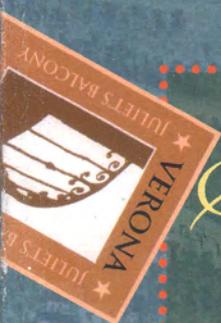


The
**Upstart
Crow**
A Shakespeare Journal



*Shakespeare
and
Tourism*



Volume XXVII

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Dear Readers,

I am proud to introduce Volume XXVII (2008) of *The Upstart Crow*. Building on the 2007 Clemson Shakespeare Festival, the special feature of this issue is “Shakespeare and Tourism.” Who or what is a Shakespearean tourist? How does “tourism” or travel figure in Shakespeare’s plays? What do Shakespeare’s plays have to tell us about our twenty-first century fascination with tourism and travel?

These questions are addressed directly by the volume’s first two essays, by Sharon O’Dair of the University of Alabama and John R. Ford of Delta State University. To speak of Shakespeare and tourism, O’Dair reminds us, is to speak of Shakespeare from a decidedly later, nineteenth-century perspective. But given the impact of tourism on the environment, including travel to Stratford-upon-Avon, O’Dair wonders how “virtual” forms of tourism might offset our twenty-first century fascination with “being there.” John R. Ford, a confessed Shakespearean tourist, records in his essay the joys that accompany traveling between Shakespeare festivals. The arrangement of plays in repertory makes possible unexpected connections between characters, plays and playing spaces, which produce what Ford describes as “the secret pleasure of reportorial recognition”—a pleasure that comes precisely with “being there.”

The issue, as always, cultivates a range of approaches to Shakespeare. Marguerite Tassi raises insightful if also troubling questions about revenge in *Twelfth Night*; David Lucking considers the importance of storytelling to identity construction in Shakespeare’s plays but also, through a reading of *Othello*, the potential risks that accompany the telling of one’s story; and Michael W. Shurgot confronts the ethics of reviewing productions of Shakespeare’s plays.

Additionally, our performance review section addresses a wide range of Shakespeare performance (from Idaho to London), and our book review section, under the expert guidance of Henry Turner of Rutgers University, features reviews of significant contributions to the field of Shakespeare studies.

As an interim editor I have felt sometimes like a tourist, which seems only fitting given the special feature of this issue, but I am pleased to report that Elizabeth Rivlin will return as editor with the 2009 issue on “Politics and the Citizen.” Thank you for continuing to support *The Upstart Crow*. We hope that you enjoy the issue.

Brian McGrath
Interim Editor, Fall 2008

with

Elizabeth Rivlin
Editor

**VIRTUALLY THERE: SHAKESPEARE AND TOURISM IN THE TWENTY-FIRST
CENTURY**

Sharon O'Dair, University of Alabama

The irony of talking about Shakespeare and Tourism is that, in doing so, we are talking about ourselves, about today, or at least the last fifty or sixty years or so, and not about the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries or even Shakespeare's characters or settings. Tourists did not roam the planet then, nor did they flock to Stratford-upon-Avon, and Shakespeare never wrote a tourist into one of his plays. The *Oxford English Dictionary* records 1780 as the first use, in English, of the word "tourist"; 1811 of "tourism"; and 1848 of "touristic." Even in their origins, the *OED's* citations make clear, the terms were disparaging, and this situation has scarcely changed. Tourists have been and, it seems, always are objects of derision; at the same time, tourists have been and, it seems, always are other people. As Jonathan Culler points out, "tourists can always find someone more touristy than themselves to sneer at."¹ Today we bemoan the truth that tourism has become mass tourism with a capital M and a capital T and that packaged tours to the Costa Brava, or weekend party ships to the Bahamas or Ensenada, all signify an approaching apocalypse: the destruction of environments and cultures, a pandering to escapist fantasies of the doltish and the out-of-shape. What we need—and what we are being offered by astute travel companies—is something new, what one tourism scholar has dubbed the "New Moral Tourism."² Encompassing eco-tourism, sustainable tourism, heritage tourism, and cultural tourism, among other forms, New Moral Tourism defines itself in opposition to mass tourism, to having fun in the sun fueled by pink drinks adorned by rice paper umbrellas. New Moral Tourism tells you how to vacation: travel must be good for you, and for the cultures and environments you visit. Codes of ethics for tourists have been promulgated by bodies as diverse as the World Tourism Organization, the American Society of Travel Agents, the Friends of Conservation, the World Wide Fund for Nature, and even publishers of travel guides, like those in the Let's Go or Lonely Planet series.³

Eventually, say advocates of New Moral Tourism, we must have in force a "regulatory framework for tourism that can protect all the stakeholders from the worst aspects of tourism."⁴ In the meantime, advocates encourage tourists in the West to buy into this moral vision, and many of us do, wracked as we are by guilt and anxiety about our privilege. Consider, for example, the American tourists encountered just a few years ago by Tim Oakes, a scholar studying tourism in a remote village located in the subtropical mountains of southwestern China. Seeking authentic experience in the village life of ethnic Miao people (or, more familiarly, Hmong people), something not to be had in the Bahamas or Ensenada, the Americans also "wanted badly to feel that their

visit was somehow helping the village” and that they “themselves [were] more [like] ambassadors of friendship and development” than tourists.⁵ The Miao, in contrast, thought the Americans were tourists, just like their more usual visitors from China and Japan, and they wanted them to behave like tourists, which is to say, they wanted them to spend lots of money on the trinkets and souvenirs they had for sale and eagerly thrust into their faces.

Arguably, New Moral Tourism is but the most recent manifestation of what Culler calls “an opposition integral to tourism” in which certain travelers set themselves apart from and see themselves as superior to other travelers, who are derided as tourists. Culler thinks the ubiquity of this definitional mechanism—the way oppositions between “traveler” and “tourist” become destabilized, muddled, and then reestablished—undermines the historical categories of traveler and tourist.⁶ This opinion, however, seems to be a bit of postmodernist wishful thinking, for almost all tourism scholars agree with the *OED*: the tourist is distinctively modern and the traveler distinctively pre-modern.⁷ You will, therefore, find tourists in Stratford-upon-Avon today, including those of the New Moral variety, some of whom, in a grand, even amplified gesture of opposition to mere tourism, fancy themselves travelers. But you will not find tourists in Shakespeare’s plays.

Culler notwithstanding, travel is very much different from tourism, the traveler very much different from the tourist. In contrast to easy, relaxing, and mindless tourism, travel is difficult and dangerous. Tourism scholars almost always point out what the *OED* also relates: in its original usage “travel” was the same word as “travail” and meant labor, including the labor of child-birth; it meant toil, suffering, and trouble. Even after the spellings diverged, beginning in the fourteenth century, travel retained its original meanings into the nineteenth. For persons in early modern England, including William Shakespeare, the toil and trouble of travel was a given, partly because of logistical or technical conditions but especially—and this is very much in contrast to society today, which is global, mobile, and fluid⁸—because society was largely static, and social life rooted in the local. Stephen Greenblatt explains that

A person uprooted from his family and community in Elizabethan England was a person in trouble. This was a society deeply suspicious of vagrancy.... There were wanderers on the roads, but they were exceedingly vulnerable. Unaccompanied, unprotected women could be attacked and raped almost with impunity. Unaccompanied men were less desperately at risk, but they too needed all the protection they could get. Trades that required travel were heavily regulated—every peddler and tinker was required to have a license from two justices of the shire in which he resided, and anyone not so licensed would be officially or unofficially victimized. An able-bodied beggar or idle vagrant could by statute be seized and brought before the local justice of the peace for interrogation and punishment.... If the vagrant could not show that he had land of his own or a master whom he was serving, he was tied to a

post and publicly whipped. Then he was either returned to his place of birth—to resume the work he was born to do—or put to labor or placed in the stocks until someone took him into service.⁹

Shakespeare does allude in a number of plays—*Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Hamlet*, *Richard II*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, for example—to the kinds of travel engaged in by aristocrats or others of high standing, those who, as Greenblatt reminds us, “lived lives of privileged idleness”:¹⁰ travel for education (what would come to be called, soon enough, the Grand Tour), as well as travel for adventure, commerce, diplomacy, war, religious duty, and the like. This travel is largely, if not entirely, distinguishable, as Greenblatt implies, from that of working people or that of vagabonds, the masterless, and others who do not know or accept their place. In *All’s Well That Ends Well*, for instance, sage old Lord Lafew makes just such a distinction, in attempting to put the social climbing fop Parolles in his place: “You are a vagabond and no true traveler,” says Lafew.¹¹ In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Antonio is urged to send his son elsewhere “to seek preferment”—in the wars, at a university, or in adventure¹²—since only by being “tried and tutored in the world” can the young Proteus become “a perfect man.”¹³ Enobarbus reminds the warrior Antony that one purpose of travel is to accumulate trophies and wonders, of which Cleopatra is one of the finest, “a wonderful piece of work.” Not to have seen her, or bedded her, “not to have been blest withal,” says Enobarbus, “would have discredited your travel.”¹⁴

But even for these, travel is travail—hard and wearisome. Like Antony, Othello has seen wonders far and wide, and travel is the story of his life, but it is a “travailous history” that wins him Desdemona’s love: “She loved me for the dangers I had passed / And I loved her that she did pity them.”¹⁵ In *Richard II*, Shakespeare uses the word’s two meanings to pull apart the romance of aristocratic travel. When Bolingbroke is banished from the kingdom for six years, his father gamely tries to cheer him up, get him to buck up, by telling him to call the banishment “a travel thou tak’st for pleasure.”¹⁶ But Bolingbroke will have none of his father’s advice:

My heart will sigh when I miscall it so,
Which finds it an enforced pilgrimage....
[And] every tedious stride I make
Will but remember me what a deal of world
I wander from the jewels I love.
Must I not serve a long apprenticeship
To foreign passages, and in the end,
Having my freedom, boast of nothing else
But that I was a journeyman to grief?¹⁷

Enforced, tedious, grievous. Bolingbroke dissects the travail of travel, its rigors and demands, and in doing so, reveals its opposite, the imperative of place, an

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English attachment to land, and the comfort of the local. These, he says, are “the jewels I love”; these the “mother and...nurse” that “bears me yet!”¹⁸

Such sentiments arise, too, in romantic comedy, figuring prominently in *As You Like It*. Sensible, no-nonsense Rosalind-become-Ganymede concurs with Bolingbroke, and Shakespeare offers her/him a stage on which to assert the vanities of travelers. Waiting for Orlando in 4.1, Rosalind/Ganymede passes the time in conversation with Jaques, who explains that his melancholy is quite unlike anyone else’s, precisely because it is “mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels.”¹⁹ Taking this in, Rosalind/Ganymede retorts,

A traveler! By my faith, you have great reason to be sad. I fear you have sold your own lands to see other men’s. Then to have seen much and to have nothing is to have rich eyes and poor hands.

At which point, Jaques admits, “Yes, I have gained my experience.” And that experience, Rosalind/Ganymede judges, “makes you sad.” Imagine, she/he says, gaining experience just to be sad, “and travel[ing] for it too!”²⁰ You are one, she/he tells him, who would “disable all the benefits of your / own country” and “almost chide God for making you that countenance / you are.”²¹

Very tempting is the thought of directing Rosalind/Ganymede’s words here toward the New Moral Tourist, she who is wracked with guilt over her own privilege, he who always seeks the authentic elsewhere, but I will resist that temptation. More fruitful at this moment is to point out a link between the aims of modern tourism, whether mass or New Moral, and modern conceptions of Arden as a delightful green world, a place of welcome retreat where jaded courtiers come to find their authentic selves and nourish their brittle emotions and bodies, finding “tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, / Sermons in stones, and good in everything.”²² The link is vitally strong—think of Woodstock, of National Parks, of holidays on isolated specks of coral in the South Pacific, or of movie stars running from Hollywood’s bright lights to live in Montana or New Mexico. But it is forged on a dubious reading of Shakespeare’s green world, including Duke Senior’s famous speech. Shakespeare in fact constructs Arden in a much different register, referring to the place six times as a “desert.”²³ Arden is “bleak,” “cold,” “savage,” and “inaccessible,”²⁴ and, as a result, frightful and dangerous. Celia and Rosalind bear out Greenblatt’s assertion about the vulnerability of women traveling “unaccompanied [and] unprotected”: “Alas,” says Rosalind to her cousin, “what danger will it be to us, / Maids as we are, to travel forth so far? / Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold.”²⁵ Upon arriving in Arden, strong Orlando, who defeated the wrestler Charles, is almost hysterical in his weariness. To old Adam, faint with hunger and age, he blusters, “if this uncouth forest yield anything savage, I will either be food for it, or bring it for food to thee.”²⁶ Like Bolingbroke, these courtiers find themselves exiled, their retreat forced, and disaster a more expected end than sweet leisure. Touchstone rather than Duke Senior captures the exiles’

states of mind: "Ay, now I am in Arden, the more fool I; when I was at home I was in a better place, but travelers must be content."²⁷



Until recently, one might have been called mad, or antediluvian, or even a luddite to suggest that today "[tourists] must be content," content with fear, danger, or the possibility of disaster. Certainties and comfort are the very essence of tourism, and to suggest that home is a better place than Yellowstone, Italy, or Bhutan is anathema for those, perhaps a near-majority in the West, who believe travel is a right, perhaps not God-given but certainly technologically-driven, and essential to democracy and the pursuit of happiness.²⁸ As feminist critic Caren Kaplan observed in 1996, for middle-class Americans in the post-war years, the benefits of travel were taken for granted, and in any case, travel was "unavoidable, indisputable, and always necessary for family, love and friendship, as well as work."²⁹ In Europe, too, writes John Urry, "not to 'go away' is like not possessing a car or a nice house"; it suggests a lack of status, a lack of sophistication.³⁰ And statistics do support these claims: the market for tourism is huge, and growing. We are edging close, now, to one billion persons traveling internationally "for no other reason than leisure."³¹ Domestic tourism far outstrips international tourism: in 1998, residents of the United Kingdom took 122 million tourist trips. And in the USA in 1996, Americans took 1100 million such trips.³² The World Trade Organization publishes tourism statistics for over 190 countries, and the economic sector of "travel and tourism" is, according to Urry, "the largest industry in the world accounting for 11.7 per cent of world GDP, 8 per cent of world exports and 8 per cent of employment."³³

And yet, some now wonder about the likelihood of continued rapid growth in travel and tourism, as well as the appropriateness of a social world conceived in terms of "hypermobilities," as fluid and malleable rather than static and stable. Partly, they do so because of an increased awareness of climate change and in particular of global warming: transportation accounts for approximately one-third of all carbon dioxide emissions³⁴ and is the fastest growing source of such emissions; within this sector, air transport is growing the fastest.³⁵ Most greenhouse gas emissions caused by tourism result from transportation—in the US, about 75%; in France, about 80%; in New Zealand, almost 90%³⁶—and principally from just getting people from their homes to their destinations. Data reveal that "people travel further, more frequently and for shorter periods of time than a few decades ago,"³⁷ largely because of the ease of air travel.³⁸ But the ease and amount of air travel is not the only reason it "needs to be seen as the most problematic global environmental impact of tourism."³⁹ Emissions from jets are released primarily in "upper troposphere and lower stratosphere, where they have a larger impact on ozone, cloudiness, and radiative forcing than they do at the Earth's surface."⁴⁰ And unlike with automobiles, no alternative fuels for jets exist or even are on the horizon.

Indeed, air travel occupies a privileged but unexamined space in our consciousnesses, in the public imaginary. As former British Airways executive Hugh Somerville points out, “people...tend to throw their environmental credentials away when they board an aircraft.”⁴¹ Even environmentalists do, as Urry quips: “environmentalists travel huge amounts...complaining about the building of extra airplane runways but being absolutely fierce users of runways!”⁴² Ironically, a principal factor in the growth of international tourism is our awareness of the fragility of our global environment. People want to see a lion in Kenya or South Africa, not in the local zoo. People want to see antiquities in Machu Picchu, not at Yale University.⁴³ And, as with shopping more generally,⁴⁴ data suggest that the more highly educated an individual is, the more likely he or she is to travel extensively.⁴⁵ Why shouldn’t a French telecom executive or an American museum curator ski in July on the slopes of Chile or New Zealand?

Notwithstanding our bad faith or ignorance, however, an increasing number of academics, policy analysts, and even industry executives are wondering whether it may be necessary to curb the right to travel, particularly by air, and if so, how to do so without jeopardizing too badly an important part of the world’s economy.⁴⁶ People are also wondering whether that economy will be jeopardized by a voluntary curbing of travel, particularly by air, a consequence of people now feeling, if I may invoke Virginia Woolf, that on or about September 11, 2001, human character changed—again.⁴⁷ Of course, no one needs me to explain how or why it changed, or the many results of it, but I hope the reader will indulge my citing of Ian McEwan, a novelist like Woolf, who captures this change beautifully. Watching a plane go down over London, Henry Perowne—the main character in *Saturday* and a physician—thinks about his own air travel, about the way “you submit to the folly because everyone else does,” shooting over “the Atlantic at five hundred feet per second” at forty thousand feet above the ground. He often imagines “how it might go” in a crash. “Construed from the outside, from afar like this, [the scene] is...familiar. It’s already almost eighteen months since half the planet watched, and watched again the unseen captives driven through the sky to the slaughter, at which time there gathered around the innocent silhouette of any jet plane a novel association. Everyone agrees, airliners look different in the skies these days, predatory or doomed.”⁴⁸

Everyone agrees. And I was in Stratford-upon-Avon in the summer of 2006, anticipating yet another ride on one of those planes that look so different, predatory or doomed, when the latest terrorist scare occurred, a scare it is safe to say we recall every time we get on a commercial flight these days, carrying our quart-sized plastic baggies of gels, creams, and liquids; looking at the grumpy and humorless TSA inspectors, while resisting all impulses to laugh or make a joke; and enduring the disrobing in front of them that sometimes seems faintly obscene. Just two days later, I was scheduled to fly to Dublin to meet a friend, who was leaving the States on the very afternoon of the scare in London. She never made it to Dublin—ironically not because of security delays but because, for what seemed the first time all summer,

Birmingham, Alabama, and specifically the airport there, was the target of an enormous thunderstorm. Her plane sat on the tarmac for several hours, rain pouring down. By the time the pilots were allowed to return the plane to the terminal and the passengers to disembark, her flight to Dublin had left Atlanta. With schedules disrupted on two continents, it was impossible for her to leave again before Monday evening, and we were scheduled to return to Alabama that Friday morning. In contrast, I did make my plane at the Birmingham airport in the UK, after an hour-long cab ride from Stratford, and a mile-long walk with my bags at 5:30 in the morning, which walk was decidedly faster than the cabs were moving, stuck in deep traffic, as they approached the terminals.

So I was alone in Dublin for a week, with, I might add, a couple of sets of theater tickets in hand. But I was not entirely alone; and my friend didn't entirely miss the trip. For with email and the internet, she was with me, in a sense; she was with me virtually. I wrote long missives every day about what I had done and seen and eaten; and after she got over a one-day bout of feeling very, very sorry for herself, she wrote every day reminding me of day trips she had planned for us to take or museums and restaurants she had planned for us to visit. And every day she knew the weather as well as I, for she spent a good deal of time watching Dublin's webcam, located surprisingly close to the hotel we had booked and where I was staying. My friend used her imagination to supplement the information she had and to substitute for what she was missing. Now, a skeptic may protest, "that is a poor substitute indeed," and perhaps it was; but she was not cold or ever wet from the rain. Or one may marvel, "your friend has quite the imagination!" Perhaps she has.

But in fact the quality of her imagination is irrelevant, or rather, more accurately, always relevant, for, even had she traveled, even had she been a tourist in Dublin, she would have depended upon her imagination. When we travel, when we are tourists, we all depend upon our imaginations. Tourist companies, art museums, heritage sites, and, of course, theater companies depend upon our dependence, because, as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explains about heritage sites,

Not everything that is to be known or understood is so directly available to the senses. While the marketing of heritage promises experience, and specifically to engage not only sight and sound but also touch, smell, and taste, heritage interpreters often locate truth in what cannot be seen, in the invisible heart and soul of the site. Their expressed desire to make sites real and vivid indicates that sites cannot do this for themselves. The inability of sites to tell their own story authorizes the interpretation project itself.⁴⁹

Tourism, she adds, is thus "largely in the business of virtuality [though it] claims to be in the business of actualities—of real places, real things, and real experiences."⁵⁰ And what I am going to suggest to you, therefore, is that my friend's virtual experience of Dublin in the summer of 2006 offers an image

of what, with continued technological innovation and capability, may become a viable alternative to certain forms of tourism, especially tourism associated with heritage and the performing arts. While it is true that such tourism, especially travel made specifically to see live performances of Shakespeare—or any playwright—is a tiny percentage of tourism, and a small percentage even of cultural tourism;⁵¹ it is also true that reducing that percentage even more, perhaps to near-zero, is worthwhile, is worth the effort. Particularly when long-haul air travel is involved, small reductions in numbers of tourists can have sizable positive effects on the global environment.⁵² And virtual experience—or other sorts of slow or low-impact tourism—is less dangerous and less trouble and perhaps even less disappointing, than experiencing the real thing.

Here we edge toward the problem of authenticity, a major issue in work on tourism, both academic and within the industry. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett suggests a contradiction within contemporary tourism, which simultaneously must produce both “difference” and “sameness”: “to compete for tourists, a location must become a destination. To compete with each other, destinations must be distinguishable” and yet “standardization is part and parcel of the economies of scale that high-volume tourism requires.”⁵³ Rather than cite the literature extensively here, however, I will offer two examples from my own travels in the summer of 2006. En route to the World Shakespeare Congress in Brisbane, Australia, I stopped in Tahiti, rather than spend additional time in Australia’s cities, which offer what I find in San Francisco or Boston: beautiful landscapes, fine food, terrific wine, art films, classic theater. The weather promised to be warmer in Tahiti and the islands exotic; both proved true. Yet Tahiti was more familiar than I expected: substitute English for French, and a booming economy for a small one, and I could have been in Hawaii. Everyone, particularly the Tahitians themselves, seemed to be wearing board shorts, t-shirts, and flip-flops. Label of choice: Billabong, a company whose associations if not origins are Australian. It was impossible to impose images from Gauguin onto the Tahitians I saw.

In Dublin, a city with significant numbers of historical buildings, as well as fine food, not-so-terrific wine, arts films, and classic theater, I wondered whether it mattered to the authenticity of my experience that I heard not one word of Gaelic, even though every street sign and every public building announces its name in English and Gaelic? Even more crucially, did it matter that every waitperson and every bartender I encountered had recently immigrated from Eastern Europe, spoke accented English but without a brogue, and couldn’t possibly know that, picking up my credit card and reading my name, it might be opportune to ask from where my Irish ancestors hailed? I had, in fact, been dreading the possibility of the Irish asking me; but was I disappointed, and did I feel my experience less authentic, that no one did, not once? Was it an authentic experience of Dublin to hear an Irishman complain loudly in the street about these immigrants taking jobs from the Irish? Perhaps so, but how different is this from the situation in Los Angeles? Barbara Hodgdon calls Stratford a “virtual wonder cabinet for Shakespeare,” the heritage properties carefully managed by the Shakespeare Trust in order “to reconstruct and individuate

him, assign him particular values, circulate and disseminate knowledges about him, and frame his histories with particular viewing agendas.”⁵⁴ But does it matter to the tourist’s experience of this wonder cabinet that the Trust does not similarly manage the rest of the town? Does it matter that, after visiting Hall’s Croft or Nash’s House, the likelihood is that the Shakespeare-doused tourist will sit down in the comfortable bar at the half-timbered Shakespeare Hotel, and find that the young woman serving the ale is just off the boat from Poland, works fourteen-hour days, and does not know what “half pint” means in English?

In these conditions, might virtual travel substitute for tourism? We do not know yet and will not know for some years to come, but scholars in a number of disciplines are debating and investigating, as well as speculating about, the issue. Perhaps most notable is Urry, and his recent work emphasizes both the ubiquity and necessity of travel—though not necessarily of tourism—in the contemporary world. People travel because they require proximity to and face-to-face interaction with other people in many social instances—for family life, for business transactions, and for social integration. And yet, while Urry concludes that our need for “physical co-presence and corporeal travel would appear to be with us for a long time yet,” and moreover that use of the internet often stimulates the desire to travel, he acknowledges, too, that virtual travel is most promising and most likely to take hold in exactly the areas of concern here, in live performance and in the beholding of objects, such as at heritage sites.⁵⁵ Not surprising, this, since we have in the past and until very recently relied on “surrogates for travel” such as the museum.⁵⁶ And live theatrical performance has long been mediatized, so much so that in most cases today, live performance strenuously “endeavors to replicate television, video, and film [and thus] itself is a product of media technologies.”⁵⁷ As Susan Sontag put it in 1966, the influence of theater upon films was great in film’s early years, but “today traffic seems, with few exceptions, entirely one way: film to theatre.”⁵⁸

Theater—and perhaps Shakespearean theater in particular—lags behind other forms of live performance, such as popular music or performance art, in recognizing this dependence on media technologies, that the traffic is almost entirely one-way. But being behind the curve can be exemplary. Consider the Royal Shakespeare Company’s 2006 production of *The Tempest*, with Patrick Stewart in the lead and Mariah Gale as Miranda. The opening scene, of the shipwreck, was strongly mediatized, using video projection onto a huge screen, accompanied by deafening and body-penetrating music and sound effects. Most of the scene was narrated, or seemed to be, because the human figures were puny, visible from behind the screen, on which was projected an enormous radio; the mariners and aristocrats moved about inside the space of the radio’s dial, without room to act, shouting ineffectively amid the roaring noises of sound effects, which vividly conveyed the sense of a modern ship sinking, complete with crystalline and loud sonar beeps. When Prospero arrived onstage in the second scene, followed by Miranda, neither had to compete with sound effects or the enormous projected image

of the radio, and the contrast could not have been more striking. Yet the contrast did not benefit Stewart and Gale, who also seemed puny on the large stage; their voices were small, unamplified, and the audience strained to hear them. I was no more than fifteen rows from the stage. I returned two nights later and sat five rows from the stage. Only there—that close—could I feel the power of Stewart's voice. I understand that the RSC refuses to mike actors, presumably to protect the sanctity of the actor and her craft, but this *Tempest* suggests the awkwardness of going half-way with mediatization.

Our definition of what constitutes live performance is changing to include and embrace and even demand that which is mediated.⁵⁹ Although live, shall we say, acoustic, theater will not disappear, this cultural transformation cannot be reversed. As such, being ahead of the curve within Shakespeare performance is also exemplary. A late 2007 production of *Hamlet* by the experimental theater company, The Wooster Group, at the Public Theater in New York, revealed clearly both the dependence of theater, including Shakespeare, on media technology and the continuing resistance to this fact by theater audiences. *Hamlet* was director Elizabeth LeCompte's first engagement with Shakespeare, but The Wooster Group's productions usually are organized around a dazzling multimedia "encounter with a literary, cinematic or dramatic text,"⁶⁰ in this instance, with a dramatic text and a cinematic one, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and the film of John Gielgud's 1964 production of the play, starring Richard Burton. As in Stratford, so in New York: a large video screen dominated the set on the Public's stage, and onto it was projected the Gielgud-Burton production, which, as a number of reviewers note, LeCompte's actors "mimic—and mess with...neither doing *Hamlet*, exactly, nor deconstructively undoing it....The performers synchronise themselves to the film with fanatic fidelity—matching vocal patterns, gestures and movements with the actors on screen."⁶¹

I loved LeCompte's work in this *Hamlet*, and while I could say much, even gush, about its brilliance, I want to restrict my comments here to what is at issue in this essay, the possibility of virtual Shakespeare performance and, on ecological grounds, the necessity of (pursuing) it. Except for the actors' bodies, nothing was "live" in this performance. All of the actors were miked. Voices were manipulated from the mixing board at the back of the hall: at times, instead of company actor Scott Shepherd, Burton spoke Hamlet's lines; at times their voices merged. Levels of amplification were part of the "action." Of course, video images pervaded; I counted seven video screens and three cameras onstage. And much of the acting was focused around the onstage camera: a good deal of the action was filmed for the audience's consumption right then and there, as actors had been directed to bring their bodies into the camera's view. LeCompte deliberately imposed this additional level of mediation upon the audience. Certainly, that camera and that screen did not have to be part of the set, and this is certainly the case if, as the program notes insist, the idea was to reconstruct "a hypothetical theater piece from the fragmentary evidence of the edited film, like an archeologist inferring a temple from a collection of ruins."⁶² But I do not think such an archeology is all that is going on

here. As Alisa Solomon, too, observes,

all the painstaking digital doctoring suggests that something deeper is going on... As a play about acting, about measuring up to expectation, about the injunctions of ghosts and the debilitating weight of history... *Hamlet* is a perfect Wooster Group vehicle for holding a mirror up to representation... [T]hey seem to question the entire enterprise of live performance.⁶³

Indeed, and certainly in this performance, liveness is a relative concept, perhaps even dubious.

In making a live event from an edited film, in mimicking the work of the archeologist, LeCompte suggests the company reversed the process of the 1964 production, in which a live performance “was recorded from 17 camera angles and edited into a film that was shown for only two days in 2000 movie houses across the United States.”⁶⁴ But again, archeology is not all that is going on here, for, as the program notes also suggest, the point of the 1964 recording was to “bring... a live theatre experience to thousands of simultaneous viewers in different cities.”⁶⁵ Laurie Osborne has called this effort, in which the Geilgud-Burton production screened for only two days and four performances, “an early version of ‘live pay-per-view,’”⁶⁶ but I think it important to note that their “theatrofilm”⁶⁷ sought not only to approximate the immediacy of the live Broadway production, with respect to the actors’ bodies and voices, presumably to create a national community of theatergoers, but also to approximate the experience of being in the New York theater while sitting in a movie theater somewhere else. The 17 camera angles were captured, as Russ Alsbrook explains, in “a multi-camera TV-style recording [in which]...[s]tudio video cameras were positioned in the orchestra, boxes, and balconies to mimic the audience point of view.” The producers of this “theatrofilm” tried to create a virtual experience for moviegoers of the Lunt-Fontanne Theater in New York City.⁶⁸

Osborne implies that for many, an insistence upon “liveness”—the “non-reproductive” nature of performance that Peggy Phelan claims is its ontological ground⁶⁹—is a crucial distinction between stage plays and films, a distinction Philip Auslander and others find hopelessly muddled in contemporary culture. Oft-invoked, too, is the related notion that a distinctive community is created through live performance, in which actors and audience interact, drawing energy and focus from each other, and everyone incorporates the residual effects of theater’s origins in ritual.⁷⁰ No doubt this is true, but to what extent is debatable. Stanley Kauffmann pointed out over thirty years ago that certain “theater performances... seem to proceed wonderfully without any real cognizance of or relation to an audience.”⁷¹ LeCompte’s work generally proceeds similarly: “the audience is always spatially separated from the scenic landscapes that she constructs” and “the spectator’s role... is to witness events, rather than become an active or equivalent participant in their performance of them.”⁷² By my reckoning, almost no community was established at The Public Theater on the

nights I saw The Wooster Group's *Hamlet*. At the intermission, the audience thinned,⁷³ and the severe video and digital mediation enforced an abstract relationship between actors and audiences. I found myself watching Richard Burton almost as much as Scott Shepherd.⁷⁴

Auslander thinks detrimental to the cause of live production the "invoking of clichés and mystifications like 'the magic of live theatre,' the 'energy' that supposedly exists between performers and spectators in a live event, and the 'community' that live performance is often said to create among performers and spectators."⁷⁵ And Pierre Lévy thinks we should strive "to live without fear and resentment" about our emerging virtual world; there is little point in "spreading a sense of disarray and panic" about it.⁷⁶ After all, predictions of disarray are easy; and society will have to confront the many social dislocations that do occur from virtualization. Rather, we should begin to think creatively about the possible benefits to us afforded by various forms of virtuality, such as those in the arts, including theatrical performance. Consider the "Shakespeare in Washington" festival, presented in 2007 in the US Capitol. In addition to a number of plays produced, films screened, and lectures presented, several art exhibitions were offered to the public. At the National Building Museum, a number of architects mused about theatrical space in an exhibit entitled "Reinventing the Globe: A Shakespearean Theatre for the 21st Century." One such musing, by John Coyne, imagined "A New Global Theater," which would use the internet, streaming video, and big monitors to bring actors on different continents into a single, virtual performance. *The Washington Post's* writer, Philip Kennicott, was skeptical about the idea, invoking the kinds of clichés and mystifications Auslander complains about.⁷⁷ But my guess is that Kennicott's skepticism will be proven incorrect. After all, the Second Life Shakespeare Company will soon present *Hamlet* in Second Life.⁷⁸ And one can easily imagine yet another level of digital video mediation in The Wooster Group *Hamlet*: a camera on the mixing board and a dozen in the audience would allow The Wooster Group to mimic the tactics of the Geilgud-Burton "theatrofilm," only with the ability to simulcast the production "live" in high-definition video to movie theaters in major metropolitan areas in the US and abroad, as, in fact, New York's Metropolitan Opera has recently and, shall we say, theatrofilmically, begun to do.⁷⁹ My guess is that soon, very soon, we will be able to watch performances of Shakespeare's plays in theaters in our home towns, or even, perhaps more appealingly, at home. Companies like the Royal Shakespeare Company or the Stratford Festival in Ontario, Canada, will follow the lead of the Metropolitan Opera, as indeed the San Francisco Opera has now done;⁸⁰ and the virtual experience will be wonderful. Our carbon footprints will be smaller, too, and we will worry less often about whether we can pack all of our gels, creams, and liquids into a quart-sized plastic baggie.

At the beginning of this essay, I noted the irony that to talk about Shakespeare and tourism is to talk about ourselves. Another irony to note at the end of this essay, one implicit in my discussion of The Wooster Group's *Hamlet*, is that, given the exigencies of my life, I had to fly to New York to see a production

that, I had hypothesized, would further my argument about the need for and possibilities of virtual Shakespeare performance. In making that one round-trip flight from Birmingham, Alabama to New York, I was responsible for putting into the atmosphere almost as many pounds of CO₂ as does an average person living on the Indian sub-continent *in one year*. That one trip was responsible for almost half the emissions put into the air by an average middle-class person driving 7500 miles per year, and almost one-third of the total emissions claimed to be a “climate compatible budget of one person in one year” by Atmosfair, a respected carbon emissions offset company, located in Germany.⁸¹ Cultural tourism, and specifically travel to see Shakespeare performed live, is, as I noted above, a tiny percentage of tourism, but, as I also noted above, and as the carbon footprint of my trip to New York suggests, reducing the amount of travel we do is always worth the effort, particularly when long-haul air travel is involved. All of us—fans of Shakespeare and scholars, too—can be more efficient about our travel, can search for lower-impact forms of it; and we can insist that Shakespeare theater companies begin to think more creatively about the benefits of digital and virtual performance.

Notes

1. Jonathan Culler, *Framing the Sign: Criticism and its Institutions* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 157-58.
2. Jim Butcher, *The Moralisation of Tourism: Sun, Sand...And Saving the World?* (London: Routledge, 2003).
3. Butcher, 67-73.
4. Ron O'Grady, *The Threat of Tourism: Challenge to the Church* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2006), 83.
5. Tim Oakes, “Get Real! On Being Yourself and Being a Tourist,” in *Travels in Paradox: Re-mapping Tourism*, ed. Claudio Minca and Tim Oakes (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 229-50; 234.
6. Culler, 157.
7. See, for example, Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Atheneum, 1973 [1961]); Waleed Hazbun, “The East as an Exhibit: Thomas Cook & Son and the Origins of the International Tourism Industry in Egypt,” in *The Business of Tourism: Place, Faith, and History*, ed. Philip Scranton and Janet F. Davidson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Dennis Kennedy, “Shakespeare and Cultural Tourism,” *Theatre Journal* 50. 2 (1997): 175-188; Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1989 [1976]); and John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990).
8. So much so that some sociologists see their object of study changing before their very eyes, from social structures to networks or fields of mobility.
9. Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (New York:

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Norton, 2004), 87-88. In *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), Patricia Fumerton confirms Greenblatt's account, while torquing it to remind us of the considerable numbers of people on the move during the period. Thus, "not all of these mostly poor migrants would have been arrested for vagrancy or peremptorily whipped before being hurried out of town, as was the custom of treating undesirable 'strangers' after the late 1590s... Nevertheless, the 1572 act that attempted to define who exactly constituted the vagrant, hashed out over much hot debate, was deliberately broad in its scope, leaving considerable room for interpretation. As a result, the 'legitimate' destitute traveler not only rubbed elbows with the 'illegitimate' vagrant, but also risked at any moment being identified as such... the impoverished mobile poor who did escape correction did so at the discretion of authorities who could often confidently distinguish them from the 'true' vagrant only by the thin paper passport clutched in their hands authorizing their travels and perhaps their right to beg" (xii). For further discussion of mobility in the period, see Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) and Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986). On the use of violence, particularly hanging, as a mode of social control in early modern England, see Francis Barker, *The Culture of Violence: Essays on Tragedy and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

10. Greenblatt, 88.
11. William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well*, Arden 2nd Series, ed. G. K. Hunter (London: Methuen, 1966), 2.3.255-56.
12. Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Arden 3rd Series, ed. William C. Carroll (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2004), 1.3.7, 8-10.
13. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 1.3.21, 20.
14. Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, Arden 2nd Series, ed. M. R. Ridley (London: Methuen, 1967), 1.2.151-53.
15. Shakespeare, *Othello*, Arden 3rd Series, ed. E. A. J. Honigmann (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1997), 1.3.140, 168-69.
16. Shakespeare, *King Richard II*, Arden 3rd Series, ed. Charles R. Forker (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2002), 1.3.262.
17. *Richard II*, 1.3.263-63, 268-74.
18. *Richard II*, 1.3.270, 307.
19. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Arden 2nd Series, ed. Agnes Latham (London: Methuen, 1987), 4.1.15-18.
20. *As You Like It*, 4.1.16-18, 20-24, 25, 26-7.
21. *As You Like It*, 4.1.32-33, 34-35.
22. *As You Like It*, 2.1.16-17.
23. *As You Like It*, 2.1.23; 2.4.70; 2.6.17; 2.7.110; 3.2.122; 4.3.141.
24. *As You Like It*, 2.6.15; 2.1.9; 2.7.107; 2.7.110.

25. *As You Like It*, 1.3.104-106.
26. *As You Like It*, 2.6.6-7.
27. *As You Like It*, 2.4.13-15. The power of our pastoral conventions is well-captured in the reception afforded to Christine Edzard's film version of *As You Like It*, set at the edge of London's old Docklands. "Critics missed it...the reason for doing it that way," Edzard told me in an interview at the Sands Films Studios in London: "leafy pastoral convention" does not convey the hardness, the difficulty of nature and of living in it, either then or now (23 September 2004). As Edzard explained upon the film's opening in 1992, "the Forest of Arden in the play was certainly an ironical concept, and a spoof on pastoralism, which was so fashionable then, as it is now. It wasn't in Shakespeare's time represented realistically either, and if one was to show it as a foray in the countryside and a picnic, it would not render that irony at all. Hence the transposition into urban wasteland!" (Phillip Bergson, *What's On!* [October 7, 1992], 11). Edzard told me that "harshness does not eliminate the possibility of renewal," but it seems many cannot reconcile Shakespeare's love story with "harshness"; the film's reviews were overwhelmingly negative; and Derek Elly in *Variety* (5 October 1992) opined correctly that the "British low-budgeter, mostly shot on drab exteriors, will be limited to literary students and the very dedicated, given careful nursing," 61.
28. In 2000, sociologist John Urry expanded—I am tempted to say, globalized—the arguments of his important book *The Tourist Gaze*, published ten years earlier, to argue that tourism is but the tip of the travel iceberg, such that our understanding of the "social" as "society"—as a bounded structure or grouping based on ethnicity or nation—is now obsolete. The social, Urry claims, is "mobile," fluid and malleable, that which is constituted by continuously crossing and breaking borders (*Sociology beyond Societies: Mobilities for the twenty-first century* [London: Routledge, 2000], 1-20). To examine the social as fluid and malleable rather than static and local—to have a sociology without societies—is to map "both the large-scale movements of people, objects, capital and information across the world, as well as the more local processes of daily transportation, movement through public space and the travel of material things within everyday life" (Kevin Hannam, "Tourism and development III: performances, performativities, and mobilities," *Progress in Development Studies* 6 [2006]: 243-249, 246).
29. Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), ix.
30. Urry, *Gaze*, 4.
31. Butcher, 6.
32. Howard Hughes, *Arts, Entertainment, and Tourism* (Oxford: Butterworth, Heinemann, 2000), 31.
33. Urry, "Social networks, travel and talk," *British Journal of Sociology* 54 (2003): 155-76, 157. Statistics about tourism can be misleading, however, because countries and agencies do not subscribe to standard definitions and because problems tend to occur in the reliability of the statistics gathered, regardless of definition. While "tourism" often means traveling for pleasure away from home and including an overnight stay, people sometimes travel as tourists without spending the night in a hotel or with relatives or friends, and people do travel long distances and overnight for other reasons, especially business or to visit family and friends, and yet, while so engaged, they may enjoy a bit of tourism; and they may or may not be counted, therefore, as tourists. For instance, of those 122 million tourist trips taken by Britons in 1998, 11.5% were taken for business and just over 31% were taken to visit family and friends. Among the Americans, 22% were taken for business and 36% to visit family and friends (Hughes, 31). How many of these engaged in tourism while on business or visiting? Should they be counted as tourists? Should their total expenditures—or only a part and if so, what part—be counted as part of tourism's effect on an economy?

34. Urry, "Mobility and Proximity," *Sociology* 36 (2002): 255-274, 257.
35. See, for example, Murray May, "The growth of tourism and air travel in relation to ecological sustainability," *The International Journal of Tourism Research* 4 (2002): 145-150; Stefan Gössling, Paul Peeters, Jean-Paul Ceron, Ghislain Dubois, Trista Patterson and Robert B. Richardson, "The eco-efficiency of tourism," *Ecological Economics* 54 (2005): 417-434; and Stefan Gössling and C. Michael Hall, "Conclusion: wake up...this is serious." *Tourism and Global Environmental Change: Ecological, social, economic and political interrelationships*, ed. Stefan Gössling and C. Michael Hall (London: Routledge, 2006), 305-320.
36. Ghislain Dubois and Jean-Paul Ceron, "Tourism and Climate Change: Proposals for a Research Agenda," *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 14 (2006): 399-415, 407, 405, 408.
37. Bas Amelung and David Viner, "Mediterranean Tourism: Exploring the Future with the Tourism Climactic Index," *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 14 (2006): 349-366, 364; see also Gössling et al, "Eco," 431.
38. In 1954, for example, 31% of international tourists arrived in Greece by air; by 1999, that number had jumped to 76% (Dubois and Ceron, 409). The complete numbers are the following: for 1954, 31% by air; 30% by train; 31% by boat; and 8% by road. For 1999, 76% by air; 0.2% by train, 11.8% by boat, and 12% by road (Dubois and Ceron, "Tourism," 409). The arrival of cheap air travel in Europe accounts for much of this increase and, from an environmental perspective, is a dangerous development. In an interview, Urry observes that Europe seems to be "going in the wrong direction; people should be paying the full cost." But that solution, of course, means "that only richer people go, and not others." As Urry recognizes, the issue is deeply complicated, without easy answers. (Anders Blok, "Tourism & Cosmopolitanism: Towards a Mobile Sociology. Interview with John Urry," *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 5 (2005): 79).
39. Gössling et al., "Eco," 432; see also Susanne Becken, "Analyzing International Tourist Flows to Estimate Energy Use Associated with Air Travel," *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 10 (2002): 114-131; Stefan Gössling, C. Borgström-Hansson, O. Hörstmeier and S. Saggel, "Ecological footprint analysis as a tool to assess tourism sustainability," *Ecological Economics* 43 (2002): 199-211; Claus Lassen, "Aeromobility and Work," *Environment and Planning A* 38 (2005): 301-312; Paul Peeters, "The tourist, the trip and the earth," in *Creating a fascinating world*, ed. NHTV Marketing and Communication Departments, (Breda: NHTV, 2003), 1-8; and Dubois and Ceron, "Tourism."
40. Stefan Gössling, "Global environmental consequences of tourism," *Global Environmental Change* 12 (2002): 283-302, 288; see also Lassen, "Aeromobility," 301. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change suggests multiplying by 2.7 the actual emissions of an airliner flying at high altitude to capture the greenhouse effect; other scientists have argued for a multiplier as high as 5.8 (Kimberly Lisagor, "Practical Values: Paying for my Hot Air," *Mother Jones*, May/June 2007, http://www.motherjones.com/commentary/columns/2007/05/practical_values.html).
41. Susanne Becken and Bernard Lane, "Air Travel and the Environment: An Interview with Hugh Somerville," *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 14 (2006): 216-219, 218.
42. Blok, "Interview," 78.
43. Christopher Hany, "Bonesmen: Did Yale Plunder Peru?" *The New Republic*, October 23, 2006, 14-19.
44. On the relationship between shopping and levels of education, see my essay, "Beyond Necessity: The Consumption of Class, the Production of Status, and the Persistence of Inequal-

- ity," *New Literary History* 31 (2000): 337-54, 348-52.
45. Gössling, "Global," 297.
 46. Blok, "Interview"; May, "Sustainability"; Dubois and Ceron, "Tourism," 411; and Becken and Lane, "Interview." Possibilities include taxation, carbon trading, incentives for longer stays, and the promotion of a "slow" or "low impact" tourism less focused on air travel.
 47. Woolf's words are "And now I will hazard a second assertion, which is more disputable perhaps, to the effect that on or about December, 1910, human character changed." In "Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown," *The Captain's Death and Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1950), 96.
 48. Ian McEwan, *Saturday* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005), 15-16.
 49. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 168.
 50. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 169.
 51. On this point, see Hughes, *Arts*. This issue is complicated. Some, like Urry, argue that it is increasingly difficult to separate, say, travel for work from travel for leisure. Others, like Hughes, insist that to understand travel in its many guises, and to perhaps influence individual behavior or public policy, one must strive to do precisely that, separate, for analytical purposes, varieties of and motivations for travel. For an empirical study about the effect of cultural heritage on tourists' decisions to travel, see Tiziana Cuccia and Roberto Cellini, "Is cultural heritage really important for tourists? A contingent rating study," *Applied Economics* 39 (2007): 261-271. For an empirical study about the way the professional class uses air travel to mix work and leisure, see Lassen, "Aeromobility."
 52. Gössling et al., "Eco."
 53. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination*, 152.
 54. Barbara Hodgdon, *The Shakespeare Trade: Performances and Appropriations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 194.
 55. John Urry, "Mobilities," 270, 269. For empirical studies of the ways virtuality substitutes for travel, see Susan Kenyon, Glenn Lyons, and Jackie Rafferty, "Transport and social exclusion: investigating the possibility of promoting inclusion through virtual mobility," *Journal of Transport Geography* 10 (2002): 207-219; and Susan Kenyon, Jackie Rafferty, and Glenn Lyons, "Social Exclusion and Transport in the UK: A Role for Virtual Accessibility in the Alleviation of Mobility-Related Social Exclusion?," *Journal of Social Policy* 32 (2003): 317-338.
 56. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination*, 132.
 57. Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a mediatised culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), 24.
 58. Susan Sontag, "Film and Theatre" in *Theater and Film: A Comparative Anthology*, ed. Robert Knopf (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005 [1966]), 147.
 59. Urry, "mobilities," 269; Auslander, *Liveness*.
 60. Andrew Quick, *The Wooster Group Workbook* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 11.

