Duke of York leapt upon Richard's crooked back, causing him obvious pain, and reminding him of his deformity. Newcomb's scowl at the child could have killed. The relationship between Richard and Buckingham was brilliantly played. Elich is also immensely talented, and as Richard nears the sweet fruition of the English crown, he becomes increasingly dependent on Buckingham's political talents; that is, on Buckingham's talents in hypocrisy, in *acting*. From the plot against Hastings, whom Richard spies on in 3.2, to Richard's plan to murder the princes in the Tower, to Richard's audacious posing as a penitent unwilling to accept the crown in 3.7, Buckingham's acting enables Richard's. In the council scene, 3.4, Buckingham calmly advised Richard to withdraw, and when they returned, Richard violently slammed a crutch upon a steel chair as he condemned Hastings for a traitor. In 3.5 and 3.6, Richard and Buckingham plotted together to convince the Lord Mayor to proclaim Richard king, and then as Richard bent over in his friar's robe during his mock penitence—as with Mephostophilis, *cuculus non facit monarchum*—he peered from beneath his hood at Buckingham's brilliant orchestration of the scene. As Buckingham urged the Mayor and citizens to proclaim Richard king he simultaneously absolved Richard of any imagined sins that might disqualify him. Buckingham's successful manipulation of this scene surely convinces Richard that Buckingham is nearly as accomplished an "actor"—hypocrite—as he is, and that he is thus potentially dangerous to Richard's scheme. Elich's skillful snaking through this scene lent credibility to Richard's asking Buckingham to murder the princes in 4.1 as a test of his loyalty; i.e., how will Buckingham play *that* scene? In Richard's world there is no room for men either too doltish or too clever for their own good.

To thundering drums, Richard entered as king in 4.2 on new crutches inlaid with rubies and trailing an enormous red cape. Three huge banners bear-

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ing Richard's image, a wild boar, dangled from above. As Richard neared the throne, he suddenly fell, a comic, crippled dwarf bearing a giant's cape. He staggered to his feet, but the damage to his ego was profound. He stumbled at what should have been his proudest moment, and his crown was never sweet. Once deserted by Buckingham, Richard's kingdom collapsed in incessant rage and violent battle. The grim keening of the women in 4.4 heralded the heavily cut battle scenes where Newcomb again showed amazing dexterity as he employed yet another set of crutches, here inlaid with knives. In Richard's soliloquy in 5.3, Newcomb's terrified voice and trembling body evoked the shattered interior of his character. Bereft of pity even for himself, Richard degenerated into a shrieking madman in battle, whirling furiously on his crutches and striking blindly at all that moved. When Richmond finally stabbed him in his hump, Richard screamed and spread wide his arms as if upon a cross, in chilling mockery of the innocence he had murdered. The chorus of women, led by Margaret, assembled center stage, pulled down Richard's banners, and gathered silently around Richmond as he closed the play.

This was a season of bold directing and inspired performances. One hopes that the Oregon Shakespeare Festival can channel its energies towards similarly memorable productions in future years.

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Notes

1. All textual references are to *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 4th ed., ed. David Bevington (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).
2. *The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Irving Ribner (New York: Odyssey Press, 1963), 2.7.29.
3. John Russell Brown, *Shakespeare and his Comedies*, (1957; rpt. London: Methuen, 1968), pp. 94-95.
4. Nicholas Brooke, "The Moral Tragedy of Dr. Faustus," *The Cambridge Review*, 5 (1952): 662-87; reprinted in *Critics on Marlowe*, ed. Judith O'Neill (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969), 93-114. For a response to Brooke's interpretation, see J. B. Steane, "Dr. Faustus: The Diabolonian Interpretation," in *Marlowe: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 365-69. For a balanced interpretation of the play, see John D. Jump, ed., *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus The Revels Plays* (1962; rpt. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978), xlv-lviii, esp. liv-lviii.
5. Brooke, p. 104.
6. Brooke, p. 113.

THE 2005 ALABAMA SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL'S *CORIOLANUS* AND *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW*

by Craig Barrow

Despite a major change in personnel at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, the quality of Shakespeare productions has not suffered. Martin Platt, the founder of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival in Anniston, Alabama, a town of about 25,000, remained Artistic Director only a short time after the Festival's move to Montgomery. Platt was superb at casting, but the Festival almost vanished due to red ink. The second Artistic Director, Kent Thompson, resigned from the Festival to become Artistic Director of the Denver Center Theatre Company in June, 2005. In his sixteen seasons, Thompson was superb in community relations and the politics of funding, although sometimes major productions failed because of casting decisions. Now, Englishman Geoffrey Sherman, who already has two Obies to his credit, has taken Thompson's place. Geoffrey Sherman's legacy is yet to be determined, but *Coriolanus*, the product of his collaboration with Kent Thompson, was superb. At a Theatre in the Mind lecture on June 11, 2005, Sherman made clear who made what decisions regarding the production.¹ Kent Thompson made good casting decisions and chose for the production the 200-seat Octagon Theatre's stage, which is once again a theatre in the round rather than the U-shaped theatre it had been for much of its career. Geoffrey Sherman chose the costuming and made some of the recommendations for set design.

When the audience enters the Octagon for a production of *Coriolanus*, it finds that three images dominate the sparse set: a 1930s Modernist bas-relief, a tiled stage showing crossed fasces and an upraised stage space with a lectern decorated by other fasces and a helmet imposed on a shield. The bas-relief, approximately twelve feet high and eight feet wide, shows opposing soldiers separated by a diagonal line of abstracted structures that suggest a modern city. The distance from the surface of forms in the relief varies; some protrude as much as two inches. Throughout the play shades of light casting a variety of shadows are focused at an angle on the relief. As one might expect, these changes in light are tied to the action. During the early battle scenes in Act I when Coriolanus is establishing his credentials as a brave warrior and an inspiring military leader, the opposed figures on the relief are cast in red and a brown that looks like dried blood. Fasces, bundles of rods bound about an axe head facing outward and tied by leather strips, were carried before magistrates of ancient Rome and served as emblems of authority. The crossed bundles also were part of the design on the shield decorating the lectern. When the plebes gather to protest grain shortages or oppose Coriolanus' consulship, they usually appear carrying long rods which suggest a part of the fasces or a will divided. Coriolanus, when not a leader of an army, is in a similar position, an isolated rod.

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Although the action of the story occurs during the early years of the Roman Republic, the costuming is set in the early 1930s. Mussolini's early uniforms provide a guide for the soldiers' costumes, while the diplomats wear formal attire, top hats, vests, and spats, and the women wear dresses that reflect the period, even to pumps and nylons with straight seams. Other than the uniforms, no statement about fascism appears in the production, although politics is a major concern throughout the play.

