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The Wooden O Symposium is a cross-disciplinary conference that explores Medieval and Renaissance studies through the text and performance of Shakespeare's plays. The symposium is held annually in August in Cedar City, Utah, and coincides with the Utah Shakespeare Festival's summer season. Plays from Shakespeare's canon are performed each summer in the Englestadt Shakespeare Theatre, a unique performance space modeled after the Globe Theatre, Shakespeare's own "Wooden O."

Richard's Body Politic: Disability and Ability in Shakespeare's Histories

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Richard III is Shakespeare's most famous disabled character, yet scholars cannot define his disability. Though he is hunchbacked, limps, and has a shriveled arm, he has no need for crutches, canes, or other prosthetics. Other than wanting a horse, he never shows any physical limitations, and, in battle, actually "enacts more wonders than a man" (*Richard III* 5.4.2).[1] His society does not suppress him either, despite the ableist slurs sometimes hurled at him. Richard thrives, in fact, overcoming his brothers and rapidly taking the throne. Even romantically, despite his insecurities, he triumphs; he admits he "[is] not made to court an amorous looking glass" (1.1.15), yet, in the following scene, Richard woos the widow of a man he murdered, over the corpse of her father-in-law, whom he's also murdered—an extraordinary accomplishment for even the best looking. His disabilities do not really disable him. For Abigail Comber, "this is why Richard is such a slippery character for disability studies to tackle…a hunchback, the text tells us, yes; but a disability, the text tells us, no."[2]

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Much scholarly ink has been spilled to explain this contradiction. The most popular readings frame Richard's disfigurement as immaterial, monstrous figuration, making the question of his impairment irrelevant. Dazzling the audience with spectacular freakishness, his body is only a symbol, externalizing both his personal immorality and the nation's decay. Richard becomes, then, what David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder call narrative prosthesis.[3] The term means that Richard's disability simply exists for narrative ease. Richard was born deformed, which portended evil to a medieval and early modern audience, giving Richard little choice to be anything but the villain, and necessitating the story crush his deviance. Though some readings, vested in Richard's humanity, partially attribute Richard's villainy to his society's stigma—because he's treated like a monster by his so*ciety, he becomes one, lashing out at his 'able' world*—Mitchell and Snyder claim this humanity is the result of narrative forces, not social ones; his disability is still immaterial, metaphorical, and necessary to prop up the narrative.[4] This Richard is cartoonish, simplistic, inhuman, and contrived. To question the reality of his impairments, then, is a red herring, invoking a humanity and reality that does not exist, and we have no reason to consider his bodily abnormality anymore.

When attempting to truly focus on Richard's disability, scholars attempt to justify his abilities. David Wood, for example, claims that Richard dominates his world through his ability to operate quickly, under the guise of the "tardiness" we would expect of a limping cripple.[5] Even Mitchell and Snyder, though seeing Richard as a relatively straightforward example of narrative prostheses, negotiate with Richard's power. They claim that Richard actually uses narrative prostheses for his own gain, redefining his deformities when convenient: "Richard's character fashions disability as a full-blown narrative device that accrues force for his own machinations."[6] Through accepting and using his body as a vehicle, he can make up tenors; his deformities

become 'evidence' for his own lies. For example, Richard accuses Hastings of having consorted with witches to curse him with a "blasted" arm, despite having directly referenced its congenital origin in an earlier play, and despite everyone onstage and in the audience knowing that.[7] Nevertheless, they execute Hastings as a traitor (*Richard III* 3.4). Katherine Schaap Williams, finally breaking down the restrictions between disability and ability that Richard defies, claims that Richard is a dismodern subject.[8] Dismodernism, a term invented by Lennard Davis, amplifies disability/ability's categorical malleability and uncertainty, and highlights every single body's dependence upon technology to function in a modern word.[9] Williams argues that Richard uses his bodily narratives as his own form of technology, enabling himself and allowing him to overpower others in his world. The other 'bodies' of the play lack the same technology, allowing Richard to overwhelm them. Though Williams admits she uses dismodernism with "deliberate anachronism," the term suits Richard's bizarre abilities, particularly when compared with the other bodies in his play.

We've moved completely from the discourse of disability to accommodate Richard. This gravitational effect pushes Jeffery Wilson to admit his "reluctance to embrace *disability* as a useful vocabulary for Shakespeare studies," not least because of his worries about anachronism.[10] He cites Davis as saying that "disability was not an operative category before the eighteenth century," and so was not a way in which Shakespeare thought about difference. Wilson argues that Williams, Comber, and other disability scholars can argue about the social stigmatization of physical difference, yet cannot acknowledge "the *identity* of the characters and people we identify as disabled" (my emphasis). Shakespeare's texts, in other words, cannot offer insight into disabled experience. Previous scholars' analyses of disability in Shakespeare can homogenize other forms of difference—like racial difference and even bastardy—with disability, an act that Wilson says

"can distort the concept of disability." The only thing to do, Wilson claims, is alter our framework to a theoretical one, which, "rather than using disability theory to read Shakespeare's texts…can use Shakespeare's texts to generate and support theories of disability." Wilson's subsequent theoretical argument focuses only on the uncertain creation and establishment of stigma—of those who are 'normal' and those who are not.

Wilson's suggestion of altering our analytical framework is a good one, but I think homogenizing disability with the language of stigma is too broad, and his theory doesn't test well on the complexity of Richard's world. Rather than continue analyzing the language of stigma, and maintaining the definitions that clearly demarcate Richard as an "other," I will expand upon William's dismodernist analysis by examining the bodies and texts that surround Richard. Disability-centric readings of Richard tend to treat all the bodies around him as if they're normal, and as if his body is abnormal. They also tend to focus almost entirely upon a single play: *The Tragedy of Richard III.* However, *Richard III* is not a stand-alone play, nor is Richard confined to a single play. *Richard III* is the last of the first tetralogy, and, when originally performed, these plays would have circulated in the repertory together; their boundaries are insecure. Characters spill over into various texts, and the plays are enmeshed in the same thematic projects; they blur together in our minds. As Jan Kott puts it, "when we read the Histories in their entirety, the faces of kings and usurpers become blurred, one after the other," showing the porousness of the plays' boundaries, their repetitive construction, and their unified thematic focus.[11] These histories all wrestle with the relationship of bodies, identity, and power. Both the plays' textual dependence upon one another and Richard's bizarre ability indicate that our focus should expand outward.

When looking at Richard exclusively, his deformities are inherently fluid and contradictory in their meanings. In this essay, though I consider why this is, I argue that Richard's

meanings crystallize into a nuanced bodily theory when we expand our view to look at the bodies and identities that surround him. These bodies follow the plays' primogenitary logic, and Richard, rather than deviating from those norms, perfectly demonstrates the history plays' primogenitary bodily ideal. Through his perfect demonstration, he becomes emblematic of the flaws of primogenitary patriarchy and its hypermasculinity. As part of his representation of that inherently flawed logic, Richard finally resembles both masculinity and femininity and female reproduction, and this gendered perspective reveals the uncanny "disability" of masculine, primogenitary monarchy.

Shakespeare's first tetralogy—comprising the first, second, and third parts of *Henry VI*—dramatizes the War of the Roses and its catastrophic effects on England. These plays are about the competition for power, and, because power transitions through monarchic succession, they are about primogeniture. Primogeniture stipulates the inheritance of property or title from fathers to first-born sons. Though it governed all the political relationships in early modern England, Shakespeare's treatment of power takes primogeniture to a patriarchal extreme. Royalty pass on identity, not merely power. Son's identities collapse with their father's; they're supposed to. The history plays trace out the logic of primogeniture, experimenting with the indistinguishable identities of fathers and sons, and creating masculine history and a particular bodily theory.

The paradigmatic template of this unity between fathers and sons occurs long before Richard III even appears, in the first part of *Henry VI*. John Talbot is a legendary English war hero; the mere sound of his name frightens away French soldiers, and his honor and heroism become a masculine foil to Joan la Pucelle's notoriety.[12] Talbot's masculine and violent legend repeats itself in Talbot's son (whom Shakespeare calls "Young Talbot"). They, fittingly, meet at the site of a battle the English are certain to lose, and immediately attempt to convince each other to flee.

Young Talbot: If death be so apparent, then both fly.
Talbot: And leave my followers here to fight and die?
My age was never tainted with such shame.
Young Talbot: And shall my youth be guilty of such blame?
No more can I be severed from your side
Than can yourself your self in twain divide.
Stay, go, do what you will: the like do I,
For live I will not if my father die. (*I Henry VI* 4.5.44-51)

All the Talbots' exchanges illustrate sameness. The meaning of what they say simply doesn't shift depending on who speaks; they invoke militaristic honor, pleading with one another. They complete each other's rhymes, and follow similar linguistic structures, as in their rhetorical questions and extraordinarily regular iambic meter. Their physical bodies are as repetitive as their language: "yourself your self." Just as a body "in twain dividing" cannot survive, both of them have to live, or die. They die. They can't live, because Talbot's honor forbids them from running. The Talbots become a perfect litmus test of masculinity and patriarchal primogeniture. Their inevitable self-destruction is perhaps a tragic stipulation of their hegemony, or, as the later plays show, a necessary result or construction. They establish a bodily theory of repetition and identity formation, even as that formation, crucially, impairs them. Yet Shakespeare's world founds its "logocentric, masculine historical record," as Phyllis Rackin calls it on the idea of them and their repeatable bodies.[13]

1 *Henry VI* also introduces a crucial problem with this system: the problem of women. Beyond Joan la Pucelle's threat to the Talbots' militaristic power, she contrasts primogeniture and the repetition of masculine identity. As the English lead Joan away to be burned at the stake, her father, a shepherd, appears. Though initially crying, "sweet daughter Joan, I'll die with thee" (5.6.6), within thirty lines, he tells the English to "burn her, burn her! Hanging is too good" (5.6.33). She denies that he is her father, calling him a "decrepit miser,

base ignoble wretch, / I am descended of a gentler blood" (5.6.7–8). Their identities do not intermingle in the ways the Talbots' do, obviously; instead, they despise each other. They very clearly have distinct identities. Their mutual rejection shows the devaluation of daughters in primogenitary systems, allowing them to be easily and unapologetically disposed of. However, this ostracization perhaps gives women the ability to alter their positions and move through this primogenitary world in ways the men cannot. Joan of Arc does not repeat the identity of her shepherd father, and so becomes a legendary individual, even if a demonic one. As an exception to primogeniture, she both suffers from it and circumvents it.

The plays that follow continue to test the "logic" of primogeniture, and we see precisely what occurs when primogenitary fathers and sons are separated. If Talbot and Young Talbot establish a template, wherein fathers and sons cannot exist without the other, the example of the similarly named Clifford and Young Clifford show us what happens when a father does die. Richard Duke of York (Richard III's father) kills Clifford, and Young Clifford has no purpose other than to avenge his father. He doesn't mourn—he just kills prolifically; "In cruelty I will seek out my fame" (2 *Henry VI* 5.3.60), he claims, and Shakespeare builds his character around this one trait. Even when Rutland, a child, begs for his life, pointing out that he himself has done nothing wrong, Clifford says, "Thy father slew my father, therefore die" (1.3.47). Through Clifford's logic, and, indeed, the norm of primogeniture, the child is his guilty father. We can see how awful and cruel Clifford is, but in terms of a primogenitary system, he acts logically. The Talbots and Cliffords show us how cruelly destructive a primogenitary system is to the bodies within it. *This* is the plays' normal way to speak about identity, bodies, and, seemingly, everything else.

Primogeniture is everywhere in these plays, even in the small comforts characters offer one another. When Richard's brother, Edward, dies, another character comforts his mother

by saying, "Drown desperate sorrow in dead Edward's grave / And plant your joys in living Edward's throne" (*Richard III* 2.2.99-100). One Edward might be dead, but another lives, and that living body can simply replace the one that came before. This system of patrilineality dominates the play, and identity is projected into the future rather than having inherent or individuated selfhood. But even beyond the system of bodily repetition, "plant your joys in living Edward's throne" represents emotions as living things, in the sense that they can be drowned or planted. "Planting joys" implies that joys are a living thing can have an endless growth; joy can affirm and reaffirm itself, growing outward, like a genealogical tree. Emotions, along with human identity, are metaphorically tied to outward growth. They repeat their branches over and over again to survive. So too do legends and truth. Richard's nephew, (living) Edward, tells him, "Methinks the truth should live from age to age, / As 'twere retailed to all posterity, / Even to the general all-ending day" (3.1.76-78). Edward claims that the recollection of a story can only repeat itself through its own kind of genealogical repetition. A person repeats a story to a young person, and that young person will repeat that story to their young person, et cetera. Such a relationship of stories through time gestures also to the continuity of history itself. Bodies and history are thought of in the same manner, and Shakespeare's depiction of history is considered quite negative. "Feudal history is like a great staircase on which there treads a constant procession of kings," Kott writes, highlighting the inherent generational turnover of this history.[14] Peter Smith calls this history "ruthless logic."[15]

Shakespeare's depiction of bodies repeating themselves expresses that negativity and ruthlessness, highlighting the plays' imperatives of reproduction. In *Richard III,* after killing his stepsister's children, Richard attempts to marry her remaining daughter. He says, "in your daughter's womb I bury [your dead children], / Where, in that nest of spicery,

they will breed / Selves of themselves, to your recomforture" (4.4.423-425). Though her former children's bodies might be dead, primogeniture makes their identity continue, and living bodies can simply replace the ones that came before. All the names of the male family members represent this bodily process, in fact: Henry IV is Henry V is Henry VI, Richards are Richards, Edwards are Edwards. This repetition makes the boundaries between living and dying insecure. Bodies are expendable and replaceable because they exist simply to propagate and repeat themselves. These characters live for the past and the future, and the present is lost; they care more about lineages over time than about individuals, so individuals can fall into destructive patterns.