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61. Alisa Soloman, "Doing (or undoing?) the most iconic play of all," *The Guardian*, 15 November 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/nov/15/usa.arts>. Mimicking the film proved an interesting challenge, for actors and for audience members. Mimicking the 1964 actors' movements—of head, face, and body—caused laughter among the audience during the opening minutes of the production. This slowly stopped as the erasures and other visual manipulations of the Burton film began. I hypothesize that such digital manipulations both trained or induced the audience not to laugh and made the audience realize what could be going on and was not (that is, laughter). For the actors, mimicking the 1964 actors' movements was a compelling physical challenge. Furniture for the set included a table and chair welded together and on wheels and a set of mobile screens. Two or three actors continuously pushed and pulled the wheeled chair and table and the two screens (which seemed to act as a framing device) to mimic the positioning of the chair and table during the close-ups, pans, and jump-cuts of the filmed 1964 production. Actors, too, of course, had to move, often very quickly and all over the stage. During the fast-forwards imposed upon the Geilgud-Burton production, the actors speeded up their movements and their speech.
62. *Playbill* 123, 11, November 2007.
63. Solomon, "Doing."
64. *Playbill*.
65. *Playbill*.
66. Laurie Osborne, "Speculations on Shakespearean Cinematic Liveness," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 24 (2006): 49-67, 52.
67. Cinematographer Russ Alsobrook has called the Geilgud-Burton effort the "first serious attempt" to use video as a recording medium for "theatrical motion pictures." Made "through 'the miracle of Electronovision'" (*Playbill*), the film was basically a kinescope, in which "a film camera [is] aimed at a monitor, re-recording the images fed from the TV camera." ("Back to the Future: Reflections on the Brief History of Video Moviemaking," http://www.cameraguild.com/interviews/chat_alsobrook/alsobrook_reflects.htm. Originally published in *ICG Magazine*, September 2001.)
68. Alsobrook.
69. Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 148.
70. Stanley Kauffmann famously observed that "the theater began as a sacred event and eventually included the profane. The film began as a profane event and eventually included the sacred" ("Notes on Theater-and-Film" in Knopf, 160). On the relationship of ritual to theater, see, among many others, Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982); Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); and Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).
71. Kauffmann, 159.
72. Quick, 9.
73. An usher opined to me that such was the case most every night. Performances sold out, and the performance schedule was extended, but the tendency of audiences to leave at intermission suggests that this *Hamlet* was not to be seen but to be seen at. I would like to thank The Wooster Group for arranging my attendance at the performances on 16-17 November, 2007.

74. As Daniel L. Keegan hypothesizes, "One of the main effects to the 'gesture-by-gesture' imitation is to confound our efforts (which we have been well-trained to make) to understand the actions of the actors in terms of the psychological motivations of the characters they play: they are simply repeating the actions of their onscreen precursors." Keegan observes that during the "Rogue and Peasant Slave" soliloquy, in which Burton was mostly erased, Shepherd seemed about "to carve out his own interpretation and performance." But just as "the speech came to a close...Burton reappeared...in exactly the same pose that Shepherd held." Burton, "the master Hamlet," thus "retroactively sucked away" whatever autonomy Shepherd had been granted or allowed to achieve. Daniel L. Keegan, "Memento Yorick: Remembering Yorick on Stages and Screens" (master's thesis, University of Alabama, 2008) 55.
75. Auslander, 2.
76. Pierre Lévy, *Becoming Virtual: Reality in the Digital Age* (New York: Plenum Trade, 1998), 184, 183-84.
77. Philip Kennicott, "All the World's His Stage: The Globe, Yesterday and Tomorrow," *The Washington Post*, January 15, 2007, C1. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/14/AR2007011401289.html?nav=emailpage>.
78. A 2008 production of *Hamlet* is the goal of the Second Life Shakespeare Company. See the Company's website: <http://slshakespeare.com/>.
79. For information on the Metropolitan Opera's apparently wildly successful experiment with live high-definition broadcasting, see the Opera's website: http://www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/broadcast/hd_events.aspx. See in particular the PDF of "Live in HD: FAQs." As in the Geilgud-Burton "theatrofilm" of *Hamlet*, the Met is broadcasting live on videotape in HD, with cameras in multiple locations throughout the opera house.
80. The San Francisco Opera's entrance into the market of digital simulcasts to movie theaters began in March, 2008. See the press release at <http://sfopera.com/press/DigitalCinemaRelease.pdf>. The press release avers: "Marking the first time that any opera company will utilize the Hollywood feature film quality digital cinema format, the agreement underscores how the era of digital cinema is transforming how and where great entertainment reaches new audiences."
81. See the website of Atmosfair at <http://www.atmosfair.de/index.php?id=9&L=3>. I used the Atmosfair calculator to assess the trip from Birmingham to New York.

**CONFESSIONS OF A SHAKESPEAREAN TOURIST: DISCOVERING NATURAL
PERSPECTIVES IN THE SECRET PLEASURES OF REPERTORIAL RECOGNITION**

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My name is John, and I am a Shakespearean tourist. I have been a Shakespearean tourist for most of my life. The first signs were innocent enough, nothing more than curiosity. My brother and I, cutting through the Boston Common one summery night, wandered into the field of energy of a Shakespearean performance. I don't remember the name of that play. Only the excitement. Even so, the passion I now feel for festival Shakespeare grew slowly but unmistakably. When Susan Allen Ford and I were married, in 1980, we decided to spend our honeymoon in Stratford, Ontario, where we partook not only of the pleasures of individual plays but also of the pleasures of collective performances, where the themes or actors of one production would strangely echo the themes and characters and worlds of another, as if these separate performances of separate plays were actually conversing with one another. That passion reached its most intoxicating level in 1994, when I attended, for the first time, the Clemson Shakespeare Festival, organized by James Andreas. For the next twelve years I was captivated by the secret pleasures of those Clemson performances, especially when those pleasures were shaped and expanded by the strange, déjà vu experiences of repertory theatrical practices. We even re-routed our summer trips according to gerrymandered itineraries that could accommodate as many festival Shakespeares as possible: the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, the Atlanta Shakespeare Tavern, the Clemson Shakespeare Festival, the American Shakespeare Center, the Folger Theater, the American Repertory Theater, and the Huntington Theater, to name only a few.

I know my condition is serious. But I must at this point be quite honest. It is true that I was initially drawn to the august assembly of scholarly magicians at the Clemson Shakespeare Festival because they could make me understand more clearly my touristic compulsions. But, like Orlando, presenting himself to the gifted scholar-magician Ganymede, "I would not be cured."¹

One of the most exhilarating experiences attendant on watching and listening to theatrical performance is the pleasure of recognizing what is demonstrably not there. That pleasure comes in a variety of forms. The most famous reference is, of course, to the Chorus of *Henry V*, who at every turn in the play urges us to "[p]iece out our imperfections with your thoughts" and to "[t]hink when we talk of horses that you see them."² The corollary pleasure is just as acute: that of *not* recognizing what is demonstrably *present*. So when Oberon confidently announces to the audience that "I am invisible," we need not suspend our disbelief.³ We can clearly see that he is invisible. Finally, there are those theatrical

experiences such as a character's disguise or an actor's doubling that require us simultaneously to awake our faith *and* our skepticism, as when the boy actor playing Viola in disguise as Cesario admits to Olivia that "I am not that I play."⁴

Doubling is a more equivocal example because it is, like on-stage invisibility, a matter of convention. Some critics indeed insist that doubling is merely a matter of practical necessity that should be accepted at face value: it is a necessary tactic practiced by repertory companies, whether sixteenth or twenty-first century, when the number of roles exceeds the number of available actors. If, such critics argue, Alex Jennings in Adrian Noble's 1994 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* performs the roles of both Theseus and Oberon, such doubling should not invite us to hear echoes of one role in the performance of the other. But surely, as the disguised Celia explains to Oliver about the strange fainting of the cross-dressed Rosalind, "there is more in it" (4.3.154). Doubling, as John C. Meagher has argued, has twin requirements. On the one hand, the different characters an actor plays must be clearly distinguishable from one another. The audience must recognize Theseus as Theseus or Oberon as Oberon, even though the audience sees the same actor onstage. And yet, "a play that requires some actors to play more than one part not only imposes dramaturgical restraints on the playwright, but opens new dramaturgical opportunities as well."⁵ Stephen Booth has also written about the opportunistic effects of doubling on the untidy pleasures of an audience as it participates in two mutually exclusive modes of engagement, pleasures quite possibly "not only anticipated but exploited as Shakespeare wrote." Booth argues that, "like us, Renaissance audiences delighted alternately and equally in being taken in by theatrical illusion and by seeing through it (and thus becoming party to it)."⁶

I'd like to explore another variant of this pleasure, one made possible not by Shakespearean plotting but by festival planning: the arrangement of plays in repertory as well as a company's sharing of stage designs and actors from one production to another. One might think of John Barton's decision, working with the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1973, to have the same two actors, Ian Richardson and Richard Pasco, perform both *Richard II* and *Bolingbroke* in alternating performances. Or one might consider Barton's decision, four years earlier, to include his production of *Twelfth Night* in a repertory of productions focusing on Shakespeare's late plays. American Shakespeare companies like the Alabama Shakespeare Festival and Shenandoah Shakespeare (now the American Shakespeare Center on Tour) also draw on their repertory style to create sudden and surprising collocations of characters, themes, and plays not often linked with one another. Such unexpected mirrorings of characters, plays, and playing spaces create natural perspectives that lead to equally surprising recognition scenes.

Twice in a span of four years, in his 1969 RSC production of *Twelfth Night* and his 1973-74 RSC production of *Richard II*, John Barton achieved a radical redefinition of both plays with very little alteration of Shakespeare's text.⁷ All Barton did was to schedule *Twelfth Night* and *Richard II* in repertoire with plays with which they were not conventionally paired. Simply by staging these

plays in temporal proximity with one another, Barton established each play as a foil to the others. In the case of *Twelfth Night*, Barton wanted to bring out that play's wide tonal range, a range that allowed audiences to hear something of the emotional, "Mozartian," mixed music that would reach its fullest development in plays like *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*, all three plays part of that RSC's season's repertory, each play poised between sadness, mirth, and wonder. For John Barton, *Twelfth Night*, no less than the late romances it anticipated, "contains an enormous range of emotions and moods, and most productions seem to select one—farce or bitterness or romance—and emphasize it throughout. I wanted to sound all the notes that are there."⁸ Four years later, by casting *Richard II* in the same repertory season as *King John*, Barton again allowed audiences to see in one play thematic reflections of the other. The settings and acting styles of both plays were similarly mannered, further evoking the self-conscious theatricality of the two kings.

But *Richard II* was not merely in repertory with *King John*. It was in repertory with itself. Barton had cast *two* actors, Ian Richardson and Richard Pasco, in both the roles of Richard and Bolingbroke. The effect was to mute the sharply antagonistic differences that usually highlight the moral and regal contrasts between the two kings and instead to emphasize a shared theatricality that linked protagonist and antagonist. John Barton's casting, then, implied that "[b]oth [Richard and Bolingbroke] are characters who consciously assume various roles. I would like the audience to be more than usually aware of this and of a special acting duel between."⁹ For many, Barton's shared casting, as well as the metatheatricity of the performances, created an effective, believable modern image of the elusive early modern concept of the king's two bodies, "that the role of a king is like an actor's part in that it can be assumed by one man or by another who yet remains a private individual."¹⁰

Both actors were encouraged to discover independent—even contrasting—characterizations of Richard as well as Bolingbroke. A number of critics who saw several performances noted that Richardson's Richard was more witty and self-indulgent, though capable of sudden flashes of political effectiveness,¹¹ while Pasco's Richard was more sensitive—a poetic, even Christ-like figure.¹² The two Bolingbrokes were also different, Richardson's more coolly efficient, while Pasco's blended ruthlessness with incipient guilt. And yet, for all their differences, the two Richards and the two Bolingbrokes were complements of one another, even "interchangeable": "The exchanging of parts was the outward symptom and symbol of a concept that lay at the heart of Barton's production: that the parts are truly interchangeable, that Richard and Bolingbroke are mirror images one of the other, one no doubt left-handed and the other right-handed but except for this opposite bias essentially the same."¹³

The effect of such contrapuntal casting, especially for audiences who attended both productions, was an uncanny double vision which redefined "the experience of the play as a series of palimpsests."¹⁴ For Miriam Gilbert, the effect was to allow the audience to become a collaborative presence in the play's creation: "As soon as you have seen the production once, your mind

immediately begins to work with the other possibilities—what will it look like with the roles reversed? When you do see the switch, then four characters take the stage instead of two: Pasco's Richard and Richardson's Richard are both visible, no matter which man is wearing the crown, and the same is true for Bolingbroke. We are treated to a production in which we can actually see, from our memory of the previous night, several choices at once."¹⁵

In its 2004 repertory season, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival performed both *Macbeth* and *Titus Andronicus*, discovering unsettling shared aesthetic and ethical resemblances in the two plays, largely through a pattern of cross-casting actors from one play to the other. Theatrical convention tends to regard these two plays, both equally "in blood stepped in so far," as nonetheless representing two sharply different ethics about the political use of violence. In *Macbeth*, for example, Malcolm's army's bloody extermination of Macbeth is seen as both a restorative force of nature, complete with Burnham foliage, and an act of providential retribution. Macduff reminds Malcolm that

each new morn,
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland and yelled out
Like syllable of dolour.¹⁶

The violence that permeates *Titus Andronicus*, on the other hand, while insistently defined by those who use it in terms of honor and sacred retribution, is nonetheless presented by the play as acts of aesthetic indulgence, a kind of pornography of bloodletting.

Yet in its 2004 productions of both plays, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival subverted such comfortable moral distinctions by a series of strategic cross-castings that allowed an audience that had attended both productions to recognize in the language and actions of characters in *Macbeth* unexpected resemblances to the language and actions of their dark doubles in *Titus*, and vice versa.¹⁷ So Bassianus, murdered by a brother determined to seize the crown, was played by Harry Carnahan, who also played Macbeth, the ambitious murderer of his "kinsman" Duncan. Michael Bakkensen, who played Malcolm, the son and rightful heir to Duncan, also played Demetrius, the voluptuous and murderous son of Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*. Such casting at some level troubles what an audience sees and hears. When, for example, we heard Malcolm test Macduff by "confessing" to an avarice and a voluptuousness so deep that "your wives, your daughters, / Your matrons and your maids could not fill up / The cistern of my lust" (4.3.61-63), did we also see Demetrius, Malcolm's double, *enacting* the desires? Or was it, after all, Demetrius whom we saw? Was this, rather, a Malcolm that we saw before us, a fatal vision indeed? Perhaps the most disturbing example of cross-casting was Philip Pleasants's double performance of Titus Andronicus, "General against the Goths" and Old Siward, "general of the English

forces in *Macbeth*.”¹⁸ Often in performance, Old Siward, though an English soldier, emerges as the renewer of the Scottish national ethic. But there was in this Siward’s praise of his fallen son a cold, bloodless decorum. He rejoiced at young Siward’s manly death, but he could not feel his son’s loss “as a man.” When we heard such a lament—“Had I as many sons as I have hairs / I would not wish them to a fairer death” (5.9.15-16)—we might have remembered that the same actor, hours before, had played Titus Andronicus. At the heart of such double vision is something even more than the pleasures with which I began this essay. Each of these experiments, using strategies available only to producers and consumers of festival Shakespeare, in particular its repertorial style of acting, succeeded in creating among diverse audiences communities of collaborative partners, so that each audience became simultaneously producers and consumers of these plays.

My final example of the natural perspectives that only such festival collaboration can achieve arises out of the surprising energies that occur when *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night* share a repertorial life. It happened at Clemson. As it always has, in its 1995 productions Shenandoah Shakespeare Express experimented with a number of Shakespearean stage practices, including interacting with the audience, extensive doubling, and cross-casting the same eleven or so actors in all three productions.¹⁹ That cross-casting not only redefined the audience as a community of collaborating co-producers of the play but also allowed for a surprising “recognition scene” between *Twelfth Night* and *Hamlet*. Scott Duff, for example, played both Feste and the Player King, calling attention to the self-conscious interest in both plays with the powers and limits of theatrical performance. Both characters are professional maskers whose verbal performances uncover the corruption of words all around them. And yet both characters also embody the *limits* of theatrical strategies. We should remember that in *The Murder of Gonzago* the Player-King’s story *is* performed upon a stage now and *is* condemned as an improbable fiction.

But the most effective use of repertory casting was Thadd McQuade’s performance as both Hamlet and Malvolio. The casting not only invited us to see Malvolio as Hamlet’s double, but it also called into collocation these two plays, both uncomfortably balanced between comedy and pain. Malvolio, it turns out, has something of a smack of Hamlet himself. Hamlet opposes the festive riot of Claudius no less insistently than Malvolio opposes the cakes and ale consumed by Toby and Feste. And if Hamlet puts on an antic disposition, Malvolio has one thrust upon him. When Feste asked of Malvolio, “But tell me true, are you not mad indeed or do you but counterfeit?”(4.2.96-97), the two characters, Malvolio and Hamlet, collapsed, momentarily, into one. Such a palimpsest occurred earlier in the play, as Malvolio was soliloquizing about the full prospect of his social hopes. Suddenly Thadd McQuade looked into the audience expectantly and began to share a thought: “To be....” He stopped momentarily, “[a]nd “like a neutral to his will and matter, / Did nothing.”²⁰ Had he forgotten his lines? How would this sentence end? Where were these words taking Malvolio, or the actor playing Malvolio, or us? That was the question. Finally, Thadd

continued: "COUNT Malvolio." He lacked advancement indeed.

It was a wonderful performative moment, replete with deserved laughter. But there's more in it. Such moments allowed both actors and audiences to discover an intimacy between these two plays, whose language kept flowing back and forth across play boundaries. Lois Potter has been tempted to think that *Twelfth Night*, with all its verbal and performative echoes of *Hamlet*, might have been written just after, rather than just before, Shakespeare's great tragedy. In speculation framed in parentheses, Potter wonders: "The relative dates of *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night* are not known; if the comedy were later than the tragedy, it could have been an opportunity for Burbage to parody his own performance."²¹ In the end, Potter dismisses that possibility, attractive as it is. There is simply no hard evidence for it. Nonetheless, Shenandoah Shakespeare Express' productions of both plays, replete with repertorial "ghosts," raises provocative questions that are both scholarly and performative, intrinsically linked. These are unmatched pleasures that bond playgoers not only to one another but to the actors as well. Sometimes, these ghostly visions are intended by actors or directors. Other times, as with other natural perspectives, they are accidental, the precipitate of a highly volatile energy latent in repertorial performance. In either case, they are welcome.

In 2002, writing eloquently and passionately against Adrian Noble's plan to dismantle the Royal Shakespeare Company's repertorial structure, Miriam Gilbert was particularly concerned that the loss of plays performed in repertory would seriously weaken the intensity of an audience's experience with those plays. "For me," Gilbert explained, "the answer is simple: an ensemble company performing in repertory in three venues [The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, The Swan, and The Other Place] supports exciting acting and directing...[A]s the season adds more and more plays, the experience of playing one role often enriches the approach to another."²² The loss of The Other Place has, of course, been deeply felt, as has the much shorter tenure of actors' commitment to the RSC. But what most disturbed Gilbert was the loss of extraordinary pleasures and instructive discoveries brought about by watching the same group of actors play different parts in multiple performances.

What is it about repertorial theater that prompts such cries of passion and loss? What is at stake? Why do so many adherents of repertorial theater travel, even travail, on such long pilgrimages? Perhaps such pleasures satisfy two simple needs, inherent in such forms of play and playfulness: an ephemeral yet sustaining sense of community and collaboration; and through that community and collaboration a moment of shared discovery, the sudden recognition of a theatrical world where every constituent element is a natural perspective, that is and is not. We come to the theater to be auditors, but actors too, perhaps, if we see cause. When we become a part of any theatrical experience, but especially repertorial, festival theater, we simply do not know what to expect, what will happen to us, an ontological vulnerability that, in Shakespeare's time, terrified anti-theatrical critics. Who knows what ghostly figures we might perceive, or become? We might remember that the etymology of the word "repertory" is from

repertorium (an inventory); and *that* term is derived from *repertus* (to find out or discover), as well as from *re + parere* (to produce or invent again). These multiple definitions work like doubles that collectively hint at repertory's epiphanic pleasures, once we learn to see these things with parted eye, where everything seems double. At the root of all those entangling etymologies I found in my dictionary was one more. "Repertory," it turns out, is "a place where something may be found."

Notes

1. *As You Like It*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, ed. Michael Hattaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3.3.349.
2. *King Henry V*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, ed. Andrew Gurr (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Prologue 26, 23.
3. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, ed. R. A. Foakes (1984; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.1.186.
4. *Twelfth Night or What You Will*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (1985; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1.5.253.
5. John C. Meagher, *Shakespeare's Shakespeare: How the Plays Were Made* (New York: Continuum Press, 1997), 104.
6. Stephen Booth, "Speculations on Doubling in Shakespeare's Plays," in *Shakespeare: The Theatrical Dimension*, ed. Philip C. McGuire and David A. Samuelson (New York: AMS Press, 1979), 113, 114.
7. *Twelfth Night or What You Will*, dir. John Barton, Royal Shakespeare Company, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1969, 1971, and Aldwych Theatre, London, 1970. *Richard II*, dir. John Barton, with performances by Richard Pasco and Ian Richardson, Royal Shakespeare Company, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1973, 1974, and Aldwych Theatre, London, 1974.
8. Michael L. Greenwald, *Directions by Indirections: John Barton of the Royal Shakespeare Company* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), 87, quoting John Barton.
9. Greenwald, 116, quoting Barton.
10. Richard David, *Shakespeare in the Theatre* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 170. See also Margaret Shewring, *King Richard II*, Shakespeare in Performance (New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), 121-22, and Stanley Wells, *Royal Shakespeare: Four Major Productions at Stratford-upon-Avon* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), 65.
11. David, 168.
12. Miriam Gilbert, "Richard II at Stratford: Role-playing as Metaphor," in *Shakespeare: The Theatrical Dimension*, ed. Philip C. McGuire and David A. Samuelson (New York: AMS Press, 1979), 99, and Shewring, 126-27.
13. David, 169. See also Gilbert, 89.

14. Gilbert, 98.
15. Gilbert, 98-99.
16. *Macbeth*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, ed. A. R. Braunmuller (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4.3.4-8.
17. *Titus Andronicus*, dir. Bruce K. Sevy, with performances by Michael Bakkensen, Harry Carnahan, Philip Pleasants, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Octagon Stage, Montgomery, AL, 2005. *Macbeth*, dir. Kent Thompson, with performances by Michael Bakkensen, Harry Carnahan, Philip Pleasants, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Festival Stage, Montgomery, AL, 2005.
18. *On Stage: Alabama Shakespeare Festival Program* (Montgomery: Alabama Shakespeare Festival, 2005).
19. *Hamlet*, dir. Ralph Alan Cohen, with performances by Scott Duff and Thadd McQuade, Shenandoah Shakespeare Express, Clemson Shakespeare Festival, Brooks Center for the Performing Arts, Clemson, SC, 1995. *Twelfth Night or What You Will*, dir. Murray Ross, with performances by Scott Duff and Thadd McQuade, Shenandoah Shakespeare Express, Clemson Shakespeare Festival, Brooks Center for the Performing Arts, Clemson, SC, 1995.
20. *Hamlet*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, ed. Philip Edwards (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 2.2.439-40.
21. Lois Potter, *Twelfth Night: Text and Performance* (London: Macmillan, 1985), 35.
22. Miriam Gilbert, "The Leasing-Out of the RSC," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 53 (2002), 519.

“SPORTFUL MALICE,” OR WHAT MARIA WILLS: REVENGE COMEDY IN
TWELFTH NIGHT

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Maria writ

The letter, at Sir Toby's great importance,
In recompense whereof he hath married her.
How with a sportful malice it was follow'd
May rather pluck on laughter than revenge,
If that the injuries be justly weigh'd
That have on both sides pass'd.¹

Recent theater productions and literary criticism of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* acknowledge the disquieting nature of the revenge plot carried out against Malvolio; yet the degree to which directors and critics allow revenge to unbalance romantic comedy varies significantly, as do perceptions of how the dynamics of revenge operate in this comedy. These interpretive differences, I argue, arise from Shakespeare's deliberate use of contradictory figurative constructions of revenge, which create tonal ambiguity and destabilize generic boundaries. Complexities in tone and genre are directly related to the avenger's character and function in the play. Critics have generally overlooked the role of Maria, Olivia's lady-in-waiting, as the lead avenger. Unassuming as she is, Maria takes the part of Nemesis, goddess of retribution, whose righteous indignation and resentment against pride and undue disturbances of Fortune and Justice drive her "to give what is due" (the Greek root of *nemesis*). The avenging Maria stands as a figure for comedy's contradictory impulses; her vengeance generates *and* undermines comedy from behind the scenes, eliciting both uproarious laughter and moral disquietude. Her journey's end, like Viola's and Olivia's, is comedic, but her function as Nemesis complicates the play's generic purposes. Her ingenious plot fuels communal resentment and retribution, revealing not only that comedy is hospitable to revenge, but, most surprisingly and rarely observed by critics, that vengeance, with its attendant pleasures, cruelties, and humiliations, is *constitutive* of the genre.

Twelfth Night raises troubling questions about revenge as a means for individual and communal retribution; at the same time, questions about generic integrity come into focus. To what extent does comedy license excessive revenge? What conditions, generic and personal, transform revenge fantasy into reality? Can revenge be constructive or therapeutic, or does it simply encourage further injury? Does revenge teach a lesson? How much revenge is enough? The specter of such questions betrays how awkwardly *Twelfth Night's* revenge plot fits into traditional views of comedic design espoused by critics such as C. L. Barber.² Critics who defend the poetic justice of Malvolio's treatment are "bent

on repressing instincts which, outside the theatre of *Twelfth Night*, they would surely admit.”³ We need only examine the figurative language used to characterize the revengers’ plot and the play’s final moments of awkward reconciliation to detect textual complexities and contradictions that cannot be glossed over or laughed away. Malvolio’s exit line and Fabian’s peacemaking speech offer ready examples. In comedy’s world, how can we make sense of the harsh, discordant notes of the persecuted steward’s cry, “I’ll be reveng’d on the whole pack of you!” (5.1.377)? This chilling line, with its intimations of tragic fury, the bearbaiting ring, and bloodthirsty dogs, demands to be taken seriously. Alternately, if the Folio’s question mark at the end of this line were to be used by an actor, we might feel a real sense of pathos and remorse upon the shamed steward’s exit. Fabian’s speech, quoted in part as the epigraph for this essay, seems intended to provide clarification and preserve wonder at the play’s end, but succeeds mainly in leaving us with a nagging sense that reconciliation has been hastily attempted, that it is a far more fragile business than the characters—or we comedy lovers—admit. Words such as “recompense” and “sportful malice” sit uncomfortably with “married” and “justly weigh’d.” We wish to reconcile them, to say with Feste, “that’s all one” (5.1.406), especially since the play itself seems to demand such graciousness or moral deafness from us.⁴ We observe Malvolio’s failure to gain insight, yet we feel some justification in his cry for vengeance, both of which point up comedy’s vulnerability to tragedy and the spinning whirligig of time and revenge. The play’s end offers wonders indeed, but they do not let us forget the shadowy undercurrents of vengeance, which “Taint the condition of this present hour” (5.1.356). For the audience, if not for the play’s characters, there is a lingering sense that some darker purpose of comedy has been at work.

John Kerrigan muses, “Such plays as *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night* are strongly driven by vengeance—as Malvolio discovers to his cost—and it would be interesting to work out why it should be revenge plots which so often carry tragic materials into comedy.”⁵ Indeed, revenge plots contribute not only to the “shifting, tonal complexity” (216) in tragedies, but in comedies as well, as the wildly shifting tones in *Twelfth Night* attest. Maria’s revenge plot is Shakespeare’s invention, so his stretching of generic norms might be understood as a deliberate move to complicate genre, indeed to invoke the anti-comic genre of revenge tragedy. Yet why in *Twelfth Night* do the explicitly comic dynamics of revenge darken so radically and give way to malicious laughter, psychological violence, and shame? In *Much Ado About Nothing*, the tragic potentialities of revenge are roundly defeated by the Friar’s felicitous death trick in which Hero dies to live. In *Twelfth Night*, the “sportful malice” results in the victim’s utter humiliation and the community’s awkwardness in the play’s final moments when harmony should reign. Kerrigan’s view is clarifying: “Repeatedly, vengeance generates, from out of its dramaturgic potential, a strain of awkward comedy which raises laughter, and kills it” (216). The dynamics of revenge spontaneously provoke oddly conflicting responses, which seem inappropriate to the festive dimension of the genre. Once revenge’s energies are unleashed they are difficult to

contain, or to reconcile with comedy's lighter generic purposes. Attempts at a harmonious resolution to the revenge plot at the end of *Twelfth Night* cannot defuse vengeance, which has taken shape and rooted itself within the comic world. In the play's final movement, the revengers' revels may be over, their appetite for sport having sickened and died, but another victim with a cause for revenge now compels attention. Perhaps because we laughed so heartily at the letter trick in *Twelfth Night* we find ourselves drawn almost unawares into the trajectory of revenge, which eventually plunges us into pained silence and guilt when we witness its aftermath. At certain moments, *Twelfth Night's* comic premises seem to have come embarrassingly unseamed to expose a rather savage tragicomedy at work.

By imagining a tonally complex comic variant of revenge tragedy, *Twelfth Night* clearly stretches generic expectations to include moral responses we might prefer to deny. The norms governing blood revenge have been inverted "for the love of mockery" (2.5.18), yet comic revenge proves to be just as aggressive and disruptive as its tragic counterpart. We sense the shadow structure and dynamics of tragic revenge underlying the comedy. Like Hamlet's Denmark, Illyria is an aristocratic honor-based society whose inhabitants instinctually seek to preserve their reputations. Insults to one's honor destabilize both self-identity and position in society. Malvolio represents the greatest threat to the reputation and position of Olivia's householders. While Malvolio's "crimes" are minor compared to regicide, rape, or murder, typical motives for revenge in tragedy, he nonetheless has committed wrongs over time, which others resent and perceive as unjust. The audience witnesses firsthand his humiliation of Feste, Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Maria. His verbal abuse of Feste early in the play establishes his character's ill will and seems representative of a host of insults for which he is guilty. Malvolio asserts his will to control Olivia's household and, even worse, her favor, which he does by representing her household revelers in the worst light. Maria's revenge is directly provoked by Malvolio's threat to bring her out of favor with Olivia. This threat is coupled importantly with Malvolio's overweening self-regard and desire for social advancement through marriage to the Countess Olivia. Thus, comic revenge responds not only to perceived past and present wrongs, but also to traits and desires that seem absurdly funny, inappropriate, and vicious. Just as Nemesis punished the proud and redistributed Fortune in due proportion according to a person's desert, Maria responds to Malvolio's presumptuous, injurious character by giving him his due.

Maria is something of a cipher, operating behind the scenes mostly, coming out of the shadows in her pivotal scene (2.3), where she boldly inverts social norms through the invention of a revenge plot. As an avenger, Maria appropriates a conventionally male-gendered social and theatrical role and, in doing so, experiences the pleasures and dangers that attend revenge plots—the exhilaration of artistic invention, secret conspiracy, self-empowerment, power over others, escalation of the intrigue, loss of control, unchecked malice, and the possibility of retaliation. Her ingenuity leads to creative and destructive ends, activating both comic and tragic energies. By taking up the pen rather

than the sword or dagger, she creates the infamous "obscure epistles of love" (2.3.155-56), a stage property and script in one, which puts into play a fantastical revenge comedy. She manages her own coterie theater, inspiring scenes of farce and violence, which veer dangerously between physic and cruelty.

Critics' and directors' responses to Maria's part in the gulling of Malvolio range between these two poles of comic experience and reflect the degree to which they desire—or do not desire—*Twelfth Night* to be a joyous festive comedy.⁶ The Royal Shakespeare Company's productions of the play in the 1980s demonstrate the pendulum swings in directorial emphasis. In his 1987 Royal Shakespeare Company production at Stratford-upon-Avon, director Bill Alexander staged Maria's plot as "very vicious, very vindictive," while John Caird in his earlier RSC production (1983) emphasized her wit and resourcefulness in making the "festival side of this play work out."⁷ These examples from performance history reflect opposing views of an ambiguous character, as well as antithetical understandings of comedy's potentialities. The popular traditional view of Maria as unequivocally good and benign seems naïve, yet the opposite, more recent view demonizes Maria as morally depraved, far worse than the ill-willed Malvolio. Neither extreme plumbs the depth of this character, or considers the play's delicate balance of dark and light energies.

The proliferation of critical and directorial perspectives on Maria stems from cultural and theoretical preoccupations, without a doubt, yet the text itself surfeits in figurative terms used to describe Maria's character and her plot. Our very attempt to contain Maria runs counter to the dramatist's will to have her function in a multitude of ways in the comedy. She is a "most excellent devil of wit" (2.5.206-7), displaying her mischievous ingenuity for the pleasure of onstage and offstage audiences. She is a satirist who successfully eviscerates a deserving opponent; a moral physician who applies medicine to the sick; the lead dog in the pack that baits the bear; a "noble gull-catcher" (2.5.187) who traps her gull; and Lady Fortune (or "The Fortunate Unhappy") who brings ruin upon the fool who trusts that "all is fortune" (2.5.23). She is a plot-maker and intriguer, as well, which gives her the privileged seat of power in bringing catastrophe to an unwitting enemy and a "providential" escape for herself and Sir Toby. Above all, she is an avenger and figure of Nemesis punishing a prideful enemy. Maria's identity multiplies as rapidly as perspectives in a glass and, by the play's end, she vanishes. Evading responsibility and punishment, she is absorbed into the romantic ends of comedy through a surreptitious, offstage marriage.

Thus, *Twelfth Night's* figurative language offers contradictory signals to playgoers and readers about how to view Maria's will. Her intrigue is conceived, born, extended, and exposed in the wake of numerous tropes, including revenge, recompense, improbable fiction, physic, sport royal, dream, infection, device, practice, gulling, baiting, knavery, punishment, penance, pastime, jest, whirlingig of time. These figures, like "a very opal" (2.4.75), color the audience's theatrical and reading experiences with a shifting palette of meaning. On one end of the spectrum, we might anticipate the therapeutic or curative functions of a plot associated with physic and penance. Yet, on the other end, we are

given a plethora of metaphors involving violence and illicit forms of play, such as bearbaiting and gull-catching. Of the darker figures, however, it is revenge that suggests the greatest degree of moral ambiguity and emotional upheaval, challenging the very premises and generic boundaries of comedy as a social revel.

Maria's identification of her "device" as revenge reflects comedy's (and Shakespeare's) dependence on sometimes painful and destructive means to achieve restorative actions. After being humiliated (yet again, we presume) by Malvolio, Maria sizes up her enemy's vulnerabilities and considers a fitting revenge:

The devil a Puritan that he is, or anything constantly, but a time-pleaser, an affectioned ass, that cons state without book, and utters it by great swarths: the best persuaded of himself, so crammed (as he thinks) with excellencies, that it is his grounds of faith that all that look on him love him: and on that vice in him will my revenge find notable cause to work. (2.3.146-53)

Maria's portrait of Malvolio has a laughably satiric quality to it, but more importantly it savors of resentment, indignation, and retaliatory fantasy. Her penetrating analysis of the "affectioned ass" resembles Iago's penetrating portraits of Othello, Cassio, and Roderigo; both revengers have the wit to size up their opponents' weaknesses.⁸ Like Iago's, Maria's cause is "notable," rather than noble, and personal. Naming her theatrical project as "*my* revenge" (my emphasis) personalizes the enterprise, highlighting her initiative and agency. At the same time, her revenge becomes the community's revenge, pursued "in the name of jesting" (2.5.20) and, in that sense, takes shape as saturnalian play. By the time Maria sends her fellow revengers off to bed, they have begun to relish the fantasy of an upcoming "Sport royal"; she tells them to "dream on the event" (2.3.172, 176). Revenge fantasy is about to invade daylight.

Maria's self-willed role as comic Nemesis enables her not only to punish Malvolio's pride and "pluck on laughter" (5.1.365), at least temporarily, but also to pursue a covert courtship. The play's alternate title, *What You Will*, suggests that the will to shape an identity, as fantastical as it might be, governs Illyria, and stands as a guarantee (liberating or troubling) against essential selfhood. Maria's forged letter promises in jest what the characters wish to believe in earnest: "thou art made, if thou desir'st to be so" (2.5.154-55). Not only does *Twelfth Night* conjure "a world in which one's social estate is a matter of desire or will rather than birth or title,"⁹ it does so in decidedly theatrical terms, positing *personation* as the model of identity. Characters devise personae for themselves, as well as shape roles for others through imaginative construction. Maria's self-determined witty persona allows her to function with an unusual degree of agency in Olivia's household and, ultimately, to make a match of her own choice. Her motives for masterminding the revenge plot against Malvolio seem to have to do with Sir Toby Belch. If Malvolio's transgression lies, in part, in his wish to cross class lines through marriage—to become *Count* Malvolio—

so, too, does Maria's. Ironically, she seeks to punish Malvolio for a desire she secretly harbors. Revenge advances her suit, which is to become *Lady Maria*. Thus, we might say that Olivia's "gentle" servants, Malvolio and Maria, pursue twinned plots of social ambition, which lead to a pair of plots (one carried out, the other threatened) centered on revenge.

If we examine Maria's class aspiration from the perspective of genre, we see how, like twin threads binding one design, a submerged romantic plot is directly related to the revenge plot. The trope of recompense unites the disturbingly twinned goals of revenge and marriage in the play. Some critics have felt that the "play is not interested in the precise nature of the relationship between Maria and Toby" because they do not belong to the "leisure" class.¹⁰ While it is true that their "romance" is not given the surface interest value of Orsino, Viola, and Olivia's love triangle, there are underground currents of importance here that reflect on the other couples and the purposes of comedy. Sir Toby *is* of the leisure class, and Maria's destined marriage with him renders their relationship a kind of murky, albeit playful, courtship. Their conspiracy to humiliate Malvolio energizes the would-be lovers and solidifies their alliance. Over the body of the scapegoat, the lovers seal their bond.

Maria's identity and relationship to other characters can be understood within the tangled, fluid network of signs that indicate social aspiration, status, and hierarchy. As the third female "heroine" in the play, Maria's character comes into focus partly through her similarities to Viola and aspirations regarding Olivia and Sir Toby. She and Viola, for example, are twinned as "gentle" servants waiting upon superiors who languish passionately in self-absorbed fantasies of impossible love. Like Viola, Maria has a rather ambiguous position in an aristocratic household, and her history, too, is a "blank" (2.4.111). Her status as a gentlewoman, however, is unassailable.¹¹ Countess Olivia functions as Maria's patron, bestowing favor upon her. Maria is a social dependent, a courtier and waiting-woman to her aristocratic superior. Although we do not hear Maria speak directly of the matter, it is implied that she depends significantly upon her alliance with Olivia, for this position represents her livelihood and maintains her public identity. We can infer that she is a gentleman's daughter in need of a place in the social network. To fall out of the Countess's favor would court social punishment—rejection and the horror of social placelessness. Her bantering with Feste when he returns from unlicensed leave reflects her understanding of the consequences of disfavor. Maria's figurative example of such a fate—a hanging—is served up in a joking manner, but a palpable threat lurks beneath the mirthful veneer.

For Maria, we might conclude, revenge is partly an act of self-preservation. Her plot against Malvolio aligns her advantageously with Sir Toby, first and foremost, which leads to a more secure place in Olivia's household and a social status far superior to Malvolio's.¹² While Maria appears to serve two masters, Olivia and Sir Toby, in truth, she serves no one but herself. Maria's revenge plot against Malvolio skillfully directs Sir Toby and the others to a fruitful recognition of her wit and, more importantly, her worth. Because Maria's wit

has been spent, in part, for the sake of his honor, Sir Toby thinks in terms of recompense. Certainly he owes something to Maria, but why does he think of *marriage* as the best recompense for the brilliant favor she has done him? "I could marry this wench for this device," he exclaims, "And ask no other dowry with her but such another jest" (2.5.182, 184-85). Sir Toby's offer is both fanciful and awe-inspiring. Audiences must feel a degree of surprise when they hear later in one brief line that Sir Toby made good on such an incredible promise. It is Fabian who tells us, using a precise economic metaphor, "In recompense whereof he hath married her" (5.1.363). Shakespeare, in effect, makes good on comedy's promise here: a woman's witty revenge pays off with interest in a world where jests and revels function as acceptable social currency.

Romantic desire for "Sweet Sir Toby" (2.3.132) may very well be the loftier inspiration for Maria's jest, yet she seems shrewder than this. Maria not only wishes to please and impress Sir Toby; more importantly, she wishes to master him through an inversion of the social and gender order. In his admiration for her, Sir Toby places himself in a position of mock subordination, which hints at what is to come: "Wilt thou set thy foot o' my neck?...Shall I play my freedom at tray-trip, and become thy bond-slave?" (2.5.188, 190-91). Sir Toby is Maria's ideal spectator, one infinitely capable of appreciating a jest. He understands, as well, that payment must be made for his pleasures. Indeed, he himself has been a jest-maker, though if Olivia tells true, the jests were "many fruitless pranks," which he "botch'd up" (4.1.54, 55). His duel plot involving Sir Andrew and Cesario/Viola is a case in point. He botches it in the end and wins a bloody coxcomb. Maria's vengeful plot, with Sir Toby's added device of the "dark room," proves far more successful and exceptionally fertile than any plot Sir Toby initiates on his own. He has recognized Maria's superiority, using her wit and her device to help humiliate and thwart his enemy. Maria kills off the disturbing specter of *Count* Malvolio, mocking the steward's pathetic fantasy of taking revenge on "my *kinsman* Toby" (my emphasis, 2.5.55).

