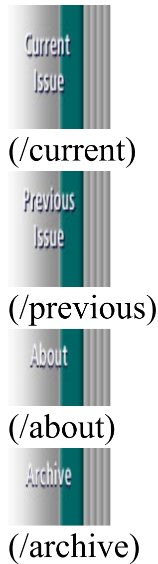

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Introduction: Early Modern Drama on Screen

LISA HOPKINS, SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT | COMING TO MEAN I: ALEX COX'S REVENGERS TRAGEDY | COMING TO MEAN II: SARAH HARDING'S COMPULSION | THE ESSAYS | NOTES | REFERENCES

ABSTRACT

The Introduction contextualizes the essays in this cluster about screen adaptations of early modern drama, emphasizing the simultaneous freedom from strictures of time and space that screen adaptations enjoy and their acquisition of new meanings and additional resonances that could not have been thought of when they were first created.

Early modern plays were written for a bare stage and early modern performance was ephemeral. When we do have records of it, they are typically misleading, baffling, or both: Simon Forman, watching *Macbeth* at the Globe on 20 April 1610, thought he had heard the witches acclaim Macbeth as "Hail, Macbeth, King of Codon," and believed that there was a character called Mack Dove (Mabillard 2017). Screen adaptations, by contrast, can disregard both time and space. They can be set anywhere and at any time, and they endure, which means that as they stick around in the cultural landscape they may acquire new meanings and additional resonances that could not have been thought of when they were first created. It is adaptation's ability to import new meanings that lies at the heart of all the essays in this special issue, which are interested not so much in what their chosen texts may originally have meant as in what they may come to mean.

COMING TO MEAN I: ALEX COX'S REVENGERS TRAGEDY

A particularly striking example of coming to mean is Alex Cox's *Revengers*

Tragedy. When this was first released in 2003, its exploration of cultural faultlines seemed confined to the film's obvious but commonplace interest in a north-south divide and the opposition created by collapsing the family structure, so that the Duchess becomes the real mother of Lussurioso, which sets up a clear contrast with the close family group of Vindici, Carlo, and Castiza.[1] However, watching the film in 2011, the year when it is set, was a very different experience. The comet seemed less like celestial machinery than like the Daleks and the Cybermen arriving to give Christopher Eccleston, by then starring in *Doctor Who*, something else to worry about. In the wake of the Arab Spring, the public protests in the streets of Liverpool, where the rioters have all covered their faces, looked for all the world like a Scouse Spring, alerting us to the extent to which there was in fact always a contrast in place between the film's images of a distinctively Western decadence — this is the city as urban wasteland, with the nearest to green space a patch of waste ground opposite the Liver Building — and images of purity drawn from Islamic iconography and custom. At the trial of Junior, Imogen and all the other women in court with her veil their heads, while Castiza covers her face, and it is repeatedly remarked on that she is accompanied by her brothers and is therefore safe.

A further set of references is also in play. Cox chose Middleton rather than Shakespeare because he felt that Middleton espouses regicide. The leaflet inside the DVD suggests that watching the film may make you think of storming the palace, and Cox draws on the image of Princess Diana, who clearly lies behind the suggestively-named Imogen: she has blonde hair and a shy downcast glance, and after her suicide we see shots of memorials of flowers and toys. There are also conspiracy theories about her death ("The shot was in the back of the head. She'd have had to be a double-jointed octopus"), and her husband is played by Tony Booth, whose real-life son-in-law Tony Blair was the man credited with coining the term "the People's Princess." Particularly pertinent here is Mohammed al-Fayed's repeated insistence that Princess Diana was murdered because "the establishment" knew that she planned to marry his son Dodi and convert to Islam, and that the attacks on the World Trade Center were revenge for the west's treatment of Palestine and other parts of the Arab world; Cox, who is on record as regarding Liverpool as effectively a double for New York (Davies, 2000, 13), initially wanted the 9/11 attacks to the form the climax of the film. The Diana references were always there, but by 2011 audiences would have been better prepared for them by a strongly marked set of allusions in Tim Supple's 2003 TV film of *Twelfth Night*, in which Claire Price's Olivia is clearly modelled on the princess, while Florence Cabaret suggests that Sebastian could be read as Dodi (Cabaret 2008, 167). In 2011, Cox's film was thus still a version of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, but it had also come to be about revolutions abroad as well as potential revolution at home, and it was also even more clearly about Diana.

Coming to Mean II: Sarah Harding's Compulsion

Screen adaptations also seek out new audiences, with whom they need to communicate in new ways. Sarah Harding's TV film *Compulsion* (2009) drew on a growing body of both stage and film versions of Shakespeare within the British Asian community.[2] In the case of *Compulsion* (an adaptation of Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling*), the family shown are very clearly and specifically identified as Indian — there are numerous verbal references, including the information that they come from Mumbai, while their alcohol consumption makes it clear that they are not Muslim — but the film's affiliations are with a body of work that has featured a number of less tightly defined communities. These include Tim Supple's very well-received stage productions first of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2006), which toured widely, and subsequently of *As You Like It* at the Curve Theatre in Leicester (2009), whose multicultural cast included a sari-wearing Rosalind and Celia and music by Nitin Sawhney; the 2003 TV version of *Twelfth Night*, also directed by Supple; and Don Boyd's *My Kingdom* (2001), in which Jimi Mistry appears as one of the Lear figure's sons-in-law. *Compulsion* contains echoes of all these, not least in the reappearance of Parminder Nagra, who starred in the Supple *Twelfth Night*: particularly noteworthy is the fact that as in *Twelfth Night* we are offered a male character to compare the heroine's situation and behavior with, since unlike her original in the play Anjika, the Beatrice-Joanna of the film, has here been given a brother, Jaiman/Jamie, who hasn't been to Cambridge, doesn't do anything useful, takes drugs, and yet entirely escapes the policing mechanisms and the criticism to which his sister's behavior is so relentlessly subject.

There are several reasons why the British Asian community should form an attractive setting for an adaptation of *The Changeling*. In the context of the massive popularity of Bollywood and the perceived need to increase the appeal of a dramatic genre too easily pigeonholed as accessible and interesting only to a few, an injection of Asian flavor is obviously an attractive option, and one that may, additionally, seem to offer a built-in postcolonial dimension that further facilitates the creation of a sense of contemporaneity. There is also the wider hope that interesting an Asian audience in Renaissance drama will translate into "bums on seats" for live productions. The British Asian community as a whole is perceived as under-represented in theater audiences, as illustrated by an article in *The Independent* in 2011 in which Farhana Shaikh asked,

> Why do so few Asians visit the theatre? I have asked the question via Twitter and Facebook. One blogger replies: "For me, theatre is a real luxury; it's not so much about the money but the time." This is typical of the responses I get from tech-savvy Asians who are riding the social media wave to market themselves and their businesses. (Shaikh 2011, 20)

This alarming idea that most plays are simply too long had already been put forward in a Michael Billington article a few days previously about an apparent trend to forgo intervals, though this was about theater audiences in general rather than Asian ones in particular. Billington was writing in the immediate aftermath of the opening of Danny Boyle's *Frankenstein* at the National, which on the night I saw it came in at one hour and fifty minutes straight through; earlier that week I had also seen *Edward II* at the Rose on Bankside, which was two hours straight through (though in the case of the Rose the decision not to have an interval is perhaps an inevitable product of the fact that there is nowhere for the audience to go and no facilities for them to use). However in a 2010 special issue of Shakespeare devoted entirely to theater reviewing, Andrew Dickson noted that

> I was talking, a couple of weeks ago, to Claire Higgins who's playing the Countess in *All's Well That Ends Well* at the National. She described to me that one of the great shocks for her of being in that production is that when she looks out across the audience, for the first time in her Shakespeare-playing career, she sees a significant number of nonwhite faces in the audience. (Wells 2010, 322)

(I can confirm anecdotally that at the performance I attended, I was sitting next to a group of young Asian girls.) Shakespeare, then, is perceived as the solution to the apparent reluctance of British Asians to go to the theater, and his contemporaries ride on his coat-tails.

Despite its ingenuity, *Compulsion* is perhaps not wholly successful, since it is open to the charges of being too schematic and trying too hard to discuss "issues," with the result that characters' behaviour is driven not by its own internal logic but by the demands of the plot and the desire to tick a whole range of boxes from environmental awareness to drugs, gender, race, the ethics of cigarette manufacture, the malaise of new graduates, and class. The actors are thus given too little to do (Winstone relies almost entirely on saying "Git in the car"), and there is not enough of the wild, quirky, at times almost dreamlike structure-by-association of the original play, where Beatrice-Joanna is doubly hyphenated both as herself and as her dead sister, where sex changes nature, where courtship strategies involve impersonating lunatics, and where a finger with a ring on it is severed at the end of a narrow winding space in a metaphor which is simultaneously sexual and more than that.

The key to the film's take on the issues it raises might be thought to lie in its chosen title, but that is inherently ambiguous. Does it mean compulsion as in a sense of obsession, or as in being compelled, and if so who is compelling whom to do what? Anjika complains that "I've spent my whole life doing what men wanted me to," but we note that her mother is by no means powerless — she is easily able to persuade her husband to accept Anjika's English boyfriend — and Anjika

herself ultimately gets everything she wants, or at least everything she thinks she wants, for although her guilt is never proved (though her friend suspects something), it has been apparent for some time that she is trapped inside her own head. In the last shot, we see her wearing Flowers' bangle and strapped into the back of the wedding car, recalling the image system of bars which was so strongly marked in the Supple *Twelfth Night* and which has also been present here too. (The first full shot of her has barred windows behind; Flowers drives past railings that look like bars and picks up an Asian girl there; he parks Anjika in front of railings and a bench with a slatted back when she asks him for sex; later, as they talk in the car, slatted blinds can be seen behind his head.) As a chauffeur, Flowers is a figure of mobility, but Anjika, it seems, is in a prison, even if it is one partly of her own making. In replacing the prison-like atmosphere of Vermandero's castle with purely internalized constraints, the film perhaps seeks to evoke an idea of ideological repression which it may feel will resonate with the young South Asian audiences to which it hopes to appeal. In Harding's adaptation, *The Changeling* has ceased to be about seventeenth-century Alicante and instead come to be about twenty-first century London, and instead of speaking about Spaniards, it now speaks about British Indians.

The Essays

A similar tension between compulsion and liberty obtains in the wide variety of screen adaptations examined by the contributors to this special issue. Andrew Duxfield's exploration of Jan žvankmajer's *Faust* argues that not only is the film surrealist in its own right, but that it helps us to understand *Doctor Faustus* itself as a proto-surrealist text. One aspect of that surrealism is the way both play and film (doubly) resurrect the dead; Janice Wardle's essay explores how Shakespeare is "brought to life" in three modern stories for screen, and in the process, implicitly intervenes in current theoretical debates about the death of the author and the importance of fidelity in adaptations. Constraint literally comes to the fore as Domenico Lovascio discusses the Tavianis' transposition of *Julius Caesar* to an Italian prison in their 2012 film *Cesare deve Morire*, in which art becomes the liberator of the spirit, while Megan Murray-Pepper considers Ngaio Marsh's various imaginings of *Macbeth*, in the form of both real and fictional theater productions. This essay is about what Murray-Pepper terms Marsh's "intermedial aesthetic," but it is also about what *Macbeth* comes to mean in a new context and a new country.

Two essays focus on Hamlet. Adele Lee explores *King and the Clown* (*Wang-ui Namja*, dir. Lee Joon-ik 2005), which "grafts the play onto Korean history and retells the story from the perspective of the traveling players." Douglas Lanier discusses how the title of Helmut Kaütner's *The Rest is Silence* evokes not only *Hamlet* itself but also the guilt-ridden silences of postwar Germany. Finally, R. S.

White looks at three films that, on the face of it, appear to have nothing to do with Shakespeare — Jacques Rivette's New Wave movie, *Paris nous appartient* or *Paris Belongs to Us* (1961), *A Love Song for Bobby Long* (2004), and the Australian aboriginal film *Bran Nue Dae* (2009) — and shows how they can collectively comment on both Australia and *Pericles* as sites in which new generations come to terms with the old. Together, these seven essays explore how screen adaptations help the works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries to find new audiences and negotiate new meanings, as *Doctor Faustus* becomes Czech, *Hamlet* Korean and German, *Macbeth* a New Zealander, and *Pericles* an Australian, while even the inherent Englishness of Shakespeare and Italianness of Julius Caesar are made to mean in new ways.

Notes

1. Both Ben Spiller (2003) and Patrick J. Cook (2007, 88) discuss the repeated shots of the back of a limousine in which the Duke's sons jostle for space but which gets less and less crowded as brother upon brother disappears from the scene.
2. In the UK, the term "Asian" is primarily used to refer to groups of persons with ancestry in the Indian sub-continent.

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Screening the Metatheatrical: Jan Švankmajer's *Faust* as Marlovian Adaptation

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Abstract | Švankmajer's *Faust* | Surrealism and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* | Magic and Artifice: Švankmajer's *Faust* and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* | Conclusion | Notes | References

Abstract

This article considers the relationship between Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and the 1994 film, *Faust*, by the Czech surrealist filmmaker, animator, and puppeteer Jan Švankmajer. Švankmajer's film, which splices modern live cinema with claymation and self-consciously archaic puppetry, is liberal in its adaptation of its various sources (ranging from Goethe to Czech puppeteering tradition), a fact that perhaps accounts for the lack of attention it has received from Marlowe critics. With the aim of addressing this lacuna, this essay argues that, even in the scenes that deviate most clearly from Marlowe's play, Švankmajer's *Faust* persistently amplifies features of Marlowe's play that have been the subject of critical discussion, most notably its blending of medieval and early modern modes of representation and its equation of theatrical performance with the practice of magic. Švankmajer's film, I hope to show, represents an adaptation of and commentary upon Marlowe's play of which discussion is long overdue.

Despite its prominent position in the literary canon and its history of poetic, narrative and dramatic appropriation, Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* is a play with a limited cinematic tradition: the only well-known film adaptation of the play remains the 1967 movie directed by Richard Burton and his tutor at Oxford, Nevill Coghill,

starring Burton alongside his then-wife Elizabeth Taylor. This film was described in a contemporary *New York Times* review as being "of an awfulness that bends the mind," which may suggest a reason why it has provoked little interest from literary critics (Adler 1968).[1] A more recent — and, as I hope to demonstrate, more interesting — appropriation of *Doctor Faustus* is the 1994 film *Faust* by the surrealist Czech animator and filmmaker Jan Švankmajer. Švankmajer's film combines live action with stop motion animation, claymation, and hand-operated wooden marionettes and blends elements of Marlowe's play, Goethe's *Faust*, Christian Dietrich Grabbe's *Faust and Don Juan*, and German and Czech folk puppet tradition.

Švankmajer's *Faust* has attracted some attention from film critics, but the nature of its relation specifically to Marlowe's play remains as yet largely unstudied.[2] In a sense, this is understandable: the film is, after all, not a conventional adaptation of Marlowe's play, appropriating as it does material from a variety of sources, and is also notably liberal in its treatment of the material it uses. As such, while the film does insist on its Marlovian heritage at key moments, the proportion of it that can be identified as direct adaptation of material from the play is relatively small. Nonetheless, this essay will argue that, even in the scenes that deviate most clearly from Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, Švankmajer's *Faust* persistently amplifies thematic concerns and dramaturgical techniques that critics have identified in the play.[3] It will consider how the film's splicing of modern live cinema with self-consciously archaic puppetry engages with Marlowe's own blending of medieval and early modern modes of representation.[4] And, building on recent work that equates Faustus's magic with theatrical performance, it will argue that the film explores and develops a metatheatrical aspect of Marlowe's play, situating an apparently real Faust in a world that becomes increasingly artificial and theatrical as his investment in the diabolic becomes more complete. Švankmajer's film, I aim to show, represents an adaptation of and commentary upon Marlowe's play of which discussion is long overdue.

Švankmajer's *Faust*

The career of Jan Švankmajer, born in Prague in 1934, extends back to the 1960s. His output predominantly comprises enigmatic short films that favor symbolism over linear narrative. Švankmajer's films demonstrate a preoccupation with texture and tactility and manage to communicate a sense of this through the use of techniques such exaggerated sound and extreme close ups. These techniques are also used to intensify the viewer's attention to the body and to bodily functions: great focus is often applied in Švankmajer's films, for example, to the process of eating. All of this is achieved using a range of visual media. Some films, like *Dimensions of Dialogue* (1982), rely heavily on stop motion animation and claymation. Others engage with the strong Czech tradition in puppetry: Švankmajer's first film, *The Last Trick of Mr Schwarzwald and Mr Edgar* (1964), makes use of large marionette heads worn by

actors, while *Punch and Judy* (1966) depicts hand puppets performing barbaric acts of violence upon one another while also competing for the affection of a live guinea pig. Elsewhere, as in *The Garden* (1968), his films rely on conventional live acting (put, it should be added, to unconventional uses). Also notable in Švankmajer's work is a tendency to adapt from literary sources — his oeuvre includes *Don Juan* (1970), *Jabberwocky* (1971), *Castle of Otranto* (1977), *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1980), *The Pendulum, The Pit, and Hope* (1983), and *Alice* (1988).

All of these techniques and preoccupations are interwoven in Švankmajer's second feature-length film, *Faust* (1994). While a familiarity with Marlowe's play is assumed, it will be useful to provide here a brief account of the film. *Faust* situates its action in 1990s Prague and casts the protagonist not as a great scholar with an Icarian desire for knowledge, but as an unremarkable middle-aged man whose briefcase and raincoat suggest, as Pavel Drábek and Dan North put it, "a regular white-collar worker, anonymous and undistinguished" (Drábek and North 2011, 526). This Faust is apparently aimless as well as undistinguished; Michael Richardson rightly notes that he "appears to enter into the diabolic pact not from any great desire, but out of boredom" and because he "can't be bothered to resist" (Richardson 2006, 133).

In the film's first shot, intercut with flashing images of early modern woodcuts depicting scenes of infernal torment and accompanied by a chorus from the first act of Gounod's *Faust* (1859), Faust emerges via an escalator from the "underworld" of the Prague Metro — the first of the film's many motifs of ascent and descent — onto a street where two men (Valdes and Cornelius, it turns out) are distributing leaflets that specify a location and that are headed by an alchemical symbol. Faust initially discards his leaflet, but after a bizarre experience at dinner involving the discovery of an egg baked into his loaf of bread, the cracking of which occasions a gale-force wind and the onset of night, he becomes (understandably) more inquisitive. Seeking out the location, Faust finds himself in the deserted back streets of Prague, and ultimately in a dilapidated building where he discovers first of all a theatrical dressing room and later an alchemical laboratory.[5] Here, he dons a costume that has been left at the makeup desk, and from this point on the film begins to operate on various disorienting layers, in which the distinction between artifice and reality becomes increasingly hazy. Discomfited by finding himself onstage in a theater faced by a modern audience, Faust cuts his way through the stage backdrop and enters a world of a different order, populated by wooden marionettes that speak in stilted rhymed verse and that are operated — with a touch of Brechtian *verfremdungseffekt* — by visible hands.

Here he is solicited by marionettes representing the good and bad angels, and, in a comic subplot loosely derived from the Robin and Rafe scenes in Marlowe's play, a jester makes use of a magic book by tauntingly summoning and dismissing

chattering demons from within the safety of a pentagram. In the film's most overtly Marlovian moment, Faust (who in this scene becomes "Faustus") takes an occultist kitbag given to him by Valdes and Cornelius and heads up a set of rickety, collapsing stairs to an attic, where he proceeds to summon Mephistopheles, whose head bursts through the wooden floorboards. At first Mephistopheles is represented as a grotesque clay demon, but soon takes on the appearance of Faust, albeit rendered through pixilation — a process of animation whereby a live subject is filmed using stop-motion techniques. Here, the dialogue is lifted directly from Marlowe's conjuration scene and stands in stark contrast to the doggerel spoken by the film's puppet characters.

When it comes to signing the deed, the film moves on to another plane of representation, as a giant wooden marionette's head is lowered onto Faust's shoulders and he too begins to be controlled from above by a puppeteer's hands. This is the form Faust predominantly takes during his escapades with Mephistopheles, until the film shifts back in the direction of realism (if not quite reaching that destination) as the contract is called in by Lucifer; Faust, by this point human, attempts to flee his punishment and suffers the bathetically mundane — and also distinctly Czech — fate of being run over by a Skoda. It should be added that these shifts between different modes of representation and levels of reality are not as neatly compartmentalized as the above account may imply. Claymation sequences are interspersed throughout live action sections of the film, and during the period of his diabolic powers, Faust is able to remove his marionette shell and interact as a human with the wooden and clay characters around him; this he does when debating with Mephistopheles in his dressing room, and most notably in the key scene when he discards his costume to pursue Helen of Troy. As such, the film makes no comforting distinctions between what is real and what is not, or, at least, where those distinctions appear to be being made, they are soon undermined.

Surrealism and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*

Faust's employment of various representative media to trouble the real/unreal binary is very much of a piece with Švankmajer's broader interests as a filmmaker. Peter Hames, for instance, notes among his persistently reoccurring themes "[t]he concern with reality and unreality (making the real imaginary and the imaginary real)" (Hames 2008b, 36). Particularly worthy of note in this respect is Švankmajer's dedication to surrealism as an intellectual framework for his work; in 1970 he became an active member of the Czechoslovak surrealist group and a member of the editorial board for its academic journal (Richardson 2006, 122). Richardson argues that Švankmajer's work offers the purest of filmic manifestations of surrealism, stating that he "holds a unique position [among filmmakers] in that his surrealism can be described without any qualification" (Richardson 2006, 134). This is important to note, as Richardson is also keen to stress that surrealism does not simply

denote artwork that is bizarre or, for that matter, "surreal." Rather, he suggests, surrealism refers to a mode of thought with a specific set of tenets; it is not an artistic style or quality, but an intellectual movement (Richardson 2006, 2-3). Underpinning that intellectual movement is an interest "almost exclusively in exploring the conjunctions, the points of contact, between different realms of existence" (Richardson 2006, 3). André Breton, known as the founder of the movement, notes in the opening to his *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* that:

> Everything leads us to believe that there exists a certain point of the mind at which life and death, the real and the imaginary, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, the high and the low, cease to be perceived as contradiction. It would be in vain to see in surrealist activity any other motive than the hope of determining this point. (quoted in Rosemont 1978, 43)

That *Faust* represents an artistic manifestation of this project seems clear, since it so persistently juxtaposes and intermeshes different registers of reality.

But it is worth considering why Švankmajer might have been drawn to the Faust myth — or more specifically to Marlowe's *Faustus* — in order to make such a film. The Faust myth is clearly important to Švankmajer. *Faust* is not his first artistic engagement with it, since his first credit came as a puppeteer in *Johannes Doktor Faust*, a short film of 1958 by Emil Radok (Drábek and North 2011, 525). In a playful preface to the published screenplay of *Faust*, Švankmajer suggests that his personal attachment to the myth goes beyond the artistic, offering a striking account of a diabolic encounter during his college years:

> Whilst still a student I agreed with a friend (under the influence of reading gruesome horror stories) that one day we would call up Mephisto at midnight. We knew no magic formulae or magic incantations. We did not have a magic circle or any of the other necessary props. We just went into a newly-cut field and ran over the stubble calling to Mephisto. And he came. (Švankmajer 1996, vi)

The nature of Mephisto's arrival is sufficiently ambiguous to leave available a number of explanations: in the account, a gust of wind blows the two students into a ditch and then a car stops nearby, its door opening apparently in invitation. The two "did not doubt for an instant that it was Mephisto," but the effect of the encounter was to provoke questions about its nature: "Was it only a hallucination of an over-agitated imagination, or just some strange chance? Or was someone making fun of us? I don't know. We definitely experienced it as a terrifying reality which we had provoked ourselves" (Švankmajer 1996, vi).

How seriously we are meant to take Švankmajer in this para-textual account is unclear. We are left to ask — as the filmmaker claims to have done after his putative

encounter with Mephisto — whether a trick is being played on us. But the point here seems to be that the myth facilitates for Švankmajer an interplay between different orders of reality: whether the encounter is the result of a trick or not, as far as the collective perception of the two students was concerned, Mephisto's arrival was experienced as reality. Indeed, the experience is at its most interesting, from a surrealist perspective, if it *is* the product of a trick, since in that case it entails multiple realities existing simultaneously: Mephisto both has and has not appeared. It is significant that the state of mind required for this experience is facilitated by indulgence in literature (they are still "under the influence of reading gruesome horror stories"), especially as the account appears as an adjunct to a discussion of artistic creation being a negotiation between the registers of conscious planning and the "abyss of the unconscious" — between, as Richardson puts it in his identification of the surrealist focus, quoted earlier — two different realms of existence.

The notion that art or storytelling has the capacity to bring into contact different orders of reality is especially applicable to the Faust myth, since it is itself so concerned with interactions between the diabolic and the terrestrial worlds. This is particularly true of Marlowe's *Faustus*, in which the subject of the spatial relationship between earth and hell is raised in debate between Faustus and Mephistopheles:

> FAUSTUS: Where are you damned?
> MEPHISTOPHELES: In hell.
> FAUSTUS: How comes it then that thou art out of hell?
> MEPHISTOPHELES: Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it. (1.3.75-78)[6]

In this famous passage, which is one of the few parts of Marlowe's play to be reproduced verbatim in Švankmajer's film, hell and earth not only encounter one another but are depicted as coterminous; as Mephistopheles later states, "all places shall be hell that is not heaven" (2.1.129).

Marlowe's *Faustus* begins to look more like a proto-surrealist text, and its protagonist like a proto-surrealist, when one considers another statement by André Breton, made in his *Surrealism and Painting*. Breton declared that the ambition of surrealist art should be to

> encompass the whole psychophysical field [constituted by] unfathomable depths [in which] there reigns the absence of contradiction, the relaxation of emotional tensions due to repression, a lack of the sense of time, and the replacement of external reality by a psychic reality obeying the pleasure principle. (quoted in Richardson 2006, 5)

The correlation is approximate, but each of the elements mentioned by Breton can be said to feature to some degree in Marlowe's play. Obedience to the pleasure principle is precisely what seems to govern Faustus's actions during the third and fourth acts of

the play, between the sealing of the bond and his return home on the eve of his damnation, as he hedonistically squanders his twenty-four years of earthly power. The play is in one sense structured around a very clear sense of time — twenty four years is the specific earthly duration that Faustus's adventures are given — but, as Joseph Candido has noted, its treatment of that duration is remarkably fluid, with the period of the bond elapsing in a seeming moment before the play culminates in Faustus's final hour which, marked by the sounding of a clock's chimes, speeds up as it progresses (Candido 2009).

Just as Švankmajer can write of a reality in which he encountered Mephisto irrespective of whether Mephisto was really there or not, the play dramatizes conflicting yet co-existent orders of time, on one level as the regular constant that is measured by a clock, and on another as the fluctuating and intangible force experienced by a human subject; for Candido, the play, and particularly the scene that dramatizes Faustus's final hour,

> masterfully depicts the ironies of time as human beings tend to experience it — i.e., the paradox that time can seem virtually interminable during a period of relatively short duration and, alternatively, often seems to slip by unnoticed during a period of much greater length. (Candido 2009, 137-38)

Finally, Breton's urging of surrealist art to encompass "unfathomable depths [in which] reigns the absence of contradiction" calls directly to mind Faustus's desire to be resolved "of all ambiguities" (1.1.82) and his declaration that

> Emperors and kings
> Are but obeyed in their several provinces,
> Nor can they raise the winds or rend the clouds;
> But his dominion that exceeds in this [magic]
> Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man. (1.1.59-63)

As I have discussed elsewhere, Faustus's intellectual project is built on a foundation of occult hermetic philosophy that states as one of its central goals the achievement of a state of being in which contradictions become meaningless (Duxfield 2015, 65-88). The *Pimander*, the central text of hermetic philosophy, states that in order to achieve complete and divine knowledge, one must

> Become higher than all heighth, lower than all depths, comprehend in thy self, the qualities of all Creatures, of the Fire, the Water, the Dry, and Moyst; and conceive likewise, that thou canst at once be every where in the Sea, in the Earth . . . Thou shalt at once understand thyself, not yet begotten in the Womb, young, old, to be dead, the things after death, and all these together. (Trismegistus 1657, H6r-H6v)

Doctor Faustus, then, with its blending of contradictory yet co-existent worlds, its protagonist set on the undermining of conventional intellectual distinctions, and its

evocation of a state of mind unencumbered by binary oppositions, has already in place a set of dramatic effects and intellectual associations that render it fertile source material for a surrealist film maker.

Another important aspect of Marlowe's work as a source for Švankmajer is its status as a work specifically conceived for, and performed in, the public commercial theater. In this performance context, *Doctor Faustus* seems to have been a play with a unique capacity to trouble the distinction between world and play-world; this much is indicated by the notorious anecdote included in William Prynne's *Histriomastix*, among other places, which told of

> The visible apparition of the Devill on the stage at the Belsavage Play-house, in Queen Elizabeth's dayes (to the great amazement both of the actors and the spectators) while they were prophanely playing the History of Faustus (the truth of which I have heard from many now alive, who well remember it) there being some distracted with that feareful sight. (quoted in Chambers 1923, 423-24)

This story seems to have gained currency as a myth, as another early modern account tells of a performance in Exeter during which the acting company received an unwelcome addition to its personnel: "as Faustus was busie in his magicall invocations . . . they were all perswaded, there was one devell too many amongst them" (quoted in Chambers 1923, 424). Whatever credence one pays to these accounts (and Prynne's, appearing as it does in a work of puritanical antitheatrical persuasion, would seem to have a clear motive to associate the performance of the play with the real appearance of the devil), they bespeak an anxiety about this specific play's potential to occasion contact between "real," theatrical, and diabolical realms.

Andrew Sofer has elegantly attributed this power to the relationship between *performance* and *performativity*: since a conjuration is a performative speech act — that is, an utterance which performs an action (e.g., "I declare this store open") — its utterance, whether in earnest and in private or as part of a theatrical performance on a public stage, carries the threat of being successful in its designated purpose. "For Elizabethans," Sofer suggests, "the power to conjure inhered in the utterance itself . . . rather than in the will or intention of the speaker" (Sofer 2009, 4). For that reason, the play was able to create a heightened state of receptivity to otherworldly experience, which again recalls Švankmajer's Mephistophelean encounter:

> It was precisely the potential for *inadvertent* magic on the part of the players — the belief that Faustus's spells might operate independent of actor and character — that thrilled and alarmed Elizabethan audiences, causing them to see devils that were not literally there. (Sofer 2009, 2-3)

If, as Richardson suggests, surrealism's central focus is on "the conjunctions, the points of contact, between different realms of existence," then there could hardly be

richer source material than Doctor Faustus (Richardson 2006, 4).

Magic and Artifice: Švankmajer's *Faust* and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*

Having established some commonalities between the broader surrealist filmmaking project and the dramatic and intellectual world of *Doctor Faustus*, the rest of this essay will consider in detail the ways in which Švankmajer's *Faust* appropriates, manipulates, and reinvents specific aspects of Marlowe's play. In particular, I wish to examine the uses that Švankmajer makes of a metatheatrical strain that numerous critics have identified in the play.

As tends to be pointed out, *Doctor Faustus* is a play full of performances. Lucifer and Mephistopheles stage them at crucial times in order to divert Faustus's attention when it seems possible that he might turn to God. Thus, at the moment when the inscription "*homo fuge*" appears on Faustus's arm in the act of signing the deed, Mephistopheles stages a dance of devils "somewhat to delight his mind" (2.1.81-82), and later, when Faustus appears to be on the brink of repentance, Lucifer introduces the pageant of the seven deadly sins, inviting his victim to "mark this show" (2.3.105). Faustus later becomes a director of theatrical spectacles himself. The conjuring of Alexander the Great and his paramour for the entertainment of the Emperor Charles V is a case in point. Before summoning Alexander, Faustus offers Charles an honest account of the nature of the spectacle he is about to witness:

> But if it like your Grace, it is not in my ability to present before your eyes the true substantial bodies of those deceased princes, which long since are consumed to dust . . . But such spirits as can lively resemble Alexander and his paramour shall appear before your Grace in that manner that they best lived in, in their most flourishing estate (4.1.47-56)

By drawing attention to the artificiality of his own staged spectacle, Faustus also momentarily underscores the artificiality of the larger performance of which it is a part: the audience is not about to see a spirit in the likeness of Alexander, but an actor representing a spirit in the likeness of Alexander. Faustus's insistence on the theatricality of his show takes on a tragically ironic dimension later in the play, when he is unable to discern the same artificiality in Mephistopheles's summoning of Helen of Troy: it is at this point in the play that Faustus's embrace of illusory pleasures becomes complete.

Sara Munson Deats has noted the play's association of magic with theatrical performance, both with respect to the episodes just mentioned and in terms of its vocabulary. She points out that "the theatrical terms *art*, *show*, *perform*, and *shadow* are linked with magic to accentuate the similarities between these two arts that employ fantasy and illusion as their media" (Deats 2008, 22). For Deats, the play's

equation of theatrical performance with magic represents an engagement with similar associations made in puritan anti-theatrical rhetoric and thereby ascribes to the theater some of the moral and theological taint associated with Renaissance occultism. As such, the play reveals an ambivalence on the part of the playwright towards the profession to which he belonged. But the relationship also works in the opposite direction. When magic and theater are associated in this way, the artificiality of theater — so often self-reflexively foregrounded by its most prominent practitioners — serves as an analogue of the illusoriness of any success, fame, or achievement derived from the earthly practice of magic or the pursuit of diabolical alliances. Faustus's apparent failure to understand this at the point of the Helen of Troy episode makes a central contribution to his downfall.

The association between occult magic and theatrical performance is, if anything, insisted upon to an even greater extent in Švankmajer's film than it is in Marlowe's play. When Faust follows the directions on the map given to him by Valdes and Cornelius, he discovers at the marked destination a theatrical dressing room. Apparently already aware of the action that the situation requires, Faust sits at a dressing table and assumes the costume of a Renaissance nobleman, complete with skin-whitening makeup, a wig, and a bushy false beard (a suggestion of the magician is added by a starry cape). Here, the ordinary, white-collar Faust engages in the kind of imaginary social mobility that so alarmed early modern anti-theatrical writers.[7] What is striking about this scene is how unfazed Faust is by suddenly assuming the role of an actor; as Shera observes,

> initially drawn . . . into a theatre, Faustus proceeds to behave as though he is vaguely familiar with the demands of this new world. He knows where to find the key to enter the dressing room and, later, he almost automatically applies his costume and stage makeup. With all the skills of a character in a dream, Faustus prepares for his impending theatrical role as though it were strangely routine. (Shera 2001, 137)

Shera makes this observation as part of a reading of the film as engaging with the psychoanalytic concept of the uncanny, implying that Faust's assumption of his new role in some way represents a return of the repressed. This is a reading that takes on an added dimension when considered in relation to a series of episodes that initially seem to be incidental. First, while perusing his map on his way into the theater Faust encounters a man fleeing the building in a state of terror. Secondly, Faust crosses paths on a couple of occasions later in the film with an elderly and apparently destitute man carrying a severed leg wrapped in newspaper. These scenes find their significance in the film's dénouement, when Faust, attempting to escape the devils that have come to collect his soul, runs from the theater, and, in a reversal of the earlier scene, passes another man entering with a copy of Valdes and Cornelius's map. Shortly after, when Faust is mowed down and killed by a driverless car, the elderly man arrives at the scene and furtively carries away his leg, which (like that of

his Marlovian forebearer) has been severed in the collision. The implication is clear: everything that has happened in the film has already happened before and is already happening again. Thus, Faust appears familiar with his actorly role because he — or at least previous incarnations of him — has already played it countless times before.

Equally, though, Faust's familiarity with his new role is consistent with other metacinematic techniques that the scene employs. As the camera positions itself behind Faust and directs the spectator's gaze towards his reflection in a mirror, the composition incorporates an effective screen-within-a-screen. Once Faust has finished putting on his costume, a new camera angle produces a close, front-on view of Faust's face (presumably still in the mirror, although by now its frame is outside the frame of the shot), at which point his gaze fixes directly on the camera and he sticks out his tongue. The deployment of mirrors and the direct gaze at the camera are both identified by Sarah Hatchuel as techniques through which cinematic adaptors of Shakespearean drama have sought to reproduce or transpose the effect of metatheater onto the screen, making the spectator aware of the presence both of the camera and of the actor (Hatchuel 2004, 94-126). As such, the audience sees in this moment not just Faust-as-actor, but actor-as-Faust-as-actor; with this effect in mind, the cosy familiarity with the theater dressing room setting makes sense, particularly in the case of Petr Cepek, who was primarily known for a distinguished career in Czech theater.

Despite Faust's apparent comfort in the dressing room environment, he soon shows himself to be anxious at the prospect of performance before an audience. In another scene that encourages an alienating recognition of the mechanics of the filmic medium, Faust, now fully regaled in costume, wanders around the wings of the theater and finds his way onto the stage. Peeping through the curtain, he sees (and, since at this moment the camera adopts his viewpoint, the audience also sees) people in modern dress filing into an auditorium, with the usual hum and chatter that constitutes the aural build up to a theatrical performance. What needs to be noted here, though, is that this generic auditorium might as easily be that of a cinema: while Faust is ostensibly looking out from the curtain onto the audience in a theater, any audience that happens to be watching *Faust* in a cinema is confronted at this point with what might be taken as a reflection of itself approximately fifteen minutes earlier, preparing to engage in the act of watching the film itself.