Richard, though pointing out this problem, is not the exception to the 'norm' of primogeniture. Rather, he's the culmination of the royal family's patriarchal influences. He is hypermasculine in the Talbots' destructive, warlike sense, and brutally kills both fathers and sons, like Clifford. The masculine members of the royal family, across the War of the Roses' "sides," resemble one another; they all descend from the same patriarch. And, oddly enough or not oddly at all, Richard greatly resembles his own father, sharing his name and his key attributes.

Richard Duke of York is Richard's father. Richard III's performativity and rhetorical excellence germinates from Richard Duke of York's speeches, and we can interpret a lot from the fact that Richard is York's third son, not his first. This is not simply a violation of how primogeniture 'should' operate. Richard Duke of York began the War of the Roses in the first place, attempting to replace Henry VI. A younger brother challenging an 'older' male relative is Richard III's story also; he crushes his two older brothers to become king. Richard III seems to simply take Richard Duke of York's Machiavellian tendencies to an extreme. Before he's killed by the Lancastrians, Richard Duke of York says, "My ashes, as the phoenix, may bring forth / A bird that will revenge

upon you all" (*III Henry VI* 1.4.36–37). "A bird that will revenge upon you all" is Richard III—he eventually wipes out a majority of both the Lancastrians and, ironically, the Yorks. Richard Duke of York's curse creates this bird, and, crucially, he creates the bird from himself. Phoenixes are the exact same bird, repeated endlessly through time.

When finally ascending to the throne, Richard is said to physically resemble Richard Duke of York. Further, Richard's tyranny follows his father's pattern: before killing Richard Duke of York, Young Clifford says, "Now Phaëton hath tumbled from his car, / And made an evening at noontide prick" (1.4.34–35). The tendency for members of the royal family to rapidly self-destruct after brilliant action is not unheard of in this family. Richard III, like his father, and even like his Lancastrian enemy, Clifford, blazes out extremely quickly and destructively. Richard rules for only about two acts of his play before he's usurped. Richard's traits are not original to him.

Physically, Richard resembles his father, pushing his body into the plays' bodily normalcy. When announcing Richard's kingship, Buckingham claims, "Withal I did infer your lineaments, / Being the right idea of your father / Both in your form and nobleness of mind" in order to convince the public of his fitness to rule and of his similarity to his father (*Richard III* 3.7.12–14). The likening of Richard to Richard through physical form and nobility glosses away his bodily difference. Their likeness serves a propagandistic purpose and normalizes Richard, turning his body into a symbol of patriarchal lineage—a bit like the other male bodies that surround him.

If Richard so perfectly presents primogeniture, what to make of Richard's deformities becomes still trickier. The point of Richard's body seems to precisely be that he doesn't look like his father, or any other previous generation of the Yorks. He seems to contrast primogeniture's bodily repetition and its backwards/forwards focus. When he says his infamous

line—"Now is the winter of our discontent / Made glorious summer by this son of York" (*Richard III* 1.1.1–2)—he shifts the plays' temporality. No longer are we focusing on the repetitive history of part one, part two, part three of *Henry VI*, or the future of a lineage, but the temporal "now." He needs no introduction—his body seems to give him individuality and uniqueness—he's cruel and awful, but he's kind of refreshing. His performativity alleviates a playgoer's discontent with the previous three plays with, finally, something enticing. He is self-centered; he's alive. To combat primogeniture's paradigm, he scours away entire lineages, killing children and his family, and claiming to "have no father" and be "like no father" (5.6.80). He desires to be an individual, closed off from the family and world around him, maintaining his body as his *own* figure.

Today, the idea that our bodies are neat containers closed off from the world that surrounds us is not bizarre. However, early modern conceptions of health and bodies generally saw physicality as more porous, their humors influenced and mediated by environment. The body was a "semipermeable, irrigated container."[16] The abject horror of bodies' permeability, invoked by the permeation of our bodies by outside influences, is a frequent aspect of modern horror stories, as outlined by Julia Kristeva.[17] Richard's character seems to feel that horror in this way—a way familiar to our contemporary sensibilities—and wishes to separate himself from the influences of his family. The rest of Richard III's royal family does not seem to hold the same fear of the abject that Richard does. If he is indeed disabled, this is perhaps why—he desires a wholly individuated selfhood, but he is the complete expression of the opposite, expressing perfectly the primogenitary ties to both his father and the other male members of his family.

Richard also seems to understand the innate dependence of primogeniture upon reproduction, and so primogeniture's dependence upon women. Ian Moulton claims that, in

Richard III, "masculine aggression runs rampant in the figure of Richard" as he "refuses to subordinate himself to traditional patriarchal power structures and lines of succession;" Moulton defines Richard's monstrosity and deformities around that masculinity.[18] Though I would contest the uniqueness Moulton grants Richard, there is no doubt that Richard resents women, calling Margaret a "withered hag" (*Richard III* 1.3.235), resenting the injustice of "when men are ruled by women" (1.1.62), and calling Edward's wife a "monstrous witch" (3.4.70), blaming her for his deformities. Richard's hatred of women is perhaps exacerbated by his mother's connection to his deformities; in early modern times it was thought that pregnant women's imagination or posture could warp and deform their fetuses.[19] Richard's deformity is perhaps the innate expression of the femininity primogeniture depends upon. Women are a "corruption" and a problem to this system, and Richard might externalize that innate problem within the patriarchy.

Despite his blatant misogyny and his hypermasculinity, however, Richard resembles women. The multitude of scenes where women speak with one another, lamenting the loss of their husbands and sons, speaks simultaneously to the simple truth that a patrilineal system is inherently dependent on female subjects to exist, which can introduce 'corruptions' to the male copies, and to the mysterious identities of these women. Margaret, who lives for four plays and sees her entire family killed around her, has a ghostly return to *Richard III*. For roughly fifty lines of dialogue in Act 1, Scene 3, she enters, speaks in asides and is unnoticed by the men onstage. In the periphery, she curses them and their family, and when she reveals herself, Richard says, "Foul wrinkled witch, what mak'st thou in my sight?" (1.3.164). She responds, "But repetition of what thou hast marred" (165). Her curses can only follow in the strain of what has occurred to her own family; this repetition is an indication of the prevalence of patrilineal thought. However, her body onstage, despite

her irrelevance in a patrilineal system, offers an immediate critique of the system, like Richard's uniqueness does. Garland-Thomson writes, "the exceptional body…exists in a realm of hyper-representation."[20] What renders a body "exceptional" is the institutions in which it is contained, and we cannot separate ourselves from Richard's exceptionality, despite the evidence which encourages us to think otherwise. Garland-Thomson's work on the similarities between feminist and disability theory help explain why Richard's soliloquys and Margaret's asides seem to offer an extraordinary bodily contrast to the accepted patrilineal method, even as women necessarily participate within it. Female bodies, further, are accented in their deviance as Richard progressively wipes out more and more of the male lines. In 4.4, Margaret, Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York all discuss their killed families until Richard enters the scene as one of the last remaining men in the family. Those who remain after the violence have uniquely female and/or deformed bodies, and so come to somewhat resemble one another.

Richard resembles femininity in other ways. In 3 *Henry VI*, he decides, "I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall" (3.2.186). The combination of the simultaneously nonhuman and feminine body of mermaids and their ability to convince men to drown themselves, speaks to Richard's own unusual body, but also his ability to entice and convince others to follow him blindly. Hastings expresses confidence in Richard's affection; "I thank his grace. I know he loves me well" (3.4.14). In the same scene, Richard calls Hastings a traitor, and demands that he be executed (3.4.75-76). Hastings then laments, "Who builds his hope in air of your good looks / Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast, Ready with every nod to tumble down / Into the fatal bowels of the deep" (3.4.98-101). A wild misreading of Richard's "good looks" towards him results in Hastings dying or drowning. This repetition of the metaphor speaks to Richard's enticing bodily power.

Richard both dissolves and resembles the reproductive aspects of primogeniture. As Williams argues, Richard enables himself through propagandistically reframing the narratives attached to his body and the stories of those who surround him, using his body as political technology.[21] The interplay of his body and his treatment of history is likened to the sea and drowning; he contains the history and bodies that preceded him, which perhaps explains his body's "deep bosom" (*Richard III* 1.1.4). George, Richard's brother, has a nightmare in which

> [Richard] stumbled, and in falling
> Struck me (That thought to stay him) overboard
> Into the tumbling billows of the main.
> O Lord, methought what pain it was to drown…
> What sights of ugly death within mine eyes.
> Methoughts I saw a thousand fearful wracks,
> A thousand men that fishes gnawed upon…
> (*Richard III* 1.4.18–21, 23–25)

George, seeing so many strewn bodies across the seabed, sees Richard. Richard, who likens himself to the god of the sea and the sea itself at times, consumes and drowns the bodies that he has killed, including his brothers'. Richard's body, then, is a demonstration of all the bodies that are within him, and all of the bodies that had to build up for him to become powerful in the first place. The bodies of his direct family and the "thousands" that have died in the War of Roses reside within him, like a container, or like the wombs/tombs of the women in his family. Rackin describes women as the "anti-historians" of the history plays; they "threaten to obstruct those [masculine historical] projects," and "historiography itself becomes problematic…[that is] always subject to erasure."[22] Richard does the exact same work that Rackin's anti-historians—Shakespeare's women—do, erasing and eradicating both history and historiography.

Yet, before Richard dies, the plays that precede *Richard III* are spat out again. The ghosts of the people he's killed—Henry VI, his brothers, his brothers' children—

return to haunt him, cursing him to "despair and die" over and over again. When he wakes, afraid, his identity becomes muddled, de-individuated: "What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by. / Richard loves Richard; that is, I and I. / Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am. / Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why— / Lest I revenge, What myself upon myself?" (5.3.183–188). The distinction between himself and the people he's betrayed, and his father, leads him into this confusing dialogue with himself, pushing us to understand that he is indistinguishable from the family that he's betrayed. They're all within him, in his body—"breeding selves of themselves." Richard then becomes an expression of patriarchy, primogeniture, reproduction, and femininity; traits that seem to contradict one another, but which are married together within Richard's figuration and character. This deconstructive symbolism damages the theory of bodily wholeness and patriarchy that the Talbots initially outline.

Most disability scholars seem to accept that Richmond cleans the stage of Richard, correcting his abnormality, and ridding the narrative of its prosthetic. However, the point that Richard has made through his figuration and ability is not so easily wiped offstage. Richard's uniqueness among his family tree, as his family's scourge and yet also their reflection, still stands out as individual and dangerous; he was a comment and commenter upon a normative system, and a family's self-examination. If carrying on kingship through children was never a motive for Richard to begin with, this play was perhaps the ultimate example of non-normative success. Richard is a dominating, enabled force throughout this play, and his character is more enticing, unique, and brief than the ones that came before him. Shakespeare's text cannot perhaps be separated from its dependence upon narrative prosthesis, but it can offer this strange idea of success, and offer a unique bodily metaphor that reflects a very flawed family and a very flawed way of thinking about bodies.

We reflexively place Richard on the "disabled" side of an "disable/able" dichotomy, and all the aesthetically 'normal' bodies on the other. The appearance of bodily difference deceives us. Richard encapsulates and demonstrates the powers and traits of his own father and his family, and becomes the expression of primogeniture's poetics. He can't rebel against that norm, because he is the most extreme form, the culmination, of the history plays' definition of normal (and able) bodies and minds. He's a monster because he warps the natural principle to display the monstrosity of the principle to itself. (The term "monster" comes from the root "montre", which means to show—it shares a root with the word "demonstrate".) If Richard is disabled, it's not because he differs from the norm, but rather because he embodies it and, more importantly, demonstrates it, even though he doesn't want to. This is precisely Shakespeare's point; the poetic completion of primogeniture is horrific. This tetralogy is a devolution or evolution into primogeniture's logical conclusion, and that is Richard. The fact that this looks monstrous expresses the monstrosity of the hegemonic principle.

Notes

1. All references to these plays use *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare,* ed. Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller (New York: Penguin Books, 2002).

2. Abigail Comber, "A Medieval King 'Disabled' by an Early Modern Construct: A Contextual Examination of *Richard III,*" in *Disability in the Middle Ages: Reconsiderations and Reverberations*, ed. Joshua R. Eyler (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 191.

3. David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

4. See Mitchell and Snyder, Abigail Comber, and Katherine Schaap Williams for some of these. Also see Stephen Greenblatt's *Tyrant*; his propagation of this idea to a nonacademic audience speaks to the broad acceptance of this idea about Richard's body.

5. David Wood, "New Directions: 'Some Tardy Cripple': Timing Disability in Richard III," in *Richard III: A Critical Reader, ed. Annaliese Connolly and Lisa Hopkins* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2013), 91–107.

6. Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis,* 103.

7. "Love foreswore me in my mother's womb…She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe / To shrink mine arm up like a withered shrub" (*III Henry VI* 3.2.153, 155-156).

8. Katherine Schaap Williams, "Enabling Richard: The Rhetoric of Disability in Richard III," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 29.4 (2009).

9. Lennard Davis, *Bending Over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism, and Other Difficult Positions* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

10. Jeffery Wilson, "The Trouble with Disability in Shakespeare Studies," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 37.2 (2017).