Malvolio's social status and position in the household are perhaps less ambiguous and more colorfully marked by willful fantasies of self-fashioning and punishment than Maria's; in this respect, he is both Maria's distorted twin and inevitable target. What is his value in the household in relation to Maria's value? Is he a gentleman? Olivia declares that she would not have Malvolio "miscarry for the half of my dowry" (3.4.62-63). Is she exaggerating? Perhaps not, considering that a steward was the chief manager of domestic order in the early modern aristocratic household. Olivia depends upon Malvolio to reflect and enforce her will in the household. Yet Shakespeare seems to have deliberately toyed with his audience by withholding the answer to the question of gentility until late in the play. It is only when Malvolio is imprisoned and told he is mad that he desperately calls for light, ink and paper, proclaiming, "as I am a gentleman, I will live to be thankful to thee for't" (4.2.85-86). He is called "gentleman" twice in the final scene of the play. This term, like "steward" and "chambermaid," is more fluid than it might seem in a play in which characters' aspirations and self-perceptions fluctuate according to their wills. Sir Toby's

provoking question, "Art any more than a steward?" (2.3.113-14), is rhetorical, with an implied assertion of his own rank (he is a knight and a blood relation of the Countess Olivia). In Sir Toby's estimation, Malvolio is no more than a functionary. He might be a gentleman by birth, or perhaps a social upstart who "achieve[s] greatness" (2.5.145), but he is distinctly lacking in gentle manners and a proper respect for place and duty, which are faults that render him a threat to an aristocrat such as Sir Toby. Others name Malvolio a gentleman only at the play's end where again there is the suggestion that he is something less than a gentleman in his behavior and attitude. Olivia's "poor gentleman" (5.1.278) sounds pitying, or perhaps patronizing. In naming his gentility, though, there may be a suggestion here of his dishonor; Malvolio appeals to "the modesty of honour" (5.1.334) when he begs Olivia to explain why she had tormented him. With the exposure of the letter trick, however, Olivia's "poor gentleman" elides all too easily into "poor fool" (5.1.368).

On a socio-political level, Maria's revenge can be seen as a retaliatory measure or skirmish in class warfare and household politics. She makes a bold move to protect her own privileges, as well as Sir Toby's, against the encroachment of an upwardly mobile member of the lower gentry or underclass. The competition for favor is fierce—all's fair in love and service—perhaps because it is a limited commodity in the household. Maria has assessed her situation, and, when it comes time to choose, she aligns her fate with Olivia's blood relative, Sir Toby Belch. His call, "A stoup of wine, Maria!" (2.3.119), may be heard as the challenge, and her insult to Malvolio, "Go, shake your ears" (2.3.124), as her decision in favor of Sir Toby.¹³ Her revenge on Malvolio displaces him as the household's chief officer and authority. She subverts his position by asserting her own authority and standing in for the steward.¹⁴ She ably manipulates and rearranges the domestic hierarchy, subordinating the householders, all men, to her will.

On a symbolic level, Maria plays out a secret fantasy not only to master Malvolio and Sir Toby, but to master her mistress, Olivia, as well, through an act of impersonation. Her handwriting, which is "very like" her lady's (2.3.160), stands in for a noblewoman's hand. Her forgery of the love letter is an act of social and individual usurpation, which exploits her lady's fantasy of wooing beneath her station.¹⁵ The lack of "distinction of our hands" (2.3.161-62) which Maria perceives, expresses her desire for social distinctions to be erased as easily. Maria not only "feelingly personate[s]" Malvolio in the epistles of love (2.3.159); she transgresses multiple boundaries of selfhood, decorum, and class by feelingly personating Olivia. The tropes attending this device echo Olivia's interview with Cesario, which also turned on the figures of identity and writing—conning, personation, usurpation, veil.

Maria's letter-writing inspiration reveals how her will expresses itself through the energies of the hand metaphor.¹⁶ The ubiquitous figure of the hand (appearing along with its variants thirty-four times in the play) becomes most significant as Maria employs her "sweet Roman hand" (3.4.28-29), her italic handwriting, to take revenge *and* secure her husband's hand, as it were.

“Hand” suggests agency, authority, literacy, skill, and a pledge of one’s faith, all of which come into play in the course of Maria’s plotting. Furthermore, there is a fitting linguistic and symbolic equivalence of hand for hand established in the scene of revenge-plotting, which subtly invokes the biblical talion law of an eye for an eye: “life for life, eie for eie, tothe for tothe, hand for hand” (Deut. 19:21).¹⁷ When Malvolio threatens Maria with the oath “by this hand,” she imagines a fitting repayment of hand for hand:

Mal. Mistress Mary, if you prized my lady’s favour at anything more than contempt, you would not give means for this uncivil rule; she shall know of it, by this hand. (2.3.120-23)

Maria. I will drop in his way some obscure epistles of love, wherein by the colour of his beard, the shape of his leg, the manner of his gait, the expresse of his eye, forehead, and complexion, he shall find himself most feelingly personated. I can write very like my lady your niece; on a forgotten matter we can hardly make distinction of our hands. (2.3.155-62)

Malvolio’s threat to report Maria’s insubordination to her superior “by this hand” carries multiple connotations of authority, punishment, and literacy. The phrase betrays his will to be superior, and perhaps conveys a sense of his literacy as a point of pride and status. Later in the “dark room,” Malvolio will depend on his hand to save him. Yet it is Maria’s superior literacy that rules the day. As Karen Robertson argues, Maria inverts gender norms through her “avenging female hand,” and exposes Malvolio as a “bad reader who has dangerously simple notions of gender.”¹⁸ What will become abundantly clear in the letter-reading scene, furthermore, is Malvolio’s *illiteracy* regarding himself, which is cause for both a great deal of laughter and perhaps a bit of pity.¹⁹

On some level, the performance of this famous scene may provoke pity, and even a lurking sense of terror, as we watch the spectacle of a man’s fall due to his sin of self-love. But the dominant feeling has to be sheer pleasure at watching an insufferable man get his due, at witnessing comic Nemesis at work. Only at the edge of our consciousness might there be a slight reservation, something that erupts full-blown later in the play when we are finally confronted with a disheveled, humiliated Malvolio. When he pathetically insists to Olivia before her household, “Madam, you have done me wrong, / Notorious wrong.... Pray you, peruse that letter. / You must not now deny it is your hand” (5.1.327-30), the vengeful joke has taken air and tainted. Maria’s revenging hand is unmasked in these final moments as evidence that she and her conspirators have done “Notorious wrong.”

The linguistic play with *lex talionis*, so satisfyingly exemplified in the hand for hand trope, occurs elsewhere in the play, making good on revenge’s aggressive character, as well as carrying the past into the present. Revenge thrives on the principles of recompense, equivalence, and remembrance. At the play’s

conclusion, we hear Malvolio's words recoiling upon him in the fullness of time. Malvolio had sworn during the letter-reading scene that he would "baffle Sir Toby" (2.5.162), only to hear Olivia unwittingly "repay" his vindictive intention later with her pitying acknowledgment, "Alas, poor fool, how they have baffled thee!" (5.1.368). Both uses of "baffle" refer to a victim being subjected to public disgrace, but Olivia's use invokes the French *befler*, which means not only to deceive, mock, or gull, but to do so with fair words (according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*). One thinks immediately of Maria's fair letter. At the play's end, Feste throws back at Malvolio his taunting words, which have been etched painfully in the Fool's memory: "But do you remember, 'Madam, why laugh you at such a barren rascal, and you smile not, he's gagged'? And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges" (5.1.373-76). *Lex talionis* operates powerfully for Feste and the other avengers, as it does for Malvolio, who strikes back verbally and immediately with his infamous, "I'll be reveng'd on the whole pack of you!" (5.1.377). In the play's world and ours, public shaming demands a response; if Feste is right, it is in the nature of time itself to repay such insults. So, too, does it appear to be in the nature of comedy to accommodate Nemesis and her implacable will.

Is it possible, then, to argue that Maria and her co-conspirators take on social and moral obligations—or shall we say, comedy's obligation—to respond to "ill will" in their community? To address this question, let us look again at the various tropes for the revenge plot, which are held in maddening tension with one another. By examining the polar extremes, the popular Elizabethan pastime of bearbaiting and the medicinal metaphor of physic, we see just how morally ambiguous and volatile revenge is. Bearbaiting, like theatrical revenge, implicates spectators, whetting their appetite for violence and spectacle. This trope introduces notions of victimization, mob violence, and theatrical blood sport into the aristocratic world of Illyria. When Sir Toby recruits Fabian to the revenge cause, we learn that Fabian has literally staged an illicit round of bearbaiting on Olivia's grounds. The very space in which Maria and her co-conspirators play out a theater of revenge has accommodated a sport of another kind, or shall we say, a disturbingly similar kind. As Ralph Berry sees it, the "dark room" scene *is* "theatre as blood sport."²⁰ Fabian's complaint against Malvolio is that the steward "brought me out o' favor with my lady, about a bear-baiting here" (2.5.6-8). Viewing the revengers' treatment of Malvolio in light of Fabian's sport makes their revenge look like an act of vindictive repetition. Sir Toby's response to Fabian is, after all, to imagine reprisal in kind with the figurative transformation of Malvolio into a bear: "To anger him we'll have the bear again, and we will fool him black and blue" (2.5.9-10). Maria too exults in delightful malice with the language of bearbaiting: "I have dogged him like his murderer" (3.2.73-74). Malvolio's cry for revenge against the "pack" employs the trope one final time, revealing that Malvolio has in truth experienced his torment as a baiting and his persecutors as savage. At least one director, Bill Alexander, has exploited the potentialities of the bearbaiting trope by having Malvolio chained to a stake onstage.²¹

The trope of physic suggests an entirely different range of emotions and intentions driving Maria's jest. When Maria uses this medicinal metaphor, "I know my physic will work with him" (2.3.172-73), she gestures toward a potentially positive, even virtuous, dimension of revenge. While the adage to give someone a taste of his own medicine may underlie Maria's use of the term "physic," it is equally possible she entertains a vision of a healthy outcome to the retributive spectacle of shaming. Of all the tropes we have examined, physic comes the closest to asserting a socially productive, curative function to revenge. "Physic" can mean "a cathartic, a purgative," "mental, moral, or spiritual remedy," "medical treatment," and "the art of practice of healing."²² In this sense, Maria takes upon herself the role of a moral physician who will cure the vice (overweening self-love) in her patient, Malvolio. Early in the play, Olivia diagnoses Malvolio's disease and points up what he lacks: "O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite. To be generous, guiltless, and of free disposition, is to take those things for bird-bolts that you deem cannon-bullets" (1.5.89-93). In summoning up a medical figure of speech, Maria implies that she can provide a healthful diet of laughter for, as another adage goes, laughter is the best medicine, and the ability to laugh at one's self is a great restorative. A distempered appetite reflects medical terminology, as well, signaling an unhealthy imbalance in the humors. Purging the body of its excesses is analogous to the cathartic purgation of comedy. Thus, we might see Maria in a similar light to Viola and Feste who, as John R. Ford sees it, "minister to their patients through wit, song, or mockery designed to allow these characters both to empathize with another and to laugh at themselves."²³

But does Maria in fact cure or rehabilitate the offending patient? Can her revenge be regarded as constructive? Not surprisingly, critics have answered this question in different ways. Those who emphasize generic integrity are more likely to view Malvolio as cured, or purged of his sin, or even to see a cure as beside the point.²⁴ Yet, the questions raised by vengeance's presence in comedy are not so easily laid to rest. After being abused so abominably, Malvolio has not necessarily ceased loving himself in excess; he has learned that he is not loved by all, and that festive play and drunken revelry are just as destructive and dangerous as he judged them to be. Duke Orsino may "entreat him to a peace" (5.1.379), attempting to invite Malvolio into the comedy's circle, but Malvolio will have none of it. At best, we might follow the ethicist Peter French in arguing that "[t]he avenger is the agent of an otherwise impotent morality, which is enabled, through the avenger, to communicate a significant impact in the life of the offender, even if the offender never accepts morality, never guides his (or her) life by its principles, never has the chance."²⁵

Maria's talent as physician is less equivocal and more socially productive in her skillful redirection of Sir Toby's energies from drink and carousing to therapeutic vengeance-taking and, finally, marriage. If Malvolio is Sir Toby's adversary, Maria does Sir Toby a service by organizing scenes in which he can watch Malvolio suffer and undo his credit with Olivia. He is distracted by the jest—indeed he *surfeits* on the jest—to the point of sobriety. Eventually he

proclaims, "I would we were well rid of this knavery. If he may be conveniently delivered, I would he were" (4.2.69-71). The all-engrossing, emotionally exhausting theatrical project of revenge has opened the door for marriage as the cure for Sir Toby's humor imbalances and "ill will," for he, like Malvolio, dishes out insults, lacks self-restraint, and evades self-knowledge. Maria's revenge, ironically, works to redress these imbalances, as well.

Finally, the metaphor of physic calls to mind the therapeutic or cathartic function of theater. In *Twelfth Night*, revenge not only makes for satisfying theater; it is theatrical in its very conception and structure. Stage vengeance naturally thrives on intrigue and comes into its own, as it were, by realizing its dramaturgic potential: revenge must be plotted, opportunity found, roles cast, properties found, the stage set, etc. In exploiting the dramaturgic potential of revenge, Shakespeare not only reminds us that *Twelfth Night* is an "improbable fiction" "played upon a stage" (3.4.129, 128), but also that revenge is a cathartic experience structured to provoke emotions of both pleasurable and painful kinds. Like Maria's onstage troupe, we gain satisfaction from witnessing poetic justice at work, but at the same time we cannot help but catch glimpses of ourselves as voyeurs and predators, indulging individual and communal feelings of schadenfreude. Maria's revenge comedy stars Malvolio, but its intent—punishment and public exposure—strike anti-comic notes. When she gives her own fantasies and his an air of reality with the letter, fantasy begins to invade his waking life. Yet Malvolio was already acting upon, indeed *performing*, his fantasies, if only to his shadow and eavesdroppers. It takes only the ingenuity of the witty Maria to take such a performance to a new, rather frighteningly comic level of "reality," that of revenge comedy.

As Maria's exuberant imagination bodies forth a plot, script, and local habitation for revenge, the comedy-loving audience thrills to the jest. There is first the "box-tree" or letter-reading scene in which the conspirators secretly watch, laugh, and comment on Malvolio's (mis)reading of the forged letter. Maria's letter becomes Malvolio's unwitting script; with each word he utters, he becomes further lost in the role she has "feelingly personated" for him (2.3.159). She has read his heart's secret desire, "To be Count Malvolio" (2.5.35), with all this implies about identity, social mobility, the will to power, and violated decorum.²⁶ Her onstage spectators are positioned in the "box-tree," from where they view the laughable spectacle. In the letter, she cues Malvolio's costume, facial expression, and speech. Later, when the letter bears fruit in a full-blown performance, Maria is present, secretly playing Mistress of the Revels, witnessing the yellow-stockinged, cross-gartered Malvolio approach Olivia. She invites Olivia to witness the spectacle of a madman: "He's coming, madam, but in very strange manner. He is sure possessed, madam....he does nothing but smile...for sure the man is tainted in's wits" (3.4.8-9, 11, 13). With the success of the letter and Malvolio's ridiculous performance before Olivia, the revels begin to darken. Maria and her troupe have laid the groundwork for their next scene in the "dark room."

The scene of dissembling before the "dark room" (4.2) is a disturbing comic

exercise in the escalation of vengeance and the surfeit of appetite. At this point, many readers and theatergoers may feel revenge has become a hopeless parody of justice, exhibiting little more than gratuitous psychological violence. The revengers move from staging the public entertainment of the yellow-gartered fool pressing his love-suit before an astonished Olivia to a private theater in which the victim is bound in the dark and told repeatedly that he is mad. This second scene of vengeance takes shape with Maria's insistence, in a role that now resembles more Fury than Nemesis, that they "pursue him now, lest the device take air, and taint" (3.4.132-33). Riding on the heels of Maria's triumphant letter plot, Sir Toby proclaims, "Come, we'll have him in a dark room and bound" (3.4.136-37). Their goal in taking revenge shifts from ridicule to something more reprehensible—to drive a man to madness, as the Furies often did. Or to look upon the scene in a different light, the revengers will attempt to exorcise the mad spirit of pride and ambition in the steward. Still very much in charge, Maria sees to the details of the "production" but, as with the first scene, she mostly stays "backstage." She directs Feste, her player, in his part and costume: "Nay, I prithee put on this gown, and this beard; make him believe thou art Sir Topas the curate; do it quickly. I'll call Sir Toby the whilst" (4.2.1-3). Sir Toby, however, soon recognizes that they have gone too far with the "dark room"; he fears repercussions from Olivia and wishes to be "well rid of this knavery" (4.2.69-70).

In the end, the comic device of revenge "overfulfills" its function.²⁷ Too much comedy leads to tragicomedy. What initially appeared to be a communal act of cathartic play becomes a theater of cruelty in which Maria and her co-conspirators each try to get a piece of Malvolio. Recalling Anton Artaud's radical concept of cruelty, the revengers reflect an aggressive determination to fulfill the details and ends of their project. In a number of respects, Maria's revenge mimics destructive patterns in tragic vengeance; she loses sight of the social and moral benefits of her project to apply physic to the sick man and manages in the end only to produce a darker mimetic response in Malvolio. In the play's most chilling line, we are promised, all of us, further retaliation: "I'll be reveng'd on the whole pack of you!" (5.1.377). Yet Maria's satisfaction at the thought of driving Malvolio mad, "The house will be the quieter" (3.4.135), is equally as chilling, and strangely ironic, in that Malvolio was the advocate of quiet, and Sir Toby of caterwauling. Malvolio is far from quiet at the drama's end, however, when his voice sounds the deadly tragic spirit of revenge, giving full expression to malice with no trace of the sporting spirit of his persecutors. Malvolio's treatment sparks elements of tragedy within the comic world; his revenge, in its fury, promises to usher in some serious action far more appalling than what he has just experienced.

While Malvolio's voice cannot be quieted, attempts to defuse his malice must be made. The laws of comedy demand it, for the spiraling cycle of vengeance threatens to unbalance the comic dispensation of Olivia's household and *Twelfth Night's* world. Not surprisingly, Olivia gives the counter-response to revenge in offering Malvolio the means to reconciliation and reintegration into society. She holds out the olive branch, as her name would lead us to

expect, calling for peace in the feud. She attempts to redirect Malvolio's malice and redress his injured honor with the promise of truth, justice, and legal reparations. She assures him that in time he will play plaintiff and judge in a household court of law. "Institutional" justice, not personal or communal revenge, is her way, and she will allow the victim to preside over the hearings. Importantly, she acknowledges that harm was done to Malvolio and that the nature of the harm warrants justice. This is far more than Malvolio gets from his persecutors, and the lack of remorse or acknowledgment of injury from them proves problematic.

Fabian, naturally, wishes to see an end to the affair immediately: "let no quarrel, nor no brawl to come, / Taint the condition of this present hour" (5.1.355-56). He freely confesses and embellishes his part in the device, takes responsibility, and names Sir Toby and Maria as collaborators, though he reduces Maria's role considerably (perhaps to protect her). He implies that their device was motivated by just resentment "Upon some stubborn and uncourteous parts / We had conceiv'd against him" (5.1.360-61), but pleads equity regarding the injuries: "If that the injuries be justly weigh'd / That have on both sides pass'd" (5.1.366-67). The implied image of Justice's balance, weighing wrongs on both sides, sounds promising for the restoration of harmony and a joyous conclusion. Indeed, the highest claim revenge or Nemesis might make is that it brings things back to even, restoring a lost equilibrium. In one balance, the householders' injuries are suspended; in the other balance, Malvolio's sufferings have accumulated.

Clearly, the rub lies in that very phrase, "justly weigh'd." From whose perspective are the weights determined? How should the two elements of Fabian's troubling oxymoron "sportful malice" affect the balance in which Malvolio's shameful treatment rests? Attempts to assuage Malvolio's anger may seem painfully inadequate because of what many, including Olivia and some of the play's audience, perceive to be a clear imbalance in the weighing of injuries. The lack of proportionality is rather stunning; upon reflection, readers and audience-members may realize that tragical mirth is born from this very imbalance. Following the common economic trope, the revengers have incurred a debt. They have exceeded repayment of Malvolio's wrongs. The perpetrator has become the victim, and he now feels he is owed a further piece of his former victims' pride. He will become perpetrator once more, and thus the whirligig will keep spinning. In the Illyrian community, Malvolio's self-preservation and self-worth depend upon it. Through revenge, he will hope to recover a lost sense of worth. Forgiveness and the acknowledgment of pain can short-circuit the explosive mechanism of revenge, but Fabian does not ask for forgiveness, nor does Feste. One can assume that Maria and Sir Toby, both absent from the scene, lack remorse, enjoying instead a sense of satisfaction. Malvolio, even if he were inclined to forgive, has not been dignified with this possibility. While the punishment has suited the crime, the excessiveness is troubling. To follow Thomas Aquinas, we might say, "by way of excess" there arises the "sin of cruelty or brutality, which exceeds the measure in punishing."²⁸

Our laughter dies not only with the knowledge of how deeply shameful and

traumatic Malvolio's experience has been, but with the recognition that the tormentors have reaped benefits at his expense. The interpersonal dynamics of Maria's revenge plot reveal a larger truth about the play's world and its inhabitants: the play's emotional and structural economies are driven by debt and recompense.²⁹ One form of recompense (revenge) elides into another (marriage). Through revenge theater, Maria and her co-conspirators have pursued their own comic ends. For Maria, the revenge plot has been her investment in the domestic comedy of marriage, or so we might imagine, if Sir Toby can accept love as the cure for drunkenness and self-loathing ("I hate a drunken rogue" [5.1.199]). In the end, Maria rests on her laurels, having witnessed the triumph of her wit and orchestrated a secret courtship. Malvolio's threat of revenge and Olivia's anger are lost on the revenge artist and her admirer as they enjoy an offstage union. Furthermore, the marriage of Sir Toby and Maria guarantees their part in the social regeneration of the Illyrian community. While some members of the larger community may feel pity for Malvolio, they will shore up together, some as happy couples focused on their own comic ends. The intrusion of revenge's dark business upon their happiness may be fleeting at best. For the audience, however, comic closure seems far more provisional, as Feste's song suggests: "Present mirth hath present laughter; / What's to come is still unsure" (2.3.49-50).

Present mirth has already given way to a palpable unsureness about our (and the lovers') responses to comedy's excesses. Malvolio has been shamed and exposed before the community as "the most notorious geck and gull / That e'er invention play'd on" (5.1.342-43). He is truly pitiable in his isolation and ignorance, even when his speech continues to betray obnoxious and self-deluded characteristics. If we, as his audience, fail to pity him, it is our own failure (or perhaps that of the actor or director who has worked against eliciting pity). Psychoanalyst Léon Wurmser describes the experience of shame as fundamentally dehumanizing: "the loss of love in shame can be described as a radical decrease of respect for the subject as a person with his own dignity; it is a disregard for his having a self in its own right with its own prestige...the thrust of this aggression is to *dehumanize*."³⁰ Far from being a crowned lover, far from being loved by anyone, Malvolio is reduced to the role of a "madly-used" fool (5.1.310). In humiliating Malvolio, Maria and her fellow antagonists establish the psychological conditions for vengeance, for such raw and demoralizing experiences motivate victims to retaliate, if they are to save face and function productively in their community.

The play presses upon its audience the question of whether there are moral differences between Malvolio's and Maria's vengefulness. Surely, these characters mean different things when they use the word "revenge"—or do they? Intangible wrongs, such as slights to one's honor, breaches in class deference, verbal insults, etc., committed in the private arena of domestic households, as they are in *Twelfth Night*, evade legal punishment; thus the play entertains the fantasy of a private theater of revenge in which jesting, aggressive prosecutors bait and punish their victimizer, Malvolio. As Francis Bacon

asserted in his essay "Of Revenge," "The most tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs which there is no law to remedy."³¹ In keeping with this view, the Elizabethan law student John Manningham recorded in his diary an appreciation of the revenge plot as "good practice," ignoring altogether the question of morality or the potential for tragedy.³² His sympathies were unequivocally with the revelers and their dream of lawless revenge.

Couched in figures of aristocratic sport and physic, Maria and her troupe's treatment of Malvolio attempts to pass as a socially acceptable comic inversion of revenge tragedy, meant to entertain and "pluck on laughter." No blood is spilled and no one dies, after all; the overarching laws of comedy, while having been stretched like a chevril glove, are still intact. Vengeance, psychological torment, physical deprivation, and public humiliation have been fair game to teach the prideful steward a lesson (even if he has learned nothing productive). Malvolio has been a fitting target for Nemesis. Feste gives revenge a sporting air when he figures it as product of Time's spinning top: "thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges" (5.1.375-76). Yet this figure, like so many in the play, suggests a troubling indefiniteness—in picturing the whirligig, we see the rapid blur of the spinning top, sense the possible loss of control. As the whirligig keeps whirling, it promises to bring in not a single revenge, but revenge upon revenge. Yet this is to abstract or mystify what is, in the end, a product of individual and social will. As Bacon cautioned in *De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum*, "He that did the first wrong made a beginning to mischief; he that returned it made no end."³³

The provisional, tragicomic closure of *Twelfth Night* points to the problematic status of the comic genre and its rather indiscriminate celebration of ludic pleasures—taken too far, they produce a surfeit of aggression, a distempered appetite unchecked by morality, law, or authority. The representative of festivity and holiday foolery, Feste, speaks to comedy's darker truth: "pleasure will be paid, one time or another" (2.4.70-71). The excesses of revenge point up the excesses of comedy. Shakespeare unmasks comedy's dependence on such volatile constitutive forces as revenge, which appeal to disturbingly guilty, dark pleasures in the characters and audience alike. What becomes clear through Maria's twin plots of punishment and courtship is that revenge's motives and means, like comedy's, are never pure.

Notes

1. Quotations are from The Arden Shakespeare *Twelfth Night*, ed. J. M. Lothian and T. W. Craik (London and New York: Routledge Press, 1995), 5.1.361-67.
2. In *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom* (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company, 1959), C. L. Barber made a compelling case for the positive social and generic function of disruptive activities. The result of

irreverently mocking or turning over normative laws and behavioral strictures is a clarification of those bounds and a renewed sense of self and community. Following Barber, a plethora of critics have been at pains to argue that all's well that ends well in *Twelfth Night*. Ralph Berry cites articles by Joseph Summers ("The Masks of *Twelfth Night*," *University of Kansas City Review* 22 [1955], 25-32) and Barbara K. Lewalski ("Thematic Patterns in *Twelfth Night*," *Shakespeare Studies* 1 [1965], 168-81) as examples of a "critical imperviousness to the ending" of *Twelfth Night*. See "Twelfth Night": The Experience of the Audience," *Shakespeare Survey* 34 (1981), 111-19, 117. More recently, Linda Anderson, in *A Kind of Wild Justice: Revenge in Shakespeare's Comedies* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1987), illustrates this defensive position by focusing specifically on how vengeful actions in comedy create intrigue and conflict, which necessitate a healthy, morally edifying reconciliation.

3. Berry, 117. The present article owes much to Berry's excellent critique of the festive view of *Twelfth Night*. Other critics who emphasize darker, anti-comic tones and generic complexity in *Twelfth Night* include Julian Markels, "Shakespeare's Confluence of Tragedy and Comedy: *Twelfth Night* and *King Lear*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 15 (1964), 75-88; Clifford Leech, '*Twelfth Night*' and *Shakespearean Comedy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), esp. 29-55; Anne Barton, "As *You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*: Shakespeare's Sense of an Ending," *Shakespearean Comedy*, eds. Malcolm Bradbury and David Palmer (New York: Crane, 1972), 160-80; and R. W. Maslen, *Shakespeare and Comedy* (London: Thomson Learning, 2006), 192-210.
4. Stephen Booth's self-conscious discomfort regarding this speech is worth noting here. He claims, while "Fabian and his peacemaking speech ask us to take them as furniture of the play as play—as stuff in a comedy," he cannot help pursuing a line of thought "entirely alien to the spirit generically appropriate to an audience listening while a playwright brings his comic machine to rest," 179, 178-79. *Precious Nonsense: The Gettysburg Address, Ben Jonson's Epitaphs on his Children, and 'Twelfth Night'* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
5. John Kerrigan, *Revenge Tragedy, Aeschylus to Armageddon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 194.
6. Jagannath Chakravorty, for example, assures us that "Maria's 'revenge' is, of course, good-hearted—nothing more than a desire to teach him a lesson." *The Idea of Revenge in Shakespeare* (Calcutta: Jadavpur University, 1969), 257. Harold C. Goddard, on the other hand, regards Maria as a practical joker with a "cruel streak"; he detects ambition and envy in her, as well as a desire to show off her talents to Sir Toby. *The Meaning of Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 298. Similarly, Ralph Berry emphasizes Maria's social resentment; he notes, "she endures the classic ambivalence of the lady-in-waiting, above the servants but not ranking with the great," 114. Harold Bloom argues that Maria is sadistic, calling her "the only truly malicious character in *Twelfth Night*." *Shakespeare, The Invention of the Human* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998), 238.
7. *Approaches to Twelfth Night*, ed. Michael Billington, with contributions by Bill Alexander, John Barton, John Caird, Terry Hands. RSC Directors' Shakespeare (London: Nick Hern Books, 1990), 87, 86. As John Barton insightfully argues, "The way you take Maria is one of the big interpretive choices because it is open-ended: it's not textually defined how old she is or what she is at all," 85.
8. Goddard finds a "vague premonition of the Iago-Cassio theme" in Maria's simile, "I have dogged him like his murderer," and asserts that her intelligence and the constraints of a servile position have led to her ambition and envy, 298.
9. Cristina Malcolmson, "'What you Will': Social Mobility and Gender in *Twelfth Night*," in *Twelfth Night*, ed. R. S. White (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 160-93, 186.

10. Penny Gay, *As She Likes It: Shakespeare's Unruly Women* (London and New York: Routledge Press, 1994), 18.
11. While directors tend to present Maria as a maid or housekeeper onstage, a careful examination of the text makes clear the error of too lowly a social designation for Maria. Olivia and Malvolio both call her a “gentlewoman” (1.5.165, 166), establishing her gentility at an early point in the play. Perhaps Sir Toby Belch's phrase, “my niece's chambermaid” (1.3.50) and Valentine's reference to “handmaid” (1.1.25) have misguided readers and directors. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, however, confirms that the Elizabethan terms “chambermaid” and “handmaid” may refer to a gentlewoman who attends an aristocratic lady. Richard A. Levin suggests that the term is used as a private witticism exchanged between Sir Toby and Maria; Sir Toby calls her “my niece's chambermaid” to confuse Sir Andrew and to play on Maria's social aspirations. *Love and Society in Shakespearean Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Content* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 132.
12. See Elliott Krieger, “*Twelfth Night*: ‘The morality of indulgence,’” in White, 37-71, 60. About Maria, he rightly observes, “Through her service to Sir Toby she transcends service, rises to a higher social position. Her vocation allows her to express and to fulfill herself.” See also Levin, who argues that Maria serves as Sir Toby's “self appointed steward,” 138.
13. Directors John Caird and Bill Alexander regard this moment as the pivotal one for Maria, for she must choose whether or not to align herself publicly with Sir Toby Belch. See Billington, 86.
14. Mark Thornton Burnett makes a similar point in *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 142.
15. Laurie E. Osborne offers a useful discussion of Maria's “occupation” of Olivia's position in “Letters, Lovers, Lacan: Or Malvolio's Purloined Letter,” *Assays* 5 (1989), 63-89, 70-71.
16. Stephen Booth notes that Shakespeare does not waste “the inherent energy of *hand*” as a frequently repeated metaphor and body part in *Twelfth Night*, 201. Geoffrey H. Hartman comments that in the “dark room” scene words such as “hand” suddenly receive their full value. “Shakespeare's poetical character in *Twelfth Night*,” in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, eds. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (New York and London: Methuen, 1985), 37-53, 50. I argue that the play's final scene, even more so, enacts a kind of linguistic fullness in keeping with the principle of retribution.
17. *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*, intro. Lloyd E. Berry (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1969).
18. Karen Robertson, “A Revenging Feminine Hand in *Twelfth Night*” in *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*, ed. David Bergeron (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), 116-130, 123.
19. Inge Leimberg argues, “Malvolio, for all his passionate efforts to ‘see...see...see’, is blind to what everyone else sees clearly because it is indeed as revealing as ‘Daylight and campaign’; he is virtually illiterate, unable to read the very ABC of self-knowledge spread before his eyes.” “‘M.O.A.I.’: Trying to Share the Joke in *Twelfth Night* 2.5 (A Critical Hypothesis)” *Connotations* 1.1 (1991), 78-95, 82.
20. Berry, 119.
21. Jason Scott-Warren notes Bill Alexander's directorial choice in his excellent article, “When Theaters Were Bear-Gardens; or What's at Stake in the Comedy of Humors,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 54 (2003), 63-82, 65. Scott-Warren belongs to a group of scholars (e.g., John R.

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Ford, Stephen Dickey, Ralph Berry) who have pursued links between bearbaiting and theater in *Twelfth Night*. As Scott-Warren argues, "For a while, Shakespeare's comedy is propelled by the violent energies of the bear-garden; finally, it almost comes to grief on them," 80.

22. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "Physic," Entries 1, 2b, 3a, 3b, <http://www.dictionary.oed.com> (accessed 27 April 2008).
23. John R. Ford, *Twelfth Night: A Guide to the Play* (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 2006), 58.
24. Chakravorty believes that Malvolio is "at last cured of his 'self-love,'" 258. Markels credits Feste, not Maria, with curing Malvolio, claiming that the Fool purges the steward's pride with a set catechism in the "dark room" scene, 85-86. Ruth Nevo also focuses on Feste, claiming that his ministrations to Malvolio in prison "travesty cure," but end up having a "rough curative effect." *Comic Transformations in Shakespeare* (London and New York: Methuen, 1980), 214. Ronald R. Macdonald argues, "No matter how we experience the tone of the joke played on Malvolio...the fact remains that insofar as it is aimed at bringing him to his senses and giving him a more workable sense of the self, it is a failure." *William Shakespeare, The Comedies* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 118.
25. Peter A. French, *The Virtues of Vengeance* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 86.
26. C. L. Barber stated well what Malvolio desires: "His secret wish is to violate decorum himself, then relish to the full its power over others," 255.
27. I have borrowed this felicitous term from Ruth Nevo. See "Shakespeare's Comic Remedies," *New York Literary Forum* 5-6 (1980), 3-15, 8.
28. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, vol. 3 (New York: Christian Classics, 1948), 1652. This quotation comes from Question 108, "Of Vengeance."
29. See Camille Wells Slight, *Shakespeare's Comic Commonwealths* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) for an enlightening discussion of how mutual dependence and continuing obligations define the comic world.
30. Léon Wurmser, *The Mask of Shame* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 81.
31. Francis Bacon, *Essays, Advancement of Learning, New Atlantis, and Other Pieces*, ed. Richard Foster Jones (New York: Odyssey Press, 1937), 14.
32. Law student John Manningham attended the 1601 Middle Temple performance, recording in his diary how he relished the "good practise" of making the "steward beleuee his Lady wid-dowe was in Loue wth him by counterfaying a lett' as from his Lady in generall tearmes telling him what shee liked best in him and prescribing his gesture in smiling his apparraile &c. And then when he came to practise making him beleuee they tooke him to be mad." Quoted in J. M. Lothian and T. W. Craik's edition, xxvi.
33. Francis Bacon, *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. John M. Robertson (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 555.

Angelina Oberdan

**VINDICATION: IN RESPONSE TO THE DOCUMENTARY
SHAKESPEARE *BEHIND BARS***

I would have forgiven them, their crimes
I think, after seeing them act. Large

men articulating Shakespeare, I would
have at least given them parole.

Everyone of them, yes. Except the one
I went there to watch—my cousin.

I can still feel him, casually sitting
with me on a log, casting into

a croppy bed in our Easter best.
He would take the fish off the hook

for me and throw back into the lake, harmless.
And I can see the bulk his body has

become. The un-cousin who raped
a girl—a few years younger than me.

Watching him act with beauty
and seeing in the blue

of his eyes the face of the lake
where we used to fish.

“TO TELL MY STORY”: NARRATING IDENTITY IN SHAKESPEARE

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The burgeoning of interest in the role played by narrative in human life has led to the emergence in recent decades of an extensive, if somewhat amorphous, area of inquiry in which a variety of different disciplines have sought to stake out territory. Though deriving much of its original impetus from studies conducted within the domain of literary criticism, a number of fields remote from literature have undergone what is sometimes referred to as a “narrativist turn,”¹ a formal interest in the cognitive and constitutive aspects of narrative infiltrating disciplines as diverse as those of anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, historiography, and even jurisprudence and medicine. Building on the premise that human beings tend “both to organize their experience and to interpret their social lives according to narrative plots,”² proponents of the narrativist approach have made even more far-reaching claims for narrative, representing it not only as a “primary act of mind,”³ or “fundamental instrument of thought” indispensable to human cognition,⁴ but as a mechanism deeply implicated in the forging of individual identity itself. Jerome Bruner’s contention that “it is through narrative that we create and re-create selfhood,”⁵ so that “in the end, we *become* the autobiographical narratives by which we ‘tell about’ our lives,”⁶ is one that has gained considerable consensus among other writers on the subject as well.

This perception of the primacy of narrative modes of thought in shaping human experience is not however an entirely novel development, and Shakespearean drama offers particularly fertile terrain for those seeking evidence of such an awareness in early modern literature.⁷ The conception of life as constituting a kind of story is, indeed, as pervasive in Shakespeare as the more familiar notion of the world as a stage, and proceeds from very much the same assumption that the various parts played by human beings in the course of their existences are in some respects analogous to the scripted roles of drama and other literary genres.⁸ This assimilation of life to a story assumes various forms, each of them calling for a different kind of intellectual and imaginative response. In its most elementary manifestation the invocation of narrative is simply a trope, one belonging to the inherited repertory of conceptual metaphors available to Shakespeare as to any other poet,⁹ and not making any necessary claim to wider significance. When Egeon in *The Comedy of Errors* concludes a brief autobiographical sketch by saying that “here must end the story of my life” (1.1.137),¹⁰ for instance, there is no need to seek for any meaning over and above that immediately present in the figure itself.¹¹ In invoking the story motif Shakespeare quite frequently goes beyond the level of metaphor as such, however, suggesting that there is a very real sense in which human beings live their lives as stories, that they structure their experience and invest it with significance through what are essentially strategies of narrative elaboration. If the protagonist of *Macbeth* decides in a mo-

ment of bleak philosophizing that life is no more than "a tale / Told by an idiot... / Signifying nothing" (5.5.26-28), the implication being that there is no way that any coherent narrative pattern can be discerned in the mechanically self-perpetuating violence of which he has lent himself as an agent, other Shakespearean characters are rather less pessimistic about the possibility of eliciting such a pattern from the turmoil of events. Much of their conduct, indeed, would appear to be dictated by precisely such an imperative, and in the upshot illustrates not only the pitfalls attending the process of narrative self-construction but also the paradoxes latent in the conception of selfhood that it entails.

A conspicuous case in point is that of Hamlet. Confronted by his own imminent death at the end of the play in which he has played a sometimes equivocal part, what the prince is above all anxious to ensure is that his friend Horatio will undertake to "Report me and my cause aright" (5.2.346), a task whose nature Hamlet further clarifies as follows:

O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,
 Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind me.
 If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
 Absent thee from felicity awhile,
 And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
 To tell my story. (5.2.351-6)

But if Hamlet's exhortation to Horatio is very explicitly to tell "my story" rather than anyone else's, no sooner is he dead than he becomes subject to narrative exigencies wholly different from his own. Although Horatio has been enjoined to tell a story that will confer a semblance of order upon the events that have transpired at Elsinore, a clearly delineated epic of revenge in which Hamlet himself will figure as the protagonist, what he actually seems more inclined to embark on is a chronicle of random carnage destitute of any coherence whatsoever:

And let me speak to th'yet unknowing world
 How these things came about. So shall you hear
 Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
 Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
 Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause,
 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
 Fall'n on th'inventors' heads. All this can I
 Truly deliver. (5.2.386-93)

As the prologue to a report ostensibly intended to vindicate Hamlet's conduct this is hardly promising, for as James Shapiro points out "the same could as easily be said of *Titus Andronicus*."¹² The events that Horatio will be called upon to give some account of include the murder of a harmless old man, the psychic destruction of his daughter, the ruthless elimination of a pair of ineffectual but well-meaning students from Wittenberg, the extermination of the royal house of

Denmark, and the consignment of an entire nation into the hands of a foreign princeling, all of which are to be laid more or less directly to Hamlet's charge. While Hamlet will doubtless have a significant role to play in whatever story Horatio feels called upon to recite, it seems unlikely that it will bear very much relation to the one in which he has cast himself.

Fortinbras too has his own version of events to enshrine as history, and no sooner does he discover that the throne of Denmark has fallen to his lot than he begins to convert Hamlet into something amenable to such a project, absorbing the prince within a narrative totally alien to the one he has been living by:

Let four captains
 Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,
 For he was likely, had he been put on,
 To have prov'd most royal; and for his passage,
 The soldier's music and the rite of war
 Speak loudly for him. (5.2.402-7)

In the context of what has come before, the phrase "like a soldier" has distinctly ironical reverberations, for whatever Hamlet has been acting like it is not a soldier. Since he can no longer speak for himself, it is now the "rite of war" that will "Speak loudly for him," and his identity will thus be articulated by voices other than his own. With his "dying voice" he has nominated his successor (5.2.363), but that voice has now been appropriated by others.¹³ Fortinbras' main concern at this juncture is to legitimate his own position by creating a lineage of ethos if not of blood, to represent the Danish prince as having been a worthy predecessor to himself by assimilating him to the chivalric code that lies at the foundation of his own system of values. Hamlet the brooding scholar is thus transformed into a fallen soldier, the irresolute prince into a designated monarch of great but blighted promise, and the obsequies of this most deeply introspective of Shakespeare's characters into a Viking funeral attended by all the ostentatious panoply of war.

Hamlet is not the only Shakespearean character who evinces the desire to impart narrative coherence to his life in the final moments of ebbing consciousness. Nor is *Hamlet* the only play in which it is the final words pronounced by the protagonist that reveal his deep concern with story, his awareness of the degree to which identity is bound up with narrative. In quite literally trying to get their story right in the final instants before their deaths, a number of Shakespearean personages betray the extent to which they have always conceived their lives as story, endeavoring to establish their identities through means that are, in the last analysis, narratological in inspiration. As the example of Hamlet's postmortem transformation illustrates, however, the conception of life as a deliberately fabricated story, and of identity itself as a function of that story, is at least potentially deeply problematic. Anyone can tell a story and not only the person who is nominally the protagonist of that story. The inevitable corollary of this is that the identity of the subject is not a purely private possession, nor a product of individual self-fashioning only, but vulnerable to manipulation on

the part of anyone who happens to exert narrative control.

As is perhaps only to be expected, the personages in Shakespeare who are most susceptible to manipulations of this kind are those who are most overtly disposed to perceive themselves in narrative terms in the first place, who in one way or another consciously interpret their own lives on analogy with stories. One such individual is Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, whose announcement a few moments before committing suicide that "Brutus' tongue / Hath almost ended his life's history" (5.5.39–40) suggests not only that he has been organizing his life along narrative lines from the very beginning but that he is to some degree aware of the fact. The irony is that while he is fashioning his own identity in narrative terms, other people are refashioning him through what are essentially the same means, and of this aspect of the situation he seems to remain oblivious. The role that Brutus has played in the conspiracy against Caesar has at least in part been charted out for him by Cassius, who has invoked the history of Brutus's own ancestor Junius Brutus—credited with ending Tarquin rule and inaugurating the republic—as a model worthy of emulation in his own conduct as well:

There was a Brutus once that would have brook'd
Th' eternal devil to keep his state in Rome
As easily as a king. (1.2.157-9)

The story of Brutus' life, the story that *is* his life, must be patterned on that of the ancestor whose name he has inherited. "Honour," Cassius says, "is the subject of my story" (1.2.91), and it is this story of honor as he conceives it that he proceeds to project onto Brutus.