If this reflection jolts the audience members into awareness of their status as spectators, the sudden awareness of being watched seems to disturb Faust, whose response is to produce a penknife from his pocket and cut a vertical slash into the theatrical backcloth, through which he then escapes. In retreating from a confrontation with the "reality" of the theater/cinema audience, Faust moves into another order of reality that exists behind the stage or screen. In this realm, Faust's awareness of illusion, like that of Marlowe's Faustus before him, seems to melt away,

as he engages with clay figures and with wooden marionettes without betraying any understanding of their artificiality. However, as a general rule (although, as I have already mentioned, there are complications to this generalization), the further Faust progresses in his commitment to magic, and the less *he* seems aware of the nature of the illusions around him, the more the film seems to advertise its artifice to its audience.

The most striking manifestation of this occurs, in another correlation with Marlowe's play, at the utterance of a performative speech act. Immediately before the signing of the deed, Mephisto (in one of the few passages — each of which is concerned with the summoning of Mephistopheles and the completion of the deal — to quote Marlowe directly), threatens to return to Hell if Faust will not formally hand over possession of his soul. At Faust's response — "Stay, Mephistophilis! / Aye, Mephistophilis, I give it thee" — a giant, wooden marionette's head lowers onto the head of Faust, and the rest of the scene, like several subsequent scenes, is performed in the medium of puppetry (57:40-58:30). Once this transformation has taken place, both the content and the delivery of the verse also becomes distinctly wooden, with undue emphasis and metrical irregularity drawing attention to the clumsiness of the rhyming verse. As tiny good angels repeatedly break the quills with which Faust attempts to sign the deed, the following dialogue is delivered with self-conscious bombast:

> FAUST: A mystery, as you see
> My quill lies snapped in two upon the floor.
> MEPHISTO: Do not prevaricate, you've plenty more.
> You cannot now deny what we've agreed
> So with your blood come sign the deed!
> FAUST: Look, Mephisto, stranger still:
> Again you see upon the floor a broken quill.
> MEPHISTO: Faustus, you try my patience sorely
> Take another quill and sign the deed:
> My acolytes stand ready and this time you'll succeed. (58:40-1:00:20)

The contrast with the sonorous Marlovian blank verse spoken only moments before is stark.

This heightened artifice is also evident in episodes equivalent to the two scenes from Marlowe's play discussed above, namely, the entertainment of Charles V and the liaison with the succubus Helen of Troy. In the first of these equivalent scenes, again performed in the medium of puppetry, Faust travels to Portugal, where he has heard that the King is celebrating a birthday. Like Charles, the king requests to see a show — in this case, not Alexander and his paramour, but the slaying of Goliath by David. After Faust very audibly calls for Mephisto's help (Marlowe's Faustus is much more careful to conceal his secondary role in the production of his illusions), cardboard

cut-out figures representing the biblical personages are raised in modest puffs of smoke and are visibly held up from behind by wooden puppet devils. The already obvious ruse disintegrates entirely when Goliath is dropped by his operators, and the King, after some initial amazement at the scene, raises the alarm, occasioning the destruction of his kingdom at Faust's orders.

In the film, as in the play, Faust later becomes the victim rather than the orchestrator of one of these diabolical illusions. In the film's most disturbing scene, Faust, on the point of repentance, is presented with Helen, which in this case is one of the devil puppets seen regularly in the film, disguised by the addition of a doll-like mask and wig, a white gown, and an imitation vagina created by the means of a hand drill and a pubic wig. Faust removes his marionette's mask and pursues the puppet Helen in his human form, as if the exchange were happening on the plane of reality (although, crucially, the puppeteer's rod remains fixed to the top of his head). Only after chasing the succubus into the crypt of a ruined cathedral and having intercourse with it does Faust realize his error; as he catches sight of the devil's red, wooden shell underneath the disguise, his instinctive response — to vomit — highlights the difference between his own fleshy, visceral body and the grotesque, chattering, wooden puppet with which he has just copulated. As Hames puts it, "the episode joins the real and the imaginary in a tangible, nauseous and disruptive manner" (Hames 2008a, 92).

The bringing together of live acting and puppetry, of realist representation with deliberately archaic and alienating types of performance, is part of the film's engagement with the surrealist project of examining the points at which different orders of reality meet. While this might seem like a particularly modern — or perhaps postmodern (although Švankmajer would likely reject the application of the term to his work) — device, it has a model in Marlowe's play.[8] As I have noted elsewhere, critics writing on *Doctor Faustus* have tended to observe the coexistence of dual generic frameworks in the play, noting its capacity to be read either as a tragedy depicting the fate of a flawed but admirable Renaissance hero whose resistance to theocratic dogma goes a step too far, or as a medieval morality play, at the center of which is a clear admonition against wondering at unlawful things (Duxfield 2015, 65-74). This generic commingling does not simply make available multiple responses to the play's central character, but brings together, as Švankmajer's film does, approaches to representation that are associated with distinct historical moments and that differ on a conceptual level.

In her influential study of the early modern subject as realized on stage, Catherine Belsey distinguishes between two modes of staging: the emblematic, associated with medieval drama and characterized by figures standing as abstractions, and the illusionistic, which was emergent on the early modern stage and which aimed to give the impression of human characters with interior lives. In Belsey's terms, "[w]hile emblematic staging displays the signified, makes meaning visible, illusionism

reproduces the referent, replicates what is already visible, already known" (Belsey 1985, 24). For Belsey, it is key that the illusionist mode is only emergent and not yet entirely dominant during the heyday of early modern English drama; both modes of representation coexist on the stage throughout the period. Darryl Grantley makes a similar point with specific reference to Marlowe:

> It could be argued that what we see in Marlowe . . . is effectively a simultaneity and coexistence of what might be termed the figural impulse, i.e., towards dramatic persona as paradigm or discursive category, and the subjective impulse, i.e., towards interiority and psychological integrity, in short that dramatic *persona* in Marlowe operates as *both* figure *and* character. (Grantley 1996, 227)

Thus, Faustus's agonizing over the destination of his soul is staged both emblematically by devices such as the presence of good and bad angels competing for influence over his actions, and illusionistically through features such as the great final soliloquy, which gives the impression of a psychologically complex human subject anguished by the realization of his fate.

What is important with respect to the current discussion is that the emblematic mode, though still present in Marlowe's theater and particularly in *Faustus*, is by this time well into the process of becoming outmoded. This juxtaposition of recognizably older forms with strikingly new modes of representation gives those older devices a metatheatrical quality. Grantley writes that

> The very outdatedness of the devils as a dramatic device underlines their identity as theatrical mechanisms, in a sort of alienation effect and this is further underlined by the fact that Marlowe pulls out all of the theatrical stops: they enter with thunder and lightning, and on occasion with fireworks. (Grantley 1996, 234)

To an Elizabethan audience, then, the play's more medieval, more emblematic aspects might have had a similar effect to that which the puppetry sequences in Švankmajer's *Faust* have on a modern viewer: they stand out as self-consciously theatrical, nakedly artificial, and oddly anachronistic. Indeed, Švankmajer encourages this effect in his film by giving his puppets a chipped and battered appearance that invests them with a sense of antiquity; these devils seem to be from another time as well as another world.

Finally, as Joel Altman has noted, the emblematic mode of representation has implications for the autonomy of the central character (Altman 1978, 381-82). When Faustus deliberates over the direction of his studies at the beginning of the play, the audience is given the impression of a subject with an interior life with the capacity to make choices. When, however, his interior deliberation is represented emblematically — when his thoughts are dramatized by the opposing persuasions of

the good and bad angels — Faustus is deprived of any sense of agency, becoming instead the object of a conflict between external opposing forces. A similar effect is produced by Švankmajer's puppetry, although here it is more explicit. A puppet, after all, requires a puppeteer. When Faust promises to give his soul to Mephisto and the marionette's head is lowered onto his shoulders, he not only enters into a different order of reality but also visibly cedes control of his being, as his movements are operated in these scenes by a clearly visible pair of hands. Faust may have entered an illusory world, but his loss of self-determination is all too real.

Conclusion

I have not attempted to offer a comprehensive reading of Švankmajer's *Faust* in this essay. His is an enigmatic film susceptible to countless interpretations and derived from an eclectic selection of sources, and I make no claim to having arrived at a fixed sense of its overall meaning (if it can be said to possess such a thing) here.[9] What I hope to have shown, however, are some of the complex ways in which the film engages with its Marlovian source. While the film's playful navigation between different orders of reality and commingling of variant artistic media are characteristic of a markedly twentieth-century set of surrealist interests, on a certain level these are interests that are shared by Marlowe's sixteenth-century play. Where Švankmajer's film sets the puppetry of old Czech tradition alongside realist acting and modern animation, Marlowe's play intersperses the emblematic mode of the medieval theater with the illusionistic mode of the Renaissance and beyond. Where *Faustus* employs metatheatrical techniques to underscore the illusoriness of the fruits of diabolical magic, *Faust* achieves a similar effect through a comparable cinematic self-reflexiveness. The necessary material for a surrealist filmmaker, it seems, is already present in Marlowe's play, and that play, I suggest, has in Švankmajer's film its first and only great cinematic adaptation.

Notes

1. Critics who have discussed the Burton/Coghill film include David Bevington (2010, 51), who offers a very brief account of it in his performance history of the play, and Jennifer A. Yirinek (2013), who argues that the film engaged with the late-1960s current of sexual liberation by focusing on lechery as the foremost of Faustus's sins.
2. Švankmajer's film has attracted some attention in film criticism and cultural studies. Critics to have worked on it include Lorna Fitzsimmons (2000), Peta Allen Shera (2001), Elisa Segnini (2009), and Pavel Drábek and Dan North (2011).While the latter of these sources appears in a literary journal and refers to the film's literary sources, a focused reading on the film's appropriation of Marlowe's play has to date not been carried out.

3. Švankmajer, in extracts from his diary published with the screenplay of *Faust*, reflects on whether his film is more indebted to Marlowe's *Faustus* or to Goethe's *Faust* and concludes that the Faust he has created is in important ways unlike those of both of his main sources (Švankmajer 1996, xii). My intention here is not to claim that Švankmajer's film is a direct and unilateral adaptation of Marlowe's play, nor is it to suggest that his debt to Marlowe is greater than his debt to Goethe or his other sources. Rather, I aim to identify and consider the ways in which his film engages specifically with Marlowe's play as a source.
4. On the play's medieval heritage, see David Bevington (1964), John Parker (2007), Karol Cooper (2014), and Andrew Duxfield (2015).
5. While Faust ultimately finds his way to the designated spot via deserted back streets and arrives at a dilapidated building, a freeze frame inspection of the map, which only appears on screen momentarily, reveals that the destination marked on it actually appears to the be the site of Prague's Old Town Hall, the hub of the old town and Prague's most famous building owing to its astrological clock. While there is insufficient space to offer a full consideration of the implications of this detail here, it is worth noting that, just as Faust's ordinariness lends him the quality of an everyman, the place where he eventually agrees to his pact with Mephistopheles is subtly associated with a building that tends to stand symbolically for Prague as a whole.
6. This, and all further quotations, are taken from the A-text in David Bevington's *Doctor Faustus: A- and B-Texts* (1604, 1616) edition (1993).
7. Deats remarks of Marlowe's play that "[Faustus's] infernal familiar diverts him from his wavering with a demonic dance and gifts of royal regalia — hollow crowns without kingdoms, robes without offices. In accepting this accoutrement, Faustus identifies himself with the much-maligned actor, who frequently dressed in the raiment of his supposed 'betters,' playing the roles of kings and nobles and thus assuming a sartorial position above his station" (Deats 2008, 19).
8. Michael O'Pray notes of the relationship of Švankmajer's work to postmodernism:

    > Švankmajer's reputation was firmly established in the West in the 1980s at the same time as the burgeoning of postmodernism. A superficial resemblance exists between his work and this development in the visual arts: they share a zest for the manipulation of historical visual elements in a *bricolage* fashion, and the general disruption of historical and aesthetic coherence and continuity. But, unlike many purveyors of postmodernism, Švankmajer does not embrace its inveterate impotence in the face of humanist themes. On the contrary, his stance is essentially radical, always facing outwards towards the world and eschewing self-reflexivity for its own sake. (O'Pray 2008, 42)

9. In particular, the film invites readings in terms of both Czech folklore and the political upheaval experienced in Czechoslovakia throughout the twentieth century, as well as more sustained consideration of its relation to the Czech puppetry

tradition, but these are considerations beyond the scope of this work.

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Time Travel and the Return of the Author: *Shakespeare in Love*, "The Shakespeare Code," and *Bill*

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Abstract

In the latter part of the twentieth century, Roland Barthes's reader-orientated theory, "the death of the author," seemed to signal the end of biographical literary investigation. And yet by the end of the twentieth century, fueled in part by the rising wave of celebrity culture, a new strategy in relation to canonical texts emerged: the resurrection of the author via the biographical film. This paper examines the extent to which "time travel" via contemporary film to the early career of Shakespeare in the 1590s has been driven by a search for images of the playwright relevant to modern audiences, whether that be romantic bard or rock star hero. The texts considered here which explore versions of the author Shakespeare include John Madden's *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), the BBC's *Doctor Who*: "The Shakespeare Code" (2007), and Richard Bracewell's *Bill* (2015). The discussion investigates the significance of these filmic travels through time and place and, by linking them to literary tourism, examines how these ideas are utilized to create personal and national memories. It also shows how these representations of time and place, and the attempt to establish contemporary connections with audiences, engages with central questions in adaptation studies about the authenticity and fidelity of texts and performance.

Introduction

This essay explores three filmic texts, *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), the *Dr Who* episode "The Shakespeare Code" (2007), and *Bill* (2015), which offer their audiences varied representations of the author Shakespeare. Contemporary film and television have had an enduring fascination with the idea of the author, and this has resulted in a "marked surge in the popularity of the literary biopic" (Buchanan 2013, 4). And yet Shakespeare offers particular challenges to those film and television makers, because while comprehensive biographical information is available, "the main deficiency in the available data consists in the fact that [it] is public not private" (Holderness 2011, 2) in the sense that it reveals little about Shakespeare's emotions and feelings. The texts to be discussed here appear undaunted by these challenges, however, and via the technologies of contemporary film and television offer the opportunity for their audiences, in imagination, to meet the author as they travel back in time to the sixteenth century.

It is that notion of the films as time travel, and the interaction of the past and present, that this essay wishes to explore. In one of the texts discussed here, the *Dr Who* episode "The Shakespeare Code," time-travel is clearly the main narrative thread. In the other texts, there are similar attempts to recreate significant places and times from Shakespeare's life, although in these instances no character is designated as the time-traveller. While, as Brooks Landon notes, "the primary effect of film is always one of time travel or time manipulation" (Landon 1992, 76), this essay will argue that in these particular texts, the intermingling of past and present is more overtly foregrounded, particularly through the use of comedy. Arguably, with all filmic historical recreations of the past there are residual traces of the present, the film's moment of production and consumption, but the texts discussed here make deliberate dramatic capital out of the co-existence of different time periods. These texts explicitly, and conterminously, in their reading of Shakespeare, see the author as someone both "of his time" and also "out of time." Often the presence of this double time enables the films to assert the playwright's genius as an author for all time. The films, moreover, rely upon, and indeed exploit, modern audiences' assumptions about Shakespeare's iconic status. In their depiction of the events of the sixteenth century, "his time," they work to provide "evidence" for, and of, his burgeoning talent. More controversially they also, often playfully, provide largely fictional explanatory "evidence" in Shakespeare's time for some of those gaps and blanks in the author's life identified by contemporary critics. Two of the films discussed here, for example, make merry with Shakespeare's life in 1593, as he emerges from the gap constituted as the "lost years" by academic criticism. Moreover, these

comic interpolations, which often highlight moments of frisson between past and present, also make the audiences more aware of their role as observers and travelers to a different place and time.

Contexts

But why should one wish to travel to that place and time in search of the author? Part of the answer may lie in the extent to which such biographical films have in themselves become acts of literary tourism. The history of Shakespearean bardolatry has certainly included the development of literary sites deemed significant to Shakespeare. Harald Hendrix illustrates how place provides an opportunity for acts of memorial and "an intellectual exchange beyond the grave, a 'conversation with the dead'" (Hendrix 2009, 14). In the twenty-first century, travel to Stratford-upon-Avon and visits to the tourist sites such as the Shakespeare Birthplace continue to play an important part in those conversations. The nature of the conversation in 2015 was made clear in a banner across Henley Street which proclaimed: "'Explore' Shakespeare's Birthplace: uncover the stories behind the world's greatest storyteller." These literary places, including the Birthplace, employ guides in character and staged dramatic scenarios to carry the visitors back in space and time to Shakespeare's world. We may well ask, with Alison Booth, "in what ways does literary tourism serve as time travel?" (Booth 2009, 151). Booth also goes on to argue that "time travel is by no means uni-directorial" (Booth 2009, 151), suggesting, as we shall see in these texts, that the creation of literary space is not simply defined within a specific time, but may occupy a complex mixture of past, present, and future. It is only a short step from these kinds of literary tourism to the film and television texts under discussion here. Although experienced virtually, in film and television, the place and time of the author become the springboard to access the significance of the life. These texts provide the opportunity for a different type of what Douglas Kennedy calls "cultural tourism" or "edutainment" (Kennedy 2008, 175) and as Michael Anderegg asserts, "the cinema cultural tourist travels in time" (Anderegg 2004, 34).

The earliest biographical film concerning Shakespeare is, as Douglas Lanier notes, Georges Méliès' 1907 film *La Mort de Jules César*. In it, Shakespeare, suffering from writer's block, falls asleep. As he does, he dreams of the assassination scene from *Julius Caesar* (Lanier 2007, 61), with the dream being both Gothic premonition and also suggesting that the source of inspiration is Shakespeare's subconscious (and not his research of historical sources). The latest example, at the time of writing, of such a biographical film about Shakespeare is *Bill* (2015), which will be discussed below. What unites these biographical films with literary tourism is the same "desire to find

a satisfying synergy between the life and the work" (Buchanan 2013, 15), and in particular a desire to pinpoint the inspiration giving rise to the works. It is clear that such interests fueled earlier films, and this interest has been intensified in more recent films by a contemporary preoccupation with celebrity culture and fame.

In addition to the contexts provided by popular culture, tourism, celebrity culture, and, arguably, science fiction and time travel, the films are obviously positioned, sometimes rather knowingly, amidst the frameworks of academic literary criticism. The opportunity provided to audiences to access the "life of the author" in these texts seems at times a deliberate rebuff to Roland Barthes' mid-twentieth century claims about the "Death of the Author" (1967). As Judith Buchanan notes of Barthes' essay, "No longer was a written text understood as simply a transmission vehicle for a settled and stable meaning determined by an author and awaiting decoding in those terms" (Buchanan 2013, 17). These films, together with a wealth of biographies about Shakespeare,[1] which initially began to appear in a flurry of new millennium reassessment, seem anxious to reassert the centrality of the life to the works. In these academic biographies, in what seems to be an extension of new historicist methodology, the life becomes a contemporary text to be derived from, and placed alongside, historical sources from the early modern period. The markers of this re-association of the life, works, and historical documentation can be seen in the title of James Shapiro's book — *The Year of Lear: Shakespeare in 1606* (2015). And yet, as Shapiro noted, in a pre-publication article in *The Guardian*:

> Biographers like to attribute the turns in Shakespeare's career to his psychological state. . . . While his personal life must have powerfully informed what he wrote, we have no idea what he was feeling at any point during the quarter-century he was writing. (26th September, 2015)

While Shapiro recognizes that historiographical investigation can reveal significant events in the life of Shakespeare — the return of the plague, the death of Marie Mountjoy, his landlady in Silver Street — and while he posits that these brushes with death are likely to have informed the writing of *King Lear*, he also notes the lack of a personal record, with no first hand evidence of the precise nature of any emotional impact of these events on the author. M. G. Aune, exploring the critical reception of Stephen Greenblatt's biography of Shakespeare, *Will of the World*, suggests that this "biography relies on conventional biographical strategies, most noticeably the use of conjecture and supposition" (Aune 206). It is, as Aune notes, the extent of that conjecture and supposition that was significant to the academic reviewers of Greenblatt's biography, which most also felt (ironically given the nature of Greenblatt's previous academic engagement) went beyond the parameters of new

historicism. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, both literary biographies and films continue to employ such apparently imprecise biographical strategies as they attempt to resurrect the idea of the author. Yet arguably film and television versions of the author's life, within their fictional context, have a greater freedom to operate in the gaps and blanks, and to explore the emotional catalysts for the production of the literary works.

Before examining these three films, which all present versions of Shakespeare's life, a brief word about audience. All three films employ humor, and, of course, not all members of the films' audiences will respond in the same way to comedy. More importantly, we should not assume a homogenous audience for these, or indeed any, films. While there is no "text" against which to measure representations of Shakespeare's life, it is certainly the case that audiences for these popular cinematic versions of his life will bring different knowledge sets or baggage on their time travel to the sixteenth century. Some will see them as an opportunity to exercise (and maybe display) their academic abilities; others will treat them as introductions to the milieu and plays; while others already interested in the drama may be more interested in the speculations about the author's life. They may even simply be interested in a particular genre of film, such as those to be discussed here, romantic comedy or science fiction. The designated rating of the films also has an impact both on the production and consumption of a text. Two of the texts discussed below might be said to be designed for a young, or family audience, while the first, *Shakespeare in Love* with a 15 (or PG-13, in the U.S.) rating, is aimed at young adults and older.

Shakespeare in Love

Shakespeare in Love, released in 1998, presents an imagined context for the writing, rehearsal and performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, which aims to reveal the author's emotional catalyst for the play's production. The film, set in London in 1593, quite clearly seeks to illustrate parallels and analogies between sixteenth-century life and 1990s Britain. The publicists for the film proclaimed that "Refreshingly contemporary, *Shakespeare in Love* is ultimately the tale of a man and woman trying to make love work in the 90s — the 1590s" (quoted in Anderegg, 2003, 61). This notion of the "contemporary" implies that the film will transcend distinctions of time by celebrating universal values. Its aim, as Anderegg notes, is "to bring Shakespeare to us, to collapse past and present, to deny there is such a thing as 'pastness.' 'History,' from this point of view, is always now" (Anderegg 2004, 43).

There are, however, numerous paradoxes in the interpretation of

"Shakespeare" offered here. The Will[2] of this film may be like us in his attempts to understand his unfulfilled and complex life in his visit to the astrologer/psychiatrist in the opening scenes, or in his frustrated attempts to make his way in the world, but the film also seeks to affirm the uniqueness of Shakespeare the genius poet. This genius is signalled to those in the audience in the know as they see snatches of language from the Elizabethan street (such as the anti-theatrical cleric proclaiming "And the Rose smells thusly rank by any name! I say a plague on both their houses") registered by Shakespeare and then transformed by the creative powers of the poet into the speeches of Juliet and Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*. There is thus a contradiction wittily played out in Norman and Stoppard's[3] script for this film, as the audience are engaged by Will's similarity to themselves, while he is at the same time marked out as different and separate from them by his transformative genius.[4] It is this focus on the genius literary figure that has been a part of most academic attacks on the film, typified by Richard Burt's comment that the film is a "blunted critique of literary authorship" relying "on outmoded academic scholarship" (Burt 2000, 222).

The paradox of engagement with, and separation from, the representation of Shakespeare is reinforced in terms of the visual and verbal recreation of the world of the film. There is, on the one hand, a meticulous attention to detail in the creation of the costumes and setting of the city of London and its playhouses which draws us via its apparent verisimilitude into the world of the film. In this we see the influence of the heritage film with its use of spectacle and the pictorial creation of an idealized past. Yet this engagement is frequently undercut by anachronistic moments, as when the camera focuses on a mug in Will's lodgings which bears the inscription "A present from Stratford upon Avon." Later we hear the fanciful description of "Today's specials" given by the tavern keeper which in its parody of the 1990s vogue for nouvelle cuisine signals the audience's temporary participation in, but also our separation from, this historical recreation. Elizabeth Klett, noting this contradiction of "anachronism and accuracy," goes on to comment that "it is evident that *Shakespeare in Love* is creating a dialectical relationship between past and present. This dialectic is predicated upon audience awareness of Shakespeare and his works, and upon the dearth of biographical data on Shakespeare's life. The result is a virtual palimpsest of texts and contexts" (Klett 2001, 25-6).

One issue that emerges from this palimpsest is the anachronistic representation of Shakespeare as a Romantic poet, struggling in his garret with the temporary failure of his imagination until it is reignited by his muse in the person of the non-historical figure of Viola de Lesseps. This fictional interpolation is seemingly deemed necessary as what we "know" about Shakespeare's love life

is not sufficiently exciting, and would contribute little to the desired romantic arc of the narrative. The film suggests that Shakespeare, through a combination of these intense romantic experiences and inherent genius, is able to express on the stage, in the words of the character Queen Elizabeth, the "very truth and nature of love." Tony Howard notes that the film invites the audience to subscribe "to the myth that Great Art is the direct product of a Great Writer's extraordinary experience" (Howard 2000, 310). Being a "Great Writer," Will is able to use his extraordinary experience with Viola to break out of the romantic comedy straitjacket in which he finds himself in the film. He transforms his play "Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's Daughter" ("comedy, love and a bit with a dog, that's what they want") into the serious tragedy anticipated by the film's audience — *Romeo and Juliet*.

Thus during the course of the film the "traditional" hierarchies of drama are re-established, with tragedy reasserted as a superior genre to comedy. *Romeo and Juliet* brings Will commercial success and artistic acclaim. Yet it is one of the paradoxes of the film that the genre of tragedy is lauded in a comic film, ironically, with the performance of Will's tragic play providing the carnivalesque moment where a woman becomes a player on the Elizabethan stage. More importantly, the film suggests that the intensity of Will and Viola's love gives rise to the writing of the tragedy and the charged performance of the play in the film that

> only concerns itself, rather significantly, with scenes that illustrate the social and cultural forces that ensure the lovers' undoing. Norman and Stoppard demonstrate the merging of Romeo and Juliet's fate with that of Will and Viola — indeed the actual coalescence of art and life. (Davis and Womack 2004, 159)

Despite the foregrounding of the tragedy as a product of, and a revealing commentary upon, the final separation of Will and the now-married Viola, the film itself ends with the imagined projection of Viola's future transfigured by Will into another comedy, *Twelfth Night*.

Moreover, this film, and "The Shakespeare Code," as we shall see, asserts the primacy of the theater itself. The camera lovingly lingers over the Rose playhouse at the beginning of the film, tracing a slow path over its wooden structure from sky to stage, in an opening which echoes the beginning of Olivier's *Henry V*, except here the discarded playbill advertises "The Lamentable Tragedy of the Moneylender Reveng'd" and not *Henry V*. As Lisa Hopkins notes, this theatrical "'real presence' [is] in implicit or explicit contrast to the showiness and make-believe of film" (2009, 82). This centrality of specific places to the films underlines how they are kinds of literary tourism using place to initiate "conversation with the dead." In *Shakespeare in Love*, a

version of the Rose playhouse was constructed for the film, whereas in the later texts discussed here, an actual theater and literary tourism site, the reconstructed Globe, was utilized. The connections with literary tourism do not end there. Judi Dench apparently bought the filmic reconstruction of the Rose playhouse, with the intention, sadly never realized, of opening it to the public and using it as a theater space. In these texts, however, it is, as Hopkins notes, the filmic frame which gives the theater added significance. In the theater adaptation of the film *Shakespeare in Love* (2014, Noël Coward Theatre London), the absence of that filmic frame meant the scenes in the Rose became metatheatrical and self-conscious, rather than being displayed as a contrastive "real presence" and a significant transformative experience.

The conversation between past and present, somewhat antithetically, also resulted in "Stoppard and Norman rethron[ing] a traditional Shakespeare — unproblematic, heterosexual and apolitical" (Howard 2000, 310). The "heterosexuality" of Madden's Shakespeare is signaled to the audience through the unflinching focus on the romantic Will-Viola courtship. It is also suggested in the film that Sonnet 18, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" is written for Viola. She receives this poem in a letter from Will, which although read while she is dressed as Thomas Kent, contradicts the long-held view that this poem is addressed by Shakespeare to the Young Man of the Sonnets. This suggests a return in the film to a conservative reading of the playwright's sexuality, and as Sujata Iyengar argues, "both the writer's block and his impotence are cured by Will's love for Viola. Heterosexual intercourse produces children, not biological offspring, but children of the mind, poetic posterity" (Iyengar 2001, 125). The film presents a similarly conservative reading of the historical and political context of the 1590s. Queen Elizabeth is represented as benign *dea ex machina* who ensures "fair play" (here represented as financial reward) by ensuring that Tilney's accusations are not upheld. Yet at the same time, as Burt, commenting on Elizabeth's decision-making within the film, notes, "the theatrical arena . . . has the effect of significantly shrinking what kinds of effect female agency can have" (Burt 2000, 211). In the film all actors, playwrights (Marlowe's death goes unexplored beyond the angst it provides for Will who believes he has caused his murder), and playhouse managers remain unfalteringly loyal to the Queen, largely because of her fondness for theater and not her political acumen. The film audience are also encouraged to remain sympathetic towards the queen because of her complicity in the deception perpetrated during the stage performance of *Romeo and Juliet* which, it is suggested, is born out of personal experience when she remarks that "I know something of a woman in a man's profession — by God I do."

Shakespeare in Love, then, despite containing some intelligent and witty

dialogue and visual images, remains an essentially conservative example of time-travel in its representation of the figure of Shakespeare and the world of the 1590s. The intention seems to have been through the popular medium of film to make the high cultural works of Shakespeare more emotionally relevant to a modern audience. In its depiction of the early career of Shakespeare, who at the film's conclusion emerges as a celebrity who has "won" a significant sum of money (which enables him to buy a share in the Lord Chamberlain's Men), there is perhaps more than a hint of the aspirations of a late twentieth-century Elizabethan age, rather than those of the sixteenth century. The film is, of course, designed for multi-national audiences (although particularly British and American ones), and the representation of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan period is intended to pique the interest of those familiar and less familiar with the life and times of the author.

The mix of high culture and popular culture aided this endeavour, and encouraged engagement and assessment of the premise that Shakespeare was like us, which we might say is a rather teleological reduction of the idea that he might be for all time. The time travel in this film and the intermingling of past and present offers the opportunity for its audiences to take stock of their historical and cultural credentials as they neared the end of the century and in this it shares a common interest with other films of the 1990s. Some films of the decade went to considerable pains to recreate historical moments for further examination (*Schindler's List*, 1993; *Titanic*, 1997; *Saving Private Ryan*, 1998; *Elizabeth*, 1998), while others assessed the impact on individuals of specific historical periods (*Forrest Gump*, 1994; *The English Patient*, 1996; *Pleasantville*, 1998). *Shakespeare in Love*, like these other box-office successes, utilises CGI (computer generated imaging), which contributes greater verisimilitude to the creation of historical moments and gives further veracity to the time travel offered by film. The final sequence of the film with Viola de Lesseps shipwrecked on some distant shore reinforces the coalescence of past, present, and future. Shakespeare, while mourning the loss of Viola, creates for the audience a fictional future for her beyond the end of the film, which has another effect of also suggesting to its American audience that their own beginnings are linked to the genius of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan period. The Director's commentary on the DVD of *Shakespeare in Love* reveals how in earlier versions of this ending, Viola met two strangers (one of whom appears to be native American) while traversing the expansive sea shore, and in response to "What country friends is this?" was told "This is America." (This deleted scene is also included in the DVD extras.) In the end, an image of the solitariness of Viola was deemed more acceptable than the possible political fallout from such a staging. As John Blakeley comments,

The encounter on the beach suggests an open and harmonious, multi-

> racial land of opportunity, and one can well imagine why, given its glib erasure of the complex, often bloody, history of American racial conflict and assimilation, the producers felt uneasy about it. (Blakely 2009, 250)

However, John Madden's commentary also reveals that a further addition was planned but not executed:

> There was always a potentially rather wonderful idea, which we got some way towards exploring — which was an idea of Tom Stoppard's . . . that during the course of this shot, very, very, very, gradually, and imperceptibly, the ghostly outline of modern Manhattan would become visible beyond the tree-line — there for those to see who wanted to see it, and not for those who didn't, but somehow production schedules overtook us, and we never really had the chance to try that out. But the notion that she was walking away into history is still what I hoped the shot would mean and feel. (Transcript in Blakeley 2009, 250)

Here the Shakespeare myth of an iconic genius would have been extended to embrace a myth of the creation of American nationhood. Instead, the solitary wanderings of Viola on the beach echo the opening (well, the second scene) of *Twelfth Night*, a text from the past involving ideas of rebirth from the sea. These ideas are created in the film with underwater scenes that reference both Trevor Nunn's film version of *Twelfth Night* (1996), and another pre-millenium film, *Titanic* (1997). The contemporaneous juxtaposition of *Titanic* and *Shakespeare in Love* also contrasts the hubris of scientific and engineering advancement with the positive cultural longevity of Shakespeare's plays. Moreover, this alignment of past, present, and future is made possible by the time travel of film, and yet in this instance, time travel has become the means of eliminating questions and fissures from the historical sequence, which in turn contributes to what is a rather conservative reading of Shakespeare as an author for "our" time.

Dr Who — "The Shakespeare Code"

The second text to be explored here is an episode from the long-running UK television series *Dr Who*. The episode, "The Shakespeare Code," was first broadcast on 7 April, 2007. As noted earlier, this is the only text under consideration here where the narrative is concerned specifically with science-fiction time travel. In this episode the time-travelling Doctor and his new companion, Martha Jones, arrive in London in 1599, and meet Shakespeare.

Martha and the Doctor see Shakespeare at the Globe

Since the revival of the *Dr Who* series, there have been a number of encounters between the Doctor and historical personages, including Queen Victoria, Charles Dickens and Madame de Pompadour, all of whom battle with creatures from other worlds and beyond their time. This representation of historical figures is in itself a departure from the very early *Dr Who* series, where the companions were teachers of science and history who facilitated the series' Reithian aim to ""educate and entertain" and who "would draw lessons from their journeys into the future and the past" (Leach 2014, 184). In these early days, the historical and the science fiction encounters were kept in separate story lines, and the combination of these in the more recent series both marks a significant change to the program's conception of time travel and complicates the historiographical enquiry. In "The Shakespeare Code," Shakespeare, as with the representation of Dickens in Series Two, affirms his

"genius" and intellectual powers by his ability to comprehend the complexity of the Doctor's thoughts, and ultimately to assist him in vanquishing his alien opponents.

The adversaries in this episode are "deadly witch-like creatures" who, while resembling the witches from *Macbeth*, are Carrionites, intergalactic travellers intent on bringing about the end of the world. As the plot unfurls it transpires that Shakespeare and the Globe Theatre have inadvertently been the catalysts for the Carrionites' arrival on earth. The focus of the Carrionite power lies, the Doctor tells us, in "words and shapes." The science fiction narrative here utilizes known historical detail. The Carrionites have entered the sixteenth century by utilizing the power of the fourteen-sided Globe, which they have instructed (the historical) Peter Street to construct; they have also been able to harness the power of Shakespeare's grief-ridden words on the death of his son Hamnet. Having thus gained access to Earth, the Carrionites plan to utilise the power of words embedded in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Won* to open up a portal through which the rest of their race may join them, and colonize the planet and destroy all human life.

The original title for this episode was, in fact, "Love's Labour's Won," a possible lost Shakespearean play, which has exerted an influence over a number of fictional revisitings of Shakespeare's life and work.[5] However, Russell T. Davies, the series producer, reveals on the BBC *Dr Who* website that this original title was rejected because the original it was "too academic," and replaced by "The Shakespeare Code" with an ironic intertextual allusion to Dan Brown's bestselling novel, *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) and film of the same name (2006). This change in title reveals some of the challenges and the potential paradoxes that are implicit in the inclusion of the figure of Shakespeare in a prime-time, popular television series. It is a paradox expressed succinctly in another millennium-inspired television program, *Blackadder: Back and Forth* (1999). Blackadder, now a late-twentieth-century entrepreneur, travels to Elizabethan England in Baldrick's unreliable time-machine, in search of a signed copy of a Shakespearean play, and literally bumps into the author.

Blackadder punches Shakespeare

During their brief conversation, Blackadder persuades Shakespeare to sign the title-page of his new play, *Macbeth*, and then says:

> Blackadder: And just one more thing [punches Shakespeare to the ground]: that is for every school boy and school girl for the next four hundred years. Have you any idea what suffering you're going to cause? Hours spent at school desks trying to find one joke in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Years wearing stupid tights in school plays and saying things like 'what ho my lord!' and 'oh look — here comes Othello talking total crap as usual.' Oh and that [kicking Shakespeare's foot] is for Ken Branagh's endless uncut four hour version of *Hamlet*.
> Shakespeare: Who's Ken Branagh?
> Blackadder: I'll tell him you said that. And I think he will be very hurt.