11. Jan Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary,* trans. Boleslaw Toborski (United States: Double & Company, 1965),7.

12. English soldier: "The cry of 'Talbot' serves me for a sword, / For I have loaden me with many spoils / Using no other weapon but his name" (2.1.81–83).

13. Phyllis Rackin, "Anti-historians: Women's Roles in Shakespeare's Histories," *Theatre Journal* 37.3 (1985): 329.

14. Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary,* 8.

15. Peter Smith, "The Critical Backstory," in *Richard III: A Critical Reader, ed. Annaliese Connolly and Lisa Hopkins* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2013), 37.

16. John Donne, *The Sermons of John Donne,* ed. George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson, 10 vols (Berkeley and Los Angeles, U of California Press, 1959), 4.337.

17. Julia Kristeva, "Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection," trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

18. Ian Moulton, "'A Monster Great Deformed': The Unruly Masculinity of Richard III," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47.3 (1996): 255.

19. See Ambroise Pare, *On Monsters and Marvels,* trans. Janis L. Pallister (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 3-5 and 38-42.

20. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Introduction: From Wonder to Error—A Genealogy of Freak Discourse in Modernity," in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 3.

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22. Rackin, "Anti-historians: Women's Roles in Shakespeare's Histories," 330.

The Consistency of the Context: Texts and Contexts of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*

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Falstaff plays such a prominent role in 1 and 2 *Henry IV* and the *Merry Wives of Windsor,* that one might call the plays a "Falstaff Trilogy." His popularity with audiences led to a promise at the end of 2 *Henry IV* that he would reappear in *Henry V.* However, when reading the texts of this "trilogy," loose ends abound. Inconsistencies exist in time, place, and characters, especially when attempting to place *Merry Wives* within the textual framework of 1 and 2 *Henry IV.*

The chronology and order of composition must play some part in these inconsistencies. Traditionally, scholars place the Falstaff plays within 1596-1598. According to many, the order of composition is as follows: Shakespeare began 2 *Henry IV* while writing 1 *Henry IV* and *Merry Wives,* and then finished 2 *Henry IV.* A widely accepted (but contested) view is that *Merry Wives* was an intrusion between 1 and 2 requested (or commanded) for entertainment at the 1597 Garter festivities, when George Carey, patron of

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Shakespeare's company, was invested with the Garter. Others suggest that *Merry Wives* was written later, sometime around 1599-1601.[1]

Nonetheless, let us look at an interesting change in Falstaff's circle between part 1 and part 2 *Henry IV.* In part 1, his immediate circle includes Peto, Bardolph, and Mistress Quickly of the Boar's Head Tavern. In part 2 that circle expands to include Pistol, Nym, Doll Tearsheet, and Falstaff's page. Here too, we meet Falstaff's gull, Justice Shallow, who is sent to the Fleet with Falstaff at the end of the play. These additional members of Falstaff's circle in 2 *Henry IV* and *Henry V* first appear in *Merry Wives,* the play believed to be written between the two *Henry IV* plays. The appearance of these characters suggests that *Merry Wives* did influence 2 *Henry IV.* In *Henry V* Shallow is gone, but so too is Peto. And except for Pistol, who returns to England to be a thief, Falstaff and his entire circle are killed off.

Consensus assumes an ur-*Merry Wives* probably was written for the 1597 Garter Feast, and revised, and perhaps re-revised, around 1600-1602 resulting in the quarto version of 1602 and the later *First Folio* version of 1623. The fact that Falstaff originally was called Sir John Oldcastle further suggests an ur-version for the 1597 Garter Feast. Oldcastle was an ancestor of William and Henry Brooke, Lords Cobham, both of whom were rivals at Court not only of the earls of Essex and Southampton but also of George Carey, the legal patron of the Chamberlain's Men. Essex and Southampton seem to have equated Falstaff with Henry Brooke.[2] The fact that Master Ford masquerades as Master Brook may be yet another poke at the Brookes. Like Master Ford, Henry Brooke was known to have an unreasonable and hair-trigger temper. Either the printer or Shakespeare's partners avoided a possible connection when "Master Brook" was changed to "Master Broome" in the *First Folio*.[3]

Falstaff's character in *Merry Wives* differs from the Falstaff of 1 and 2 *Henry IV.* He still is a rogue, but a stupid, not

a crafty rogue. Why did Shakespeare lack consistency of character for this audience pleaser? He certainly maintained consistency when crafting Margaret of Anjou as a "she-wolf of France" for the sequence of 2 and 3 *Henry VI* and *Richard III.* Mistress Quickly, Bardolph, Pistol, Nym, and Justice Shallow also are different from how they are portrayed in the histories. If, as is surmised, Shakespeare revised an earlier version of *Merry Wives* after he had completed 1 and 2 *Henry IV* and *Henry V,* why are there such inconsistencies in characters? And it is almost impossible to determine "what time it is" in *Merry Wives.* Is this an episode from the reign of Henry IV, or Henry V? Is this before he collaborated with Shallow to recruit sub-standard soldiers, or after they were jailed at the end of 2 *Henry IV*? The *Merry Wives* of the *First Folio* even seems to create a time warp by placing the action 250 years in the future when a queen is on the throne.[4]

Performance circumstances may help explain these inconsistencies. If originally designed as a one-time performance for the Garter feast, all that is necessary for that circumstance is continuous comedy. One need not worry that in this play Falstaff and Mistress Quickly do not know one another, nor that Quickly is transformed from the hostess of London's Boar's Head Tavern into the housekeeper of a French doctor in Windsor. One need not worry whether Henry IV or Henry V, or indeed a queen is on the throne (5.5.46). One *does* need to increase Falstaff's circle of rogues to give parts to actors who in the histories would be playing lords, soldiers, etc. One does need to create a Master Ford for a tragedian-specialist's role in a comedy. But one need not worry about whether this play was consistent with the 1 *Henry IV* on the public stage. Lords at the Garter performance would not care about consistency; some probably would not have seen the play.

But an astute actor-author, would observe the impact upon the aristocratic audience of the new characters added to Falstaff's circle. Why not write them into the

forthcoming *Henry IV*? And if the characters from *Merry Wives* are somewhat different when they appear in 2 *Henry IV,* why would that matter? The public did not see their first incarnation. What I am suggesting is that the Garter *Merry Wives* may have served as a "pilot" for the low-comedy figures in 2 *Henry IV* meant for the public stage.

But our two extant texts of *Merry Wives* differ. The length of the quarto version is only about half that of the *First Folio.* Some suggest the quarto is close to the 1597 Garter performance; some assert it is a pirated, "bad quarto." Both opinions concur the play was revised around 1599-1602 for the public.[5] The *First Folio* version, however, differs from the quarto in the delineation of the characters Parson Hugh Evans and Abraham Slender, in the addition of the "Little William" scene, and in the almost total destruction at the end of the play of Falstaff's image as a resilient, likable rogue. Performance circumstances—what I call the consistency of the context—may give clues here.

Around 1599-1600, playwrights virtually ceased writing and presenting English history plays—probably due to backlash from the Essex episode. If we take Shakespeare's plays, the loss to the Chamberlain's Men of his histories amounts to 45% of his repertory. In Henslowe's Diary a similar hole is seen in the repertory of the Admiral's Men. This led Shakespeare and his contemporaries to produce new plays rapidly, and revise old ones. We know Shakespeare revised or rewrote an ur-*Hamlet* and a new version of the King Lear legend.[6] Such circumstances also suggest probable revision of a one-time Garter performance into a timelessly indeterminate, and relatively apolitical, comedy for the public stage.

The *Folio* script represents yet another performance circumstance—Will Kemp had left the Chamberlain's Men, and, it seems possible, the new Blackfriars Boys had pirated, and presented, a version of *Merry Wives* before the Chamberlain's Men had gotten it on stage. Terry P. Morris

has shown how the *Folio* text revises the quarto version to mock the two theatrical personalities most likely responsible, Henry Evans, director of the Blackfriars Boys, and Ben Jonson, lately of the Chamberlain's Men, but now an undermaster at Blackfriars.[7]

Morris shows clear links between the *character* Sir Hugh Evans, the Welsh parson in the play, and the *real* Henry Evans, Welsh scrivener and Blackfriars theater entrepreneur. On December 13, 1600, a Blackfriars deputy impressed and carried off to Blackfriars, Thomas, only son of Henry Clifton, Esquire, from Norfolk. Ostensibly, the impressment was to add to the boys' choir and acting company; in reality it probably was to extort money from his parent. Clifton appealed to the Privy Council, and the case ended up in the Star Chamber. Evans was censured and forced to hide his investments in the Blackfriars Boys, withdraw from active participation in the company, and leave London for the space of at least one year.[8]

In the first scene of the *Folio Merry Wives* we are introduced to Parson Hugh Evans who tries to persuade Justice Shallow not to make it "a Star Chamber matter," because Falstaff had poached a deer (1.1.1-41). The attempts of Parson Evans to avert "a Star Chamber matter" may well be a reminder to the audience of Henry Evans's troubles over the Clifton affair, which *was* a Star Chamber matter, rather than an allusion to a deer-poaching incident in Shakespeare's youth. Abraham Slender's last line in *Folio* version, bewailing that he thought he had carried off Anne Page but it turned out to be "a great lubberly boy… a postmaster's boy,"—an identification reiterated eleven lines later—may be yet another allusion (5.5.184, 188, 199). There *is* evidence that Henry Clifton, Esquire, may have been a master of the posts.[9] That specific information is lacking in the quarto. Slender simply says: "Why so God saue me, tis a boy that I haue."[10]

Further details in the *First Folio* version identify Parson Evans with Henry Evans. In Act III, Parson Evans shows his

singing ability with a fractured version of Marlowe's *Come Live With Me and Be My Love* and Psalm 137. The singing Welsh Parson, Hugh Evans, might just remind those in the audience of the *real* Welsh scrivener Henry Evans, who technically was choirmaster for the Blackfriars Boys. Act IV, scene I, again found only in the *Folio*, presents Parson Evans as young William Page's schoolmaster. He quizzes William on his Latin. The reason William is not in school is because "Master Slender is let the boyes leave to play." We now have Parson Evans as a schoolmaster, and a songmaster, functions that were among Henry Evans's responsibilities for the Blackfriars Boys, and here it suddenly pops up that Abraham Slender is his under-master, just as Ben Jonson served undermaster for Henry Evans at Blackfriars. There is no such link between the two characters in the quarto, and nowhere else in the *Folio* is there reference to Evans and Slender as colleagues. The "Little William" scene serves no furthering of the plot. Coming as it does in Act IV, scene 1, it serves to nail down the previous clues Shakespeare has planted in the audience's mind identifying not only Parson Hugh Evans as Henry Evans, but also Abraham Slender as Ben Jonson. And the "Little William" scene may be a theatrical in-joke, referring to Jonson's famous line that Shakespeare "hadst small Latin and less Greek." The scene has bewildered commentators as to its dramatic purpose, and consistency within the script. But if seen against a backdrop of theatre-goers aware of theatrical personalities, the performance serves to poke fun at Ben Jonson and his pretensions, much as Kaufman's *The Man Who Came to Dinner* was an in-joke to 1930s New York theatre-goers. It would be especially ironic, if, as I suspect, the character fracturing Latin into bawdy English Mistress Quickly, was played by William Shakespeare.[11]

In *The Return from Parnassus: or the Scourge of Simony,* a play written and performed by Cambridge University students in 1602, the character Will Kempe, referring to Ben Jonson, states: "Shakespeare hath given him a purge

that made him bewray his credit."[12] The play appeared during the so-called "War of the Theatres," when Jonson, Dekker, Marston, and others were satirizing the writings and *personae* of other playwrights.[13] Shakespeare seems to allude to the "war" in *Hamlet* through lines exchanged between Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (2. 2.362-69). Kempe's line in *Parnassus* implies that Shakespeare, like Dekker and Marston, publically satirized Jonson, but there is no hint as to where he did it.[14]

Slender is a character appearing only in *Merry Wives.* Unlike Justice Shallow and Falstaff's entourage, Slender does not appear in 2 *Henry IV.* His role in the *First Folio* version considerably expands the role found in the 1602 quarto, and several aspects of Slender's character seem direct parallels to Ben Jonson's life—Jonson's physical appearance, his drinking, dueling, involvement in the 1597 play *The Isle of Dogs,* and his plays *Every Man in* (and *Out of*) *His Humor.*

The name Slender itself hints at the comments by rival playwrights on Jonson's thinness; Dekker called him "a raw-boned anatomy."[15] In the very first scene of the play Bardolph and Pistol describe Slender as a "Banbery Cheese" and a "Latine Bilboe"—Banbury cheese is noted for its thinness, latine [latten] refers to a thin sheet of metal and bilbo to a thin sword. Jonson's drinking was common gossip. Aubrey wrote Jonson was known to "exceed in drinke," and "tooke too much [wine] before he went to bed, if not oftner and soner."[16] Drummond wrote that Jonson told him his pocket was picked by a man "who drank him drousie."[17] Slender complains that Bardolph, Pistol and Nym got him drunk and picked his pocket (1.1.123-26).