For audiences accustomed to tragic heroes with sensibility and large recognition scenes, *Coriolanus* is a problem because its hero does not have the qualities that make an audience sympathetic to him. Coriolanus is no Lear, Hamlet, Othello, or even a Macbeth torn between virtue and criminal ambition. Coriolanus can stir an army's courage, but he is unable to reveal his interior emotional life. Fortunately, Ray Chambers, who has effectively played Hamlet in an earlier season at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, can use body and facial gesture to supply those emotional references for an audience that Coriolanus' language leaves unspoken. Chambers' best moment in showing this emotionality is when Coriolanus accedes to his mother's petition to stop his attack on Rome in 5.3.² Before Chambers gives his "O mother, mother! / What have you done?" speech, his body



Coriolanus: Sonja Lanzener as Volumnia and Ray Chambers as Coriolanus. Photo by Phil Scarsbrook.

and face quake as tears fall down his cheeks. He looks like a man unused to crying, whose sorrow, because of the opposed forces of passion and restraint, appears all the more powerful. Passion and restraint also appear in the relationship of Virgilia and Coriolanus. When Lauren Bloom as Virgilia and Coriolanus embrace, even though they kiss before others, they seem alone on the stage. Lauren Bloom portrays a character who is a quiet well of largely unspoken love in whose depths Coriolanus can be free of the burdens of his ambition, his honor, his public life, and briefly, his mother.

Of course Coriolanus' relation to his mother is a key to his conduct. Although Volumnia bred and nourished a warrior, she later hoped for a politician. She was supremely successful with her first goal, and that success caused Coriolanus' dilemma: he cannot modify values of never backing down and being constantly aggressive to the give and take of politics,

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the deal making, equivocation and necessary lying, what D. Douglas Waters sees as “internal conflicts between honor and dishonor.”³ As Kenneth Burke observes, when Volumnia desires Coriolanus to become a consul, she authors his tragic dilemma; when she pleads for Rome to be spared in Act 5, she arranges her son’s doom, as he is well aware.⁴ Volumnia, who is played by Sonja Lanzener, is heartlessly manipulative in dealing with Coriolanus. When she succeeds in saving Rome, her triumph in the public procession in 5.5 is her chief joy; she no longer has to act through Coriolanus to get recognition but attains it through the destruction of her own son. Geoffrey Sherman, or possibly Lanzener and Chambers, brings in a sexual, almost incestuous relationship between mother and son, much like Hamlet and Gertrude, with several kisses on the lips throughout the play. However, Lanzener’s great weight mars incestuous overtones, although it increases the effect of her bullish behavior with everyone.

As long as war is all that Coriolanus needs to face, he is successful, but public life is a challenge. As the play opens, Roman aristocrats have given the plebes five tribunes of their choice to represent their interests in the Senate as a sop to the plebes’ real grief of hunger, famine, and usurious lending rates. The opposing political forces are well represented in the play. The aristocrat Menenius, beautifully played by Joe Vincent, listens to the plebes while justifying aristocratic rule as he introduces the body politic metaphor with his tale of the stomach in 1.1, while the tribunes Sicinius and Brutus, cleverly played by Paul Hebron and Chris Mixon, cynically motivate their plebian power base throughout the play. Their work in reversing acceptance of Coriolanus’ consulship in order to preserve their power and advance their interests traps Coriolanus with his own class biases and anger. Hebron and Mixon excel at playing these politicians; the leg brace Mixon chooses to wear seems to key his character’s special resentment of the physically imposing Chambers as Coriolanus. His anger is especially evident in 3.1 when Brutus challenges Coriolanus’ description of the tribunes’ activities in reversing the plebian acceptance of Coriolanus as consul: the crippled man has a special resentment of Coriolanus’ scarred wholeness. Brutus proceeds by indirection, while Coriolanus proceeds by opposition.

Geoffrey Sherman said in his Theatre in the Mind talk that before he began working with *Coriolanus*, he had not been aware how important the character Menenius is. Although he did not elaborate, one can easily see the character’s significance. Not only is Menenius a useful bridge between aristocrat and plebe and Roman and Volscian, but he is like a *raisonneur* in a Moliere comedy, a standard of value against which to measure appropriate political behavior. Though Menenius claims a paternal role for himself with the fatherless Coriolanus, Menenius fails to teach his “son” the values Coriolanus needs to succeed politically. While many of those who care for Coriolanus, such as Cominius or Volumnia, know how and tell him how to influence the tribunes and the plebes, Menenius’ words matter more in this production, since he is the bridge between the aristocrats and plebes, a successful politician to whom both groups

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listen. When Menenius says in 3.1.256-257, "His heart's his mouth; / What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent," the audience accepts his judgment of Coriolanus, and later, when Coriolanus has joined the Volscians but before Rome is aware of Coriolanus' move, Menenius says in 4.6.16-17, "All's well; and might have been much better, if / He could have temporiz'd." The audience responds as to a final judgment of Coriolanus' conduct.

While the role of Cominius as general is overshadowed by the role of Menenius, Cominius, who was once a consul, is a similar type of character. However, because he is associated most often with the military, he doesn't serve to gauge Coriolanus' civilian shortcomings but is a measuring rod of Coriolanus's military virtue. Rodney Clark does a masterful job with the role.

While the tribunes engineer Coriolanus' banishment from Rome with the help of Coriolanus' tongue and the betrayal of Coriolanus' social class, Aufidius, the general of the Volscian forces, engineers his murder after Coriolanus offers his own services to Aufidius, his former greatest enemy. When the Volscian forces under Coriolanus could easily conquer Rome, Aufidius is aided by Coriolanus' mercy to the city. One cannot help but question Coriolanus' choice of offering his services to Aufidius and the Volscians, especially considering the fierce, murderous rivalry of their previous encounters. In addi-



Coriolanus: Ray Chambers as Coriolanus and Aaron Cabell as Aufidius. Photo by Phil Scarsbrook.

tion, in seeking to make a personal enemy into an ally, Coriolanus errs again in allowing Aufidius' envy to build after Coriolanus leads Volscian victories over Roman forces. Even Aufidius' lieutenant is aware of the danger when he says to Aufidius, "you are dark'ned in this action, sir, / Even by your own" (4.7.5-6). Acknowledging the truth of this observation, Aufidius says, "He [Coriolanus] bears himself more prouder, / Even to my person, that I thought he would / When first I did embrace him" (4.7.8-10). Small wonder that even before Coriolanus' capitulation to his mother Aufidius should state, "When, Caius, Rome is thine, / Thou art poor'st of all; then shortly art thou mine" (4.7.56-57). Like the Roman tribunes, Aufidius has no qualms about cloaking his intent as he believes the Volscians should with the Romans, thinking it wise "To keep your great pretenses veil'd" (1.2.20). Aaron Cabell, an excellent actor, does a fine job with the role of Aufidius as he exhibits courage, nobility, and guile.

On the whole, I thought that the Alabama Shakespeare Festival production of *Coriolanus* was outstanding. Some aspects of the production did, however, seem like wandering, extraneous signifiers, such as the casting of the Volscians with mostly black actors and the early Fascist uniforms of both sides. Once one makes his peace with the audience's emotional distance from Coriolanus, he can enjoy this tragedy that is dominated by political intrigue, even though sometimes Coriolanus seems to be a melodramatic victim. While the audience may not bond with Ray Chambers' Coriolanus, it does feel a sense of tragic loss or waste. As Frank Kermode says, "the health of the Roman body politic suffers from his [Coriolanus'] absence."⁵ Ray Chambers and director Geoffrey Sherman both did a superb job in crafting this production.