The paradox acknowledged here is that Shakespeare, while an unmistakable iconic figure, whose rare signature would certainly be bankable, is at the same time associated, in the minds of many in the *Blackadder* television audience, with a boring educational experience. (Interestingly, this same attitude was noted by Marc Norman in relation to the figure in *Shakespeare in Love*. Norman observes, in the "Cast and Crew Commentary" on the 2004 DVD, that the audience may have "ambivalent feelings about Shakespeare . . . the guy the teacher made them read at school"). The switch of title for the *Dr Who*

episode from that of a "lost" play (bad) to one incorporating the name of the author (good) reflects this ambivalent view of Shakespeare and his works in the modern period. The code in this episode has a genuine narrative function as described above: words are power. Yet the reference to code could also allude to the modern audience's concern that the plays are written in a kind of incomprehensible linguistic code, which has to be cracked. The Doctor's willingness to embrace that "code" and celebrate it in this program, as well as the fact that Shakespeare is on the side of the Doctor as he saves the world, is a positive reinforcement of Shakespeare for the modern audience. It represents an attempt to re-read the signs/codes of the visual and verbal representations of the high-culture icon Shakespeare, and re-sequence these into a different more popular signifier.

As with *Shakespeare in Love*, the historical context of the *Dr Who* episode is established very quickly in its depiction of bustling street scenes. Yet instead of empathizing with Shakespeare's subject position in those streets, as is the case in *Shakespeare in Love*, we hear the Doctor's commentary as we accompany him and Martha on their journey along Bankside. We are televisually stitched into their conversation, as we share her point of view as a novice time traveler. As Andrew Hartley notes, "the tone of the episode owes much to *Shakespeare in Love* and is similarly playful in its teasing out of Shakespearean issues and problems" (Hartley 2009b). The Doctor's guidance to his twenty-first century companion, and the audience, is based on drawing analogies between 1599 and 2007, finding equivalencies between what they see and "recycling," a" water-cooler moment," "global warming," and "entertainment." The Doctor's anticipated pleasure of seeing Shakespeare at the Globe is important, as the authority of his point of view is crucial in this series in shaping the audience's own expectations. He describes Shakespeare as a genius: "Genius. He's a genius, the genius. The most human, human there has ever been. Now we are going to hear him speak. Always he chooses the best words. New, beautiful, brilliant words." This image of the high cultural icon is deflated by Shakespeare's actual first words, "Shut your big fat mouths," which visibly disappoints the Doctor. Martha's comment, "you should never meet your heroes," could have signaled the end of this iconic treatment of Shakespeare. However, the writer Gareth Roberts cleverly repositions his portrayal of Shakespeare as the episode develops. Initially Shakespeare is presented as a loud-mouthed rock star, somewhat weary of his celebrity image — "no autographs, no you can't have yourself sketched with me, please don't ask where I get my ideas from." This conception may owe something to TV biographies of Shakespeare screened in the early years of the twenty-first century. Both *Great Britons* (2002) and *In Search of Shakespeare* (2004) had been at pains to establish Shakespeare as a young celebrity at the heart of a dynamic historical moment. As Michael Wood asserted in the latter

series:

> You have to think away that image of Shakespeare, the balding, middle-aged man in a ruff, the gentle bard, the icon of English heritage. This is a young blade in his mid-twenties. This is a young man, bold, ambitious in his art. He's funny, streetwise, sexy and by all accounts extremely good company. (Wood 2003)

This is in effect what we get in "The Shakespeare Code" and it is endorsed by Martha's anti-iconic comment that Shakespeare is "a bit different from his portraits!"

Nevertheless the main preoccupation of the episode is "words." Despite his roguish image, Shakespeare is presented as a collector and transformer of words and phrases. He is intrigued by the Doctor's vocabulary which playfully includes many phrases we know to be Shakespeare's. The running joke of the episode is the Doctor indicating whether Shakespeare "can have that" (e.g. "the play's the thing," "all the world's a stage," "Sycorax") or "you can't, it's someone else's" ("Rage, rage against the dying of the light"). Or alternatively we see the Doctor encouraging Shakespeare to capture his own thoughts such as "to be or not to be" - "you should write that down!" Alongside this celebratory affection for words, there is also praise of "theatre's magic" — "oh you [Shakespeare] can make men weep. Or cry with joy. Change them. You can change people's minds just with words in this place." This Shakespeare may initially disappoint and be unlike his portraits but his genius resides in his love of language and theater. He is also marked out as separate from his age in that he is not deceived by the Doctor's "psychic paper"[6]: he deduces that Martha is from the future and the Doctor from another time and place. As Hartley observes of the representation of Shakespeare:

> one gets a sense that his separateness, like the doctor's, comes from knowing and feeling too much, however flippant he seems superficially. Both figures are thus rendered Hamletic according to a specific Romantic model. (Hartley 2009b)

The episode aims to explore the affinity and parallels between the two central characters, built on a sense of loss (the Doctor's loss of Rose, his previous traveling companion, and Shakespeare's of his son). While the play staged in the episode is the supposed lost play *Love's Labour's Won*, Shakespeare is being edged by the Doctor towards writing *Hamlet*. Like *Shakespeare in Love*, comedy is forsaken in favor of tragedy and in the "end roots the episode in Shakespeare's repudiation of the frivolity of comedy for something of more weight" (Hartley 2009b). It also ironically marks the trajectory of Tennant's own migration from the popular culture of Dr Who to his performance of Hamlet for the RSC in 2008 (see Hartley 2009b).

The resolution of the episode depends on Shakespeare's open-minded modernity and his recognition of the power of words. In the final scene the Doctor says:

> Come on Will, history needs you! . . . you're the wordsmith, the one true genius, the only man clever enough to do it . . . you're William Shakespeare . . . Trust yourself. When you're locked away in your room, words just come: they are like magic. Words of the right sound, the right shape, the right rhythm — words that last for ever. That's what you do Will, you choose perfect words. Do it Will — improvise!

And once Shakespeare has found the words the aliens are defeated.

We see here a subtle mutation, from the Romantic image of an emotionally inspired poet, as in *Shakespeare in Love*, to the intelligent wordsmith and theater practitioner in *Dr Who*. This may partly reflect Roberts's awareness of his audience, particularly the children and young adults who made up a large percentage of the 6.8 million who first watched the program. A focus on the excitement and power of language chimed well with the aspirations of the UK educational system at that time, which emphasised the significance of "language": from the literacy hour in primary schools, to GCSE English Literature programs which stress the need "to explore how language, structure and forms contribute to the meaning of texts" (Review of Standards in GCSE English Literature in 2000 and 2007). Moreover, the episode made a number of knowing intertextual allusions to J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. As Peter Holland comments, "The modern and the classic prove to harmonize, and the text that represents the contemporary excitement of publication proves to complete, complement, and re-energize the early modern excitement of performance (Holland 2012)." The references to Rowling's wizard engage the young audience, reminding them of the underlying message in her novels that language is powerful. It is Harry Potter's spell, "expelliarmus," which brings past and present words and worlds together in the final expulsion of the Carrionites from the Globe.

Though the initial representation of Shakespeare in Roberts's text is more as rock star than as traditional icon, it does show awareness of some key debates about the biography of the playwright, and also alludes to Shakespeare's iconic representation in the visual arts. For example, it is less conservative in its representation of Shakespeare's sexuality than *Shakespeare in Love*. At one point, the Doctor says, "Come on, we can all have a good flirt later," to which Shakespeare responds, "Is that a promise, Doctor?" The Doctor's subsequent comment — "Oh — fifty-seven academics just punched the air" — momentarily draws attention to the academic debates around Shakespeare's sexuality, and maybe even the responses to the resolute heterosexuality of

Shakespeare in Love, which some of his time-traveling audience may be aware of. Nevertheless, in the final moments of the episode the iconic image of Shakespeare is re-codified, albeit rather ironically. First Martha tells Shakespeare a joke that he fails to understand, involving Shakespeare being "barred"; then she calls him a "great genius," but refuses to kiss him because his breath smells. Next the Doctor offers him a ruff from the stage properties to wear as a neck brace for a few days, but adds "you might want to keep it — it suits you." Shakespeare is thus ironically reaffirmed in his traditional pictorial image before reciting his latest sonnet, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" to his twenty-first century "dark lady," causing the Doctor literally to raise an eyebrow. All this detail appears to parody much that appears in *Shakespeare in Love*, including the appearance of Queen Elizabeth I who has heard about the previous night's performance. One senses the writer's tongue is firmly in its cheek at this point. Yet the ending does not subside into an inferior historical pageant: rather it plunges into a Carroll-esque conclusion, as Elizabeth is turned into a Queen of Hearts calling for the head of the "pernicious Doctor." The topsy-turvy world of time-travel is revealed as the Doctor does not know how he has offended the Queen because he has yet to meet her. This mystery plays self-consciously with the time-travel motif and its scrambled sequencing, as we see the consequences of an action that the Doctor has not yet experienced. It creates a loose thread, not explained for another two years of the program, when in the Christmas 2009 special, and Tennant's last appearance as the Doctor, it is revealed, in a complex story about alien duplications of Elizabeth, that he was married to Elizabeth, albeit briefly.

V: *Bill*

The final text to be considered here is the September 18th 2015 BBC Films/BFI production of *Bill*.

Mathew Bayton in BILL (BBC production image)

Mark Kermode writing in *The Observer* commented "the players of TV's terrific *Horrible Histories* romp their way through this entertaining mash-up of *Shakespeare in Love* and *Blackadder II*" (Kermode 2015). Most reviews of the film reference these texts, with some also suggesting influences from "The Shakespeare Code." The *Horrible Histories* franchise, which has connections with this film, is an educational entertainment company which includes numerous books, television programs, stage productions, and assorted merchandise. *Bill* is directed by Richard Bracewell, but written by members of the writing team of the CBBC *Horrible Histories* television program, Laurence Rickard and Ben Willbond, with cast members also from the television team. Stylistically, *Bill* replicates the fondness of the *Horrible Histories* for visual and verbal puns, scatological humour, and musical numbers. This film, like "The Shakespeare Code," is predominantly attempting to appeal to a young, or family audience. In *Bill*, as well as the *Horrible Histories*, the audience travel to the past, but there are constant reminders of the present. While set in the past, the details of that past are presented within a recognizable framework from the present. This technique somewhat paradoxically ensures that the audience take away some knowledge of the historical situation being presented. In the film *Bill*, for example, the audience is presented with a scene representing Shakespeare's first acting job. He is dressed as a tomato, and works alongside Marlowe dressed as a leek, promoting the consumption of vegetables — "Are you getting your two a week?" In terms of plot it is blatantly fictional, yet it succeeds in suggesting that, because of the closure of the playhouses due to the plague, out of work actors and playwrights had to find alternative employment. The ridiculous and anachronistic promotional work is amusing, but it depicts the playwrights' insecure financial situation and their frustrated ambition. While not founded

particularly on historical facts, the film, perhaps more than one might expect, seems in an entertaining way to teach the audience something about the material conditions surrounding playwriting in Renaissance London.

These material conditions include discovering, in general terms, something about the background of social, religious and political intrigue. The film is set in the same year as *Shakespeare in Love*, 1593, at the end of the so-called lost years. The opening credit notes it is a "time of war and plague, but mostly war." One of the main themes of the film, which is comically reprised throughout, is the fear of Catholic plots. It is even proposed that the spymaster Walsingham has been pretending to be dead for three years, but has really been undercover investigating these plots. He has, in one of the running jokes of the film, been "hiding in plain sight," and is seen hidden in a pie, and then later in a cart full of plague victims (allowing the cast, perhaps for the benefit of the adults, to draw on the "bring out your dead" joke from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, 1975). While comically presented, the film uses modern terminology to suggest a correlative between these earlier Catholic plots and contemporary concerns about terrorism. There are security checks around the court, and a security level of "dark woad."

Interestingly, the lessons taught embrace not only historical contexts but also issues around authorship. First, the film suggests that the writing of Renaissance drama was often a collaborative affair. In this it develops the idea of the Doctor helping Shakespeare fine-tune his word choices in "The Shakespeare Code." In *Bill* we see the would-be playwright meeting with Christopher Marlowe in the "Quill and Rapier," and being chastised for including "dance moves." Marlowe later appears as a ghost to help him re-write the play for Elizabeth's political summit. This scene has a number of postmodern borrowings with Bill's address to the ghost, "I charge thee speak," and the appearance of a ghostly quill hanging in the air. There are obvious intertextual references here to Will's discussions with Marlowe about "Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's daughter" in *Shakespeare in Love*. However, it has closer parallels with the stage version of *Shakespeare in Love* which opened in London in July 2014. This production placed greater emphasis on the collaboration between Marlowe and Shakespeare, framing the play with Marlowe, in the opening scene, assisting with the writing of "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?," and then appearing as a ghost, to comfort the distraught Will, at the end of the play, by helping him begin to write *Twelfth Night*. *Bill* also includes the ghostly figure of Marlowe standing with Elizabeth in the closing scenes. In both of these versions Marlowe is a shaping influence on the work of Shakespeare, with the possible suggestion that he is "reborn" in Shakespeare. It seems possible that *Bill* and the stage version of *Shakespeare in Love*, are acknowledging the anti-Stratfordian theory that Marlowe did not

really die (like Walsingham in this film) but, after staging his death, began to write the plays under Shakespeare's name. Nevertheless, the presence of Marlowe as a ghost seems eventually to debunk the theory, and emphasize his role as mentor.

The film rather knowingly even creates humor around its interpretation of Marlowe's death, when he is stabbed to death in the Bull Tavern. In this interpretation it is Philip II and his accomplices who kill Marlowe, while he is trying to sell Shakespeare's play. The Spanish steal the play and leave Marlowe dying, calling out for "Bill," after which he is presented with the bill for the meal. This word-play entertains its young audience, and yet there are additional levels to the joke to be accessed by members of the audience who are aware that the official Elizabethan report of Marlowe's death alleged he was killed following a disagreement over "the reckoning." The tragedy of Marlowe's death is mitigated with the Pythonesque body collector trying to load him onto to the cart before he is dead. The scene reveals further playfulness around the idea of authorship, when it is later revealed that Marlowe did not give Philip the play, and we see the innkeeper throwing the discarded collaborative "lost" play into the fire.

The film also seems to parody another anti-Stratfordian theory, through its inversion of the plot of *Anonymous* (2011). The suggestion in that film is that the erudite Earl of Oxford writes the plays, and then employs the drunken actor Shakespeare to disguise his involvement. This is comically inverted in *Bill*. In this film the Earl of Croydon, having claimed in a drunken boast to Elizabeth that he has written a play, needs to acquire one quickly. Having failed to write his own, because plays turn out to be not "just talking written down," Bill is cajoled into giving him his play. So in a double comic inversion of the Oxfordian claim, it is the Earl who claims to have written Bill's play, but it is the aristocrat who is also the ignorant buffoon.

But what of the representation of the author Shakespeare in this time-traveling film? In general terms the film follows the same narrative arc of the previous two texts, with the author rising to a challenge and receiving recognition and reward. Perhaps to encourage empathy in the young audience, however, Bill is presented as initially much more immature and less formed as a writer. He is first seen in the film at a desk, quill in hand, in the conventional pose of a writer in biopics, but he is interrupted and the iconic image is broken as he shouts "What?" in response to his wife's call. In the early scenes he seems mostly driven by a desire to be famous. He performs with his lute-playing boy-band, "Mortal Coil," who soon "shuffle off" following a showboating performance from Will. Anne interprets his decision to be a playwright as another example of his rather dilettante behavior, following as it does his

interests in music, acting, and "interpretative dance," and remarks that play writing is not a proper job in Stratford. Before departing for London, he protests with rather knowing irony that "twenty years from now they will remember my name!" Once in London, a Dick Wittington figure, worldly goods in a handkerchief on a stick, and oblivious to the crimes being committed around him, Bill seeks his fortune. Yet throughout the film, the audience see little evidence of his skill as a playwright. He explains to Marlowe that he writes plays where "people get hit with sticks," and the actual examples of his work given show a fertile, but unstructured imagination.

Bill is very much shown to be an apprentice writer. His first play, "A Series of Comic Misunderstandings," is prefaced by a musical song which outlines a plot formed from the half-formed motifs of plays to come — pairs of twins, jilted brides, bodies hidden by monks, star-crossed lovers, bride brought back from the dead with a donkey's head etc. All of which leave the Earl of Croydon, who hopes to pass the play off as his own, insisting "I am dead." Following Marlowe's guidance to "write what you know," the play performed to Elizabeth is a bowdlerized mixture of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, with a smattering of famous phrases and lines. The Queen's critical response is that there are "many ideas," and that in future these should be introduced "one at a time, as it is a bit dense." Bill's reward for the play, and helping to foil the Spanish plot, is that he gains financial support for his future career when Elizabeth recommends that Southampton become his patron.

In the closing moments of the film, the film audience is reassured that Bill has made it. This scene echoes the end of "The Shakespeare Code." As Bill, behind the scenes at the "Rose theatre," confirms the title of the play as *The Comedy of Errors*, he turns towards the camera, and we see that he has been recrafted as something approaching the iconic Chandos image of Shakespeare — hair tamed, earring inserted. He walks onto the stage as someone intones "world ready for Shakespeare." These conversations in the wings of the playhouse mirror contemporary reality shows and offer the young audience a rather *X-Factor* definition of celebrity fame, which is the product of overcoming adversity. In this film, the texts of the plays are always fragmented, and never experienced on the public stage, and so unlike in the previous texts, there is no celebration of the power of theater itself. The narrative of success has been charted, yet here, there is no celebration of Shakespeare's "words," little sense of his craft as a writer, and so far no-one has been affected by his plays.

The consequence of time travel in this film is thus different. Here we see the postmodern irony that is present in the earlier films and that often signals the overlaying of past and present, moving from the periphery to dominate center

stage. Paradoxically, in a film which plays so fast and loose with historical accuracy, *Bill* does quite successfully deal with the underlying social, cultural and political movements of the time. Curiously the absurdity of its reconstruction serves to parody, and thus make visible, several of the underlying questions that have preoccupied critics. The film's dominant ironic tone means that it avoids the stereotypical image of the Romantic playwright, but the downside, perhaps, is that the audiences (both of the film and on-screen) are left anticipating what is to come. Yet maybe that is the point — the film, like the *Horrible Histories* books and television programs, is intended to stimulate interest and provide, via its "mash up," an entertaining hook that will bring children and young adults enlivened to their further study of history and literature. This film is one of several late-2015 texts anticipating the commemorations in 2016 of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. In response to this, it proposes ends in the beginnings of the author's life, but perhaps more importantly, it creates a springboard for teachers in 2016 to explore that life, and its ends, in the sense of the plays, in the modern classroom.

VI: Conclusion

To conclude, all of the texts considered in this essay indicate at their ends an uncertainty about what happens next. Two texts, *Bill* and "The Shakespeare Code," pull apart the narrative of Shakespeare's life, only to reconfigure him visually as the conventional figure in a portrait. In all of the texts, as in the ending of the *Dr Who* episode, there are things "to look forward to," which seems an apt metaphor for the representation of the person of Shakespeare in contemporary film. Like the time traveling Doctor, the audience of these films is given an experience which is partial: both in the sense that it is incomplete, and in that it reveals a bias in its characterisations of the author. In the early days of cinema, screenwriters relied on the authority of the book and the "author's voice-over" to give authenticity to their creations. In contemporary cinema there is more confidence in the medium's ability to narrate its own stories. Yet, this discussion has shown that, as David Wittenberg observes, "in time travel fiction, the fundamental historiographical question [is] — how is the past reconstructed by or within the present?" (Wittenberg 2013, 13). These texts are undoubtedly the product of different presents, even within the short span of less than twenty years, and they reflect a range of social, cultural, political, educational and filmic contexts. Yet, there is one context that seems to have influenced them all, and that is the modern preoccupation with fame and celebrity. The structuring narrative of the "life journey" is dominant, and yet inconclusive, perhaps because the very notion of "celebrity" is itself dependent on, and forever flirts with, the idea of knowing and yet not knowing about the object of one's fascination. These biographical representations of the

rather elusive figure of Shakespeare feed that craving for speculation and information; they also paradoxically ensure that the questions will continue to be asked and the debate will go on. Meanwhile, we can be grateful for the fact that in a predominantly visual and public medium, each film has found images and narrative devices which encourage us to rejoice in the private creative act of authorship.

Notes

1. Recent biographical studies of the playwright, many with "celebrity" undertones in their titles, include *The Genius of Shakespeare* (Jonathan Bate, 1997), *Shakespeare: the Invention of the Human* (Harold Bloom, 1999), *Ungentle Shakespeare* (Katherine Duncan-Jones 2001), *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (Stephen Greenblatt, 2004), *Secret Shakespeare: Studies in Theatre, Religion and Resistance* (Richard Wilson, 2004), *Shakespeare: The Biography* (Peter Ackroyd, 2005), and *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare: 1599* (James Shapiro, 2006). Shakespeare was voted "Man of the Millennium" in a Radio 4 "Today" program poll, featured in a BBC1 television series *Great Britons* (2002), and was the subject of Michael Wood's *In Search of Shakespeare* (2003) for BBC2. These last two programs have been discussed by Pearson and Uricchio, who suggest that "both *In Search of Shakespeare* and *Great Britons* . . . sever Shakespeare from heritage and . . . argue for his relevance to the twenty-first century" (2006, 214).
2. I follow the protocol adopted by many commentators on this film here by referring to the character in the film as "Will" and the historical personage as "Shakespeare." When discussing "The Shakespeare Code" I will revert to Shakespeare for both character historical figure, and in Bill, resume referring to the character "Bill" and Shakespeare for the author.
3. Lisa Hopkins notes "there has been a steadfast refusal of the part of those involved in *Shakespeare in Love* to clarify the precise nature of Tom Stoppard's involvement" (83) which heightens the issues around authorship in the film itself.
4. For a different reading of the film as postmodern metanarrative employing multivocality and heteroglossia that "demonstrates the synergistic role of cultural, social and historical conditions in the act of composition" (157) and ultimately limits the role of Shakespeare as unifying genius, see Davis and Womack.
5. A. J. Hartley's *What Time Devours* (2009) is an example.
6. Psychic paper is one of the Doctor's tools — a kind of business card that enables him to gain access to individuals or buildings by persuading the reader

that they see the verification they need to see.

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"Da quando ho conosciuto l'arte, 'sta cella è diventata 'na prigione": *Cesare deve morire* and the Unsettling Self-(Re-)Fashioning Power of Theater

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ABSTRACT | SHAKESPEARE'S WORDS, CONVICTS' EXPERIENCES | CONSCIOUS ADAPTERS | REHABILITIATION AND REGENERATION | NOTES | REFERENCES

ABSTRACT

As uplifting as it is unsettling, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani's *Cesare deve morire* (2012) is one of the most peculiar and engaging Shakespearian adaptations of the past few years. A drama-documentary chronicling the staging of *Julius Caesar* by the inmates of the maximum-security wing of the Rebibbia prison in Rome, *Cesare deve morire* explores a wide range of thought-provoking issues. As an adaptation, it is especially interesting for the directors' unusual choice to have each actor "translate" his lines into his own dialect, which enriches Shakespeare's text with new layers of meaning, in that each dialect both carries geographic-specific cultural traits and evokes conscious and unconscious associations in the viewers' imagination. The use of dialect is also decisive in creating a bridge between the events in *Julius Caesar* and the inmates' first-hand experience of criminal life, which endows their performance with profound intensity. This article notably focuses on the ultimate consequences brought about on the convicts' perception of their own lives and selves by their intimate encounter with art. Specifically, the rehabilitative and regenerating function of theater seems simultaneously to carry disturbing retributive overtones, since this reawakening contact with art leads some of the inmates fully to realize the extent of what they have lost.

Shakespeare's Words, Convicts' Experiences

As uplifting as it is unsettling, "at once ancient and dangerously new" (Lane 2013), Paolo and Vittorio Taviani's *Cesare deve morire* (*Caesar Must Die*, 2012) is "a film that defies easy categorization" (Calbi 2014, 235) and arguably one of the most peculiar and engaging Shakespearean adaptations of the past few years. A 76-minute long "double hybrid that occupies a space somewhere between documentary and fiction right along the border of cinema and theater" (Long 2014), *Cesare deve morire* chronicles the staging of *Julius Caesar* by the inmates of the maximum-security wing of the Rebibbia prison on the outskirts of Rome, raising a wide range of thought-provoking issues. Besides restating the universal value of Shakespeare's art, to which people from the most disparate social and life backgrounds are able to relate, the film especially focuses on the ultimate consequences — at the same time positive and negative — brought about on the prisoners' perception of their own lives and selves by their intimate encounter with art and culture.

Shot in a mere 21 days (Rohter 2013), this "stimulating marriage between theater and harsh reality" (Rooney 2012) was awarded The Golden Bear and the Prize of the Ecumenical Jury at the 62nd Berlin International Film Festival, and was also selected as the Italian entry for the Best Foreign Language Oscar at the 85th Academy Awards, although it did not make the final shortlist. It received eight nominations for Italy's David di Donatello 2012 awards (winning as many as five, among which those for best film and best director), and won the Nastro d'Argento 2012, together with a host of lesser prizes.

Although the inmates of the Rebibbia prison had been staging performances under the direction of Fabio Cavalli since 2003, it was only through a journalist friend that Paolo and Vittorio Taviani learned about the initiative in the first place. Their friend had been to Rebibbia to attend a performance of passages from Dante Alighieri's *Commedia* and had reported how overwhelmed she had felt by this surprisingly intense experience (Fratarcangeli, 2012). Though admittedly skeptical as to what to expect from such a non-professional theatrical venture, the Tavianis followed their friend's suggestion and went to see the inmates of Rebibbia declaim Dante in their own regional dialects. They were amazed at what they witnessed:

> È stata un'emozione imprevista ascoltare i versi di Dante tradotti in napoletano. Ci siamo resi conto che la deformazione dialettale non immiseriva il tono alto dei canti di Dante, anzi regalava loro una verità nuova. In seguito abbiamo visto altri loro spettacoli: *La Tempesta*, *Amleto*. I detenuti della massima sicurezza sono quasi tutti del Sud. La loro recitazione era una mescolanza di dialetti napoletani, siciliani, baresi. E anche in queste occasioni abbiamo ascoltato con orecchi più consapevoli (Liguori, 2012).

> (It was an unexpected emotion to listen to Dante's lines translated into Neapolitan. We realized that the dialectal deformation did not impoverish the high tone of Dante's cantos; in fact, it bestowed a new truth on them. Afterwards, we attended other shows of theirs: *The Tempest*, *Hamlet*. The convicts of the maximum-security wing almost invariably come from Southern Italy. Their acting was a mixture of dialects from Naples, Sicily, Bari. And on these occasions as well we listened with more conscious ears.)[1]

The Tavianis therefore resolved to approach Cavalli, and the three of them together decided that the next project on which the Rebibbia inmates would work would be William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*: they would make a movie out of the whole experience. As the Tavianis explain, the choice of the 1599 Roman tragedy was dependent on its potential to turn into an emotional catalyst susceptible of making Shakespeare's words resonate with the convicts' personal experiences (Liguori, 2012). As this article will make clear, the directors' hunch proved to be well founded.

The movie is characterized by its circular structure.[2] It starts from the conclusion of the project by showing the final performance; more specifically, by showing Brutus's suicide with Strato's assistance after all his other fellow soldiers have refused to help him die. Then we see Brutus dead and the performance end in triumph: the audience goes into raptures about what they have just witnessed. However, the ensuing shot exposes the now empty theater seats, immediately followed by a sequence showing the spectators quickly pouring out of the prison. Meanwhile, the parallel editing chosen by the directors for the sequence brings viewers back to the actors, who are now joylessly casting off their Roman robes. Three of them are then shown one by one as they are escorted back to their individual cells. The sound and fury of the performance have vanished into thin air, and the rattle of the keys in the locks remains the only sound to be heard. As the prisoners mechanically return to the grim reality of their actual lives, the saturated colors of the first scenes gradually yield to the black-and-white that will dominate the movie until its final part.

The scene then changes completely, and viewers are brought back to where it all started six months earlier: the presentation and inauguration of the yearly theatrical laboratory, followed by the auditions. Here, the prospective actors are asked to give their personal details in two different ways: first they have to convey sorrow, then anger. Though somewhat too protracted, this sequence is crucial, insofar as it starts familiarizing viewers with the inmates-actors and opens that back-and-forth process of approach and distancing toward the convicts that characterizes the movie. We begin seeing the inmates as actors, thereby momentarily forgetting their actual predicament. Moreover, we do not know exactly what crimes they have committed, and what we are faced with is just a

handful of men giving of their best to get a part. However, after Cavalli assigns the roles, a hammering succession of close-ups of the principal members of the cast of convicts/actors with their crime and punishment as a caption abruptly brings us back to reality (*Cesare deve morire*, 12:46-13:19). They are introduced to us one by one in the following order:

Giovanni Arcuri (Caesar)	17 years	drug trafficking
Salvatore Striano (Brutus)	14 years and 8 months	organized crime
Cosimo Rega (Cassius)	Fine pena mai ("life meaning life")	murder
Antonio Frasca (Mark Antony)	26 years	various crimes
Juan Dario Bonetti (Decius)	15 years and 6 months	drug trafficking
Vincenzo Gallo (Lucius)	Fine pena mai ("life meaning life")	organized crime

This brief yet chillingly penetrating sequence involves strong emotional repercussions for viewers, who are made conscious of the inmates' crimes when they least expect it. The blood-curdling realization of the ferocity of those felonies is central to the movie.[3] The Tavianis do want us to see the convicts-turned-actors as "regular" people while they are acting, but they also want us to remain constantly aware of what they have done. While undoubtedly seeking to demonstrate that art is in everyone's reach and to expose its purifying potential and its capacity to help anybody improve their lives, the directors also seek bitterly to stress that an artistic experience cannot efface the past, no matter how profoundly intense and Aristotelically cathartic it can be. Even though the movie is clearly informed by the sharp awareness of both the distress of living in prison — see for example the scene where Rega laments: "Non so mica cosa farò domani mattina se mi negano ancora la cella singola. È mio diritto. Tutti con la diarrea oggi; cinque letti, cinque diarree" ("I really don't know what I'll do tomorrow morning if they keep denying me a single cell. It is my right. Everybody has diarrhea today; five beds, five cases of diarrhea," *Cesare deve morire*, 38:07-38:22) — and the hardship of any possible future within a life that is now irreparably mutilated (Reverdito 2012), the Tavianis avoid easy exonerating and/or sentimental temptations, and show no commiseration for the convicts and their gloomy destiny as "guardatori di soffitti" ("ceiling observers," *Cesare deve morire*, 37:30).

In a curious historical twist, a play that was performed in Elizabethan times by players often conceived of as vagabonds and criminals is here performed by actual

criminals. Having theatrical performances staged by inmates in prison is certainly an unusual choice, albeit by no means unique or pioneering. As for the Italian context, director Armando Punzo has been working since 1988 with the Compagnia della Fortezza, that is, the company made up of the inmates of the prison of Volterra, for which work he has even won the Ubu Prize, the most important award of the Italian theatrical community.[4] In a broader context, Hank Rogerson's 2005 documentary *Shakespeare Behind Bars* also explored the world of convicts through Shakespeare's arts by following for nine months a troupe of inmates preparing for a performance of *The Tempest*.[5] The Tavianis' movie, however, stands out for the wider exposure it has given to such initiatives (especially thanks to the media resonance it achieved after the somewhat unexpected Berlin victory) and for its peculiar use of space.

Given the unavailability of the prison's dedicated theatrical space, which was being refurbished at the time, rehearsals had to take place elsewhere. Or, better, everywhere else. In *Cesare deve morire*, all the prison is a stage: the cells, the corridors, the library, the exercise courtyard — on which windows look down, so that both convicts and guards have the chance to watch the action like real spectators in ancient Rome. Any time of the day looks like a good time to rehearse. It is especially intriguing to see the inmates rehearsing in the same places where their lives of confinement go on every day, which furthers the intermingling of reality and performance — of which more anon. The use of space is inspiring: a window becomes a view from above of Rome in uprising; the corridors become the streets of Rome, where everyone hails Caesar as he passes by; the non-acting convicts become the Roman populace after Caesar's death and during the funeral orations; the cells become the houses where everyone seeks refuge after the murder; Lucius's lute becomes a harmonica — this being the only instrument Gallo can play.

Displacing a Shakespearean performance in the various spaces of a prison means adapting Shakespeare to a very peculiar environment that, as Paolo Lago (2012) points out, is located outside space and time, at least outside the space and time of the daily life of contemporary society. Borrowing Michel Foucault's definition of both prison and theater as "heterotopias," that is, "privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis" (Foucault, 1986: 24), Lago (2012) suggests that it is feasible to talk about *Cesare deve morire* as "un'eterotopia dentro un'altra" ("a heterotopy inside another"). This creates a sort of Chinese boxes effect that increases the spatial and temporal displacement of the inmates' performance in what is both a nowhere and an everywhere, thereby contributing to the spectators' difficulty in taking a stand about what they are witnessing on the screen.

Conscious Adapters

Lago's insightful remark is, in turn, also susceptible of being applied to the question of adaptation itself, insofar as it seems we can talk about *Cesare deve morire* as an adaptation inside another, since the Tavianis adapt the convicts' rehearsals and performance for the screen, but each actor had already "translated" (and thereby adapted) their lines into their own dialect of origin.[6] The use of dialects is one of the aspects that make this adaptation especially worthy of attention, in that each dialect carries with itself a whole array of geographically specific cultural traits, together with an entire series of conscious and unconscious associations in the viewers' imagination. Francesco Carusone, the inmate portraying the Soothsayer, furnishes a telling example of the implications of the use of regional dialects. While rehearsing the scene in which the Soothsayer tries to warn Caesar of the danger awaiting him on the Ides of March, Carusone tells Cavalli: "Fabio, au paese mio, i maghi, gl'indovini, so' tutti nu poco pazzarielli. La posso fa' accussì?" ("Fabio, where I come from, wizards, soothsayers, they're all a bit loopy. Can I play it like this?," *Cesare deve morire*, 15:25-15:45). While giving this explanation, he starts acting loopy and eccentric, and Cavalli accepts what is to all intents and purposes an interpretation of Shakespeare's text, "for the adapter is an interpreter before becoming a creator" (Hutcheon 2006, 84).

By imposing themselves actively on the text, the actors are actually involved in the project as "conscious adapters" (Hutcheon 2006, 81) of *Julius Caesar*. Through their contributions, Shakespeare's text gets admirably enriched rather than vulgarized, as a moral strain of adaptation criticism might readily suggest (Hutcheon 2006, 1-6). Shakespeare's words acquire new colors and are provided with a visceral intensity that can be fully appreciated only by Italian people who are familiar with the dialects of Southern Italy — as testified by the fact that the very same Italian DVD of the film provides Italian subtitles, and "not only for the hearing-impaired but also because these dialects are largely foreign to many potential Italian viewers" (Calbi 2014, 241). This "refreshment" of the text through its "naturalization" as spoken dialect can also be seen as effectively exemplifying Margaret Jane Kidnie's idea of the Shakespearian "work" as "a dynamic process that evolves over time in response to the needs and sensibilities of its users" (Kidnie 2009, 2).

Some of the convicts' translations and the directors' modifications are not only instrumental in adding a distinct local color but, more importantly, give a clearer republican bent to the text. For example, the scene of Caesar's rejection of the crown is not reported to Cassius and Brutus by Casca but seen by them first-hand, thereby making Caesar's ambiguous triple rejection of the crown appear as a more straightforward demonstration of his thirst for absolute power: to add to the intensity of the scene, "he put it by with the back of his hand" (*Julius Caesar*,

1.2.221) is expanded as "La schifa! Guarda, la sposta così, col dorso della mano" ("He scorns it! Look, he puts it aside like this, with the back of his hand," *Cesare deve morire*, 18:31-18:37). In Brutus's orchard soliloquy, "It must be by his death" (*Julius Caesar*, 2.1.10) becomes the much more concise, "personal — direct, abbreviated, but highly emotional" (Calbi 2014, 241)"Addà murì" ("He has to die," *Cesare deve morire*, 23:07); and "for my part, / I know no personal cause to spurn at him, / But for the general" (Julius Caesar, 2.1.10-11) becomes "se fosse per me solamente, non mi importasse e' niente, ma chille se fott'a Roma intera" ("if it was just about me, I wouldn't mind at all, but he's going to screw all Rome," *Cesare deve morire*, 23:13-23:18). Shakespeare's language is rendered more violent and endowed with a disruptive force straining its boundaries: new layers of meaning are added to the "original" lines.[7]

There are also meaningful additions further melding Shakespeare with the inmates' criminal milieu: "Swear priests and cowards, and men cautelous, / Old feeble carrions, and such suffering souls / That welcome wrongs" (*Julius Caesar*, 2.1.128-30) becomes the much more colorful and emotional "Ca giurassero i prieviti, i cacasotto, i vecchi ruffiani, le carogne infami, i quacquaraquà e tutti i cornuti, mazziati e cuntenti" ("Swear priests, shit-scared people, old ruffians, vile bastards, turncoats and all the cuckolds, the beaten-up ones and the happy ones," *Cesare deve morire*, 26:37-26:47). Other additions seem intended to recall the specific context of Sicilian mafia. This is the case of "Picciotti" (*Cesare deve morire*, 25:19), a specific term commonly deployed by members of the Sicilian mafia to define the lowest level of affiliation with *cosa nostra* and used by one of the minor characters to address his comrades while Brutus and Cassius are secretly discussing the plot; and "Bacio le mani, Cesare" ("I kiss your hands, Caesar," *Cesare deve morire*, 40:48-40:49), a typical greeting used by the mafia. The deployment of the inmates' different dialects endows their performance with an unprecedented polyphonic quality and with a genuine feeling of authenticity that only the mother tongue can yield. This way, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, as Maurizio Calbi argues, becomes a sort of "'intertext' that is made to cohabit with the languages and codes of prison culture and, more specifically, the languages/dialects of the mafia and camorra culture spoken by these convicts-turned-actors" (2014, 240).