One of the ironies lurking in this assimilation of the story of Brutus's life to that of his illustrious namesake is that while there are indeed suggestive parallels between the two, the role played by Brutus himself will in some ways invert that of his ancestor. Whereas in the story of the overthrow of the Tarquin dynasty as it is recounted by Shakespeare himself in the Argument of *Lucrece* it is Brutus who conveys the body of Lucrece to Rome and uses it to incense the Roman populace against their rulers, in *Julius Caesar* it is Mark Antony who will bring Caesar's body into the marketplace and stir the people to revolt against Brutus. Whereas the earlier Brutus makes a solemn vow to extirpate the Tarquin family, the later Brutus refuses to allow the conspirators to pledge themselves to their undertaking by means of an oath. Brutus thus finds himself entangled in a narrative role whose requirements he cannot fulfil, and it is ironically the case that this process of role imposition, of narrative refashioning against the grain of character and circumstance, does not cease even with his death. Mark Antony's eulogy over the body of the dead man, however dignified it is in formulation, gives a radically simplified account of his actions that renders scant justice either to the nuances of his character or to the intricacy of his motives:

All the conspirators save only he
Did that they did in envy of great Caesar;

He only, in a general honest thought
 And common good to all, made one of them. (5.5.69-72)

This assessment of Brutus' motivations is consistent with the image of himself that Brutus has been striving to project, and perhaps with the image of the publicly spirited Roman that it is in the immediate interest of Antony to disseminate, but not with the character as he has unfolded before us on the stage. In view of Brutus' own reservations about the menace posed by Caesar and the necessity of destroying him, and in view also of the distinct streak of narcissism in the character to which various critics have drawn attention,¹⁴ Mark Antony's narrative reconstruction of his reasons for joining the conspiracy is totally inadequate.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Mark Antony, who in *Julius Caesar* has revealed himself to be so singularly adept at manipulating other people's stories, will have problems of his own with narrative, for the story of his love affair with Cleopatra will inevitably clash with other stories and in particular with the history of Rome which happens to be that with which Octavius identifies himself. At the same time, however, that story does invest his existence with meaning, and creates a scenario moreover in which other characters can discover their meaning as well. At one point in the tragedy Antony's aide Enobarbus, deeply divided within himself as to whether he should remain with his captain or not, reflects that it is participation in a story that confers dignity upon the life of an individual, even if that story seems in its own terms to be a wholly inglorious one:

Yet he that can endure
 To follow with allegiance a fallen lord
 Does conquer him that did his master conquer,
 And earns a place i' th' story. (3.13.44-7)

When Enobarbus lets prudence prevail and deserts Antony, learning afterwards of the magnanimity with which his former captain has forgiven this act of betrayal, he comes to regret his decision. Deprived of his place in a story, even the story of inevitable defeat which is the only one available to him as long as he remains in Antony's retinue, he loses his will to live. To all intents and purposes, he has forfeited his identity as an individual, exiled himself from the only narrative that has been capable of giving his life meaning. The only role that remains to him is that of being "alone the villain of the earth" (4.6.31), and his seeking out a ditch in which to end his days is no more than a symbolic confirmation of that fact (4.6.38-40).

Plays such as *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* thus simultaneously demonstrate the moral and existential necessity of narrative in human life, the indispensable role it plays in the creation of meaning and identity, and the perils inherent in its use. Human beings perceive their lives as stories and in a certain sense "write" their lives as stories, but writing one's own life as story almost invariably entails writing or rewriting the lives of others as well, and it is at this point that difficulties arise. Since the individual and his doings can also become part

of the material which others incorporate into *their* stories, the problem inevitably emerges of who it is who is qualified to tell the definitive story, what forces are at work that privilege one storyteller over another, what gives one narrative a superior claim to the status of truth or at least to the authority of general consensus. Ultimately this issue merges into that of the nature of history understood in its broadest sense, inasmuch as historical discourse also assumes the contours of narrative, creating order and meaning through what Hayden White describes as an "imposition, upon events that are represented as real, of the formal coherency that stories possess."¹⁵ White argues that the "fiction" of a world "capable of speaking itself and of displaying itself as a form of a story" might be "necessary for the establishment of that moral authority without which the notion of a specifically social reality would be unthinkable."¹⁶ Octavius' story, with its relentless momentum culminating in the triumphant inauguration of the *pax romana*, will ultimately be consecrated as history, and Octavius, confident that the "time of universal peace" (4.6.5) of which he will be remembered as the architect is at hand, is resolute that this story shall assume lineaments of his own choosing:

Go with me to my tent, where you shall see
 How hardly I was drawn into this war,
 How calm and gentle I proceeded still
 In all my writings. Go with me and see
 What I can show in this. (5.1.73-77)

At the same time, of course, while fully conscious of what Barbara Hardy calls the "power-structure of historical narrative,"¹⁷ Shakespeare's play is also concerned to recuperate that other story which has been crushed beneath the wheels of historical process, one which even Octavius must concede to be no less compelling than the narrative of power in which his own identity is inscribed. Contemplating the body of the dead queen of Egypt, Octavius recognizes indeed that the story of the lovers, though it may be one terminating in defeat and death, is invested with a splendor equal to his own:

She shall be buried by her Antony.
 No grave upon the earth shall clip in it
 A pair so famous. High events as these
 Strike those that make them, and their story is
 No less in pity than his glory which
 Brought them to be lamented. (5.2.356-61)

A character who might be regarded as paradigmatic of the tendency on the part of human beings to define themselves through narrative, and whose vicissitudes illustrate all the paradoxes attendant on that tendency, is the protagonist of *Othello*. In view of the concerns of the present essay particular attention must be paid to this figure, for as James Calderwood remarks, "of all Shakespeare's characters, Othello testifies most thoroughly to the fact that everyone is a biog-

raphy, a life-story constantly being written and revised, told and retold."¹⁸ The existential strategy of fabricating an identity through the telling of stories can be one fraught with danger, however, and as various critics have argued, it is this proneness towards narrativizing experience that renders the Moor susceptible to attack as well. Stephen Greenblatt for instance locates the source of Othello's tragedy in what he calls his "*submission to narrative self-fashioning*,"¹⁹ while Catherine Bates argues in a similar vein that "Othello falls prey to Iago's storytelling because he is himself a story-teller."²⁰ What such observations, notwithstanding their indubitable merits, perhaps fail sufficiently to emphasize is that it is above all Othello's *consciousness* of himself as a storyteller that renders him vulnerable, that what Iago represents is not only an independent narrative agency but also the externalization of the protagonist's own awareness that the selves he constructs through narrative means are no more than contingent fictions. It is this aspect of his situation that I wish to concentrate on here.

From the point of view of the play's self-conscious concern with stories and the various kinds of distortion to which they are liable, a crucial scene in the tragedy—one in which Othello's formidable narrative talents are displayed in all their enormous creative potential and all their essential ambivalence—is that in which he delivers what he calls a "round unvarnished tale" (1.3.91) to the Venetian senate in order to answer the charge that he has resorted to witchcraft in order to seduce Desdemona. In the event, of course, the tale that emerges proves to be anything but unvarnished. What Othello's long speech actually amounts to is what Rawdon Wilson describes as "a kind of metanarrative in which he tells not the narrative that won Desdemona but the tale of the telling."²¹ Since much of what I have to say in connection with *Othello* constitutes a kind of commentary on this speech, I will quote it in its entirety, italicizing those words and phrases that betray a reflexive self-consciousness on the narrator's part:

Her father loved me, oft invited me,
 Still questioned me the *story of my life*
 From year to year—the battles, sieges, fortunes
 That I have passed.
 I *ran it through*, even from my boyish days,
 To th' very moment that he bade me *tell it*,
 Wherein I *spake* of most disastrous chances,
 Of moving accidents by flood and field,
 Of hair-breadth scapes l'th' imminent deadly breach,
 Of being taken by the insolent foe
 And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence
 And portance in my *travailous history*;
 Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
 Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch heaven
 It was my hint to *speak*—such was the process—
 And of the cannibals that each other eat,
 The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads

Do grow beneath their shoulders. This *to hear*
 Would Desdemona seriously incline,
 But still the house-affairs would draw her thence,
 Which ever as she could with haste dispatch
 She'd come again, and with a *greedy ear*
Devour up my discourse; which I, observing,
 Took once a pliant hour and found good means
 To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
 That I would all my pilgrimage *dilate*,
 Whereof by parcels she had something *heard*,
 But not intentively. I did consent,
 And often did beguile her of her tears
 When I did *speak* of some distressful stroke
 That my youth suffered. *My story* being done,
 She gave me for my pains a world of sighs,
 She swore in faith 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,
 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful;
 She wished she had not *heard* it, yet she wished
 That heaven had made her such a man. She thanked me
 And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
 I should but teach him how *to tell my story*
 And that would woo her. (1.3.129-67)

What we are dealing with in this passage is an elaborate exercise in narrative recursion, since what we are listening to is not so much an individual recounting his experiences as what Calderwood describes as "a voice telling about himself telling about himself."²² Stories are embedded within other stories, and at the same time both reflect those other stories and are reflected by them in their turn, the complex structure of interlocking narrative planes recalling in certain respects the convoluted dramaturgical architecture of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In recounting in the present the circumstances in which, at some unspecified moment in the past, he captured Desdemona's interest with a series of tales actually intended for her father's entertainment, and then went on to beguile her imagination still further with stories of adventures set in an even more distant past, what Othello is essentially doing is using narrative to construct the persona of himself as a narrator. In other words, he is at once both the producer of narrative and its product, that product being nothing other than the image of himself as the producer of narrative. In the course of this recursive process Othello tends to disappear altogether as anything but a narrating voice, to become totally swallowed up within the discursive process in which he is engaged. The image of swallowing is not used unadvisedly, for various critics have noted that it is the reference to cannibalism on one narrative level that seems to generate the image of Desdemona "devouring" Othello's speech on another,²³ the effect of this being to reinforce the sense of each narrative level as being not only subsumed, but also in a sense *consumed*, by

that superordinate to it. Othello's history has been encapsulated in the earlier narrative, and his use of that narrative for the purposes of courtship has been encapsulated in the narrative he produces in the present. There is no reason why such a process of progressive encapsulation should not continue into the future as well, and in a certain sense it is precisely this that occurs.

The Moor is immensely successful as a storyteller, for the Doge and the senators are as much persuaded by Othello's account of how he wooed Desdemona as Desdemona has been persuaded by Othello's account of his own history, the Duke going so far as to acknowledge indeed that "I think this tale would win my daughter too" (1.3.172). But if in the present the Moor is using narrative to construct an identity for himself as a narrator, the identity that he has delineated by recounting his adventures in the past is that of a romantic hero, and the point is that this identity too is no less a function of the narrative process than is his persona as narrator. There are indications that Othello is well aware that what has come into being through the medium of story, the man that Desdemona ambiguously "wished / That heaven had made her," is to all intents and purposes a verbal artifact, a figment of the narrative imagination. Certain elements in Othello's history—such as the allusion to "men whose heads / Do grow beneath their shoulders"—clearly partake of the world of fable and not of fact, and there is a sense in which the same might be said about the heroic protagonist of that history he has elaborated for Desdemona's delectation. When Othello quotes Desdemona's declaration that it would be sufficient for any "friend" to learn "to tell my story" in order to woo her, what he is inadvertently giving his listeners to understand is that it is the story itself that has been doing the wooing, and that the tellers of that story are perfectly interchangeable. The story has worked, in the sense that it has cast the magical spell through which Desdemona has been won. But at the same time the fact that Othello has to some degree knowingly fashioned himself through narrative makes him vulnerable to the suspicion that Desdemona has become enamored of his story and not of himself, that "she loved me for the dangers I had passed" (1.3.168) and not for his own qualities. It is Iago who, for reasons of his own, articulates the unfocused anxieties in Othello for which he himself will later supply a local habitation and a name when he reminds Roderigo "with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies," and goes on from this to formulate the question that is perhaps lurking at the back of Othello's own consciousness: "and will she love him still for prating?" (2.1.221-3).

The audience knows that this is an entirely false estimate of the situation, that Desdemona has in fact fallen in love with a man and not with a story, and that, as she herself unabashedly declares, it is with this man that she intends to live (1.3.250). The terrible pathos of Othello's situation stems from his failure to understand that he evidently does possess personal qualities capable of inspiring love in a woman like Desdemona. While Othello's gnawing fear, made manifest as soon as he begins to fall under Iago's deadly influence, is that such disparities as those of race and age between himself and Desdemona—the

absence of what Iago describes as "sympathy in years, manners and beauties" (2.1.227-8)—will inevitably militate against the success of their union, all the evidence made available to us indicates that this is not the case. If there is anything in the play that can be considered "true," that is not in one way or another merely a product of any narrative imagination other than Shakespeare's own, it is precisely the fact of Desdemona's devotion. What the suspicion that Desdemona has fallen in love with his story and not with himself amounts to, then, is not so much a realistic apprehension of any true state of affairs as *yet another story*, one that is implicit in the story the Moor has recited for the benefit of the Senate. When Othello narrates the story of his courtship before the Senate, he is at the same time projecting that narrative onto Desdemona, representing her as having been won by a narration and not by a man. As is perhaps suggested when he repeats Desdemona's admiring speeches—quite literally appropriating her voice for narrative purposes—the story of a story he has recited for the benefit of the senators incorporates her as one of its *dramatis personae* and therefore robs her of her autonomy as a human being. He has assimilated her to his story, constructed her identity as a function of his story, allowed that story to "devour" her.²⁴ The irony is that this story is one that, in the final analysis, is profoundly demeaning to himself as a human individual, and that will inevitably come into conflict with the other story of the glamorous hero of a thousand adventures in which he has also cast himself.

What Iago does is function as the catalyst precipitating the contradictions of identity already latent in this situation. When Cassio's mistress Bianca denies having had any part in an attempt to murder her lover, Iago tells her that "you must tell's another tale" (5.1.125), and obliging other people to change their stories is in fact the strategy he pursues throughout the play. Divining Othello's profound doubts as to the nature of the spell he has cast over Desdemona, what he does is adumbrate an alternative story, perfectly coherent in its own terms, in which the Moor is assigned a quite different role. Othello has quoted Desdemona as saying that a friend would be able to woo her if he learned "to tell my story," and it is this detail that Iago uses as his own point of departure. According to the story that Iago subtly weaves, a "friend" *has* been wooing Desdemona, ostensibly on Othello's behalf but actually on his own, a friend who is not an exotic fiction but an attractive young man. Such a story conforms fully to the facts as the other characters remember them, for Desdemona refers to "Michael Cassio / That came a-wooing with you?" (3.3.70-71), and Othello himself recalls that Cassio "went between us very oft" (3.3.100). The process by which Iago projects his own story into these facts, insinuating the doubt that the story with which Othello wooed Desdemona was being undermined by a faithless emissary intent upon his own project of seduction, is described in explicitly narratological terms. In talking to Roderigo he feigns to construe the gestures of affection with which Desdemona greets Cassio as "an index and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts" (2.1.255-56), and later employs a related image when he urges Othello to eavesdrop while he elicits a confession from Cassio:

Do but encave yourself
 And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns
 That dwell in every region of his face;
 For I will make him tell the tale anew
 Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when
 He hath and is again to cope your wife. (4.1.82-7)

As he induces Cassio to “tell the tale anew” he signals Othello to take heed of his words and gestures, and Othello remarks that “Iago beckons me: now he begins the story” (4.1.131) without realizing the ironic reverberations of what he is saying. A similar irony informs Othello’s later words when, speaking to Desdemona, he asks, “Was this fair paper, this most goodly book / Made to write ‘whore’ upon?” (4.2.72-73). This is precisely what has happened, for what Iago has succeeded in doing is imprinting his own story onto a book that previously told another tale.

As Iago demonstrates with devastating efficiency, narrative control can be seized by an external agent that is intent not upon the consolidation but upon the demolition of a personality which in the final analysis consists merely in the stories it tells about itself. Othello plays into his hands, as I have already suggested, because the elements of an alternative story are already held in suspension in his mind, ready to crystallize in the presence of the least seed of doubt. Only at the end of the play does Othello come to realize the nature of his error and strive to regain the narrative initiative. Like Hamlet, however, he transfers narrative responsibility to a man he hopes will prove a lenient custodian of his reputation, together with a number of specific recommendations as to the contours his biography should be allowed to assume in the future. Once again his effort to sum up the significance of his life assumes the form of a story, one that he even goes so far as to insist be committed to writing:

I pray you, in your letters,
 When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
 Speak of me as I am. Nothing extenuate,
 Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak
 Of one that loved not wisely, but too well;
 Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
 Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand,
 Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
 Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,
 Albeit unused to the melting mood,
 Drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees
 Their medicinal gum. Set you down this... (5.2.340-51)

Whether or not we agree with T. S. Eliot that there is a certain element of aesthetic self-consciousness in this speech,²⁵ it will be clear that what Othello’s remarkably particularized mandate amounts to is not so much an exhortation

to historical accuracy as an effort at posthumous self-fashioning, an endeavor to dictate the shape of narrative from beyond the tomb. The culmination of the speech takes place when Othello assimilates his own self in the present to a figure in one of his stories:

And say besides that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turbanned Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by th' throat the circumcised dog
And smote him—thus! [*He stabs himself.*] (5.2.352-6)

Othello's gesture is, as Lodovico remarks, a "bloody period" (5.2.356). Othello is once again narrating himself, and the life and the narration conclude at precisely the same instant because in essence there is no difference between them. It is left for Lodovico to make sense of it all, to piece together a coherent story, as he readies himself to return to Venice and "to the state / This heavy act with heavy heart relate" (5.2.370–1). It ironically transpires that the man who has lived his own life as narrative will continue to exist in narrative, though—as is the case with Hamlet and Brutus—it will not be one of his own devising.

Etymologists tell us that the word "narrative" derives from the same root as the word "know." That the story-making faculty constitutes a distinct mode of knowing in itself, a way of grasping and making sense of the flux of experience that is different from any other kind of understanding, is the premise of much contemporary thinking about narrative. I have been arguing throughout this essay that the intuition that human beings cannot live without narrative, that it is one of the most fundamental means by which they understand themselves and the world about them, is a lesson that emerges as clearly from Shakespeare as from the theoretical pronouncements and research findings that have steadily been accumulating over recent years. Shakespeare is relentless in revealing the paradoxes inherent in this reliance on narrative, and the perils to which it exposes the individual who perceives himself exclusively in terms of the stories he tells about himself or that are told about him. At the same time, however, his works no less emphatically suggest that narrative is not only the inevitable means to which human beings resort in order to compose their experience and render it meaningful, but also that it is one of the principal instruments through which they constitute themselves as subjects. In several places in Shakespeare, significantly, the word "story" is employed as a verb meaning to extol a person, to establish his value through the medium of language,²⁶ the implication being that it is story that creates reputation, that contributes to establishing a public identity for the individual by generating the esteem in which he is generally held.²⁷ The words "story" and "glory" are so frequently found in close proximity to one another in Shakespeare, indeed, as to hint very strongly at the existence of an abiding association of ideas in the playwright's mind.²⁸

In my opening remarks I mentioned that Macbeth plunges to the nadir of his spiritual trajectory when he perceives life as "a tale / Told by an idiot... / Signify-

ing nothing" (5.5.26-28), a dark epiphany that seems to bear out Hayden White's observation that "the absence of narrative capacity or a refusal of narrative indicates an absence or refusal of meaning itself."²⁹ But I did not complete this particular story, and the moment has perhaps arrived to do so. What should be added is that no sooner does Macbeth invoke this bleak image of a tale destitute of significance than he demands to know the errand of a messenger who presents himself before him, and the words with which he does so are "Thou com'st to use thy tongue; thy story quickly" (5.5.29). Even Macbeth cannot persist for long in the contemplation of a universe wholly devoid of significant stories, it would seem, and in this ultimate dependence on story he becomes paradoxically paradigmatic of all human beings despite his rupture with the community of men. If there is the least element of justice in Harold Bloom's contention that Shakespeare was the author of human identity in its modern configuration, that he "invented the human as we continue to know it,"³⁰ then there is much of significance to be found in the fact that the means through which many of Shakespeare's characters establish their *own* identities is precisely that of telling their stories. If they invent themselves by narrating themselves, it is also by narrating themselves that they invent that humanity in which we all participate.

Notes

1. Martin Kreiswirth, "Trusting the Tale: The Narrativist Turn in the Human Sciences," *New Literary History* 23 (1992), 629-57. Jerome Bruner goes so far as to refer in Kuhnian terms to a "paradigm shift" in the human sciences towards an interest in narrative in "The Narrative Construction of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1991): 1-21, 5.
2. Theodore R. Sarbin, "Believed-in Imaginings: A Narrative Approach," in *Believed-in Imaginings: The Narrative Construction of Reality*, ed. Joseph De Rivera and Theodore R. Sarbin (Washington: American Psychological Association, 1998), 15.
3. Barbara Hardy, *Tellers and Listeners: The Narrative Imagination* (London: Athlone Press, 1975), 1.
4. Mark Turner, *The Literary Mind: The Origins of Thought and Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 4. For a comparable view, see Jerome Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge [Mass.]: Harvard University Press, 1986), and *Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge [Mass.]: Harvard University Press, 2000).
5. Jerome Bruner, *Making Stories: Law, Literature, Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 85.
6. Jerome Bruner, "Life as Narrative," *Social Research* 71 (2004): 691-710, 694.
7. Full-length studies dealing with this topic include Rawdon Wilson, *Shakespearean Narrative* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995), and Barbara Hardy, *Shakespeare's Storytellers: Dramatic Narration* (London: Peter Owen, 1997).
8. In one of the more memorable Shakespearean iterations of the *theatrum mundi* trope, indeed—the speech in *As You Like It* beginning "All the world's a stage"—the metaphor of the play and that of the story coalesce when Jaques refers to the "Last scene of all, / That ends this strange eventful history" (2.7.163-4). Hovering in the background of such speeches as these perhaps is the popular account of Augustus Caesar's death according to which the emperor's last words were "Acta est fabula, plaudite," the word "fabula" conveying the sense both of a stage play and of a story.

9. Cf. Sir Walter Raleigh's reference to the "story of our days" in "The Conclusion," a poem written on the eve of his execution. For a discussion of conceptual metaphor, see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
10. All references to Shakespeare's works are to *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, ed. Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan (1998; rpt. Thomson Learning: London, 2001).
11. This is not to say that the trope does not have a certain amount of reflexive significance in a play which begins and ends with narrative acts, in which the dramatic action is a prolongation of the narrative and concludes with the promise of further narrative. Much the same might be said of *The Tempest*, in which Prospero similarly refers to "the story of my life" which he intends to relate after the play ends (5.1.306).
12. James Shapiro, *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* (London: Faber, 2006), 335.
13. See Arthur F. Kinney, "Hamlet's Narratives," in *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's Hamlet*, ed. Bernice W. Kliman (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2002), 94.
14. See for instance Harold Bloom, "Introduction," in *William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1988), 1, and A. D. Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 176, 178.
15. Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 5-27, 24.
16. White, 27.
17. Barbara Hardy, *Shakespeare's Storytellers*, 88.
18. James Calderwood, *The Properties of Othello* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 57.
19. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 234. Emphasis in the original.
20. Catherine Bates, "Weaving and Writing in *Othello*," *Shakespeare Survey* 46 (1994): 51-60, 53. For more recent discussion of issues pertaining to narrative in this play, see Thorell Porter Tsomondo, "Stage-Managing 'Otherness': The Function of Narrative in *Othello*," *Mosaic* 32 (1999): 1-25; and Marcia Macaulay, "When Chaos Is Come Again: Narrative and Narrative Analysis in *Othello*," *Style* 39 (2005): 259-76.
21. Wilson, 102.
22. Calderwood, 58.
23. Stephen Greenblatt, 238-9; Patricia Parker, "Shakespeare and Rhetoric: 'Dilation' and 'Delation' in *Othello*," in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 59-60.
24. That Desdemona has a narrative of her own which includes a quite different account of their courtship from that delivered by Othello is a point made by Macaulay, 266-70.
25. T. S. Eliot, "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca," in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber, 1986), 131.
26. In conversing with the protagonist of *Lucrece*, Tarquin "stories to her ears her husband's fame . . . And decks with praises Collatine's high name" (106-8), while at one point in *Cymbeline* Philario says of Posthumus "How worthy he is I will leave to appear hereafter, rather than story him in his own hearing" (1.5.33-4). The word "stories" also appears as a verb in *Venus and Adonis* (1035).

27. There are precedents in the theoretical literature of the time, for in *The Arte or Craft of Rhetorike* the sixteenth-century schoolmaster Leonard Cox characterizes the *narratio*, or “tale wherein persones are prayesd,” as an account of the subject’s “lyfe and doynge after ther fashyon of an historye” (quoted by Wilson, 21).
28. Examples of rhymes on these words can be found in *Antony and Cleopatra* 5.2.359-60, *Henry V* Epilogue, *Lucrece* 1521-4, *Romeo and Juliet* 1.3.91-2, and Sonnets 84 and 88, while “stories” is made to rhyme with “glories” in *Venus and Adonis* 1035-6.
29. White, 6.
30. Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (London: Fourth Estate, 1999), xviii.

Dolores Stewart

A RETIRED GENTLEMAN’S GARDEN IN STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Here from the profits of his plays, he planted
 herbs and flowers, hedges, knots, and mazes.
 From murder, incest, war, betrayal...planted.
 From dying princes, drowning virgins...planted.
 From fairies, witches, ghosts, diverse enchantments.
 From skulls unearthed, lovers entombed—each paid
 for some sweet plot. Perennials laid out in iamb
 rows and patterned beds.

Here’s flowers for you;

*Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram;
 The marigold, that goes to bed wi’ the sun,
 And with him rises weeping.*

Here to walk
 down pleasant paths, and here to rest beneath
 his mulberry tree. Listen—the faint applause
 of rustling leaves and petals.

To turn from theater
 life, enjoy the fruits of his prosperity.
 To dazzle the odd guest who came for something
 else, a loan, an inspiration, how to be
 successful in the trade. *Then make your garden rich...*

**WATCHING RICHARD WATCHING BUCKINGHAM: 3.7 OF *RICHARD III* AND
PERFORMANCE CRITICISM**

Michael W. Shurgot, Seattle, Washington

As an experienced reviewer of Shakespearean productions, I have seen numerous productions of his most popular plays in the United States, Canada, and Britain.¹ In this era of the “director’s theater,” I have become increasingly fascinated—and occasionally frustrated—by the reasons why directors make the decisions they do and how, as an academic reviewer, I am supposed to react to them. Every time I ponder this question I find myself confronting squarely the knotty problem, much discussed in academic journals, of “authority” in both Shakespearean performances and performance criticism. Directors obviously have their own legitimate spheres of authority—their theater—but just as obviously reviewers have their own sphere of authority—their knowledge of Shakespeare’s plays which justifies an editor’s asking them to review productions and to write (presumably) intelligent reviews for the journal’s readers. Most reviewers of Shakespearean productions that I read usually try to address both spheres of authority; possessing a superb knowledge of the text and its performance history, they generally praise a production while occasionally they fault some elements, perhaps involving casting, costumes, cuts, blocking, or the director’s “concept” that haunts contemporary Shakespearean productions.

As they attempt to balance their reviews between the directors’ choices and their own knowledge of the text, most critics also attempt to be as “objective” as possible, heeding Alan Dessen’s advice about being “conscious of their implicit and explicit standards about what constitutes an ideal production of a Shakespearean play.”²

While ideally always aware of the standards they evoke and apply in their essays, reviewers must also recognize directors’ appropriation of Shakespeare as the authority for their production choices. W. B. Worthen explains this interpretive process:

To conceive the performance ensemble as interpreting the Author means that the ensemble is interpreting an Author it in fact creates. Shakespeare is a necessary fiction that organizes and stabilizes this interpretive community, working not to provide access to privileged meaning, but to legitimate a series of interpretive relationships—between actor and text, between spectator and stage, between critic and performance.³

All Shakespearean productions create numerous “interpretive relationships,” including that with Shakespeare the author who is created to “stabilize” (by

which I assume Worthen means justify) directors' choices. Directors make these choices well before reviewers see them, and, as Sidney Homan explains, from completely different perspectives: whereas scholarship and criticism are "retrospective," actors and directors approach a play "moment by moment, line by line, beat by beat—inductively."⁴ Conscientious reviewing thus involves a juggling act among the choices that directors and actors make and a reviewer's sense that without one's critical standards one has no justification for writing a review.

While recognizing, and attempting to balance, these twin spheres of authority—the director's/actor's and the reviewer's/critic's—this retrospective essay contrasts two recent productions of *Richard III* to address two issues that I believe are important to performance reviews. The productions are the 2005 Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) staging of *Richard III* in the Angus Bowmer Theatre, directed by Libby Appel, with James Newcomb as Richard and Michael Elich as Buckingham;⁵ and the 2006 Intiman Theatre version in Seattle, directed by Bartlett Sher, with Stephen Pelinski as Richard and Michael Winters as Buckingham.⁶ I will address first how Appel's staging of 3.7 convinced me of the *essential place* of that scene in all productions of *Richard III* and my sense of what that claim means for a reviewer's authority. While the Intiman production omitted 3.7 altogether, the OSF staging, which I examine below, made the scene central to its entire production and is the basis for my argument that 3.7 is essential to performances of *Richard III*. "Essential" is here an admittedly dangerous word, for it claims that a particular scene must be present in *all* productions of a play (as, for example, one might argue is true of the "Mousetrap" in *Hamlet* or 4.7 of *King Lear*), and its use might seem to compromise the authority of a director to shape his or her vision of a play within his or her authorial space: the theater. However, I wish to argue that the OSF staging justifies this word because without 3.7 spectators can understand neither the deadly game that Richard and Buckingham are playing, especially why Richard asks Buckingham to kill the princes in the Tower, nor the relationship between 3.7 and Richard's sudden dismissal of Buckingham in 4.2. My second issue involves what I shall call an "interpretive relationship" that my initial argument about 3.7 could perhaps foster between directors and academic reviewers.

Buckingham's dedication to Richard's cause, as well as Richard's ruthless egotism, are established early in the play. In 1.3 Buckingham tells Richard that he respects "nothing" that Queen Margaret says, and then tells Richard that he rejects Margaret's warnings about his devotion to him: "My hair doth stand on end to hear her curses."⁷ Despite this pledge of loyalty, Richard numbers Buckingham among the "simple gulls" that he will manipulate in his "secret mischiefs" (1.3.325). In 2.2 Buckingham argues for a "little train" to accompany Prince Edward from Ludlow to London, ostensibly to prevent new eruptions of the "new-healed wound of malice" (2.2.125). Moments later, Buckingham urges that he and Richard journey towards the Prince while he "sort[s] occasion" regarding their discussions about parting "the Queen's proud kindred from the Prince" (2.2.150). Richard acts the role of child to his supposed men-

tor and counselor:

My other self, my counsel's consistory,
 My oracle, my prophet! My dear cousin,
 I, as a child, will go by thy direction.
 Toward Ludlow then, for we'll not stay behind. (2.2.151-54)

Then in 3.1, after Buckingham sends Catesby to sound Lord Hastings' loyalty to their cause, Richard promises Buckingham his reward:

BUCKINGHAM. Now my lord, what shall we do if we perceive
 Lord Hastings will not yield to our complots?
 RICHARD. Chop off his head. Something we will determine.
 And look when I am king, claim thou of me
 The earldom of Hereford and all the movables
 Whereof the King my brother was possessed.
 BUCKINGHAM. I'll claim that promise at Your Grace's hand.
 RICHARD. And look to have it yielded with all kindness.
 Come, let us sup betimes, that afterwards
 We may digest our complots in some form. (3.1.191-200)

For agreeing to murder, Buckingham's reward supposedly will be generous.

Richard's questioning of Buckingham in 3.5 is the necessary prelude to his asking Buckingham to kill the princes in the Tower:

RICHARD. Come, cousin, canst thou quake and change thy color,
 Murder thy breath in middle of a word,
 And then again begin, and stop again,
 As if thou wert distraught and mad with terror?
 BUCKINGHAM. Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian,
 Speak and look back, and pry on every side,
 Tremble and start at wagging of a straw;
 Intending deep suspicion, ghastly looks
 Are at my service, like enforced smiles;
 And both are ready at their offices,
 At any time, to grace my stratagems. (3.5.1-11)

Richard asks Buckingham about his ability to "play," to be the hypocrite, the Greek word for actor. As the lead actor in his own hypocritical rise to power, Richard here tests Buckingham's loyalty as well as his ability to "counterfeit." With his mind on Edward's sons in the Tower, Richard knows that he now needs an uncompromising ally who, like himself, will "upon [his] cue" (3.4.26) perform vicious deeds instantly and indisputably. Buckingham asserts his ability and willingness to fulfill Richard's requests with the "enforced smiles" that dictators require.

Buckingham's hypocritical skills excel in 3.7, where he stages Richard's supposed unwillingness to assume the crown:

The Mayor is here at hand. Intend some fear;
 Be not you spoke with but by mighty suit.
 And look you get a prayer-book in your hand,
 And stand between two churchmen, good my lord,
 For on that ground I'll make a holy descant;
 And be not easily won to our requests.
 Play the maid's part: still answer nay and take it. (3.7.45-51)

Buckingham skillfully manages this scene, maneuvering Catesby, the Mayor, and the citizens, and arguing that Richard's initial refusal of their request "argues conscience in Your Grace" (174). Buckingham's litany of Edward's supposed infidelity and the resulting bastardy of his sons in the Tower finally convinces the Mayor and citizens to "entreat" Richard to assume the throne. Richard finally accepts his citizens' pleading, despite the "world of cares" that he insists they are thrusting upon him. Richard leaves, having agreed to be crowned "tomorrow," and retires with the two bishops to their "holy work" (245).

This scene is among Shakespeare's most preposterous, and it requires a skilled actor playing Richard to stage it convincingly. The actor must make Richard appear saintly and devout, while being fully aware of the sheer hypocrisy of the entire spectacle. Whereas at the end of 1.2 the actor playing Richard has a soliloquy in which he can relish his astonishing success with Lady Anne, the actor in 3.7 does not have a soliloquy in which he can release to spectators the tension required in playing the hypocritical buffoon with the Mayor and citizens. In 3.7, Richard, aloft, speaks of his "holy work" with the churchmen, bids farewell, and then exits above, presumably to explode offstage with self-congratulatory laughter. As convincing as the actor playing Richard must be, a crucial point about this scene *in performance* is that the actor playing Buckingham must be equally skilled, for his task is equally demanding: he must coordinate the entrances and exits of this charade with a similar grasp of the hypocrisy he is conducting. His "ghastly looks" and "enforced smiles" must convince the Mayor and citizens that Richard's ludicrous game, played symbolically "aloft" among clergymen, is sincere, and that Richard is both penitent and unwilling to seize the crown.

In her OSF staging of 3.7, Libby Appel emphasized that this scene tests the theatrical hypocrisy of *both* Richard and Buckingham; they laughed giddily as Buckingham outlined his plans for Richard, and both obviously relished the charade they were about to stage. When the Mayor and citizens entered, James Newcomb as Richard hobbled upstage right and crouched more than stood between two clergymen. Downstage left, Michael Elich as Buckingham urgently exhorted the Mayor and grabbed his coat repeatedly, as if heralding doom if the Mayor and his aldermen did not urge the pious Richard to assume the throne. Buckingham was ferocious, turning the initially reluctant Mayor

upstage and pointing towards Richard holding his prayer book. Buckingham thus superbly played his “role” in this scene, and throughout, *his* most attentive spectator was Richard. Crouched between the taller clergymen, Richard turned his head over his disfigured right shoulder to watch Buckingham’s performance. As Richard marveled at his partner’s wooing of the Mayor, one suddenly realized exactly why this scene is crucial to the entire play: Watching Richard watching Buckingham, one senses that Richard now grasps how “talented” Buckingham is at “counterfeiting,” as he says in 3.5, and thus how dangerous he could be. Richard numbers Buckingham among the “simple gulls” in 1.3, but if Buckingham can convince the Mayor and aldermen of the sincerity of Richard’s blatant hypocrisy, what else might he be able to do? Might he be able to play Richard for a fool? “Counterfeit” even as he plotted with others against Richard? The longer and more deeply Newcomb’s Richard gazed at Buckingham, and the more that Richard marveled at Buckingham’s wicked tongue, the more clearly one sensed the necessity of this scene, and how sharply the OSF staging had communicated its central importance to understanding the relationship between these two thoroughly hypocritical and now equally dangerous men.

Equally clear in the OSF production was the relationship between Richard’s sudden grasp of Buckingham’s “talents” and his immediate test of Buckingham’s loyalty. In 4.2, barely five minutes after Buckingham salutes Richard as “England’s worthy king” (3.7.240) and the Duchess of York bids Dorset flee to Richmond, Richard brutally taunts Buckingham.

Ah, Buckingham, now do I play the touch,
To try if thou be current gold indeed:
Young Edward lives. Think now what I would speak.

.....
Cousin, thou wast not wont to be so dull.
Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead,
And I would have it suddenly performed.
What sayst thou now? Speak suddenly; be brief. (4.2.8-10; 17-20)

Having used Buckingham in his boldest and most audacious scheme, Richard must immediately ascertain Buckingham’s loyalty by testing his capacity for cruelty. Can Buckingham murder the innocent? Buckingham’s error, like Remirro de Orco’s in Book VII of Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, is not to have seen where his loyalty to a ruthless dictator would inevitably lead him.⁸ The OSF production superbly clarified this point; Elich stumbled off stage towards his death, aware that the audacious success of his hypocritical performance in 3.7—his ability to feign in the midst of a scene as repulsive as it was ridiculous—will now cost him his head.

Bartlett Sher at Intiman omitted 3.7 completely (and both productions cut 3.6), and thus significantly altered the rhythm of the play.⁹ Given the cuts, spectators heard Richard refuse all access to the princes in the Tower at the

end of 3.5 and then saw Queen Elizabeth, Duchess of York, and Lady Anne (the other women were cut) trying to visit them. Brackenbury's refusal to admit them, on Richard's order, came just a moment after Richard's saying he will prohibit all visitors, so the transition from the end of 3.5 to 4.1 seemed fluid and certainly hastened the action. Achieving this fluidity of action was probably one of Sher's main motives in cutting both 3.6 and 3.7, but I would argue that cutting 3.7 seriously weakened this production. The Intiman spectators were denied what the OSF production showed is a crucial scene for the entire play; for in 3.7 we witness not only the height of both Richard's and Buckingham's hypocrisy but also Richard's reason for testing Buckingham's loyalty in 4.2 so soon thereafter. While one might argue that cutting 3.6 and 3.7 creates a smooth transition from Richard's order forbidding visits to the princes and its implementation by Brackenbury, what is lost seems of far greater importance to the *theatrical* contest between Richard and Buckingham. In a play replete with theatrical metaphors, spectators ought to see Richard's devious mind at work in 3.7 as he listens to Buckingham and realizes that yet one more test, more sinister than the rest, must be applied to Buckingham. After all, has not Buckingham said:

Intending deep suspicion, ghastly looks
Are at *my* service, like enforced smiles;
And both are ready at their offices,
At any time, to grace *my* stratagems. (3.5.8-11; emphasis added)

Surely Richard attended these words, especially Buckingham's repeated "my," not "your," presumably what Richard would have preferred to hear.

To return to my first issue, I would argue that Appel's OSF staging of 3.7, and the prominence that her production gave to *both* Richard's and Buckingham's theatrical, i.e., hypocritical, skills, warrants this scene's inclusion in all productions of *Richard III*. While no other production will exactly copy Appel's staging, nor would I wish it to, what matters is how this production clarified Richard's understanding of Buckingham's skills, his potential danger to Richard's plotting, and the relationship between what Richard grasps about Buckingham in 3.7 and Richard's dismissing Buckingham so quickly in 4.2. Richard calls Buckingham "The deep-revolving, witty Buckingham" (4.2.42), and Appel's staging of 3.7, as well as James Newcomb's and Michael Elich's superb acting, clarified exactly why Richard must dismiss Buckingham. Further, this assertion invokes a reviewer's authority to judge radically different stagings of the same play by respected directors in well-established theaters. An obvious, initial point is that a short article on just two productions of a single play cannot possibly engage the many theoretical debates surrounding the contentious issue of authority in Shakespearean productions and criticism. My focus is both far more narrow and more practical. However, even within this narrow range I am nonetheless engaging, and in the case of Bartlett Sher challenging, the established authority of two well-respected directors whose approaches to

Richard III were widely different, and who elected to tell different “stories” from that single script. As Cary Mazer explains, this is what directors do:

[D]irectors and their collaborators create performances out of the theatrical raw materials at their disposal, materials which include (but are not limited to) the playscript; they seek to “tell” the “story” that they perceive is in the script, and to find theatrical means of telling this story, according to the particular material conditions in which they are working. If, and only if, what they read of contemporary scholarship matches their sense of the story they wish to tell, will scholarship be of any use to them at all.¹⁰

Within the material confines of Angus Bowmer Theatre in Ashland or Intiman Theatre in Seattle I have no legitimate authority at all. Appel’s and Sher’s staged versions of *Richard III* are uniquely theirs, the result of their own interpretive choices that, as W. B. Worthen asserts, invoke Shakespeare to legitimate those choices. Worthen adds: “As a genre of literary criticism, it is perhaps not surprising that performance criticism finally denies the authority of the stage, reserving it for an Author whose ‘presence’ can be generated from a reading of the text.”¹¹ Reviewers return to an authorial text, assuming it to be far more stable than a script acted upon a stage, whenever they encounter performance choices that they deem somehow unworthy of this presumably stable text and its “Author.” However, despite the major differences between what Homan terms the inductive immediacy of performance and the deductive reflection of the critic, both must, as H. R. Coursen remarks, make choices “recognizing that a ‘total understanding’ of the ‘text’ will never be realized” and that each response is “inevitably individual.”¹² Given these individual theatrical and critical choices, and the obvious fact that Sher, Appel and I are operating within totally different contexts and spheres of influence (they in theatrical spaces, I in an academic journal), what justification exists for criticizing Sher’s cutting of an entire scene from his production of *Richard III*? Can one deduce from a critical comparison of just two productions of one play that one production has omitted a scene so essential to that play that it simply must be included if spectators are to experience that play fully? Or is this critical exercise only too obviously an encroachment on a director’s authority and simultaneously a blatant example of performance criticism’s evoking a spectral author(ity) to justify bashing a particular production? Where now are those two spheres of authority that I promised to balance?

In his fine essay, “Shakespeare’s Scripts and the Modern Director,” Alan Dessen addresses the justifications that directors have used for their “cutting or reshaping” of Shakespeare’s scripts in production. Dessen finds “insidious” a conceptual basis for cutting the script in which “passages or stage directions or even entire scenes are omitted because their presence would contradict or jar with the director’s interpretation.”¹³ Does Sher’s cutting of 3.7, presumably to emphasize the swift execution of Richard’s order regarding visitors in the

Tower, constitute such a conceptual basis for cutting? If so, can a reviewer justifiably describe this cut as “insidious” because it is presumably inimical to a complete understanding of Richard’s and Buckingham’s characters and their relationship? Dessen laments those reviewers who reveal more about their own tastes than about the actual production itself.¹⁴ However, my argument here is not about my own *tastes* in production styles, but rather about my critical sense of the *necessary place* of 3.7 within *Richard III* that Appel’s production convinced me is too vital to be cut in any production of the play. I argue that Sher’s production was flawed because what Dessen would term Sher’s “concept” about the swift execution of Richard’s order led to his omitting an entire scene that is essential to understanding *Richard III* and the deadly “counterfeit” between its two main characters.

Thus, in a reversal of Worthen’s claim that performance critics ultimately deny the authority of the stage,¹⁵ I would assert the authority of Appel’s staging of 3.7 within her production of *Richard III*. The OSF production infused life into this scene so convincingly that 3.7 became vital to understanding not only the relationship between Richard and Buckingham but also later segments of the play, especially Richard’s tantalizing words to Buckingham in 4.2: “Ah, Buckingham, now do I play the touch, / To try if thou be current gold indeed” (8-9). While Sher’s Intiman production aimed for its own internal logic and audience appeal, I argue that Appel’s OSF production clarified brilliantly the essential place of 3.7 within *Richard III* and why this scene demands performance.