When one enters the 750 seat Festival Stage for *The Taming of the Shrew*, he is immediately aware that the Christopher Sly Induction will not appear, since the set features three brightly colored structures that represent Baptista's house, a church, and Gremio's house. Each of these three structures revolves around a vertical axis similar to a Lazy Susan to transform the set to interiors of Petruchio's house and an interior of Baptista's house. Director Susan Willis in conversation thought of the buildings as sitting on the outskirts of Padua.⁶

As Tranio and Lucentio enter the stage followed by Baptista, Gremio, Hortensio, Katherina, and Bianca, the dating of the costuming becomes evident, the early 1950s. While the costuming may be close to that of our own era, in small towns in Italy, even in the 1950s, Willis discovered that arranged marriages by fathers were still the rule. The costuming, particularly Tranio's, shows a link to the *commedia dell'arte* tradition. Tranio's stockings have the diamond-shaped design of the Harlequin, and when later in the play he is disguised as Lucentio, he appears in a chartreuse suit wearing Lucentio's coat as a cape. Always in need of money from his master, Tranio is an embodiment of the clever slave. Gremio and Baptista also seem painted by a similar *commedia dell'arte* brush in their costumes and their behavior. Unlike later comedies by Shakespeare, the characters in *The Taming of the Shrew* are framed by bold strokes and lack the subtlety we see in such plays as *Twelfth Night*. By alluding to the *commedia dell'arte* tradition, Susan Willis prepares the audience for the

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kind of characters we see in the play and the kind of comedy, farce, that the play produces, especially in the Bianca plot.

Henri Bergson's "Laughter" does a fine job in describing such comedy, dealing with comic effects in action, character, and words, even though his great interest is Moliere and not Shakespeare.⁷ What he has to say about action is especially useful. He sees three types: a repetition which seems to defy probability; inversion, where plots backfire on their originators; and reciprocal interference of series, caused by characters in disguise, lying, or equivocating. Disguises, lies, and equivocations are not humorous in *themselves*, but they

cause, in comedies, unintended difficulties for those who use them. Tranio continually milks money from Lucentio to maintain his disguise as Lucentio. Hortensio in his disguise as a music tutor continually has trouble tuning his instrument when he competes for time with Bianca. Throughout the play, characters in disguise experience inversions where their disguises expose them to unintended, laughable difficulties. Clothing, of course, is a part of the disguise. For Bianca, innocent looking in her virginal puffed sleeves, clothing hides a dominant will; for Katherina, clothes to attend Bianca's wedding are a lure by Petruchio to change Katherina's behavior.

In this production Katherina's behavior changes; she does not pretend to follow Petruchio's whims. As Harold Goddard has suggested, Katherina is "starved for love," a victim of her father's favoritism for Bianca.⁸ Kathleen McCall, who plays Katherina, gives no sly winks in her address to the widow and Bianca in 5.2. I heard no irony when she says, "Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper, / Thy head, thy sovereign" (146-47) or later, "I am asham'd that women are so simple / To offer war where they should seek peace / Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway, / When they should seek to serve, love, and obey" (1.61-64). Susan Willis sees Katherina in Baptista's house as unhappy prior to her marriage to



The Taming of the Shrew: John Pasha as Lucentio (Cambio disguise), Sam Gregory as Hortensio (Litio disguise) and Julia Watt as Bianca. Photo by Phil Scarsbrook.

Petruchio, so that Petruchio's appearance in her life is an opportunity to escape. His "taming" of her, which provides a negative mirror to her behavior and a positive image that he repeatedly creates for her, Willis sees as a release. A woman or two in the audience laughed during parts of Katherina's wedding speech in 5.2, but on the whole the audience appeared to accept what was said. Katherina seems more liberated by Petruchio than enslaved.

Probably the biggest surprise in this production was a bald Petruchio, who looked middle-aged except for a cowboy dress and manner. A wig could have remedied the baldness, but either Doug Rees refused or Susan Willis liked the effect. Kathleen McCall as Katherina is also somewhat older than the traditional Katherina; she wore a red wig, a clue to Katherina's early behavior and nature, but the wig only made her look older. Julia Watt, who played Bianca, was a brunette, not the blonde one usually sees, so that her will in early scenes seems more transparent, and when she calls her husband a fool in the wager scene, her words are not a surprise. Sam Gregory as Hortensio also seemed a bit old for the part. Perhaps metamorphosis or transformation is not confined to the young.

In a production that aimed for laughter, the cast of *The Taming of the Shrew* was terrific. Craig Pattison as Tranio, Chris Qualls as Grumio, and



The Taming of the Shrew: Kathleen McCall as Kate and Douglas Rees as Petruchio.
Photo by Phil Scarsbrook.

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Christian Rummel as Biondello were wonderful in their clownish roles, while Kathleen McCall and Douglas Rees were careful to keep the "taming" of Katherina comic. Fear for Katherina or sympathy for her plight would undermine the laughter that is desired. Susan Branch as costume designer and Bob Phillips as scenic designer also did outstanding work, and Susan Willis, who is also an English professor at Auburn at Montgomery, proved as capable a director as she has been a dramaturg.

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Notes

1. The Theatre in the Mind lectures are all on Saturdays during the Alabama Shakespeare Festival's summer season. Critics, actors, and directors discuss the plays. This one was especially useful since Geoffrey Sherman outlined the process of bringing *Coriolanus* into production and answered questions about the play as well as questions about his aims as artistic director of the Festival. He had been named artistic director only the day before, on June 10, 2005.
2. Quotations accord with *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).
3. D. Douglas Waters, "Mimesis and Catharsis in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*," *The Upstart Crow: A Shakespeare Journal*, 19 (1999), 144.
4. Kenneth Burke, "Coriolanus and the Delights of Faction," *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), p. 85.
5. Frank Kermode, "Coriolanus," *The Riverside Shakespeare*, p. 1394.
6. Susan Willis usually gives talks prior to Shakespeare productions in the summer. This one occurred on June 10, 2005, prior to the performance of *The Taming of the Shrew*.
7. Henri Bergson, "Laughter," *Comedy* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor), 61-103.
8. Harold C. Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 69.

CLEMSON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL XIV (2005)
“MAKING THE BEAST”: ACTORS FROM THE LONDON STAGE
PERFORM *OTHELLO*

by John R. Ford

It was both wonderful and troubling that the 2005 Clemson Shakespeare Festival IV, whose theme was “Shakespeare and the Arts,” would be the occasion for one of Shakespeare’s most disturbing explorations of artistic power. In *Othello* we enter a nightmare version of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, where the poet’s power to give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name is assumed first by Iago, and then by Othello. The production of *Othello* by Actors from the London Stage, was a demonstration of such artistic malevolence.¹ These were powerful performances, framed by casting and performance choices that clearly acknowledged and accepted their cost. There were cuts—sometimes major ones—often determined by the necessities of doubling, tripling, or quadrupling. Because, for example, Gemma Larke played both Bianca and Montano, there was no Bianca available to race courageously to Cassio’s aid in 5.1 while Venice’s respectable leaders, Lodovico and Montano, hid in the dark. And because George Mayfield personated both Cassio and Lodovico, Cassio was erased from the play’s final scene. There was also the regrettable loss of some of the play’s most powerful language. There was no “Every way makes my gain” soliloquy leading directly to the door of a horrible truth for Iago, that there is, in Cassio, “a daily beauty in his life / That makes me ugly” (5.1.19-20).² This production also lost some of Iago’s ugliest and most racist lines, wherein he reminds Othello of Desdemona’s “many proposed matches / Of her own clime, complexion and degree, / Whereto we see, in all things, nature tends” (3.3.229-31).