It is very important to stress once more that the use of dialect never entails a banalization or vulgarization. Far from it, it proves to be decisive in creating a bridge between the events in Shakespeare's tragedy and the prisoners' first-hand experience of the nature of crime and the codes of honor that shape the world of men, of conflicting allegiances and backstabbing, of betrayal and murder, which endows the performance in *Cesare deve morire* with a visible surplus of intensity. Through the resonances between the story told by the play and the inmates' past, their performance is raised, so to speak, to the second power: the inmates can re-

enact their personal experiences, whose vivid memory enables them to penetrate the dynamics of crime, revenge, and conspiracy with a sharper eye and a more profound understanding than even Shakespeare himself could possibly have. The convicts possess the awareness of men who did indeed find themselves having death set in one eye and who had to look into it closely. As Arcuri asks Striano, who has difficulty in performing a scene: "Ma perché? Di Cesari prepotenti, a casa nostra, non ne hai mai conosciuti?" ("But why? Have you never met domineering Caesars where we come from?," *Cesare deve morire*, 28:03-28:09).

The very fact that "these non-actors neo-realistically elevated to the role of historical giants" (Viganò 2012) can readily appropriate Shakespeare's text by relating it to their former lives as criminals is not only a demonstration of Shakespeare's universality or instrumental to the generation of intense emotion. In fact, the seamless intertwining between script and personal memories in an effortless back-and-forth transition from life to stage and back exposes how labile and porous the boundaries between reality and fiction can turn out to be: the scene where Decius tries to convince Caesar to go the Senate despite Calphurnia's nightmare even prompts an actual altercation between Bonetti and Arcuri, which draws on their shared history in prison. As Guido Reverdito (2012) points out, the Tavianis manage to channel in the convicts' acting both the tempestuous urges of a denied existence and the anxiety to express in fiction the truth of so much passion repressed inside. What strikes as especially surprising is the prisoners' capacity to access their own emotions in such a powerfully intimate way.

The use of color is also of paramount importance in the movie, which was almost completely shot in a very powerful and implacable digital black-and-white that scrutinizes the faces of the inmates-actors, thereby exposing them in the nakedness of their own "denied lives" while facing the height of Shakespeare's lines and their invariably invasive content (Reverdito 2012).[8] As Lago (2012) remarks, the interplay of lights and shadows is endowed with a strong plastic, matter-like value, which is itself tragic and powerful, as in a Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau film. Colors are only used in the beginning, in the end, and in a scene in which Gallo immerses himself in a mirage-like daydream of freedom while looking at a postcard of a Mediterranean island; colors always symbolize the feeling of freedom. The transition from the saturated colors of the performance to the sharp black-and-white of the reality of prison acutely highlights the loss of freedom and is instrumental in presenting prison life in an anti-naturalistic vein, with a brutal nakedness enhanced by a suggestive expressionist photography. The music composed by Giuliano Taviani (Vittorio's son) and Carmelo Travia makes for an intensely piercing soundtrack by crucially setting the tone and atmosphere of many scenes. This is one of those cases when, as Linda Hutcheon observes, "the aural is just as important as the visual" (2006, 40), in that it manages to "enhance and direct audience response to characters and action" (2006, 41) and "can be used

to connect inner and outer states in a less explicit way than do camera associations" (2006, 41).

Rehabilitiation and Regeneration

The convicts' meeting with Shakespeare is a utopian flash of light, as Shakespeare becomes a privileged vehicle for the exploration as well as the expression of inner freedom in a very peculiar environment, in which every action is severely controlled. The movie therefore also ends up touching upon the crucial issue of individual freedom in the face of authority and in the context of larger historical processes, an issue that has actually taken up a large part of critical discussions of the play in the last fifteen years.[9] It is particularly apt that such a key question be explored in jail, where convicts have to deal every day with the consequences of their conflict with authority (Mamone 2012). A special liberty emerges in Rebibbia, the liberty to create new worlds, to become someone else, to get better; through theater, the inmates understand that they can be different, and the overlap of fiction and reality proves to be crucial to their rehabilitation and regenerative process. As Francesca Borrione (2014, 13) remarks, while in Al Pacino's *Looking for Richard* (1996) the actors look for themselves in Shakespeare, in *Cesare deve morire* they look for Shakespeare inside themselves, thereby opening themselves to interpretation too. The underlying assumption seems to be that everyone can achieve redemption through culture, through theater and its creative potentialities, insofar as theater enables men to construe themselves after their own fashion, thereby giving them the opportunity to start building a new, alternative self and be "reborn" on stage. The case of Striano is emblematic in displaying the extent to which theater is able to foster a complete re-fashioning of the self: after serving his eight-year sentence in Rebibbia, he benefited from the *indulto* (pardon) in 2006 and went on to become a professional actor.[10]

In most cases, however, the freedom experienced by the inmates is only momentary, since the overlap between stage and life abruptly comes to an end as the final curtain is lowered on their performance: the striking contrast between the imagined glory of ancient Rome and the actual gloom of the prison becomes apparent for both convicts and viewers, again. After the exaltation of both the descent into and the escape from themselves that have marked their performance, the convicts have to return to their cells: they quickly go back from Romans to outcasts. We are shown once again the sequence of the inmates being escorted back to their individual cells with only the rattle of keys in the locks as a soundtrack: this time, the effect is even more powerful than in the beginning as a result of all the emotion, depth, and authenticity that have touched us in the previous sixty minutes.

The rehabilitative and regenerating function of theater simultaneously seems,

however, to carry disturbing retributive overtones, since this enlivening, reawakening contact with art leads some of the convicts fully and painfully to realize what they have lost because of their crimes. "Da quando ho conosciuto l'arte, 'sta cella è diventata 'na prigione" ("Since I got to know art, this cell has become a prison," *Cesare deve morire*, 1:09:00-1:09:16), significantly laments Rega while looking straight into the camera as a way to conclude the movie. These lines — eerily redolent of the very same bitter sorrow informing Caliban's retort to Prospero "You taught me language, and my profit on't / Is I know how to curse" (*The Tempest*, 1.2.364-5) — harshly jar with the widespread rhetoric of art as the liberator of the spirit par excellence and actually direct the viewers' focus on the convicts' excruciating awareness of what they could have been and never were or will be. Art, the Tavianis seem to imply, is a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it is undoubtedly the best pathway to freedom in our grim reality; on the other, it is by that very same art that we become aware of the limits imposed on us by life, a realization that can bring about much existential suffering. Here, Shakespeare therefore becomes "a veritable Derridean *pharmakon*," which embodies at the same time "poison and cure, and [is] thus far removed from the incontrovertibly salvific 'Shakespeare' as catalyst of spiritual growth, reformation and redemption that emerges from previous 'prison Shakespeare' films" (Calbi 2014, 236-37). The regret for the time that has been lost is also apparent in Arcuri's remark about Caesar's *De bello gallico*: "Pensare che al liceo mi sembrava così noioso!" ("To think that I considered it so boring in high school!," *Cesare deve morire*, 31:40-31:53), which may even be interpreted as a not-so-veiled accusation to the Italian State school system, apparently incapable of conveying high values without making them sound unbearably boring.

Unsurprisingly, given the unsettling nature of the movie, the transformative power of art turns out to be not only directed to the inmates but also to viewers, as the film ends up eliciting conflicting feelings and reactions, inasmuch as one often finds oneself oddly sympathizing with criminals, something most of us would not normally contemplate as a possibility. In this sense, the movie offers spectators a rare opportunity to reconsider their prejudices and simplistic assumptions about good and evil, nature and culture, nativism and behaviorism, and possibly start looking at both prison life and Shakespeare with different eyes.

Notes

1. All translations from Italian and from regional dialects are mine.
2. For a discussion of the intentional "imperfections" of such a circular structure, see Calbi 2014, 237-38.
3. In the words of Kenneth Turan (2013), "To see how artfully these men manage

this is to realize how essential acting can be for a life outside the law, to be reminded that to be a criminal is to be first and foremost a deceiver." Such an idea is shared by Manohla Dargis (2013), who contends that "there's nothing surprising about the disclosure that some denizens of the criminal world have a talent for dissembling."

4. Prisoners-actors also importantly figure in Davide Ferrario's 2009 movie *Tutta colpa di Giuda* (*Blame it on Judas*).
5. On *Shakespeare behind Bars*, see Marshall 2009, Tofteland and Cobb 2012, Herold 2014.
6. Other aspects of the adaptation, though not devoid of significance, seem less important, namely the severe cuts to the text, the absence of female characters, and the excision of the quarrel scene between Cassius and Brutus.
7. There are other similar examples. "Our course will seem too bloody" (*Julius Caesar*, 2.1.161) becomes "La giustizia non è 'no scannatoio!" ("Justice is not a slaughterhouse!," *Cesare deve morire*, 27:19-27:22). "Caesar will not come" (*Julius Caesar*, 2.2.68) becomes "Cesare 'un c'ha genio de venì" ("Caesar does not feel like coming," *Cesare deve morire*, 32:50-32:53). "Lest I be laughed at when I tell them so" (*Julius Caesar*, 2.2.70) becomes "Se no, i senatori, m'avessero a piglia p'o culo a me?" ("Otherwise, the senators will take the piss out of me," *Cesare deve morire*, 32:59-33:02).
8. For the first time in their career, the Tavianis decided to use digital equipment. This allowed them to spare money but also provided them with much more material than usual from which to choose, so that editing ended up taking a very long time (Fratarcangeli 2012).
9. See Roe 2002, Wells 2002, Phoon 2004, Grady 2010 and 2011.
10. He went back to Rebibbia for this production, and "even if his casting is something of a cheat, his history with the facility makes it legitimate" (Rooney 2012).

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"Everything thickens": Ngaio Marsh and an Intermedial *Macbeth* from New Zealand

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ABSTRACT | MARSH'S *MACBETH*(S) ON STAGE | *LIGHT THICKENS*: NOVEL AS PERFORMANCE | INTERMEDIAL AESTHETICS | NOTES | REFERENCES

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the Shakespearean intersections in the works of New Zealand theater director and detective writer Ngaio Marsh (1895-1982) in the context of adaptation strategies within "settler cultures" and with *Macbeth* as a focus. Archival records of the New Zealand theater demonstrate the similarities between Marsh's productions of *Macbeth* in 1946 and 1962; the dramaturgy of the witches in particular distinguishes her stagings in the wider landscape of Anglophone production. Subsequently, Marsh reproduces and magnifies these productions in her final novel *Light Thickens* (1982). In reading closely the elements of montage, sensory crossover, and lexical repetition in Marsh's prose, I elaborate the precise formal relations of the intermedial approach that is at the heart of her aesthetic practices of adaptation. Where Marsh's multiple Shakespearean works appear to pursue a kind of inert repetition that reveals the play's essence, the play that "is," I argue that her work is characterized by a distinctive and interconnected accretion of *Macbeth* "performances." Culturally speaking, her multifocal engagement with Shakespeare is symptomatic of a settler culture that frequently experienced — through the complex dynamics of British affiliations — a sense of entitlement to or ownership of the Shakespearean canon.

Edith Ngaio Marsh (1895-1992) was one of New Zealand's primary cultural practitioners of the twentieth century: she wrote thirty-two detective novels and produced more than thirty Shakespeare plays — among many others — across six decades. To her actors in New Zealand she was a "spectacular creature," with "marvellous extravagance of vision" (Edmond 1989, 217; Thompson 1980, 75); to her readership around the world, one of the four renowned "Queens of Crime" who supplied regular investigative and frequently theatrical adventures for her detective Roderick Alleyn (named for the prominent sixteenth-century actor Edward Alleyn). Her lifestyle entailed a fairly regular pattern of movement between her home country and London. This peripatetic rhythm echoes that between theater direction and detective writing, a practice in which Shakespeare operated throughout her career as an anchoring thread and as a generic interface. Her practices of Shakespearean staging and of theatrical business within her novels are among the most substantial aspects of her work — and one of the most significant engagements with Shakespeare in New Zealand's cultural history.

This essay reads closely Marsh's multiple versions of *Macbeth*, using detailed analysis of a select play to explore the characteristics of Marsh's Shakespearean productions and prose adaptation, as well as the mechanisms through which they were disseminated both to New Zealand and to global audiences or readerships. In what follows, I read the archival records of her productions of the play in 1946 (and touring 1947) and 1962 alongside her final novel, *Light Thickens* (1982), in order to posit that Marsh develops a characteristically *intermedial* aesthetic — that is, one that invokes and shifts between different modes of expression in seeking to capture the Shakespearean "essence" that she firmly theorized. At the same time, this intermediality is itself suggestive of the unstable nature of such theatrical texts. I suggest that this analysis is important on three counts: for expanding histories of Shakespearean performance in the wider Anglophone world; for the examination of Shakespearean adaptation in its formal, generic aspects; and for the exploration of the ways in which such strategies are produced by specific cultural locations, in this case of a settler society.

One of Marsh's principal achievements lay in the successful regeneration and popularization of Shakespearean performance in New Zealand for a local, national, and sometimes international audience, from her first production of *Hamlet* in 1943 to *Henry V* in 1970. While there was limited professional theater in New Zealand until the 1960s,

in the energetic mid-century era of widespread and enthusiastic amateur theater, Marsh gained prominence as a producer and director.[1] She worked both with the University Drama Society at Canterbury College (then a constituent part of the University of New Zealand), and with repertory societies in Christchurch in New Zealand's South Island to produce both modern and Shakespearean plays, touring them on a number of occasions across the country and in Australia. These substantial dramatic efforts were pursued with astute reference to British traditions of production in the mid-twentieth century. At the same time, Marsh was equally implicated in a network of artistic practitioners in the closely knit New Zealand creative scene. Her imaginative and exciting productions of *Macbeth* and other Shakespearean plays therefore have a substantial contribution to make to the wider history of Shakespeare performance across what historian James Belich has designated the "Anglo-world" (Belich 2009).

The theater was not the first outlet for Marsh's creative talents, however. In embarking on detective writing during a trip to London in 1931, Marsh — like many aspiring writers of the Thirties — was engaging with an increasingly popular genre. Its recently codified nature, for example in the hands of the "Detection Club" in Britain, seemed to offer significant scope for ingenuity and invention in a period retrospectively dubbed the "Golden Age." Marsh's *A Man Lay Dead* was published in 1934 and followed by a steady sequence of "whodunits," only four of which are set in New Zealand itself. Though many of her novels (*Light Thickens* included) broadly conform to the conventions of the classic detective novel, P. D. James suggests their longevity is probably more a consequence of her skills in characterization and in the evocation of a specific social milieu — qualities that might have enabled her to work effectively outside the detective genre (James 2009, 101; Symons 1974, 158).[2] The social world most expressively brought to light in her books is a theatrical one.

In *Light Thickens* (1982), the final novel of a long career, the interlinking of Marsh's two principal artistic practices — theater direction and detective writing — receives its fullest expression, as Shakespearean theater takes center stage in the novel, and in fact dominates over the rather elongated detective pattern. A vivid treatment of theatrical life, superstition and stagecraft, the novel re-embodies the New Zealand productions of *Macbeth* in a fictional London landscape. In representing Shakespeare's *Macbeth* across several aesthetic genres and translating it from the stage into the detective novel, Marsh provides a powerful example of Shakespeare as creative process as well

as a vigorous component of a double cultural identity.

Marsh's *Macbeth*(s) on stage

In an essay of 1964 entitled "The Quick Forge," Marsh reveals her belief in an inner essence of Shakespeare's plays that can withstand any vagaries of interpretation, production, and spectacle:

> There they stand, rocklike through their four centuries. The tides of accumulated scholarship, theatrical fashions, veering preferences, wash over them and leave their deposits. Garrick plays Lear in a tie-wig, Kean reveals Richard Crookback by flashes of lightning. Irving makes a gentleman of Shylock and Beerbohm Tree herds un-cooperative livestock across the bank whereon the wild thyme grows. William Poel returns to the strict Elizabethan playhouse and someone gives a rendering of *Twelfth Night* on rollerskates . . . In New Zealand, from time to time, a young player struggling with a secondary part, exclaims in astonishment, 'But this is real!' and, you may say, utters the one irrefutable comment upon Shakespeare. (Marsh 1964b, 39-40)

This passage shows not only Marsh's own thorough acquaintance with English traditions of Shakespeare performance, but her own aversion to an emerging tradition of radical and even burlesque productions, condemned in shorthand as "*Twelfth Night* on rollerskates." In this conception, the play *is*: she and her actors must reveal it. If "the savagery, the terrors and the beauty of the language . . . are expressions of the very elements that disturb the modern world," then any radical adaptation is unnecessary (Marsh, Undated-A). The repetitions of staging and of poetic rhythms in her own *Macbeth*s reflect her conception of a *truthful* exposition whose purpose is rather to express in perpetuity, and without overt localization, "the pathology of violence, the sour taste of murder, the sick idiocy of ambition" (Marsh 1962a, 10).

However, tracing the staging, the movements, and the interpretations of Marsh's *Macbeth* in its three manifestations, from stage to stage to page, suggests that what at first appears to be a curiously inert intermediality is revealed to be a dynamic (and sometimes unstable) process that actually undermines Marsh's avowed essentialism — since it always points to *another* version of the play. By comparing the prompt books of her *Macbeth* productions in 1946 and 1962 with the production of the same play as it occupies her final novel, *Light Thickens*, it is possible to construct an archaeology of performance which reflects Marsh's

theatrical *ideals* as much as her actual practice.[3] This close reading first briefly situates Marsh in relation to Anglophone production of the middle of the twentieth century.

Her first production of the play in 1946/1947, which toured New Zealand's four major cities of Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland, and Dunedin, impressed critics as it "unrolled with the continuous action of the cinema film" and was steeped in "reds and earthy greys" (Lewis 1991, 208). Marsh's stage designs take on significance when compared to accounts of the very successful *Macbeth* directed by Glyn Byam Shaw at Stratford in 1955, starring Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh, which is considered a landmark in twentieth-century productions. In one account, Shaw's sets were "bare and functional, the costumes expressive but severe" (Bartholomeusz 1978, 255). Bernice Kliman describes more striking garments: rich colors, rugged woolen costumes for the men, "body-encasing, silken costumes for the women (snake-green for Lady Macbeth), with breasts and navels shadowed with paint to suggest the naked body beneath" (Kliman 2004, 66).

Marsh's elaboration of her stage designs in the more lavish fictional form in *Light Thickens* similarly emphasize Lady Macbeth's sexuality: her "skin-tight gown of metallic material, slit up one side," perhaps a more glamorized detail carried over from the earlier productions, whose script sketches suggest a tight, figure-hugging gown. If Marsh is adapting her own production designs (on a more lavish scale), she may even have pre-empted the Stratford production in this respect — suggesting that space might be made for more settler-society productions in the performance archives.

Amidst such points of reference, Marsh's *Macbeth*(s) nevertheless show touches of a striking independence of thought. Tyrone Guthrie's Old Vic production in 1934, a "severely rationalist" staging indebted both to A. C. Bradley and to Granville Barker's view of the play's textual corruption, omitted the opening scene with the witches entirely. Guthrie argued that "by making the three Weird Sisters open the play, one cannot avoid the implication that they are a governing influence on the tragedy" (Bartholomeusz 1978, 238). Marsh was incisively critical of the British productions she devoured during frequent visits. Her scrapbook from 1949-1950 records her critical observations on Anthony Quayle's production at the Stratford Memorial Theatre in the 1949 festival:

> Duncan character not established. Note — why not bed him down

> and let the audience see this? . . . Apparitions good but their disappearance not quite right. [Godfrey] Tearle a dignified & orthodox performance. [Diana] Wynyard excellent in feeling but inaudible. (Marsh, Undated-C)

While a British reviewer for the *Tribune* noted the sinister poetry of the witches, the scene did not meet Marsh's own exacting standards. Byam Shaw's Stratford production with Olivier and Leigh had the "prettified" witches float down through the air at the beginning, in pink and grey costumes that faded into the background (Kliman 2004, 67-68). By contrast, Marsh's witches play a powerful role in opening the play and in providing its atmosphere, and are clearly an aspect of the play on which she focused much imaginative energy.

The conscious independence of her aesthetic can be traced in the surviving theatrical promptbooks of Marsh's productions with the Canterbury University Drama Society, which act as working scripts for the production of 1946, its tour to Auckland and Wellington in January 1947, and the production of 1962. The three books are preserved in the Manuscripts Collection of the Alexander Turnbull Library within the National Library of New Zealand in Wellington. The promptbooks are large, detailed, colorful books, in which the text is divided into a series of climaxes that are clearly marked out in bright red ink (and consistent between scripts). They demonstrate Marsh's typical style of pasting the typewritten text into a large book where there is room for her to add directions, musical and performer cues, and sketches — in both pencil and watercolor — on the facing pages. (She was also a talented painter, having studied at the Canterbury School of Art, and retained this practice throughout her life). Their density and detail reveal a meticulously schematized directorial control, particularly in the explicitly marked movements of the actors: "Ghost moves down and begins to weave towards P. Ghost deep, even pace" (Marsh 1962a, 31). Figure groupings are carefully plotted; gestures are tested in pencil and inserted into the interstices of the dialogue. Among the more striking of the illustrations are Marsh's portrayals of the witches, whom she intends to have a sinister power (Figure 1).

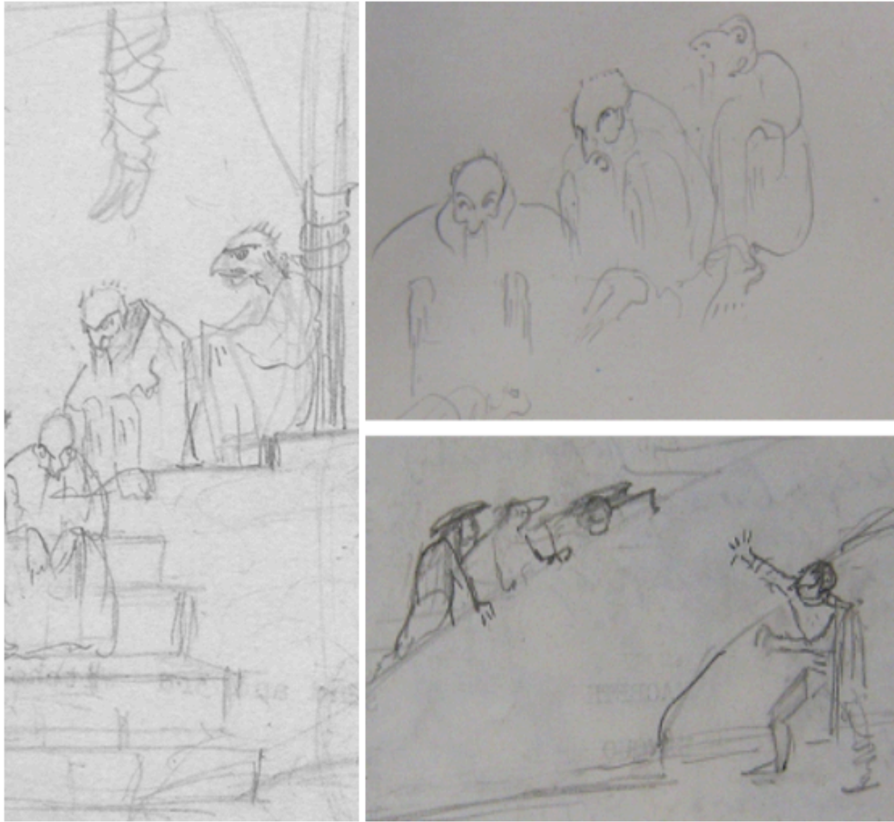

Figure 1. Marsh's sketches of the witches from 1947 (left), 1946 (top right), and 1962 (bottom right). Courtesy of the Manuscripts Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

The figures above show the witches as Marsh sketched them in each incarnation. They appear frequently in the early pages of 1946 and 1947. The sketch of 1946 exhibits them in incomplete outline, as wraith-like forms that might at any moment melt off the page. Distinctively inhuman in aspect, semi-bald and peak-nosed, they are similarly reproduced in 1947, which frames them neatly in the set of staircase and gibbet. From this more scenic illustration we move to the sketch of 1962, when the witches appear in the dramatic moment of Macbeth's fevered imperative ("Stay you imperfect speakers"). A rare photograph in the Turnbull archives from the 1946 production at Canterbury University (Figure 2) suggests — despite the crudeness of the setting and costumes — how closely these designs were reproduced on the stage, in a tableau of Macbeth's first meeting with the witches.

Figure 2. A Still from the Canterbury University Production of Macbeth in July 1946, courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand (ref PA1-q-172-02-1).

The most distinctive detail of this scene, however, is the gibbet behind the witches, complete with a dangling corpse on which they were feasting at curtain up. Preserved in each successive version of the play, this aspect of staging marks out Marsh's *Macbeth*: symbolic not only of the supernatural feeding on the human, but also perhaps of the degradation of humanity itself in the course of Macbeth's descent into bloody tyranny.

The scenery of Marsh's productions in both 1946 and 1962 is dominated by what *Light Thickens* will later describe as "a permanent central rough stone stairway curving up to Duncan's chamber" in the upper right corner (Marsh 2009b, 229). This basic geometry controls much of the actors' movements, as the staircase becomes barrier, gateway, and symbolic progression across the divide between good and evil (most especially in Macbeth's ponderous, pensive traipse towards the king's chamber). The stage design also sets up the witches' dramatic disappearance. The scripts themselves do not explicitly elaborate the techniques for the witches' exit at the end of the first scene. However, their suggestive call for "Blackout" and the testimony of one of the actresses of 1946 enables us to read backwards from *Light Thickens* to flesh out some of the performance details, suggesting a static freeze-frame created by the blackout of the witches' leap from the staircase at the back of the stage into a gap behind the scenery and onto cushioning below. "They'll leap up and we'll see them in mid-air. Blackout. They'll

fall behind the high rostrum onto a pile of mattresses" (Marsh 2009b, 233). Actress Pamela Mann recalls her own vivid memories of the production, including "a long-forgotten leap into darkness, arms and talons outstretched, onto a waiting mattress" (Mann, Undated, 5). Theatrical spectacle of years before is reanimated by the novel.

Numerous key moments within the production scripts of 1946, 1947, and 1962 illustrate other conceptual similarities. At Macbeth and Banquo's first encounter with the witches on the heath in Act 1 Scene 3, in 1946, the witches huddle on the main staircase with the First Witch in the middle, an arrangement that Marsh favors in both scripts. The three grotesque bald heads eagerly convene as the central First Witch points with a bony finger to the pilot's thumb on his palm. (The First Witch is played by a male actor in the 1946 production and in *Light Thickens*). According to the penciled stage direction, just before the entrance of the thanes the witches "descend" and "dance to position" at the foot of the staircase (Marsh 1946, 4). They move insistently "forward" through the scene in a maneuver that crowds and entraps their target, a premonition of the unrelenting restlessness that will accompany the play's progression. After addressing Banquo, they evidently return back up the staircase, while Macbeth approaches them from below to stay their departure.

In 1962, the witches' entrance is made differently, as they emerge severally from the two arches left and right and from above stairs to "smell the air. Huddled center, down facing footlights" (Marsh 1962a, 4). Macbeth is once again encircled (with Banquo giving ground). In this version a fuller sketch clearly shows the witches crouching back on their position mid-staircase, while Macbeth stands below with arm outstretched in imprecation. Finally, "witches turn their backs" (in preparation for that leap into darkness). Peregrine Jay's conviction in *Light Thickens* that the witches are aspects of Macbeth's mind, "conjured up by [his] secret thoughts" (Marsh 2009b, 233), finds its visual correlation in one of the sketches for the script of the play used on tour in 1947 in which Macbeth is pressed so closely up against the figures on the stairs that the lines dividing his face from theirs are indistinct (Figure 3).

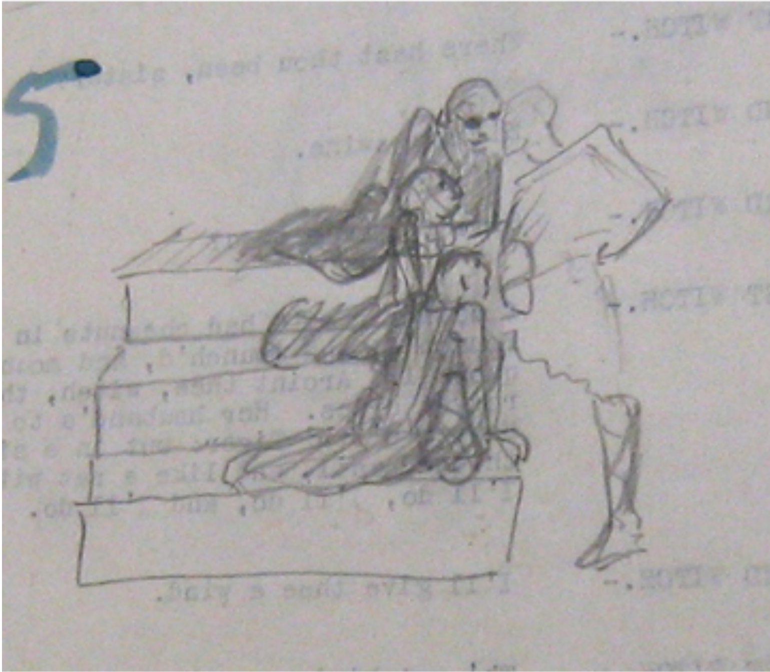

Figure 3. Macbeth and the Witches in the Production Script of 1947, Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington New Zealand (fMs-162).

Analysis of these designs suggests the distinctive contribution to the archive of Shakespearean performance that is offered by this strong-minded and creative New Zealand director. Though these several versions of the play suggest repetition and re-creation, they also indicate Marsh's fascination with remaking the play in successive iterations. That this desire should have been concentrated upon *Macbeth* is appropriate given the play's own verbal style, since it is distinguished by a "reiterative poetic texture" and "unremitting repetition" in its auditory effects. In Russ McDonald's stylistic analysis of Shakespeare's late tragic idiom, he highlights the "unprecedented concentration" of repeated words and sounds that resound throughout the play (McDonald 2006, 44; 47). The effect is produced by frequent and compressed uses of rhetorical techniques including epanalepsis (the echo at the end of a clause of the word with which it begins), which often creates a sense of muscular inexorability: "It will have blood, they say; blood will have blood" (*Macbeth* 3.4.121).[4] Language and idiom are also shown to be contagious; not only Lady Macbeth but Macbeth too picks up what L. C. Knights called "the sickening see-saw rhythm" of the witches' expressions (quoted in McDonald 2006, 30).

Shakespeare's powerfully condensed rhetoric infiltrates Marsh's own

notes when she writes of the play: "The choice is the eternal choice between good and evil, the nightmare is the nightmare of power-politics. *Macbeth* is the gangster-play to end all gangster-plays" (Marsh Undated-B). This amplificatory statement reproduces a kind of rhetorical claustrophobia just as Marsh's script designs encode it in the tightly entangled movement sequences of both productions. These features — reiterative language, rapid rhythm, claustrophobia — come to the fore in her final iteration of *Macbeth*, when *Light Thickens* turns theater into prose montage and dramatizes the powerful play's capacity to spill beyond the boundaries of the stage.

Light Thickens: novel as performance

Marsh's final novel describes a wildly successful production of *Macbeth* at London's fictional riverside theater "The Dolphin," directed by the expatriate New Zealander Peregrine Jay (who, like Marsh herself, has already done two productions of the play). Jay's early professional adventures are detailed in *Death at the Dolphin* (1967). After an extensive build-up through the play's rehearsals, which feature superstition and romantic intrigue among the cast, the real performance is violently disrupted by the actual beheading of the Macbeth (Sir Dougal MacDougal) in the wings one night, and the carrying of his head, "streaming blood," onto the stage for the play's climax (Marsh 2009b, 350). With the writer's fascination trained on the idealized production and the mechanics of theatercraft, the single murder occurs nearly two-thirds of the way through the novel, whose primary purpose seems to be the architecture of a dramatically exciting and successful embodiment of *Macbeth*. The murder plot by comparison is rather slight and disappointing: Gaston Sears, who plays Seyton and McDougal's understudy, punishes the lead actor for mocking the ancient claymore with which the climactic fight is undertaken. In this final instance, then, of her internationally successful fiction, the potency of Shakespearean text overwhelms conventions of detective fiction much as the play within the novel threatens to spill beyond the boundaries of the theater.

Marsh's novel is a re-staging of *Macbeth* as murder mystery and as theatrical triumph in London. Lady Macbeth's gown is simply one of the details that is scaled up in a fantasy production that acts as Marsh's export of her theatrical visions to the metropolis and to her global readership at large. This aspect of the adaptation allows her to develop her production beyond the restrictions of working in a colonial city of small population with university students. However, if adaptation is

partly "the compulsion to repeat" (Carroll 2009, 4), Marsh's novel is evidence that such a performance might harness the active pleasures of continuity as well as being necessarily transformative. *Light Thickens* is the product of many years' thinking about the possibility of more wholly conflating play and novel for what she calls in her autobiography a "final fling" (Marsh 2009a, 714). This phrase proved prophetic: the novel was submitted to her publishers shortly before Marsh's death in February 1982. The manuscript was subsequently revised at Collins but proved commercially successful despite editors' misgivings (Lewis 1991, 256).

Even more so than others of Marsh's novels set in the world of the theater, the demands of the detective genre here appear subordinate to her interest in Shakespearean performance; it is easy to read this novel as a wish-fulfilment of the opportunity that Marsh never had to transport her own productions to the London stage. The author does, however, participate in the wider tradition in detective fiction of using Shakespeare as a critical part of her crime narratives. Susan Baker has studied both the extent and the manner in which Shakespeare is deployed in the genre:

> [A]lthough classic detective stories repeatedly invoke Shakespeare, they engage only superficially the plays and poems for which he is supposedly famous. The idea of Shakespeare, however, Shakespeare as cultural token or totem, runs through classic detective stories with such frequency as to be all but a generic requisite. (Baker 1994, 164)

The relationship Baker describes here is a metonymic one, suggesting that in detective fiction specific plays and lines are invoked only superficially to represent the idea of "Shakespeare" himself. In this notion of a "cultural token," "Shakespeare" is merely the cipher for a specific nexus of privileged (and class-specific) values. Baker defines this peculiar economy of classic detective fiction as "Shakespeare equals good taste equals social superiority equals intellectual superiority equals moral superiority" (Baker 1995, 445). Conservatively, Shakespearean knowledge — and often integrity — tends to be aligned with characters of a more distinguished social class (of whom Marsh's detective Alleyn is one: he is a professional by inclination rather than necessity).

While Marsh's deployment of Shakespeare does at times exhibit these characteristics, she frequently presents a more nuanced and detailed engagement with particular plays themselves, and with performative

utterance and timing as a mechanism to solve murder. Her final novel, however, broadly eschews the equation of Shakespeare knowledge with successful detection. Instead, it provides an entranced rendering of theatrical production which eclipses the detective plot proper and concentrates on the minutiae of the play's meanings.

If the murder plot itself is unremarkable in the context of detective writing, it is the formal devices and generic transposition offered by Marsh's novel that are much more striking and that offer a model for Shakespearean adaptation as a process both reiterative and metatextual in nature. By providing her last novel with a double frame — looking inward on the Dolphin's company, who look inward on the increasingly slippery world of the play — Marsh is finally able to place the Shakespearean text squarely at the center of her work *and* explore the matrix of relationships around its production. She creates thereby a model for the reader that invites them to examine her techniques of appropriation, as well as of design and directorial method, at work. That Marsh's work discloses a vital *intersection* between theater and novel writing has become critically axiomatic, but there has been little sustained exploration to identify its precise formal relations (see Lewis 1991; Harding 2001). This analysis suggests that montage, sensory crossover, and lexical repetition all form a crucial part of Marsh's intersemiotic transfer of production to prose.

In a number of details the production of *Light Thickens* is evidently a reiteration of Marsh's previous versions. Lady Macbeth's "metallic" sleepwalking voice and her slinky "skin-tight gown of metallic material, slit up one side" (Marsh 2009b, 236) echo the "harsh metallic set" of the 1962 production, among other details that suggest Marsh is lovingly restaging and amplifying her own production designs (Lewis 1991, 177). Just as the stage productions bound the actors in heavy sheepskins tied with leather thongs (Lewis 1991, 177), this third instantiation of the play heavily emphasizes the materiality and bulk of medieval fabrics: "distinctive cloaks . . . particularly brilliant ones, blood-red with black and silver borders. For the rest, thronged trousers, fur jerkins, and sheepswool chaps. Massive jewellery. Great jewelled bosses, heavy necklets, and heavy bracelets" (Marsh 2009b, 236). Luxuriating in a historically hazy, clannish, Gothic Scotland, the fictional Dolphin production embellishes and extends the kind of adornments that Marsh's modest resources with the Canterbury Society could provide. The costuming is symptomatic of this scaled-up production: from hard-working amateur company to professional superstars, from a small Christchurch theater to the gaudy bankside confection (with a long,

distinctive heritage) that director Peregrine Jay has resurrected. The production therefore distinctively reflects the duality of Marsh's own experience as a New Zealander deeply engaged with her national cultural scene as well as with the older and more established traditions of the "home" country of Britain.