I proposed also that my argument about the OSF staging of 3.7 might create yet another kind of “interpretive relationship” involving directors and reviewers of Shakespeare’s plays. Directors and actors certainly create their own interpretive relationships with Shakespeare’s plays, and teachers create theirs as well in the classroom. Reviewers going into a production may be influenced by their own strongly held critical approach to a play, which may affect how they receive and review a production, although one hopes, as Dessen asserts, that most reviewers remain open to all the possibilities that a production offers. (And here I certainly must include my own reactions to both of the productions I describe above.) While Homan is right that directors and reviewers approach a Shakespearean play from totally different perspectives and that the reviewer’s critique always postdates the director’s choices, nonetheless a more collaborative relationship between directors and reviewers could benefit both and perhaps yield an evolving consensus on production values for Shakespeare’s plays that could confront and integrate the “spheres of authority” that both claim. By proposing an increased dialogue between directors and reviewers, perhaps at conferences and in scholarly journals, I do not pretend to know how such discussions might evolve or what form they might assume. I desire only more dialogue about this “knotty problem” of distinctive authorities and challenging productions of Shakespeare’s plays that engage their audiences—and their reviewers—fully.¹⁶

Notes

1. I review Shakespeare productions in the Pacific Northwest for *Shakespeare Bulletin*, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and London Globe seasons for *The Upstart Crow*. None of this experience, however, renders me immune from errors in judgment or taste.
2. Alan Dessen, "Reviewing Shakespeare for the Record," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 36 (1985): 602-608, 603.
3. W. B. Worthen, "Staging 'Shakespeare': Acting, Authority, and the Rhetoric of Performance," in *Shakespeare, Theory, and Performance*, ed. James C. Bulman (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 19.
4. Sidney Homan, *Directing Shakespeare* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), ix-x.
5. For my review of the OSF *Richard III*, see *The Upstart Crow* 25 (2005): 92-104, esp. 101-04.
6. Both OSF and Intiman have excellent artistic reputations and the majority of their productions are highly praised and well supported. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival is among the best known festivals in North America, selling annually over 350,000 tickets. Intiman Theatre in Seattle and its Artistic Director Bartlett Sher won a TONY award for regional theatre in 2006.
7. 1.3.296. All citations to *Richard III* are from *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 4th ed., ed. David Bevington (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).
8. See Chapter VII of *The Prince*, where Machiavelli recounts Cesare Borgia's efforts to pacify Romagna and his manipulation of Remirro de Orco, a "cruel and able man." *The Italian Renaissance Reader*, ed. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Mark Musa (New York: New American Library, 1987), 266-67. For a different view of Richard's dismissal of Buckingham, see Robert G. Hunter, *Shakespeare and the Mystery of God's Judgment* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1976), 89-91.
9. On the OSF cutting of 3.6, see Alan Armstrong's excellent review in *Shakespeare Bulletin* 24 (Spring 2006): 73-77.
10. Cary M. Mazer, "Historicizing Alan Dessen: Scholarship, Stagecraft, and the 'Shakespeare Revolution,'" in Bulman, 150.
11. Worthen, 19.
12. H. R. Coursen, *Shakespearean Performance as Interpretation* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992), 25.
13. Alan Dessen, "Shakespeare's Scripts and the Modern Director," *Shakespeare Survey* 36 (1983): 57-64, 60.
14. Dessen, "Reviewing," 603-04.
15. Worthen, 19.
16. A shorter version of this essay was part of the seminar "Performance Criticism: The State of the Art," directed by Jeremy Lopez, at the annual Shakespeare Association of America Meeting on April 6, 2007 in San Diego. I wish to thank the participants, especially Alan Armstrong, for their comments during the seminar.

*Francis Blessington***SHAKESPEARE'S MULBERRY TREE**

Sold by Reverend Gastrell
 who detested admiring mobs,
 cut to snuff boxes
 with "Memento Mori,"

more a Miltonic pun
 (Milton planted at Christ's),
 "Remember the Mulberry,"
 this tree blooms late.

Garrick got The Freedom
 of The City in this wood's
 casket and wrote verses
 for *his* Shakespearean slip.

Virgil and Pompeii knew it
 ran wild in the Caucasus
 to Persia. Quartermasters
 marched it to Roman Britain.

Pyramus and Thisbe died
 in its moonlit shade,
 whose ghastly skin drank
 their blood to deep red.

After James' Edict, mulberry
 sprouted from free seed
 to cultivate silk fashion
 from the worm leaves.

The poet sliced his from James'
 garden to ripen at New Place,
 the black mulberry, untasty
 to silk vermin, but wholesome.

The tree bears late:
 its spiel holds Stratford
 tourists, and its scions
 stretch for the clouds at Kew.



PERFORMANCE REVIEWS





The Merry Wives of Windsor : Shakespeare's Globe (2008). Photo by John Trampler.



LOOKING UP: THE 2008 SEASON AT LONDON'S GLOBE THEATRE

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No one ever doubted Mark Rylance's abilities as an actor.¹ As Michael W. Shurgot has demonstrated in the pages of *The Upstart Crow*, Rylance is a performer of skill and dexterity, an adroit interpreter of Shakespeare and a master of different playing styles.² But it remains a truth almost universally acknowledged that, in his capacity as Artistic Director, his pursuit of so-called "Original Practices" (including music, costuming, and even pronunciation) often took precedence over the theatrical quality of the Globe's productions. Rylance's obsession with authenticity reached its climax in his lunatic pursuit of the "real" author of Shakespeare's plays: his daft *The BIG Secret Live—I am Shakespeare—Webcam Daytime Chat-Room Show* only confirmed his eccentricity, and while one misses his performances, his departure from the Globe offers his successor new opportunities.

Dominic Dromgoole, who incidentally has described Rylance's anti-Stratfordianism as "baloney," is gradually turning the theater around.³ This year he presided over four Shakespeare plays as well as two pieces of new writing (which will not be discussed here). He entitled the season "*Totus Mundus*" and in his program blurb he insists on Shakespeare's generic diversity: "This year we perform his most searching tragedy, *King Lear*; his most wild and inventive comedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; his most thrilling and savage satire, *Timon of Athens*; and his invention of a new form, the sitcom, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*."⁴ The repertory is a brave one—would the unpopular *Timon* stand up against the most popular of all Shakespeare's comedies? How would the diurnal trivia of *Windsor* compare with the profound melancholy of *Lear*? Would the resulting rep. be unbalanced? Could any attempt to find coherence between or common themes across such a declared variety of genres be anything more than over-ingenuity?

The first play to open the season, Dromgoole's *King Lear* offered new hope to a jaded and despairing Globe-goer. Without the populist gimmickry which characterized most productions during Rylance's reign, this production, predicated on some excellent casting, concentrated on clear articulation, detailed but not fussy playing, and contact with the audience, which was engaging rather than crassly diverting.

At the heart of this production's success was its realization that the Globe is a non-illusionistic theater. The production was designed by Jonathan Fensom. In the place of anything resembling a set was a pair of sliding screens which functioned, when drawn, to shield the discovery space or the doors which flank it. An octagonal platform had been erected in the middle of the yard at stage height and connected to the stage by a bridge. Two sets of steps led from this platform down to the yard floor. Both the main stage and the octagonal platform were equipped with traps (the latter used for Poor Tom's cell). Two

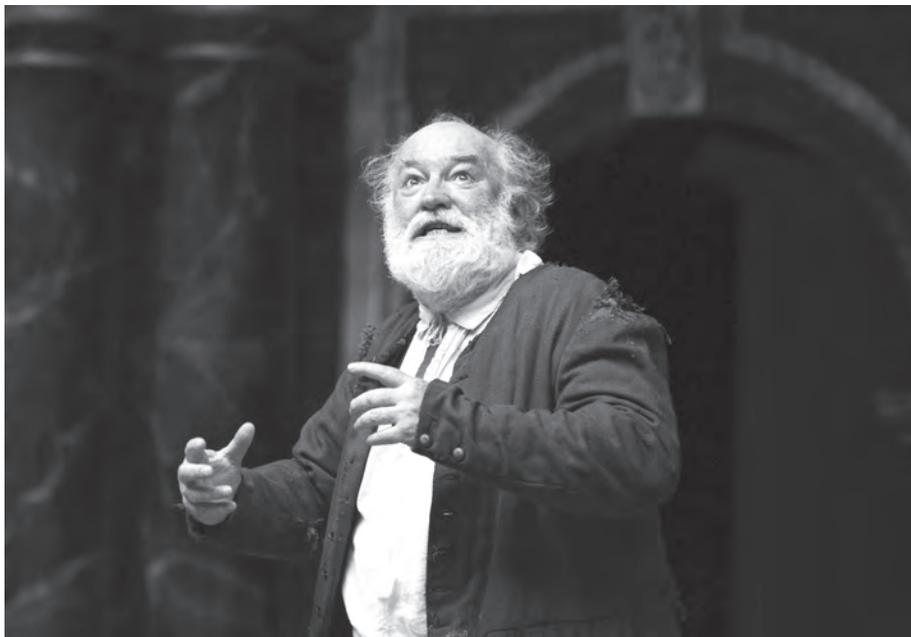
telegraph poles with climbing rungs stood at the downstage corners on either side of the stage and swags of greenery were draped from the tops of these back to the balcony.

The design was static and symmetrical as was much of the blocking. Frequently an actor would take a position at the center of the satellite platform and address other members of the company positioned geometrically across the main stage from this “hot-spot.” The effect was frequently suggestive of a courtly formality but such obvious positioning hinted that the production was not interested in reconstructing the vagaries of real situations or conversations. Dromgoole seemed unencumbered by any obligation towards verisimilitude and stage positioning was used as much symbolically (to indicate relative degrees of political power, for instance) as naturalistically. Indeed the least successful sequence was when the production affected a labored naturalism by having several bloodied and muddied madmen (weird companions to Poor Tom) invade the yard from under the stage and haloo and whimper at the non-plussed groundlings. Fortunately, this was only a temporary distraction.

The real strength of this production derived from its casting. Not merely were the company vocally fluent and poetically lucid—notable here was Joseph Mydell’s Gloucester—but they were physically well-cast. For instance, Jodie McNee’s tiny Cordelia (whose sheer dress accented her slenderness) appeared all the more vulnerable when confronted and bullied by David Calder’s Henrician monarch in a long furred gown like someone straight out of Holbein. Danny Lee Wynter’s fey and whimsical Fool seemed, like Cordelia, to be physically, as well as politically, outsized by those around him. Daniel Hawksford was a strapping and handsome Edmund who could easily have proved attractive to both wicked sisters (Sally Bretton as Goneril and Kellie Bright as Regan). The fairly minor role of Oswald was played by the weaselly Ashley Rolfe, whose encounter with the grizzled and irate Kent (Paul Copley) was a comical mixture of pantomime bravado and desperate panic as the Earl pursued him and forced him to duck behind the screens like a *banderillero* fleeing an enraged bull.

Calder’s Lear was, if not a revelation, a refreshingly new take on the role. This Lear took a long time to go mad. His initial rejection of “our last and least” (F, 1.1.81) was inspired not by lunacy but by anguish. As he presented Cordelia, without dower, to France, his attempted resolve not “ever [to] see / That face of hers again” (262-3) forced a shudder of grief from him and as he lamented his daughters’ “filial ingratitude” (3.4.14), he was shocked by their callousness rather than inwardly demolished by it. Indeed this was a profoundly reasonable, and thereby even more pathetic, old man who (in spite of the warnings of Kent and the Fool) had miscalculated rather than proved mentally incapable. As he turned to Kent, sitting in the stocks, his “Follow me not; stay here” (2.2.228) was not a symptom of the blithe unawareness of madness—Kent wasn’t about to go anywhere—but a final, and comically desperate, attempt to issue regal commandments: Lear was stubbornly and rationally attempting to articulate a remnant of authority. When, later in the same scene, he promised

“such revenges on you both, / That all the world shall—I will do such things— / What they are, yet I know not” (445-7), his hesitation suggested that this plot needed further deliberation rather than being a fissure in his ratiocination. As late as his exchange with Poor Tom, Lear spoke out of genuine concern which was eminently practical, sensible even: “Thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies” (3.4.91). Even during the mock-trial scene (the inclusion of this from Q and the Fool’s earlier Merlin prophecy from F indicate the use of a composite text), the legal protocol allowed Lear some semblance of a residual rationality. Without the bald ranting insanity of so many Lears, Calder’s was finally more *interesting*, more inflected and complex. As he regained consciousness in the camp of Cordelia, his modestly articulated description of his scalding tears (4.6.40) was profoundly moving—a testament to Calder’s mastery of such an unintimate performance space as the Globe.



King Lear: David Calder as King Lear. Photo by John Haynes.

While he had chosen slightly to mute Lear’s madness, Dromgoole had given less central roles an increased prominence. Peter Hamilton Dyer’s Cornwall, for instance, presided over one of the most horrifying extractions of Gloucester’s eyes I have seen. Aided by the simplicity of the staging—Gloucester roped into a Jacobean wooden chair, stage center, no lighting effects (obviously)—Dyer reached over to Gloucester’s face and rummaged with deliberation rather than frenzy to extract the first eye. He pulled the jelly out and threw it contemptuously upstage, wiping his bloodied hand across the front of his white shirt in an adumbration (poetic justice?) of his own stomach wound that



King Lear: Peter Hamilton-Dyer (Cornwall, left) blinds Joseph Mydell (Gloucester). Photo by John Haynes.

would later lead to his death. As the second eye was extracted he goaded his wife to sit on Gloucester's lap. As she screamed in a mixture of perverted delight and horror, tugging at the eye herself, Cornwall groped her from behind. Thus, within this single episode were moments indicative of a calm and deliberate brutality juxtaposed with a febrile eroticism. Poignantly, Dromgoole allowed the bleeding Gloucester to take his time, guided by the (Quarto only) second servant, to exit through the groundlings in an agonizingly protracted silence. Ingeniously the blinding sequence was to resonate across other productions this season.

The mad Lear was kept till after the interval and even then he was quietly confused rather than ranting. The inclusion of Quarto's scene 17, in which Kent and the Gentleman bring each other up to speed, provided a transition between the break-

neck pace of the previous political maneuvering and the subsequent reunion of Lear and Cordelia. Lear sat up in a wheel-barrow bed which resembled the stocks we had earlier seen Kent occupy—a neat parallel which insisted upon an equivalence between the Earl's physical and the King's mental torture. Calder's quietly spoken Lear seemed to be struggling to determine his whereabouts and the intensity of his concentration was reflected on the expressions of those who sympathetically surrounded him: this was strong company playing. The battle was effectively staged as a choreographed stomp which contrasted neatly with the violent barbarism of the supposedly chivalric duel between Edmund and the anonymous knight—here Edgar was suited in black armor with a visor masking his face.

The final scene is the play's and this production's pinnacle. Lear entered with Cordelia's corpse draped around his shoulders in a ghastly parody of a childhood piggyback. Both wore simple white gowns. His fifth "never" (F has five while Q has only three) came after a pause between it and the fourth: when it came, it was entirely rational, accepting, fatalistic. It was as though he was admitting—in just that one word—his full responsibility for everything that had happened, including the death of his own daughters *without a trace of madness*. As if to physicalize the sense of exhaustion, Kent slumped against one of the stage pillars in utter submission. A single female singer walked down-

stage to keen over the bodies. Why, having effectively staged one of the most powerful scenes in Western drama, Dromgoole followed this with the Globe's jolly jig is one of the eternal mysteries / miseries of productions here.

The Learian "weight of this sad time" (5.3.299) seemed to have infected the opening, at least, of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, swathed in mourning. *A Warning for Fair Women* includes the suggestive observation on the correlation between color and genre: "The stage is hung with black and I perceive / The auditors prepared for tragedy." Jonathan Munby's *Dream*, designed by Mike Britton, took shape around a central contrast: black with its connotations of melancholy, grief and formality for the court versus vibrant color with its associations of fantasy, cheer and youth for the forest.

Presiding, ambiguously, over both was a huge, white, spherical moon suspended at roof level above the yard (an allusion to or a "borrowing" from Greg Doran's 2005 *Dream* resurrected and currently playing at the Royal Shakespeare Company? Munby is clearly *au fait* with Doran's work having been his assistant in Stratford). Tethered on elastic, and illuminated from within, this source of watery light was buffeted up and down by the wind and served to cast indistinct and mobile shadows across the action. The court of Theseus was clearly and unhappily restrained—reflecting his opening lamentation on the delay of his and Hippolyta's nuptials. With its stage pillars shrouded in black and the upstage wall draped in a cloth of the same color, their entirely black costumes fitted them for this setting of disconsolate sable. The blistering Egeus and the four lovers were all similarly attired and, as they discussed the real possibility that Hermia be executed unless she take her father's part, the color (as in the quotation from *A Warning*) suggested the imminence of tragedy. Tom Mannion's Theseus showed real fury with Hermia's (played by Pippa Nixon) feminist intransigence so that it was entirely appropriate that Siobhan Redmond's Amazonian queen, who had earlier given permission for Hermia "to plead my thoughts" (1.1.61) with an approving nod, protectively embraced the young woman shielding her from the onslaughts of ruthless patriarchy. Her haughty exit in a different direction from Theseus' fawning "what cheer, my love?" (1.1.122), made clear whose side she was on.

The forest outside Athens was as colorful as the court was monochrome. At the top of Act 2, the black disappeared and gave way to a vibrant and clashing palette. The fairies set large purple flowers around a blue disc on the stage



King Lear: David Calder (King Lear) and Jodie McNee (Cordelia). Photo by John Haynes.

floor which echoed the circularity of the moon hovering above. The black drape upstage fell to be replaced with one of diaphanous royal blue and the two arch-shaped walkways, like lunar crescents, which descended from either side of the stage down into the yard, were of the same color. The fairies were costumed in purple, green, blue or red tutus with torn and rebelliously unkempt lace and fishnets in a post-punk refutation of courtly authority. Puck's parodic tails were turquoise- and white-striped and his hair sported a wave of greenish-blue.



A *Midsummer Night's Dream*: Siobhan Redmond (left, Titania) and fairies. Photo by Manuel Harlan.

It was not long before the lovers' black costumes yielded to this kaleidoscopic aesthetic. Their disrobing allowed them to reveal shirts, skirts and underwear of bright gold or green and the sexual licence of the forest was implicit in their casting off of formal attire and the exposure of legs and arms. As Helena (Laura Rogers) acted as Demetrius' "spaniel" (2.1.203) she provocatively crawled towards him on all fours and as she lamented her own uncontrollable desire, "I am sick when I look not on you" (213), she lay spread-eagled on the stage her skirts hitched indecently high revealing bare legs in a gesture of complete submission.

The sexual intensity of the forest was emphasized by the erotic presence of Redmond as Titania. (She and Mannion doubled the earthly and the fairy rulers though the fairy kingdom seemed set, vocally anyway, in Edinburgh while Theseus and Hippolyta spoke the English of Windsor Castle.) Provocatively, her bower was a cross between Salvador Dalí's red settee, based on the lips of Marilyn Monroe, and a large open and sexually suggestive rosebud which had something of the predatory exoticism of Audrey II, the cannibalistic plant from *Little Shop of Horrors*. Both the little Indian boy and the ass-headed

artisan were laid across the crimson bed. As she draped herself among their limbs there was an obvious, though very dark, parallel between her apparently maternal contact with the child and her copulation with Bottom: both were objects of her consummation.

Mannion's Oberon maintained the tyrannical edge of Theseus though here his fury was directed not at a disobedient young woman but against his mischievous servant. Michael Jibson (who had earlier, fittingly, doubled as Philostrate), relished the confusions of the night and maintained a good rapport with the audience, entering through the yard and puffing his way up the ramp to present Oberon with the love-in-idleness. He and Oberon took up spectators' positions, standing on the shelves formed by the bases of the stage columns and watched the confusions of the four lovers over the rotating identities of their various love objects. There were some excellent and carefully choreographed *lazzi* between them—movement was by Glynn MacDonald. There was a nice touch as Puck attempted to resolve the problems by anointing the eyes of the male lovers with the magic juice. As he bent over each of them, lying on the floor, he plucked out their eyeballs on long elastic threads of red, drew them towards him, sprinkled them and then replaced them. Given *King Lear's* truly ghastly blinding of Gloucester (see above), there was clearly a crafty nod in that direction.

Pyramus and Thisbe was played at a furious pace and was full of effective comic business. We were returned to the court by the upstage blue cloth being pulled by fairies over the heads of the cooing groundlings. This time the courtiers wore matrimonial white and the presence of the "Hard-handed men" (5.1.72) took place with the women of the onstage audience downstage left and men downstage right. This represented an interesting revision of the convention which usually blocks them as embracing couples and hinted at the propriety of unmarried modesty which Theseus laments at the play's opening remained in force.

Against this abstinence, the comic crudity of the inset play was especially effective. The "Wall's chink" (5.1.132) was Snout's spread legs which offered Flute (Peter Bankolé) a disgusted double-take on "Thy stones with lime and *hair* [acknowledging the proximity of his mouth and Snout's pubic hair] knit up in thee" (190). Snout (Jonathan Bond) wore only the tiniest briefs. Thisbe's subsequent kissing of "the wall's hole" (200) was preceded by Snout's turning his back on Flute so she kissed his anus. Paul Hunter's unusually diminutive Nick Bottom was powerfully overacted and he played his suicide as a protracted amputation of toes, fingers, genitals, arms, legs, tongue and eyes before laying on his back, his sword sticking out phallically between his legs. This allowed him to wince with terror as Flute's Thisbe clumsily pulled the weapon out on "Come, trusty sword" (338). There was a lovely detail as the arrogant Theseus condemned the entertainment's author: "if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter it would have been a fine tragedy" (351). Theseus looked at Bottom as he said this and there was an uncomfortable silence as Bottom gestured to Peter Quince (Michael Matus) with an embarrassed shrug

to indicate the inept playwright. Hastily attempting to cover his tracks, Theseus continued chumily, “and so it is, truly, and very notably discharged” (354), but it was too little too late. The awkwardness of the moment was comically rescued by the incompetence of Snug (Robert Goodale) who ended up dancing on the wrong side of the stage and facing the opposite direction to everyone else in the bergamask. It is Snug who has earlier confessed to being “slow of study” (1.2.63). The production ended with Oberon’s blessing on the lovers—here set to music—and Puck’s cheeky epilogue. The Globe’s trademark jig forced one to wonder, as usual, why the theater refuses to trust the playwright to end his own plays without populist razzmatazz...one day, perhaps...



A *Midsummer Night's Dream*: From left to right, Robert Goodale (Snug), Peter Bankole (Flute), Jonathan Bond (Snout), Paul Hunter (Bottom) and Sam Parks (Starveling). Photo by Manuel Harlan.

The production’s moon demonstrates, unsurprisingly, the reciprocity that exists between the Globe and the Courtyard, temporary home of the Royal Shakespeare Company, in Stratford upon Avon. One of the trademarks of Michael Boyd’s work at the RSC is its exciting verticality: rope-work, entries from suspended ladders and walkways, as well as the use of trapdoors to bring actors on from beneath stage level, all employed in his recent magnificent cycle of history plays. Doran’s current RSC *Dream* has Bottom and Titania and later Oberon and Titania suspended from the flies. Even as the Main House in Stratford is being rebuilt with thrust stage in order to emphasize its depth and fully exploit two dimensions, the current work seems impatient to lift the action from the stage floor. The Globe has always been happy with this sort

of perpendicular style, exemplified in Kathryn Hunter's 2005 *Pericles*.⁵ Furthermore, the marked verticality of the Globe's *Timon* may have signalled its debt to its director's fondness for roofs. When she directed *Titus Andronicus* in 2006 Lucy Bailey hinted both at the gladiatorial blood-lust of the play as well as its internecine destructiveness by mimicking, in a series of black swathes, the *velarium* off the Roman amphitheater. The Globe's yard was plunged into an ominous shadow by this awning which both symbolized the play's murky treachery and added a claustrophobic element to this usually open and airy performance space: we seemed trapped too close to the play's violence.

For her production of *Timon*, Bailey had turned the theater into an aviary (design was by William Dudley who collaborated with her on *Titus*). From the stage canopy out to the thatched roofline, a coarse netting was stretched above the yard across the top of which aerial acrobats walked and squawked like malevolent ravens (a shot from Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* was included in the program). Most spectacularly, these scavenging birds could dive, head first, down into the pit from several circular apertures let into the netting and plummet onto the groundlings before being halted on bungee cords and returning just as abruptly to the heavens. They signified an aerial rapacity that could swoop at any time—and they did as the fare of Timon's feast, held aloft, processed through the yard. Like the harpies from Prospero's vanishing banquet, they functioned as the gods of a cursed nature dispensing a justice as wild as it was sudden. In the light of this avian predation, Timon's altruistic optimism sounded ominously naïve: "I am not of that feather to shake off / My friend when he must need me" (1.1.102-3).

In common with all the other Shakespeare productions at the Globe this season, the stage had been extended into the yard. This was the slightest extension, though, and served only to convert the straight downstage edge into a curved border beyond which a bench seat ran parallel. This enabled assembled lords to sit around the edge of the stage and consume Timon's feasts as they looked on at the various entertainments staged for their benefit. In this way the arrangement resembled the row of bar stools stretched across the front of the platform of a pole dancing club (so I'm told!). At the dancing of the Amazon, an aerial acrobat dropped on a pair of white silk skeins and erotically and gracefully wrapped herself in and out of the ribbons before descending to Timon's clutches: "You have done our pleasures much grace, fair ladies" (1.2.137). Her tiny white costume and bare legs contrasted with the cawing crows, entirely in black, who presided overhead throughout. The guests' drunken profligacy was illustrated as the bread which Timon distributed among them became missiles flying between them, much to the sneering disgust of Bo Poraj's huge and shaggy Apemantus and the party broke up with the antics of an inebriated guest running around the stage, flashing his genitals. This disgusting sexuality was explicitly staged during Timon's later cursing of Phrynia and Timandra (Pippa Nixon and Laura Rogers). As they lay on their backs, their legs open towards him, Timon placed his hands on their crotches at "Be strong in whore, allure him, burn him up" (4.3.141). The effect was of the laying on of hands—a

mock ecclesiastical blessing as their wantonness and disease were blessed by his doctrine of misanthropy, his parting curse insisting on their canine lewdness: "Get thee away," he growled at Alcibiades, "And take thy beagles with thee" (174).

Bailey had clearly read *Timon* as an Aesopian allegory and many of the stage costumes (such as those of the Poet and the Painter—Michael Matus and Michael Jibson respectively) echoed the short, feathered capes of the opportunistic raptors. Throughout, the dividing line between the human world of reason and the animal kingdom of Darwinian survival was erased. The gifts with which Timon is presented include "Four milk-white horses" and "two brace of greyhounds" (1.2.179 and 184) while he reciprocates with "a bay courser" (206) and, as the beastly orgy of giving and receiving intensified, the dinner guests fell onto all fours and chased each other round the stage barking like dogs. Later, as Timon condemned the stingy inconsistency of his so-called friends, he muttered "such summer birds are men" (3.7.29) and, following the unveiling of the mock-feast, they departed in a chorus of twitters and cheeps, hopping like chicks. The theater audience themselves became the victims of the aggressive birds as they screeched and flapped their wings at us to clear the yard at the interval.

As he cast himself out from the city, Simon Paisley Day's slim Timon, stripped to a white loincloth and matted with filth, resembled one of the gaunt and angular Christs of El Greco. But, ingeniously, this too was overlaid with a feral deportment. Part baboon and part starved dog, he rummaged in the ashes of his hovel for roots to eat before sardonically wondering at the gold he uncovered. Day's powerful vocal range was illustrated during his invective against the worthless but still precious metal and its alchemical properties which can effect oxymoronic transformations such as "Black [to] white, foul fair, wrong right, / Base noble, old young, coward valiant" (4.3.29-30). He recounted these in a racked mixture of wonder *and* reproach.

As if to illustrate what Lear calls "Unaccommodated man" (3.4.101), Timon lowered himself onto a midden and pulled his loincloth down. Grunting and heaving, he relieved himself with visible contentment and, as the Poet and the Painter scowled their disgust, he let fly a trumpet fart. Realising he had nothing with which to wipe himself, he wandered around on all fours in simian style looking for something and, in the process, pointed his bare and shitty arse at the audience which prompted a universal groan. He decided to use his hand before offering to shake those of his visitors, "Have I once lived to see two honest men?" (5.1.54) he remarked with mock-enthusiasm. Their recoiling was met with his fury: at "You are an alchemist; make gold of that" (112), he reached his hand into the dungheap and smeared their faces with faeces, an outraged Yahoo tearing off the veneer of cultivated refinement.

Timon spoke of his "everlasting mansion" (5.2.100) as the crows gathered portentously above him. He lay down amid his ashes and they descended upon him, the first one sitting on his chest like the goblin from Henry Fuseli's *The Nightmare* and then, deliberately and carefully pecking out his eyes. (See

comments above about the anointing of the lovers' eyes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* echoing the blinding of Gloucester.) The murder of crows was quite literally that and they scattered with bloodied mouths and talons at the entry of Alcibiades (Gary Oliver). His closing declaration, to use the olive rather than the sword, was small comfort after the bestial depravity of what had gone before and the residing sentiment was the pessimism of Lear: "man's life's as cheap as beast's" (2.2.433).

The tonal distance between this scabrous satire and the season's second comedy could not have been more extreme. Indeed, choosing *The Merry Wives of Windsor* to accompany *Lear* and *Timon* felt like a play too distantly related to them generically. But whereas the *Dream* seemed in the shadow of Doran's successful RSC version, Christopher Luscombe's *Windsor* was justifiably anxious to get as far away as possible from Doran's disastrous musical version (RSC, 2006) which inflicted terrible damage on the play. Doran's production trivialized the closest thing Shakespeare wrote to a city comedy, a genre which satirizes the profoundly ordinary anxieties over money and sex which reside just below the surface of social convention and apparent normality. In turning this dark comedy into a West End romantic musical, Doran demonstrated his incapacity to recognize the play's acuminate vision and blunted its ironic design. Shakespeare's witty and acerbic soap opera was reduced to the most anodyne of Christmas musicals. Rachel Kavanaugh's 2002 RSC production, on the other hand, demonstrated the play's acute awareness of these societal concerns. Set in the late 1940s, the production used post-war deprivation to charge the Windsor atmosphere—Falstaff's aspirant seduction of Mistresses Page and Ford is as much financially as erotically motivated. Luscombe's Globe version was somewhere between these two poles. In places, it tapped into the text's caustic comedy and its documentary realism served to point up the self-interest of the Windsor residents. Elsewhere, however, it played to the lowest comic denominator and typified Globe populism.

Yet again the stage had been extended. Janet Bird designed a walkway that ran across and bisected the yard and curved round at each end to connect to the stage. Stage right, the walkway ascended into a humpback bridge so that groundlings could get themselves under it and occupy the yard between it and the downstage edge of the stage. The middle of this walkway widened out into an oblong-shaped platform that contained a stage that flipped over to present variously a knot garden complete with love seat or the severed trunk of Herne's Oak. The set comprised a timber-framed Elizabethan house (echoing the Globe Theatre itself) with a balcony that extended to half the depth of the stage.

Christopher Benjamin played Falstaff as a fruity lecher from a British seaside postcard. He relished the dirty possibilities of lines like: "[Mistress Page] examined my parts with most judicious oeillades" (1.3.51) and he left just the optimal comic pause after Mistress Quickly's "they mistook their erection" before responding with the inevitable *Carry On Shakespeare* line, "So did I mine" (3.5.36). Robin's apparently innocent description of Falstaff's location to Mistress Ford was allowed to ferment into a smutty suggestion: "My master Sir

John is come in at your back door" (3.3.19). But along with this cheeky music-hall muck was some carefully preserved moral insight and this was equally well honed, such as Falstaff's "When gods have hot backs, what shall poor men do?" (5.5.10) or Mistress Page's axiomatic "I will find you twenty lascivious turtles ere one chaste man" (2.1.70).



The Merry Wives of Windsor: Serena Evans (Mistress Page), Christopher Benjamin (Falstaff), and Sarah Woodward (Mistress Ford). Photo by John Trampler.

In spite of the production's capacity to run comedy and morality alongside one another, some tricks were missed. The episodes with the laundry basket were played only for laughs with Andrew Havill's Ford discharging a gun into the basket before glumly concluding, "Well, he's not here I seek for" (4.2.138). His attack on the old woman of Brentford was little more than Punch and Judy slapstick and never offered a glimpse of the violence which flows just below the surface of this relentlessly patriarchal society. Indeed Serena Evans's Meg Page and Sara Woodward's Alice Ford were never really much more than comic plot devices and Ford's resolution to "take him [Falstaff] and torture my wife" (3.2.33) was followed by a matter of fact shrug of his shoulders as though he had suggested something quite reasonable. That the audience were encouraged to giggle their assent demonstrated the production's refusal to take seriously the play's darker aspects.

Will Belchambers was an unusually sympathetic Slender and his attempts to woo Anne Page, played by Ellie Piercy, were full of embarrassed and embarrassing pauses as he groped clumsily for the next thing to say. As John Rugby (Timothy Speyer) told Dr Caius (Philip Bird) of his lack of prowess with a weapon, he settled on an altogether more restful occupation: his "Alas, sir, I cannot

fence" (2.3.13) was accompanied by his casting a fishing line into the yard.

Falstaff's comeuppance at Herne's Oak was neatly effected. Half a dozen or so children were got up like the fantastic demons from a painting by Hieronymus Bosch. Their anti-masque revelry began as they emerged from under the walkway (Evans has previously ordered them to "Follow me into the pit" [5.4.2]) so that they were among the groundlings and thus served to erode further the boundary between spectator and player. This breach of decorum was entirely appropriate to such a carnivalesque scene as well as being suited to the openness of the Globe. Falstaff's ecstatic "Let the sky rain potatoes" (5.5.16) was gleefully delivered at the very point that the fairies were about to appear, which made the imminence of his disappointment all the more exquisite. It was a testament to Benjamin's performance that one almost wanted his fantasy threesome to come true. The various denouements followed hard on the heels of this episode but the production hardly paused over any of them. Given that the play's very title alerts us to the importance of marital negotiations, the revelation of the marriage of Fenton and Anne felt perfunctory indeed. While tapping into the seriousness with which the play addresses social concerns such as marriage and fidelity, Luscombe had settled, ultimately, for a less demanding "feel-good" production.

Although *Windsor* felt the least significant of this season's offerings, it was by no means an ineffective production. Perhaps the fact that a perfectly sound (if slightly routine) production is the norm rather than the exception at today's Globe is symptomatic of the achievements already made under Dromgoole's new artistic leadership. If he can maintain the movement of the theater in this positive direction, the Globe may finally and deservedly begin to shed its unfortunate reputation as Shakespeare-meets-Disneyworld.⁶ Things at the Globe are looking up.

Notes

1. I am grateful to the following: Elizabeth Rivlin and Michael W. Shurgot for inviting me to write this review essay and to Farah Karim-Cooper and Penelope Woods of the Globe who read earlier versions of it and provided helpful commentaries. James Lever of the Globe's press office was a model of efficiency with press comps and pictures.
2. See, for instance, Shurgot's account of Rylance as Duke Vincentio in "The Globe 2005 Season," *The Upstart Crow* 25 (2005), 77-91.
3. *The Independent*, 5 May 2008.
4. Dominic Dromgoole, foreword to all the 2008 season's programs, 2.
5. Discussed by Shurgot, *The Upstart Crow* 25 (2005).
6. W. B. Worthen, "Reconstructing the Globe: Constructing Ourselves," *Shakespeare Survey* 52 (1999), 33-45.

**A FOOL'S STAGE: ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY PRODUCTIONS
FROM STRATFORD, ENGLAND, 2007**

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The Royal Shakespeare Company has been in the midst of a radical self-fashioning, in which every element of its theatrical identity and mission must be revisited. The Royal Shakespeare Theatre has been gutted, while The Other Place has metamorphosed into the much larger Courtyard Theatre, silencing, at least for the moment, the rich and intimate eloquence of that earlier and simpler theatrical space, the venue of, among other works, Trevor Nunn's *Macbeth* and *Othello* as well as Tim Supple's *The Comedy of Errors*. Additionally, features of theatrical practice that have long defined the RSC, such as the commitment of actors to long theatrical runs often marked by improvisation and discovery, are now uncertain. One feature in jeopardy is cross-casting, the practice of casting the same actors in multiple roles in multiple plays, a tactic that can lead to surprising metatheatrical discoveries—recognition scenes, really—between one play, or one character, and another. In a risky series of experiments, the RSC seems to be divesting itself, layer by layer, of all its rich and familiar traditions until it finds “the thing itself.”

Is it any wonder, then, that the 2007 Royal Shakespeare Company's summer season should be so self-consciously obsessed with the power, the volatility, even the vulnerability, of theater? Implicit in that self-consciousness were both experimentation and elegy, as we participated in a vital theatrical practice about to be extinguished. The RSC, for example, staged both *Macbeth* and *Macbett* in repertory, with David Troughton playing Duncan in the former play and Macbett in the latter and Patrick O'Kane playing Macbeth in Shakespeare's play and King Duncan in Ionesco's.¹ The double cross-casting closed some of the distance between Shakespeare's play and Ionesco's as the audience was invited to imagine these two antithetical characters as one. And why not? If bloody murder were merely “man's work,” then Duncan's robes could indeed sit as easily as Macbett's—or Macbeth's. That Derbhle Crotty played both Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare's play and Lady Duncan in *Macbett* further contributed to the dark metastasis that raced through both productions. The evil in these two plays was not limited to a particular root, or household, or man. Both of these productions presented a malice too cruel anywhere. That sense of moral interchangeability was made even more discomfiting, especially for the audience, in *Macbeth*'s treatment of the weird sisters. They became choric figures helping to establish the audience's own point of view. They insinuated themselves among the nameless attendants in the Macbeth or Macduff household, even helping to prepare the table for Macbeth's inaugural banquet. They came to appear as ghostly spectators. Such theatrical practices made it increasingly difficult for the audience to distinguish itself from

the rest of the Porter's hellish guests. We were all tainted.

Trevor Nunn set his production of *King Lear* in the Courtyard Theatre, where it was performed in repertory with Chekhov's *The Sea Gull*.² Nunn's setting created a radically ambivalent theatrical space that allowed us to look simultaneously into the past and the present. On the one hand, the central stage thrust out into the audience, allowing an engagement, even an interaction, between audience and actors that problematized the distinction between them, creating a highly charged energy that characterized a performance decorum that was both early modern and postmodern. At the same time, the stage and staging looked nostalgically toward the past. The back wall of the stage was marked by a series of classical columns with red curtains draped between them. The set reminded one critic of "an enormous grand theatre."³ But as the columns on each side of the stage intruded on the space reserved for the audience, those classical columns metamorphosed into more functional, and more modern, vertical red supports, flanking the audience on both sides and creating an imperfect magic circle that contained both audience and actors. The effect was an architectural contradiction: a thrust stage caught within a proscenium framework. More significantly, those authoritative columns were already beginning to crumble. In each scene that followed, we could hear the rumble of collapsing plaster until by the end of the play the theater was in ruins, just as it was at the height of Puritan authority—or again almost three hundred years later, during the London Blitz. Indeed, this production attested to both the power and the limitation of theater.

From the opening moments of Trevor Nunn's *King Lear* the audience was thrust into an inexplicable and dangerous ceremony, presided over by Ian McKellen's Lear. All the lights of the theater went black, while a loud organ pealed like thunder. Two by two, figures in black robes entered and created a circle around King Lear, a kind of strange formal procession. Lear, flanked by Gloucester (William Gaunt) and Kent (Jonathan Hyde), wore a spectacular gold robe and what looked like a miter. Everyone else in the procession, with one exception, was dressed in black. Cordelia, "our joy," distinguished herself in a white robe, a hint, perhaps, of the role Lear had assigned her. At a given signal, all fell prostrate, or else knelt, on the stage. Lear seemed to bless all. Then, just as abruptly, Lear left, followed by his daughters and his—and their—trains. What did this ritual—this strange theater—mean?

The King re-entered in grand theatrical fashion. Lear read his announcement from cue cards as an intense spotlight illuminated him. This was a fearful and awkward ceremony, shaped by a script that only Lear possessed. Everyone else was reduced to guessing. As Lear read his lines, he was amused at their puzzlement—and invited both on- and off-stage audiences to share that amusement. Lear was particularly gleeful at the very *thought* that such a king might "unburdened, crawl toward death" (1.1.36).⁴ This was a vigorous Lear whose strength was implied in his unpredictability. When summoned to the love test, Goneril (Frances Barber) looked briefly at Regan (Monica Dolan). Was Regan the intended heir? At the podium, Goneril quickly recovered her-

self and declared her love for Lear as “[d]earer than eyesight, space, and liberty” (1.1.51), three terms this production would remember. When Regan was summoned, she too tried to improvise, but found herself more at a loss for words than was her sister. She looked to Cornwall, who urged her on. The audience no less than the court was unprepared for what happened next. This ceremony had come out of the blue, as Gloucester’s gossip with Kent made clear. While in most productions, the audience has at least Cordelia (Romola Garai) as its standard, here Nunn had cut all of Cordelia’s asides. When Cordelia approached the podium, before she said “nothing,” for several moments she said *nothing*. After Lear repeated her “nothing,” Cordelia approached the king, laughing nervously, guessing at her father’s script.

This scene, then, with its terrible ceremonies, was played by McKellen’s Lear as a kind of absurdly comic and indulgent deposition scene. Lear toyed with his authority over Gloucester, putting the duke in his place as he read his opening lines with sharp impatience, as if chiding the duke for his slow obedience to a king’s command: “Attend the lords of France and Burgundy” (1.1.29). Then, moments later, Lear roared, “*Gloucester?*” However, despite Lear’s repeated claims to sovereignty, Cordelia and Kent, not Lear, best embodied the violation of the king’s two bodies and most forcefully registered the pain and isolation of their rupture. As Lear’s attention moved toward Goneril and Regan, Cordelia moved downstage right, isolated from Lear and his other daughters, who remained further upstage. At Lear’s commands to Albany and Cornwall to “part” this coronet (1.1.133), Cordelia suddenly buckled, clutching her belly as if she had been struck by an internal seizure or a physical punch. That pain seemed to be caused, moreover, neither by bodily assault nor even paternal betrayal, but by the violent tearing apart and “digesting” of the kingdom, a response cued by Lear’s own words: “Cornwall and Albany, / With my two daughters’ dowers digest the third” (1.1.121-22). Moments later, as Kent reproved Lear for desecrating the *source* of his kingly authority, for “swear[ing] thy gods in vain,” Lear physically punched Kent, assaulting his servant with words more appropriate to himself: “O Vassal! Miscreant!” (1.1.155).

Set against the pomp and circumstance of Lear’s theater were the comic catechisms of the Fool (Sylvester McCoy), a much more subversive, opportunistic, improvisational style of performance, a kind of guerilla theater. McCoy, speaking in discussion at the Shakespeare Centre in Stratford-upon-Avon, saw his role as that of a working-class stand-up comic, whose one-liners and short verbal sketches were the precipitate of barely suppressed anger and fear.⁵ McCoy used what he could, taking riddles, catches, and dark nursery rhymes from Shakespeare’s text, adding to them a singing voice and a bit with the spoons. This fool was only one bad joke or two away from unemployment. Lear at one point in the hovel punched the Fool merely for saying foolish things. McCoy’s Fool was too experienced not to sense his disposability. Lear was already moving towards the new-fashioned Fools, Kent and the king’s new philosopher, Edgar. But there was also a sharp, corrosive intelligence to the old Fool as well as, especially in this production, an uncompromising com-

mitment to loyalty, courage, and human love that discovered itself, as it did for so many characters in Nunn's production, in the inhuman treatment of Lear and Gloucester. This production chose to literalize Lear's lament at the end of the play that "my poor Fool is hanged" (5.3.279) by including a scene just after the capture of Gloucester in which Cornwall's soldiers lynched the Fool.

In some ways it was a questionable decision, heavy-handed ocular proof of a conflation of Cordelia and the Fool that Shakespeare's texts merely suggest. However, the scene gave to the Fool a powerful moment that McCoy used brilliantly. After his assassins forced the Fool to climb a chair (the same chair to which Gloucester would later be bound), this Fool recited to a captive audience his terrible prophecy of things to come, here displaced from its usual location in 3.2. Knowing he was about to die, the Fool delivered these lines with clarity and defiance. It was a moment of great political theater for both on- and off-stage audiences. And because the interval occurred not at Gloucester's blinding as it so often does but at the Fool's death, his lines shifted the political and aesthetic center of this play. With the Fool's words, we had indeed entered a new dispensation, theatrically echoed by the rumble of the set's further collapse.

Most performances of Lear fall into one of two categories: either the frail domestic father or the raging monarch, whose windy curses and commands seem to become yet another force of nature. The brilliance of McKellen's Lear was his ability to embody all the contradictions of both play and character in one coherent whole, to "play the antitheses," as John Barton, McKellen's friend and mentor, has so often urged. Speaking to John Lahr of his attempts to discover his character, McKellen stressed the inclusiveness of the play, "so rich, so fraught; it makes no sense": "Initially, in rehearsal, I was going, 'Is he a warrior king? Is he a priest king? He's eighty—do I have to be old?... Do I have to sound old? Is he ill? He's got this heart condition, has he?' Then I sort of let all that go and said, 'Let's just concentrate on what he is actually saying.' It's his mind that's declining but being woken, and there are explosions happening. There's a storm in his mind."⁶

It was, then, only appropriate that one of Lear's most memorable moments in this production was conceived in terms of theatrical impotence as well as theatrical power. When in 3.4 Lear strips himself of his lendings, the gesture is not entirely an act of submission; nor is it entirely an act of identification with all those "unaccommodated" men, those "poor naked wretches" all around him (3.4.95, 28). In Trevor Nunn's production, "[o]ff, off, you lendings!" (3.4.97) was a *command* that Lear shouted to himself, an actor's momentary and noisy catharsis as he prepared to discover the energy needed for a theatrical challenge that seemed to require more than he could give. Through the bluster, this silly old man created out of his own body a kind of tableau that might well have illustrated one of the Fool's kingly riddles: "This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen" (3.4.72). Aside from an act of high foolishness, in all senses of that word, it was also an act of impotence. Lear then pulled his trousers down, revealing his unaccommodated genitals. But he could not complete the

act. As he tried to pull his garments over his head, the soaked clothing tangled itself around Lear's shoulders and neck, rendering this king, and the actor who played him, unable to move. The theatrical technology that generated all that wind and rain, those "hurricanes," would not suffer it.