But what we lost was amply compensated by the fruits of judicious doubling and tripling that repeatedly created the powerful visual image of equivocal moral voices co-inhabiting a single body in a world where no one is without guilt, all ensnared by the racism and misogyny that swirl through Venice like the winds of “common sense.” Every actor embodied that psychomachia. So Paul McCleary’s performance as both Iago and the Duke fused together uncomfortably what in Venice passes for moral opposites. The same actor embodied at once two authority figures that define the volatile ethos of this play. There is the official voice of authority and justice who must override Brabantio’s accusation in part because the state requires the services of Othello, for, as Iago well knows, “[a]nother of his fa[th]om they have none” (1.1.152). But at the same time, McCleary’s voice, slightly adjusted as Iago’s, became the voice of popular fears that reside beneath the surface of Venetian cosmopolitanism. Gemma Larke likewise embodied another pair of dark opposites, as she played both Desdemona and Bianca. Thus in one body we saw both the divine Desdemona Cassio worships and the whore that Othello has invented. Moreover, such a tactic also implicated the audience, as it forced us to see

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from Iago's—and eventually Othello's—confining perspective; for as this play repeatedly demonstrates, especially in performance, the psychological and aesthetic processes of an audience's recognition of imaginative characters through “signal” external features—a synecdoche achieved by an



Paul McCleary as Iago.

accent, a prosthesis, a bit of costume or cosmetic—are also disturbingly similar to the processes at the heart of “recognizing” racial or gender caricature, “whereto we see, in all things, nature tends.” It is a feature of this company that just before the play begins each actor steps forward to declare the name of each character he or she plays. With the mention of each character's name, the actor “defines” that character with a signifying accent, facial expression, body language, or altered dress. We must learn how to recognize such marks. Much will be seen in that.

The setting and costuming of this production vaguely suggested a past military world, perhaps 1940s or 1950s Britain although postmodern enough for cell phones. There was in this production, as in several recent theatrical productions of

Othello, including Janet Suzman's, Trevor Nunn's, Sam Mendes's, an air of military dress and decorum that, like Venetian cosmopolitanism, hid much.³ As Lois Potter has observed, such military settings create a tightly disciplined world of masculine order and bonding that defines itself against the more fluid and foreign dangers represented by Venetian sophistication and the intrusive presence of women.⁴ The men wore dark olive military jackets cut to the waist, covering maroon T-shirts. The maroon berets became a symbol of military prestige, intelligibility, order. When Othello stripped Cassio of his rank, he seized the lieutenant's beret. Later, in 3.3, Iago threw *his* beret to the stage as he challenged Othello to “take mine office.” Beneath that military regimen, for all the characters except Desdemona and Bianca, there were raging destructive forces at work—jealousies, resentments, racial and sexual fears. It was appropriate that the storm in 2.1, with its tempests, high seas, and howling winds, was created, not by special effects, but by the voices of these five actors.

Othello is a play about the processes of thinking and seeing, ocular proof, which this production effectively explored through its controlled use of lighting. Roderigo and especially Iago used their flashlights as tiny spotlights as they spoke, drawing their listeners' attention to tiny circles of detail on the stage. Those flashlights not only suggested a world of manipulated vision but also something of the isolation and paucity of Iago's own field of thought, especially

when compared to Desdemona's illuminated presence. The flashlights, as well as the omnipresent cell phones, gave the lie to the deep harmonies of Iago's communal barracks songs. The scene of violent assassination in 5.1, a scene largely choreographed by Iago, was defined by the criss-cross of flashlight beams. In the next scene as Othello entered Desdemona's room, the space around her was defined by a large, intense spotlight that illuminated like the "heavenly light" that guides her faith. Such a light eclipsed the small, Iago-like lantern that Othello had brought with him to "put out the light" (5.2.7).

Indeed, this production gave prominence to all three of the women in *Othello*. Although Bianca lost both language and stage visibility due to the doubling, when she did appear on stage, as when she seduced Cassio, she was assured and commanding in her sexual play. She was no customer, whatever Cassio might say to Iago. Julia Watson's Emilia was also a complex and conflicted figure. Although she was a strong and sympathetic character in this production, she was complicit in the racial codes of the men. It was interesting to watch her respond to the public embraces of Desdemona and Othello. Like Iago, Emilia was repulsed by their intimacy and honest play. But, also like Iago, she was compulsively drawn to what she most abhorred.

Finally, Desdemona's character inhabited a world of masculine authority with an interesting mix of deference and self-assurance. When we first saw her, summoned to the senate, she moved confidently across the stage to meet her father. As she passed Othello, she gave her husband a quick, private glance and then, without breaking stride, continued to her father. When the Duke suggested that Desdemona stay with her father, her "not I" was spoken with slightly more emphasis than either Brabantio's or Othello's, as if she were serving notice of her own vocal presence. Like Imogen Stubbs in Trevor Nunn's production, this Desdemona (Gemma Larke) responded to the Duke's announcement that Othello should leave "tonight," with a forceful "tonight, my lord?" But while in Nunn's production, Imogen Stubbs's breathless response suggested an edge of girlish excitement at the thought of entering a forbidden masculine world, Gemma Larke's cry was more foreboding, anticipating "that song to-night / Will not go from my mind" (4.3.30-31). Desdemona's intimacy with Emilia was also complex, a sisterly bond balanced by a hint of class difference. Just before we heard the Willow song, Desdemona recalled that "my mother had a maid." That family memory clearly drew her thoughts to a pres-



Gemma Larke as Desdemona

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ent comfort, for, as she spoke, she touched Emilia lightly and confidently. It was a gesture that simultaneously secured their sisterly bond and at the same time suggested something of an aristocratic privilege. Then she knelt as the seated Emilia gently instructed her about husbands and wives and the frailty they share.

At the heart of this metatheatrical *Othello* was Othello himself. He was a consummate performer whose artistic confidence masked a world of doubts. The play began with a kind of dumb show. Othello and Desdemona enacted for a riveted on- and off-stage audience both the sacrament of their marriage and the promise of its consummation, as the fast married lovers exchanged rings and then embraced. When summoned to account for the story of their love, Othello performed that story with humor and self-assurance. At "her fa-



Andrew Dennis as Othello and Paul McCleary as Iago

ther loved me," he turned to Brabantio, extending his hand as Brabantio turned away. When he spoke of most disastrous chances, moving accidents by flood and field, hairbreadth 'scapes, his performance grew more compelling, spell-binding. He had a great actor's supreme confidence in shaping and seducing his audience. He had, after all, done this before. This was not the first audience to devour up his discourse. Othello was equally gifted in performing, and parodying, the codes of male bonding. Even Iago's early attempts to cue Othello were easily deflected by Othello's performative skills. When Iago urgently asked "are you fast married," this Othello merely smiled and put his finger to his lips, as if he were teasing a boyhood friend who was getting too close to a sexual secret.