The continuity in the positioning and aspects of the witches in the play has already been noted; in the novel, their appearance is explicitly hideous: "terrible faces" (Marsh 2009b, 235); "three disreputable old women [whose faces] are terrible and know everything. In the opening scene we see them, birdlike, as they are; almost ravens" (Marsh 2009b, 287). Their avian strangeness is prompted perhaps by the pose of outstretched wings in which they leap from the stage; they are birds of prey nibbling at human remains.

The role of Seyton also receives a particular amplification in the novel, not only because he is the murderer. In the 1962 production he is merged with the Third Murderer and with the Messenger to provide a more frequent and sinister presence throughout the play, sometimes silently hovering in the midst of scenes. This conceit is not a novel one, with a history in performance dating back to Davenant within whose adaptation he is "universal factotum and confidant" (Hunter 1967, 7). But it is taken to a different and much more menacing level in *Light Thickens*, where he is the embodied "fate," "alter ego," "shadow," "a sort of judgement" (Marsh 2009b, 284); even "like death itself" (Marsh 2009b, 342). It is to him, and not to the First Murderer, that Macbeth remarks softly, "there's blood upon thy face." This remark is prophetic for events around the play, when Gaston becomes the murderer. An ominous shadow to the bloody king within the play's diegetic framework, he is also perpetrator of the enacted murder plot which "ghosts" the performance itself. The sensation of a "double life" adhering to the play is perpetuated by the detective Alleyn's re-enactment of the final scenes for his investigation. An echo of the "real" presentation which has the murderer playing his victim's role, its provision of exact timings and cast positions in service of the police enquiry denotes performance as a rigorously codified and repeatable event (like the meticulously choreographed climactic fight). This device is common in Marsh's theatrical fictions.

As homage to past performance, *Light Thickens* operates as a polyphonic space in which Shakespeare's text, Marsh's own production texts, and the loosened framework of detective conventions are layered to form a powerful mixture. In her recent theorizing of adaptation,

Linda Hutcheon has emphasized the transactional quality that inheres in the enjoyment of such arrangement: "[p]art of this ongoing dialogue with the past, for that is what adaptation means for audiences, creates the doubled pleasure of the palimpsest: more than one text is experienced — and knowingly so" (Hutcheon 2006, 116). Hutcheon offers a salutary reminder that an act of recognition is crucial to the dialogic notion of palimpsest. Readers of *Light Thickens* — an international group — are explicitly signaled to read its relationship with the Shakespearean text; bound up in this pleasurable encounter is the possibility that specific identifications of the companion work might replicate the process of detection. (It is notable that knowledge of the Shakespearean text is frequently embedded within a detective clue-system: in this respect, readers of detective fiction and consumers of adaptations participate in a similar active engagement).

For another category of readership, those New Zealand audiences and actors with sufficient memory of the actual theatrical events that haunt the novel, their palimpsestic pleasure might be *trebled* by the triangulation of Shakespeare play/Marsh novel/Christchurch performance. This relationship, too, is explicitly if modestly displayed in the book's dedication to James Laurenson and Helen Holmes, the Macbeth and Lady Macbeth of 1962. Such pleasure is evinced by Pamela Mann's account (above) of playing a witch, a stimulation of memory which is complemented by the recollections of J.A. Pocock (who played the Doctor/Sargeant), who distinguishes *Light Thickens* from her other novels as "part of the enterprise we shared with her" as a local theatrical company (Pocock 1989, 2). *Light Thickens*, it is implied, successfully captures and replicates both the details and the ambience of a stage production from more than thirty years earlier. Marsh's specific act of adaptation here, which scripts the possibility of such a triangulated response, means that her book should be recognized as belonging to a New Zealand performance history as well as bringing the latter into the wider archive of Anglophone performance. *Light Thickens* delivers a production from New Zealand (albeit disguised) to a global audience.

Macbeth seems a perfect choice for the Shakespearean detective novel; after all, one editor of the play has called it a species of "whodunit," in which the criminal's true propensities are gradually revealed to himself (Hunter 1967, 7). It is also an appropriate vehicle for the illustration of theater overrunning its (generic) boundaries, in its exploration of the self-destructive energies released by ambition. *Macbeth* is preoccupied with the slipperiness of signs, encoded through persistent motifs of

disguise and deception. Macbeth's "false face must hide what the false heart doth know" (1.7.82), but he struggles hopelessly to contain the crime at the core of the play. In *Light Thickens*, the play's own ability to rupture into the "real" world in which it is performed, with threatening and even disastrous consequences, echoes the central dramatic ruptures of both moral and psychic integrity.

Intermedial aesthetics

Within the verbal patterns of the novel (a "fugue" of repeated motifs, as Marsh described it), the title itself provides a pervasive lexical cluster. It is drawn from Macbeth's lines as he gives himself up to killing after killing, and to the oncoming dark:

> Light thickens
> And the crow makes wing to the rooky wood;
> Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
> While night's black agents to their preys do rouse. (3.2.50-53)

In a play that contains an unusually high proportion of couplets, the harmony here is a chilling one; Macbeth's alliterative triad (day/droop/drowse) recalls the incantatory idiom of the witches as he succumbs to moral chaos and the irresistible energy of evil, here "roused" to be unleashed in the violence onstage both in the play and in the novel.

Numerous instances of the polysemous verb "thicken" pervade the theater's atmosphere, expressing the gathering intensity and opacity of the play's emotional currents; they even find their way into descriptions of the world outside ("the traffic had not thickened" [Marsh 2009b, 291]). This lexical scheme partly articulates the play's bleeding outward into the frame of supposed "real" lives on its margins and outside the theater walls. "It's a volcano," claims Jay of the text in his jurisdiction, "Overflowing. Thickening" (Marsh 2009b, 272). This unbridled image of supra-human power is a more savage verbal counterpart to the shape of the theater rising above its surrounding urban plain, "conspicuous in its whiteness and, because of the squat mess of little riverside buildings that surrounded it, appearing tall, even majestic" (Marsh 2009b, 237). Incongruous within the city space, "volcano" is a suggestive geological echo of Marsh's home country, and embodies an innate threat of mysterious and destructive violence waiting to be unleashed and to overrun its boundaries.

While such a rupture is most obviously enacted in the actual murder of

an actor as he is "killed" in the play, its more microcosmic instances at the linguistic level — of the play breaking into its framing context — also subtly signify the challenges of containing the prior text. The "thickening" atmosphere describes miasmas of superstition and discomfort that gradually envelop different members of the cast. As the play's rehearsals strengthen to a full realization of Macbeth's destruction, and the mysteries build up among the cast, "[t]he play closes in on him. And on us." The reader stands in for the audience; "Everything thickens" (Marsh 2009b, 234). Marsh preserves the context of the title phrase in specific quotation. But she also extends and complicates its contexts in her appropriation: it becomes the sign of unease, of theatrical convention, of unexpected narrative complication (as in "the plot thickens") — and even of the very accretion of adaptations that have subsequently attended the play's afterlife. In the last sense, novels such as *Light Thickens* offer to extend what *Macbeth* is, making it simultaneously more substantial (in *Othello*'s sense, to "thicken other proofs," at 3.3.431) and — paradoxically — more fluid.

Jay's feeling that "the days before the opening night seemed to hurry and to darken" (Marsh 2009b, 330) echoes the rhythm of the play itself as Macbeth speeds towards destruction. The pace of this is enacted in the text's more frequent pieces of montage, through the dress rehearsals and the run itself (just as Marsh's *Macbeth* of 1946 "unrolled with the continuous action of the cinema film"). It is in the often dreamlike and compelling quality of these passages that Marsh's prose is at its most expressive:

> Exquisite lighting: a mellow and tranquil scene. Banquo's [sic] beautiful voice saying "*the air nimbly and sweetly recommends itself unto our gentle senses.*" The sudden change when the doors rolled back and the piper skirled wildly and Lady Macbeth drew the King into the castle. From now on it is night. (Marsh 2009b, 331)

This passage layers atmosphere, dialogue, and polysyndeton (conjunctions between each clause) to convey Duncan's inevitable movement towards his fate — a fate symbolically suggested in "night" and the abruptness of the sentence that follows. (Through a strange slip, Duncan's line here has been attributed to Banquo). As such scenes slip by in panoramic prose, the subtle shifts in tense — from present to past to present again — suggest the essentially cyclical nature of this production: for its writer (and her real-life actors), it is happening now as it happened in the past (1946 and 1962), and as it will continue to resonate with the vitality and the gloss of the living theater. It is

ephemeral and it is repetitive.

At the same time, this passage speaks of the author's fluid movement among genres of expression: as novelist, director and painter, her language betrays an instinctively multimedia approach (and even partakes of cinematic montage). This has already been noted in the elaborate combination of pencil, brush strokes, and typed text in the scripts. One of the distinguishing features of Marsh's detective novels, many of which feature a theater production or actors, is her technique for capturing the motion and atmosphere of theater in writing:

> There is perhaps nothing that gives one so strong a sense of theatre from the inside as the sound of invisible players in action. The disembodied and remote voices, projected at an unseen mark, the uncanny quiet off-stage, the smells and the feeling that the walls and the dust listen, the sense of a simmering expectancy; all these together make a corporate life so that the theatre itself seems to breathe and pulse and give out a warmth. (Marsh 1964a, 72)

This extract from *Opening Night* (originally published 1951) draws together a range of sensory experiences — smell, warmth, and above all, sound — which are rendered verbally, with even a disingenuous admission that nothing "gives one so strong a sense" as the noise that by definition cannot be repeated in text.

In the novel *Final Curtain* (1947), written shortly after her first production of *Macbeth*, the play forms a vital context for the murder of an elderly Shakespearean actor posing for his portrait as the Scottish tyrant king. Detective Alleyn's wife Agatha Troy is the painter, herself haunted by the production she has recently designed and by the play's text that she *repeatedly* consumes; "Its threat of horror was now a factor in her approach to her work" (Marsh 1965, 6). Troy's lucidly described works, which Marsh readily acknowledges in reflection as a verbal cipher for her own "unattempted, non-existent" pictures (Marsh 1979, 142), bring the setting of *Macbeth* to life once more: "The rooky wood, a wet mass, rimmed with boldly stated strokes of her brush, struck sharply across a coldly luminous night sky. The monolithic forms in the middle distance were broadly set down as interlocking masses" (Marsh 1965, 86). The portrait's heavy outlines and "monolithic forms" adapt Troy's own set paintings, with clear echoes of Marsh's designs for the recent Christchurch play. Both playtext and performance become images suffused with interpretation, "ghosted" by their antecedent forms. Troy's painting, too, is a palimpsestic document. The author's unwillingness to settle for a singular expression of this remarkable

passage in sketch, stage, or prose is symptomatic of an appropriative aesthetic that, "interlocking" different genres, adopts continual shifts of medial perspective towards a relatively singular and stable vision of the play.

At one point in the novel, Troy's painting is vandalized and roughly daubed with aliens. This event is symbolic of the violence that will be performed not only on its subject (Sir Henry, the Macbeth, who is predictably dispatched), but possibly on the play itself. In this sense it anticipates the crude superstitious tricks with dummy heads that are played in *Light Thickens*. There is an appropriate "picture" of *Macbeth*, and there is its crude antithesis. The former remains consistent for Marsh in its outlines.

However, what appears at one level to be a kind of inert intermediality in *Light Thickens* — a transposition from stage to page thickened by a murder plot and detective process — nevertheless reveals more fully than any previous novels her fluid approach to Shakespeare as ungraspable in any single medium. Only Troy can produce a wholeness of representation that successfully elides all modes of expression. In the rather clumsy testimony of Sir Henry Ancred's son Cedric upon sight of the completed portrait: "I mean, it really *is* theater, and the Old Person and that devastating Bard all synthesized and made eloquent and everything" (Marsh 1965, 87). Such synthesis — such wholeness — can only be linguistically deferred.

While the focus here has been in detail on her aesthetic practices, Marsh's work is also of significance to the cultural politics of Shakespearean adaptation, and particularly to the growing understanding of adaptation strategies within settler societies.[5] Marsh is prominent among a range of artists in New Zealand who have used Shakespeare's works for a variety of purposes: as intertexts through which to negotiate their sense of settlement and connection to British/European culture; as a source of linguistic energy and fellowship; and more recently as a site of political critique. Marsh's affiliation with the doubled identity of New Zealand and Britain shared by her generation has produced readings such as Mark Houlahan's designation of her "late imperial groundbase" for Shakespearean interactions in New Zealand (Houlahan 2007, 170). Within wider criticism of Marsh, she has also been perceived as Anglo-centric, conservative and essentialist, even while celebrated for her undoubted vision and support for the arts. However, this first sustained analysis of Marsh's Shakespeare productions alongside her novelization of these

same theatrical events suggests a more nuanced sensibility, disclosing her conscious relationship to the different dimensions of local and global Shakespeare, with the crossing of generic borders as a signal towards such double occupation.

This approach might also suggest a redefinition of the boundaries of "local" Shakespeare that have attracted critical attention principally to those works that emphasize radical difference. Countering the critical embarrassment that often attends investigation of "late imperial" culture, colonial relationships between New Zealand and Britain are now being re-read by historians as comprising "cultural co-ownership" (Barnes 2012, 2). The identities formed under such conditions, both personal and artistic, are often active constructions rather than impositions. In this context, Marsh's multifocal engagement with Shakespeare is in part symptomatic of a settler culture that frequently experienced — through the complex dynamics of British affiliations — a sense of entitlement to or ownership of the Shakespearean canon.

In re-presenting the play, Marsh expects to "find" *Macbeth*, in the assumption that the Shakespearean play is a knowable, stable object, rather than what M. J. Kidnie calls "an unbounded diachronic series of events" (Kidnie 2005, 102). In fact, her own *oeuvre* precisely re-produces the play as such a diachronic series, while *Light Thickens* strongly dramatizes the possibilities and tendencies of the Shakespearean play to overspill the boundaries of the stage and of singular iteration. Articulating across her career the Shakespearean theater in prose, theater in painting, painting in prose, Marsh effects both intermedial repetition and adaptation.

These structural and linguistic transpositions demonstrate the importance of understanding her work through the generic interconnections that so frequently center on Shakespeare. At the same time, her London *Macbeth* is also a reiteration and restaging of *Macbeth* as it lived in the midcentury New Zealand theatrical scene. In her own distinctive ways, Marsh creates a kind of "settler Shakespeare," whose generic flexibility and multiple locations offer a point of negotiation for emerging identities in both the Anglo-world and post-colonial cultural landscapes.

Notes

1. In the early part of the twentieth century, theater was principally produced in New Zealand by a number of professional touring companies from Australia and elsewhere, such as that of Allan Wilkie — and very enthusiastically received. Subsequently, local and regional amateur theatrical organisations were widespread and popular, alongside vigorous student/university societies, with a growing impetus through mid-century towards a national theatre. In the 1960s regional theaters such as Downstage in Wellington (1964) became established and the medium achieved what Peter Harcourt calls a "stable, professional outlook." See Peter Harcourt, *A Dramatic Appearance: New Zealand Theatre 1920-1970* (Wellington, NZ: Methuen, 1978).
2. In James's usefully succinct recent definition, the detective story

   > is differentiated both from mainstream fiction and from the generality of crime novels by a highly organized structure and recognized conventions. What we can expect is a central mysterious crime, usually murder; a closed circle of suspects each with motive, means and opportunity for the crime; a detective, either amateur or professional, who comes in like an avenging deity to solve it; and, by the end of the book, a solution which the reader should be able to arrive at by logical deduction from clues inserted in the novel with deceptive cunning but essential fairness. (James 2009, 15)

3. My archival sources are all drawn from the Alexander Turnbull collection of the National Library of New Zealand in Wellington. The Alexander Turnbull collection forms part of the National Library and contains both published and unpublished materials (including manuscripts, oral histories and photographs) as part of the national documentary heritage collections. The Turnbull includes a number of files on Marsh, including some of her prompt books, correspondence, scrapbooks with theater cuttings and draft versions of talks, as well as occasional loose manuscripts and notes with story ideas. References to manuscripts are preceded with "ATL" and then employ the library catalogue number. Not all sources have dates recorded.
4. All references to *Macbeth* are from the Cambridge University Press edition, edited by A. R. Braunmuller (1997).
5. New critical paradigms are emerging to understand settler societies as distinctive cultural formations. Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis have defined settler societies as those "in which Europeans have settled, where their descendants have remained politically dominant over indigenous peoples, and where a heterogenous society has developed in class, ethnic and racial terms" (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995, 3).

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ABSTRACT | MARSH'S *MACBETH*(S) ON STAGE | *LIGHT THICKENS*: NOVEL AS PERFORMANCE | INTERMEDIAL AESTHETICS | NOTES | REFERENCES | TOP

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The Player King and Kingly Players: Inverting *Hamlet* in Lee Joon-ik's *King and the Clown* (2005)

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Abstract | He That Plays the King Shall Be Welcome | "All the World's Large Stage is the Clowns' Stage" | The Play's the Thing | Conclusion | Notes | References

Abstract

Set during the reign of King Yeonsan (1476-1506), *King and the Clown* (*Wang-ui Namja*, dir. Lee Joon-ik, 2005) is an (overlooked) adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that grafts the play onto Korean history and retells the story from the perspective of the traveling players. Employed to help Yeonsan confront and explore his unresolved (Oedipal) issues and to "catch the conscience" (2.2.582) of corrupt officials, the troupe finds itself dangerously embroiled in court politics and asked to stage a number of theatrical "mousetraps" to the point where the interior plays supersede the exterior film. By making the "clowns" the heroes and the plays-within-the-film the main foci, *King and the Clown* threatens to turn Shakespeare's *Hamlet* inside out, structurally and thematically, an inversion that reflects South Korean resistance to western cultural hegemony. This paper will explore the ways in which Lee's carnivalesque film functions to decenter the "original," as well as to blur the lines of distinction between the stage and the screen, the local and the global.[1]

Since the turn of the twenty-first century South Korea has emerged as a new center for the production of transnational popular culture, supplanting Japan as cultural hegemon in East Asia and challenging the unidirectional cultural flows from the West. Key to the success of the so-called Korean Wave (or *Hallyu*), the reason behind the highly exportable and globally appealing nature of its products, is the practice of blending local, regional and Western styles, genres, identities and narratives: Korean Wave culture is "in essence all things hybrid" (Kim 2013, 17).

Unlike North Korea, which by comparison remains hermetically sealed, South Korea has been exposed to multiple external influences and is accustomed to absorbing and imaginatively appropriating other cultures. John Lie even claims there is no K in K-Pop because of its *mugukjoek* nature (i.e., lack of nationality). The loss of specificity and complex mixing of genres and themes characteristic of contemporary South Korean culture is also apparent in its treatment of Shakespeare, described almost invariably as "hybrid," "intercultural" and "glocal."[2]

In the last couple of decades there have been several notable Korean stage adaptations of Shakespeare, including the work of directors Oh Tae-suk, Kim Myung-kon, Han Tae-sook and Yang Jung-ung, and many more; indeed, such is the current popularity of Shakespeare in South Korea that it is possible to speak of a "Shakespearean Wave."[3]*Hamlet* has proven especially popular in South Korea and in the last twenty years, it has been staged more than any other play either foreign or domestic. (Lee Hyon-u suggests this is due to "fellow-feeling between Hamlet and the Korean people with their painful experience of Japanese colonialism, the Korean War and military dictatorship" (2011, 105)).[4]

Film versions of Shakespeare, on the other hand, with the exception of Lim Won-kook's 2008 "take" on *The Taming of the Shrew*, *A Frivolous Wife* (*Nallari Jongbujeon*), are relatively unheard of and it seems South Korea's thriving film industry has yet to embrace Shakespeare.[5] Another exception to this is *King and the Clown* (*Wang-ui Namja*), a 2005 period drama directed by Lee Joon-ik which has won multiple awards and is one of the country's highest ever grossing films. Set in the fifteenth century and based on the life of the notorious King Yeonsan, a historical figure traumatized by his father's complicity in the murder of his mother, *King and the Clown* is an adaptation or, more accurately, transformation of *Hamlet* that grafts the play onto Korean history and retells the story from the perspective of the itinerant players, whom King Yeonsan employs to confront and resolve his psychological issues and to "catch the conscience" (2.2.582) of corrupt officials.[6] It thereby dismantles, rearranges and, by making the clowns the heroes and the plays-within-the-film the central focus, ultimately inverts Shakespeare's "original." Perhaps for this reason, coupled with the fact producers resisted using Shakespeare as an overt selling tool — another act of rebellion? — *King and the Clown* has yet to be labeled a "Shakespeare film" (itself a problematic term) even though it is not the first production to draw parallels between Hamlet and King Yeonsan. Lee Yun-taek's *The Problematic Man: Yunsan* is a 1995 stage version of *Hamlet* that also dramatizes the life of King Yeonsan, blending "historical fact" and "Shakespearean fiction," while, more recently, *The Treacherous* (dir. Min Kyu-dong, 2015) explicitly invited comparisons between King Yeonsan and Hamlet (Figure 1). Indeed, King Yeonsan is sometimes dubbed "the Hamlet of Korea" in recognition of the ways in which this historical figure's story resonates with Shakespeare's tragic protagonist.[7]

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Figure 1. Kim Kang-woo in the role of King Yeonsan in The Treacherous (dir. Min Kyu-dong, 2015). This scene obviously alludes to Hamlet's iconographic contemplation of Yorick's skull and serves to prove just how deeply engrained the link between Yeonsan and Hamlet is in the Korean imagination. Image courtesy of SOOFILM.

While many critics have commented on *King and the Clown*'s "Shakespearian dynamic," its "hint(s) of the Bard" and the way in which it "hearkens back as much to Shakespeare and *commedia dell'arte* as to Korea's own cultural traditions," few have come close to recognizing the extent to which *King and the Clown* is in dialectic with *Hamlet* (Lamble, 2007; Smith, 2007).[8] Even Keumsil Kim Yoon and Bruce Williams, who highlight how "*King and the Clown* counterbalances traditional Korean performance with intertextual references to Shakespeare," and David Carter, who describes the film as "Shakespearean in its structure and style" and identified that the "use of the device of a play to reveal the truth about the murder of the king's mother has clear echoes of Hamlet's use of the travelling players," fall short of appreciating the multiple, complex ways *King and the Clown* sustains an intertextual relationship with *Hamlet*.

It is my contention that *Hamlet* is an important referent throughout *King and the Clown*, influencing though not determining the film's plot, style, structure, themes and characterization, but like so many Asian Shakespeare films it has "slipped beneath the radar" (Burnett 2010, 120). In particular, *King and the Clown* — a distinctively self-reflexive film about performance — explores Hamlet's fascination with theater and his near-obsession with the players, who take the form of *namsadang* performers (or *gwangdae*).[9] Their response to his obsession, and feelings of trepidation at being drawn into the world of court intrigue, are given pre-eminence — an indication of the carnivalesque nature of the film and its attempt to decenter Shakespeare's playtext, which, as John Barth and others have pointed out, privileges the perspective of the

aristocratic. By making the players the focal characters and by painting an unflattering portrait of King Yeonsan, *King and the Clown* not only strips *Hamlet* of its heroic dimensions but privileges indigenous Korean performance over Western "high" art. Indeed, the film, regarded as an "ambassador for Korean culture and history abroad," has led to a reappraisal of *namsadang* and its six types of acts — *p'ungmul* (farmers' band), *bona* (plate spinning), *salp'an* (acrobatics), *orum* (tightrope walking), *totbegi* (masked dance), *tolmi* (puppet plays) — all of which are colorfully showcased (Hwang 2014, 90). Thus, rather than revealing the passive resistance to Western cultural hegemony which, according to Im Yeeyon, typifies most "Korean Shakespeares," *King and the Clown* keenly promotes Korean folk traditions and, as a sign of resilience against Western hegemony, essentially turns *Hamlet* inside out, structurally and thematically.

He That Plays the King Shall Be Welcome

The film opens with the troupe's two stars, Jang-saeng (Kam Woo-sung), who plays the *sutdongmo* (generically "butch") role, and Gong-gil (Lee Joon-gi), who is a female impersonator and embodies the *yodongmo* ("queen") role, tightrope walking while engaging in bawdy banter — a central part of the *namsadang* repertoire. Gong-gil is performing the part of a shrewish woman and Jang-saeng is "her" would-be tamer. The first lines spoken take the form of an ancient Korean poetic form called *sijo* and, notably, it is only the players who speak in verse, an inversion of Shakespeare's frequent use of poetry and prose to distinguish between the upper and lower classes, respectively. The mood turns sour, however, when Jang-saeng becomes aware that their manager is negotiating the sale of Gong-gil for sexual services to a male member of the audience. It is well known that *namsadang nori* wandered the countryside generally available as homosexual prostitutes and that "among the itinerant players — the dancers and acrobats and puppet-show people — paederasty, male prostitution, and regular homosexual marriages, sometimes with transvestitism, were common" (Rutt 1961, 112). Yet Jang-saeng takes issue with this transaction, perhaps, it is strongly implied, because of his own, repressed homoerotic feelings for Gong-gil, who, like the skirt-wearing Alfred in Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966), is subject to frequent sexual exploitation. After a violent altercation that results in the manager's death, Jang-saeng and Gong-gil leave the troupe and head to Hanyang (the contemporary name for Seoul) where they quickly impress and join another company of players with whom they devise a routine that ridicules the tyrannical king and his consort, Jang Nok-su. This routine portrays a grotesque King Yeonsan foolishly enslaved to lust and its popularity attests to *namsadang*'s reputation as critical of the ruling elite and appealing to the disenfranchised. However, the king's chief advisor, the film's Polonius, Cheo-sun, happens to attend a performance and orders the troupe be flogged and imprisoned. Jang-saeng then proposes, in a nod to *Arabian Nights*, that they be given the chance to perform before the king to prove they can make him laugh; if they fail, they will face execution. This leads to their first, fateful encounter with King Yeonsan (Jung Jin-young) and their entrance into the world of Hamlet/*Hamlet*.

King Yeonsan is immediately entranced by the company and mirrors the depressive Hamlet's

enthusiastic embracement of the players: "there did seem in him a kind of joy/ to hear of them" (3.1.20-21). He respects and admires the troupe and particularly welcomes Jang-saeng, "he that plays the king" (2.2.298). King Yeonsan also, for the same reason Hamlet receives the players so warmly, appreciates the irony that they are what they seem to be, namely performers, and thus are "certain entities in a world filled with hypocrites, imposters or . . . individuals wavering in their sense of loyalty" (Homan 1981, 155). But it is the opportunities they provide for introspection and self-knowledge that are particularly welcome, and King Yeonsan proceeds to use them to work through his psychological issues. After watching them mock his relationship with Nok-su (Kang Seong-yeon), the King replays in private the enactments, lampooning his own behavior and thereby appropriating the performance in his double role as author and figural puppet. Recognizing the "potentialities of theatre" (Rosenberg 1992, 418) and perhaps deliberately trying to upset the court he despises, he takes the players in and ensures they are "well bestowed" (2.2.485), much to the disapproval of Cheo-sun, who considers the actors vermin. King Yeonsan, by contrast, seems to desire to join the troupe and earn himself "a fellowship in a cry of players" (3.2.271-72), for during the next court performance, he enters the stage action and in a Saturnalian reversal of roles bows down to the Player King. He thereby emulates/exaggerates Hamlet's reverence of the First Player and seems willing to cast himself in the part of the clown, perhaps as a means of convincing those around him he is mad (Figure 2).[10] This moment is also reminiscent of the role-reversal scene between Falstaff and King Hal in *Henry IV, Part One* and underlines the generally festive quality of both this film and the "original" *Hamlet*, which has previously lent itself so beautiful to comedies such as *In the Bleak Midwinter* (dir. Kenneth Branagh, 1995) and *To Be or Not to Be* (dir. Ernst Lubitsch, 1942).

Figure 2. Playing the clown: Jin-yeong Jeong as King Yeonsan, King and the Clown (dir. Lee Joon-ik, 2005). © CJ Entertainment

King and the Clown is attuned to Hamlet's affection for court jesters — Yorick was, after all, his childhood idol — which chimes with historical records that suggest King Yeonsan held a defiant court clown in particular esteem. Further, the film stakes a claim for the importance of clowns, arguably the main attraction in early modern dramaturgy, highlighting their role in critiquing

those in power. They are not conceived as free agents, though, but as servants of the very individuals/institutions they satirize, and thus their subversive potential is always curbed. Jang-saeng and Gong-gil soon find themselves enlisted by the conspiratorial Cheo-sun (Polonius), a master strategist, to set a theatrical trap and expose court corruption. The stratagem goes to plan and the "guilty creature sitting at [the] play," an official who sold titles for money, is "struck so to the soul that presently/ [he] proclaimed [his] malefactions" (2.2.552; 54-54). Thereafter, King Yeonsan's admiration for and reliance on the actors increases, and he begins to trust entirely the mimetic function of theater as well as its capacity to prompt himself and others to acts of self-analysis. Thus, in an ensuing scene he invites Gong-gil to his chamber where he stages his own puppet show, a show that depicts/replays a conversation between him and his late father, Seongjong of Joseon (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Ghostly encounters: King Yeonsan's imagined conversation with his dead father in King and the Clown (dir. Lee Joon-ik, 2005). © CJ Entertainment

Taking the form of shadow theater, which nicely captures the gothic atmosphere of *Hamlet*'s ghost and graveyard scenes (puppets are historically associated with mediums and the supernatural and often deployed by Korean directors of Shakespeare in "spooky" scenes), the show King Yeonsan directs and stars in emphasizes once again his use of theater as a probing device to his consciousness (*King and the Clown* sublimates Hamlet's soliloquies through intimate performances). The performance also highlights Yeonsan's narcissistic self-absorption — a character trait the film, going against the grain of Anglo-American tradition and deliberately distancing itself from overly sentimental or idealized views of Hamlet, is disapproving of — and his Hamlet-esque conception of humans in general as "puppets dallying" (3.2.247): the Shakespearean topos of *theatrum mundi* is a recurring motif throughout *King and the Clown*. Cutting a diminutive figure *vis-à-vis* his father, Yeonsan explores past trauma, namely his abusive father's demands that he "forget her [his mother]" — a demand that draws a similar, albeit again inverted, parallel with the Ghost's instruction to "remember me."

King Yeonsan's father's orders culminate in the accusation that "Thou [Yeonsan] art fit to become but a changeling." The theme of royal changeling children, of course, runs through the Shakespearean corpus, including *Henry IV, Part One*, wherein the titular character wishes "some night-tripping fairy had exchanged" (1.1.86) his errant son, Prince Hal, with the valiant Hotspur. Often the phrase is used to express parental disappointment, but it also serves to raise doubts about legitimacy. King Yeonsan/Hamlet, it is fair to say, at times feels like a changeling, a "gipsy" more at home with the traveling players. As Harold Bloom points out, "Hamlet is a changeling, nurtured by Yorick, yet fathered by himself, an actor-playwright from the start" (2003, 9). Replaying the memory of his mother's murder and his father's cruelty prompts the further deterioration of King Yeonsan's sanity and he becomes increasingly unable to distinguish between real life and theatrical performance. The puppet show also serves to increase his commitment to the task of revenge and he is finally spurred to action when the troupe, at the behest of Cheo-sun, stages his mother's poisoning: this Hamlet, despite efforts at self-determinism, literally is a "pipe" that is played upon.

This particular interior play is the film's longest and most elaborate and it takes the anachronistic form of Peking Opera (*Jingjù*). Jeeyoung Shin reads this as a specific reference to *Farewell My Concubine* (dir. Chen Kaige, 1993), a film about a homosexual relationship in a Chinese opera troupe and one of *King and the Clown*'s other important intertexts: Yi's film is in many ways an exemplar of "multicultural mutant Koreanness."**[11]** The use of Peking Opera in this pivotal scene, which leads to three deaths at King Yeonsan's hand, also signifies an attempt to draw attention to South Korea's shared cultural heritage with China, with whom substantial efforts were being made to build a stronger economic relationship in 2005. It might even be suggested that *King and the Clown* bears some comparison with Feng Xiaogang's *wuxia* or martial arts film, *The Banquet* (2006) — a lavish and critically-acclaimed adaptation of *Hamlet* that also features numerous "inset" theatrical performances and the use of the mask as a central motif. Some of the tensions in *King and the Clown*, therefore, might be described as *intra*cultural as much as intercultural; that is, clashes can be detected not just between East and West but between South Korea and its former colonial master, Japan. Shakespeare has, in fact, previously been deployed to stress the cultural differences in language, culture and politics between Korea and Japan, and one of the most conspicuous ways in which this has been achieved is through "Korean Shakespeares" complete and deliberate disassociation with Akira Kurosawa.**[12]**

The use of Peking Opera further signifies an attempt to link *namsadang nori* with a more elite and better-known art form. As Kathy Foley points out, several theater companies in South Korea have wed selected *namsadang* to elevated court arts with which it has no historical link in order to transform commoner arts into "courtly consort" art. It could be claimed that *King and the Clown* uses Shakespeare for similar purposes, for even though producers did not explicitly use Shakespeare to market the film, his presence gives it an up-market gloss, increases its appeal to international viewers, and helps familiarize them with the relatively unknown *namsadang*. As Patrice Pavis succinctly puts it, "Shakespeare is now a machine . . . to reveal other cultures" (1993, 287) and in Korea especially Shakespeare has been seized as "an opportunity to parade traditional Koreanesque arts" (Im 2008, 261). Certainly, the way in which King Yeonsan, who is

initially contemptuous of popular entertainments and shares Hamlet's disdain for "the general," grows to appreciate *namsadang* performance encourages the viewer likewise to re-evaluate it as an art form. He is the inner spectator with whom the cinema spectator cannot help but identify, after all.

King and the Clown's central play-within-the-film, its equivalent to *The Murder of Gonzago*, unleashes a rage in King Yeonsan that terrifies those around him, especially the actors whose identities he conflates with the parts they play. The sight of Gong-gil as his mother being forced to drink poison intensifies his affection for the young, androgynous actor and spurs him to lash out violently at those the play suggests are responsible for the crime: his father's consorts. Here, then, as with the so-called Mousetrap, Yeonsan/Hamlet assumes theater mirrors the "real" world and provides him the evidence and emotional provocation needed to take action. He stabs without haste the two women, triggers his grandmother's fatal heart attack, and embraces Gong-gil's body with the passion and despair he would have if the actor actually was his mother. Indeed, given it is common to stage the Mousetrap, i.e. the original play-within-the-play in *Hamlet*, in the form of a Shamanistic *gut* ritual in Korea, one could view this scene as dramatizing the return of King Yeonsan's mother through the medium of Gong-gil.[13]

Throughout *King and the Clown* King Yeonsan displays symptoms of the Oedipus complex and during intimate moments with Nok-su he pretends to be a "baby" wanting "milk from mama's breasts" in what might also be a reference to Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor* (1987). At another point, he crawls beneath Nok-su's skirts to rest his head in her lap, a moment symbiotically related to Hamlet's public emasculation of himself with Ophelia (Act 3 Scene 2). Similar to Lee Yun-taek's *The Problematic Man*, wherein Nok-su clutches Yeonsan's head to her breast and says, "here is your home: being a small pigeon breast, it can give a crying baby milk and a cosy nest," Nok-su's role in *King and the Clown* is that of mother/lover, Gertrude/Ophelia, as indeed is Gong-gil's when he replaces Nok-su in King Yeonsan's affections. Thus, rather than engaging directly and primarily with Shakespeare's playtext, the producers of *King and the Clown*, twice removed from the "original," engage with a complex web of intervening adaptations.

Wearing a headdress resplendent with flowers (Figure 4), Gong-gil is the archetypal *kkonminam* (flower boy) — an effeminate man currently *en vogue* in South Korea and across East Asia. The flowers, which are not consistent with Peking Opera costume, provide an explicit visual link to Ophelia, whom Gong-gil resembles in that he is the film's main love interest and an object of excessive gazing. (Incidentally, the film's sexual ambivalence and capitalization of "soft masculinity" has been the chief source of scholarly attention rather than its connections with *Hamlet* and exploration of the Oedipus complex). Gong-gil is also, like Ophelia, the innocent cause of all the film's calamities, and in another gesture to Shakespeare, he attempts suicide before being discovered in a pool of his blood. *King and the Clown* thereby inverts gender roles as well as class positions in this topsy-turvy version of *Hamlet*.