This moment in the Nunn production will, of course, be remembered for other reasons, as an act of theatrical and sexual display. Reviewers have found it difficult—well, *impossible*—to resist clever references to Lear's and McKellen's exhibitionism, as, for a moment, this production allowed character to collapse into actor. Indeed, whom were we watching on stage? Was it Lear baring himself before an on-stage audience of wretches so that he too might feel what wretches feel? Such was the effect of Ian Holm's nakedness in Richard Eyre's 1997 production.⁷ Or were we watching ourselves, as one of the most powerful and at the same time most *venerable* actors in recent memory, whether as Lear or Gandalf the Grey, toyed with our voyeuristic expectations? Like the on-stage audience in 1.1, trapped within Lear's own theatrical staging, were we too wondering just how far this secret script would take us?

In such a metatheatrical production, where characters might dissolve into actors and the audience was occasionally invited to join the cast, we were indeed both in the world of *King Lear* and of it. Even our critical judgment was disabled, unless that judgment acknowledged its own participation in the compromised world of the play as well as the players. Consequently, whatever marginal redemption these characters achieved took place within worlds of decay: whether in nature, in politics, or in theater. And yet those moments of human compassion we did recognize and share were all the more moving for their sharp limitations. There was Lear crying with Gloucester on the heath. At first the tears were parodic, one more act of mock imitation from this Fool-King. But at some moment in the parody Lear suddenly recognized the thing itself, as the parodic tears became a genuine sign of human engagement. The two did not meet again. There was Lear's struggling acknowledgement of his treatment of Cordelia: as he urged his daughter to "forget and forgive," McKellen's voice tentatively rising into a question mark at "forgive," his hand offered itself to Cordelia.

That sense of limited human recognition was most keenly felt in the moments after the most *inhuman* blinding of Gloucester. Relying on the First Quarto edition, Trevor Nunn included the nine lines at the end of 3.7, where servants attempt to ease Gloucester's pain by applying "flax and whites of eggs" to his eyes.⁸ What they did was a diminished thing to be sure. It accomplished nothing, like Edgar's contrived miracle at Dover. It could not prevent the death of Lear or Cordelia, or even the collapse of the play's final lines, where Kent, declaring that "My master calls me. I must not say no," pulled a pistol from his holster and walked offstage to certain suicide. That moment was darkened even more by Trevor Nunn's use of a subtle repertorial strategy, not so much cross-casting one actor in two roles as cross-blocking their movements. Thus Nunn staged the blocking of Kent's final exit to be identical to that of Konstantin, whose exit in Nunn's *The Seagull*, in fact, was punctuated by the sudden sound of a lethal gunshot, a sound not included in the text's stage directions.

The affirmation we received from this production of *King Lear* was embodied in the smallest of theatrical gestures. We needed to look with our ears, as Lear advised Gloucester to do, to strip away layers of ocular and aural theatrical conventions until we found the thing itself. What we found at the center of this play, at the center of performance itself, was a community of Fools, symbolized by the passing of the Fool's bauble from the Fool, to Lear, to Gloucester. We might think of Edgar's description of Dover to his blind father—and of the fall and "miraculous" recovery that follows. It is a bit of foolery, a mock redemption to be sure. But it is also an act of human kindness and human recognition. When Lear entered, bauble in hand, and announced, "I am the king himself" (4.5.83), blind Gloucester heard something in those words, and knelt. Or to return to the scene of Gloucester's blinding, the servants' feeble attempts to apply medicines to Gloucester's eyes were foolish gestures, no match for the scale of cruelty and inhumanity all around them. The growling dogs we continued to hear offstage reminded us that in one sense nothing had changed. A dog's obeyed in office. And yet the flaxen applied to Gloucester's eyes, a declaration of faith beyond all reason, a sign of shared helplessness, was nonetheless a minimal, and thus eloquent, gesture that remained for the audience even through the play's final scene. As Gloucester himself acknowledges, responding to Edgar's foolish balm of endurance, "And that's true, too" (5.2.11).

Notes

1. *Macbeth*, dir. Connall Morrison with performances by David Troughton, Patrick O'Kane, and Derbhle Crotty, The Royal Shakespeare Company, The Swan, Stratford-upon-Avon, 2007. *Macbeth*, dir. Silviu Purcारेte, The Royal Shakespeare Company, The Swan, Stratford-upon-Avon, 2007.
2. *King Lear*, dir. Trevor Nunn with performances by Ian McKellen, Sylvester McCoy, The Royal Shakespeare Company, The Courtyard Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 2007. *The Seagull*, dir. Trevor Nunn with performances by Richard Goulding and Ian McKellen, The Royal Shakespeare Company, The Courtyard Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 2007.
3. Neil Norman, Rev. of *The Seagull*, in *Daily Express* (1 June 2007) rptd. in *Theatre Record*, 22:11 (2007) 643.
4. *The Tragedy of King Lear*, ed. Jay L. Halio, *The New Cambridge Shakespeare* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). All citations will be made to this edition.
5. Sylvester McCoy in conversation at The Shakespeare Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon, UK, 18 June 2007.
6. Ian McKellen in John Lahr's "He that Plays the King: Ian McKellen's Stagecraft," *The New Yorker* (27 August 2007), 53.
7. *King Lear*, dir. Richard Eyre, with performance by Ian Holm, The Royal National Theatre, The Cottesloe, London, 1997.
8. *King Lear*, ed. Halio, 300.

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER SEASON 2007-2008

Silver Damsen, University of Southern Mississippi, Gulf Coast

In 2007-08, Barbara Gaines' Chicago Shakespeare Theater was a huge success by anyone's standards: the company provided world-class productions of Shakespeare's plays in the fabulous location of the Chicago tourist center, the Navy Pier; was heavily involved with community service; consistently brought their extraordinarily high-quality productions to Chicago-area public schools; and last, but not least, the company's long list of wealthy benefactors suggested solvency even beyond their substantial seeming ticket revenues. The company was then, by all appearances, *thriving*. Perhaps it was the very success of the company that made it so difficult for me to gain permission to talk to the directors and actors of the company about their interpretations and insights into the characters and themes.¹ The company was doing so well that any seeming intrusion carried the fear of spoiling its perfect image. However, if this was truly a fear of the company, it would seem to have been entirely misplaced; production values were so high, the actors so skilled and intelligent, and the directors so thoughtful that there were no real flaws to be found in interpretations or in performances. It was all magnificent. Each performance also provided such skilled explorations of social and gender roles that they qualified as major or minor contributions to the larger arena of feminist performance theory. Performances gave riveting models of female empowerment and thoughtful critiques of exploitative gender roles.

Depending on one's starting point, Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 07-08 season began or ended with a masterpiece of feminist interpretation in Barbara Gaines' *Troilus and Cressida* (April 13-June 24). Here Gaines skillfully removed much of the ambiguity of this extraordinarily difficult play by mounting a feminist interpretation that offered a crux of either a feminist or a masculinist burlesque performance option.² These generally darker choices clarified the relationship of war to the sexual exploitation of women while still providing, for this viewer at least, a cumulatively euphoric experience, in large part because of the superior acting of the cast. This roller-coaster ride began the moment Troilus (Kevin O'Donnell) stepped onstage. O'Donnell confirmed his well-deserved reputation for intensity, carrying the audience through a tumult of emotions; Chaon Cross was an intelligent, compelling, and sympathetic Cressida; Stephen Ouimette was a Pandarus so charming and seductive that it was nearly impossible not to feel sympathetic towards this highly exploitative character; and, indeed, the whole of the cast was wonderful.

A foundation of the production's feminist reading was to frame war as mutually destructive and exploitative gendered roles as timeless. For example, the play opened with semi-nude, variously helmeted soldiers of a variety of periods and countries moving across the stage underneath a large, transparent, silk-polyester sheet (some wore only loincloths, with white and black stage

make-up over their face and body, others wore white and black bodysuits), the mesmerizing esthetic beauty of which would be hard to imagine for anyone who did not see it firsthand. This opening exemplified the beauty and the horror of the brutalized and brutalizing body of the male warrior. Similarly, the timeless beauty and plight of the objectified woman were illustrated in the depictions of Cressida and Helen (Mary Kay Cook). Both women were beautiful, exploited, and yet in their own ways warring against their exploitation. Both also wore costumes that, while influenced by classical forms, were modern enough for a Palm Springs cocktail party. Their defining personality traits were even more modern. For example, to the delight of the audience, Cressida exhibited the contemporary urban teen neck roll. (The chin stays parallel to the shoulders as the head rapidly moves in circular motion before returning to the center of the body; at the conclusion of this “roll” a hip is thrust out, and the wrist is raised and flipped upward—an action that is meant to be read as a bodily performed exclamation point) during her act one, scene two conversation with Pandarus concerning the merits of Troilus. Here and elsewhere, Cressida evoked the naïveté and vulnerability of an urban adolescent who has seen and intuitively knows more than she fully understands. For example, not only was Cressida a child of the war in the broad sense, her heart had come under repeated personal attack from (all?) the men in her life, even possibly, as Cross shared with me in a wonderful post-performance phone conversation, from Paris in a pre-Helen romantic intrigue. (The textual evidence for this reading can be seen at several junctures throughout the text, as in for example, the short bawdy exchange between Pandarus and Helen in act 3, scene 1 that alludes to sexual intercourse between Paris and Cressida, as well as in the more subtle competition of beauty between the two women, a competition that Pandarus evokes in act 3, scene 1, and elsewhere.)

This context of habitual male betrayal helped to explain Gaines’ reading of Troilus betraying Cressida in act five, scene two, a scene that has been more often understood as Cressida’s betrayal of Troilus. Gaines created this effect of male betrayal by having Troilus watch Diomedes physically and emotionally assault a vulnerable and tearful Cressida. Then not only did Troilus fail to rescue his sworn beloved when Diomedes attacked her, he erroneously concluded that she had betrayed him. These very male errors were the result of the destructive male-male competition that permeated the text, facilitated by the manipulations of Ulysses (more generally wicked when played by Greg Vinkler, April 13-June 17, and more specifically sexually motivated when by Patrick Clear, June 20-24).

Cressida’s history of victimization also gave added complexity to her pre-marital intercourse with Troilus. While the choice of Troilus was made in large part from her own desires, it was influenced by her repeated abandonment by the men in her life: (Paris), her father, her uncle. Thus, Cressida entered the relationship with Troilus so sure that she would be betrayed again, and so sure that she would be blamed for this betrayal, that her fate was inevitable, signaled by her eagerness to vow that her name would be infamously associ-

ated with unfaithful women to the end of time *if* the *inevitable* were to occur. Indeed, Cross' Cressida dwelled repeatedly on this theme of her vulnerability in act three as she hesitated at the prospect of entering into a sexually illicit relationship with Troilus. However, Ouimette's Pandarus cheerfully eschewed this very real possibility of exploitation, and instead insisted that of the two, Troilus was the more sure and constant, reinforcing in yet another way Cressida's victimization. This familial encouragement to premarital sexual activity was so charmingly and seductively performed by the highly skilled Ouimette that its underlying corruption could be overlooked. However, while Pandarus might have convinced Cressida that the vows she and Troilus exchanged protected her as the sexual property of Troilus, the majority of Trojan and Greek warriors knew otherwise. In this sense, the sexual relationship between Troilus and Cressida was a kind of familial sexual exploitation that modern psychological study has shown to make teens, in particular, far less likely to be able to extricate themselves from later sexually compromising situations.³ With so many experiences of abandonment and exploitation, Cressida would then have had, in real world terms, no hope whatsoever of maintaining her sexual integrity in the Greek camp, regardless of her love for Troilus.

Gaines further emphasized the constant threat of sexual exploitation that women in classical, early modern, and even modern times have faced in violent masculinist societies by the inclusion of a non-speaking, bedraggled, filthy drab in the act one, scene three Greek camp scene (a creature whose origins, Greek or Trojan, but more than likely Trojan, no longer mattered). The figure's matted hair and grimy face worked to entirely obscure her facial features, further muting her potential for subjectivity. This pathetic shadow lurked in the stage right corners until one of the Greek generals threw a chunk of bread at her, striking her with it. Rather than showing mortification at this assault, she snatched and hungrily devoured this dirty fare. The connection between her degraded status and her sexual exploitation was made clear when a bored Menelaus (William Dick) grabbed her arm to pull her onto his lap. Menelaus then fondled her as she grimaced and made sounds of delight at his sexual efforts; he rewarded her by allowing her to continue to eat. This figure not only foreshadowed one possible alternative facing Cressida (an alternative familiar to non-Shakespearean versions of the tale), it reflected the larger masculinist view that failed to include a schema for women's subjective experiences and independent desires. For example, while the cause of the Trojan War was ostensibly the result of Helen's preference of Paris over Menelaus, the implications of this preference were never directly confronted by any of the male characters. Instead, this (female) choice was the means for Paris and the men of Troy to denigrate the honor of Menelaus and the other Greeks, and it was this same obsession with male honor that kept Helen in Troy and the Greeks encamped outside the Trojan walls. In short, to blame Helen for being a "whore" was shown to be a reflection of the seeming timeless masculinist mind-set of exploitative self-aggrandizement. Men blamed women for men's need to denigrate other men, and sexually exploit women, as a means to (imagined) male

self-enhancement.⁴ It was then also a mind-set that created whores wherever it could find them, regardless of the initial suitability of such a labeling.



Troilus and Cressida: Kevin O'Donnell as Troilus. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

The tragic beauty of O'Donnell's Troilus was that he only partially believed in this masculinist ideology. Troilus, unlike any of the other male characters, was aware that women had their own desires independent of men's desires for them as objects. However, while O'Donnell's Troilus credited Cressida with subjectivity and independent desire in the abstract, he still refused to see the larger issues of domination and subordination that worked to mute the desires of characters outside the ruling male elite. O'Donnell was perfect for this interpretation of the play because of his ability to capture the intensity of this conflict: believing in this destructive masculinist ideology where men relentlessly competed with each other for honor, using women as accessories in this sadistic battle, and yet at the same time valuing and loving Cressida for her qualities as an individual—not as male object. Cressida clearly and rightly did love Troilus (O'Donnell's Troilus was truly irresistible in this viewer's opinion), but in a society so fraught, love was not enough. Thus, this version had much more in common with a nuanced and more mature *Romeo and Juliet* than with a burlesque comedy that condemned and yet salaciously enjoyed the fantasy of the "whore."

Following Gaines' *Troilus*, David H. Bell's *The Taming of the Shrew* (July 14-August 12) was a choice as provocative as it was successful. This version was most delightful to those who appreciated its superb comic timing. Nearly every line was, or led up to, a punch line. The physical humor also played to hilarious effect. In short, all the actors hit the comic moments at just the exact point of savor, neither too harsh nor too sweet. The feminist reading of the play also arrived at a similar point of balance. The interpretation strove to hit the recognized major points of gender equality, and yet to do so in a manner that would appeal to those not necessarily versed in the greater complexities of academic theory.

Thus, the beautiful pointed barb of *Troilus and Cressida's* feminist interpretation was entirely absent. In its place was a less disturbing chuckle of delight.

This *Shrew* was part of the Short Shakespeare series, a branch of the company that performs plays it deems accessible to children, facilitated by fairly extensive textual cuts that accommodate shorter attention spans and by the incorporation of performances into the curricula of local elementary and high-school classes. In some ways, *The Taming of the Shrew* is an obvious choice for the Short Shakespeare series because its pop-culture relevance has been well-proven in numerous film versions.⁵ However, *The Taming of the Shrew* was still a highly provocative choice to show to children because it has been seen by many critics as Shakespeare's most misogynist play. Thus, for some, performing *Shrew* for children was an incredibly perilous task from the start. However, in this viewer's opinion, the varying expectations and needs of Short Shakespeare's divergent audience were equally met: comic delight prevailed; an insight into the playtext's important themes gave material for critical rumination.⁶ All this took place in a performance version suitable, accessible, and pleasurable for children.

A key to this version's success was the attention to some of the more latent aspects in Shakespeare's text, most notably that of non-gender specific learning and education.⁷ Thus, the educational aspect of Bell's version focused more on learning to respect the needs and feelings of others, regardless of gender, than on specifically training women into roles of subordination. However, the topic of learning avoided being dully pedantic for more mature viewers by virtue

of its highly effective *commedia dell'arte* playfulness that worked to emphasize the play's constant push-pull with themes of order and disorder.⁸ Indeed, it was also in this push-pull that broader themes relating to subordination and domination surfaced in a non-gender specific way, most notably that of the young against the old. Thus, an experienced viewer could not only delight in watching those less familiar with Shakespeare fall in love with this master of words, but could also discover a new and exciting version of the play that before had, perhaps, gone unexplored.

Bell's gender-neutral thesis on learning became most obvious in sections with the heaviest cutting, such as the last act of the playtext, an act that has almost always appeared highly misogynist in contemporary performance. However, in Bell's version all references to the men's (highly sexist) wager on the women's obedience were eliminated. Katherina (Molly Glynn July 12-July 31, demonstrating a keener



The Taming of the Shrew: Molly Glynn as Katharina and Ben Viccaglio as Petruchio. Photo by Steve Leonard.

comic timing; and DeAwna McGinley Aug.1-Aug.12, a stronger shrewishness at the beginning of the play and, thus, more strongly emphasizing the theme of education with her reformation) even addressed her last speech on the errors of disorderly behavior to a male Hortensio (Jackson Evans) and a male Gremio (Dieterick Gray). The characters' errors that preceded this lecture were their failure to be considerate and to "compromise" (the particular word choice of Molly Glynn when this issue was raised in an audience/actor talk-back. This gender-neutral lecture complemented the similarity in early defects and lessons learned between Katherina and Petruchio (Ben Viccellio). Both began the play as inconsiderate, boorish, and completely unable to "compromise." This reading was feminist in that both were then shown as being trapped within the roles that society had assigned them. Katharina was, in particular, trapped by the label of "shrew." However, both Glynn's and McGinley's Katherina, and Viccellio's Petruchio, appeared initially attracted to each other because of a mutual desire to conquer the other, to the delight of the audience. However, after they fell in love, both learned to "compromise" and to be kind rather than to dominate and abuse.

Continuing on this same wave of real-world / netherworld fantasy, the introductory notes to Barbara Gaines' *Cymbeline* (September 1-November 11) billed this version as "Shakespeare's fairy tale about love, fidelity and deception," which was true but failed to highlight the comic delight, complexity, and thoughtful feminism of this interpretation. Where Gaines' *Cymbeline* was most like a fairy tale was in the presentation of seemingly one-dimensional hero or villain characters. Where this version was most distant from modern ideas of fairy tales was in the deconstruction of these single dimensions. In short, it was not so much that Shakespeare created one-dimensional characters for *Cymbeline*, but rather that the challenge for actors in this production was to utilize a depiction of willful self-deception as part of their performance—and the actors in Gaines' version all did this splendidly.⁹

The text called attention to this crux of role-playing and self-deception with Posthumus' pre-battle vow of "less without and more within" (5.1.33).¹⁰ Some characters were indeed able to turn "within" themselves, explore and reject their previous role, and, thereby, demonstrate personal growth, most notably the chillingly wicked (at least before his reformation) Iachimo (Julian Chioran), the brilliantly passionate Imogen (Chaon Cross), and the worthy but naïve Posthumus (Joe Sikora). However, others, because of the characters' performed insistence on role-playing and self-deception, had no "within" to rely upon, most notably Cymbeline (Larry Yando) and Cloten (Brian Sills)—both of whom gave wonderful comic interpretations of this lack of self-reflection.

Gaines' interpretation of *Cymbeline* then emphasized the quotidian nature of role-playing and self-deception fostered by positions of authority. Authority required characters to play a role that was often beyond their capabilities, as well as encouraged the character to accept this role as an entire and accurate depiction of persona. The characters believed in their own single dimension, even though they were actually far more complex than they believed themselves to be. For example, Yando's Cymbeline was only able to believe in his role of king



Cymbeline: Larry Yando as Cymbeline (right), Shanesia Davis as Queen (center), Choan Cross as Imogen (left). Photo by Liz Lauren.

by refusing to acknowledge his dependence upon his wife and step-son.

Sill's Cloten was even further enmeshed in the mistaken self-perception of himself as an attractive, intelligent, and respected prince. Indeed, many of the comic highlights of this production were born out of Sill's wonderful performance of a complete and total lack of self-knowledge. One of the most disturbing and hilarious of these depended upon Sill's demonstrating no recognition—not even the standard villain's delight—as to the heinousness of his planned murder of Posthumus and rape of Imogen. For Sill's Cloten, Cloten was perfection itself, and therefore he himself was just arbitrator of all definitions of right and wrong. Another comic highlight was initially more cheerful but at least as disturbing because it situated Cloten's death as simultaneously trivial and joyous. Here, as Guiderius (Stephen Louis Grush) and Cloten encountered each other for the first time, Guiderius, reasonably enough, attempted to point out to Cloten the comic effect of the latter's absurd boasting. Rather than profiting and learning from these critiques, Sill's Cloten contorted his face into hilarious expressions of disbelief, as if someone had, with all intended seriousness, told him that he were not, in fact, a person but perhaps a rock, or a leaf of grass, or a cow. It was this challenge to Cloten's (self-imagined) role as worthy prince that led him to provoke Guiderius into a battle that ultimately would cost Cloten his life. It simply was unimaginable to Sill's Cloten that he was not, in fact, the beginning and the end of the world. It was better for his world to end than for his erroneous self-image to be challenged. Yet this loss was disturbing in that it was framed so as to evoke no mourning from the audience—a notable absence of mourning, in fact. Sill's Cloten could not perceive himself in other than a false one-dimensional role of perfection; thus, the audience was forbidden to credit him more than a one-dimensional response.

In the midst of all this self-deception, Cross' Imogen delightfully took upon herself a male disguise, a role that helped her to define her womanliness. Unlike most female characters of the Shakespearean canon who have found empowerment through male disguise, Cross was an engaging combination of dainty, helpless, and yet determined femininity when clothed as Fidele. Cross was unable to handle a sword, and trembled before entering Belarius' (Dennis Kelly) cave. This type of (endearing and grating) feminine performance figured



Cymbeline: Joe Sikora as Posthumus and Chaon Cross as Imogen. Photo by Liz Lauren.

in her abandonment of the Roman general who had earlier rescued and cared for her, a point made with the general's quip: "Briefly die their joys / That place them on the truth of girls and boys" (5.6.106-107). However, while performing femininity, the execution was for her own ends and was, therefore, feminist in result. Indeed, male authority was never Cross' Imogen's goal, rather it was the fulfillment of her erotic desires. Thus, while the play did not advocate feminist values in terms of women searching for/finding social equality with men (or even in terms of lamenting this absence), it was nonetheless feminist in its insistence that women should and could fulfill their desires no matter what or who attempted to prevent them. It was also feminist that it encouraged women to find and create roles for themselves rather than merely accept a role given to them by society.

The final performance of this reviewer's season was Marti Maraden's brilliant interpretation of *Othello* (February 3-April 6). What made Maraden's version so hypnotic was that it used an exploration of social roles to give motive to Iago's "motiveless malignity"—and, thereby, effectively and constructively challenge Coleridge's enduring and persuasive reading. Also here, as in *Cymbeline*, as well as in *Shrew* and *Troilus*, the root of unhappiness was the performed adherence to social roles that did not allow individual characters to connect with their more genuine emotions.¹¹ The actors constantly and magnificently performed self-deception, as well as overt lying, for wonderfully mesmerizing performance effects. This emphasis on the characters playing roles within the actual play helped me to finally feel (despite my long familiarity with the play) that I understood why Othello (Derrick Lee Weeden) could so easily believe Iago (Paul

Niebanck), just as I felt that I finally understood the twisted internal workings of Iago's mind. In other words, the characters became real people, probably even more real to me than most of my current acquaintances. This performance solved some of the most puzzling cruxes of the play, as well as challenged the audience again and again on the difference between acting and being. The most brilliant points of the performance were when the actors didn't seem to act; rather, the characters seemed merely to perform their gender roles. Being was then shown to be acting. This slant then performed the idea that nearly all people nearly all the time understand being as performing roles for others. Thus, the interpretive slant was also largely feminist. The play's costuming of late nineteenth-century/early twentieth-century formal military attire for Othello and his subordinates highlighted for modern audiences the backdrop of military culture. With this context, the definition of male honor made male/male betrayal virtually unthinkable. Iago's genuine betrayal of Othello was far deeper and more disturbing to the perceived natural order of relationships than would have been Desdemona's (Allison Batty) betrayal, even if it had existed outside the fantasy world of Iago and Othello. Othello believed Iago because to not believe him would have challenged the very idea of the military hierarchy.

This emphasis on role-playing began with the textual clue of Iago's epithet of "honest." Niebanck's simultaneously low-key and intense Iago performed "honesty" with his extremely open body language. He frequently raised his eyebrows, smiled, tilted his head, and leaned towards the characters he was speaking to. This Iago was an attention-seeking comedian, and was most himself during the act two, scene one beach scene. However, the smile was im-



Othello: Derrick Lee Weeden as Othello, Allison Batty as Desdemona. Photo by Steve Leonard.

portantly a half-smile, and while his body language appeared open and accepting, his left hand was perpetually on the hilt of his sword, and his body was stiff, posed, too alert. His posture demonstrated the ease with which he could, without hesitation, strike down and kill another with words or his sword. In short, it was a performance that, while close to "honesty," missed (and brilliantly so) its exact representation. It was also an "honesty" where cruelty passed for truthful humor. For example, after Iago's several beach scene rants on the imagined (but, alas, stereotypical) faults of women, Desdemona turned to Cassio (Sean Fortunato), the current representative of hegemonic authority on the island, for an appropriate interpretation of these

seeming insults, to which Fortunato's Cassio casually replied with a smile and a slight shrug: "He [Iago] speaks home madam. You may relish him more in the soldier than in the scholar (2.1.165-166). Cassio's confirmation of Iago's honesty and reliability was performed as resting in Iago's willingness to highlight the (assumed) gendered faults of women. Iago was not to be read as diplomatic, but he was to be read as to the point in all senses of the word. Iago's malice surfaced here as playful entertainment of (the socially dominant) men, and, thereby, earned him the reputation of being trustworthy. The social approval that Iago garnered from such performances then was the originating cause of Iago's descent into even greater viciousness. The other (male) characters gave vindication, validation, approval, and respect to Iago when he performed his role of cruel comedian. Iago gained love by hating women. Thus, Iago became more and more full of hate over time because of the reward he received for the performance of this role.

Batty's Desdemona highlighted this idea of reinforced social roles by performing sweetness, innocence, and sexual attractiveness. At the same time, Batty played Desdemona as genuinely having these characteristics.¹² The combination gave a slight excess to her depiction of these qualities, so that she seemed a little bit spoiled and not quite as naïve as she pretended to be. However, neither she nor any of the other characters appeared to be aware

of these flaws; they perceived no difference between her performance and her possession of these qualities. Indeed, it was the other characters', especially Cassio and Emilia, performed belief in the utter, and even supernatural, wholesomeness of Batty's Desdemona that made the slight excess in Batty's performance seem appropriate for the part. Batty was highly skilled at showing Desdemona to be a slightly flawed human being. She created this effect of performed and real innocence with her perpetually (and only mildly exaggerated) wide-eyed look, her slow seductive body movements perched atop very high-heeled shoes, perpetually side-tilted head, her arms bent at the elbow with her fingers joined over her arched wrists at her stomach, and, most of all, with her pointed ignoring



Othello: Lesley Bevan as Emilia (above) and Allison Batty as Desdemona (below). Photo by Steve Leonard.

of the clear and obvious pain of her closest confidant, Emilia (Lesley Bevan). Thus, Batty's performed innocence was a good deal like Niebanck's sword-in-hand smiles and jests. Perhaps the best example of this slip in Desdemona's performance of perfect womanhood (not, of course, Batty's performance of Desdemona) was when Batty's Desdemona revealed a latent competition with Emilia over the control of their respective husbands. Here Batty showed Desdemona's pique with just the slightest raising of her chin, making it clear that at some level Batty's Desdemona was aware that when she insisted that Othello was singularly not jealous in 3.6.25-27 with the lines, "but my noble Moor / Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness / As jealous creatures are," that she denigrated Emilia's choice and control of Iago. However, this and other minor acts of cruelty were ignored by most (or all?) because they contradicted Desdemona's larger and, as they interpreted, seemingly more genuine performance of kindness and goodness. Batty's Desdemona was not quite as pure as she wanted to be, or as pure as everyone said she was. Hence, Othello's doubts seemed even more justified, yet in being imperfect Desdemona seemed ever more real. Batty's Desdemona was a human being playing a role, rather than Batty simply playing Desdemona as a character.

This emphasis on role-playing in everyday life also explained the crux of Emilia's initial betrayal of Desdemona when she gave her husband the infamous handkerchief. Bevan's Emilia was teeming with frustration over her failed relationship with her husband, a pain made more acute by witnessing the initial happiness of Desdemona and Othello. She gave Iago the handkerchief, in part, because she so desperately wanted to rekindle Iago's affection, but also because Desdemona's taunts of superiority "gnawed" at her "like a poisonous mineral" as well (2.3.284). Batty created this effect of pain with her crossed arms and pinched frowns whenever Othello and Desdemona appeared to be enjoying each other. Perhaps signaling her latent pleasure at Desdemona's suffering, Emilia ceased these defensive postures as she lied by omission and pretended to help Desdemona look for the missing handkerchief. Yet Desdemona's and Emilia's performed and largest lies were to themselves, in respect to the lengths that gendered roles forced them to depend on men for approval and self-validation. Desdemona had to perform sweetness, innocence, and unbelievable goodness in order to be loved, just as Emilia had to venerate Desdemona as an icon of womanly virtue if she were to be considered, and to consider herself, to be second in virtue to Desdemona.

Weeden's majestic and powerful Othello was the character who suffered the most because he most believed the role-playing performances of others and himself, a crux hinted at by Iago in 2.1.381-384 with "The Moor is of a free and open nature, / That thinks men honest that but seem to be so, / And will as tenderly be led by th' nose / As asses are." Weeden's Othello, like Batty's Desdemona, was a character who attempted to perform perfection. Every mellifluous note from Weeden's Othello's mouth was *perfectly* enunciated, measured, considered, as if it were a move in chess or battle. Weeden's Othello was then obsessed with the impression that he created on others, an effect initially de-

pendent upon his success in battle, and then later on his control of Desdemona's affections. Iago was Othello's entirely trusted assistant in his former performances, and, thus, he seemed to Othello to be entirely trustworthy in these additional battles of honor. The destruction of Othello was then brought about by the destruction of Othello's perceived control of affect on others. This demise was one of the most powerful emotional outcomes I have seen on stage. Since Iago's real betrayal was of more catastrophic effect than Desdemona's imagined betrayal, the world of the play did indeed break into chaos at the revelation of the truth. Weeden artfully depicted the human descent into a world without hope, order, or meaningful social roles. Niebanck's Iago confirmed it with his emotional collapse at Othello's suicide. As Othello stabbed himself, a genuinely distressed Iago reached forward as if he were trying to prevent Othello's spirit from leaving the room. Indeed, all Niebanck's Iago had wanted was the approval and love of others, and especially Othello, (a point the artfully genuine Niebanck confirmed through tears during the March 5 talk-back) and yet this connection had been blocked by the constraints of gendered role-playing of the early modern period. Judging from the resonance of this and the other portrayals of gendered performance throughout the season, the limitations of gender roles are still felt among contemporary audiences.

Notes

1. For example, I was told by Jeffrey Fauver, CST's P. R. coordinator, that even if an actor were to approach me anywhere in the greater Chicago area, as the result of, for example, some chance meeting on a subway, that I was to immediately break off the ensuing conversation and insist that the actor go through Fauver to set up a formal phone interview. Casual conversations were not be allowed between myself and any CST employee while I was writing the review—only interviews carefully monitored by CST administration.
2. See W. R. Elton, *Shakespeare's 'Troilus and Cressida' and the Inns of Court Revels* (Aldershot, Brookfield, VT, and Singapore: Ashgate, 2000) for a recent exploration of the more comedic potential in the play.
3. See, for example, Ramesh Raghavna et al., "Sexual Victimization among a National Probability Sample of Adolescent Women," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 36 (2004): 225-232.
4. See David G. Winter, "Power, Sex, and Violence: A Psychological Reconstruction of the 20th Century and an Intellectual Agenda for Political Psychology," *Political Psychology* 21 (2000): 383-404, for a good summary exploration of the connection between male-male domination and the sexual exploitation of women in masculinist societies.
5. I counted 20 film versions and film adaptations beginning with the first silent film version in 1908, directed by D.W. Griffith, and the last adaptation of this past century, *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999), directed by Gil Junger.
6. While Chicago Shakespeare did provide these free performances for public school children in their classrooms, there were not as many younger people in the actual theater audience as one might have expected. At nearly every performance I attended, the retired elderly were the largest segment of the audience. However, the Short Shakespeare matinees did have more children than other performances; perhaps one-fourth of the audience was middle-

aged mothers with one or more (usually more) children. Young or middle-aged adults were rarely more than a handful except on Friday or Saturday nights, where together they composed about half of the audience; the other half were retirees. Thus, the audience was never as diverse as the footnoted sentence might suggest.

7. See Dennis S. Brooks, "'To Scorn Her Own Image': The Varieties of Education in 'The Taming of the Shrew,'" *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* 48 (1994): 7-32, for an intriguing exploration of this larger theme of education in the play. Brooks argues that Sly is the character most in need of education and that the play-within-the-play is designed to evoke a comparison between Sly's lack of education and his social and economic failures and Katherina's need of taming before she can be a productive member of society. According to Brooks, both men and women need to learn empathy and compassion in order to be useful members of society. In this reading, Katherina in her reformation and education is a model for both men and women in the audience rather than a victim of performed misogyny.
8. For example, despite my preference for other plays that season, over the six performances I attended for these three productions, about an equal portion of the audience gave standing ovations for *Shrew* alone as for *Troilus* and *Othello* combined.
9. See Ros King, *Cymbeline: Constructions of Britain* (Aldershot, Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2005), esp. 7-8, for a wonderful exploration of inner and outer as they relate to the performance of roles in *Cymbeline*.
10. All quotes are from *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
11. See Carol Thomas Neely, *Broken Nuptials in Shakespeare's Plays* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 105-135, for a now classic exploration of gendered roles, and the suffering these roles enact on the characters' lives.
12. This was an effect that differed markedly from my first date of attendance, March 5, to my second and last of March 20. I also fear that I might have played a role in this difference. During the March 5 talk-back, I was allowed to begin the group discussion by asking Batty and Bevan about their seemingly more self-centered interpretations of their characters. Both actors were aghast at my suggestion, because they, as the best actors almost invariably do, had taken on the viewpoint of their characters. Thus, Batty perceived her Desdemona to be perfect, just as Bevan perceived her Emilia as unambivalently loving in her feelings towards Desdemona, even if their performances were much more complex and nuanced. Thus, whether it was the result of my seeming challenge, or a quirk of that particular performance, the less perfect (but more human) versions of Desdemona and Emilia that I had so very much enjoyed before were gone on March 20—instead the actors were actually trying to perform perfection.

OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL 2007

Michael W. Shurgot, Seattle, Washington

For its 2007 season, the last for Artistic Director Libby Appel, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival produced two of Shakespeare's early plays, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Romeo and Juliet*; one middle comedy, *As You Like It*; and Shakespeare's final play, *The Tempest*. Among other features, all four plays have at their heart romantic couples, although with varying fates. The two comedies were a curious mix. While many consider *As You Like It* a superior play and far less offensive than the oft maligned *Shrew*, this year's production of *Shrew* was far superior to *As You Like It*, primarily because the fiery relationship between Katharina and Petruchio was far more convincing than the tepid relationship between Rosalind and Orlando. Bill Rauch's *Romeo and Juliet* featured excellent acting throughout, especially Dan Donohue's Mercutio, and Appel's production of *The Tempest* was superb.

The lavish clothing clearly set this *Shrew* in the Italian Renaissance, but with a modern touch. The initial set was Baptista's Trattoria Di Padua, so identified by a sign hanging above the stage left entrance. As spectators settled into their seats on a cool evening with a threatening sky (more on that below), several servers, including Kate, hustled to bring coffee and pastries to their patrons. Bianca's favored position was evident immediately; attired in a luxurious gold gown that matched her exquisitely coiffed blonde hair, she sat among the guests while Kate, in a dull brown servant's dress and snarling constantly, served her and Hortensio and Gremio, who battled each other for the seat closest to Bianca. Baptista obviously approved this arrangement, thus establishing that Katharina had very good reasons to detest both her sister and her father. When Katharina entered in 2.1 dragging Bianca around by a rope, one sensed in Kate a violent envy that bordered on the pathological but also a woman desperate to escape her social situation. In Katharina's "What, will you not suffer me?"¹ one heard not only fierce anger but also genuine pain.

Given director Kate Buckley's firm grasp of the potential dynamics of the Katharina-Petruchio relationship, she surprisingly cut the Induction, thus robbing her production of Shakespeare's initial image of metamorphosis that is central to the play proper. This decision was especially surprising given Buckley's efforts to humanize the Katharina/Petruchio relationship—making it alternately boisterous and violent but also hilarious and tender—and the striking contrast that Buckley created between the Katharina/Petruchio relationship and that between Bianca and her suitors. Shad Willingham as Hortensio fell all over himself helping Bianca around the stage, and James Edmondson as a perfectly grumpy Gremio hobbled around with his cane wearing garments so many-layered and heavy that he could hardly stand straight. Sarah Butan's Bianca relished their attention, but obviously did not desire it; they were merely pawns in her game as she flaunted her sexual appeal before her drably-clothed sister, a Cinderella figure squirming in her servant's role. Buckley also stressed the central importance of clothing imagery in the play. Danforth Comins as Lucen-

tio, in a paroxysm of sudden desire for Bianca, and Jeff Cummings as Tranio spent several funny moments trying to exchange their garments, emphasizing the obvious “supposes” of the Bianca plot and setting the stage for Petruchio’s frantic assault on Padua’s fashionable tastes.

Buckley cast Petruchio and Katharina as middle-aged, resembling how Beatrice and Benedick are often staged in *Much Ado*, which is considered a later version of *Shrew*. This decision created the potential for a mature and convincing courtship, assuming of course certain difficulties within both characters can be ignored. Michael Elich brings bountiful physical and mental energy to his roles. As Petruchio, richly attired and sporting flowing locks, he darted about the stage and spoke impatiently to Baptista when he doubted Petruchio’s wish to marry Katharina. Here was a man on a mission: he came to wive it wealthily, and if wealthily, why then happily. Elich’s obvious impatience and brisk diction presented a man whose business asketh haste and who comes not every day to woo. Jeffrey King as Baptista did caution Elich about the necessity of obtaining that special thing—Katharina’s love, which he insists is “all in all,” a line that suggests, amid this raucous farce, a sense of Katharina’s emotional complexity—but Elich was perfectly serious when he asserted that obtaining Kate’s love was “nothing.” Grumio’s urging Hortensio to “let him go while the humor lasts” (1.2.106-07) seemed a perfectly apt characterization of Petruchio as he pondered Hortensio’s broken head and realized spontaneously that his ironic approach to wooing Katharina would completely surprise her.

The term “chemistry” is perhaps over-used in describing how actors interact on stage, but astonishing chemistry truly emerged between Elich’s Petruchio and Vilma Silva’s exuberant Katharina as they constantly reacted to each other’s verbal and physical energy. Petruchio, obviously confident about his wooing plan replete with ironic blazons that Katharina has *never* heard before, stood stage right, smiling smugly. Katharina, who we must remember is sent in by her father (“Or shall I send my daughter Kate to you? / I pray you do” [2.1.167-68]), entered utterly furious. She bolted on stage, raced head down to the center, glanced up, and stopped cold. The look exchanged between them told spectators everything they needed to know immediately: neither had ever seen the likes of the other before. This was love—or something remotely resembling it—at first sight; and the game was on. Petruchio spent most of their initial scene chasing Katharina around stage, all the while infuriating her with his loudly punctuated expressions of “Kate.” He relished his bawdy jokes about tongues and tails, and she smacked him hard at his insolence. His voice rose only when he threatened to cuff her if she struck again; he was obviously having too much fun to get really angry. Katharina was constantly exasperated by his wit, but, as with Beatrice who cannot resist speaking to Benedick even as she claims that nobody marks him, Katharina was obviously fascinated by Petruchio: “Where did you study all this goodly speech?” (2.1.259) was a genuine question. Katharina spat out “hanged” and tried desperately to free herself from Petruchio’s grasp as he insisted that she had been the aggressive wooer. Yet as she darted off stage, she glanced back to indicate some interest in this tempestuous man who had at least acknowledged her beauty. When told about the wedding, Baptista, like Malvolio, looked to the skies to thank Jove!

Katharina entered for her wedding in a gorgeous white gown trimmed in gold and wearing a diamond-studded necklace—fine array far from her servant's smock at the café. Buckley staged Petruchio's entrance brilliantly; in marvelous motley and—in a clever reversal of the Sampson myth—shaved bald, he entered aloft as if symbolically *above* the ceremony. His outrageous clothing, described so breathlessly by Biondello, signaled his disdain for tradition and his determination to rescue Kate from her conventional household. Yet Katharina's justifiable anger clearly signaled another side of this controversial play. At least in this scene, Katharina did not see Petruchio's quest for mutual freedom but rather his trashing of a formal ceremony for which she has presumably longed. This surely is Katharina's wish as she urges all to attend the bridal dinner despite, or possibly because of, Petruchio's having hurled the sops at the sexton in the church. Katharina's rage, which prompted her to try to slug Petruchio again, only intensified his comical insistence that he and she were beset by thieves, an obviously lunatic claim as Baptista is surely anxious to be rid of them: "Nay, let them go—a couple of quiet ones!" (3.2.240). Amid this hurly-burly lie central questions about this play. Are we witnessing a couple gradually breaking free from societal conventions? A woman's spirit being broken by a madman who woos only while the humor lasts and marries only for money? Or both? Petruchio insists that Katharina is married to him, not unto his clothes, suggesting his disdain for convention; yet the rhetorical force of Elich's "My household stuff, my field, my barn, / My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything" (3.2.231-32), while so ridiculously repetitive as perhaps to belie its sinister claims, suggests a rough possessiveness that indicates that a woman may indeed be made a fool if she has not a spirit to resist. The *tone* of Elich's "They shall go forward, Kate, at thy command," down to "Fear not, sweet wench, they shall not touch thee, Kate! / I'll buckle thee against a million" (3.2.222-239), another absurd exaggeration (what million?), suggested that Petruchio was here engaging in yet another spontaneous game, like his assertion in 2.1 that Katharina had been the aggressive wooer. But Silva's insistent rage clearly suggested that Petruchio's attempt at using play to dissuade her from her characteristic behavior² was much less playful for her than for us.

In Act Four, where the tensions evident at the end of Act Three are magnified, Buckley's staging and direction indicated that she saw this couple as moving, however tentatively, towards a mutual resolution of these tensions. Petruchio entered from the stage left vomitorium, ahead of and indifferent to Katharina in her mud-splattered wedding gown. Petruchio's servants were anxious about his return home, but his exaggerated antics with them showed that he was deliberately fashioning for Kate a mirror of pointless rage. He enjoyed throwing food, boots, and furniture around the stage, and Katharina seemed genuinely terrified. Petruchio also spoke his soliloquy "Thus have I politically begun my reign" (4.1.176ff) from above, from whence he had pronounced his bizarre theory of wedding protocol. Buckley's staging was again provocative; having Petruchio pontificate from above suggested Petruchio's "authority" in matters of shrew-taming, while in 4.3 Katharina, hungry and tired, at one point begged food from spectators, indicating that she was really suffering. This moment was *not* funny. But Petruchio's asking her, ever so softly, to say "Thank

you” for the food that he did eventually offer her was heartfelt, as if to show her, as one might a child, that “please” and “thank you” may be more powerful than anger. The scene with the beleaguered Haberdasher (see Novy’s essay on this scene) reverted to comedy; Katharina stood stage left, observing carefully, as Petruchio railed about the gown and cap, and this staging suggested that here Katharina has finally begun to understand Petruchio’s purposeful nonsense.

This realization was obvious on the road back to Padua. As Petruchio’s tone at the wedding had signaled the “play” in his diatribe about wedding customs, so here Katharina’s tone heralded her final grasp of the game being played. She sighed heavily at not realizing that the sun was the moon, and vice-versa, and flung herself on the “young budding virgin” with exaggerated rapture. Silva’s deliciously drawn out, “Pardon, old father, my mistaking eyes, / That have been so bedazzled with the sun” (4.5.44-45), complete with a winsome snarl at this “son” Petruchio, was hysterical. Spectators laughed so long and hard that the actors had to freeze for several seconds before moving on. From now on the games would be mutually entertaining. Here one realized quite powerfully the truth of Petruchio’s claim after paying the poor tailor: “’Tis the mind that makes the body rich” (4.3.168), a most un-farcical truth about human relationships that echoes his earlier “To me she’s married not unto my clothes.” The nobility’s gorgeous clothing in the opening scenes became a perfect foil to Petruchio’s insights into our tendency to judge people by their appearance. While some of Petruchio’s antics in this play are genuinely disturbing, his insight into that chestnut about the discrepancy between appearance and reality is significant, and Buckley’s staging superbly visualized that insight.