But Andrew Dennis's Othello also displayed in his voice and gestures another kind of performativity, more passive and pathological, less self-possessed. Often Othello would retreat into the stiff attitudes of military decorum when under stress. When, for example, Brabantio performed, for the senate to hear, a mockery of a father's marital blessing, Othello's body, in reflex, shifted

from a marital to a martial posture, standing rigidly at attention, a gesture to which he again resorted at the end of the play, when Lodovico formally stripped Othello of his "command."

Throughout this production, performative choices that demonstrated Othello's easy self-mastery were undercut by a different kind of scripted behavior. In the highly iconic scene at the end of 3.3 wherein Othello and Iago exchange a "sacred vow" to "the ever-burning lights above," this production, as others have done, heightened the ceremony by having the two characters cut their hands, then clasp them together. Othello's performance of the "blood brother" ritual was, of course, another mockery, not just of male bonding but also of marital union, but this time it was Iago, not Othello, in control of the parody. This Othello never entirely recovered the ownership of his performances. In the final scene of the play, Andrew Dennis, in one last attempt to control his fate by transforming a suicide into a sanctioned execution through the artistic power of performance, pulled from some secret place a knife, as countless Othellos had done before him, and "took by th'throat the circumcised dog / And smote him—thus" (5.2.355-56). But it was an infected ceremony, as both Iago and the audience knew. We had seen that knife before. It was the knife Othello and Iago had used in an earlier ceremony, when "in the due reverence of a sacred vow" the two pledged their faith. Iago's words, of course, completed that ceremony, as in a sense his silence completed the play's final ritual. "I am your own for ever" (3.3.480).

Delta State University

Notes

1. *Othello, Actors From the London Stage*, performances by Andrew Dennis, Gemma Larke, George Mayfield, Paul McCleary, Julia Watson, Brooks Theatre, Clemson University, 9-10 Mar. 2005.
2. All textual references are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).
3. *Othello*, directed by Sam Mendes, Lyttleton Theatre, London, 1998; *Othello*, directed by Trevor Nunn, The Other Place, Stratford-Upon-Avon, 1989; *Othello*, directed by Janet Suzman, Market Theatre, Johannesburg, 1987.
4. See Potter's discussion of "Military Othellos" in her *Othello, Shakespeare in Performance* (Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 2002), 186-88.

Tim Myers

DISSOLUTION IN THE TEMPEST

The drowning of his book in so many dark fathoms;
 pearl-eyed corpse of the father;
 cities of cloud dissolving:
 For me these images have become warm animals
 escaping their master.

Were they really meant to be read
 as no more than poetic stoicism?
 Oh, I won't deny the continual unraveling
 of this world as it endlessly becomes—
 the wholly natural way
 a body, a family, a landscape
 destroys itself by degrees in bearing fruit.
 But what are we to make
 of lightplay over such unbecoming,
 of the birth of splendid desires,
 of longings grown beyond themselves,
 of imagination seeking everywhere, unfettered
 by the endlessness of falling away?
 And what are we to make
 of love?

The very gorgeousness of Prospero's words,
 of Ariel's, the songs of the spirit-rout,
 these sunbursts of language, the heat such words give off
 as Shakespeare strikes them—
 sentences shaped to pierce our lapsing clay—
 all find residence here
 in the deeps amid my meat.
 And how can I explain
 the suddenness of joy they meet within me,
 this strange recognition their strange beauty brings,
 this feeling of coming home to
 an unimagined place?

Let body go its way.
 It has somehow taken that which it is not,
 lifted it far beyond its own poor dwelling.



Book Reviews



BOOK REVIEWS

***The Book of Common Prayer 1559: The Elizabethan Prayer Book.* Edited by John E. Booty. Charlottesville and London: The University of Virginia Press, 2005. Pp. xvi + 427.**

Reviewed by Daniel Gibbons.

Early in his Preface to *The Book of Common Prayer 1559*, John Booty offers readers a historical evaluation of its importance to early English national identity, but leaves us with a telling contradiction emblematic of the Prayer Book's own stylistic, theological, and historical difficulties:

For all English men and women were required by law to attend their parish church on Sundays. In the parish churches and in the cathedrals the nation was at prayer, the commonwealth was being realized, and God, in whose hands the destinies of all were lodged, was worshiped in spirit and truth. (xii)

A modern scholar or believer might well wonder how on earth a form of worship required by secular law and enforced by the punitive power of the state could possibly be worship "in spirit and truth." And yet, even secular readers may find themselves moved by Booty's vision of the spiritual commonwealth, the unified nation worshipping together in harmony with the divine. At the very least, in order to begin to understand what motivated the production of the 1559 version of the Book of Common Prayer in the first year of the reign of Elizabeth I, we must entertain a lively appreciation of this idyllic vision of spiritual nationhood, of a commonwealth rising above its divisions and uncertainties to join together in service of the Almighty. It was in a spirit of homage to that vision that Booty undertook his loving edition of the 1559 Prayer Book (1976), an edition entirely preserved (along with its imperfections) in the recent republication for the Folger Shakespeare Library by the University of Virginia Press.

Perhaps one reason why the idea of communal cohesion resonates so strongly with regard to the English vernacular prayer books is that they began to emerge at a time of national crisis in both the monarchy and the religious establishment. Perhaps the desire to understand and circumvent the current fractures within the Anglican communion are contributing to at least some part of the upsurge of scholarly interest in the origins of the Anglican communion. At any rate, the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer* is an indisputable milestone in the emergence not only of Anglicanism, but also of our ideas of what makes up "English-ness."

Upon the accession of Henry VIII's young son (Edward VI) to the throne in 1547, a brief window opened up for ambitious religious reformers like Thomas Cranmer, who had been Archbishop of Canterbury under Henry, but whose

Calvinist impulses had been held in check by Henry's own religious traditionalism (at least in matters not related to the expansion of his own political power). The six years of Edward's reign allowed the Archbishop and his peers to produce, first, a theologically restrained vernacular prayer book in 1542 (much of which could be read as a loose translation of the traditional Latin rubrics), and second, a much more radical prayer book in 1552 (noticeably, and sometimes quite explicitly, anti-traditionalist in its sacramental formulations and ritual guidelines). Cranmer hoped for a slow and basically peaceful transition from the old religion to a new and peculiarly English form of episcopal Calvinism, but his reforms were met with much popular resistance.

Cranmer's reformist project eventually seemed doomed by the untimely death of the young Edward and the return of Catholicism under Mary I. However, the Archbishop's prayer books were not all consumed by the purgative fires in which Cranmer and the more obdurate of his reformist brethren were burned. On the contrary, Mary's attempted restoration of the old faith was short-lived, dying prematurely along with the Queen who championed it.

Thus, Elizabeth I rose to rule over a nation weary of civil and religious strife. After the bloodshed and uncertainty of the two short reigns of Edward and Mary, both Elizabeth and the majority of her people seem to have been eager to find some kind of "settlement" to their communal difficulties. Despite the ignominious death of their author, Cranmer's two vernacular prayer books were to play a leading role in Elizabeth's new political and religious establishment.