Jonson bragged of dueling when he was in service in the Netherlands, and in 1598 he had pled "clergy" when tried for killing the actor Gabriel Spencer in a duel in which Jonson was injured.[18] Slender brags to Anne Page that he bruised his shin while "playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence." He ends the speech with the seemingly

unconnected and curious lines: "I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since. Why do your dogs bark so, be there bears i' the town?" (1.1.264). *But* are they unconnected? Jonson only escaped being hanged for Spencer's death by the arcane, technical plea of "benefit of clergy." He could read a passage in Latin, hence was not subject to temporal law. But he was branded on his thumb. Hence "the smell of hot meat" is connected to a duel. I can imagine the actor raising a thumb when delivering the line. And what about barking dogs and bears? That reference conjures up images of bear-baiting. In 1595 the Paris Gardens, famous as a bear-baiting arena, was reconstituted as the Swan Theatre. In July, 1597, the staging there of *The Isle of Dogs,* a play by Thomas Nashe and Ben Jonson, offended the Privy Council. All the London theatres were closed down, every copy of the play was confiscated and destroyed, and Ben Jonson and two of the principal actors were jailed. References to the incident frequently appear in rival playwrights' jibes against Jonson.[19] A few lines later the Paris Garden/Swan Theatre allusions are reinforced when Slender brags to Anne that he has been with the famous bear Sackerson 20 times when the bear was loose, and that he also has led him about by his chain.[20] Then, as mentioned above in the "Little William" scene where he associates Parson Evans with Slender as the under schoolmaster who has "let the boyes leave to play," Shakespeare puts the capstone on the identification of Parson Evans with Henry Evans and Slender with Ben Jonson, and cements it in place with the last scene where the parson directs the boys in the fairy masque and Slender has carried off the postmaster's boy.

And a reexamination of lines peculiar to the *Folio* in the opening scene suggests that Shallow's deer-poaching speech may *not* be an allusion to a supposed deer-poaching involving Shakespeare and Sir Thomas Lucy, but yet another allusion to Jonson.

> *Slender:* All his successors (gone before him) hath done't: and all his Ancestors (that come after

him) may: they may give the dozen white Luces in their Coate.
Shallow: It is an olde Coate.
Evans: The dozen white louses do become an old coat well (1.1.14-21).

Sir Thomas Lucy's Coat of Arms included three luces (pike fish), and the word "luces" delivered in a Welsh accent might sound like "louses." Samual Schoenbaum debunks the hoary tradition that the luce/louse lines are allusions to Sir Thomas Lucy, pointing out that there is no documentation about Shakespeare deer-poaching and no evidence of his ill-will towards the Lucy family. Schoenbaum observes: "If this is what the passage in the play is about, Shakespeare, a decade or more after the event, is taking an obscurely allusive revenge upon the county justice." Yet he also writes: "Still, the opening lines of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* are clearly allusive." Leslie Hotson also suggests that the lines might be satirical allusions, but rejects Sir Thomas as Shakespeare's target. Hotson opines that if the lines were meant as an allusion, they referred to William Gardiner, a corrupt Justice of the Peace, whose Arms also included luces.[21]

Yet there is another allusion unconnected to Warwickshire politics that these lines may well have. Among many anecdotes about Ben Jonson is one in which an old cloak he had borrowed was returned to its owner full of lice. The comic Welsh dialect of Sir Hugh Evans turns Shallow's "luces," into a lousy "old Coat." Hence, the entire exchange of luces and louses may only be an in-joke about Jonson returning a lousy cloak.[22] It is Slender, after all, that first brings up the topic of the luces and the coat (1.1.14-16).

The ending of *Merry Wives* in the *Folio* sets a different tone from the play's ending in the quarto. In the quarto, after Falstaff has been shamed by the boys dressed as fairies, Mistress Ford tells her husband to "Forgiue that sum [£ 20 that Falstaff had "borrowed"]." And Master Ford says to Falstaff, "Well here is my hand, all's forgiuen at last." In the

last speech of the play when he says, "All parties pleased, now let vs in to feast," it seems implied that Falstaff is to be included in the party.[23] In the *Folio*, by contrast, there is a devastating catalogue of Falstaff's iniquities. Master Ford demands repayment, saying "I think to repay that money will be a biting affliction," and that every one will go to their homes "And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire…" Falstaff is invited to dine with Master Page, but the overall impression at the end of the play is that Falstaff is a broken man (5.5.135-71).

These differences may be explained by the consistency of the context. The *Folio* most likely is a revision of *Merry Wives* done after Kemp had left the Chamberlain's Men. If, as seems plausible, Kemp played Falstaff, further appearances of the fat knight must be choked off. They are in *Henry V.* The epilogue of 2 *Henry IV* promises Falstaff's death in *Henry V,* implying his presence. That promise is not met. Falstaff's death is described in a short 41 lines (2.3.3-44). *Henry V* also kills off his entire circle of comedic characters (except for Pistol, essentially written out of further appearances). What this suggests is that the *Folio* version of *Merry Wives* and *Henry V* reflect a need to remove characters from the repertory whose presence depended upon an actor no longer with the troupe—much in the same way that, about the same time, Shakespeare's clowns begin to sing, reflecting the addition of Robert Armin, noted for his abilities as a singer.

Thus the composition of the "Falstaff" plays reflects what I call the consistency of the context. They do not reflect textual consistency, but consistency with the contexts for which they were written. The probable ur-*Merry Wives* simply gathered characters made popular by 1 *Henry IV* into a situation designed for a one-time aristocratic gala. In turn the response of that audience may have led to the introduction of new characters for Falstaff's circle in 2 *Henry IV.* The loss (or expulsion) of Will Kempe from the company may have necessitated killing off Falstaff in *Henry V.* The abandonment

of history plays after the fallout of the Essex episode may have necessitated the revision of the ur-*Merry Wives,* itself re-revised to be Shakespeare's version of a "City Comedy" for the "War of the Theatres." The consistency of the context pertains to performance, when audiences move from scene to scene without time to reflect upon what has come before, nor time to compare to what comes after. Consistency in that framework is only necessary within the individual play, perhaps only within individual scenes. Audiences would not have printed texts in hand. For them, and for the author and actors, the only consistency necessary was within the context of performance, and the context of the performances of 1 and 2 *Henry IV, Henry V,* and *Merry Wives* changed between 1594-98 and the new conditions and performance demands at the Globe in 1599-1603.

Notes

1. In-text citations are taken from William Shakespeare, *Riverside Shakespeare,* ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974). For the several opinions as to the date of composition see Anne Barton, introduction to *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* in *Riverside Shakespeare,* 286-87. Recently Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich also suggests that the *Folio* version is a revision of the Quarto: see "Pageantry, Queens, and Housewives in the Two Texts of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 63 (2012): 328-54.

2. A.L. Rouse, *William Shakespeare: A Biography* (New York; Harper and Row, 1963), 249-50; Jonathan Bate, *Soul of the Age: A Biography of the Mind of William Shakespeare* (New York: Random House, 2009), 238; Samuel Schoenbaum, *William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 193-94; Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World* (New York: Norton, 2004), 308-09.

3. For William and Henry Brooke, see Julian Lock, "Brooke, William," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/61735 and Mark Nicholls, "Brooke, Henry," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/3543. For the name change from Brook to Broome see *First Folio: The Merry Wiues of Windsor,* accessed December 4, 2107, http://lf-oll.s3.amazonaws.com/titles/1113/03MerryWives_Bk.pdf, 60.

4. Barton, introduction, 287-88.

5. G. Blakemore Evans, "Shakespeare's Text," *Riverside Shakespeare,* 30.

6. James H. Forse, *Art Imitates Business* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Press, 1993), 209-25.

7. Terry P. Morris, "Shakespeare Hath Given Him a Purge that Made Him Bewray his Credit," *Shakespeare and Renaissance Association of West Virginia: Selected Papers* 15 (1992): 51-60.

8. Forse, *Art Imitates Business,*191-204.

9. Forse, *Art Imitates Business,* 193, and "To Die or Not to Die, that is the Question: Borrowing and Adapting the King Lear Legend in the Anonymous *The True Chronicle History of King Leir* and *Shakespeare's King Lear*," *The Ben Jonson Journal* 21 (2014): 53-72.

10. William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Quarto I, 1602), *Internet Shakespeare Editions* (University of Victoria), accessed November 6, 2017, http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Wiv_Q1/scene/Titlepage/, 31.

11. Forse, *Art Imitates Business,* 78-99.

12. Oliphant Smeaton, ed., *The Return from Parnassus, or the Scourge of Simony. Publiquely Acted by the Students in St. Johns College in Cambridge* (London: G. Eld, 1606; repr. London: Dent and Co., 1905), 78.

13. Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1952), 90-119.

14. Morris, "Bewray," 51.

15. Thomas Dekker, *Satiromastix*, in *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 324.

16. John Aubrey, *Brief Lives,* ed. Andrew Clark, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), 12, 15.

17. William Drummond, *Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond*, ed. R. F. Patterson (London: Norwood Editions, 1977), 54.

18. Drummond, *Conversations*, 23.

19. Forse, *Art Imitates Business,* 167-76.

20. See Elizabeth M. S. Baldwin, "'But where do they get the bears?' Animal Entertainments in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Cheshire," *Société International pour l'Étude du Théâtre Médiévale,* (SITM Colloquium, 2001), accessed December 11, 2017, http://sitm.info/history/Groningen/baldwin.htm.

21. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare,* 106-08; Leslie Hotson, *Shakespeare Versus Shallow* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1937), 87.

22. Morris, "Bewray," 55-56.

23. *Merry Wives* (Quarto I, 1602), 31-32.

The Problematic Gaze in *The Merchant of Venice*

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Introduction

By surveying Shakespeare's comedies that employ disguise as a plot device, it is clear that *Merchant* has an abundance of visual language. There are over one hundred references to eyes, seeing, looking, and gazing in this play. The only disguise-comedy with more than this is *As You Like It*. In these comedies, the visual language draws upon contemporary notions of visual culture in order to problematize the veracity of visual perception. The inability to perceive truth by looking is brought to the foreground in connection with the romantic plots. The power of the masculine gaze to perceive and/or control is questioned, as the male characters cannot perceive the true identity of the female characters with whom they are in love. This failure of perception takes different forms in each of the plays in this sub-genre. In *Merchant*, Shakespeare draws attention to the disguise plot with his emphasis on visual language, which establishes thematic tropes throughout the opening acts of the play and engages with several ideas from the visual cultures

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of his time. *Merchant* employs visual rhetoric in relation to the main romantic plot (Bassanio-Portia), in comedic scenes (Lancelot Gobbo and his father), in a secondary romantic plot (Lorenzo-Jessica), and in the dramatic climax of the trial. In all of these cases, Shakespeare emphasizes the various ways in which seeing is related to knowing, especially in relation to identity.

Perception in Early Modern Visual Culture

There is a growing body of historical scholarship that seeks to elucidate prevailing early modern attitudes toward visual art, and for my purposes, the relationship between visual art, visual perception, and the early modern stage. At the center of this work is the notion "that the eyes provided the most direct knowledge of things, based on the most distinctions and the widest range; in functional terms, they were the organs of power, liveliness, speed, and accuracy."[1] While this thinking may still have been prevalent in late-sixteenth century England, it had certainly become less dominant as a result of both prevailing aesthetic developments in perspective art (such as multiple-vanishing point perspective landscapes and anamorphic paintings), and the iconoclasm of the post-Reformation Protestant church. Important to my argument is that Shakespeare's work engages with early modern visual culture in two ways: first via the Classical notion of *ut pictura poesis*—as is painting so is poetry—and second through the visual nature of theatrical production, which itself becomes the object of iconoclastic ire during Shakespeare's time.

Throughout the sixteenth century, the dominance of visual perception is questioned, especially as a means for perceiving the truth. As recently as forty years ago, Huston Diehl argued, "In the Renaissance, then, man knows in part through his sense of sight."[2] More recent evidence suggests, rather, that "vision came to be characterized by uncertainty and unreliability, such that access to visual reality could no longer be normally guaranteed."[3] It is precisely this

uncertainty of visual perception that Shakespeare draws upon in *Merchant* and his other disguise comedies. The questioning of visual perception was, almost ironically, constructed by both the visual arts and the iconoclasm that sought to undermine the visual arts. "Perspective schemes in religious art at once heightened and questioned the human ability to see divinely," argues Mead, who continues, "Anamorphic designs and mannerist experiments played with the fragility of human visual sense."[4] Perspective art, developed in Renaissance Italy and first codified as a "science" by Leon Battista Alberti, used a vanishing point to create the illusion of three-dimensional space on a flat canvas. But the original perspective paintings required a fixed perspective: the observer must assume the exact position of the painter in order to accurately perceive the three dimensions.[5] Over time, perspective paintings utilized multiple points, and were better understood as illusions rather than copies of reality, which Alberti first argued was the purpose of perspective art.[6] Thus, in concert with Clark and Mead, Thorne argues that by the early-seventeenth century "perspective had become synonymous with deceit in the English imagination."[7]

Theatre becomes implicated in the deceitfulness of visual perspective not only through its rhetorical ties to art (*ut pictura poesis*), but also as a result of the Puritanical attacks on early modern visual culture, which contributed to the notion of illusion as deceit. Post-Reformation iconoclasm sought to undermine the notion of visual art as a means to perceive divine truth, and as representative of nature.[8] Such attacks led to the destruction of countless religious icons, and the subversion of the eyes as a means to perceive. This Puritanical ideology extended beyond the visual arts to poetry and especially the dramatic poetry of the early modern playhouse. "Attacks on playhouses as centres of idolatrous activity," notes Chloe Porter, "are suggestive of the extent to which drama is a part of visual culture in the early modern period."[9] And so Shakespeare's plays, far from asserting the dominance of

visual perception, sought to further undermine any stable notion of perspective—first by utilizing similar perspectival techniques that became dominant in the visual arts of the time, and second by engaging with the iconoclasm of post-Reformation ideology (an engagement that is marked by great ambivalence).