Figure 4. The Player Queen: the Ophelia-like Gong-gil in King and the Clown (dir. Lee Joon-ik, 2005). © CJ Entertainment

"All the World's Large Stage is the Clowns' Stage"

As stated, it is the effect of King Yeonsan's behavior and actions on Gong-gil and Jang-saeng with which *King and the Clown* is chiefly concerned, for like many Korean versions of Shakespeare since the new millennium the film interprets Shakespeare from the perspective of minor characters (M. Lee 2009, 131). For example, Seok Seong-ye's *A Story of Two Soldiers* (2014) is a reinterpretation of *Hamlet* from the perspective of Bernardo and Marcellus; in Jung Ung-Yang's *Midsummer Night's Dream* Puck and Bottom are the play's foci and occupy center stage; and Han Tae-sook's *Lady Macbeth* (1998-2000), as the title suggests, puts the protagonist's ill-fated wife at the heart of the play; thus, "Lady Macbeth's inner world on the stage vividly represents the outer world of the original text" (H. Lee 2008, 278). Clowns, in particular, have featured prominently in a number of stage adaptations of Shakespeare in South Korea: for instance, in *King Uru: A Fantasia of Life and Coexistence* (2000-2004), a musical version of *King Lear* directed by Kim Myung-gon for the National Theater of Korea, clowns enact the prologue and, adapting Jacques' monologue from *As You Like It*, claim "all the world's large stage is the clowns' stage." Meanwhile, in director Kim Jung-ok's *Hamlet* (1993) clowns enter onstage and announce they will show *Hamlet* for themselves before proceeding to perform all the roles and lead the whole action; thus Lee Hyon-u declares, "this *Hamlet* is the clown's show" (2011, 107).[14] This trend, which appears to have largely escaped notice, is indicative of the populist, tongue-in-cheek nature of "Korean Shakespeares" and, more specifically, the rise of the *minjung* ("common people's") movement and a culture of dissidence in South Korea. After decades of oppression, South Koreans responded by attempting to invert traditional power structures — gender roles are regularly reversed in "Korean Shakespeares" as well — and create a culture that gives voice to the disenfranchised. Bakhtinian in nature, the *minjung* movement evoked folk traditions in particular to re-awaken the consciousness of the masses and embraced the bawdy and obscene humor of *namsadang* as a means of challenging traditional hierarchies.

King and the Clown pulses with *minjung* energy in confronting the dominant and subverting established hierarchies. Not only does it champion "the clowns" — who possess the inner essence and self-knowledge King Yeonsan/Hamlet ultimately lacks — and rejoices in the dethroning of a tyrannical king, but on an extra-textual level it rebels against a play that is positioned at the very apex of the Western canon. It is Gong-gil and Jang-saeng with whom we are encouraged to empathize; they are the tragic heroes and it is their plight that forms the film's central concern. Drawn into King Yeonsan's twisted world, the two performers become increasingly trapped and at risk of losing their lives. When Gong-gil is conferred with a rank as a sign of the king's favor the ministers are so enraged they organize a hunting game in which the actors are the prey. Dressed and pursued as animals, the players, with the King's permission, are exploited for the amusement of the rich. The hunting game, which could be interpreted as a critique of Hamlet's description of actors as forming a "cry" or pack of hounds (3.2.72), results in the death of one of the troupe, the loveable and bawdily named Six Dix, and serves to increase Jang-saeng's desire to flee the palace. Gong-gil, enamored with the king and flattered by his attention, is reluctant to go with his old companion, however, and a rift forms between them. In his anger, Jang-saeng stages a tightrope act outside the palace and taking advantage of the jester's licence to expose corruption, openly accuses King Yeonsan of sodomy and other "foul things." His punishment is to have both eyes seared with hot irons in a scene that clearly echoes *King Lear*, another one of Shakespeare's plays that offers a probing examination of fools.

Distraught at his friend's blinding, Gong-gil recounts the touching story of their relationship to the king in the form of puppetry, explaining how Jang-saeng has always looked after him as well as taken the blame for crimes he's committed (Figure 5). For the first time, a play-within-the-film becomes explicitly a player's vehicle of self-exploration and Gong-gil is afforded the kind of introspection usually reserved only for King Yeonsan/Hamlet. Granted an interior life and the authority to turn that life into an outward show, Gong-gil usurps the king's prerogative of occupying multiple subject positions at once: director, commentator and character. From this point onwards, the film loses its proximity to *Hamlet* and the focus is squarely on Gong-gil and Jang-saeng who unite in the final scene to perform their last ever double act. In it, they lament their fate and give full expression to their "han," a culture-specific form of suffering that is evident in many Korean films, usually at the climax of the story. In addition to "han-venting," an activity considered psychologically therapeutic and politically subversive, the duo celebrate minstrelsy and the carnivalesque overturning of hierarchy: "blind to high and low," Gong-gil says to Jang-saeng, "you have turned this world [and the play *Hamlet*] upside-down." The latter responds by altering Jacques' famous "All the world's a stage" speech, claiming "kingly is he who struts for a while, then exits in style . . . together again, we shall royally this blessed earth roam."

Figure 5. Usurping the king's prerogative: Gong-gil as director, commentator and character in King and the Clown (dir. Lee Joon-ik, 2005). © CJ Entertainment

Jang-saeng's words are both subversive and prophetic: he possesses the wisdom Eastern and Western religions and philosophies often attribute to the blind. Delivered at the very moment troops raid the palace to overthrow the unsuspecting King Yeonsan (he is so engrossed in the performance he fails to notice the commotion outside), they reinforce the film's populist message by using Shakespeare as a foil. Thus, rather than, as Yoon and Williams suggest, highlighting the "coming together" of "Shakespeare and Lee . . . in their celebration of the popular," this moment punctures the elitist values Shakespeare stands for as the Bard "epitomizes forces against which popular culture is pitted in the struggle for authority" (Lanier 2002, 55).

By rewriting Jacques' "universal" observation about the human condition, the film exposes the ways in which Shakespeare does not speak for everyone, especially lowly figures like the *gwangdae*. The film also grants the clowns the authorial agency denied them in Shakespeare's "original" as Gong-gil and Jang-saeng are able to defy Hamlet's command to "let those that play [the] clowns speak no more than is set down for them" (3.2.38-9). Instead, they are given the wit and freedom to appropriate one of Shakespeare's most famous meta-dramatic speeches in a politically empowering fashion. Moreover, by meshing Jacques' words with Macbeth's — there is an obvious homology between the latter's "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" soliloquy and Jang-saeng's final lines too — the *namsadang* performers playfully fragment Shakespeare and meld the high with the low, the tragic and the comedic. Gong-gil and Jang-saeng, representatives perhaps of South Korean popular culture, are transgressive, anti-textual agents, rebelling against the rule of the Western author.

The players' last, highly-emotive play-within-the-film, which no doubt precedes their untimely deaths, orientates the film further and further away from *Hamlet*, a play they have essentially hijacked. And while Shakespeare continues to operate as a referent, he is just one of several signifiers and his presence, like the Hamlet figures, increasingly diminishes: what remains could even be regarded as "the heaps of fragments" postmodern theorist Frederic Jameson once described. In the film's final sequence or epilogue, all the (now deceased) members of the troupe

are reunited, Jang-saeng has regained his sight and the company are, as he predicted, triumphantly roaming the earth, free completely from Hamlet/King Yeonsan. The film has thus come full circle — suggesting perhaps that these individuals are caught in a never-ending cycle of oppression — and the ending, Yoon and Williams argue, recalls American director Norman René's *Longtime Companion* (1989), a film in which a group of gay actors, many of whom succumb to AIDS, return from the dead in the closing sequence (2005, 220). This emphasizes again the extent to which Korean movies draw on heterogeneous, intercultural sources, as well as the way in which "Shakespeare functions as a vanishing mediator when disseminated transnationally on film" (Burt 2010, 89).

The Play's the Thing

The decentring/deconstruction of Shakespeare in *King and the Clown* is also apparent in the way the interior plays supersede the exterior film. Rebelling against the governing structural principles of Shakespearean drama which generally dictate that the play-within-the-play remains distinct from and secondary to the main action, *King and the Clown* deconstructs any fixed hierarchy between the inner plays and the outer film. In fact, as the film progresses it is clear the internal plays are taking precedence over the outer film. Again, this typifies many stage Korean adaptations of Shakespeare, for instance, Kukseo Ki's *Hamlet 1* (1981) contained multiple plays-within-the-play to the point where the play resembled a rehearsal (M. Lee 2009, 135). The reasons behind this are manifold; most obviously, it is aimed to give the players who supplant Hamlet more and more of the spotlight. Whereas at the start of the film it is the reaction of characters to the inset performances that is of primary interest, later attention shifts to the actors' thoughts and feelings during these performances. Thus, near the end of the film there are fewer shot-reverse-shots and the internal performances gradually seem less stylized and more naturalistic. This has the effect of dissolving the boundaries between film and theater and renders the camera frame into a kind of proscenium arch.

The blurring of the two media, of course, is not uncommon in "Shakespeare films," East and West, and is perhaps inevitable given the theatrical roots of these films. But while in most of these films the residual traces of theatricality suggest that theater is still the preferred medium for Shakespeare adaptations, in *King and the Clown* the progression from film to theater suggests a nostalgic and rather nationalistic preference for *namsadang* and indigenous theater traditions *over* Shakespeare. Initially, like many non-Western adaptations of Shakespeare, *King and the Clown* seems to treat the play-within-the-film as simply an opportunity to exhibit native theater modes and it is no coincidence that all six of the *namsadang*'s separate acts are put on display; indeed, Shakespeare has ironically provided the means for recovering lost traditions in Korea (Im 2008, 261).

The plays-within-the-film additionally serve as intercultural bridges, facilitating cross-cultural encounter. As Fischer and Greiner state, "the play-within-a-play can serve as an organisational agency to assist structuring encounters of different cultures [and] has been an important factor as a structure of mediation between European and non-European theatrical traditions" (2007, xiv).

Couched in the familiar (read, Western) vocabulary of film, the *namsadang* performances appear less alien or archaic to the audience than if they were standalone. Instead, they are woven into the fabric of a recognizable medium (film), genre (historical drama) and plotline (*Hamlet*) and thereby made more accessible and less marginal. However, such is the extent to which the inset plays are integrated with the main action that the inner plays become primary while the outer film (and by extension Shakespeare's *Hamlet*) is merely the framing device. Thus, as *King and the Clown* progresses the plays-within-the-film take on another, more subversive function, that is, to further decenter the narrative structure of Shakespeare's "original." It is tempting to read this as a counter-hegemonic move as well as proof that foreign Shakespeare does *not* always reflect unequal power relationships with non-Western culture taking second place to Anglophone culture. In *King and the Clown* the opposite might be said to occur; for sure, South Koreans do not tend to regard Shakespeare as the representative cultural authority of the West or as "the empire's army that conquered them" (Moran 2009, 202), and their approach/attitude to Shakespeare has rarely shown the kind of reverence found in many postcolonial societies.

The intercultural encounter between *namsadang* and Shakespeare in *King and the Clown* could be characterized as confrontational, then, and this would accord with the generally anti-authority nature of the film: King Yeonsan is literally and the Bard is figuratively dethroned. More specifically, *King and the Clown* challenges Shakespeare's privileged status and refuses to treat *Hamlet* as a grand narrative that determines the film's structure, plot and themes. The Korean wave phenomenon in general can be viewed as "a counterweight to western cultural influence . . . a periphery's talking back to the central west, a sign of resilience of the subaltern or a rebellion by Asian people" (Kim 2013, 15). Yet the relationship the film shares with Shakespeare cannot be conceived in binary terms nor does the film enact a straightforward rebellion against a Western text: there are too many other cultural referents for this to be the case and, as Dara Kaye points out, global Shakespeare increasingly reflects a "circulatory ecosystem," with influences intersecting and exchanging between East and West. Ultimately, *King and the Clown* deconstructs *any* fixed hierarchy, blurring the lines dividing local and global, theater and film, interior and exterior, courtiers and clowns, Hamlet and King Yeonsan.

Moreover, the fact the "clowns," Jang-saeng and Gong-gil, are elevated above the other characters through their use of Shakespearean language — they are the only characters to speak in verse, remember, and to recite familiar, albeit rejigged, lines from Shakespeare's plays — suggests that despite adopting a subversive stance towards *Hamlet* and high culture in general, *King and the Clown*, perhaps unwittingly, on some levels pays homage to Shakespeare and the values he represents. It is by speaking "Shakespeare" that the lowly characters' intelligence, lovability and "depth" are demonstrated, and they manage to garner the sympathy and respect of the audience whose recognition of these lines is essential. The film therefore relies on Shakespeare and on audience appreciation thereof to elevate the status of the poor players who have supposedly "turned this world upside-down." Perhaps this is reflective of the general, oft-commented on paradox behind all efforts to "write back" to the center and overturn the status quo through rewriting a cultural giant like Shakespeare. Perhaps, then, the subversive potential of the filmmakers, like the "clowns" themselves, is always limited and they are doomed, on some levels

at least, to reaffirm the very order they oppose.

Conclusion

King and the Clown is in many ways highly Shakespearean in spirit despite its seeming irreverence and lack of fidelity to the original; "fidelity," after all, has become an outdated maybe redundant way of measuring what counts as "authentic" or "inauthentic," "hegemonic" or "subversive," and indeed "foreign" and "non-foreign" in the new millennium.[15] This is especially the case in regards to cultural products that are as heterogeneous in make-up as twenty-first century Korean films wherein hierarchies are replaced by a concept of mixing genres and drawing upon a range of global, local and regional sources. Paradoxically, it is this aspect of *King and the Clown* that could be said to be quintessentially Shakespearean, for as Jeffrey Knapp puts it, one of the most distinguishing features of Shakespeare was his talent for "mixing comedy and tragedy, the historic and the imagined, kings and clowns, prescriptions and improvisation, authorship and acting" (2009, 90). In other words, by not being "faithful" to any one text and by rebelling against strict generic conventions, *King and the Clown* actually shares Shakespeare's *modus operandi*. *Hamlet*, one must bear in mind, is a play that not only mixes coarse comedy with high tragedy, folk with classical sources, but appropriates a number of local and *foreign* signifiers: Hamlet-like legends are so widely found (for example in Italy, Spain, Byzantium and Arabia) that some have speculated that the "hero-as-fool" is Indo-European in origin. Shakespeare's chief source, however, is likely to have been the Scandinavian story of Amleth or Amlóði (Norse for "mad") written in the twelfth century by Saxo Grammaticus, although accounts of Hamlet can also be found in the Icelandic *Saga of Hrolf Kraki* (c. 1400). Consequently, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is as much a hybrid cultural product as *King and the Clown* so to consider the relationship between the "original" and the adaptation in binaristic terms such as faithful or unfaithful, authentic or inauthentic, is arguably futile.

Ultimately, *King and the Clown* treats *Hamlet* with carnivalesque irreverence and reveals a desire to destabilize (Western) authority by turning Shakespeare's play upside down, structurally and thematically. It simultaneously hones in on the elements of carnival already embedded in Shakespeare's great tragedy but frequently overlooked in mainstream films. More than anything, though, *King and the Clown* prompts us to question further what exactly constitutes a "Shakespeare film" in an era when cultural products are increasingly informed by a wide range of different, multicultural sources and when allusions to Shakespeare — direct or indirect, intentional or otherwise — are actually allusions to other *adaptations* of Shakespeare, in this case adaptations that have bound inextricably the identities of Hamlet with the historical King Yeonsan.

Notes

1. I am thankful to Lee Hyon-u, whose knowledge of Shakespeare in Korea is unsurpassed, for both introducing me to this film and fueling my interest in this fascinating subject. I am also

immensely grateful to Stephen Epstein for providing me with thoughtful and invaluable feedback on an earlier version of this article.

2. Refer, for instance, to Lee 2009.
3. According to Kim Yun-cheol, artistic director at the National Theater Company of Korea (NTCK), Shakespeare was the "keyword" in theaters around the country between 2014 and 2017 (see Limb 2014). Included in the NTCK's plans were adaptations of *The Tempest*, *Julius Caesar* and a musical entitled *Singing Shylock*. Meanwhile, the Korea National Opera (KNO) presented Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Otello* and Charles-François Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* at the Seoul Arts Center. It is difficult to explain fully the immense popularity of Shakespeare in South Korea: Yeeyon Im suggests it is because more than half of the populace are Christians, but more importantly because the country is a "cultural orphan," cut off from a "mother culture" (2008). I personally think it can be attributed to the general fetishism and commodification of British high culture prevalent in the southern half of the Korean peninsula, in addition to the South Korean desire for modernization and, more recently, globalization.
4. For a survey of *Hamlet* in Korea from 1921 onwards, see Kim 2008.
5. Some regard *Oldboy*, Chan-wook Park's 2003 cult film, as a loose retelling of *Titus Andronicus* due its themes of revenge, honor, madness and mutilation: a severed hand is delivered to the central character's motel at one point and at the end of the movie he cuts out his own tongue to spare his daughter pain.
6. All Shakespeare quotations follow *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 2.1.253. References are to act, scene, and lines.
7. The relationship between Yeonsan and Hamlet is discussed in detail in Lee 1995.
8. The first quotation is taken from comments made by the Jury at the 5th Cape Town World Cinema Festival (CTWCF). See also David Lamble 2007 and Smith 2007.
9. *Namsadang Nori*, literally the "all-male vagabond clown theater," is a multi-faceted performance tradition first practiced by troupes of traveling entertainers in the Silla period (57 BCE - 935 ACE). Egalitarian in nature, the tradition was rooted in local life and drew on history, folklore and current affairs as source material. It also comprised a number of performance styles including tightrope walking, plate spinning and puppet play giving it a "circus" feel.
10. David Wiles draws attention to how "like the clown in the public theatres, Hamlet sings as soon as the [Mousetrap] is over — and probably also dances to the physically expressive 'Thus runs the world away' (3.2.68)" (1987, 58).
11. Phrase coined by Chuyun Oh quoted in Kuwahara 2014. Another significant intertext is the film *Sopyonje* (dir. Im Kwon-taek, 1993) which also focuses on itinerant singers and even features a blinding scene.
12. See Moran 2009.
13. A *gut* is a Korean Shamanistic ritual wherein a medium — usually a lower-class female — enters into communication with the spirit world often in order to restore harmony between the dead and the living. Most performances of *Hamlet* in South Korea over the last twenty years have staged rituals like the *gut* and thus show some elements of Shamanism (see H. Lee 2011).
14. In director Lee Youn-taek's *Hamlet* the two clowns that play the gravediggers usher actors onto

the stage and offer ongoing commentary on the action, encouraging the audience to view the play and central characters from their perspective throughout.

15. The fidelity question is one hotly debated in Adaptation studies in general and Shakespeare studies in particular. See, for instance, Kidnie 2009; Crowl 2014; and Lanier 2014.

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Abstract | He That Plays the King Shall Be Welcome | "All the World's Large Stage is the Clowns' Stage" | The Play's the Thing | Conclusion | Notes | References | Top

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"Must I Remember?": *Hamlet*, History, and Helmut Käutner's *The Rest is Silence*

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Abstract | Introduction | Der Rest ist Schweigen and post-war Germany | Corporate Capitalism, Tele-technology and the Legacy of National Socialism | The Ghost in the Machine | Oedipal Psychoanalysis and the Wound of History | Conclusion: Acknowledgement and Silence | Notes | References

Abstract

We have grown accustomed to conceptualizing Shakespearean appropriation as a means for filmmakers to speak through a vehicle imbued with great cultural authority, even when filmmakers aim at questioning or undermining that authority. Certainly that is the case with *The Rest is Silence*. Käutner deploys *Hamlet*, a text especially laden with political and cultural resonance for German audiences, as a means to engage a key issue of postwar German cinema: the nation's guilt and yet its desire to remain silent about its past. *The Rest is Silence* takes up two particular components of that cultural silence, the unacknowledged imbrication of corporate power and profit in the rise of the Nazi regime, and the temptation of a younger generation, coming of age after the war in the fifties, to forget the nation's guilty past or, at the least, to participate in communal silence about it. Both issues had some topicality at the time of the film's initial release. At the same time, however, the *Hamlet* narrative also provides Käutner a means to avoid remembering the complicity of ordinary German people with Nazism, a means to displace rather than fully acknowledge communal guilt. Käutner's selective fidelity to certain aspects of Hamlet constitutes a subtle mode of strategic forgetting in the tale of national guilt he seeks to tell. In *The Rest is Silence*, *Hamlet* functions as both mirror and cover for the

nation's guilty memory, so that the appropriation of Shakespeare becomes both a means to voice an uncomfortable (family) secret but also a precedent for not remembering it in all its disturbing power.

Introduction

The title of Helmut Käutner's 1959 *Der Rest ist Schweigen* (aka *The Rest is Silence*) has, ironically, presaged its critical fate.[1] Despite being dutifully noted in lists of *Hamlet* screen adaptations, commentators have said nary a word about it. Even Kenneth Rothwell's comprehensive history of film Shakespeare devotes exactly one sentence to it (Rothwell 172). One reason for this critical silence may be that Käutner's film *oeuvre* is not widely known outside Germany. Although Käutner was a major West German director of the forties and fifties, only a fraction of his *oeuvre* is available on video and only a handful of monographs have assessed his career.[2] Those monographs typically present *The Rest is Silence* as a work of peripheral interest, produced as Käutner's reputation began to wane in the 60s and, so the implication goes, precipitating his decline. Reviews of the day treated the film as a technically accomplished work marred by the fact that Käutner was insufficiently faithful to *Hamlet*, his Shakespearean template.[3]*The Rest is Silence* deserves better, for it speaks in interesting ways to the relationship between appropriation and cultural silence.

Guilty Paul and Gertrude

Käutner deploys Hamlet, a resonant text for German audiences, to engage a key issue for postwar German cinema: the nation's desire to remain silent about its guilty past. *The Rest is Silence* takes up two components of that silence, the unacknowledged place of corporate power in the Nazi regime, and the temptation of a younger generation to remain silent about Germany's recent history. Yet paradoxically *Hamlet* also provides Käutner a means to avoid fully acknowledging Germany's deep complicity with National Socialism. Selective fidelity to Shakespeare's play, I will argue, allows Käutner to voice the uncomfortable (family) secret of postwar Germany while not remembering it in all of its disturbing power.

Though not a word of *Hamlet* appears in the film, the indebtedness of *The Rest is Silence* to Shakespeare's play is unmistakable. The Hamlet figure is John H. Claudius, son of Johannes Claudius, a German steel magnate. Sent to America by his father during the war, John becomes a professor of modern philosophy at Harvard. As the film begins, John uses the occasion of his transferring power-of-attorney to his uncle Paul, now manager of the family steelworks, to return home to Germany. His visit, however, is a ruse. John's real purpose is to investigate the murky circumstances of his father's death, who, the official report states, was killed in an air-raid shelter during an Allied bombing of the steelworks. Assisting John is his friend Major Horace, an American ex-military officer working in Germany. In John's absence, his mother Gertrud has married Paul, and the two now live in the family mansion which, in an affront to John's childhood memories of home, Paul has recently renovated. There too live Dr. Pohl, known as "Uncle Max," a Freudian psychiatrist; his son Herbert, who spent time in prison for his service as a Nazi soldier; and Pohl's daughter Fee, a psychologically fragile girl fascinated with John. Using newsreel, radio and newspaper reports, and his father's diary which he discovers in his father's study, John learns that Paul used the bombings as a cover for murdering Johannes so that he could possess the family home, the steelworks, and Gertrud, with whom he'd been carrying on an affair. To test his findings, John invites Paul, Gertrud, and Pohl to a ballet called "The Mousetrap" which he crafts with his friend Michael Krantz, a choreographer. Angered, Paul pressures Pohl to fake a psychoanalytic assessment of John that will get him committed. Unable to get satisfaction from the police because Paul has stolen and destroyed Johannes's incriminating diary, John confronts Paul directly about his father's murder, at which Gertrud, unable to bear the family secret any longer, shoots Paul with his own gun.

Der Rest ist Schweigen and post-war Germany

Hamlet serves Käutner in several ways in his engagement with German postwar guilt and silence. Käutner reimagines *Hamlet* as a *noir* detective film where protagonist John Claudius seeks to unearth the truth behind his father's death. The pursuit of justice and truth leads John, like other *noir* protagonists, to discover an inchoate system of evil, a discovery dominated by the emergence of what Žižek calls "the obscene father" (in this film Paul Claudius), a perversion of that paternal logos which might guarantee restoration of social order and stable meaning (see Charnes 1-7). In *Epilog: Das Geheimnis der Orplid* (1950) Käutner had introduced this kind of *noir* film, what Joglekar calls the "antidetective" genre, to postwar German cinema audiences. Breaking with the epistemological confidence and escapist intent of classical detectives shown during the Nazi era, the "antidetective" stresses a lack of epistemological closure and moral clarity. In such tales, the solving of a single crime leads to confrontation with endemic corruption that is everywhere and nowhere; the detective is often implicated in the very system he investigates; the film's structure, riddled with flashbacks or subjective sequences, confounds the secure deduction from facts that drives traditional detectives; and the detective's paranoid "overknowing" of the world is never made public or fails to have any social effect. In postwar Germany, Joglekar argues, traditional detectives contributed to a culture of forgetting, "rendering the political past invisible" by treating justice as a matter of solving a discrete single crime, thereby limiting group culpability. By contrast, Käutner's "antidetective" *Epilog* "insisted on casting a critical glance at the Nazi past and foregrounded the connection between investigation and introspection, between suspicion and self-incrimination" (Joglekar 65). The genre Käutner inaugurated in postwar Germany provided popular cinema with a vehicle for acknowledging Germany's national crimes and the general public's involvement in them, though notably Käutner refused to "nam[e] names" (Joglekar 69). *The Rest is Silence* thus marks Käutner's return to his roots, both to a film genre he had pioneered a decade earlier and to the literary roots of that genre in the form of *Hamlet*.

By choosing *Hamlet* as a subtext, Käutner was taking up a play which had long served as a vehicle for Germany's conversations about its political self-image.[4] In this case, the conversation concerned the vexed question of postwar German rearmament, a question which divided the West German intelligentsia throughout the Adenauer era. Adenauer's pro-rearmament position lined up with the American argument that a re-armed West Germany was needed to serve as a bulwark against creeping Communism. For many, however, rearmament only codified German partition and threatened a drift back into militarism and authoritarianism. It constituted a forgetting of the lessons of the recent past.

It is the last of these sentiments that the film addresses. If earlier iterations of the "Germany is Hamlet" trope had identified the nation with Hamlet, Käutner's film identifies postwar Germany with Paul, the Claudius figure. Paul, a successful business executive, epitomizes postwar West German culture, in which corporate capitalism has replaced National Socialism. He has rebuilt the family business, an armaments manufacturing empire, as well as the family home, so much so that it is barely recognizable to John. Also residing there is Dr. Pohl, the "Uncle Max" of John's youth, a wise but wily psychologist who otherwise might function as his surrogate father. Pohl's presence reveals how Paul has co-opted the older German intellectual tradition, a point underlined by the ominous echo of their names. Gathered around Paul is a coterie of businessmen — Voltman and Cornelius, figures straight out of a Grosz painting, who ominously refer to "phase one," removing the rubble from Allied bombings that still clutters the Claudius steelworks. All they need is John's consent. However, the last trace of the war contains circumstantial evidence of the primal crime John seeks to substantiate — Paul's murder of his father. John's investigation reveals that Paul's designs on Johannes predate his murder; Paul forced his brother Johannes publically to embrace the Nazi cause and serve as frontman for Paul's morally-corrupt business ambitions. Several times we see John or Paul looking into a black hole in the rubble which leads to the air-raid shelter below.

John looks into the rubble

This signature shot visually articulates the intent of John's investigation and Käutner's film: to look into the dark criminal past buried under the rubble Paul seeks to sweep away in service of postwar prosperity. Quite literally and figuratively, Paul seeks to return to the concerns of the "rubble films" that appeared immediately after the war, films concerned with Germany's self-immolation during National Socialism, its collective guilt and the possibilities for a new national history begun in the ruins of the old (see Shandley, and Manvell and Fraenkel).

Corporate Capitalism, Tele-technology and the Legacy of National Socialism

Certainly one target Käutner had specifically in mind is the Krupp family, known for its manufacturing dynasty in steel and arms (for details, see Manchester). Under Alfried Krupp, the family business profited from Nazi slave labor, and when it became clear Germany was losing the war, Alfried liquidated millions of marks in German bonds and hid the money abroad, thereby preserving the family fortune. After the war, the complicity of the Krupps with the Nazis came out in their trials (Alfried was initially sentenced to twelve years and forfeiture of his fortune), but by 1951 officials of the American occupation granted the family a blanket amnesty, restored their assets to them, and allowed them to return to business, so long as arms manufacture and mining were kept separate from other company holdings. Notably, 1959, the release date of Käutner's film, was also the year in which Alfried was required to have gotten rid of his remaining interests in arms and mining. From the start he had had no intention of divesting and was supported in his resistance by many Ruhr industrialists. At the time Alfried was one of the richest men in the world and in many ways a troubling symbol of the postwar German *Wirtschaftswunder*, or economic miracle.

Paul extends what Alfried Krupp exemplifies, the continuity between National Socialism and modern corporate capitalism. Like Herbert, Paul has a Nazi past, but unlike Herbert, he has managed to remain silent about it and has not paid for his crimes. When Herbert bitterly complains about hypocritical Allied treatment of ex-Nazis, Paul shuts him up with the observation "politics sometimes requires compromise," a comment that epitomizes his calculating amorality and desire not to engage the past. Paul's power springs from the fact that others are willing to remain silent with him. Käutner plays up the tensely elliptical quality of dialogue in the Claudius household where what can't be said hovers over conversations. John is threatening because he raises taboo topics. At the dinner table he scandalizes Paul, Gertrud and Pohl, for example, by asking his mother and uncle whether they were with his father on the night of his death. Their anxious glances,

pauses and too-careful, matter-of-fact answers betray that much is being left unsaid. Soon John's persistent investigation into the past, an affront to proper decorum, leads to the charge that he is "mad." Even the police, Käutner suggests, are complicit with the conspiracy of silence, for when John demands that Paul be arrested, Inspector Fortner (i.e., Fortinbras) takes his statement but observes that prosecutors probably won't indict "a close family member...who enjoys [such] an impeccable reputation." Fortner implies that John's delusions are brought on by stress from dealing with all that modern philosophy at Harvard. Paul is at the apex of an entire social system — family, business associates, the police — conspiratorially committed to silence about the past because silence maintains the prosperous status quo. Question the source of the Claudius family fortune, and the German economic miracle threatens to fall apart, exposed as a just another transformation of the willingness to cast a blind eye to militarism.

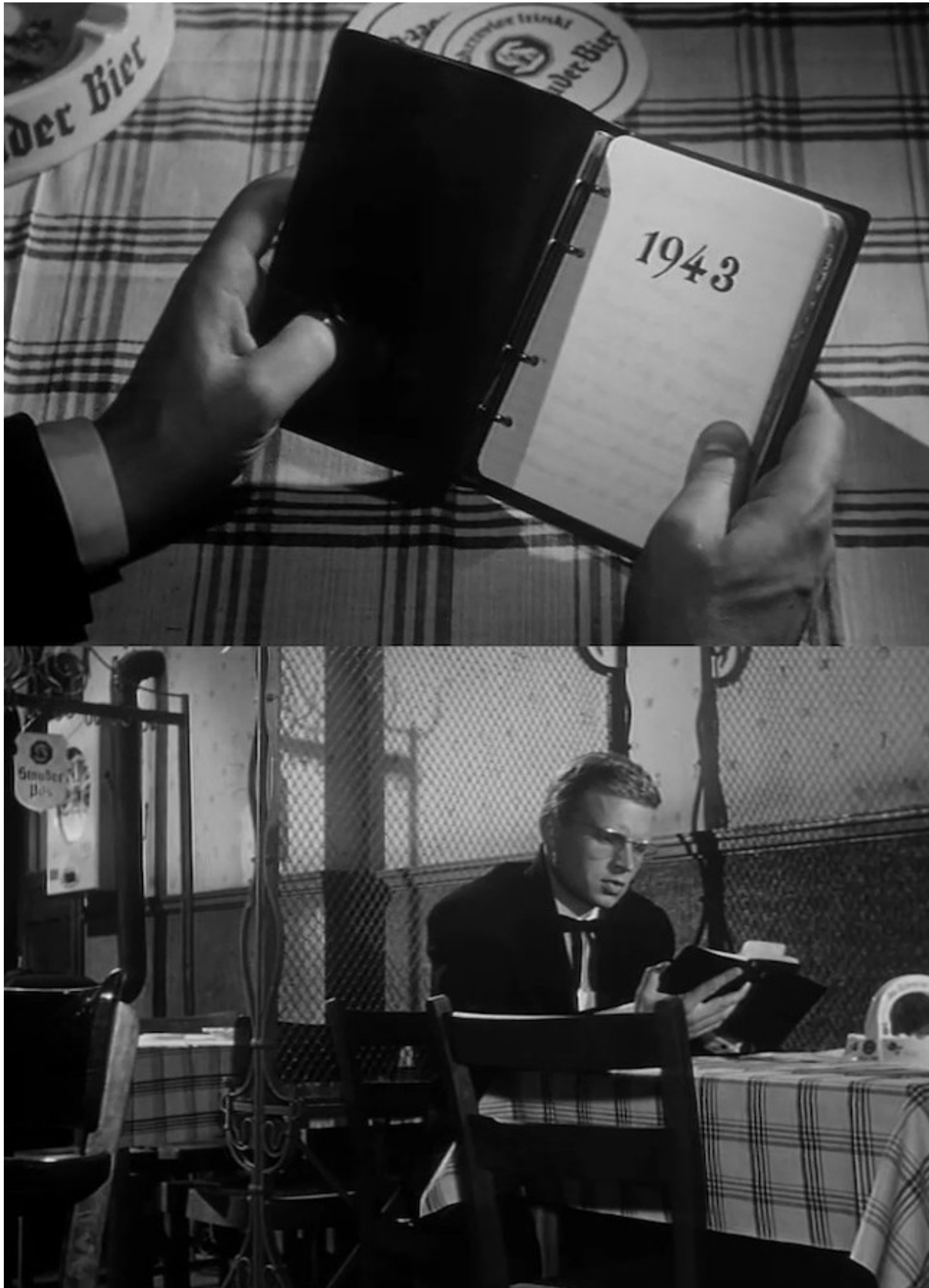
Käutner broadens out his critique of post-war Germany by suggesting how modern technology and modernism are implicated in this conspiracy. The decor of the renovated Claudius home is noteworthy in this regard, for it showcases modern design — the paintings are abstract, the furniture is sleek and without decorative ornament. These design touches make a connection between Germany's impulse not to acknowledge its past and International modernism's featurelessness, its desire to eliminate references that might evoke history. The one exception is a monumental statue in the front foyer, of a steelworker holding a forge ladle. Featured in several shots, this statue symbolizes the family business, but its abstracted, vaguely heroic style is unmistakably reminiscent of Fascist propaganda. It is thus a reminder of the dubious political affiliations of corporate-modernist style, which allows advanced capitalism to project a benignly abstract face and obscure its history. The only section of the Claudius mansion not in this style is Johannes's wood-paneled study, the room where Johannes has hidden records of his experiences during the Nazi era. The oversize portrait of Johannes that dominates the room serves the function of Hamlet's ghost, fixating John with its direct, almost accusatory stare and leading him to a secret safe containing the diary where Johannes recorded Paul's attempts on his life, his affair with Gertrud, and his manipulation of him in the company's dealings with the Nazis.

John looks at his father's portrait

In this space, untouched by modernist style, the otherwise unspoken past becomes available to John. Appropriately, too, here is where John confronts Paul and Gertrud with his knowledge of Paul's crimes in the film's final scenes. By this time, Paul has stolen Johannes's diary, the only non-circumstantial evidence John had of his activities. Käutner thus constructs the final scene so that justice depends entirely on John's memory of what his father revealed about the past and his willingness to break the conspiracy of silence.

Equally noteworthy is the film's engagement with the relationship to corporate power and history to modern tele-technology operating across gulfs of space or time. The film opens with shots of a jet airplane landing from a transatlantic flight, John's arrival from the States. This image establishes John as a remigrant, the native German returning to his homeland after the war, like Hamlet an alienated figure both inside and outside his native society. But these opening images, with interiors of the modern international terminal and the disembodied voice announcing arrivals, also hint at the nexus of technology and power. That technology made Germany's economic boom possible, but it is also how corporate control of society is exercised and memory of the past erased. Käutner is particularly interested in modern media — telephone, radio, television, tape recording and film. Paul, for example, phones Inspector Fortner before John gives his statement to the police, and it is while watching television that he comes up with the idea of

using Michael Krantz and his companion Stanley Rosen to distract John from snooping. One telling moment occurs just after John, having discovered his father's diary, sits down to read it in a bar.



As he reads, we hear the truth of his father's past articulated for the first time, presented in voiceover and flashback, but competing in the background is a goofy variety show on the radio, a sign of the superficially happy, prosperous present and, more ominously, a media opiate lulling the one other patron to sleep.