The Elizabethan "settlement" (a popular name for the political and religious project which included the 1559 Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity) was designed to foster social and political order by associating loyalty to a program of relatively moderate Protestantism with loyalty to the Crown. Elizabeth was named "Supreme Governor" of the church of England and a series of provisions were set out in an attempt to regulate all public religious practice within England. This included the production and promulgation of the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer*, which became the only authorized liturgical manual in the whole of England (and remained such, with only minor revisions, until the 1640's).

This Elizabethan Prayer Book was primarily based on Cranmer's more Calvinist prayer book of 1552, but with several crucial differences designed to avoid controversy. The 1559 prayer book offered a "broad" model of state religion which was intended to incorporate a majority of conforming Christians while allowing some variation of theological opinion among them. It excluded some of the more explicitly anti-traditionalist comments about vestments and physical signs (like kneeling to receive Communion or making the sign of the cross) and imported part of the 1549 prayer book's Eucharistic language (which was more open to transubstantiation interpretations), while still excluding most of the traditional theology and ritual that so irked Protestant reformers.

This well-intentioned ambiguity would, of course, tend to exclude both loyal Catholics and all manner of strong Calvinists, but it tended to encourage most of the populace to a general exterior conformity, while encouraging interior conformity through repetition and enforced participation. It is difficult to judge

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just how effective this was, but the general scholarly opinion seems to be that, at least for the first half of Elizabeth's reign and throughout much of England, the Prayer Book was more honored in the breach than in the observance.

Regardless of the questionable theological merits and enforceability of such an ambiguous liturgical book, in practice it achieved the desired breadth of (exterior) conformity while bolstering Elizabeth's claim to be an irenic and broadminded ruler whose love of the people led her to seek compromises and heal old wounds. This prayer book remained at the core of the official English Church throughout the careers of Marlowe, Shakespeare, Sidney, Spenser, Jonson, Donne, and Herbert. Even Catholics like Persons, Campion, Southwell, and Crashaw were influenced by its language. It was an essential part of the establishment against which rebels like Milton reacted, and it powerfully informed the sense of traditional "true Englishness" that energized the Restoration. Thus, familiarity with this prayer book is essential to understanding the religious and national sensibilities in English literature from the time of Shakespeare to the present day.

The book, then, is indispensable, but what of this edition? In both its original and the current publication, it is attractive and well-constructed. Perhaps the most notable addition to the recent republication is the inclusion of a 1578 image of the Queen at prayer on the front of the dust jacket—an improvement over the plainer original cover. Booty's introduction and supplementary essays on the history of the Prayer Book, retained in the new edition, still provide a solid introduction to the basic background and early publication history. The fonts (in both black and red) are pleasing to the eye and the calendars and tables will be serviceable even for those who wish to use the book for personal devotions. Booty's edition remains the scholarly standard and a crucial reference for students of early modern religion.

Unfortunately, this republication does oddly preserve one of the few notable imperfections of the first publication. The dust jackets of both publications promise a "[p]articularly useful... general index," but I cannot find it anywhere in this recent republication or in the original one. Such an index would indeed be particularly useful to scholars if it were, in fact, included in the book. Unfortunately, the main text of the republication, in scrupulously reproducing the original, also excluded the index that it promised.

The more interesting "weakness" of this edition, however, is more of an individuality that marks its origin than it is a real weakness. As I have said, Booty's love of the Prayer Book is deeply informed by the project of idyllic Englishness undertaken by Elizabeth and her contemporaries, but reproduces some of its contradictions. Booty's edition admirably traces out some of the editorial divergences in the various surviving originals, but contains such discussions within the introductory material. The edited text displays an overwhelming sense of textual unity and is based primarily on the edition of Jugge and Cawode, with few intratextual notes to indicate the many differences among the earliest printed versions of the 1559 Prayer Book.

In his introduction, Booty explicitly defends this decision, attributing it to

the fact that the Juge and Cawode version "seems to be more in line with the uniformity act" (xiii). Booty's desire to produce a Prayer Book that glosses over the cracks in the Elizabethan edifice by emphasizing uniformity is itself an echo of the Elizabethan "settlement" sensibility. In the thirty years since the first publication of Booty's edition, however, there has been a great flowering of scholarship devoted to exploring how very unsettled England really was beneath the tranquil surface often reflected in older historiography.

This edition is attractive and useful, and its republication is a real gift to a new generation of scholars. I would even say that Booty's editorial uniformity has its merits, but the current generation of scholars can hardly help but notice the absence of notes marking out the historical complexities of the various early texts of the Prayer Book. Thus, this republication of Booty's fine edition of the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer* strikes me not only a useful resource in its own right, but also a clear indication of the work that is still left to be done to deepen our understanding of the rhetorical, textual and cultural complexities that attended the promulgation and gradual acceptance of the Elizabethan Prayer Book of 1559.

University of Wisconsin-Madison



***Women Players in England, 1500-1660: Beyond the All-Male Stage.* Edited by Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.**

Reviewed by Erika T. Lin.

The belief that women did not appear on the English stage until after the Restoration has long governed the study of early modern drama. A new collection of essays, based on a 2000 Shakespeare Association of America seminar, challenges this entrenched assumption. *Women Players in England, 1500-1660* provides fascinating evidence of a rich and long-standing tradition of female participation in a wide variety of performance activities. Because women actors did not appear on the London professional stage, their theatrical activities are often seen as exceptions to the "rule." This volume suggests, on the contrary, that "all-male" acting companies were themselves anomalies.

Recent work on female authorship has showcased the widespread involvement of early modern women in many different forms of textual production. Just as "literature" has often been defined in ways that exclude writing by women, "theater" has been often been limited to the drama of Shakespeare and other professional playwrights. A more expansive definition of playing, the editors of this volume suggest, can uncover women's substantial and diverse contributions to early modern dramatic activity. Accordingly, the essays in this collection engage performance in its broadest sense, as "any act of embodied display or representation intended for an audience" (5). They discuss not only formal drama sponsored, produced, and enacted by women but also para-

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theatrical activities, such as story-telling, religious ritual, festive observances, and role-playing in the political and commercial arenas. The “theatricality of everyday life” often falls within the purview of performance studies rather than theater history. This volume points to the centrality of gender in the ongoing negotiations between these two fields. It also has important implications for a number of other scholarly conversations, most notably the vigorous debates about cross-dressed boy actors that have featured so prominently in critical discourse since the 1980s.

The book is divided into five sections. In Part I, James Stokes’s detailed account of amateur female performance in medieval and early modern Lincolnshire dovetails nicely with the essay jointly authored by Gweno Williams, Alison Findlay, and Stephanie Hodgson-Wright. Grouped together under the heading “Beyond London,” both pieces focus on female performance in the provinces, and both draw on archival material transcribed by the Records of Early English Drama (REED) project. Stokes traces female participation in festive drama sponsored by “socio-religious guilds” and argues convincingly that evidence of women’s “co-equal” presence in the guilds “is not merely an expression of something within that culture, it is the principal vehicle for the customary expression of that culture, often taking the form of performance” (41). Williams, Findlay, and Hodgson-Wright focus on evidence from the City of York, Lancashire, and Gloucestershire to explore women’s involvement in seasonal festivities and their performances as suspected witches and Catholic recusants. Like Stokes, their main interest lies in the legal and administrative bodies that circumscribed female playing. However, they focus primarily on how women appropriated theatrical techniques for their own ends whereas Stokes stresses the institutional enfranchisement of women at all socio-economic levels.