The architecture of the early modern stage resisted singular perspectives. With observers taking up positions encompassing nearly 360-degrees around the stage, the visuality of early modern theatrical production had to privilege multiple perspectives. "The stage is in a sense a laboratory for commingling dramatic verse, moving statuary, hanging cloth, staged music, and the spectator's angle of sight," Mead claims.[10] In experimenting with perspective, especially in the comedies, Shakespeare comes to no clear conclusion regarding the power of the eye to ascertain truth. Rather, I argue, he utilizes the multiple perspectives co-present on and around the stage to subvert any notion of a singular perspective. Like a perspective portrait where the subject's eyes seem to follow the viewer, Shakespeare often reverses the gaze, and subverts audience expectations. As in anamorphic paintings, the centralized audience viewpoint looks like a jumble of shapes which only take on their true proportions when viewed from the margins. Shakespeare's plays "emphasize the relativistic and subjective qualities of perspective."[11] This is most often the case in the comedies, which according to Barbara Freedman "are notorious for games that reverse the look and entrap the audience . . . They no sooner tantalize us with a stable position of mastery than they mock this stance."[12] In the case of *Merchant*, the ability to perceive the truth visually is constantly mocked and subverted. By constructing a world that is so visually uncertain through his dramatic poetry and early modern stage conventions, Shakespeare connects his plays thematically with trends of thought that were developing in response to early modern visual cultures. In examining the play's dramatic structure,

I argue that Shakespeare thus privileges the perspectives of those who are seeing from the socio-cultural margins.

Visual Rhetoric in *The Merchant of Venice*

Despite the numerous articles and books dedicated to Shakespeare's visual rhetoric and his entanglement with early modern visual cultures, few offer more than a cursory mention of Merchant. Addressing this insufficiency, I provide a detailed reading of the play's visual rhetoric in what follows. I emphasize the ways in which Shakespeare subverts visual certainty, and how those subversions tend to privilege characters, specifically Portia and Shylock, outside the cultural hegemony of Christian Venice in the play.

In acts one and two, the visual rhetoric of the play is frequently used to establish the main romantic plot, and as a means to question identity. Portia, as the primary subject of the masculine gaze and the object of masculine desire in this play, is introduced by Bassanio as a means to an end: "to get clear of all the debts [he] owe[s]" (1.1.141). Several lines later, Bassanio again mentions her wealth before her beauty and wit. This establishes the homosociality of the relationship between Bassanio and Antonio.[13] When he does describe Portia, he focuses unsurprisingly on her eyes saying, "Sometimes from her eyes / I did receive fair speechless messages" (1.1.170-1). It may seem that Portia's gaze is being privileged here, imbued with power to deliver her truest desires to Bassanio via some telepathic connection. However, Bassanio's gaze is the more privileged, in that his eyes are the recipients of Portia's love message. Given that the Portia-Bassanio plot is the main driver of the play's action, it may also be that Shakespeare is tying Portia's gaze to tropes of the "lethal gaze" present in love poetry. Clark elucidates: "The dominant role of the eye in love imagery was also matched by the themes of 'possession of the eye' and voyeurism that flourished more darkly in contemporary misogyny."[14] This is especially plausible as Bassanio's language, already deeply misogynistic, later turns

even darker, equating love with torture. After Portia asks him to wait before making his choice, so that they can enjoy one another's company, he replies, "Let me choose, / For as I am, I live upon the rack" (3.2.25-26). It seems clear that Portia's gaze is only empowered to the point of being lethal to the man upon whom it falls.

Act two further serves to objectify Portia in men's eyes, and simultaneously commodifies Portia as Shakespeare introduces the audience to the casket test. As the Prince of Morocco attempts to flatter her, he exclaims that the whole world is traveling "to come view fair Portia" (2.7.49), a sentiment he reiterates just a few lines later saying that all want "to see fair Portia" (2.7.53). All the while, Portia has literally been reduced to an aesthetic work inside a commodity. The casket test serves to encapsulate her within a portrait, where she is literally the object of the artistic masculine gaze. Then, she is doubly encapsulated in a box of precious metal. The point here is, of course, that the men should not choose with their eyes, and realize that the least "beautiful" leaden box is the correct choice. The test ties into prevailing aesthetic ideas about the eyes and the gaze. The man who best recognizes that appearances are nothing more than artistic illusion, that the eyes mislead and fail to perceive the truth, will win the lady. Yet at the same time, the leaden casket contains the counterfeit of Portia, not she herself. This complicates the casket trial in that Portia is reduced to her portrait—note the homophonic links between her name and that word—and thus an aesthetic object which, as the prevailing iconoclastic ideology would have it, cannot be trusted. This is the lesson that Arragon learns in choosing the wrong casket: "the fool multitude that choose by show, / Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach, / Which pries not to th' interior" (2.9.28-30).

Acts one and two also begin the process of using sight and the gaze to problematize identity, setting up Portia's disguise plot which will affect the play's resolution. Despite his status

as the play's titular character, Antonio is noticeably absent throughout the play. Characters say very little about him other than that he is a good friend to Bassanio and a worthy gentleman. Thus he becomes something of a vanishing point: he must be there to create the three-dimensional world of the play, but he is nothing more than the imaginary point around which the play's perspectives are crafted. As such, it is interesting that Shylock is the only character whose opinion about Antonio is granted privilege in the early acts. As he and Bassanio negotiate the terms of the loan, Antonio enters and Shylock delivers an aside which begins, "How like a fawning publican he looks!" (1.3.41). The audience has already met Antonio, gazed upon him, and formed its opinion of him, but here Shylock is allowed a privileged moment with the audience to deliver his interpretation of Antonio's character. It is likely that Shakespeare's audience would have rejected Shylock's visual interpretation of Antonio's identity, but a modern audience is more sympathetic to the perspective of the erstwhile villain, which itself problematizes the very notion of perspective.

Issues of identity, and the ability to perceive identity by looking, continue throughout act two. Comically, Old Gobbo's blindness prevents him from perceiving his son Lancelot's true identity. Lancelot calls his practical joke "confusions" (2.2.36), seeming to connect the notion of appearance with artifice as was prevalent in early modern culture. Lancelot takes his joke to an extreme, claiming to his father that Lancelot had died. When the clown begins to reveal the truth, he says, "Indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me. It is a wise father that knows his own child" (2.2.73-75). Sight and wisdom become diametric opposites in this scene, revealing that even if the old man could see, his lack of wisdom would not allow him to perceive the truth through his eyes. In keeping with the tradition of allowing clowns to inadvertently reveal deeper truths, Shakespeare in this scene delivers one of his main

thematic statements: looking alone cannot reveal identity, it takes wisdom for that.

Act two also reveals the first disguise plot, setting the stage for Portia's disguise in act four. In order to escape from her father without being noticed, Jessica disguises herself as a boy and poses as her lover Lorenzo's torch-bearer. With her identity concealed, Jessica is ashamed of her appearance and does not want Lorenzo to gaze upon her. Lorenzo, to the contrary, seems to suggest that the artifice itself is aesthetically valuable, calling her disguise "the lovely garnish of a boy" (2.6.47). Of course, there are many implications in this line that could be addressed, but for my purposes Lorenzo seems to equate artifice and superficial beauty unproblematically. Jessica is evidently concerned with outward appearance, but Lorenzo sees through the deceptive illusion created by her disguise. As they prepare to elope, he says,

> For she is wise, if I can judge her,
> And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,
> And true she is, as she hath proved herself.
> And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,
> Shall she be placed in my constant soul. (2.6.55-59)

Lorenzo is the only character capable of seeing without gazing, of knowing the truth without being deceived by his eyes. While many characters refer to Jessica as "fair" throughout the play, Lorenzo is the only one who first assesses her wisdom before her beauty, and values her for herself, not for the superficiality of her appearance.

Regarding the interconnectedness of the gaze and the body in early modern thought, Miran Bozovic claims, "In the body's encounter with the gaze, even such a basic notion as identity can become blurred and elusive."[15] Issues of identity and the gaze reach their apex in act three of *Merchant*. Early in act three, Shylock's most famous speech is predicated by a discussion of appearance. Shylock twice avers that Jessica is his "flesh and blood" (3.1.34, 37). Salarino responds, "There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet

and ivory, more between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish" (3.1.38-39). Salarino emphasizes not the substance of the two, but the appearance. Throughout the play, Jessica is often described as "fair," which is also the most common adjective for Portia. This word has the double meaning of both "beautiful" and "pale," the latter of which seems to be Salarino's point in referring to Shylock as dark-skinned ("jet"). His second metaphor furthers his emphasis on outward appearance, using dark red wine as the stand-in for Shylock, and white Rhenish for Jessica. To Salarino and the other Venetians, it is the fact that Jessica looks less Jewish that makes her different from Shylock. The gaze of the Venetian insiders is privileged in that it is empowered to claim possession of Jessica, and to marginalize and categorize Shylock. This power is questioned, however, when Shylock launches into his famous rhetorical equivocation, which begins with, "Hath not a Jew eyes?" (3.1.57-58). The eyes are the first characteristic that Shylock uses to equate Jews with Christians, and in so doing he draws attention to the problems of sight's veracity. The rhetorical use of eyes as the connection between Othered Jews and Venetian Christians in the play and the earlier privileging of Shylock's sight (1.3) together with the play's concern with obscuring visual truth suggest that even in the deeply anti-Semitic fiction of this piece there is room for a multiplicity of perspectives, both among and towards the characters.

This perhaps becomes clearer in act three, scene two, wherein Bassanio engages in the play's only instance of *ekphrasis*. The objectification of Portia in the casket test and the love-gaze trope established by Bassanio in act one come together in this scene. Portia says to Bassanio, as he prepares to make his choice, "Beshrew your eyes, / They have o'erlooked and divided me" (3.2.14-15). Bassanio has gazed upon Portia, and taken possession of her through that gaze's ability to anatomize ("divide") her into her attractive parts. When he correctly chooses the lead casket, we see the

literal portrait of Portia: she has been converted into a work of visual art. Karen Newman argues that "Portia objectifies herself and thereby suppresses her own agency in bestowing herself upon Bassanio."[16] Newman's reading, building off of Luce Irigaray's work, is difficult to counter. As I have already argued, Portia is reduced to an aesthetic commodity within a physical commodity in this scene. At the same time, we must recognize that within the dramatic context, Portia desires Bassanio. While Bassanio may be looking at her as a means to an end (her fortune), Portia for reasons many actors have struggled with, seems to want Bassanio for himself. And during his *ekphrasis*, the visual rhetoric problematizes the notion of which character truly has power over the other.

If Shakespeare's purpose in the casket test were simply to emphasize that appearances are deceiving, then Bassanio's choice is deeply problematic. After all, while he recognizes that the "precious" metals—silver and gold—are likely to be misleading, his choice of the leaden casket is also motivated by appearance. He says to the casket, "Thy paleness move me" (3.2.109). As I noted earlier, Portia is repeatedly described with the adjective "fair" and here the double meaning of that word again becomes apparent. Portia's paleness is tied visually to the lead casket's by Bassanio's rhetoric. He is still choosing with his eyes, claiming the power of visual perception. But then he discovers Portia's portrait within the box, and the visual dynamic shifts. His description of the painting marks it as a linear perspective portrait as he wonders at the eyes of the painting, "Move these eyes? / Or whether, riding on the balls of mine, / Seem they in motion?" (3.2.120-22). In his history of perspective painting in English visual culture, Mead notes that portraiture was much preferred over landscapes, limiting the influence of perspective to single-point paintings.

> The portraits of Elizabeth, many by Hilliard, use one-point perspective to create a vanishing point off center to empty space, the effect of which is to draw the viewer's eye out to this nothing, whence it will return

> to the subject in the foreground: the journey to the 'depth' actually causes the viewer to reject the 'back' of the painting in favor of the surface, to celebrate the idea over the image.[17]

As Bassanio looks at the rest of the portrait, he is brought back in similar fashion to the eyes: "But her eyes! / How could he see to do them? Having made one, / Methinks it should have power to steal both his / And leave itself unfurnished" (3.2.127-30).

However, Bassanio's *ekphrasis* is not the only perspective in this scene. Throughout his thirty-five line musing over the portrait, there is an onstage audience of one: Portia. While he obsesses over the illusion of the moving eyes, she herself is a physical presence on the stage. Despite the fact that he has clearly succeeded in the casket test, winning the Portia portrait, and Portia herself, confirmed by the inscription that comes with the portrait, Bassanio is still uncertain. He does not trust the appearance of success saying, "Stand I even so, / As doubtful whether what I see be true, / Until confirmed, signed, ratified by you" (3.2.150-52). He must have the confirmation of the real Portia, who herself must finalize the deal in the mercantile language of Venice which Bassanio returns to here. Thus, Portia's perspective becomes privileged. First, as the audience who gazes upon Bassanio as he examines the portrait, she becomes connected to the actual audience of the play. Her perspective and the audience's perspective become connected. Second, the lesson of visual uncertainty seems to have succeeded here, in that Bassanio will not trust his eyes, but only Portia's words. In her examination of *ekphrasis* in Shakespeare, Catherine Belsey asserts that "critics reiterate the belief that Shakespeare's invocation of the visual arts is designed to affirm the superiority of the writer."[18] Belsey is attempting to deconstruct this notion, but this moment in Merchant seems to further the sense that the visual arts are being made subordinate to the verbal. The emphasis on Portia's word makes her response to his request

for confirmation all the more interesting: "You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand, / Such as I am" (3.2.153-54). She confirms Bassanio's sight as truthful, but only when he is looking upon Portia herself, and not her counterfeit from the casket. Portia is authorized to confirm Bassanio's sight, which he inherently mistrusts. The connections to early modern visual culture are clear, and the suturing of the audience into the scene via Portia's perspective imbues the character with an agency that is sometimes overlooked.