This use of mass media to project a false image of the nation connects to an earlier sequence, where John watches a Nazi newsreel, "Die Deutsche Wochenschau" ("The German Weekly Review"), as part of his investigation. The newsreel offers an unwittingly damning portrayal of Johannes's involvement with Hitler's war machine: pictures of the Claudius factory and his father alternate with Riefenstahl-like shots of goose-stepping troops and parading armaments. At Johannes's funeral, we see the Reichsminister for Munitions and Armaments lay a wreath in his honor; even Hitler himself offers Gertrud condolences. (Käutner cleverly intercuts actual newsreels with his own footage to achieve the effect.) The newsreel, and the recording of a patriotic speech by Johannes to which John also listens, allow the Nazi regime to project a seductive image of national solidarity. This sequence highlights the disturbing continuity between the Nazis' manipulative use of mass media and the postwar military-industrial complex's use of media to lull the German public into complacent silence.[5]

Here Käutner raises a moral dilemma facing postwar German filmmakers: how to acknowledge the cinema's complicity in the rise of the Nazis? For him this issue had personal resonance, for he began his career as filmmaker in 1939, and though he made movies during that period that either avoided propagandizing or registered ambivalence about politics, he was nevertheless part of the Nazi media apparatus. Soon after the war in a 1947 essay "Dismantling the Dream Factory," Käutner laid blame upon bourgeois audiences, not the director, for the escapist (and so politically complicit) nature of German cinema, a claim he reiterated nine years later in a co-written editorial, "Every Audience, as Everybody Knows, Has the Films It Deserves," for the film magazine *Film: Monatshefte für Film und Fernsehen*.[6] Within *The Rest is Silence* itself, deferral of complicity comes from another angle. The culpatory "Die Deutsche Wochenschau" newsreel is capable of yielding potentially exculpatory conclusions, for as John watches it and closely peruses news photos, he notices Paul's sinister presence in the margins, a figure of "pure hatred" who, John hypothesizes, forced his father to cooperate. Despite the clear aim of the photographic evidence to create a false image of Germany and his father, John (and Käutner) insists that the medium captures more and less than its Nazi practitioners intended. The film medium can preserve the past in spite of its misuse, if one has the skill to read it carefully.

The Ghost in the Machine

Perhaps the best example in the film of this equivocality is the telephone. What prods John to exhume the past is a mysterious telephone call he receives from his dead father, the counterpart to the call that Paul places later

on to Inspector Fortner. Here the voice of the almost silenced past enters the narrative through an instrument of Paul's corporate power, as if it were the ghost in the machine.[7] This paternal voice on the wire is uncanny. We see the phone call only in flashback, narrated with John's voiceover.

John receives the phone call

As the scene opens, John is napping at his desk at Harvard; a skull on the shelf behind identifies him as a Hamlet figure; beside him is his father's photo, eyes glancing to the right, directly at John. The call awakens John, and we see him answer, but we don't hear what either figure says, only a dissonant organ chord and insistent drumbeat, a musical motif that highlights various sinister moments throughout the film. Afterward, John tells us, he contacted the operator to identify the caller, only to discover no such call was put through. Since here we never directly hear the father's voice (in fact we hear his voice only in the diary sequence and on the recording of his speech), the status of this accusatory voice from the past remains uncertain. Is it real? A projection of John's guilt? Manifestation of his desire to exonerate his father? The result of reading too much Heidegger and Nietzsche? Even John's ally Horace, the only person to whom he reveals the story of the phone call, doesn't believe the voice actually exists, calling it instead a hallucination brought on a letter about John's mother's remarriage. Like Hamlet's ghost, this voice who breaks silence about unacknowledged sins at the nation's heart is haunted by doubt, but in John's case, he has no witnesses, not even the film

viewer, who can corroborate that the voice is real. And yet in the final confrontation between John and Paul, a confrontation in which John acknowledges that "there's no one left who'll believe me," the telephone suddenly rings, as if to suggest that the otherwise silenced ghost of the Nazi past in the modern corporate machine were on the other end of the line, threatening to make itself heard. The ringing phone represents the pressure to acknowledge the insistent call of Germany's history. As it rings, Gertrud finally blurts out the heretofore silenced truth that Paul killed Johannes — "I knew it all the time"; with that confession she turns Paul's own gun on him. Yet Käutner refuses to resolve the ambiguity of the voice on the line. When Herbert eventually picks up the receiver, it's clear from the conversation that he is speaking to Inspector Fortner. In a strange way, then, to all but John the direct voice of the past remains silent to the end, incapable of speaking to us in anything more than a troublingly mediated fashion.

Undoubtedly Johannes's voice reflects the ambiguous status of Hamlet's ghost, but Käutner's amplification of that ambiguity is symptomatic of the film's unease with the father-figure's (and fatherland's) relationship to the Nazi past. Käutner's central point was that Germany, a generation on from the war and experiencing unprecedented prosperity, risked not recognizing how its troubling past survived into the present. One advantage of using *Hamlet* to make this point was that Shakespeare's play made Hamlet, representative of the younger generation intent on recovering a repressed past, the tale's hero. Though Käutner aligns the dominant power structures of modern Germany with Claudius, he aligns the counter-cultural strains of German youth culture with Hamlet. If one follows out the equivalences between play and film, *Hamlet* also establishes the elder Hamlet as an entirely blameless victim, precisely how John sees his father. John's effort to uncover Paul's criminality seeks to exonerate his father from wartime guilt, this despite the fact the public record contains ample evidence of Johannes's Nazi involvement. John devotes himself to bringing his father's image in line with the kind of idealized paternal image that Hamlet holds of his father. *Hamlet* also functions in *The Rest Is Silence*, then, to establish analogically Johannes's status as a mythic, idealized victim-father like old Hamlet. So presented, Johannes allows Käutner to reserve a space of non-culpability for the older generation even as he stresses the nation's need to confront its sordid past.**[8]**

John's desire to reconstruct an unsullied memory of the patriarch — corresponding to Žižek's notion of the paternal logos — bears upon his own inherited culpability, since John still reaps the rewards of the family dynasty and has power-of-attorney. After all, he too bears the guilty name of "Claudius." And yet even though Käutner, like John, would like to exonerate Johannes, he must know that displacing communal blame onto a single figure

like Paul is potentially just another form of evading shared moral responsibility for National Socialism, another mode of silence. In fact, Major Horace — the film's only non-German — voices that awareness. When John claims to him that his innocent father was forced to collaborate, Horace replies, "You, of all people, using the old Nazi excuse. No individual is to blame. No industrialist, general, concentration camp bullies. All were forced." Käutner's odd representation of the father's voice, then, is symptomatic of the film's struggle to engage the full implications of German guilt. We never hear Johannes directly utter his accusation of murder (as Hamlet's ghost utters his), for that accusation would constitute an utter evasion of Johannes's own complicity. Rather, his voice on the wire remains to the end ambiguous, silent for us and insistent for John.

Oedipal Psychoanalysis and the Wound of History

The film's ambiguous attitude toward a psychoanalytic reading of *Hamlet* also betrays its struggle with the demands of history. When John tells Horace of his father's mysterious phonecall, Horace concludes that this is an Oedipal hallucination. Dr. Pohl floats a similar idea when Paul asks him why John hates his mother so, observing cryptically that "the cause isn't always clear, even to the one who hates. It might be jealousy." Interestingly, the film repeatedly entertains the possibility that John's hostility to Paul and Gertrud may spring from psychological neuroses only then to dismiss that possibility, as if it were purging the Oedipal resonances of the *Hamlet* narrative. The reason for doing so is easily divined. To explain John's obsession with unearthing Paul's crimes in psychoanalytic terms is to explain away his moral imperative and to pathologize his need to break silence; it is to reduce Johannes's voice, the voice of the unarticulated past, to an Oedipal projection of John's imagination. Within the film, psychoanalysis is presented as an instrument of Paul's power. Though Paul doesn't believe Pohl's Freudian explanation for John's hostility, he encourages Pohl to write a diagnosis designed to commit John to an isolation ward, the equivalent of the execution order Claudius sends with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. It is as if Käutner were at some level attracted to an Oedipal reading of John as a way of blunting the full burden of history, while at the same time he recognizes how a psychoanalytic reading of his Hamlet figure is just another way of converting John's demand for justice into private neurosis.

This topic draws attention to one final parallel between *Hamlet* and *The Rest is Silence*: Dr. Pohl's daughter Fee, the film's Ophelia figure. Unlike Ophelia, Fee is coded as psychologically unhinged from the very start of the tale. She is the only member of the Claudius household who goes to meet him at the airport, though John is so preoccupied with his investigation that he never

sees her. Our first glimpse of Fee is through a car's back window as she is driven away from the airport without John, looking sad, abandoned, imprisoned, alone. That look backward is thematically significant, not just because it announces her romantic idolization of John. Fee's relationship to modernity is one of looking backward — she dresses in outdated frocks; she lives in the decrepit Pohl family home where she grows flowers; her bed is littered with dolls, suggesting her arrested development; she insists that John "has always been here," despite the fact that he's been in America for more than a decade; and she is pointedly detached from the Claudius household, with its silence about the past. If with John Käutner is at pains to deny psychopathology, with Fee he emphasizes it — Fee's troubled idealization of John parallels John's idealization of his father.

Several key scenes suggest that Fee's mental state is an effect of her denial of wartime history. If Paul, Claudius and Pohl know the truth of the past and choose never to speak it, Fee has repressed all cognizance of the past and remains in a state of childhood. She speaks to John about her flowers as if they were her children and she their protective mother — "I just let them grow undisturbed. And I help them. I am with them when they die." In the same conversation she reveals a fatalistic fascination with dying with dignity: "Have you ever watched a flower die?...It looks nice. Humans try to live to the end. Flowers don't. They have dignity. They die the way they flower. Happy and ready when their time comes."

John and Fee in the greenhouse

When John asks her "But if you cut them before their time, is that a nice death too?", Fee declares with fury, "That is not death, it's murder! Even if it's only a flower!" This strange exchange suggests how fully Fee has repressed any engagement with Germany's history of wartime cruelty, particularly genocide. Rather than acknowledge the nation's culpability for its past, she steps out of history and retreats into her own imagined world where she can protect her flower-children and insure that they die with dignity. Dr. Pohl's diagnosis of his daughter is apt: she suffers from schizophrenia, the national malady of postwar Germany.

Early on Fee is attracted to John, as if despite her repression of the past she remains drawn to what he represents, the desire to break through the oppressive silence of German society. The two connect as representatives of the younger generation at odds with their elders, but they also share a deeper bond of alienation, revealed in their conversation after John has read his father's diary. When John laments "I always thought I could understand what I saw," Fee sympathizes "We only understand secret things. At least I do. I don't try to understand anything else. It just brings pain or disgust." Here Fee is not the pawn of Paul and Pohl, as Ophelia is of Claudius and Polonius; John does not mock Fee at the performance of his "Mousetrap," as Hamlet does Ophelia. In fact Fee is at John's side as he writes the ballet and she sits with him at its premiere; the two are in league against the Claudius household. But when John accidentally kills Pohl as he listens in on John's confrontation with his mother, Fee quickly falls apart. Not only can't she bear the death of her father; she can't bear the fall of John in her estimation, for with the killing of her father John has committed the same act he has accused Paul of. We see her fall into mad disillusionment when Herbert, Paul and Gertrud observe her clipping off the heads of her flowers while romantic music plays in the background. With wartime trauma repeated so close to home and unable to repress it any longer, Fee descends into psychotic disconnection from the world. Her function in *The Rest is Silence* is to provide tragic counterpoint to John's "heroic" notion that revealing Germany's secret guilt will lead to justice, reform or psychological health.

Fee does not die, unlike Ophelia (nor does John, unlike Hamlet), and in fact the film gives her the last word. After Gertrud has shot Paul, John sees Fee being led to a car by a doctor, and he calls out to her. At first she gives no sign of recognition, then she asks him "How do you know my name? You're a stranger. Come and visit me. I want to show you my flowers. The cattleya's in bloom tonight. But you must be very quiet. I don't want my father to hear you. He's always behind the door." After getting into the car, she adds, "Maybe you'd better not come. I'd forgotten - all my flowers have died. Don't be sad about it. Death is nothing special to me. Ask your father. He knows."

This final speech underlines the film's ambivalent attitude toward the father-figure, at once menacingly enforcing silence ("you must be very quiet, he's always behind the door") and a source of truth ("he knows").

Fee and John

As Fee drives off, the film's final image is of John, alone in a parking lot, the family steelworks behind him, walking slowly into the blank landscape, a figure of existential integrity who has left to contemplate the tragic cost of his labors. Only then does the title "the rest is silence" appear, as if to stress the sadly ironic effect of his pursuit of justice and truth. John's pyrrhic victory reveals the difficulty with Käutner's engagement with postwar guilt: he is unable to conceptualize what German society might look like after it has moved beyond silence and acknowledged fully its political past.

Conclusion: Acknowledgement and Silence

We have grown accustomed to conceptualizing Shakespearean appropriation as a means for filmmakers to speak through a vehicle imbued with cultural authority, even when they contest that authority. Käutner's *The Rest is Silence* certainly uses *Hamlet* in this way, deploying a Shakespearean text long central to Germany's self-conceptualization to meditate upon the nation's postwar cultural memory. But with its conflicted desire to idealize the ghostly dead father, also drawn from and strengthened by parallels to *Hamlet*, the film occludes a full acknowledgment of national guilt even as it seeks to confront it. What makes *The Rest is Silence* fascinating is that it demonstrates powerfully that for all its mediated eloquence, Shakespearean appropriation can also be a form of silence.

Notes

1. Thanks to Courtney Lehmann and members of the 2011 SAA seminar "Silent Shakespeare" for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this essay.
2. See Cornelsen; Jacobsen and Prinzler; and Mehlinger and Ruppert. Loquai makes no mention of Kautner's film.
3. For example, Niehoff's 1959 review, in Jacobsen and Prinzler, 243-5.
4. See Habicht, Pfister 1986, Loquai and especially Zimmermann. Hopkins discusses at some length the ways in which the long legacy of the Germany-*Hamlet* analogy pervades Edgar Reitz's *Heimat* film cycle and is transformed in the process for a very different generation.
5. Käutner does establish the possibility of using modernist style and media for voicing the truth. John's highly mocking, confrontational "Mousetrap" ballet is in up-to-the-moment modernist style, in contrast with the blandly conventional ballet that precedes it.
6. Käutner's essays are reprinted in *German Essays on Film* (McCormick and Guenther-Pal), 198-201.
7. When Horace insists that the voice must have been a hallucination, John insists that he thought so too until he got a second phone call, where the voice repeated its accusation and insisted he return to Germany. "I spoke but he didn't hear me," John claims, "he kept repeating the words, *like a machine*, like the first time" [my emphasis].
8. Though Käutner was one of the first German filmmakers to address postwar guilt, many critics have accused him of stressing his characters' private acts of resistance and humanity during the Nazi era as a means for combining positive remembrance of the German people along with acknowledgment of their general culpability: "the overarching narrative in all of these films is the tragic set of circumstances that always enables the protagonists' 'blameless guilt'" (Köppen 2010, 57). As Köppen and others point out (see also Berman and Silberman), this strategy locates the essential German spirit in the private, fundamentally decent soul of individual Germans and treats the public political realm in the Nazi era as a kind of fate, imposed from outside and difficult to resist. In this formulation, the weight of history becomes a generalized existential burden Germans must bear rather than a specific set of choices for which they bear responsibility.

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Rivers of Story: Some Filmic Afterlives of *Pericles*

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ABSTRACT | SHAKESPEAREAN ROMANCE AND FILM GENRES | EPISODIC STORYTELLING, THE GUILELESS HEROINE, AND POLITICS | LOVE, LOSS, RESTORATION | THE JOURNEY HOME | NOTES | REFERENCES

ABSTRACT

Some stories are like rivers, just as rivers hold their own stories. This essay considers origins and movie adaptations of Shakespeare's *Pericles*, tracking them into territory where the source play is one staging place for a longer narrative history, and the film need not acknowledge or show awareness of the play. Texts include the French movie, *Paris nous appartient* or *Paris Belongs to Us* (1961), the American *A Love Song for Bobby Long* (2004), and the Australian Aboriginal musical film *Bran Nue Dae* (2009).

SHAKESPEAREAN ROMANCE AND FILM GENRES

Rivers have always fascinated me. I have traced several to their sources, and two in particular. The Tyne presented a dilemma since it has two points of origin, respectively north on the picturesque border between Scotland and Northumberland on private land feeding into the man-made Kielder Dam, and south on the rather bleak Alston Moor in Cumbria, marked by ghost towns where tin mines have collapsed and been abandoned. The confluence comes at a "meeting of the waters" near Hexham, and then flows down along the Tyne Valley past Corbridge, through Newcastle upon Tyne, and into the sea at Tynemouth. Even the names document the landscape and have created numerous communities along the river, providing sustenance of food

and water, transport, and recreation. I chose the southern source and eventually came to nothing resembling a spectacular snow-clad mountain peak or even a bubbling spring, but rather a damp patch which began in soggy stasis and gradually moved away at a sluggish pace to find its path.

Meanwhile, the Swan River in Western Australia is an impressive but unsung waterway, at times stately and broad, albeit invisibly polluted, flowing eventually down to the Indian Ocean at Fremantle Harbour. It is not the result of a confluence, but in some ways, it contains three rivers, beginning as the Avon which becomes the Swan (the Shakespearean echoes are no doubt more than coincidental) and generating a major tributary, the Canning. My pilgrimage in this case led me to a place called Wickepin where, according to aboriginal Nyoongar legend, resided the usually benign but also dangerous and powerful Waugal, Rainbow Serpent in the Dreamtime of creation myths, his excrement being the ubiquitous limestone all the way to the ocean (Hughes-Hallett 1997, 297). A little more promising than the Tyne's provenance, its source turned out to be a gently running spring at a spot which, in an interesting reversal of European categories of upstream and downstream, past and future, beginning and endings, Aborigines knew as "where the fresh water ran out."

Like the Tyne, for countless centuries (in this case probably 60,000 years) the more recently named Swan has provided life and livelihoods for generations living along its course, and it has also been dammed, diverted, filled in, forced underground, and generally manipulated for human purposes. However, while the Tyne is valued largely in terms of economic and practical considerations, the original inhabitants and custodians of the land now known as Australia, with their beliefs in the natural law of the land or "country," regarded the Swan as a spiritual and emotional resource with its sacred spots and significant areas created or inhabited by benign and malevolent spirits. Names along its course tell as much: "the place of magic spirits" (now depressingly a freeway), "place of the children," "place of death water," "the blackness of the river bank" — and sometimes indicating the kind of landscape or food to be found there (Broomhall 2012). The Swan River provides a rich, classic case of what we now call "emotional geographies."

My premise is that some stories are like rivers, just as rivers hold their own stories. Obvious examples abound. The story of Ulysses' journeying no doubt predates Homer's *Odyssey*, includes Tennyson's poetry, and runs beyond James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The equivalent of its geographical journeying around the Mediterranean is also a temporal history marked by constant adaptation to human needs at different times. Sometimes parts or episodes of

stories are like coves that can be "settled" — the widow Dido from Virgil's *Aeneid*, the transformation of characters in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The analogy of the history of narratives likened to rivers has a parallel with the ocean in an article by Peter Womack, "Shakespeare and the Sea of Stories," pointing to a "narrative reservoir for poets and playwrights alike" though his account is developed in different ways from the one offered here (Womack 1999, 170). In terms of *Pericles*, Womack gives an example of the way an older miracle play with a Catholic tradition (*Mary Magdalene*) contains a set of comparable narrative incidents that Shakespeare adapted into a Protestant worldview more skeptical of miracles. Lisa Hopkins has more eloquently used the same metaphor of the sea in her critical account of the play:

> In *Pericles*, the true borders and the true journeys are those of the mind, and for all the imagery of the sea, the most important shores are those that lap at the self — those that Pericles himself memorably terms "the shores of my mortality." (Hopkins 2000, 228-29)

My approach here, as well as focusing not on possible sources but on works influenced by *Pericles*, also draws on early modern humanist, literary and rhetorical practice. Another related but different account is given by Lori Humphrey Newcombe in a chapter called "The Sources of Romance, the Generation of Story, and the Patterns of Pericles Tales" (Newcombe 2009, 21-46). Once again, however, the aim is different from mine. Like Womack, Newcombe's study is exclusively focused on the relationship between Shakespeare's immediate sources (essentially *novella*, Wilkins' *Painfull Adventures of Pericles*, Twyne's *Patterne of Painfull Adventures*, and more distantly Gower's *Confessio Amantis*) and his play, rather than later adaptations which take Shakespeare's *Pericles* itself as either source or generic analogue, which is my task here. Also, Newcombe's main concern is to establish an argument drawing on feminist scholarship, proposing that attitudes to sources are a matter of gender and subject to "patrilinear logic" and "familial agenda": "Source study assumes a gendered, generational, and textual norm: it traces single, fixed lines of descent from a feminized source via the presumed paternity of Shakespeare's genius to the legitimate inheritance of a play," the latter being presumed "masculine" and given priority (Newcombe 2009, 23). Her aim is to erect a theory of "the sexual politics of romance intertextuality" (Newcombe 2009, 35), acknowledging a related idea advanced by Janet Adelman, which deals less with textual and source matters and more with a perception that in Shakespeare's *Pericles* the female body is seen as a threat to masculine authority and needs to be excised or subdued: "What is celebrated, then, is the recuperation of the family, freed from the sexual body" (Adelman 2000, 187). This approach is not my concern here, and in fact I will be implicitly turning the argument on

its head somewhat by treating Shakespeare's *Pericles* as the dimly perceived (maternal and feminine?) source for recent movies, none of which can be regarded as being especially masculinized or prioritized. My concentration is on genre and literary imitation. However, Newcombe's conclusion in exploring the sources for Shakespeare's play closely anticipates and mirrors my exploration of the Pericles story's sometimes unconscious and surprising "descendants":

> The set of Pericles tales did not ask early modern audiences to impose textual lineages, to claim textual patrimonies, to isolate single sources or master authors. It called on early modern audiences to listen carefully for patterns of repetitions and difference, to "stand i'th'gaps" and teach themselves "the stages of our story" (4.4.8-9). It invited audiences to draw on romances' resources to travel an expanding sea of narrative meaning. (Newcombe 2009, 41)

The doctrine of composition in rhetoric involving Imitation and Invention, followed by early modern imaginative writers, seems to embody some such analogy as the ever-flowing, ever-changing courses of rivers of narrative which I have invoked. The confluences of literary tradition might not relate to a specific narrative but to a genre, such as Elegy, Ode, Sonnet or Epic; or to the style of a writer so distinctive as to be recognizable, like Horace or Martial. Elizabethans such as Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, Jonson and the rest found it not only convenient but obligatory to adopt such models of authority as their own source or origin, while at the same time recognising that they must not produce a mere copy but an adaptation, a personal point of utility or Invention in the bend of the river where they chose to build their own habitation. The particular chosen river may have originated with the classics, but like Heraclitus, each writer knew that they never step into the same river twice, since it is "made new" each time they placed their own feet in its waters, depending on what they found stimulating to their own artistic purposes and creative temperaments. Petrarch in a letter to Boccaccio described Imitation in terms of human generations and genetics, "the resemblance of a son to his father" (Jones 1977, 19). Although the child is not a clone of parents, yet that child's unique physiognomy would not exist without those particular parents, and something similar could be claimed for settlements along the Tyne or the Swan — they exist simply because the river does, but they can also utilize the tradition with their own inventive powers.

Drawing a little closer to the subject of this paper, we find also that in some cases the parenting river is acknowledged and known to the writer — the two springs on Mount Helicon where the Muses dwelt and the story of

Narcissus originated — while at other times the source is more immediate than mediate, a tributary rather than the river itself, as Shakespeare imitates his contemporary Marlowe who is in turn imitating the classics. In the case of Shakespeare especially, and certainly in the example to be explored here, his particular imitations have become so culturally powerful that they become the river itself for those who come later. His versions of Antony and Cleopatra are more "real" to us than Plutarch's upon which he based his depictions, and for us they are origins in their own right, generating our own received narratives. Imitations may not even be known let alone acknowledged by name, but their presences, barely visible and sometimes flowing underground, are signs of the river still acting as a cultural reference point, even if unobserved. It is with Shakespeare's *Pericles* as the *fons et origo* that this essay on origins and adaptations begins, rather than ends. It will become obvious that the concept of Shakespearean adaptation advanced here goes well beyond "plays turned into films" and "offshoots," into territory where the source play is one staging place (the theatrical metaphor is relevant here) within a longer narrative history, and the film need not acknowledge or show explicit awareness of the play.

Shakespeare makes it very clear he is conscious of adapting a very old story in writing (or more likely collaborating in writing) *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, through the opening Chorus figure, Gower:[1]

> To sing a song that old was sung,
> From ashes ancient Gower is come,
> Assuming man's infirmities,
> To glad your ear, and please your eyes.
> It hath been sung at festivals,
> On ember-eves and holy-ales;
> And lords and ladies in their lives
> Have read it for restoratives:
> The purchase is to make men glorious,
> *Et bonum quo antiquius eo melius.* (1. Chorus. 1-10)

The Latin means "the older a good thing is the better it is." In this case the models do not come from standard classical genres but from romance, potentially endless stories involving travel, separations and reunions, conflict and reconciliation, loss and recovery, fathers, mothers and daughters, and re-integration of disintegrated families. These date from late classical Greek times and continue through the medieval period. In the case of *Pericles*, the story otherwise known as Apollonius of Tyre, it had been adapted in different versions from fifth-century origins (Cooper 2004, 266). We may now turn to some modern movies where, at least arguably, we find the romance elements in their distinctive *Pericles* version replicated. Each

example, I suggest, draws on particular clusters of themes intimately tied to the romance story of *Pericles*, and in turn illuminates the play.

Episodic Storytelling, the Guileless Heroine, and Politics

The most intriguing choice made by Jacques Rivette in his challenging New Wave movie, *Paris nous appartient* or *Paris Belongs to Us* (1961) is to make its central pretext the preparations for an ill-starred, amateur production of Shakespeare's *Pericles*. No matter how dedicated and even obsessed is its director, Gerard Lenz, and despite many rehearsals, the enterprise seems doomed. Each rehearsal is held in a different setting because they can find no reliable venue, and they are always disrupted by acrimony or circumstances, leading to a steady leaking of the main actors, who find excuses to resign. By the end, Gerard manages to get "corporate sponsorship" for thirty performances from a major theatre, *Le Théâtre du Cité*, only to find that in doing so he loses all artistic control and his most loyal actors to decisions made by entrepreneurial philistines intent on profits. In despair, Gerard resigns and later commits suicide. There is also a major mystery running alongside this plot. The composer Juan, whom Gerard had asked to provide all-important music for the production of *Pericles*, has died, presumed either to have committed suicide or been murdered.

The search for reasons, and for the missing tape of his score, provides the core of mystery and the main intrigue of the plot. The only person genuinely moved to investigate is a young woman, Anne, who is a student of literature. Her opening scene shows her reading the song from *The Tempest* ending in ". . . Those are pearls that were his eyes, / Nothing of him that doth fade, / But doth suffer a sea-change into something rich and strange." Prophetically, the words come to mirror Juan's posthumous fate. When he loses his female lead, Gerard casts Anne as his Marina though she has no acting training or ability. Anne's increasingly fraught efforts to avert what she believes is a plot endangering Gerard's life bring her into contact with a motley group. Philip is an illegal immigrant fleeing from McCarthyite America, paranoid (for good reason, since he is sought by officials) and perhaps schizophrenic. Terry, a darkly secretive *femme fatale*, "drifts between Paris and New York" and had been involved with Juan and Gerard. There is also a sinister businessman named de George. By the end, we discover that the dark forces are a ruthless political group, the *Falange*, a French infiltration of the right-wing Spanish movement espoused by Franco. Critics of the film, mainly French theorists, tend to downplay the *Pericles* thread as distracting and almost irrelevant, an example of what one character describes derisively as "entertainment for intellectuals" in comparison with the realities of political violence. But its presence is a real question, and may be a central one —

why is a little-known English play by Shakespeare so prominent in a defiantly experimental film made by Rivette, who was himself a theory-driven critic for *Cahiers du Cinéma* rather than a professional director, and why is that play *Pericles* in particular?

One obvious explanation is the common theme of exile. Even apart from Philip, each of the characters is in some way haunted by a sense of social discomfort and deracination, some feeling that they are at the mercy of conspiratorial forces beyond their ken, as though Paris does not in fact belong to them. Even Anne, the most "local" and ordinary Parisienne, feels increasingly bewildered and frightened, while Gerard never has control over his play or his life. The group is described as "an order of exiles." Such unease, confusion, and near-paranoia are the ambient moods of the film. Pericles in Shakespeare's play is, if nothing else, a hapless and helpless exile, driven from one court in fear of his life into a life of wandering by sea, just as the theatre group has to keep finding a new venue. Anne, like Shakespeare's Marina in the brothel, preserves her moral integrity only through her innocence and refusal to compromise her own version of truth. She has in abundance the perseverance and patience exhibited by the women in Shakespearean romance, including *Pericles*.

Moreover, the form of Shakespeare's play is consciously referred to and reflected in the film's structure. Gerard is defined as a Brechtian director, at one stage telling his actors not to identify with their role but to remember they are actors and that theatre is "not illusion" but a reality in its own right. He and Anne speak of *Pericles* in terms of Brecht's epic theatre, which in turn was based on that playwright's reading of Shakespeare:

> ANNE [*Pericles* is] rather disconnected, but that doesn't matter.
> GERARD Why?
> ANNE Because it's on another level . . . Is that the right answer?
> GERARD Full marks. Everyone says I'm crazy . . . but the reason I want to stage it is because it's "unplayable." It's shreds and patches, yet it hangs together over all. Pericles may traverse kingdoms . . . the heroes are dispersed, yet can't escape, they're all reunited in Act V. I want to show that. Do you think I'm crazy?
> ANNE Not at all.
> GERARD Thanks, but we must make people understand it. It shows a chaotic but not absurd world, rather like our own, flying off in all directions, but with a purpose. Only we don't know what.
> ANNE I agree: the world is less absurd than it seems. But what can we do to show it clearly?
> GERARD I'm counting on the music.

The world depicted in *Paris nous appartient* resembles *Pericles* as described by Anne and Gerard, and the way the film is structured mirrors the play's episodic "wandering" and the "shreds and patches" of partial revelation of some "purpose" behind the apparently absurd and disconnected events. Music is important at certain heightened moments in *Pericles*, such as when he alone hears "the music of the spheres" (5.1.220), and it adds an overall, unifying ambience (Knight 1948, 55-57). And just as Gerard hopes to recover the lost music for his production, so the music in the film itself centrally contributes to mood and meaning, since it is at times strikingly discordant, ominous and alarming, even while there is an illusion of inconsequentiality.

The hidden "purpose" behind the movie's mysteries is revealed at the end, and once again it is the fate of the play-within-film which is part of the explanation. The significance of the suicides of Juan, and later Gerard, lies in the fact that they are artists trying to maintain their integrity in a world that menacingly threatens their values. Gerard loses everything he has worked for in his play when it comes under bureaucratic control and is viewed simply as a profit-making commodity. The specific "conspiracy" against art is named as the Falange, a "dictatorship syndicalism" which had come stealthily from Franco's Spain into France in 1955 (the film is set in 1957) and is referred to in the film. This authoritarian ideology, among other things, condemned artistic individualism in the name of nationalism and social cohesiveness, and instead encouraged the kind of cultural "syndicalism" which is the fate of Gerard's production of *Pericles* and is expected by Rivette as the fate of his *auteur* movie. The ending seems obscure to us now because the Falange movement is no longer remembered, but in a strange way the film is prophetic of our own times in which art is more insidiously driven through the need for sponsorship by capitalist forces in industry and business, rather than by personal vision. Ours is a world of non-freedom which Rivette might recognise if he had lived to see it, and it might make him feel vindicated in the pessimism and futility which, ultimately, he saw as part of the *Pericles* vision. In picking up this dark strain in Shakespeare's play, which can indeed be detected when we consider the fortunes of its unfree, hapless hero, Rivette chooses not to end with the Elizabethan play's final reconciliations and fulfilment. For these we can turn to our other films.

Love, Loss, Restoration

Inspiration for this section of my paper came unexpectedly while I was watching on television the American film *A Love Song for Bobby Long* (2004). It gradually dawned that I was on somehow familiar, literary

territory. First of all, in filmic terms it seemed influenced by a "Shakespeare movie," *My Own Private Idaho* (1991), which in turn was itself explicitly based on Shakespeare's *Henry IV* plays. It is also a film with many literary associations. It was adapted from a semi-autobiographical novel, *Off Magazine Street* by Ronald Everett Capps (2004), which the author says is designed to show that "goodness can occur far from conventional morality, and beautiful things can look ugly at first glance" — coincidentally a good description of some episodes in *Pericles*, such as Thaisa's death in childbirth in a storm at sea, and Marina's virtue, which has the power of converting bawds and pimps in a brothel. Furthermore, like the novel, the film is full of literary references, building up a tissue of intertextuality leading into the realm of reasserted literary "origins." Pericles may not itself be referenced, but the general ethos of the film invites some compelling comparisons.

John Travolta as Bobby Long is an ageing and gone-to-seed, retired (perhaps sacked?) English professor. He lives in a state of amiably decrepit resignation, an alcoholic haze and encroaching illnesses, with his former star student, Lawson Pines, who aims to write a biography of the Professor but struggles unsuccessfully against writer's block (and no wonder, given the amount of vodka they both drink). An eighteen-year-old woman called Purslane (Pursy) Will, played by Scarlett Johansson, leaves her densely bovine boyfriend ("you sure didn't choose that one for his brains," laconically observes Bobby) and comes to live with the two men in the house because it had been owned by her mother, Lorraine Will, a charismatic folk singer, who has just died. Pursy also is persuaded by them to undertake a degree majoring in literature at the University of New Orleans. Throughout, there are quotations — pre-eminently from Carson McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, which plays an important role in unveiling the dénouement, and also from Tennessee Williams, William Faulkner, Eugene O'Neill, Dylan Thomas, Charles Dickens, Robert Frost, George Sand, and many others, the quotations including Plato's "the unexamined life is not worth living."

As I watched the film, I realized that many central narrative incidents and some overall generic elements led to an even more specific reference in my own experience, perhaps unlikely to be a conscious source but a strong analog, Shakespeare's *Pericles*. Since it is among the least-performed of Shakespeare's plays (Skeele 1998, 52) and has been planned as an adaptation to the screen only once (via the unsuccessful and apparently now abandoned project *Pericles by Shakespeare on the Road* in 2014) and to television only in the widely criticized BBC/Time Life production (1984), it is not a play which has been culturally transmitted as widely as, for example, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, or *The Tempest*. Its afterlife therefore

lies at a level more subtly and even unconsciously present beneath the surface, the unacknowledged but flowing river of story. In summary, we have the following: the wandering and rootless *senex* hounded out of his natural habitat as a teacher of literature (the university professor was "loved by colleagues and students and hated by Faculty," we are told); a mysteriously absent, presumed dead mother; a young woman who acts as a catalyst for change and revival in the sordid household just as Marina reforms the brothel; and several other parallels leading to the ending where — at the risk of spoiling it for you — it is discovered that in fact the girl is the long-lost daughter of Professor Long. (Some fathers might be startled to learn that they have a daughter who is Scarlett Johansson, and some daughters would at least be surprised to find that John Travolta, aged and bloated but acknowledged as "handsome" by another young student, is their biological father. And in a different kind of search for generational "origins," viewers from the *Grease* era [1978] will see their hero dancing once again [twice, in fact], though this time more gingerly and sedately on his painful toe).

This was derided by critics as a "corny" ending to a "creaky" plot, and one reviewer complaining of "something mouldy about the setup" rather amazingly echoed the very word used by Ben Jonson to describe *Pericles* in "Ode to Himselfe":

> No doubt a mouldy Tale,
> Like Pericles, and stale
> As the Shrive's crusts, and nasty as his Fish,
> Scraps out of every Dish,
> Throwne forth and rak'd into the common Tub. (Jonson 1954, 299)

All it lacks is the physical resurrection of the mother, who throughout has been very much the central presence metaphorically, if not literally, being a compelling focus of many memories and desires not only for Bobby and Pursy but also for the bar-room music-loving audience. Even from the grave she is the agent for crucial plot revelations. She does not in fact reappear, as Thaisa does in Shakespeare's play, but the revelations act as a more realistic resurrection than her physical presence would. The mysterious capacities of time to change and heal and of patience to ensure survival through to fulfilment are central to the vision of Shakespeare in his late romances, especially *Pericles*, and in a muted and modern way they are present also in the semi-miraculous reconciliation of father, daughter, and the still-lost mother, who is however in some ways regained through her music, in *A Love Song for Bobby Long*.

Some central motifs are common to Shakespearean romance and its ultimate

sources: the restoration to the *senex* of a *virgo adulescens* who had been "lost," deprived of family status and forced into a seedy environment which by her natural vitality she helps to clean up (morally in Marina's case in the brothel; literally in Pursy's since she does the neglected housekeeping). Like Marina, Pursy is urged at one stage to take up prostitution in order to earn money, and she is questioned about her virginity, which becomes a matter of public speculation. An obvious parallel is the final reunion of parent and child through the *pistis* or "proof of identity" revelation, which comes in the movie in hinted revelations from a concert in which Pursy's mother's song is sung, which prompts memories from onlookers of her as a child, just as the return of the mother in *Pericles* is accompanied by divine music. Most crucially, we learn that Lorraine had dedicated a particular song to Bobby because he had given her a copy of the novel *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. Finally, the revelation is achieved through a letter found by Pursy at the end of the film. Since it emerges that the mother's suppressed will has bequeathed the house to Pursy, the recovered daughter can live now in harmony rather than conflict with her newfound father, and various other emotional tensions are resolved. Lawson, who has a relationship not quite sexual and not quite platonic with Pursy, need no longer be the target of latent jealousy from Bobby, though we are not told the ultimate fate of his other longstanding and more carnal relationship with Georgianna. At least Bobby, Pursy, and Lawson can live in the same house together, happily (almost) ever after — at least until Bobby dies.