Institutional structures are also of concern to the essays included in the second part of the book, “Beyond Elites.” Here the spotlight is on women’s participation in early modern commerce. In a fascinating and well-argued contribution to the volume, Natasha Korda analyzes the business dealings of the historical Moll Frith, immortalized in Middleton and Dekker’s *The Roaring Girl* (1611). Korda positions the famous cross-dresser within the underground economy of the London theater world, where women often worked as pawnbrokers, second-hand clothing dealers, and “thief-takers” (individuals who “compound[ed] with thieves for the return of stolen property to its rightful owners for a fee” [78]). Moll’s appearance on the Fortune stage, where she played a lute and sang a song, should be read, Korda argues, as a publicity stunt meant to attract new customers. An emphasis on the theatricality of commerce also characterizes Bella Mirabella’s discussion of female mountebanks. These women also performed on improvised stages to attract customers, and their short skits and musical interludes were a familiar sight in early modern Europe. Mirabella discusses English and Italian references to mountebanks from the mid-sixteenth century to 1700, and draws attention to the unexpected ways in which theatrical performance and the selling of medical cures and household remedies were intertwined.

The connections between English and Italian performance that inform Mirabella's piece are also central to the four essays that comprise Part III, "Beyond the Channel." Three of the four articles focus on the prominent female players of the *commedia dell'arte*. M. A. Katritzky examines visual images of the *commedia dell'arte* to document women's roles in this improvisatory form of theatre. Julie D. Campbell centers her discussion on the *commedia* figure of the *innamorate*, the educated and elegant romantic heroine played with such success by the famous Isabella Andreini. She suggests that Shakespeare's portrayal of the women in *Love's Labor's Lost* was influenced as much by this Italian theatrical tradition as by the rhetorical and performative dexterity of French noblewomen. *Commedia* influence on England's most famous playwright is also the subject of Rachel Poulsen's article, which situates female homoeroticism in *Twelfth Night* in relation to similar scenarios performed by traveling Italian troupes. The last essay in this section addresses *commedia* only obliquely but suggests interesting ways in which its influence extended even to royal circles. Melinda Gough's careful analysis of Henrietta Maria's early acting experiences examines the impact of traveling Italian actresses on female performance at the French court. Encouraged by her mother, Marie de Medici, Henrietta Maria developed a formidable set of theatrical skills that continued to serve her after she married Charles I. As Gough usefully demonstrates, aristocratic women successfully negotiated the political landscape by sponsoring and performing in dramatic entertainments.

The political implications of performances by noblewomen are also highlighted in Part IV, "Beyond the Stage." Peter Parolin's discussion of a scandal implicating Aletheia Talbot, Countess of Arundel, points to the savvy and resourceful ways in which aristocratic women, at home and abroad, deployed theatrical techniques. In 1622 Lady Arundel was called before the *Collegio* of the Venetian Senate to defend herself against rumors, possibly instigated by English ambassador Henry Wotton, that she had hosted diplomat Antonio Foscarini, who had purportedly betrayed state secrets. As Parolin convincingly demonstrates, Lady Arundel presented herself, both visually and textually, as "an emblem of wronged innocence" (230) and successfully "transformed herself—at least momentarily—into a symbol of her country whom all the important players at court had to support" (233). This highly strategic "performance of self" was also characteristic of Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle. As Julie Crawford's cogent article shows, Cavendish used both her dramatic writing and her self-presentation to negotiate a Restoration England where "increasingly socially-dominant bourgeois women" (256) were eroding class distinctions essential to elite power. Although many scholars have studied Elizabeth I's deployment of spectacle and pageantry, the theatrical activities of other elite women have received considerably less critical attention. Indeed, their silent participation in courtly masques is often thought to be the full extent of their dramatic engagement. Parolin's and Crawford's essays contribute to our understanding of the myriad ways in which these intelligent and articulate women skillfully applied their performance training.

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The book's final section, "Beyond the 'All-Male,'" seems at first to be an anomaly: it addresses representations of women rather than actual female players. However, as all three essays in this section amply demonstrate, early modern codes of femininity were always already inflected by the experiences of real-life women. Jean Howard's characteristically smart essay explores the theatrical techniques used to materialize femininity on the "all-male" stage. Drawing on the work of Judith Butler, she examines representations of Elizabeth in Heywood's *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody, Part I*, and concludes that theater's ability to transform a boy actor into an iconic queen could function both to destabilize the monarchy and to reaffirm it. A similar "unpredictability," she contends, "haunts the representation of all the artificial 'women' of the early modern stage" (278). The multiple gender valences of performance also take center stage in Bruce Smith's engaging, intelligent discussion of early modern ballads. He argues that because sung ballads often employed first-person discursive modes, their oral performance required male singers to inhabit female subject positions. This phenomenological condition, Smith suggests, accounts for the very interesting and "persistent association of ballads with women in early modern England" (297). The final essay in this section, Pamela Allen Brown's compelling reading of a manuscript jestbook, considers bawdy tales recorded by Sir Nicholas Le Strange from the 1630s to the 1650s. According to Freud, the "dirty joke" originated when a man, ashamed of titillating a woman with a lewd story, instead recounted it to another man while the woman stood out of earshot nearby. Whereas Freud's theory disavows female agency in the telling of naughty tales, Le Strange's book points to women's active participation. Sexually explicit jests, Brown argues, were performed with energy, vigor, and even accompanying physical gestures by respectable women at local social gatherings. This "telling-for-retelling," she proposes, was a form of publication, a "making public" of the wit of women (312-13). Even in texts written by men, the essays in this section suggest, the female voice is ever present.

The collection ends with a short afterword by Phyllis Rackin. In addition to summarizing the key contributions of the book, Rackin offers a provocative question of her own: given that a vast number of Renaissance plays have come down to us as "anonymous," could some of them have been written by women? This interesting point suggests fruitful avenues for future research even as it promotes reassessment of current ideas about dramatic authorship. In this, Rackin's contribution typifies the book as a whole. The collection not only opens up a new field for study but also "encourages us to rethink all the assumptions that have previously obscured women's roles in the rich and varied culture of performance" in early modern England (317). In bringing to light previously neglected evidence of female theatrical activity, *Women Players in England, 1500-1660* makes a substantial and important contribution to the study of early modern drama and cultural history.

University of Louisville



James Shapiro, *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare: 1599*. New York: Harper Collins 2005.

Reviewed by Georgia Brown.