Portia's perspective becomes ever more valued in acts four and five, as she first dons her masculine disguise to effect the courtroom resolution, then lords her power over her hapless husband. The disguise trope in Shakespeare's comedies especially casts doubt upon the power of the masculine gaze to ascertain truth, instead granting agency to the women characters in disguise. After saving Antonio from Shylock's knife, Portia-in-disguise tells Bassanio, "I pray you know me when we meet again" (4.1.437). She subtly suggests here that seeing and knowing are not the same thing, which is imbued with irony in the next scene when Gratiano finds her to deliver Bassanio's ring and calls her "fair sir" (4.2.6), echoing the adjective that is so often used to describe Portia. The implication is that Bassanio did not heed the lesson of the casket test, and now trusts his eyes to discern the truth, which Portia's disguise makes impossible. In the final scene, the emphasis is again placed upon ocular truth. In revealing that he has given away his ring he says, "You see my finger / Hath not a ring upon it" (5.1.201-02). And just a few lines later both Portia and Nerissa vow that they will not sleep with their husbands until they "see" the rings again (5.1.205, 207). Because the women are in possession of the rings, the use of visual language here serves to further verify the play's efforts to undermine the ability of the eyes to perceive the truth. Finally, Bassanio attempts to return to the misogynistic language of the love-gaze that he used earlier: "I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes, / Wherein I

see myself–" (5.2.259-60). But Portia will allow neither the return to any notion of an ensnaring gaze, nor Bassanio to rely on her eyes for any sense of proof. She interrupts him saying, "In both my eyes he doubly sees himself, / In each eye one" (5.2.262-63). In this final use of visual language, Portia again draws attention to deceit, in essence calling her husband a liar. Far from asserting the dominance of the eyes as the tools of human perception, the play calls attention to the inability of the eyes to perceive the truth. This is especially true in relation to artistic illusion. While Puritanical iconoclasts were arguing that no truth could be perceived in art, artists were simultaneously experimenting with perspectives in ways that undermined their audience's ability to perceive any stable meaning from their artworks. Similarly on the stage, Shakespeare's dramatic language in *Merchant* implies that, as it was for painting during the time, so it is for poetry: the play constantly undermines the veracity of visual perception, going so far as to suggest that all aesthetic illusion, even the play that the audience has just witnessed, is untrustworthy.

Michael Radford's *The Merchant of Venice*

As a medium, film is overtly concerned with visuality and perspective, and provides a modern analog for the questions relating to visual certitude that pervaded early modern visual culture. I am particularly interested in how this film utilizes its visual medium, especially the way the camera controls the gaze of the audience, in relation to the visual tropes that are present in Shakespeare's play. The film opens with a montage and text-scroll, informing the audience of the anti-Semitic culture in Venice, and demonstrating the hostility of Christians towards Jews. This attempt to fabricate the world of early modern Venice is visually rich, and ethically admirable. However, "The opening montage preempts the play," according to Drew Daniel, "with dramatizations of Jewish oppression."[19] Obviously, Radford was attempting

to adapt the play to fit the ethical and aesthetic taste of his audience, to recuperate Shylock and justify his villainy as the product of an oppressive society. The son of an Austrian-Jewish mother, Radford was clearly influenced by his own family history, and he re-contextualized his *Merchant* within a more historically accurate Venice than Shakespeare's play creates. The opening montage, however, does not just foreground Jewish oppression, it turns it into a spectacle. The opening scroll identifies "religious fanatics" who attack Jews openly. The Jews are visually marked as Others by the red hats they are required to wear. Unexplained by the pedantic titles are the dozens of bare-breasted women in the opening montage; apparently it is assumed that the audience will know the manner of dress that was associated with Venetian courtesans of the time. This attempt at historical realism is mired in its inability to depict the intellectual, literary, and political contributions of courtesans to early modern Venetian society. So the courtesans become just another class of oppressed people, tying them visually to the Jews of this cinematic world, just as Jewish usury and prostitution were tied together in early modern English polemics against them.[20] As such, the opening montage becomes a spectacle of sex and violence, framing the fanatical attacks on the Jews with sexualized images of women. The audience's gaze is directed to objectify this sex and violence because the characters are not humanized, indeed not a single courtesan is given a name, nor a line.

After joining the fanaticism and spitting on Al Pacino's Shylock, thus making Shylock's verbal accusation at 1.3.123 visually apparent, Antonio (Jeremy Irons) attends Mass presided over by the same zealot who was earlier seen railing against Jews. The Christian ceremony is given forty-two seconds of screen-time, and is intercut with scenes of Bassanio and Gratiano reveling on the canals. The two scenes come together as the revelers' gondola passes by the entrance to Antonio's church. Antonio's gaze becomes privileged: he

and Joseph Fiennes's Bassanio share a deep look, and name each other. By contrast, the Jewish Sabbath which Shylock and Jessica attend is placed second to Antonio's, and occupies only twenty-five seconds of screen time. Whereas Christian characters are named and their relationships established, the Jewish ceremony only serves to bring Jessica into physical proximity with Lorenzo. The complication of visual certitude with which Shakespeare frames the plot of his play is mooted. The characters and the audience see, and are encouraged to accept what they see at face value.

In the film's version of 1.1, Antonio and Bassanio negotiate their homosocial relationship within the confines of Antonio's bedroom and, for a time, his bed, which is of course adorned with symbolically red linens. Their intimacy is intense, and has overt ramifications for Radford's audience. Our sense of Antonio is now that he, like Shylock and the courtesans, is a victim of his own culture—a gay man whose religious beliefs forbid him from truly loving Bassanio. Far from being the vanishing point, the empty space around which the play's dimensions are crafted, Antonio becomes the maker of meaning, thus undermining the ethical point of Radford's adaptation. It is an attempt to create pathos for Antonio, who is the play's ultimate villain if Shylock is made to be its hero. As the scene continues, Radford constructs a rare reverse shot: a cinematic technique wherein the camera assumes the position of a speaker and the audience gazes upon the same object as that speaker. As Freedman notes, the effect of this shot encourages the audience "to identify with a point of view, and so inscribes us within the relay of looks through which the film narrative is constructed."[21] As he narrates his lines about Portia, the film adopts Bassanio's memories and privileges the character's perspective. During the descriptive voice-over, the objects of his gaze are first the estate of Belmont, and second Lynn Collins's Portia, confirming his desire for her inherited wealth as paramount. The shot of Portia begins through a doorway, framing her

like a portrait, while she stares back at the camera (and by extension at Bassanio and the audience). Portia is reduced to an artistic object, a Renaissance portrait, and this message is emphasized in the next scene where she is glimpsed (with back turned to the camera) gazing upon the portrait of her father that is hanging upon the wall.

Radford's cinematography throughout the film is highly influenced by stage conventions. Only very rarely, and usually privileging the gaze of Bassanio or Antonio, is a true reverse-shot utilized. When a character is speaking, the camera is regularly trained on that character's face, just as the audience's gaze is drawn to the speaking character on stage. Especially with Portia and Shylock, we nearly always view them directly as they talk. The audience is not encouraged to adopt the gaze of these characters, never sutured into the world of the film via the adoption of their perspective. Instead, we look directly at them, objectifying them within the context of the film's *mise-en-scène.*

Perhaps the clearest example of the camera's failure to graft the audience into the film is Shylock's famous speech in 3.1. The film's equivalent begins with Solanio and Salarino in a brothel, surrounded by courtesans. Three times in the establishing shots, women's breasts are shown in relative close-up as they are groped by men in a disturbing depiction of sexual objectification that borders on sexual violence. It is into this scene that the bereft Shylock enters, and Radford cuts all the lines about Jessica's physical appearance, taking away the audience's ability to perceive the inherent racism of the Venetian courtiers toward Shylock. During the speech, Shylock is nearly always shot face-on, center-frame, putting the emphasis on the character and Pacino's powerful rendition of this speech, but privileging the gaze of the Venetian Christians, as the audience is sutured into the scene by the camera taking up their position. The only reverse shots are during Pacino's pauses, with the camera briefly cutting to a shot of Salarino and Solanio before jumping

back to Shylock as he speaks. Just before Shylock asks if Jews have eyes, two courtesans enter, framed in the background between the heads of Salarino and Solanio. At first they are in soft-focus, but as Shylock finishes speaking and Salarino and Solanio exit, the camera briefly pauses and focalizes upon the courtesans, whose looks of concern and sympathy regarding Shylock's statements clearly link the oppression of women to the oppression of Jews in this Venice. At the same time, Shylock's famous speech becomes book-ended by shots objectifying women's bodies. It is the actualization of Laura Mulvey's most-condemned cinematic shot: "the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning."[22]

Radford makes Portia's speech to Bassanio at the beginning of 3.2 into a soliloquy delivered in part while she gazes at her love, and in part to the audience. But her gaze is never privileged: we look at her looking at Bassanio, but never see through her eyes. The scene ends with the camera looking down at Portia as she gazes up. Here the camera looks down her dress, emphasizing her cleavage and visually connecting her with the sexually objectified Venetian courtesans. The dialogue of 3.2 is again shot mostly direct on the speaker, with the only reverse shots privileging Bassanio's perspective. The strangest moment of this comes when he narrates his thought process regarding the choice. As he speaks the lines, "Look on beauty, / And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight…" (3.2.90-91) the shot reverses to Portia, suturing the audience's gaze into the film from Bassanio's perspective, and emphasizing the objectification of her wealth and beauty. She is commodified by Bassanio's gaze. When Bassanio then chooses the lead casket because its "paleness moves" him, the audience is greeted by a double-Portia. In the background and out of focus is Lynn Collins's Portia, while the portrait which Bassanio holds up is center-frame and in focus with those characteristic moving eyes. It is Bassanio's gaze that again controls the audience's, as the focus shifts to Portia

herself while Bassanio narrates in voice-over. All this camera work serves to objectify and disempower Portia, preventing the audience from associating with her.

Radford's film continues these visual tropes, privileging the gaze of Antonio and Bassanio throughout the trial scene, objectifying the sorrow of Shylock and emphasizing and empowering the perspective of Venetian Christians. Drew Daniel concludes that the film fails because it does not take its ethical position far enough: if Shylock is to be the hero, he says, then Antonio and Portia and the rest are the villains.[23] I argue that this failure is also visual. The film is impeded by its theatrically influenced dialogue shots, and fails to privilege the perspective of the characters who are imbued with agency to question visual certitude in the play. Radford objectifies Portia and Shylock through the camera-work in sharp contrast to the usage of tropes of eyes and love, knowledge and vision, which Shakespeare employs in the source-play.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the varied readings of Shakespeare's works as engagements with early modern visual cultures, adding *Merchant* to the list of plays that have been previously studied: *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *As You Like It,* predominantly. Shakespeare's *Merchant* contributes to the undermining of visual certitude in concert with, ironically, the work of contemporary painters and Puritan iconoclasts. In part this aesthetic was inspired by Shakespeare's knowledge of the theatre, and use of lines of sight to craft visual meaning (or undermine it). The veracity of visual perception is a power claimed in the play by the cultural "insiders": Shakespeare's Venetian Christian characters. The undermining of that power serves, then, to privilege and empower the cultural "outsiders," namely Portia and Shylock. This play is in no way attempting to undo the misogyny and anti-Semitism of Shakespeare's time. Rather, as a lesson perhaps learned from perspective painting, the privileging of different perspectives simply serves for better drama.

It cannot be denied that despite its dramatic interest, *Merchant* is a deeply problematic play from a modern ethical perspective, which encourages application of the lessons learned from a historical analysis of the text to the play's only modern film adaptation. Radford's film attempts to simultaneously portray a historically accurate Venice and an ethically admirable view of Shakespeare's play. These antithetical efforts, however, result in "a film so at odds with the text it adapts that, far from establishing the endlessly renewable relevance of Shakespeare's work to our own historical moment, it seems instead to index the intractable gulf that separates us from contact with that work."[24] As this reading of Radford's shots and editing shows, the film's use of its visual medium is incongruous with the source-text's exploration of visual certainty, and further alienates its audience from contact with Shakespeare's work. It is in exploring the play's constructions of visual dilemmas, and problematizing the primacy of modern visual cultures, that a film could be most able to construct this play in a meaningful way for a twenty-first century audience. As Shakespeare utilized tropes that connected with early modern visual cultures, a modern film-maker could explore the way this play's visual language and themes speak to today's audiences. There is an argument to be made that the problematic ethics of *The Merchant of Venice*—namely its anti-Semitism and misogyny—are intractable, and that the play may not be recoverable except as a "museum piece." Radford's visuals seek to reconstruct Renaissance Venice, rather than engage a twenty-first century audience. In doing so, this film pushes the play further from its audience in temporality, and disengages from the visual themes that are inherent to the play which could evoke a connection between the modern audience and Shakespeare's play.

Notes

1. Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 10.

2. Huston Diehl, "Horrid Image, Sorry Sight, Fatal Vision: The Visual Rhetoric of *Macbeth*," *Shakespeare Studies* 16 (1983): 192.

3. Clark, *Vanities of the Eye,* 2.

4. Stephen X. Mead, "Shakespeare's Play with Perspective: Sonnet 24, *Hamlet, Lear,*" *Studies in Philology* 109.3 (2012): 226.