Most of the distant chimes of recognition of "origins" are sounded through similarities between Shakespeare's Marina and the movie's Purslane. Marina's mother Thaisa (so far as Pericles knows) has died in childbirth and consigned to the sea. Pursy's mother was similarly "lost" and it is a strong regret to the girl that she has no memories, as other children have, of childhood in a family, having grown up with an absent mother and unknown father (at least Marina knows the name of her father, but nothing more). The two young women are strikingly similar in appearance to their respective mothers — this is commented on in the film by all those who knew Lorraine, and is articulated also in the play:

> My dearest wife
> Was like this maid, and such a one
> My daughter might have been: my queen's square brows;
> Her stature to an inch; as wand-like straight;
> As silver-voic'd; her eyes as jewel-like
> And cas'd as richly; in pace another Juno;
> Who starves the ears she feeds, and makes them hungry
> The more she gives them speech. (5.1.106-13)

The characters are linked also through imagery. Although Marina is named after the sea on which she was born, she is associated even more strongly with flowers, as are Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* and Innogen (or Imogen) in *Cymbeline*:

> *Enter* MARINA, *with a basket of flowers*
> No, I will rob Tellus of her weed,
> To strew thy green with flowers; the yellows, blues,
> The purple violets, and marigolds,
> Shall as a carpet hang upon thy grave,
> While summer-days doth last. (4.1.13-17)

In the editor's somewhat coy phrasing in the footnote of the 1963 Arden, "Marina is presented as a flower-maiden" (Hoeniger 1963, 102). And so is Purslane, whose name initiates debate about whether its referent is a flower or a weed. More than this, it is noticeable that in many of the scenes she is presented framed or even garlanded in flowers, or picking flowers, and even indoors where she has placed flowers in a vase. Of course, the central link between the two characters, Marina and Pursy, separated by centuries, is the more symbolic one in terms of their shared role in galvanizing an older man who has lost his way and is ill and disappointed in life, comparable in many ways to Pericles.

There are other Shakespearean echoes, such as the role of Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well*: not only does Pursy "cure," "reform" and "clean up" the house, but like Helena, she is later called to exercise her "sacred physic" (5.1.74) on the "kingly patient" of Bobby. Pursy is instrumental in getting Bobby to seek medical attention for his various ailments. In both cases, structurally and in narrative terms, it is the figure of the returning daughter who inadvertently restores the family — through full reconciliations of daughter, mother and father in *Pericles*, and through partial reconciliations in *Bobby Long*, since the mother does not "come back to life," though her presence is fundamental throughout in bringing emotional community. In its essence, Shakespearean romance is a genre which gives a "second chance" to individuals who have lost and strayed, and who might have died as tragic protagonists but are instead given renewal. This is also the inner rhythm or heartbeat of *A Love Song for Bobby Long*, as even the hard-bitten Bobby can see: "I'm thankful for a god that I thought had given up on me. And the love of a child." On her graduation from college, he quotes from T. S. Eliot's "Little Gidding":

> In the glorious words of T. S. Eliot, "we shall not cease exploration, and the end of all our exploring, will be to arrive where we started, and know the place for the first time." And that's what you've given your old

man, and he's forever grateful.

The words could be a postscript to each of Shakespeare's late romances, and it is perhaps worth noting that not long before Eliot wrote these lines he had composed the beautiful lyric "Marina," based consciously on *Pericles*: "What images return / O my daughter . . . I made this, I have forgotten / And remember . . . The awakened, lips parted, the hope, the new ships" (Eliot 1963, 115).

If it is conceded that this rough-hewn but touching, bittersweet movie at least subliminally replicates the genre and narrative of *Pericles*, then we can look further back. Shakespeare based his story on a prose romance by Lawrence Twine, North's translation of Plutarch, and Sidney's *Arcadia*. All these drew on the story told in Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (and in the film told by Lawson, since the professor's biographer functions as a Gower figure in the film), which derived from an Anglo-Saxon fragment and more directly from the fifth century Greek romance *Apollonius of Tyre*, which in its turn probably had lost origins in even more ancient Latin and Greek stories. (Suddenly my voluminous PhD research all those years ago, reading lengthy ancient romances in my own scholarly "origins," becomes useful for pattern recognition.) So here we have an example of an unbroken line of a particular *kind* of story, a genre with many elements in common, stretching back from today to Shakespeare to Gower to classical times: a nice example of the river of stories arising from some distant, lost "origins," but continuing to flow even in unperceived or "spectral" fashion.

The Journey Home

My third example might seem on the face of it more facetious and unexpected, being a joyful Australian Aboriginal film, *Bran Nue Dae* (2009), but I hope at least briefly to show how it replicates the dominant patterning structures of *Pericles*, the journey itself leading once again to spectacular family reconciliations. In some ways the case is more easily made than in the other examples, even though actual indebtedness to Shakespeare's play is more unlikely in the case of the musical comedy. As already mentioned, it is worth observing that in *Pericles* — no musical in our sense — music does occur at important, transitional moments, which is more likely to be appreciated in performance than in reading. *A Love Song for Bobby Long* is also full of music from start to end, and it is a song that helps unravel the plot. However, the fact that *Bran Nue Dae* is generically a musical means that the "origins" which I find covertly evident in *Pericles* in this case lie on the surface, in plot motifs and incidents rather than in the emotional resonances touched in *Bobby Long*. Since the latter is full of literary allusions it does not seem inappropriate to argue for these depths,

whereas *Bran Nue Dae* is a more improbable vehicle for a Shakespearean story. However, even this might contribute to the theme of literary origins, in signaling that the stories are embedded more deeply in cultures, less textual than experiential in genesis, than might at first meet the eye.

Bran Nue Dae's similarity to the kind of play *Pericles* is lies mainly in the journey as structuring device, with some surprisingly comparable incidents along the way. It is set in the past (1969), and more particularly, in both works the journey is away from and then back towards origins. Aboriginal beliefs are so centered in "country" as starting places and destinations, in nomadic journeys and returns to "home," that the paradigm is deeply cultural. "Uncle Tadpole" explains in the film the importance of where a person begins life in terms of personal totems of animals or parts of the landscape, and he links this lore with the pre-human, dreamtime state from whence all ancestry and human history derive, according to Aboriginal beliefs. Later, the central character has a strange dream of "bush people" that is explained as "the old people, looking after us," just as in a sense Gower "takes care of us" in the play. This character, sixteen-year-old Willy (quite coincidentally, Marina is sixteen at the end of *Pericles* and Perdita at the end of *The Winter's Tale*), defines his own life through travel away from and then back to Broome, where his boyhood dream lover Rosie lives.

The refrain of "Coming back home" recurs — "we all want to go home." Willy must first depart from his mother and home for a repressive Catholic boarding school in Perth which, with its sinister and sadistic headmaster Father Benedictus (played salaciously and with a harsh, mock-German accent by Geoffrey Rush), brings the innocent boy into as close proximity to "sin" (in this case theft and "impure thoughts") as Pericles in the corrupt court of Antiochus. Willy, incriminated in a burglary of chocolates and Coca Cola, flees, as does Pericles, undergoing a life of travel, in this case leading back "home" to Broome over 2,000 kilometers away. He is accompanied by the roguish, self-styled elder Uncle Tadpole (Ernie Dingo), whose home is also Broome. The journey confronts Willy with temptations and dangers, such as the attentions of the "hot" storekeeper Roadhouse Betty, and then beneath the "condom tree" in a brothel in Wyndham where he almost loses his virginity to the promiscuous Theresa. His innocence is as inviolate as Marina's. He also has a stint in jail, though the cause is not his fault, and is several times beaten up.

Like those of Pericles, Willy's wanderings are marked by a pattern of misunderstood innocence under siege, through which both protagonists must exercise "Patience . . . smiling Extremity out of act" (*Pericles* 5.1.139). All along the way there are incidents that mirror those encountered by Pericles

on his wanderings. At the same time, there are parallel journeys in the movie. Willy and Tadpole emotionally blackmail a couple of tourists in a combi-van: the German student Wolfgang and his girlfriend Annie, a free-spirited hippy and flower-child played by the singer Missy Higgins, who in "real life" is now associated with northern Western Australia and Broome specifically. It is a cultural journey for them too, forced as they are to accept the wily ways and cultural differences of their aboriginal passengers. Meanwhile, the vindictive Father Benedictus also heads for Broome in pursuit of the fleeing Willy, vowing to bring him back to the school.

Early in *Bran Nue Dae*, Tadpole, in his own confused way, tries to explain the importance and complexity of Australian indigenous kinship relationships, in which a person will have many more "aunties" and "uncles" than Europeans would concede. The subject is presented in *Pericles* in a more solemn tone, with both incest and family reconciliation instrumental in the narrative. In the Australian film, the gear shifts when they all reach Broome, where Willy's eventual declaration of love to Rosie galvanizes an extraordinary, festive and celebratory final movement on the Broome beach, worthy even of Shakespeare in *As You Like It*. The scene virtually parodies the family disclosures in *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and even the long, drawn-out and elaborate equivalent in *Cymbeline* that was regarded by Bernard Shaw as self-parodying. The young lovers kiss, and on this "night of miracles" (though it is broad daylight), sinners are called to testify.

Annie steps forward and confesses to being a "bad person" who has been "bent on free love," had a child out of wedlock when she was sixteen, and gave it away — she is forgiven. Theresa, the prostitute from Wyndham, steps forward to confess that she had and lost a child to another man, at which moment the ridiculous figure of the German Father Benedictus appears on the hillside, arms outstretched ("behold, a vision from God"). He is revealed as the father of the child, which he "took away to Germany twenty years ago." On cue, Wolfgang the young German traveler rushes forward to greet on bended knees "my father" and turns to "meine mutter" who responds "my son, my son." Wolfgang ecstatically declares "I am an Aborigine!" Uncle Tadpole then "tells his story" that he once had a wife who had a child by another man — pointing to a woman in the surpliced, evangelical choir, who of course turns out to be Willy's mother. Willy in turn forswears his vocation for the priesthood in favour of marrying Rosie and staying "home" with his mother and rediscovered father. As they all gather for the feast, (the very white) Annie tries improbably and vainly to join the kinship network too: "Actually, I've got another confession, I was adopted out as a child and all I remember was being pulled from a sea of wailing black faces and being raised in the city to be a white. I mean, I'm one of you

guys, I'm an Aborigine too!" After a skeptical few seconds of silence, Tadpole rejoins sardonically, "You've got to be kidding . . . Today, everybody's an Aborigine." And the true celebrations begin. Somehow *Bran Nue Dae* manages to out-Pericles *Pericles* in its exaggerated deployment of the same elements derived from the river of the story.

The formal study of sources, influences and analogs in literature and drama can take us only a part of the journey in answering some questions that are probably inexplicable in any final way. Scholars writing footnotes are understandably cautious, refraining from drawing links unless they are undeniable from some obviously textual evidence, disdaining the ancient and sometimes oral evidence. R. B. McKerrow was one of the sternest of such advocates, laying down with the exactitude of a lawyer the rules to be applied in testing for the existence of a source (McKerrow 1939; Honigmann 1954). Not everybody would wish to remain so limited. Some might be attracted to a kind of universalist or at least intertextual approach, based on the assumption that some stories cross cultures and historical periods, re-surfacing in unexpected ways. Others may argue that stories are constantly being recycled, culturally transmitted, and adapted across time, down through history. Whether certain historical periods are, for some reason or other, drawn to revive particular narratives and genres is another question that must remain mysteriously open and suggestive of different answers.

My analogy of stories as rivers is intended to open up a larger vista and more far-reaching conceptualisation of source study. Using the image, we find origins flowing into streams and currents that endlessly replicate, defer, conceal, recycle, and constantly return — "and the end of all our exploring, will be to arrive where we started." From upland source to its emergence in the distant ocean, the river is always the same and yet always different, moving through time, but timeless. The story of Pericles, the quasi-mythical Prince and later King of Tyre, depends on ancient chroniclers and storytellers coming back on each occasion to retell the story over again in new ways, with different emphases, "To sing a song that old was sung": and now, if my intuitions are not entirely wrong, it has come to be sung through the medium of film. Shakespeare may well have been bemused to think of his "mouldy" old play, which he had found as "a song that old was sung" dating back to ancient Greece, itself becoming, four centuries on, a new point of origin — formally unacknowledged but often uncannily similar — for these three, very diverse movies, as transmissions of different aspects of a river that might be dubbed "the Pericles story."

Notes

1. All citations of *Pericles* come from *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, edited by Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan (2001).

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Shakespeare and the Players

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Abstract

Shakespeare and the Players is a digital archive of Emory University professor Dr. Harry Rusche's nearly one thousand postcard collection of late Victorian to Edwardian Shakespearean actors in England and the United States, ranging from c. 1880 to 1914.

Shakespeare and the Players is a digital archive of Emory University professor Dr. Harry Rusche's nearly one thousand postcard collection of late Victorian to Edwardian Shakespearean actors in England and the United States, ranging from c. 1880 to 1914. While the website has existed since the 1990s, it was updated in 2016 for the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. Justin Shaw, a Ph.D. student in English at Emory University, has led the redesign and expansion of the site and collection. Digital Scholarship Consultant Dr. Erin Hecht coded, edited, and devised the site's layout with support from Digital Projects Assistant Kayla Shipp Kamibayashi. The updated archive has improved the image quality of archived objects and streamlined the website into a structure more familiar to Web 2.0 users. The archive includes essays written in a straightforward, accessible tone targeting an undergraduate audience, alongside indexed and categorized postcard galleries. In its new form, the archive aims to serve as a digital research resource for undergraduate students and researchers of Anglo-American Shakespearean theater history, and as an interdisciplinary pedagogical tool for higher education teachers. By using Shakespeare as the unifying theme and

subject of the archival materials, *Shakespeare and the Players* most effectively functions as a pedagogical starting point for undergraduates using digital archives, understanding research methods and resources to examine theater history, and evaluating Shakespeare as an Anglo-American cultural and material asset.

Rusche provides users with an opening provocation that frames the archive as a pedagogical tool: "How many of us would think of postcards when we study the history of the theater at the turn of the twentieth century?" ("Preface"). The archive, he argues, evidences the value of postcards to the study of theater at the turn of the twentieth century because of the diverse modes of pedagogical and historical engagement it enables for students and researchers. The "Preface" further provides multiple suggested frameworks for students to engage with the postcards, all of which are centered on their materiality: as artifacts of photography, theater history, the postcard industry in the United States and the United Kingdom, as art, and as a valuable Shakespearean commodity. The archive's layout maintains a fair balance between being an open resource to be perused like a dictionary, and providing guidance, suggestions, and structure for teachers and for students to develop their own research questions.

The archive is divided into eight introductory topics. Each topic is placed on a square image of a black and white postcard photograph of Shakespearean actors. A square transforms into white text on a blue background when the user rolls their cursor across it (fig. 1). The eight topics give a comprehensive picture of the archive's scope: "The Players," "The Plays," "The Characters," "Teaching and Research Opportunities," "The History of the Cards," "Project: Past and Present," "Moments of Note: The Players Onstage," and "Postcard Backs."

Figure 1 — Screengrab of the tiles for each introductory topic

(emory.shakespeare.edu)

Each section has enlarged versions of sample postcards from the collection and offers a succinct overview of its topic including definitions of terms, basic historical contexts and instructions for accessing related content in the archive.

"The Players" page introduces an overview of the 200 player-actors in the collection, listing examples such as Sir Henry Irving, Dame Ellen Terry, Lily Brayton, and Lewis Walter. It also provides links to media of actors' performances, and the archive bibliography for further resources about the players. "The Plays" introductory page explains how to navigate between plays in the archive and the resources available for each play. The page also contains explanations for the archival organization of the plays into Shakespearean genres and examples of plays corresponding to each category. "The Characters" introductory page provides named examples of Shakespearean characters and guides the reader to the bibliography for resources about Shakespearean characters, and the roles actors played in shaping scholarly understandings of Shakespearean characters. "Project: Past and Present" presents a history of the Emory-University-based project, a visual history of the website's transformation from 2003 to 2018, and a summary of the work required to create the digital archive. The page explains the archive's newest version is designed to be dynamic, interactive, and image-focused, moving away from the early aesthetic of web design which generally aimed to reproduce a printed text layout.

"The History of the Cards" page provides more in-depth historical context for the creation and dissemination of the postcards. Rusche and Shaw also argue in this section that:

> These [postcards] are important historical materials in that they convey the atmosphere of photography in the period and are artifacts of communicable exchange, postal distribution, and turn-of-the-century stage performance ("The History of the Cards").

The historical contexualization includes a brief history of the postcard industry in England and the United States, as well as names of major postcard producers, photographers, and actor-players who were popular postcard subjects. The page explains how and where postcards were sold and how their popularity increased due to their high proliferation. This section is the most detailed and thorough in its historical analysis of the politics, materiality, economics, and geography of the postcards' production.

The "Teaching and Research Opportunities" section offers an overview of

pedagogical applications for the archive. The collection has been used in first year writing seminars as a mode of instructing students on writing for genre, rhetoric, and audience ("Teaching and Research Opportunities"). This page notes the archive could also be used for literature, theater, and history courses; the page suggests using postcards in research as evidence of historical set design and performance aesthetic; in discussions regarding notions of race, gender, and disability in Shakespeare; in a business course as material examples of advertising; in history courses as examples of material evidence; and in art history as a mode for discussing materiality of postcards and the history of photography. Rusche and Shaw encourage educators to consider the materials dynamically, and in doing so demonstrate the broad scope of critical analysis which can be conducted on and through the postcard collection.

"Moments of Note: The Players Onstage" expands the historical work conducted in "The History of the Cards," providing specific American and British historical moments related to or including the objects and/or subjects of the collection. This includes performance events, such as the opening of Sir Henry Irving's production of *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1893, as well as political or global events including US President William McKinley's assassination in 1901. These biographical, theatrical, and political events are listed side by side to illustrate the concurrence of historical events. The timeline spans from 1890 to 1914 and flows between American and British history, sometimes without clear demarcation.

Lastly, the "Postcard Backs" introduction explains the value of reading the postcard notes as part of the postcard-object. This section applies critical theory to the experience of reading postcards, citing Jacques Derrida who "encourages us to read the two conflicting, yet resonating scenes — in our case, the Shakespeare image and the handwriting on the back — two sides of the postcards together" ("Postcard Backs"). The juxtaposition of the banality of the notes written on the postcards and the dramatic, sophisticated compositions of the photographs on the opposite side demonstrate the proliferation of Shakespeare in mass-produced commodities, and his integration into daily commercial life (fig. 2).

Figure 2 — Front (left) and back (right) of Lily Brayton postcard. The back reads 'Dear Winnie, Jones H at 4.15 will suit me beautifully, but as we are busy here I maybe a little late, but I shall be sure to come as soon after 4.15 as I can. Love in haste, Aggie, I suppose if it turns out very well you will not expect me.'

As such, the archive is useful for scholars interested in Victorian and Edwardian Anglo-American Shakespearean theater, materialist history praxis, economics and cultural exchange, and the role Shakespearean theater played in emerging 20th century industries including photography.

Across the top of the homepage are also four tabs, "The Postcards," "About," "Resources," and "Contact," each with nested topics. These tabs are direct links to the archival materials; to a comprehensive overview of the website's history and a simplified guide to navigating the website; to the archive bibliography and a selection of multimedia; and to further contacts, respectively. The postcards are accessed by selecting a player from the alphabetized index under "Players," or by selecting a play from "The Plays" and either the "Comedies," "Histories," or "Tragedies" genre. The plays are categorized and ordered in accordance with the First Folio (1623). Selecting a play to browse leads the user to a page that includes a plot summary quoted from the Folger Library and a tiled list of postcards. By selecting an individual postcard, the user can see the image in larger detail as part of a slideshow, with a caption in the lower left corner describing the object. The

images can be selected again to be viewed at their largest size. Not every postcard image has both a front and back, however, and the slideshow format does not allow the user to rotate images which were scanned and presented upside-down.

The archive allows users to navigate these topics in any order they choose, with each topic related to others through overlapping networks of knowledge rather than a linear chronology. When essays throughout the archive mention an actor, play, or specific event which appears elsewhere in the collection, the name is hyperlinked to take the user to the appropriate page on the website, demonstrating this web of interactivity (fig. 3).

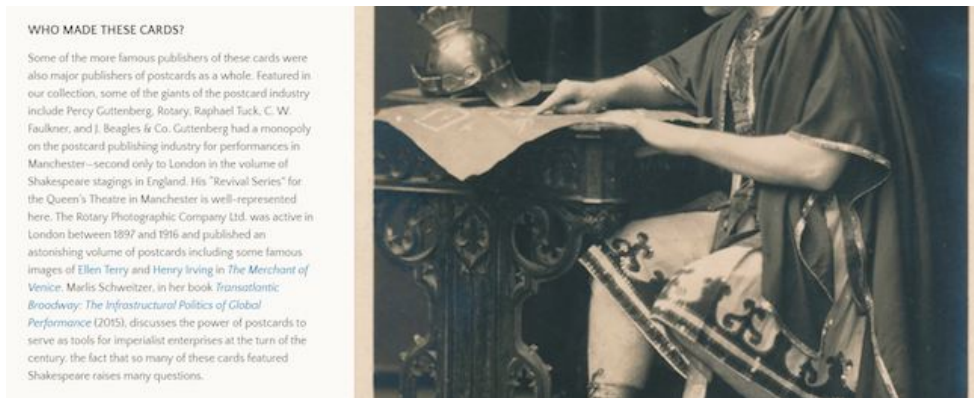

Figure 3 — Example of hyperlinking as a form of cross-reference within the archive

The archive's pedagogical capabilities could be expanded by strengthening its sense of time and geography. Sections such as "Moments of Note: The Players Onstage" provide summaries of historical moments in the United States and England that pertain to the collection. These summaries switch between American and British histories and individuals, however, making it difficult to identify the nationality of referenced subjects, or to establish a clear delineation between American historical and cultural contexts and British ones. The archive's emphasis on networks both in its own user interface and through its archived objects (the postcards) could be strengthened by providing a map to show the sites of postcards' origins and circulations. By providing tools for visualizing postcards' origins and movements, the archive could function as a pedagogical introduction for digital humanities projects on data visualization, mapping, and networking. Shakespeare and the Players demonstrates an impressive breadth of archival and pedagogical work conducted on a WordPress platform and interface through third-party plugins.

However, as an archive running on a WordPress platform, *Shakespeare and*

the Players does not have the same capabilities or fundamental digital tools available in other digital Shakespeare archives such as the Folger Library LUNA catalogue, MIT Global Shakespeare, or The Shakespeare Quartos Archive. These archives have a higher functionality for engaging with materials more rigorously through tools such as magnification and rotation buttons for closer examination, annotations functions, metadata indexes, side-by-side viewing, and the ability to create personal image portfolios. Nonetheless, *Shakespeare and the Players* effectively demonstrates that Shakespearean performance research can be conducted by examining Shakespeare ephemera, not only folio studies and recordings of performance, and that constructing archives can be done with basic tools.

Overall, Shakespeare appears throughout the archive as a subject in a historical commodity, with Shakespearean theater being the central means of engagement in a wider historical materialism. The postcards also demonstrate the role Shakespearean theater played in contemporary British and American theatrical landscapes, in set designs and performance aesthetics, and in the promotion of celebrity culture. The postcards also reveal material practices of exchange and collection that capitalize on the cards' value as "Shakespearean" items, thereby framing Shakespeare as a material asset. Finally, the archive highlights the value of Shakespeare and Shakespearean theater as potential sites of interest for students, and it provides resources for further investigation. Despite its functional limitations, *Shakespeare and the Players* offers a valuable contribution to pedagogy and a starting point for students working in varying disciplines, or in interdisciplinary modes. In the end, the archive's flexibility of use and breadth of topic render it easily adaptable into a wider array of curricula.

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Imagining Shakespeare's Wife: The Afterlife of Anne Hathaway by Katherine West Scheil. 294 pp. ISBN-10: 1108404065, ISBN-13: 978-1108404068. $19.95 (paperback); $89.99 (hardcover). Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Until Nicholas Rowe's *Some Account of the Life, etc. of Mr William Shakespear* in 1709, Anne Hathaway's existence was largely overlooked, with visitors to Stratford-upon-Avon "literally standing on her grave" to get a proper look at her husband's epitaph (Scheil, xx). Yet Rowe's simple mention of Shakespeare's "Wife" as "the Daughter of one *Hathaway*" sparked a desire to remember, restore and eventually re-imagine Anne's role within the Shakespeare story. Katherine West Scheil's book, *Imagining Shakespeare's Wife: The Afterlife of Anne Hathaway* (2018) is a long-awaited attempt to trace Anne's journey from her "discovery" in the early eighteenth century, right up to the present day. From her depiction in early published accounts of Shakespeare's life, to the "increasingly idealized portrait" (47) of Anne fostered by the Stratford-upon-Avon tourism industry, through to modern-day re-imaginings of Anne in fiction and biography, we see how the figure of "Shakespeare's Wife" has been remembered, crafted, and at times exploited, to coincide with "various social, political, and personal agendas" (xv). Underlying Scheil's work is the suggestion that "versions of Anne do not necessarily exist on a trajectory of female progress over time" (200), yet the many contrasting and conflicting Annes that have emerged all "resonate within their historical moments" (95). Anne's evolution from anonymous "Wife" to "global obsession" thus offers a barometer of "ideas about women, wives, marriage, artistic inspiration, domesticity, and sexuality" and how they "have shifted over the last few centuries" (xvi).

The book is divided into two parts, with both sections proceeding

chronologically through representative examples of Anne's cultural and literary afterlife. The first section, "Establishing Anne," traces the evolution of Anne Hathaway from a marginal (or altogether excluded) aspect of Shakespeare's biography to a fully-fledged character in the story of Shakespeare's Stratford years. This development, Scheil argues, is driven largely by a post-Romantic desire to "create a 'Shakespeare' who is a lover and a poet" (35). A "flesh-and-blood" Shakespeare thus emerges through increased interest in his real-life interactions, and becomes "accessible" through the material objects that are believed to have both shaped and been shaped by those experiences. The notorious bequest of the "second-best bed" is just the starting-point for Scheil's analysis of an array of domestic artefacts and "relics," including a wooden casket and "courting chair" (both carved with the initials W.A.S.), that have given Anne's role as Shakespeare's wife and lover both shape and validity. These items are presented as part of a much larger gamut of objects, fakes and forgeries that offer a vital conduit to Shakespeare "the man."

The eighteenth-century desire to revive the Shakespeare courtship and marriage develops in the nineteenth century into the wholesale enshrinement of Anne Hathaway's Cottage, onto which devotees have projected their desires and fantasies about the Bard as "wooer, lover and native English son" (49). The Cottage's location in the heart of the Warwickshire countryside served its purpose as "commemorative space" (xx) for also establishing memories of a pastoral "merry England," and Scheil usefully notes how this development coincided with the growth of English tourism and the development of the railways. Scheil's account illustrates the "immersive" nature of the experience, which ensured that the Cottage maintained an "indisputable claim over the physical space where Shakespeare's courtship took place" (64). Unlike other Shakespeare "shrines," however, the Cottage gave Anne a more prominent role in the Shakespeare story, which Scheil aligns with a growing "female investment" in Shakespeare. This investment is embodied by the work of Mary Baker: chief custodian of the Cottage for over seventy years until her death in 1899. Scheil also shows how the Cottage was mobilized for use in wartime propaganda, and has since become a portable "repository of myths of romantic love" (87) through a number of trans-Atlantic reproductions. Though the Cottage remains one of the least-changed of the Shakespeare monuments, Scheil's findings also show it to be a highly impressionable space through which Anne and her descendants have managed to assert their relevance and visibility for over two centuries.

The second section of the book, "Imagining Anne," explores Anne's textual afterlives, from early Shakespeare biographies to modern-day "biofiction." While Shakespeare's wife is an unavoidable part of the Shakespeare story, Scheil suggests that she has proven difficult to reconcile with the glamour and mystique suggested by Shakespeare's London years; an incompatibility that is largely to do with her "ordinariness" (96). Thus, in order for Shakespeare to pursue his alternative city-boy existence, biographers and fiction writers have been required to fashion Anne in ways that suggest a far less happy image than that of the devoted wife we see in the first half of the book. Though Anne's "stay-at-home" image maintained important currency during the first- and second-world wars, the latter halves of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed the growth of more unpleasant depictions of Anne, forging a reputation for her as shrewish, illiterate, nagging and sexually repulsive, leading biographers to speculate on Shakespeare's motives to play away from home. These developments also witnessed the births of numerous "anti-Annes" as more suitable candidates for the Bard's erotic muse. As Scheil notes, Annes from the 1960s, 70s and 80s are often working-class and "out of touch with Shakespeare's artistic life" (145), a major surprise given the growth of socialist feminism and women-centred studies of Shakespeare: "this was not necessarily an era of progressive Annes," Scheil quietly concedes (147). The texts covered in these final sections are selective, and span a range of fictional genres, from Anthony Burgess' highly-acclaimed *Nothing Like the Sun* (1964) to mainstream "popular" fiction, including the genres of historical romance and young adult fiction. Scheil highlights how, despite Anne's continued role as a "conduit" for accessing details of the Bard's life in modern fiction, modern fiction has also sought to reconcile prior understandings of Shakespeare's London years with Anne's "stay-at-home" role. "Millennial Annes" (such as Grace Tiffany's 2004 *Will*, for example) address the challenges faced by modern couples, and by presenting Anne as an intelligent and independent-minded woman, Scheil also shows how Anne's experiences might resonate with those of a twenty-first century, usually female, readership. Drawing from the comments of book reviewers and bloggers, Scheil also shows how social networking has helped to maintain Anne's circulation and relevance amongst diverse audiences from across the globe.

The distribution of materials across the two sections is pragmatic, though the presentation of chapter headings produces some unnecessary page clutter. The author also has a habit of concluding paragraphs with quotations, leaving some crucial matters unresolved.

While this is frustrating at times, it also serves to highlight the central idea of the book: "that Anne's afterlife is fluid, flexible, and adaptable" (103) and her character is ultimately unattainable. *Imagining Shakespeare's Wife* thus manages to address the developments and contradictions in Anne's story with subtlety and restraint, and Scheil's interdisciplinary approach provides insight into areas that are seldom traversed. As the female figures of history continue to gather the interest of authors, readers and scholars, Scheil's turn towards a silent and largely invisible female player in English literary history is both timely and significant, and the book's detailed Appendix should encourage readers to delve into this area in even further depth and detail.

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The Shakespeare User: Critical and Creative Appropriations in a Networked Culture by Valerie M. Fazel and Louise Geddes. 257 pp. ISBN 978-3-319-61015-3, ISBN 978-3-319-61014-6. $89.00 (ebook); $119.99 (hardcover). Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

The Shakespeare User, edited by Valerie M. Fazel and Louise Geddes, includes numerous references to Douglas Lanier's "Shakespearean Rhizomatics," but the following quotation from Lanier's article — appearing in Jennifer Holl's contribution "Shakespeare Fanboys and Fangirls and the Work of Play" — offers an introductory statement for the collection: "Shakespearean meaning" Lanier writes, "is available in the present only through processes of appropriation that actively create, rather than passively decode, the readings and values we attribute to the Shakespearean text" (Lanier 2014, 25). The emphasis on active creation over passive reception, on transformative dialogic relations — on flux and becoming — gives rise to the collection's central and titular figure, that of the "user."

The Shakespeare user may be a critic, a corporation, an internet enthusiast, or an algorithmic process. An actor among other actors, an individual agency within an animated network, the user often operates on the periphery of the academic or scholarly purview. The overarching mission of Fazel and Geddes' collection is fairly unified in theoretical terms (in addition to rhizomatic structures, Latour's suggestion to follow the actors — in this case users — is devotedly and systematically obeyed), but where the collection excels is in its individual explorations of some of the strangest, most intriguing, or most unexpected sites in which Shakespearean activity and creativity takes place. The collection is firmly engaged with the present, with what is unfolding — on the laptop screen or in the classroom — right

now.

Contributors examine social media, YouTube, online games, fanfiction, the bilingual classroom, the community outreach program, the corporate seminar, all of which emphasize experimental use of Shakespeare, and how this use takes part in a process of continual flux. The editors, discussing textual and cultural flux, explain that "digital culture allows us unprecedented access to this process as it occurs, animating Shakespeare and opening the Shakespeare network up to a variety of transformative practices" (7). Matthew Harrison and Michael Lutz head off the collection with a discussion of several mostly text-based game adaptations of *Hamlet*. Player choice and variability are of primary interest, especially when looking at games based specifically on *Hamlet*, whose protagonist is himself alienated by choice and action, freedom and constraint. Harrison and Lutz state "Videogames — and Hamlet games in particular — reconfigure the relation between the Shakespeare user and the Shakespeare network itself" (24).

From games, the collection branches into different forms of appropriation, and how they offer or question the legitimacy of Shakespeare's ubiquity in academia and other realms of education. Ruben Espinosa's "Beyond *The Tempest*: Language, Legitimacy, and La Frontera" focuses on Shakespeare's cultural currency for Latinxs, specifically those who live on the US-Mexico border and thus negotiate a fraught cultural, linguistic, and social identity. The problems of Shakespeare's assumedly universal accessibility similarly appear in Laura Estill's "Shakespeare and Disciplinarity," which focuses on Shakespeare references in "Non-Shakespearean yet academic use of Shakespeare" in venues such as the *Journal of Urology* (167). Shakespeare, when quoted out of context and in widely different fields, may seem like a kind of interdisciplinary lingua franca. As Estill explains, however, the assumption that everybody *gets it* is problematic: such use "bolsters Shakespeare's cultural capital" but also "reinforces English and Western hegemony" while further potentially compromising the objective discourse of scientific writing (182).

Also problematic is the appropriation of King Henry V as a model for Machiavellian corporate leadership. Nicole Edge's "Circum-Global Transmission of Value: Leveraging Henry V's Cultural Inheritance," looks at the Shakespeare user as the proverbial man. Looking at texts such as Norman Augustine and Kenneth Adelman's *Shakespeare in Charge: The Bard's Guide to Leading and Succeeding on the Business Stage*, Richard Olivier's *Inspirational Leadership: Timeless Lessons*

for Leaders from Shakespeare's Henry V, as well as Adelman's leadership seminar "Movers and Shakespeares," Edge argues that "the effect of mythologizing H5 as a successful leader has led to the selective uptake of *H5*/H5 to disseminate and reinforce business habits of speech and behaviors that privilege a commitment to end-goals and individual gain" (82).

A different kind of training, and different kind of manipulation, but a similar breach of ethics, finds its way into Courtney Lehmann and Geoffrey Way's "Young Turks or Corporate Clones? Cognitive Capitalism and the (Young) User in the Shakespearean Attention Economy" which examines youthful users of interactive digital content — online quizzes, language guides, pedagogical tools — provided by outreach groups such as Shakespeare's Globe Playground, Playing Shakespeare, or the RSC School's Broadcast program, while also turning its attention to the corporate values and consumer training possibly embedded by big business sponsors. Lehmann and Way question, without definitively rejecting, the presence of big-money in the arts.

The Shakespeare user's intersection with fan culture ties several other works in the collection together. Jennifer Holl, focusing on Shakespeare fanboy and cultural icon Joss Whedon's "fan film" version of *Much Ado About Nothing*, shot in his house with his actor friends. To Holl, Whedon's Shakespeare fan-boyishness "provides a particularly legible illustration of authority enacted through everyday fan-play," a form of play which, she argues, does important cultural work despite what may appear as unrefined exuberance (112). Novelist and critic Graham Holderness' "Shakespeare and the Undead" discusses what he labels as fan-fiction, such as *Black and Deep Desires: William Shakespeare Vampire Hunter*, or his own recent work *The Prince of Denmark* as works which offer their own form of creative criticism, injecting passion into "informed and judicious" academic objectivity (226). These fanfics "share a common concern to juxtapose wildly discrepant cultural materials into a heterogenous unity" (224).

A different form of fan and celeb culture finds its way into Stephen O'Neill's "Theorizing User Agency in YouTube Shakespeare," a portion of which is devoted to a kind of case study on the YouTube personality The Geeky Blonde, whose somewhat widely subscribed channel features commentaries and renditions of Shakespeare, as well as politically charged indictments of cyber bullying. In addition to the

idea that YouTube "extends the bardic function" (133) to potentially any user (with access to the internet), O'Neill is interested in YouTube itself as a user: the algorithmic functions invest the Shakespeare network with nonhuman agency, yet, as O'Neill explains, the machine can be just as socially or politically normative, as normatively compromised, as the human user. Eric Johnson's narration of his development of Open Source Shakespeare, for which he serves as director, also gestures toward the emergent possibilities of the communal platform.

Danielle Rosvally engages with the strangeness of a twenty-first century Shakespearean projection in the form of a social media presence. "The Haunted Network: Shakespeare's Digital Ghost" focuses on Twitter's @Shakespeare, a mysterious figure who interfaces with current events using Shakespearean quotations. To Rosvally, the participation of this ghost/construct in contemporary society works to "humanize the phantom of Shakespeare and allow users to align Shakespeare with their lived existence while simultaneously demonstrating Shakespeare's direct engagement with this user's present reality" (157). The notion of direct engagement, of two-way transformation via manipulation and creation, are fair points with which to conclude regarding this collection's portrayal of contemporary Shakespeare use as vital and thriving, especially in cultural and social sects which may have escaped prior academic notice.

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