At 5.1.57-58, by which time a light rain was falling, Petruchio says to Katharina, “Prithee, Kate, let’s stand aside and see the / end of this controversy.” The controversy is the feud between the real and supposed Vincentio, the last bit in the duplicitous Bianca-Lucentio plot. Petruchio and Katharina here become a chorus to what they observe. At the end of this scene, in one of those magical moments that can happen only in live theater, Katharina asks Petruchio to “follow, to see the end of this ado” (5.1.134). Petruchio asks her to kiss him first, and Katharina objects: “What, in the midst of the street?” (5.1.135). Petruchio, pretending to ignore her modesty, playfully says he will go home again, and so Katharina agrees to his wish. This formerly warring couple stood close together, oblivious to the lightly falling rain, and kissed, creating a theatrical moment as tender as I have ever seen.³ While the rain could not have been scripted, it added immensely to the serenity of those few seconds. As they parted, spectators sighed collectively, and then applauded.

Bianca’s guests did attend her wedding feast, a long table that stretched across the stage laden with goodies that the (presumably) hungry actors devoured. Petruchio’s last game, the outrageous bid that he makes about Katharina’s obedience, was eagerly engaged by both. When Katharina actually came back on stage, Petruchio was flabbergasted; he smacked his forehead in a “Wow!” gesture and stood dumbfounded. Katharina glared at him as if to say “Now what?” While she “lectured” the froward wives, Petruchio, sensing her deliberate use of exaggeration as he had done earlier, began to chuckle. Katharina never got to her knees; on her “if he please” (much virtue in “if”) Petruchio

took her into his arms and kissed her fervently. She then pulled him off stage by the ear to the nearest bedroom.

As You Like It was far less engaging. Director J. R. Sullivan set the play in the hinterlands of 1930's America. Duke Frederick, though wearing a wide red sash suggesting royalty, was a wealthy businessman, and the opening scenes occurred mostly in Oliver's warehouse, a drab building whose interior eerily recalled Beckett's set for *Endgame*: "Bare interior. Grey light. Left and right back, high up, two small windows."⁴ The folk music in the Forest of Arden suggested Appalachian West Virginia, although Rosalind, Celia, and Touchstone had ordered their traveling clothes directly from LL Bean; Touchstone could have survived a Maine winter in his wooly getup. The play opened with a young boy playing a squeeze box and reciting lines from Shakespeare's sonnet 138: "When my love swears that she is made of truth / I do believe her, though I know she lies," an odd choice for the prologue to a festive comedy of love and forgiveness. Frederick's attendants resembled Mafia hoodlums in their heavy overcoats, cocked hats, and dark glasses; they bullied Orlando as well as Rosalind and Celia when they resisted Frederick's commands. Touchstone played the court fool in his check pants, frock coat, and black and white top hat, but his attempts at humor paled in comparison with Frederick's industrial strength tyranny. In 3.1 Oliver was interrogated and tied to a chair as Gloucester is in *Lear*. Frederick's "Well, push him out of doors" (3.1.15) as he kicked Oliver was gruesome.

The wrestling match was staged inside an actual ring in Oliver's warehouse, suggesting that Frederick and Charles, with Oliver's help, had used this method of intimidation before. The lissome Orlando, Danforth Comins, took quite a beating before defeating the much larger Todd Bjurström. Their combat spilled out of the ring, suggesting Charles's determined violence and Orlando's equal determination to survive. When Rosalind draped the chain over his neck, both were suddenly too embarrassed to speak, and Rosalind was quite sure that he had called them back before Celia ushered her off stage. It was a tender and funny moment that should have heralded an energetic courtship, but, alas, it was not to be.

Duke Senior and his cohort exuded resignation and acceptance, rather than remorse, and this tone emerged in their songs and music, including some non-Shakespearean "country tunes." Duke Senior, Jonathan Haugen, and his gentlemen exiles were not exactly roughing it; they toured the forest in wool sweaters and tweed jackets. Jaques, played by Robert Sicular, was a decidedly older gentleman in his Pendleton tweeds, carefully tucked scarf, leather gloves, touring cap and cane, leather-bound flask, and binoculars: a displaced New England gentleman determined to retain a touch of elegance. He was a genuinely somber older man, not a young courtier playing at melancholy because he thinks it fashionable. This casting choice lent considerable poignancy to his character, especially during and immediately after his Seven Ages speech. With Adam stage left and comforted by Orlando, the Duke's men stood in a semi-circle behind them. Jaques stood apart farther left, and spoke philosophically, not pompously, about the course of men's lives. By "sans everything," Jaques realized that Adam was a mirror of himself: an older man, not quite

eighty, but certainly older than the Duke's other courtiers. Jaques, overcome by this living image of his aging self and weeping, exited stage left alone as his mates walked to the stage left vomitorium. "*Et in Arcadia Ego*," indeed!⁵

The relationship between Miriam A. Laube as Rosalind and Danforth Comins as Orlando, which should have delighted thoroughly given the actors' obvious energy, was theatrically disappointing. The simplest explanation is that there was little spark (dare I venture chemistry again?) between them. Comparisons are odorous, but exactly what fueled the Katharina-Petruchio story was missing between Rosalind and Orlando, and the reasons go beyond saying that the former play is more farcical and physical while the latter is more polished and intellectual. Rosalind claims to be deeply in love, but in her Oshkosh-by-Gosh Ganymede bib overalls, short boyish hair cut, and plaid flannel shirt, Laube was almost too impish, perhaps even too androgynous. She giggled and flirted through Acts Three and Four as if afraid to reveal any real emotions. Granted Rosalind is skeptical of Orlando's immaturity, given his carving her name in trees and comparing her constantly to mythical beauties, but she seemed to enjoy the games of tease too much while failing to convey the deep desire she claims to feel. The difficulty with this couple was perhaps a result of Laube's strengths as an actor. She exhibited terrific nervous energy throughout: bouncing around the stage, flirting coquettishly, giggling constantly, gesturing wildly, touching Orlando lightly then quickly withdrawing her hands, kicking up her heels in utter delight at her clever evasions. But Orlando never showed that he understood anything of Rosalind's instruction; he was so detached throughout their love games that he seemed oblivious to everything Rosalind was trying to teach him about what it might mean to love a real woman whose emotions he could neither predict nor control. Such was not the case with Oliver and Celia, or with—mercy!—Touchstone and Audrey. Each needed his own team of horses to maintain decency in the theater.

Rather than a deity (i.e., a separate character) supposedly descending to bless the happy couples, Hymen was one of the Duke's comrades who strolled into center stage as the couples gathered around him. This staging robbed the play of one of its essential features. If we are right that Shakespeare wrote *As You Like It* to inaugurate The Globe in 1599, then the suggestion of a deity at the play's end, blessing the work of the players, is essential. Since *all* the world's a stage, and *all* the men and women merely players, Shakespeare's theater becomes a place where, if we believe, we may receive blessings. Are not such blessings what we would like to receive?

Director Bill Rauch cut Shakespeare's chorus that opens *Romeo and Juliet* and opted instead for a visual statement. The opening tableau in the Elizabethan Theatre resembled a Broadway musical and brilliantly linked the play to both its Renaissance origins and to the present day. To the right of the upper stage stood a huge cross, an emblem of both the Christian faith and the death that this play will produce. Standing were the Duke, in regal Renaissance attire, and one his deputies in a modern suit and tie. Arrayed beneath them on opposite sides of the stage were the warring families: the elder generation, in sumptuous Italian garments, stood and faced each other; the younger generation, except for Romeo and Juliet, knelt in white shirts, blazers, ties, and plaid skirts

(all identifying them as students in a prestigious prep school). County Paris stood out among these young people in his white silk suit, long slicked-back hair, and dark glasses, obviously older than, and distinctive from, the students. Center stage were two caskets, and standing behind them were Romeo and Juliet, hand in hand. Stage left and right and behind the families were two gates standing at 45 degree angles to the front of the stage. These gates were the doors of the Christian school, which the students attended (or skipped, much to the nuns' annoyance), and symbolized the larger prisons of family hatred and strict tradition that trap and finally destroy Romeo and Juliet. The school bell rang to hurry the students to class, and also to mourn the deaths at play's end. Mercutio's "A plague o' both your houses" (3.1.90) recalled Donne's "[N]ever send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee" (Meditation XVII), and also sounded death from the equally insidious plague of human hatred.

The opening tableau gave way to students rushing to school and passing an open market with wagons of fruit and bread. As the insults and hostilities increased, both boys and girls began hurling food at each other, until the stage resembled a food fight in a high school cafeteria. When the cops came, they threatened everyone with their clubs; apparently everyone in Verona was sick of these quarrels. As the feuding students entered the school gates, a scantily-clad young woman in short-shorts and halter top, listening to an I-Pod, jogged past the gates. John Tufts as Romeo gazed longingly at her. This brief scene heralded the twin forces that would drive the play: intense familial hatred and sexual passion. Amid the food scraps lay forces that neither Christian forgiveness nor human love could control.

The bond between Christine Albright as Juliet and Demetra Pittman as the Nurse was immediately apparent. The Nurse fussed lovingly with Juliet's hair as her mother questioned her about marriage, and the Nurse's delight in bawdy puns anticipated her meeting with Mercutio in 2.4, where both enjoyed the risqué rapport. The sexual energy of this production was strikingly evident in 1.4; the masquers appeared in multi-colored tights, boots, and large masks reminiscent of Star Wars and boasting the most exaggerated codpieces I have ever seen on stage. The leader of this sexually charged pack was Dan Donohue's robust Mercutio. An amazingly talented actor who dominated the stage during his scenes, Donohue played Mercutio in a Darth Vader outfit, complete with Vader's sinister mask and black cape. Donohue's Queen Mab performance was electrifying. Once he started, Donohue never stopped to breathe, and he had an individual gesture for nearly every one of Mercutio's images. On "Her wagoner a small grey-coated gnat" (2.4.67) Donohue spontaneously caught between his fingers one of the bugs that fly around the stage during all performances! Donohue darted all over the Elizabethan stage, including the cover over the stage left vomitorium, from which he finished Mercutio's speech with his voice rising on every line. Romeo's "Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace!" was an unwelcome interruption of Donohue's tremendous theatrical skill. The sheer energy of Donohue's performance showed that Mercutio is desperately seeking Romeo's approval, if not love, and emphasized how tragic is his death when Romeo interferes in his fight with Tybalt. Also evident in Donohue's performance is the risk that Rauch took by casting his most talented actor as Mercutio. With

a dominating Mercutio gone after 3.1, productions of this play can wilt if other actors do not have the skill to maintain the theatrical energy that Mercutio's role can evoke from a gifted actor.

The sudden love between Romeo and Juliet was delightfully staged. Capulet's party included the old folks pantomiming upstage to delightful Renaissance tunes, while the younger set gyrated downstage to raucous rock. Amid the swaying hips and thrusting codpieces, Romeo and Juliet suddenly found themselves alone down stage center. They froze momentarily; exchanged eyes, as Prospero says of Miranda and Ferdinand; kissed gently ("by the book") twice; and their fate was sealed. Juliet's balcony was the top of the platform from which the Duke had surveyed his warring subjects, a symbolic hint of the young lovers' ill-fated attraction. Juliet's "O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo," a speech which suffers perhaps from too much familiarity, became for Albright a fresh and impassioned inquisition into accidents of birth such as one's family name. Romeo, embodying the real fear for his safety that the events of the party have created and that actors must not forget, darted feverishly back and forth between the base of the platform and the front edge of the stage, as if only among the spectators could he find safety from the guards about whom Juliet warns him. He climbed just barely high enough on the platform to touch her hand, a very tender moment, then dashed away as more voices from within parted them. Albright and Tufts thus invigorated this familiar scene and made their love totally believable.

Romeo banged loudly at the gate of Mark Murphey's Friar Laurence, his impatience to be married another image of the sexual energy of the play. In 2.4 Mercutio appeared as a soccer coach teaching his mates who entered in their school uniforms. Mercutio was visibly angry at Romeo's absence and at his indifference to the magic of his Queen Mab speech and hinted at a latent sexual desire for him. Perhaps also frustrated at Romeo's new love, Donohue was hilarious and bold in his sexual teasing of the Nurse, who thoroughly enjoyed his fondling and lifting of her skirt and his visual joke about "prick" with her umbrella. (Here was the sexiest couple of the play! A brilliant, mature Benedick and Beatrice?) Juliet's impatience in 2.5 matched Romeo's at Friar Laurence's cell; she rubbed the Nurse's shoulders nearly off her body to hear of Romeo's marriage plans. In 3.1 Mercutio welcomed violence, embracing it with the same vigor as he delivered his Queen Mab speech. During the protracted sword fights, Mercutio seemed everywhere at once, and his death scene was another of Donohue's stellar performances. After being stabbed, Mercutio was carried stage left, where he collapsed amid pools of blood. Donohue uttered Mercutio's final lines, beginning with "I am hurt. A plague o' both your houses" (3.1.89-90), while choking on blood and with a bitterly ironic laugh. Donohue gave to Mercutio's final moments a sudden realization of the absurdity of the hatred plaguing this play, and his death was immensely moving. Romeo used the knife that had killed Mercutio to slay Tybalt, and from thence that knife would travel to the play's final scene. As Romeo ran, police sealed off the crime scene with yellow tape, and reporters entered to record yet another stabbing in Verona.

Shakespeare structures the play so that Mercutio's psychic and sexual energy is assumed by Juliet in her speech opening 3.2, "Gallop apace, you

fiery-footed steeds." While Donohue was clearly the most powerful actor of this production, Albright's Juliet was genuinely passionate, and the verbal energy of this speech, as she looked desperately into the audience from the upper stage hoping to find Romeo, only heightened her terror at the Nurse's news about Tybalt's death and Romeo's banishment. As with the balcony scene, here Juliet conveyed convincingly her conflicting emotions: "Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?" (3.2.97). Rauch staged 3.2 and 3.3 simultaneously, with Juliet and the Nurse above and Romeo and Friar Laurence below. This staging emphasized how rapidly events conspire to mock the lovers' plans. Rauch then staged scenes 3, 4, and 5 in rapid succession, suggesting again how quickly events now occur. Above, Capulet, his wife, and Paris discussed Juliet's marriage, while from below the stage, on Capulet's "Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed; / Prepare her, wife, against this wedding day," (3.4.31-32), the lovers' bed rose to occupy the place of the caskets in the opening tableau. As they awaited the dawn, their cuddling beneath the wedding sheets was wonderfully tender.

Capulet raged at Juliet's refusal to marry County Paris, kicking pillows and bedding all over the stage, thus mutilating the place where the lovers had consummated their marriage. Lady Capulet stood by, stunned at his anger, and abandoned Juliet as she exited quickly on "I have done with thee" (3.5.205). Clearly her marriage and patriarchal order meant more to her than her daughter. At Friar Laurence's cell in 4.1 Juliet was resolute in her wish to die as she brandished a knife, and Mark Murphey as the Friar superbly conveyed his frantic plan to save her and her marriage. Richard Howard doubled as Capulet and the Apothecary, an intriguing choice that suggested that Juliet's father, in his inability to quell the hatred between the families, was indirectly responsible for Romeo's buying the fatal potion.

The darkness of the outdoor theater—by now nearly midnight—eerily evoked a real graveyard. Amid the darkness Juliet emerged from below on a brick slab surrounded by several large candles. The "tomb" was simply the stage itself. Because of the natural darkness, characters entered from and exited into unseen places, visible only when they came near the candles bordering the bier. Romeo was mad with grief, frantic to be alone again with his Juliet and lie with her, even in death. He killed Paris with the knife he had used to kill Tybalt, as that fatal weapon made its way towards the lovers' doom. Romeo's speech beginning "How oft when men are at the point of death / Have they been merry, which their keepers call / A lightening before death!" (5.3.88-90) was Tufts's finest moment. Romeo's imagery here anticipates Othello gazing upon Desdemona and exclaiming "My wife, my wife," only to realize that he has no wife. Here, Romeo also speaks of a wife he thinks dead and utters maddening contradictions: "O my love, my wife! / Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath, / Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty."; "Ah, dear Juliet, / Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe / That unsubstantial Death is amorous, / And that the lean abhorred monster keeps / Thee here in dark to be his paramour?" (5.3.91-93; 101-05). In this speech Tufts moved far beyond the emotionally immature teenager he had been earlier in the play. Dying upon a kiss, he lay again with his wife for several seconds in the hushed theater.

Friar Laurence crept furtively into the graveyard and when Juliet refused

to leave with him he exited quickly into the darkness, an apt symbol for his ambiguous actions. His sulking away paralleled the Nurse's terrified exit from Juliet's side in 3.5 after she hopes she has convinced Juliet to marry County Paris. Juliet's final kiss, hardly by the book, left no doubt that she could not live without her Romeo. As she thrust Romeo's fatal dagger into her body, her blood stained their white garments, symbolically linking them in death. She fell into his outstretched arms and grasped his hand one last time. Church bells tolled yet another death as Capulet and Montague walked towards the dead lovers, their reconciliation much too late.

The highlight of the festival was Libby Appel's *The Tempest*. She teamed with scenic designer William Bloodgood to stage a brilliantly imaginative version on the Elizabethan Stage. Prospero's primitive island evoked Stonehenge. Nine huge pillars stood in a rough arc at the back of the stage and two smaller ones stood closer to center stage. Heavy ropes that the victims of the shipwreck would grab during the storm and that the deities would grasp in 4.1 hung from the upper stage. Center stage was a small stand on which lay Prospero's book; when he opened it, a thunderous storm began the play. As with *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, here the nobility wore sumptuous clothing to locate this play firmly in the late Italian Renaissance.

Appel's conceptions of Prospero, Caliban, and Ariel, and her casting of these three characters, created a fascinating and emotionally complex production. As Prospero, Derrick Lee Weeden, who is physically powerful and possesses an amazingly sonorous voice, was a dominating, forceful, and angry magician, yet at times a wonderfully tender and vulnerable father. Dressed alternately in rugged, torn clothing or his diaphanous, parti-colored magical gown and bearing his staff, he thundered around the stage as he ordered Caliban and Ariel about, and raged at his enemies' perfidy and cruelty or at Caliban's "foul conspiracy" against his life. Yet in his long opening narrative in 1.1, he was genuinely tender with Miranda, eager that she should know her history and what lies before her, including the dangerous humanity that is, as he warns her later, "new to thee." He nurtured Miranda's relationship with Ferdinand, and though harsh with him at times, Weeden's soft tones showed that he cared deeply for them, a loving father aware that he could do only so much to assure his daughter's happiness. Prospero's "fair encounter / Of two most rare affections" (3.1.75-76), lines spoken as he watches Miranda weep, produced a truly lovely moment.

Neither Caliban nor Ariel is "human" in the play, yet obviously each must be played by a human being, thus creating a fascinating challenge to spectators' ability to suspend their disbelief. Dan Donohue was so compelling as Caliban, at times so "human," that I sensed early on a danger that I would become sympathetic towards him at several moments. Donohue was covered in grotesque, scale-like, peeling skin and wore a skull cap covered in weeds or perhaps algae. He was also bound all over his body by heavy ropes in rectangular patterns suggesting prison bars, indicating his physical imprisonment by Prospero. Caliban's face was reddish and his eyes bloodshot, suggesting physical abuse or a strange, untended illness. Donohue's verbal agility, so evident in his terrific performance of Mercutio, irresistibly demanded attention whenever he spoke

of his enslavement on the island that once was his. Donohue evoked considerable pity when he spoke of the beauties of the isle and of his mother, and hearing his voice resonate throughout the theater one was surely glad that he had learned Prospero's language, even though Caliban may claim to hate it. Donohue created a complex Caliban whose appearance was bestial enough to suggest an animal lust for Miranda yet sufficiently "human" to suffer mental as well as physical torture. He also compelled us, perhaps against our will, to sympathize with a creature struggling to understand how and by what force its world had been destroyed and ropes thrown around his body.⁶

Equally complex a "character" was Nancy Rodriguez's Ariel. Early in 5.1 Ariel must say to Prospero that were he to see the effects of his charms on old Gonzalo, Prospero's "affections" would "become tender." Prospero asks "Dost thou think so, spirit," and Ariel answers "Mine would, sir, were I human" (17-20). Rodriguez's Ariel certainly resembled a magic spirit, but she was also decidedly human. For most of the play she wore a tan halter top and light blue pants bearing cloud patterns, symbolizing her "airiness," while her bare midriff indicated the attractive young woman "playing" her role. Her spirit nature was indicated by a headdress adorned with long, multi-colored streamers that flew behind her as she implemented Prospero's orders. Face paintings in red and blue echoed the colors of her streamers, and suggested perhaps an ancient Egyptian deity. She was accompanied throughout the play by five "Shadows" in brown and blue cloud-patterned capes who aided her in her complex tasks and often appeared with her on the upper stage. As Rodriguez explained in a discussion after the play, Appel wanted the relationship between Prospero and Ariel to deepen throughout the play *as if they were both human*. Given the physical attractiveness of Weeden and Rodriguez, and their intense interaction in the play, this deepening relationship became increasingly evident and was clear by 5.1. In addition to Ariel's remark to Prospero about his and her "affections," after Ariel entered at line 217 with the Boatswain and Master, she stood next to Prospero whose "My tricky spirit" (5.1.228) was warmly affectionate. Then, as Prospero spoke his aside to Ariel, "Bravely, my diligence. Thou shalt be free" (5.1.243), she kissed him as tenderly as one human could another on "free." Suddenly, they became parting lovers. Besides embodying the obvious physicality of these two sexually attractive actors on the stage, their kiss also suggested the power of Prospero's magic to instill affection in an airy spirit who, perhaps, longs—for this moment—to be "human."

Weeden, Donohue, and Rodriguez were supported by an excellent cast. John Tufts as Ferdinand and Nell Geisslinger as Miranda fell in love as joyously and spontaneously as any Romeo and Juliet and were thoroughly delightful: a new Adam and Eve creating the world anew on this barren isle. Appel created another intriguing sexual complication in the play by casting Greta Oglesby as the seductive Antonia, who caressed Tyrone Wilson's Sebastian as she urged him towards regicide. Evil in this play knew no gender boundaries, a fact that Miranda obviously had to learn. James Edmondson was properly oblivious to others as he rambled on about utopias and miraculously dry clothing, as Alonso Armando Duran's grief and bewilderment were among the most touching moments in the play. Christopher DuVal as Trinculo and Michael Hume as

Stephano were hilarious drunks who used coconut shells for the wine that they spilled all over Caliban and the stage. DuVal has perfected a dead-pan delivery which he used hilariously in 2.2 in his drunken monologue about strange fish in England. Their rapid intoxication of Caliban was all the more sinister given Donohue's earlier, painful narration of his captivity. If in this production Caliban represented humanity's beastliness, a thing of darkness we must all acknowledge as our own, then Stephano's and Trinculo's obvious pleasure at his drunkenness implicated us all in their murderous plots. Whether clothed in Renaissance regalia or wine-splashed motley, human evil in this production stood out starkly against the primitive set, suggesting the ancient origins of our murderous nature. We are all such strange fish.

Prospero's journey towards his enemies was theatrically marvelous. The initial storm of fierce thunder and streaking lightning engulfed the entire theater as the ship's passengers swung desperately from the ropes above. Ariel, as befitting a spirit, worked magic from above. Attired in a cape, she sang to Ferdinand of sea changes as music drifted over the stage in 1.2 and directed her Shadows in Prospero's vision in 4.1. For 3.3 she became a harpy with huge black wings, condemning the traitors from the upper stage as she commanded her Shadows to carry in the banquet and then suddenly descend with it into the bowels of the stage. Prospero's vision in 4.1 was a brilliant combination of theatrical technology and the simple darkness of the night. The goddesses appeared standing above against a starry sky or hanging from the ropes so that they seemed to have descended from distant stars. This effect was heightened by the darkness and by the spotlights on Miranda and Ferdinand sitting below, as if, on this primitive island, magical light had emanated from the sky, rather than from computer-regulated spotlights. The theatrical magic of this scene explained why Miranda says she has never before seen her father so angry. Weeden alternated between obvious joy in his powers as he stood stage right watching his magic and angry despair at the continuing conspiracy of Caliban and company, as if not even the highest reaches of his art could quell such evil. Prospero's following "You do look, my son, in a moved sort" (4.1.146), often taken to be Shakespeare's farewell to his own theatrical magic, was both a lecture in human mortality and a passionate meditation. On "We are such stuff / as dreams are made on, and our little life / Is rounded with a sleep" (4.1.156-58) Weeden turned from his charges to address us all, his island become our theater where we are all merely players. Like Jaques in this season's *As You Like It*, Prospero knew too well how little is our life.

After getting completely sloshed and thoroughly entangled in the ragged motley provided by Ariel, Stephano and his court disappeared through the trap door into hell. Prospero's final encounter with the royal court was more direct. Wearing now a gorgeous golden cape, Prospero gathered them all into a circle where they were bound by ropes, perhaps suggesting the cords binding Caliban to his own peculiar evil. After Ariel's tender, "Mine would, sir, were I human" (5.1.20), Prospero relented to his "nobler reason" (5.1.26), and his farewell to his "most potent art" (5.1.51) was extremely moving. He reveled in the catalog of his art, yet ironically the more he recalled it the greater the difficulty of relinquishing it, a paradox that Weeden's powerful and carefully modulated voice

conveyed brilliantly. Again as Milan, Weeden loosened the ropes, embraced Gonzalo, offered his hand to Sebastian, and finally forgave Antonia. Antonia glared at him, and then moved stage right, where she remained, aloof and unrepentant. Having drowned his book and broken his staff, Prospero could do no more; hence his warning to Miranda about the “brave new world” she is about to enter. Prospero’s final moment with Caliban was far different; with his shackles now off, Caliban moved towards Prospero’s cell to tidy up for the visitors, and Prospero touched his scalp lightly as he passed. Caliban’s pledge to be wise hereafter and seek for grace suggested change, perhaps redemption for this thing of darkness, as if humanity really could be cured of its baser nature. Significantly perhaps, Caliban exited stage left, directly opposite Antonia standing defiantly stage right.

Having kissed Ariel goodbye moments before and abandoned his magic, Prospero, suddenly alone, turned towards us to speak the epilogue. Weeden’s eloquence convinced us that his art, and Shakespeare’s, was and is a form of love, and as such deserves prayer and mercy. As he had shown us in his theater the beauty of that rarer action, we gratefully set him, like his beloved Ariel, free.

Notes

1. 2.1.31. All textual references are to *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 4th ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).
2. On the play element in the Petruchio-Katharina relationship, see Marianne Novy, “Patriarchy and Play in *The Taming of the Shrew*,” *Love’s Argument: Gender Relations in Shakespeare*. (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 45-62.
3. Readers familiar with the recent (1999) Penguin paperback edition of Graham Greene’s novel *The End of the Affair* will recall from the cover the image from the film of the lovers kissing in the rain. This image came immediately to mind as Petruchio and Katharina kissed.
4. Samuel Beckett, *Endgame* (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 1.
5. On the theme of mortality in *As You Like It*, with special reference to Nicolas Poussin’s paintings of the *Et in Arcadia Ego* theme, see Anne Barton, “‘As You Like It’ and ‘Twelfth Night’: Shakespeare’s Sense of an Ending,” *Shakespearean Comedy Stratford-Upon-Avon-Studies* 14. Eds. Malcolm Bradbury and David Palmer (London: Edward Arnold, 1972), 160-80.
6. Ms. Joan Spence, one of the students in my 2007 Ashland course, was moved by Donohue’s emotionally complex Caliban to ask several questions about the character in her written response to the production. What is it like to struggle to be human? What does it mean to be human? What happens to a people when their way of life is destroyed and they don’t have the skills/background/innate ability to cope with, or are not welcome to be assimilated into, the colonizer’s culture? How much of the ability to long for and strive for something better is contained within the acquisition of language and the gift of images? Ms. Spence was obviously affected by the strength of Donohue’s performance, and saw Caliban as the victim of a colonizing invasion regardless of Donohue’s white skin. She thus raises a central point about the actor playing Caliban, who does not have to belong to a recognizable racial minority to portray Caliban as the victim of brutal invaders. The potency of Donohue’s acting clearly created a Caliban who could represent humanity’s baser nature (“This thing of darkness”), while simultaneously portraying the plight of subject peoples anywhere in the world, whether in the sixteenth or the twenty-first century.

*MEASURE FOR MEASURE AT THE 2007 IDAHO SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL;
OR, AS THE DIRECTOR LIKES IT*

Mark Robert Dodd, Idaho State University

Hence shall we see
If power change purpose, what our seemers be.¹

Vincentio, the Duke of Vienna, enters the stage. Casually but snappily dressed in tailored slacks and silken shirt, his shirt buttoned only to mid-chest exposing just a bit of manly hair, he is almost ready for his journey. As he finishes his dressing, he bids farewell to Escalus and Angelo—pulling up to button his pants—and exits as if ready for a gentleman's *wanderjahr*, masked by stylish sunglasses. For someone like me familiar with Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, the scene establishes a Duke ready to "abdicate" his authority to Angelo—an authority symbolized by the medallion that frames his manly chest. For someone in the audience who is not familiar with the play, common considering that *Measure* is not one of Shakespeare's widely known plays, the entrance immediately places the play in a contemporary setting—Shakespeare in today's world.

Such contemporary perspectives have been an integral part of the productions directed by Risa Brainin at the Idaho Shakespeare Festival (ISF).² The Festival, located in Boise, Idaho, is now in its thirty-second year, the eleventh in its current amphitheater. The amphitheater is the most wide-open summer festival stage I have ever attended and I have been to Stratford, Ontario; Ashland, Oregon; and Cedar City, Utah. The theater has no walls, the light posts are fully visible, and although the stage itself creates a partial wall, from which the actors exit and enter, and perform in front of and behind, one sees through the wide center of the stage to the surrounding hills. Only the auditorium-style seating as it slants away from the stage establishes any enclosing structure. All of this creates a very flexible atmosphere for outdoor festival theater and allows for a variety of interpretations of Shakespeare's plays.

Measure for Measure is the third production for ISF Brainin has directed, and the third to use contemporary imagery.³ Three years previous she directed an impressive *Julius Caesar* and the next year an even more effective *King Lear*. In *Julius Caesar*, for example, during the battle scenes late in the play, the actors surrounding Brutus carried laptop computers, "connecting" online to the battle and their warriors. By giving *Measure* a twenty-first-century setting, she related it to the audience and contributed to the audience's repeated delight in many of the play's jokes, puns, and eroticisms. However, in *Measure for Measure*, Brainin went beyond mere imagery to develop a powerful portrait of the intrusiveness and abuses of authoritarian control by describing the per-

vasiveness of such control in modern society. Such modernization, if it is successful, can make Shakespeare up-to-date for an audience, but if it clashes too much with Shakespeare's English, or even worse if it trivializes the play, it may reflect only a director's desire to impose her own ideas and values on the play.

The moral ambiguity of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* can be exemplified in the characters of Escalus and the Provost. Both exercise authority and both are instruments of authority. Both also have personal knowledge of the events, for instance, surrounding the execution of Claudio. Most importantly, both express their distaste for Angelo's decision to execute Claudio. Escalus says, "This gentleman, / Whom I would save" (2.1.6-7) and the Provost hopes there will be "some pardon or reprieve/ For the most gentle Claudio" (4.2.69-70). But both have no effect upon the execution of Angelo's power. Escalus (Steve Tague) was brilliantly befuddled and inept throughout ISF's performance and the perplexed Provost (Joe Conley Golden) did nothing until the Duke revealed himself and directly countermanded Angelo's order, but even then the Provost was merely following the Duke's higher command. Neither Escalus nor the Provost lets his moral misgivings interfere with the absolutism of authority.

The costumes immediately dressed this contemporary milieu.⁴ In the opening scene, the business suits of Angelo (Andrew May) and Escalus contrasted effectively with the casually stylish clothing of the soon-to-depart Duke. When the Duke (Richard Klautsch) returned, he was also dressed very dapper—but here a distinguished gentleman about town—garbed as if returning from a refreshing vacation, his coat for example slung over the shoulders, and certainly as an attractive catch for a young woman, suggesting he already had Isabella in his mind. Contrastingly, Lucio (David Anthony Smith) was dressed as a street-flashy hipster, sunglasses and long hair, sucker in mouth.⁵ The contemporary street motifs also dressed Mistress Overdone (Lynn Allison)—she was laid out in bustier, skin-tight pants, and stiletto-heeled boots—and her partner Pompey (M. A. Taylor), pictured as a complete-with-bling pimp. I did find one fault with the costuming: the contemporary dress of the secular characters clashed strongly with the very traditional costuming of the religious. The costuming of the Friar (Tom Willmorth), the convent Nun (Laura Perrotta), and Isabella (Kathryn Cherasaro) herself were much less contemporary than their secular counterparts. Isabella was costumed as a novice throughout the show. Such costuming may have made these religious more distinct, even purer, but it also made them distant, a distance amplified, unfortunately, by the image of an Isabella almost perpetually with hands held out in prayer—as much icon as character.

Another contemporary image was the use of two-wheeled, moving-van hand carts to convey prisoners. It made entrances and exits swift but also suggested that the prisoners were mere property. The image was first developed as a scene change device between the first and second scenes of the play: after a tableau showing Claudio (Jeffrey C. Hawkins) and Juliet (Laura Welsh)



***Measure for Measure*: David Anthony Smith (as Lucio) and Mark Anthony Taylor (as Pompey), both members of the Actor's Equity Association. Photo by Troy Maben.**

embracing, Claudio was tied to a hand cart and wheeled off to prison. In 3.2, Pompey was rolled in on such a handcart—a very effective image in light of Lucio's greeting, "How now, noble Pompey! What at the wheels of Caesar" (42-3). Pompey indeed was at the wheels of Caesar, at the wheels of Vienna authority. The image thus not only effectively developed the theme of authoritarianism, but it also brought Shakespeare's language alive, even if many audience members would not have understood the reference to Pompey. The image was also flexible enough to make fun of the authoritarian motif: in his first entrance, to great comic effect, Barnardine (Dan Alan Peterson) arrived on a hand cart, propelling himself like a child on a little red wagon; it showed quite effectively his freedom of movement in the prison but also how molded he had

become to prison. The prop could also demonstrate a character's psychological make-up. In the final scene, after his guilt is proven, Angelo strapped himself to the cart, imprisoning himself, either as an honest moment of remorse or at least a public display of it.⁶

The most effective evidence that ISF's *Measure for Measure* is set in today's electronic age is that the characters carried Blackberries and cell phones. Lucio, for example, conveyed information about the Duke's supposed journeys because he was able to pull it up on his Blackberry. He used his internet connection to inform the Duke (disguised as the Friar) of his [the Duke's] own "travels": "Some say he is with the emperor of Russia" (3.2.85). Lucio also used his Blackberry to snap a picture of Mariana at her unveiling in the final scene. More chillingly, his Blackberry showed Isabella confirmation that her brother had been scheduled for execution (1.4.73-4).

The repeated use of cell phones created a world in which intrusions occur at any moment. In 2.1, as Angelo dressed in his judicial robes, his cell phone rang. He looked at the phone, but he didn't answer it. Angelo's phone also rang, just after his speech "'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus / Another thing to fall" and his condemnation of Claudio, "let him be prepar'd / For that's the utmost of his pilgrimage" (2.1.35-36). While Escalus was interrogating Pompey and Froth (Tom Willmorth), Angelo's phone rang again, interrupting one of Escalus' pompous speeches to the delight of the audience. Again Angelo looked at the phone, again he didn't answer, but he did decide to dress Escalus in the robes and step aside. Angelo's cell phone also rang as he entered the stage before his first encounter with Isabella. He was reading a law book as he entered and appeared very disturbed at the call.

Over the course of the play, the inclusion of these cell phones particularly allowed Brainin to give subtle information about Angelo's character, contributing for example to the exposure of his mendacity. In 5.1, replying to the Duke's "Know you this woman," Angelo, although acknowledging that he had known Mariana five years ago and that "there was some speech of marriage" between them, says, "Since which time of five years / I never spake with her, saw her, nor heard from her, / Upon my faith and honor" (5.1.212, 221-23).⁷ Mariana (Laura Perrotta) immediately refuted this denial by simply touching a speed dial on her cell phone, which then, much to Angelo's chagrin, rang the phone in his pocket. The audience's laughter was immediate. It was a very clever device to embarrass Angelo.

The image of Mariana's cell phone had been introduced at her first entrance (4.1, in this production just after the intermission). Mariana is dialing the phone as she enters, accompanied by the sound of the number tones, but the call goes unanswered. She dials a second time, singing "Take o take those lips away" (4.1.1) to the "tune" of the number—again an unanswered call. Attentive audience members, during the final scene of the play, thus, realized she had been calling Angelo in the earlier scene and might also have realized why his cell phone had been ringing so often in the first part of the play and even more why he had not answered. At the time of those scenes, one might have thought



***Measure for Measure*: Andrew May (as Angelo) and Laura Perrotta (as Mariana), both members of the Actor's Equity Association. Photo by Troy Maben.**

he merely had not wanted to interrupt the proceedings. Instead, the image reflected both his hypocrisy and his fear. Earlier, Escalus had challenged Angelo about his decision to condemn Claudio: “Whether you had not sometime in you life / Err’d in this point, which now you censure him, And pull’d the law upon you” (2.1.13-15), and Angelo had replied, “‘Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus / Another thing to fall” and that justice cannot be denied because “thieves do pass on thieves? ‘Tis very pregnant, / The jewel that we find, we stoop and take’t, / Because we see it; but what we do not see, We tread upon, and never think of it” (2.1.23-26).⁸ Thus, by the end of play, the cell phone made clear that Mariana was the jewel he had stooped to take, and then no longer seeing, tread upon. At the same time, his hypocritical condemnation of Claudio was also made manifest—Angelo too had fallen.

One of the difficulties in *Measure for Measure* is for a modern audience to bridge successfully two divergent elements of the play—the vulgar, erotic elements and the serious elements of Christian morality, with its theme of forgiveness and redemption. ISF succeeded very well with the vulgar, erotic aspect. The contemporary setting and costumes worked in concord here in depicting today’s urban streets, and the characters made Shakespeare’s language the speech of those streets. The production was very successful, for example, in making clear the play’s numerous sexual puns. Although such language was set up in the first meeting between Pompey and Overdone, pimp and prostitute, its success was even more effective in other moments in the play. Lucio’s

"Hail Virgin [a noticeable pause] if you be" was greeted by loud laughter in the audience. The pause created the question as to whether there were any virgins left in Vienna. Similarly Lucio paused in the middle of "your brother and his lover [pause] have embrac'd," making *embrac'd* sexual understatement—the reaction from the audience indicated a clear awareness of what Lucio meant. Another sign of the success of the performance in enlightening its audience of the sexual nature of the language occurred upon Isabella's return to discover what Angelo has decided about Claudio. In answer to Angelo's, "How now, fair maid?" Isabella says, "I am come to know your pleasure" (2.4.31). Once again the audience was fully aware of the sexual double entendre—whether or not they understood all of "come," "know," and "pleasure."

However, ISF's success with the second element—the theme of forgiveness and redemption—was more problematic, even as it was modern. Any evaluation of *Measure for Measure* today must take into consideration the play's mechanical conclusion, the multiple dénouements and, especially, the "decision" of Isabella to accept or reject the Duke's marriage proposal. Traditionally, the play's endorsement of forgiveness relies on these multiple endings, in which characters, like Angelo, feel safe but are then reversed. Even more, it relies on Isabella's forgiveness of Angelo before she knows that Claudio is alive—another reversal. The sincerity of her forgiveness depends on her not knowing. These dénouements allow Isabella, in the words of the Bevington editors, to give her "gift" to Mariana. They take a traditional view of what constitutes the play's success:

With its apparently unsuitable marriages and its improbable plotting, *Measure for Measure* does end by dealing directly with the problems of human nature confronted in the earlier scenes. The bed trick (switching Mariana for Isabella) may seem a legalistic and contrived way to bring Angelo to terms with his own carnality, but it is instructive, not only to him, but also to Isabella; she, like Angelo must learn to accept the realities of the human condition. By helping Mariana to achieve her legitimate desire to couple and marry, Isabella sees into her own need. Her begging for Angelo's life is not merely an act of forgiveness to an enemy; it is a gift of continued marriage to Mariana. This realization helps to prepare Isabella herself for a marriage life that, although dramatically surprising on stage (and even rejected by her in some modern productions), may be intended to demonstrate her having given up the cloistered life for all that marriage signifies.... The play celebrates the *felix culpa* of human nature.... The formal and substantive emphasis on marriage stresses not just the benefits of remorse and humility but also the real possibility of psychic and spiritual growth: Isabella can acknowledge that she is a woman, Angelo can be genuinely freed from repression, and Claudio can value life more intensely because he has confronted death.⁹

This traditional ending of the play, with the marriage of multiple couples who are not necessarily made for each other, resolves the play's moral ambiguities into a theme of forgiveness even as it also emphasizes that the "safe" solution for human licentiousness is for society to contain it through marriage. Certainly, Isabella strongly adds to this resolution through both her forgiveness and through her commitment. However, in ISF's production, any resolution of this "gift" was undercut both by the lack of *any* sign of affection by Angelo to Mariana and by the fact that their marriage occurred upstage behind the stage's panels.¹⁰ Such staging also damaged any "freed[om] from repression" for Angelo (he was still hiding his feelings), and by distancing Isabella's gift, the element of forgiveness was weakened.

Modern productions of the play have frequently opted out from the conclusion that the Bevington editors argued for by deciding not to have Isabella and the Duke marry. Such productions presumably have desired an ending in keeping with contemporary values that a woman doesn't have to marry in order to resolve the play into a "happy ending." Shakespeare's *Isabella* is notoriously silent on the issue of her and the Duke's marriage. Nevertheless, on Shakespeare's stage it seems likely that Isabella would have taken the Duke's hand and in pairs with Angelo/Mariana and Claudio/Juliet exited together: the Duke says, "So bring us to our palaces, where we'll show / What's yet behind that's meet you all should know" (5.1.535-36); the Arden editor notes, "A processional exit in pairs seems to be indicated by the dialogue" (note: S. D. *exeunt omnes*). The modernist response, however, has frequently been for Isabella to reject, and indeed ISF's production has Isabella remain unresponsive to the Duke's "Give me your hand and say you will be mine. He is my brother too" (5.1.490-91), which left the Duke little more to do but be nervous and to draw out his "but fitter time for that" (491), a lame attempt at a joke even if it is fitting to make the Duke feel awkward about his own responsibility for everyone's suffering. However, Isabella's exit at the Duke's "What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine" also emphasized Isabella's own coldness (in an earlier word from Lucio, see 2.2.45), and the Duke's subsequent even more dragged out "So—bring us to our palace" (534, 535) was completely unbelievable. No one, especially a Duke, would react so implausibly. If Shakespeare had intended this effect, he would certainly have written something more dramatic.

Even so, one must admit, the decision to have Isabella exit without accepting the Duke's proposal does not directly undercut Shakespeare's text because Isabella is given no explicit answer to the Duke. Isabella's exit does make for a powerful action, albeit an action without words. However, if Isabella rejects the Duke, since silence and a stoic exit are certainly not the traditional focus of Christian forgiveness, what does it make of Shakespeare's play?

One interpretation is that the action implies a rebuke of the Duke by Isabella. She forgives Angelo but does not forgive the Duke—although I suppose it is possible to interpret the exit as one of "silence means consent." The Duke's actions have manipulated a happy, moral ending but at the cost of great suffering by others since the Duke could have stepped in much earlier.