5. Allison Thorne, *Vision and Rhetoric in Shakespeare: Looking Through Language* (New York: Palgrave/St. Martin's, 2000), 35.

6. Ibid., 68.

7. Ibid., 80.

8. For more on the influence of Reformation iconoclasm on aesthetics, art, and theatre, see Tara Hamling and Richard L. Williams, eds., *Art Re-Formed: Re-Assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007); Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theatre in Early Modern England* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Chloe Porter, "Idolatry, Iconoclasm, and Agency: Visual Experience in Works by Lyly and Shakespeare," *Literature and History* 18.1 (2009): 1-15.

9. Chloe Porter, "Shakespeare and Early Modern Visual Culture," *Literature Compass* 8.8 (2011): 544.

10. Mead, "Shakespeare's Play with Perspective," 230.

11. Thorne, *Vision and Rhetoric,* 56.

12. Barbara Freedman, *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 2.

13. Karen Newman, "Portia's Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange in *The Merchant of Venice,*" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38.1 (1987): 21. Newman is building here on the foundations of Luce Irigaray's *The Sex Which is Not One* (1979) and Eve Sedgwick's *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985).

14. Clark, *Vanities of the Eye,* 23.

15. Miran Bozovic, *An Utterly Dark Spot: Gaze and Body in Early Modern Philosophy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 1.

16. Newman, "Portia's Ring," 25.

17. Mead, "Shakespeare's Play with Perspective," 229.

18. Catherine Belsey, "Invocation of the Visual Image: Ekphrasis in Lucrece and Beyond," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 62.2 (2012): 188.

19. Drew Daniel, "William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice,*" Film Quarterly 60.1 (2006): 52.

20. James Shapiro, Shakespeare and the Jews (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996): 99.

21. Freedman, *Staging the Gaze,* 57.
22. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16.1 (1975): 7.
23. Daniel, "William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice,*" 56.
24. Ibid., 52.

"Patens of bright gold" in "this muddy vesture of decay": Jessica's Name as Shakespeare's Paradoxical Engagement with the Other in *The Merchant of Venice*

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In his 1926 "Introduction" to the Cambridge edition of *The Merchant of Venice,* editor Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch excoriates Shylock's daughter Jessica for being "bad and disloyal, a thief; frivolous, greedy, without any more conscience than a cat and without animal instinct—pilfering to be carnal—she betrays her father to be a light-of-lucre carefully weighted with her sire's ducats."[1] His harsh views have been slow in gaining critical amelioration and rehabilitation since then, even though Jessica's rebellious behavior has powerful echoes in, for instance, Juliet's forbidden marriage to Romeo and Desdemona' secret elopement with Othello. Desdemona, in particular, acts as the dramatist's characterological reprising of Jessica in that both heroines choose ethnic outlanders for romance and marriage.[2] And yet, while these actions have been committed against and outside of their socially accepted norms and conventions, critics of Juliet and Desdemona seem willing to be more sympathetic and discerning when it comes to

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interpreting these heroines and their choices of personal destiny.

Indeed, while sometimes calling the play "a racist text," our contemporary criticism of *The Merchant of Venice* is disposed to put forward a racial discourse that surrounds Jewish characters which pivots on Shylock as a mark of estrangement.[3] Unlike the above-named Quiller-Couch, modern audiences and readers, over time, have become more culturally literate and empathetic to the way in which Shakespeare presents the Jewish figures. Even so, these characters are still seen as theatrical as well as reflecting contemporary cultural and ethnic stereotypes as dramatized in the sacrament-stealing, buffoonish Jews in the East Anglian *Croxton Play of the [Blyssyd] Sacrament* or in Marlowe's dissembling, avenging Barabas in *The Jew of Malta.* Those images inevitably invoke the principle of "otherness" or of the Other.[4] "The Other" is a modern concept appearing in discourses of philosophy, psychology, sociology, and ethics, all of which study the way people identify or label themselves and other people in social groups. The idea of the Other is related to ontology, the study of the nature and questions of one's essential being or one's true self. It may be helpful therefore to gain a basic understanding of what this concept of "otherness" or the Other specifically entails in actual practice before discussing how Shakespeare's stance towards the Other can be better understood if it is focused on the paradoxical being of Jessica intimated in her name.[5]

Briefly summarized, the principle of the Other is a discursive process which first defines an individual who is perceived by an in-group (or dominant society of Us, Self) as not belonging (part of an out-group of Them, non-self), since the Other is defined and labelled as different in core factors than the in-group, whether such differences are actual or imagined. The Other is thus the stranger among the in-group, and is permitted to live on the margins of society, not as a citizen, but as a resident "other." Any stranger becomes

the Other. In *The Merchant of Venice,* Antonio uses this term in the line "the commodity that strangers have," meaning foreign merchants in Venice, in conversation with Solanio (3.3.30) and Shylock describes society spurning him by calling him "a stranger cur" (1.3.128), or what Portia calls "an alien" (4.1.364).[6] For the Other does not fit in the in-group which is made to establish and exercise the norms of its own proper values and behaviors. Most importantly, the in-group defines its ontology or its own essential identity. Such an in-group, like the play's Christian Venice, therefore, judges those who do not meet those norms as the Other. Though the Other exists "in close proximity" to that group, the Other does not belong to or is not integrated into that group or society.[7] Further, this group or society which defines the Other and otherness may be "an entire society, a social class or a community within a society, a family, or even a high school clique or a neighborhood gang."[8] The significant of this definition will become clear since it will apply to the play's other characters beyond Jessica as the plot moves forward.

Among these characteristics, Drakakis's mention of the Other's "close proximity" to the in-group society serendipitously calls my attention to the stranger Other's inherently paradoxical nature. For "close proximity" means not belonging to the in-group, yet existing closely near it. The in-group does not willingly invite the Other to become its full member or to view the Other as a part of the in-group's essential makeup while allowing the Other to exist near or even in it. Thus the Other's status embodies a paradoxically liminal and marginal existence as "both a part of, yet set apart from" the in-group and the ontology with which the group composes itself.[9] It follows that this paradoxical state—simultaneously being near but not being of the in-group—can signal that the Other possesses fundamentally two discrete realities (the reality of the out-group, and that of the in-group), both physically and mentally. This state of

being renders the Other's existence problematic for the in-group since the Other's dual perspectives call the in-group's geographical integrity, its epistemological certainty, and its ontological stability and confidence into question.

Though Julia Kristeva employs the term "abjection" to mean one manifestation of the Other in society, her thoughts on abjection's causes and effects unerringly point to those of the Other (markedly the effects of Shylock and Jessica) in the play. Abjection "disturbs identity, system, or order" and thus threatens the stable in-group's position.[10] Abjection is "above all ambiguity. Because, while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject [or Self] from what threatens it. . . But also because abjection itself is a composite of judgment and affect, of condemnation and yearning, of signs and drives."[11]

For Shakespeare and other like-minded writers, this epistemological power to challenge absolute judgment or established conventions was the core function of the rhetorical figure of paradox.[12] Etymologically deriving from a Greek root figure "paradoxon," meaning "contrary opinion" ("para" meaning "contrary to"; "doxon" or "doxa" meaning "opinion"), the figure of paradox exploits:

> the fact of relative, or competing, value systems. The paradox is always somehow involved in dialectic: challenging some orthodoxy, the paradox is an oblique criticism of absolute judgment or absolute convention.[13]

At the same time, paradox's intrinsically artistic possibilities must equally have attracted them. Classically-informed rhetoricians of Shakespeare's time stress paradox's epistemological as well as artistic functions. For instance, Henry Peacham who in his *The Garden of Eloquence* (1593, 2nd edition) sees paradox as:

> a forme of speech by which the Orator affirmeth something to be true, by saying he would not have believed it, or that it is so *straunge*, so great, *so wonderfull,*

> that it may appeare to be incredible. This figure is then to be vused, when the thing *which is to be taught is new,* straunge, incredible, and repugnant to the opinion of the hearer.[14] (italics are mine)

George Puttenham follows Peacham, expressing a more developed understanding of the figure in the chapter "Of Figures sententious, otherwise called Rheroticall" of his rhetorical handbook, *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589).[15] Puttenham explains its double functions, the first of which is its mental action to produce views contrary to received teaching or opinion. The second is its artistic function which results in what he defines as "the *Wondrer*" and the "maruelous." It occurs when:

> Many times our Poet is caried by some occasion to report of a thing that is *maruelous*, and then he will seeme not to speake it simply but with some signe of *admination* as in our enterlude called the Woer . . . oftentimes we will seeme to cast perils, and make doubt of things when by a plaine manner of speech wee might affirme or deny him as thus of a cruell mother who murdred her owne child.[16] (italics are mine)

Puttenham implies paradox's simultaneous nature as a-part-of/yet-apart-from-ness in human conditions, events, things, and ideas, and holds that that is the reason why writers are naturally drawn to paradox, particularly in their pursuit of the marvelous and of "Wondrer" (i.e., astonishment), and Peacham's idea of "wonderfull" ("marvelous thing, astonishment, OED, s.v. "wonderful"), while both writers agree in finding paradoxes in incongruent or unexpected aspects of life. In dramatic constructions of "Wondrer," the marvelous, and "wonderfull," Puttenham notes, writers play intricate games with commonly held conventions and expectations by yoking contrary or unexpected ideas together so as to reconfigure a potential for fresh thought and knowledge.

By making this close link between paradox and both epistemology and wonder, Puttenham also touches upon the ethical aspect of a poet's role. For he recommends that "the good Poet or maker ought to *dissemble his arte* [disguise or conceal his art to reveal something else], and in what cases the *artificiall* [what is contrived by human skill] is more commended then the natural, and contrariwise" (italics are mine).[17] At the same time, he counsels that the purpose of a good writer's artificial "wonder" and "marvel" must not remain a mere trick of his style alluring and catering to the hearer's sensation of them; it must have a higher purpose, one that will deepen and even instruct the hearer's mind and heart in moral lessons:

> so is there yet requisite to the perfection of this arte, another maner of exornation, which resteth in the fashioning of our makers language and stile, to such purpose as it may delight and allure as well the mynde as the eare of the hearers wih a certaine noueltie and strange maner of conueyance, disguising it no little from the ordinary and accustomed.[18]

In his ethical stance toward the use of paradox, Peacham echoes Puttenham when he recommends that "[t]his figure is then to be vsed, when the thing which is to be taught is new, straunge, incredible, and repugnant to the opinion of the hearer." Shakespeare seems to have heeded their advice as he does carefully "dissemble his arte" in that he reveals new thought, knowledge, and understanding in devising his own "wonder," "marvelous," and "wonderful" while he paradoxically conceals them. In *The Merchant of Venice,* what he conceals is Jessica's so-called rebellion as the artistic "wondrer," "marvelous," and "wonderful," but in so dissembling, he reveals his art's ability to transform thoughts about the Other through Jessica's name.

Admittedly, at the first sight of Jessica, Shakespeare appears to conceive her character on the standard assumptions of his time, portraying her as Jewish and therefore as the

Other in an alien/non-citizen/stranger triad. In contrast with Juliet and Desdemona who are presumably an integral part of their societies (Verona and Venice respectively), Shakespeare highlights Jessica's otherness which she takes on in many forms of difference: a different race or ethnicity (European vs. Jewish); a different nationality (Venetian Republic vs. Israelite or the Jewish nation or "sacred nation" as Shylock says [1.3.47, 3.1.55]); a different religion or origin (Christianity vs. Judaism); a different place of living (the city vs. the segregated area within the city/the ghetto),[19] a different social class (Venetian citizen vs. resident alien—the particular point Portia brings up in her courtroom peroration); a different nature of being (fully human vs. a subhuman/lesser OR inferior being; OR, male vs. female—master vs. subordinate, son vs. daughter—all universally and traditionally accepted ontological traits of women in patriarchy).[20]

But, masked in these outward signs is the shaping origin of Jessica's thrice paradoxical nature. First, as Shylock's daughter, Jessica is a part of the same ethnic Other, yet she is set apart from his prescriptive, patriarchal codes of daughterly conduct. What she is becoming is also a part of, yet set apart from, Venetian society at large as she wants to become Lorenzo's Christian wife and elopes with him. That she is aware of her twice paradoxical existence in Venetian society can be heard in her only soliloquy in act 2, scene 3, though Shakespeare causes her to say it in the form of pain and conflict between the loyalty she owes her father and the moral disapproval she feels for his manners:

> Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
> To be ashamed to be my father's child?
> But though I am a daughter to his blood,
> I am not to his manners, O Lorenzo,
> If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
> Become a Christian and thy loving wife. (2.3.16-21)

But, to come to the very heart of her paradoxical being, Shakespeare increases his sense of Jessica's "wondrer" and "maruelous" by slowly revealing her rebellious conduct as one of many manifestations of "hazard" the characters take on in the play. In Jessica's case, her hazard takes the form of a basic human desire to have outward-bound movement from the constraints and conventions of her family and society, going against Shylock's decree to "Shut doors after you. / Fast bind, fast find" (2.5.51-2). Shakespeare makes this point more intelligible, affective and, most of all, purposeful by harkening back to the literary tradition of morality plays as well as of medieval allegorical and Christian themes and imagery in which characters' names are attributively chosen. Shakespeare uses this technique not only to distinguish "one character from another," but also to emphasize "figurative overtones" contained in characters' personality traits or occupations.[21]