Shakespeare has had a curious afterlife. For some, he is the greatest writer who ever lived; for others, he never lived at all, or, at least, never lived as a writer, and the name William Shakespeare, is a mask that hides the true authorship of Sir Francis Bacon, or the Earl of Oxford, or Christopher Marlowe, among several claimants. It has always baffled me that one of the justifications for the theory that Shakespeare did not write Shakespeare is the argument that if such an important writer had really existed, then we would certainly know much more about him. In fact, we know a lot about Shakespeare, and we certainly know a lot about him compared with other Elizabethan writers, like Thomas Nashe. The problem for traditional cradle-to-grave biography is that the information we have about Shakespeare is discontinuous, disparate, and often dry, in the sense that it often does not lend itself to the kind of reconstruction of someone's emotional and psychological life that biography develops. By choosing to concentrate on one year, a felicitous year that combines major creative productivity with a generous amount of biographical fact, James Shapiro has found a way to deal generously and properly with what the record offers us. It is a brilliant solution. Without doubt, 1599 is a pivotal year in Shakespeare's career, as well as in late sixteenth century cultural, political and economic history. However, one also suspects that it is pivotal because Shapiro wrote this book. In other words, as he thought about, researched and focused on this period, he found extra potential, complexity, and importance in that year, and such a knowledgeable and astute critic could probably have done the same for other candidate years.

For Shapiro, 1599 marks a major turning point in Shakespeare's imaginative thought as the writer experiments with revolutionary forms of comedy in *As You Like It*, explores new ways of staging the antagonistic energies that Shapiro identifies as crucial to good drama in *Henry V*, and not only cracks a genre—tragedy—which had largely eluded him, but also develops a new and newly powerful kind of tragedy in *Hamlet* in which the relationship between hero and audience is completely redrawn through his development of the soliloquy. All this is true and brilliantly argued, but the focus on a single year does prompt the reader to consider the question of origins. It could be argued that these developments get under way before 1599. The sonnets, for example, as Shapiro himself acknowledges, although he does not give them quite enough space in the story of Shakespeare's dramatic development, are a proving ground for the expression of the kind of conflicted intellect Shapiro analyzes so well in the character of Hamlet. Indeed, one of the many bonuses of Shapiro's approach, which traces the influence of Shakespeare's moment on his plays and is clearly indebted (but not bound) to new historicism, is that the venerable idea that Hamlet is indecisive or weak-willed is put to rest by

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Shapiro's careful exposition of the ways Hamlet is a man caught between different models of masculinity and different epochs. The passing of chivalric heroism, which Shapiro sees as encapsulated in the fall of Essex, leaves a void in which the proper forms of action have yet to be defined. Shapiro may well answer that he deals with a year—1599—when changes that are incipient are fully actualized, and this is true, but the focus on one year does not come without its own caveats.

A diachronic narrative, as opposed to Shapiro's synchronic narrative, does lend itself more easily to comparison, and although Shapiro's book is by no means limited to 1599, there are very occasional moments when a point of comparison would have enabled the reader to assess the nature of the evidence being presented more easily. This is particularly the case in the (wonderful) description of the panic prompted by the discovery that Spain was planning a mass invasion, probably of England, an invasion that never happened and led to Bacon's quip about the Invincible Armada being succeeded by the Invisible Armada (173-87). It would have helped to have had some notion of how the rumors worked at the time of the real Armada, in 1588, and which mentalities then came into play, so that one could compare and assess the nature of the panic in 1599. I agree, more or less, with Shapiro's presentation of 1599, but without comparative material one has no way of knowing whether Shapiro inflates or deflates his evidence. The uneasiness is compounded by the fact that Shapiro draws a lot of his evidence from legal prosecutions and the records of the Privy Council. Yet, while the Privy Council noted rumors, this does not tell us whether they were believed, or how they were received, and how widespread they were. Some of the rumors Shapiro cites have at least some elements of fiction about them. For example, one of the rumors concerns a Spanish force landing at Milford Haven (184), but Milford Haven has a special resonance as place of fissure (whether good or bad) in Tudor tradition, as it is the port where the future Henry VII landed his forces. Shapiro notes that our scanty knowledge about "what ordinary Elizabethans thought about their leaders" comes from trials (123), but this is inevitably skewed evidence, and one wonders in what sense some of the individuals on trial are "ordinary Elizabethans," when they are clearly mad. There are other bits and pieces of evidence about ordinary people, apart from court records, to be found, for example, in ballads, in the details of local festivities, even in the use and appearance of objects, and trials are the best, but not the exclusive source for "ordinary" voices, and need to be treated with caution.

Although Shapiro opts for a synchronic solution to the problems of Shakespeare's biography, there is still a creeping developmentalism at work, which is prompted by the idea that 1599 is a pivotal, if not the pivotal, year in Shakespeare's career. The implication is that Shakespeare gets better in 1599. Thus *As You Like It* is presented as a better play about love than *Romeo and Juliet*. In *As You Like It*, love is experienced as a complex emotion, while in *Romeo and Juliet* it is just an intense emotion (204). Complexity will appeal to a critic as sharp as Shapiro, but it is not necessarily better subject matter than inten-

sity, and the two plays may both be good, only different. Similarly, Shapiro admires *Julius Caesar* very greatly, but is the play consistently lean, fast-paced and intense (169-70), or does it have passages that are wordy, stage-bound, and dull? The discussion of *As You Like It* demonstrates Shapiro's (very few) weaknesses and his (abundant) strengths. He makes illuminating connections with other Shakespearean plays, but marginalizes the play's connections with Shakespeare's poetry. He makes illuminating links between *As You Like It* and Spenser and Marlowe (although he claims that Leander dies in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* [218]), but with the exception of Spenser, and the authors of his source material, Shapiro does not really put Shakespeare in his literary context. He certainly locates him superbly in a dramatic context, but poetry and prose are kept separate from drama, and marginalized.

Then there is the Earl of Essex. Whether intended, or not, the book betrays a fondness for the dashing Earl, who represented ideals of militaristic honor, but was in actuality a bad soldier. Shapiro is curiously pro-aristocratic (254-59), siding with those who complain that Elizabeth, like the rest of the Tudors, eroded the aristocracy to strengthen their own position. But are Elizabethan aristocrats really "poor shadows" (255) of their grandfathers? Northumberland, the Wizard Earl, for example, and the Earls of Pembroke, were intellectuals and great patrons, who responded, often very successfully, to the demands of a changing political system. Indeed, the aristocracy still controlled vast wealth and many of them made tremendous gains at the expense of the monasteries. The chivalric culture championed by Essex is celebrated in the Order of the Garter, but the Tudors themselves promoted the Order. Compared to the dashing Earl, Robert Cecil, the son of bourgeoisie made good, is dismissed as "dutiful" (259), "diminutive" and out "for ease, pleasure, and profit" (257). Robert Cecil may not have had his father's flair, but he was, nonetheless, a capable, astute, and diligent servant of the Queen. He lined his own pocket and looked after his own interests, but then so did all Elizabeth's servants, to lesser or greater degrees. This review has concentrated on the caveats that should accompany a reading of Shapiro's wonderful book, because its strengths have been highlighted by the glowing reviews and accolades it has justifiably received. Shapiro's book is not only solid analysis, it is very often very exciting analysis, that still manages to wear its learning lightly. Writing for a wide readership without compromising academic standards is not easy. It is a very rare gift, and comes to those who really know their subject and who remember what it was like to learn. Shapiro's dazzlingly syncretic mind has produced a work of integrity, intelligence, and infectious enthusiasm.

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



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