Claudio sincerely believes he will die, and Juliet and Isabella both believe he has, but apparently to the Duke they should because such a moral catharsis will be good for them. ISF's director intensified such a rebuke of the Duke in at least one specific way. The Duke's return was done in contemporary media style, numerous public photos, but ones that were strikingly shown to be mere photo ops. These ops, directed by the Duke's attendant, contradicted Shakespeare's initial portrait of the Duke: earlier he had said, "I love the people, / But do not like to stage me to their eyes" (1.1.67-8), but the Duke's participation in the photo ops showed him willing to do such staging. One of the photo ops portrayed the Duke and Barnardine, whom the Duke has pardoned; one could imagine the picture spread across the internet, with its portrait of a benevolent ruler who had returned from his journey to save the day. But with a big grin and the Duke's leaning into the camera, he didn't just permit such photos, he mugged for them. This new Duke could reflect a man changed by his experiences as the Friar in the prison—a Duke more mature to his public responsibilities—and also changed by his interaction with Isabella: he will soon propose to her. Neither of these is negative, but the ops were also intentionally phony. Perhaps the Duke has learned that he must play the game if the abuses he had witnessed were to be prevented, but he has also become less than a sincere figure.¹¹

Another possibility is that Isabella could be deciding merely to go back to the convent, which was her original desire, but then the play's message is that the experiences she has had in the world have only reinforced her decision to withdraw from it. The opening of the play makes clear in *Measure's* world the convent would exclude her from contact: the Nun says, "When you have vow'd, you must not speak with men / But in the presence of the prioress; / Then if you speak, you must not show your face; / Or if you show your face, you must not speak" (1.4.10-13). Such an ending is a legitimate decision on Isabella's part, but it excludes the kind of self-awareness that the Bevington editors considered important to the play's resolution, and to exit without informing anyone of that decision seems at best rude. Such an action on Isabella's part is undoubtedly modern; it creates ambiguity even though such ambiguity is probably not to the taste even of modern audiences. Thus, whether Isabella is rebuking the Duke by rejecting him, or is returning to the convent by her own choice, the modern ending creates a legitimate, perhaps even richer, interpretation, even if a darker one. Unfortunately, since she doesn't speak, one cannot know for sure why Isabella leaves the stage.

The modernist ending of Isabella's exit also complicates *her* character because were it not for the Duke's plotting, she either would have had to allow her brother to die or to lose her virginity to Angelo: "That I should do what I abhor to name; / Or else thou diest tomorrow" (3.1.100-02). Isabella clearly makes her choice: Claudio pleads, "Sweet sister, let me live" (3.1.133) and Isabella rebukes him as well, "'Tis best thou diest quickly" (3.1.150). Although there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Isabella's beliefs, there is also little doubt that were Claudio actually to die, some (probably many) in the audience

would have been left with a negative feeling toward Isabella. They might, indeed, have found her as “cold” as Lucio earlier claimed. That Isabella merely walks off the stage with no word to the Duke who has saved her brother’s life may be strong but it is again also rude. Isabella’s hardness, therefore, creates moral ambiguity in her, too, modified in both her and the Duke if the two marry. For Bernard Shaw, such moral mixtures in character were the essence of true comedy as opposed to what he called “the melodrama with a happy ending.”¹² In a letter to William S. Douglas, Shaw wrote,

I think you find, on reflection, that the characteristic which differentiates a melodrama with a happy ending from true comedy consists in the substitution for genuine human characters of figures which are mere stalking-horses for our likes and dislikes. However exquisite may be the art with which such figures are made to resemble real people, they always betray themselves by the artificiality of the assortment of their qualities. The hero and heroine have no disagreeable qualities: the villain no agreeable ones. If, from this point of view, you will make a careful comparison of, say, *Measure for Measure*...with *As You Like It*, you will see that *As You Like It* is a melodrama. The fact that you may happen to prefer it is probably an additional proof of the truth of the distinction. Whenever you find that a play gives you unmixed delight, you may depend on it it is flattering you.¹³

But Brainin apparently was not willing to have only the modern ending along with its moral ambiguity because she made an additional statement. She decided to depart even further from Shakespeare’s text than the mere adding of an exit, and by doing so, I will argue, she undercut the very message she had tried to achieve and, in many respects, had achieved, and, as a result, she fell into Shaw’s notion of flattery. She had up to this point displayed the futility of individual action under authoritarian control—Isabella’s exit for all its dramatic power does nothing to alter that control—but in the end Brainin wasn’t able to accept the hard reality she had created. Her idea about control had been developed most explicitly by the darkest and most disturbing contemporary image of ISF’s entire production: the presence of numerous video cameras on the stage’s panels. No matter what scene the characters set, unknown observers were watching them. These cameras were emblematic of the ever-present spying of modern society, and it is hard not to feel that Brainin was referring specifically to the post-9/11 world.

The cameras first appeared in the scenes just after the Duke’s abdication, imaging the extent and scope of Angelo’s transformation of Vienna. Claudio’s imprisonment occurs at the moment of this transformation, implying that such spying was in part responsible for his arrest. In the interrogation scene by Escalus of Pompey and Froth (2.1), Froth’s awareness of these cameras’ being ever-present is shown at his exit; Froth goes up to the camera and talks directly to it: “I thank your worship. For my own part, I never come into any room in a

tap-house, but I am drawn in" (2.1.205-7). He exhibited the nervous tension of someone hyper-conscious of constant observation. The cameras are so present that people talk to them. The audience found Froth's exit comic, perhaps with the humor of discomfort. Throughout the production, Vienna's guards re-focused the cameras so that they pointedly observed the characters. They seemed, for example, to surround the prisoners. The image was amplified by the show's lighting, which at times shined from the stage into the audience—in that sense, the audience itself became, like the characters, the observed.

Admittedly, the speed at which we are to assume the ever-present cameras have become integral to Vienna's culture is not realistic, but the image was very effective in stage-time. The image was even flexible enough to reflect defiance: in the prison scene, for instance, Barnardine gives a camera the finger as he exits and, yes, the audience laughed. But more importantly, it could be sinister. At the opening of the second of the two Angelo/Isabella scenes (2.4), Angelo pointedly turns off the cameras one by one. (Interestingly, although perhaps contradictorily, the leaders themselves are under constant although voluntary surveillance). He wants no record of his behavior when he begins his proposition to Isabella: if she will sleep with him, then she can exempt her brother Claudio from execution. The only apparent casualness of this scene is established by Angelo's dressing in a smoking jacket and by the presence of a wine bucket from which he pours himself a glass of wine while he demands that Isabella "lay down the treasures of [her] body" (2.4.96). When Isabella threatens Angelo, "I'll tell the world / What man thou art" (2.4.152-3), ironically she points to the cameras for support, but he merely demonstrates that he has turned them off, showing both how isolated Isabella is and how helpless Isabella is in the face of the authoritarian threats the cameras create. She then crosses in front of Angelo, and as he replies, "Who will believe thee, Isabel" (153), Angelo grabs and fondles Isabella, he knocks off her novice's head-dress, he throws her down across a table, and he lies on top of her. Although the scene created only a symbolic rape, the danger that Isabella faced was made direct and real and, in that sense, showed that the danger of authority is that it can act with impunity. Who is there to stop it? Shakespeare's play makes clear that it is only the greater authority of the Duke that can stop an Angelo.

Brainin's final directorial decision, however, trivialized the very theme of authoritarian control run amok that she had both disturbingly and humorously shown. Angelo's strictness had barely escaped tragedy with comedy. But Brainin went further—and in doing so fell into escapism. After the Duke's final speech, and thus after Isabella's exit in which she apparently rejected the Duke's proposal, everyone exited the stage, leaving the bemused Duke alone to contemplate the rejection. Isabella then reentered—an entrance entirely outside of Shakespeare's text. At first this reentrance hinted at a possible traditionally happy ending, in which she has changed her mind—although it would have been a very manipulative one since the audience had gone through the dramatic moment of the Duke being rejected. Instead, Isabella dragged onto the stage a garbage can, and as the palace guards reentered, upon non-verbal



***Measure for Measure*: Andrew May (a member of the Actor's Equity Association) as Angelo and Kathryn Cherasaro as Isabella. Photo by Troy Maben.**

instructions from her to which they tipped their berets, they began to take down the cameras that had dominated the stage and Vienna. After their dismantlement, Isabella walked up to the Duke, offering her hand in friendship. They then exited the stage together. The implication was that Isabella—who had been conventionally subservient to the duke (both as friar and as leader) at least up to the ending of the play—now considered herself to be his equal and even had the right to exercise moral judgment over him. She heroically has acted to dismantle the symbol of authoritarianism that he has not dismantled, even if he was not responsible for putting the cameras up in the first place. In other words, Brainin's answer as to why Isabella left the stage is that she was going to save the world.

However, where in Shakespeare, where in ISF's performance, has Isabella obtained the power and authority to give the guards such an order? The per-

formance over and over suggested that ordinaries had no such power and that underlings did not disobey. Are we to believe, for example, that in the context of 9/11, one need only walk into the White House, order the security services to stop warrantless wiretaps and it will happen? Brainin apparently wants us to believe it possible. But who gives Isabella such authority? Unfortunately, the only answer can be that the director, the new *duke ex machina*, gave it to her—gave it to her to manipulate a new modern ending “as the director likes it.” Ironically, if Brainin had decided to adopt the traditional ending and have Isabella marry the Duke, Isabella might actually have gained the power necessary to take such liberating action, but she did not and she does not. Instead, Brainin gave her audience a new happy ending, a mighty Isabella who rescues the world, but she has provided no plausible *somehow* for how such a vision took place or for how the ending was anything more than her own fantasy to use Shakespeare for her own hopes and desires. She had the power and she changed the purpose.

Notes

1. *Measure for Measure*, 1.3.53-54. *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, 4th ed., ed. David Bevington (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).
2. Risa Brainin is an Assistant Professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She served as artistic director of Shakespeare Santa Cruz (2001-03) and has directed Shakespeare at the Guthrie Theater, the Indiana Repertory Theatre, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, the Great Lakes Theater Festival, and the Shakespeare Festival of St. Louis. Accessed 24 Oct. 2007 from UC Santa Barbara, Theater & Dance <http://www.theaterdance.ucsb.edu/people_facultyprofile.php?ResearcherID=129>.
3. All references to the Idaho Shakespeare Festival's production of *Measure for Measure* are to the performance directed by Risa Brainin. I saw the production on Opening Night, August 4, 2007 and on Closing Night, September, 1, 2007.
4. The Provost was costumed as a Parisian police officer. This contemporary costume softened the Provost's image in contrast, for example, to the prison guards. The guards of the prison and the Duke's castle were costumed in black combat uniforms and berets, similar to Italian fascists from the '30s. The costuming of the Provost seemed an intentional effort to make it visually clear that the Provost was a good guy, a friendly street-gendarme not a threatening one—as if the darkness of his moral doubts needed to be softened.
5. Lucio's character was further developed by his passing out business cards. The audience laughed repeatedly as Lucio forcefully, almost obliviously, pressed them on characters—his handing one to the Friar was both humorous and revealing of Lucio's self-absorption—what would the encloistered Friar do with it? His handing one to the Duke upon the Duke's return, “That's I, and't like your Grace” (5.1.77) received a huge laugh. Lucio was his card and only his card.
6. Unfortunately, the director also let the use of such tools run away with her. Just before the intermission, for example, four hooded prisoners are wheeled in on the hand carts. The tableau certainly created an ominous moment, but one of the prisoners was clearly a pregnant Juliet, and Shakespeare's text makes quite clear that Juliet will not be executed—in terms of Shakespeare's day she would have pleaded her belly.
7. The play makes clear the inherent double entendre of “know.” After the Duke's query to Angelo, Lucio interjects, “Carnally, she says” (5.1.213).
8. Nevertheless, there was also undoubted ambiguity in the image—although it's the kind of ambiguity that an audience, unlike a reader of the play, in the immediacy of the moment can hardly be expected to interpret. There was no way of knowing how Mariana got Angelo's

number or even if she has actually talked with him. The fact that someone can call someone's cell phone doesn't mean a conversation occurred or that the receiver wants to receive the call. The audience's laughter indicated that it interpreted Mariana's action as refuting Angelo's claim and undoubtedly it did refute the literal claim that he had "never...heard from her." The performance, however, only had shown him previously not answering her call.

9. *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, 4th ed., ed. David Bevington (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 406.
10. ISF's audience apparently felt ambiguity at the exact nature of Angelo and Mariana's status as a couple pre-play. When the Duke had justified his and Isabella's action to get Angelo and Mariana together, including arranging for their sleeping together, he excused their action by suggesting that Angelo and Mariana are already married. In 4.1.72, he says, "He is your husband on a pre-contract." The audience chuckled at this claim, reflecting a decided skepticism. It is possible, however, that the fact they had actually been in communication via cell phones, as discussed previously, eased the audience's misgivings. The staging of the actual wedding scene did little to suggest a "happy ending" for Angelo and Mariana.
11. I must admit that it is perfectly possible that the photo ops were not intended to denigrate the Duke; they might, instead, simply have been a directorial mistake.
12. Shaw was especially fond of Shakespeare's problem plays: he called *All's Well* "a play that is...rooted in my deeper affections" (qtd. in Arden edition, ed. G. K. Hunter [Harvard University Press, 1959], xxxiv), and he considered Cressida in *Troilus and Cressida* Shakespeare's "first real woman" (qtd. in Oxford Shakespeare edition, ed. Kenneth Muir [1982]; from a paper Shaw had originally delivered to the New Shakespeare Society in 1884 that was posthumously published in *The Shaw Review* 7 [1964]).
13. Letter to William S. Douglas, *Bernard Shaw: Collected Letters 1898-1910*, ed. Dan H. Laurence (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1972), 18.



BOOK REVIEWS



Robert Shaughnessy, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2007. Pp. 291.

Barbara Hodgdon and W. B. Worthen, eds. *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2005. Pp. xvi + 688.

Reviewed by Ellen MacKay, *Indiana University*

First, some math. In addition to its editor, seven of the contributors to *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture* have written essays in the Blackwell *Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, or just under two thirds of the Cambridge volume's roster. This overlap is a bit dispiriting: one senses a certain insularity in the ethos of companion-writing that is not so very companionable, a suspicion borne out by the degree to which these essays do not speak to one another. For if it is an unintended consequence of these sorts of collections that a discipline can seem to be carved up into segregated fields of inquiry over which prominent scholars reassert their already established command, a preventative would be to demonstrate that the positions staked out are provisional and fluid because always in dialogue with texts, performances, politics, histories and ideas that are constantly emerging. An edited volume should be a prime site of just this sort of emergence, and yet no such dialogue occurs in either book under review—not, I am inclined to believe, because editors and contributors do not wish it, but because presses have not done enough to foster it. Given that our students look to these books not just for information but also for models of academic discourse, it is time, I propose, for a shift in “companionate thinking.”

Beyond this limitation, both books have much to recommend them. To begin with the *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture* editor, Robert Shaughnessy, brings together a well-composed collection with a number of high-flying contributors who demonstrate the deservedness of their reputations. Especially commendable are Diana Henderson (“From popular entertainment to literature”), Douglas Lanier (“Shakespeare™: myth and biographical fiction”) and W. B. Worthen (“Performing Shakespeare in a digital culture”), each of whom manage to delineate, in beguiling prose, an important dimension of Shakespeare's popular profile while raising crucial questions about the manufacture and sustenance of the figure that results. Barbara Hodgdon's alternately wry and fervid account of Shakespeare as star-maker (from Burbage to Branagh) is less dutifully a *Companion* piece, but it is splendid, undermining the Baudrillardian mindlessness we typically attribute to celebrity culture by commenting so intelligently on it. Another infectious essay is Stephen Orgel's “Shakespeare Illustrated,” which charts the iconography of the plays from Peacham to Delacroix to the Cranach Press *Hamlet*, not pausing overmuch to account for the systems of reproduction and distribution that might have made these sketches, paintings, engravings and illustrations “popular,” but demonstrating in abundance the pleasures and riches of this field.

Essays by Nicola Watson on the Shakespearean “ramble,” Susanne Greenhalgh on radio Shakespeare, Stephen Buhler on “Musical Shakespeares” and Emma Smith on Shakespeare on TV push the volume toward other rich and untapped veins in Shakespeare studies.

A quandary that bedevils *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture*, though, is how indifferent the majority of the contributors are to the vexed category of the popular, notwithstanding Shaughnessy’s excellent gloss of its contested meanings in his introduction. The project advertised in the book’s title seems to me inevitably bound up with the canon wars of the 1980s, when the politics of trickle-down Shakespeare came in for a scathing reassessment. But if Shaughnessy’s volume is any index, that moment is gone and forgotten. The essays here frequently track expressions of Shakespeare that are quaint, twee, and even genteel; there is nary a hostile gesture in the lot. Peter Holland’s essay, for instance, is a vivid account of “Shakespeare Abbreviated” that assigns the origins of this practice to Edward Derring, a “wealthy gentleman” who condensed both parts of *Henry IV* into a single play for his own home theatrical and paid the local rector to copy out his amended script (thus preserving it for our future scrutiny) (27). Derring is a fascinating character, but as Holland admits, his adaptation is “not exactly popular culture” (27). It is, I would counter, a product of privilege and eccentricity in equal measure, though no less interesting for that. To be sure, Holland profiles other occasions, like Robert Elliston’s action-ballet *Macbeth* (at the Royal Circus, no less), that were knock-outs with the middling sort, but his opening example helpfully demonstrates that the scope of this volume might be better understood as Shakespeare and Culture, no modifier required. This is a dissatisfactory title, of course, but nothing jumps to mind to replace it, for there is no critical term yet for the matter that Shaughnessy’s volume is chasing down: not really Bardolatry (and certainly not its gritty inverse, so well elaborated in Graham Holderness’ *The Shakespeare Myth* [1988]), but something more like the modes of our conjuring Shakespeare into being. Prompted by Hodgdon’s opening line—“I begin with the desire to see Michael Gambon play Falstaff”—I am tempted to say that at its best, *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Popular Culture* unfolds the new cultural poetics of speaking with the dead.

On occasion, this enterprise comes in for a less expansive treatment than one might wish: Greenhalgh and Smith, for instance, focus solely on the BBC, with Smith attending to a single series, “The Age of Kings.” Carol Chillington Rutter’s essay, on the Shakespearean handbill, playbill, and poster, focuses steadfastly on the RSC. As always in a *Companion*, exemplarity is troublesome, and one critique that Shaughnessy might have anticipated is the marked Britishness of what passes here for “popular culture.” An imbalance of this sort is perhaps to be expected, but it must still be accounted for, particularly in a volume that takes as its cover image the statue of Juliet erected in Verona beneath ‘her’ balcony, bestrewn with the love notes of pilgrim innamorati. In Watson’s terrific history of Shakespeare and the rise of the literary walk, this off-site site (as it were) is relegated to a single sentence. Its iconic relation to

the book's project is puzzling in another respect, too, for the cover image is attributed to a photo sharing website; this Juliet, it turns out, is the destination of a virtual tour. Much might be made of the online culture that preconditions such a borrowing, but again, excepting Shaughnessy's brief but sharp introductory remarks on the subject, both the *Cambridge Companion Shakespeare and Popular Culture* and the *Blackwell Companion to Shakespeare and Performance* neglect the ever-increasing virtuality of their terrain.

Given how often the wide array of performances mentioned in the *Blackwell Companion* sent me off to scour YouTube, iTunes, and NetFlix for previously unknown riches—Penny Woolcock's *Macbeth on the Estate* (1997) merits a special mention here—the failure of either volume to acknowledge the ways this impulse has re-shaped the study of Shakespeare was especially pronounced. Worthen in the *Cambridge Companion* is the clear exception, but his focus is primarily the “atavistic” form of the DVD (231). In the *Blackwell Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, edited by Worthen and Hodgdon, the aversion to the digital encounter with performance is set from the get-go by Peggy Phelan's opening essay on the no-place of stage, in which “theatrical architecture creates an archive of spaces that exist in order to stage their own disappearance” (33). Phelan's account of performance's essential ephemerality is utterly persuasive, but it is necessarily at odds with the endlessly retrievable archive of Shakespeare online, and the forms of spectatorship, ownership, and reference which that archive puts into play. The near-total silence on this topic in the thirty-three essays that follow evidences the need for a new edited volume to accompany the *Blackwell Companion*.

Other readers are sure to notice other omissions (Deborah Warner and Fiona Shaw's *Richard II? The eighteenth century?*) but it is no less true that *A Companion to Shakespeare in Performance* abounds with marvelous stuff. Hodgdon and Worthen have divided their volume into six roughly equal parts (with the exception of the last, on Pedagogy, with its scant two entries) that run the gamut from high-concept re-framings of the field to nuanced descriptions of particular productions. The six essays that make up the first part are styled most explicitly as shots over the bow, each one elaborated from a critical conceit: Freud's death drive (Phelan), Kantorowicz's double-bodied king (Holland), Eliot's Shakespearean Rag (Bruce Smith), de Certeau's “Walking in the City” (Shaughnessy), James McLaverty's riddle “*where is Hamlet?*” (Margaret Jane Kidnie), and, in tandem with a letter published in *The Hindu*, Raymond Williams' “history of forms” (Ania Loomba). These are, as a group, extremely good, but Smith's account of time in *Twelfth Night* is a tour-de-force, and Kidnie's discussion of the volatile boundary between production and adaptation is a model of critical thinking with and for our students; of all the essays in this volume, it is the one I am most eager to assign.

Ensuing essays are generally shorter, but many are equally substantial. An especially rich and dense section is “Writing and Performance,” for which Anthony Dawson sets a high bar in his opening essay, “The Imaginary Text, or the Curse of the Folio.” Not surprisingly, Fredson Bowers plays the straw

man in many of the contributions here, but Dawson takes the unexpected position of arguing that “strip[ping] away the veil of print” remains a necessary “act of imagination” for editors and performers alike (141): he shows that the tendency to cling to early print, as several coaches enjoin actors to do, encourages distorted and diminished productions. Of the essays that follow, Worthen and Laurie Osborne offer two that complement Dawson’s especially well. By recovering the “pervasively oral culture of the theatre” (219), Worthen troubles the priority of the script from the opposite end of Shakespeare’s production history, while Osborne brings to bear some of the questions Worthen raises (“how does the book *represent* [or *objectify*] performance”? [222]) in an illuminating tour of the published Shakespearean screenplay, a print form to which I, at least, had heretofore given little thought.

Happily, many of the essays in the book’s broad midsection (on histories, technologies and identities) are similarly keyed to new evidences and new methods for the professing of performance, to use Shannon Jackson’s useful phrase. Richard Schoch uncovers what the Victorian promptbook fails to preserve; Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern elucidate the implications of “sides” to early modern acting; Lanier calls up the spirit of the Master that haunts Audio Shakespeare; Ric Knowles demonstrates how the conditions of reception color the record of performance; Susan Bennett takes into account the tourist economies that motor Shakespeare festivals; James Bulman reveals the present-day reverberations of ‘period’ (all male) casting; Michael Corder shows the poor accountability of Shakespeare editions to *mise-en-scène*; and in two separate but complementary essays, Yong Li Lan and Joanne Tompkins unfold the purposefulness and performativity of “non-understanding” to Shakespeare in intercultural performance (Lan, 533). All of the above are smart and portable, of indisputable value to the undergraduate and graduate students who make up the book’s principal audience. Others, no less acute, are delightfully feisty: Kathleen McLuskie dismantles a critical shibboleth when she proves the use of asking “How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?”, and Paul Prescott skewers the blithe snobbery that overdetermines the reviews of shows at the Globe. Finally, there were two essays that I found to be truly revelatory. Peter Donaldson’s gorgeously constellated discussion of the amphitheatrical vertigo at work in Julie Taymor’s *Titus*, and John Gillies’s Stanislavskian account of why “the future of Othello...lies in its past” were gripping reads, distinguished by the originality of their inquiries and the breadth of their historical and cultural horizons (268).

Alas, the section on Pedagogy somewhat mars the mood. Peter Lichtenfels, who has the last word in Hodgdon and Worthen’s volume, describes “empower[ing]” actors to speak the text without ever acknowledging the raft of smart criticism that actor training has elicited (653); it is as if Bulman’s important volume (*Shakespeare, Theory and Performance* [1996]) and Knowles’s essay within it, to say nothing of Dawson’s, just twenty-seven chapters prior, had never happened. Still, if Lichtenfels shows us that the Companion essay remains an unfixd entity, as prone to retrench old divides as to call forth new paradigms and to tell new histories, both *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and*

Popular Culture and *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance* feature more than enough of the latter to entice students and scholars alike.



Sonia Massai, ed. *World-Wide Shakespeares: Local Appropriations in Film and Performance*. New York: Routledge, 2005. Pp. 199.

Ayanna Thompson, ed. *Colorblind Shakespeare: New Perspectives on Race and Performance*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Pp. 262.

Reviewed by Jason E. Cohen, Berea College

Two recent collections, Ayanna Thompson's *Colorblind Shakespeare* and Sonia Massai's *World-Wide Shakespeares*, answer the sustained call to examine how local uses of Shakespeare shape and are shaped by diffuse and often contradictory cultural imperatives. For the first time, these volumes conceive of conversations among stage and media professionals and their audiences that reach beyond traditional Anglo-American productions; by engaging with major productions and figures in new and provocative analyses, the collections also remain connected to some of the most important theatrical events and facts of the recent decades. Working in the complimentary fields of contemporary performance and theater studies, Thompson's and Massai's collections each focuses admirably on the effects of Shakespeare's imperious canonicity in order to address the growing presence of anti-racist (Thompson) and anti-colonialist (Massai) consciousnesses in theater and broadcast-media productions, many of which have claimed to "do Shakespeare" differently. Indeed, reading either of these collections—and particularly reading them together—highlights the reach and breadth of Shakespearean performances; understood together, they insist on an unstable Shakespeare, one who is the object of contested cultural, performative, and textual networks within which every local production must fashion itself. Despite the differences in their approaches to the examination of a de-centered Shakespeare, Thompson's and Massai's collections share a sense of the troubled romance that readers, scholars, directors, companies, and audiences across the world carry on with the Shakespearean stage. At once hopeful and yet starkly real about the possibilities that performance offers as a form of social critique, the differences among these essays remind us that Shakespeare must be seen, following Ayanna Thompson's opening remarks on her frontispiece image of Denzel Washington as the Droeshout engraving, as "natural and strange" (xi).

Colorblind Shakespeare works at the intersections of race and performance studies by tracing the history and implications of colorblind casting in Anglo-American theater. Given its three divisions, which discuss the semiotics of race on stage (chs. 2-6), practices of colorblind theater (chs. 7-8), and

the potential futures that the problems of colorblindness raise (chs. 9-12), it is clear that Thompson's collection engages broadly with present-day challenges posed by the languages of race and identity performance. The essays in the collection locate the cornerstones of this critical engagement in the works of figures such as August Wilson and the legal scholar Patricia Williams, each of whom has demanded, in their own ways, that processes of resolution between color and culture be articulated across sites of economic, social, and political contest. By taking this demand for an ongoing engagement between color and culture into the politics of the Shakespearean stage, *Colorblind Shakespeare* presents meditations on Anglo-American social divisions as well as criticism of theater practices from the emergence of race on the stage in the 1820s to the present.

In Thompson's collection, the fine engagements with the terms of colorblind casting, for instance, include its transformation into a linguistic and performative "color bind," as Richard Burt calls it, which lurks behind discourse defined "by universalizing race along Manichean lines" (165). Guided, therefore, by an awareness that "it is difficult to write about colorblind casting because its theoretical underpinnings are so unstable that they make the practice itself not one practice but a set of practices that not only are in competition with one another but also are deconstructing one another" (6), the essays in *Colorblind Shakespeare* take on a theoretical and methodological eclecticism. Remaining poised in the face of difficult critical and personal issues, these interventions grapple with striking conclusions, including Timothy Douglas's candid response in an interview with Thompson to a question about casting, in which he noted that Folger Shakespeare Theater's "photo-negative" production of *Othello* with Patrick Stewart in the title role "goes against the story" (138). This comment resonates positively with Francesca Royster's later discussion of the "conspiratorial whiteness" she experienced in the audience's reception of the 2003 Chicago production of a condensed first Henriad, titled *Rose Rage* (228). While both of these comments aim to complicate unreflective theatrical practices, they also aim to do more than straight critique: for Douglas as for Royster, cultural signs are reflected back onto the stage by the audience. These compound reflections shed light on what to do with the stage's partial failures to portray a world that is aware of its complicity in the problems of colorblindness.

A return to personal experience serves as the grounds for theoretical work in almost every essay in Thompson's collection. In this vein, Lisa M. Anderson's strong analysis of *Richard III* and *Macbeth* is notable for its honest discussion of the relevance of "mimesis and the act of watching dramatic performance," which, she finds, elides "cultural specificity" through the blind assertion of colorblind casting (90-1). Other subtle responses to colorblind casting include Courtney Lehmann's comments on "colordeaf hearing" and the staging of dialects (71), the compound difficulties of race that Sujata Iyengar elucidates in her examination of single-sex theater productions, Antonio Ocampo-Guzman's reflections as a Latino performer and director on Shakespeare, and the collection's insightful bookends, Thompson's "Introduction" and Peter Erickson's "Afterward." Any

fault one might find in this collection is no fault of its own: it is the case, as Erickson concludes on a note that echoes Thompson's early remarks, that the field of scholars working on these problems is only emerging, and that the "celebration [of colorblind casting] blocks rigorous critical consideration" of the full range of these practices (241). Given that Shakespearean English already sounds so strange to so many people, it may not be imperative to strengthen the critique of language through an understanding of differences in color or nation on stage, but the effects of foreign or strange languages still resonate with other stage meanings. Too often in this collection's exclusive focus on English language productions, such effects of language go unexamined. One wishes that the consideration of colorblind casting was not understood here to be a phenomenon limited to the racial and cultural situation of the Anglo-American stage, particularly when the primacy of English language productions could be seen as a significant part of the language of color.

World-Wide Shakespeares fills a gap in research left by English language focus of Thompson's collection. In its imperative to discover new Shakespeares across the globe, Sonia Massai's collection not only questions the terms of the locations and performances of works on stage or in film, but it also inquires into the meanings that Shakespearean texts generate in performance and on the page. Massai's standout contribution discusses Pasolini's filmic re-framing of an imagined marionette production of *Othello*. Her essay recasts the reception of Shakespeare's great Venetian tragedy by considering the relationship Pasolini creates between a volatile audience of workers and an experimental stage; her critique uncovers a Cassio harassed as a *marrano* and an audience who revolts in order to "claim authorial agency for themselves" (101). Tobias Döring's discussion of Derek Wolcott also ranges widely to enchanting effect, reminding us that in a "true expression of local experience: 'the hurricane does not roar in pentameter'" (18). At still other moments, as in Ruru Li's comments on the tricky cultural translation of Beatrice's assertion of "determination and will" into a Chinese *huangmeixi* production of *Much Ado*, the essays defamiliarize a familiar topic through local historiography and close reading (41). Even those performances that would seem to be immediately legible are made stranger and richer by their contexts. Poonam Trivedi inquires into the local politics of performing *Macbeth* with convicts in prison in Mysore, India; when Trivedi invites the reader into the worldview of Indian felons (48), I begin to read with even greater care. The collection is concerned with the overarching roles that Shakespeare's works continue to play in the constant tension between forms of nationalism and patriotism, on the one hand, and the concerns of subaltern populations, on the other. This tension gives rise to the volume's subtle cosmopolitanism, its hybrid call to use local and culturally sensitive voices to resist seeing Shakespeare as merely one of the master's tools, thus recalling and adapting Audre Lorde's manifesto to new contexts along with the promises and risks of difference.

Sonia Massai's collection is characterized by a shorter form of essay, and this condensed approach contributes to its strength as well as an occasional

weakness. Some contributions, like Suzanne Gossett's "Political *Pericles*," give way to summarily assembled remarks rather than conveying a patient response to the volume's overall project. The decision to treat some plays repeatedly in part makes up for the brevity of the essays: with four treatments of *Merchant of Venice* and two of *Macbeth*, the volume achieves a conversational playfulness. With its textual recursiveness, *World-Wide Shakespeares* offers an analog to the cultural *convivencia* that Elizabeth Klein and Michael Shapiro remark in their analysis of a New Mexican adaptation of *Merchant* (37).

World-Wide Shakespeares also resists the claims of cultural assimilation that have been leveled at many presentist approaches to Shakespeare over the last decade. By shifting the analytic grounds away from the Anglo-American traditions of stage and media, Massai's collection produces fine-grained snapshots that focus locally on economic, aesthetic, and cultural fields in which Shakespeare is a product for import as well as an index of foreign cultural capital. In her role as final provocateur, Barbara Hodgdon notes in her "Afterword" that "perhaps the least theorized arena [of performance] involves how audiences transform what they see and hear, how spectators refashion a performance to serve individual as well as communal needs" (159). Massai's collection is at its best when its contributions match Hodgdon's provocation by showing the discontinuity between directorial intention and stage production, or, following Ania Loomba's groundbreaking work, between national or institutional conditions of production and the appropriation of a production by its local audiences. The re-emergence of a Shakespearean text within divergent fields of meaning, Hodgdon suggests, show that even a "minimalist *textual* Shakespeare," that is, one who has been altered significantly by local contexts and traditions, can tell us "how, with Shakespeare in our minds and hands, we imagined ourselves at one particular time" (160). Hodgdon's postscript to the volume thus reintroduces the possibility of divergent histories within a single field of production, and this multiple perspective gives Massai's volume its most convincing form.

At their best, both *World-Wide Shakespeares* and *Colorblind Shakespeare* will provoke new discussion about the roles of color and culture in the stage and broadcast-media uses of Shakespearean performance for global and local audiences. Perhaps these collections will even draw much needed attention to the still-marginal discourses of non-traditional stage practices in the West and beyond. Thompson's and Massai's collections raise serious questions about local knowledge; the slippery production of meaning in specific contexts of race, nation, and class; and the relationships of directors, companies, audiences, and institutions that arise as a contested ground in the exercise of Shakespeare's cultural capital. In these ways, *World-Wide Shakespeares* and *Colorblind Shakespeare* extend the important concerns of cultural and performance studies from the heart of the Western canon into the small and large audiences that do Shakespeare differently across the world.



Imtiaz Habib. *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500-1677: Imprints of the Invisible.* Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008. Pp. 415.

Emily Bartels. *Speaking of the Moor: From Alcazar to Othello.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. Pp. 452.

Reviewed by Daniel Vitkus, Florida State University

Imtiaz Habib's *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500-1677* is, as its title indicates, a cultural history project based on a systematic survey of various written records that cite the presence of "Black" persons. Incorporating and expanding on the earlier work of scholars like Peter Fryer, F. O. Shyllon, James Walvin and Gretchen Gerzina, Habib goes further and deeper. Parish records, in particular, are "systematically combed" (83), and though Habib admits that his examination of the archives "is not the result of comprehensive and systematic searches of all available documentary databases" (272), he does cover a lot of ground.

These records include "royal and aristocratic households accounts, government proclamations and legal records, parish entries, medical notations, and personal accounts" (65). Habib begins in 1500, when political and economic ties connected England and Scotland to the slave-holding kingdoms of Portugal and Spain, before relations with Catholic Spain deteriorated in the 1540s and led eventually to war; he continues in the period of conflict, reconnaissance and plunder that brought English privateers and pirates like Hawkins and Drake into contact with commercial systems that were inhabited by people of color, including the beginnings of the Atlantic slave trade. Throughout the book, he maintains that these records are the visible traces of a much larger Black presence that has been lost or intentionally hidden, in part because "the English trafficking in Africans between 1550 and 1650 was an activity in denial of itself as it were, and not only the subject of clear or deliberate recordation but also of documentary suppression" (69). By the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Habib claims, Black subjects become visible: he writes, "That eventual visibility is paradoxically the completion of the historical denuding of the early modern English black subject, who then appears fully processed as the legally mandated bare object of English colonial enslavement" (121).

Habib's search for "imprints of the invisible" is not limited to London records. He also shows that there was a significant Black presence outside London, primarily but not exclusively in the coastal counties, and he provides a final chapter that traces the signs of other people of color (primarily East Indian and American) in early modern England. Along the way, Habib points to some fascinating and moving cases—the black maidservants who accompanied the entourage of Katherine of Aragon when she arrived in England in 1501; the African mercenary Peter (Mogo) Negro, who fought with the English against the Scots and was knighted on the field of battle in 1547; Jacques Francis, a Black diver from Guinea was hired (also in 1547) to salvage tin and lead from

a Venetian wreck off the English coast at Southampton; the 1586 baptism of "Elizabeth, a negro child, born white, the mother a negro" in the church of St. Botolph (96) and in 1597 the adult baptism and conversion to Protestantism of a Mary Phyllis, the daughter of Moroccans, at that same church (91); the death in the summer of 1588 of "A man blackamoor [who] laye in the street" (96); the physician Simon Forman's diagnosis of "Polonia the blackmor maid... of 12 yeare old" (105); and the case of a prostitute named "Barbary Moore," who was called before the Bridewell court in 1598. Habib reminds us that in early modern England there were Black musicians, soldiers, prostitutes, and numerous servants and slaves working for artisans, merchants or resident foreigners.

Habib's documentation and discussion of this archival evidence is painstaking, and the book includes some statistical analysis of the archival record, with patterns of frequency and growth or decline indicated in various charts, along with a helpful 94-page "Chronological Index of Records of Black People, 1500-1677" located at the end of the text. Most of Habib's analysis of these records is perceptive and helpful, but at times the author's desire to recover traces of a Black presence leads to questionable conjecture. One notable example of this is the attribution of black identity to persons listed in parish records under the names "Blackman," "Blackmore" or "Blackemer," persons for whom there is no direct evidence of such an identity. Another semantic problem is exemplified by Habib's insistence that the "Black handsome wench" (157) who allegedly gave William Davenant syphilis is African and not simply dark-haired. Habib provides a detailed defense of these attributions, arguing that "it is more productive to err on the side of an aggressive inclusiveness than the other way around" (94). His assertion that "Documentary imperfection should be not a limit but a point of departure for scholarly investigation, particularly for topics with significant political repercussions such as the one under consideration" (126) is undoubtedly a principle based on good intentions, but one that will give pause to more cautious scholars, especially social historians.

Black Lives in the English Archives makes a very important contribution to our understanding of cross-cultural encounters and of "Black" presences in England. Habib demonstrates that this presence existed as early as the reign of Henry VII, that it persisted and grew throughout the early modern period, that it can be traced throughout England and Scotland (and found not only in ports like London or Bristol), and that it was much more substantial and prevalent than earlier scholars have realized. Though he may stretch a bit too far in his search for evidence, there is no doubt that, thanks to his study, we must now revise and rethink our understanding of how people of color were integrated within an increasingly porous and diverse English society. This has a number of exciting implications: it changes our understanding of slavery as an institution and as a legal category, within the borders of Britain and abroad; it enriches our picture of diversity within English society and of the assimilation or demonization that accompanied the Black presence; it helps to historicize the phenomenon of cultural and ethnic mixture in the early modern period,

giving us a whole range of examples of mobility, adaptability, etc.; and finally, it asks its readers to consider, in new ways, the nature and limitations of the archival record itself.

Habib's study reveals that the history of actual Moors, Blacks and Africans living in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England was repressed but not completely erased. His recovery of these lost presences, living in servitude or bondage within London and beyond, does not involve the representation of Blacks in theatrical texts like Shakespeare's *Othello*, though Habib does refer to printed narratives like those collected and printed in Hakluyt and Purchas. In her study, *Speaking of the Moor: From Alcazar to Othello*, Emily Bartels focuses on the figure of "the Moor" in the drama, and she explores the complex signification of that figure in four plays—George Peele's *The Battle of Alcazar* (ca. 1588-89), Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (ca. 1593-94), Thomas Dekker's *Lust's Dominion* (1599-1600), and Shakespeare's *Othello* (1604). Bartels' book moves back and forth between the four chapters that offer close readings of these plays and the three other chapters that examine non-dramatic writings: Hakluyt's *Navigations*, Queen Elizabeth's letters ordering the deportation of "blackamoors" from England, and Pory's translation of Leo Africanus's *History and Description of Africa*. An "Introduction" and "Conclusion" help to frame the project.

Like Habib, Bartels argues that scholars have misrepresented "Moors" and "Blackamoors"—that they have defined them reductively—but her reassessment looks less to the English archives and more to the symbolic status of "the Moor" as a character or figure who is present within English culture and writing, not as a notation in a parish record, but as a persona or representation. For Bartels, "the Moor is first and foremost a figure of uncodified and uncodifiable diversity" who "uniquely represents the intersection of European and non-European cultures" (5). Bartels insists that the Moor is not merely a demonized or exoticized outsider; rather, Bartels claims that "the Moor serves as a site where competing, always provisional axes of identity come dynamically into play, disrupting our ability...to assign the Moor a color, religion, ethnicity, or any homogenizing trait" (7). She makes this case with reference to various historical contexts that pertain to these plays and to Moors, but a great deal of the book is made up of densely argued readings of the plays, readings in which Moorish characters (Muly Mahamet, Aaron, Eleazar, and Othello) are analyzed.

Bartels' study has been carefully researched and, had she had the chance, I am sure that she would have made good use of Habib's findings. She references nearly all of the relevant scholarship, and in this regard her book is an extremely useful resource. *Speaking of the Moor* supplements previous studies of the representation of the Moor in English Renaissance literature (including the work of Michael Neill, Kim Hall, Eldred Jones, Elliot Tokson, Anthony Barthelemy, Virginia Mason Vaughan and many others). Bartels shows how, in the plays and in other early modern narratives and documents, the figure of the Moor functioned as both a symptom of and an incitement for English

culture's emerging engagement with a multicultural economy in the Mediterranean, in the Atlantic, and beyond.

In the chapter on *Alcazar*, Bartels points to England's engagement with "Barbary" or North Africa as the context for a play that "presses its spectators to look beyond the bounds of race, religion, and nation, to see a Mediterranean 'world' improvised from the unpredictable intersections of Europeans and non-Europeans, of Moors, Arabians, Turks, Portuguese, Spanish, Italians, and at least one Englishman [i.e. Captain Stukeley]" (43-44). The chapter that follows includes a comparison of the New World and African narratives in Hakluyt and concludes that Africa "figures as a place of passage," not signifying in its own right so much as it does as part of a larger "network of exchange" (52). The next section turns to *Titus Andronicus*, revealing a tension in the play between efforts to sustain a pure, homogenous Roman identity, and the play's representation of a more inclusive, multicultural Rome that has a place for both Goths and Moors. The play, claims Bartels, models "a cross-cultural incorporation" (81), in spite of the vicious demonization and expulsion of the villainous Moor, Aaron.

The chapter on the Elizabethan orders (promulgated in 1596 and 1601) for the deportation of "blackamoors" is the place where Habib and Bartels's books overlap most obviously. Bartels cites Habib's earlier study, *Shakespeare and Race*, and she agrees that Elizabeth's letters participate in the "writing out of 'blacks'" and the "writing in of a color-based race and racism" (101). But here, and throughout *Speaking of the Moor*, Bartels stresses the inclusion, embeddedness and incorporation of the Moor in English society. Bartels seeks to qualify (but not to dismiss) the charge of racism by complicating the figure of the Moor and positioning that figure as not only an object of white fear, power, or contempt, but as an agent within a culture or a text that does not simply or exclusively rely on a radical black-white or self-other polarization. That Aaron gains power at the Roman court, that Eleazar nearly comes to rule as the *Spanish* king of Spain, and that Othello's elopement and marriage to Desdemona is supported by the Venetians (as is his leadership of the Venetian military expedition to Cyprus)—Bartels goes to great lengths to argue that these events make the Moorish characters more than mere villains. For Bartels, these Moors appear, in spite of their violent deeds, as complex figures who, in some sense, *belong* within their societies and embody its exchanges and diversities. In the chapter on John Pory's 1600 translation of the *History of Africa* by al-Hasan ibn Mohammed al-Wezaz al-Fasi (also known by his Christian name, Leo Africanus), Bartels describes an author, a text, and an Elizabethan rendition of that text that bespeak a transcultural identity. In that book, with its complex account of the variety of cultures in Africa, "there is no Moor," says Bartels, if by "the Moor" we imply "a singular, essentialized ethnic subject who can stand for all Moors" (153). Referring to Pory's *History of Africa*, Bartels idealizes the textual geography of North Africa in particular—"a place where 'strangers' from inside and outside the continent's borders intermingle and intermix, where colors and categories of identity are invariably in

flux, and where histories of linguistic, religious, and cultural change complicate the differentiation of peoples” (141). She also puts forward a historical argument about the late Elizabethan moment of the texts she analyzes, claiming that they signify a “brief but crucial moment” (19) occurring after the onset of English global expansion through enterprise and adventure and before the establishment of slavery and New World colonies that would bring new forms of slavery and racism. These new historical conditions, she argues, would color the figure of the Moor differently, so that it could no longer bear the more complex and less demonized identity that she says it does in the four plays she analyzes. After *Othello*, the stage Moor may no longer be “figured as the motivating agent of cultural change and exchange” (193). In that regard, Bartels invokes the same overarching historical narrative as Habib, one that sees a more unstable and therefore more benign set of identities for the Elizabethan Moor (or for pre-1677 “Blacks”) as a fragile precursor to the unambiguous, color-based racism that would come with the legal and commercial establishment of English colonial slavery in the New World and Africa. Both of these studies contribute significantly to our understanding of that prehistory: they reveal to us how the invisibility of the Elizabethan “blackamoor” (for Habib) and the stage Moor’s “darkness that seems undeniably visible” (Bartels 80) differ from the clearly defined slavery that would be fully illuminated by the Atlantic trade of the eighteenth century.



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