Viewed under figurative and allegorical lights, then, Shakespeare seems to have chosen Jessica's name for its rich instructive power, or as Peacham suggests, "[t]his figure is then to be vused, when the thing *which is to be taught is new,* straunge, incredible, and repugnant to the opinion of the hearer." Some onomasticians speculate that the spelling of Jessica is Shakespeare's own invention.[22] Shakespeare probably based the name on the Hebrew name Yiskah or Iskah (daughter of Haran), which was then anglicized as Jeska in the Geneva Bible (translated in 1560), Jescha in the Wycliffe version, or Iesca in the Matthew Bible (translated in 1537), all of which were available to Shakespeare.[23]

The etymological meanings inhering in Jessica's name were readily available to Shakespeare's bible-reading culture, and he enroots these meanings to organize her so-called rebellious behaviors as the wonder and the marvelous that conceal her core being or true self. For Jessica is a proper name that means "foresight or being able to see the potential in the future;" it also means "one who looketh out / forth," as

Elizabethan commentators glossed it.[24] In Hebrew, the name Jessica also means "rich, or God beholds." Thus, Shakespeare plays on the name's deeper lesson and creates etymologically allusive scenes to establish Jessica's most fundamental character which she acts on: against Shylock's injunction, "Clamber not you up to the casements then/ Nor thrust your head into the public street" (2.5.31-2), she instead listens to Lancelot who prompts her to "look out at window for all this" (2.5.39). She is indeed literally looking out of window for the coming of Lorenzo who is now her existential "potential in the future" ([Enter] Jessica above, dressed as a body. [2.6.26]). Her "unfilial" outbound behavior—her voluntary breaking out of Shylock's prescriptive codes of daughterly conduct, thus defying the time's view of proper female behavior—then can be seen as her simply looking out for and taking watchful care of the spirit embedded in her name. Her subsequent actions throughout the play then become the outward-bound movements of her name's prompting spirit, though Shylock feels justified in condemning her as "a rebel" daughter and "damned for it" (3.1.28, 30). She disguises herself as a boy to escape, moving out of a patriarchal view of gender fixity to the freedom of gender flexibility (2.6.39); she then elopes with Lorenzo, moving out of the ghetto to the city and beyond; she becomes Lorenzo's wife, moving out from the sanction of the Old Mosaic Law to that of the New Law of Christianity, thus creating a new social identity ("I shall be saved by my husband. He hath made me a Christian" [3.5.18-9]); she steals Shylock's money and jewels, moving out of Shylock's own prodigal love of gold (2.6.33, 3.1.94) to giving and using it for the "hazard" of her love; and when she indulges in profligate spending in Genoa, she moves from hoarding gold for its own sake like Shylock ("Fourscore ducats at a sitting, / fourscore ducats!" [3.1.85-99]) to fulfilling Lorenzo's image of her soul as, like the stars, being made of "bright gold" in "patens" (5.1.69).

Fast forward in dramatic action to act 5, scene 1 and the etymological dimensions in Jessica's name coalesce into her most paradoxical role. For with his final dissembling act, Shakespeare proves that she has turned her biblical namesake into the entirely new Jessica: she has turned her outward movement into her act of "looking out" for "the potential in the future" of mutual love with Lorenzo and the final reward she receives at Portia's home, Belmont. Providing moonlight and music, which functions metaphorically as universal harmony, Shakespeare causes Venice's young in-group and out-group (the Other) members to engage in a kind of dialogue of social bonding, with the salutary result that they acquire a heightened creative understanding of social others and themselves. Jessica-Lorenzo's classical allusions in their love duet first foreground their cognitive ascent to reach more richly understood and articulated selves (5.1.1-22). Placing her own love story among the famous tales of love and faith between stranger and insider, Jessica pretends to be Cressida (wife of Menelaus of Sparta, a stranger) who betrays Troilus (a Trojan, an insider) after Cressida is moved to the Greek camp. Jessica also likens herself to Thisbe (a stranger) who, together with Pyramus (another stranger) in defiance of their insider parents ends her life tragically. Jessica alludes to Dido (queen of Cartage, an insider), who falls in love with Aeneas (a Trojan, a stranger) who in turn abandons her. Lastly, Jessica compares herself to Medea (of Colchis, an insider) and her love Jason (from Iolcus, a stranger) who betrays her and the way Medea avenges his treachery by murdering her own two sons by Jason. By elevating her love for Lorenzo to a universal, mythic level, Jessica demonstrates her new knowledge that unlike classical examples of insane or tragic love, her otherness in love has neither turned tragic nor miscarried despite surface resemblances. No longer existing as a binary self in society's eyes, her otherness has instead brought her and her now-husband Lorenzo to Belmont as a dual self in a place where free human association, friendship, and true romance culminate.

Shakespeare's last paradoxical touch is Jessica's newly achieved special epistemology which allows her to "see" what the in-group cannot. Her outbound movements have been in fact her mind moving transformatively toward what may be termed a humanized ethical epistemology beyond the insiders' simplistic and reductive duality of insider/citizen and stranger/Other. The act of the mind is infinite, irreducible, complex, and full of possibilities. Thus, the final paradox of Jessica is that it is Jessica the Other who defines others, because her Otherness helps to hold the truth of the identity of herself and others. Most illuminating is the role of Jessica as Portia's moral foil. Like Jessica, Portia—the gendered Other and subordinate to men—gains knowledge by learning the difference between doing good and knowing good. Like Jessica, Portia first wins Bassanio with her own device when she helps him choose the correct casket by providing background music that contains a hint on how to choose the right casket. But ultimately she refines her knowledge in the courtroom and secures Bassanio, not as a matter of self-abnegation or as a sacrificial victim like these classical women, but as a willing choice and defiance against the deceased father's injunction, mirroring Jessica's "rebellion" in a man's disguise. Like Jessica still, Portia also has "looked out for" a marriage of love as a union fundamental to her own civic freedom while learning also how to envision a redistribution of social authority in her civic society. In the final view, both Jessica and Portia transcend the accepted codes of the Other defined by class, culture, ethnicity, and gender. Jessica has taken watchful care, using the spirit innate in her name to reach her potential ("patens of bright gold" 5.1.69), achieving her fundamental right to individual salvation and happiness, this despite her thrice paradoxical social status as the Other ("this muddy vesture of decay" 5.1.72).

As Shakespeare concludes the play at Portia's Belmont (suitably meaning "a beautiful hill," deriving from the Old

French "beu" [fair, lovely] and "mont" [hill, mountain]), one wonders if Shakespeare's interest in proper names is only professionally inspired. Using his accepted biographical information, one can speculate that the shaping origins of his sense of the Other derived from the foundational paradox in several aspects of his own life. What made him "a stranger" and "an outsider" might have been his provincial heritage and education.[25] Another paradox is evident in the life he lived amid the bustle of mercantile London while, Tucker Brooke suggests, "his soul through all this time remained a stranger to them."[26] His writing career amidst the brilliant inner circle of the university wits and "the gentleman poets" might also have made him a part of, yet set apart, from his perhaps better-circumstanced social and literary associates.[27] The "stranger-outsider" in him must have been further honed by his astute schooling at the marginalized theatre which, paradoxically, was "both a part of, yet set apart from" the liberties of London."[28] In Steven Mullaney's phrasing, the stage taught him "[the] power to produce, in dramatic form, an anamorphic scene that always seems to call for yet one more perspective, for what are oftentimes mutually exclusive points-of-view, if it is to be adequately comprehended."[29] He is comparing the effects of Shakespeare's theatrical education to the similarly subversive and paradoxical effects of the anamorphic image of a skull in the foreground of Hans Holbein the Younger's painting, *The Ambassadors.* Even in his private self, his outbound artistic movement also points to his keen sense of paradox about his family name as evidenced in the granting of a coat-of-arms to his father, John Shakespeare in 1596—coincidentally the year he composed *The Merchant of Venice.* On his father's death in 1601, Shakespeare continued to use the coat of arms and had the right to style himself a gentleman—a new synthetic self built upon a faith that he could transcend the external given of his birth and enter a new field of belonging through his professional and personal respectability. Drawing on his

"maruelous" and "wonderfull" life, he would felicitously cultivate his universalist sensibility—what Mikhail Bakhtin calls "*supra-I* . . . the witness and the judge of *the whole* human being, of the whole I, and consequently someone who is no longer the person, no longer the I, but the *other* . . . a person irrespective of *I* and other," maintained in a dialogic equilibrium.[30] And thus enriched with paradox's epistemological and artistic privilege, Shakespeare dramatizes his kinship with Jessica and foreshadows our modern thinking that we as individuals are a microcosm of multiple Others within ourselves, distinct and different at given moments but also made a whole in the mysterious workings of multivalent love's power which can transcend both external and inner givens and boundaries.

Notes

1. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, introduction to T*he Merchant of Venice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), xx.

2. Generally agreed dates for their composition are as follows: *The Merchant of Venice* was composed in 1596-7, Othello in 1603-4.

3. John Drakakis, introduction to *The Merchant of Venice* (London: Arden Shakespeare, A & C Black Publishers Ltd, 2010), 30.

4. Otherness and Other are used interchangeably as signifiers.

5. The following concise and useful sources have been consulted: Lilia Melani, "The Other," Brooklyn College, City University of New York, last modified February 4, 2009, http://academic.brooklyn,cuny.edu/english/melani/cs6/other.html. She usefully summarizes modern thoughts on the Other by such writers as Edmund Husserl, Emanuel Levinas, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Julia Kristeva. John Drakakis's introduction in his edition of the play has also been consulted.

6. Lines quoted in this article are drawn from William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice,* ed. Barbara A Mowat and Paul Werstine (New York: Washington Square Press, 1992).

7. Drakakis, introduction to T*he Merchant of Venice,* 30.

8. Melani, "The Other."

9. This is Steven Mullaney's phraseology describing the status of Shakespeare's theatre in relation to the City of London in his T*he Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 54. I have adopted this expression to emphasize the gap between in-group and Other throughout this paper.

10. Julia Kristeva, P*owers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection,* trans. Leon S. Roundiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4.

11. Ibid., 9-10.

12. The term "writers" in the English Renaissance is meant to refer to "authors" (translators, prose writers), "playwrights," and "poets or makers," though some writers belong to more than one category. George Puttenham uses "poet" throughout his work.

13. Rosalie L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 10.

14. Perseus Digital Library, "Henry Peachum., The Garden of Eloquence (1593): Schemas," Tufts University, accessed February 28, 2019,http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus %3Atext%3A 1999.03.0096% 3Apart%3DSchemates+Rhetorical%3Asubpart%3DThe+second+order%3Asection%3DFigures+of+Permission%3Asubsection%3DParadoxon.

15. Quotations from Puttenham derive from George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London: A. Murray and Sons, 1869), Internet Archive, https://archive.org/details/georgeputtenham00puttgoog/page/n144). I have also consulted with a critical edition of Puttenham's handbook edited by F. Whigham and W. A. Rebhorn who modernized Puttenham's Elizabethan English.

16. Ibid., The Arte of English Poesie, 233.

17. Ibid., 304.

18. Ibid., 149.

19. In 1516, the Republic of Venice established the world's oldest Jewish ghetto.

20. I have adapted Melani's list of otherness to characterize Jessica's otherness. Many of these characteristics are shared by Jessica and Portia as gendered Others.

21. See Israel Gollancz, *Allegory and Mysticism in Shakespeare: A Medievalist on* The Merchant of Venice, *Reports on Three Lectures,* ed. A. W. Pollard (London: Haskell House, 1931), 13-68; Barbara K. Lewalski, "Biblical Allusion and Allegory in *The Merchant of Venice,*" Shakespeare Quarterly 13.3 (Summer 1962): 327-343; William Green, "Humours Characters and Attributive Names in Shakespeare's Plays," *A Journal of Onomastics* 20.3 (September 1972): 157-165.

22. Patrick Hanks, Kate Hardcastle, and Flavia Hodges, *A Dictionary of First Names,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 142-3.

23. Genesis 11.29. The Bishop's Bible (translated in 1568) may have also been available to him. Though the King James version is often cited as part of Shakespeare's indirect sources, it was not published until 1611, near his retirement from the theatre. On the popularity of the Geneva Bible among the Puritans, see Adam Nicolson, *God's Secretaries: The Making of*

the King James Bible (New York: Harper Collins Publishers,2003), 58-60, 180, 228-230, and 249-50.

24. Gollancz, *Allegory and Mysticism in Shakespeare,* 42.

25. The Other and the outsider often overlap, but they are not identical. "The outsider has the possibility of being accepted by and incorporated into the group; offspring are very likely to be accepted into the group." Melani, "The Other."

26. Tucker Brooke, *Essays on Shakespeare and Other Elizabethans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 27.

27. Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 2004), 206-10.

28. Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage,* 54.

29. Ibid.

30. Mikhail Bakhtin, "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays,* trans. and notes by Vadim Liapunov, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 39; "From Notes Made in 1970-71," *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays,* trans. Vern W. McGee, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 137-8.

The Counterfeit Trap in Shakespeare's Comedies: *Twelfth Night, The Taming of the Shrew, and Much Ado About Nothing*

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Counterfeiting another person through disguise, invention, or dissembling creates a kind of trap in Shakespeare's comedies. "Trap" applies to counterfeiting and comedies in two different senses. It can refer to the unintended consequences to self and to others that adopting a disguise or other pretense brings about. In substantial ways, these consequences are the bases of the comic disguise plots with which we are familiar. Comedies with plots based on counterfeiting pursue complications to the point of greatest disorder before restoring the world back to harmony, often in ways that seem (or are) magical. The traditional view dating back at least to C.L. Barber holds that this new order is more promising than the world left behind, the one that necessitated the disguise to begin with. Read from a distant and narrow point of view, *As You Like It* might be the paradigm case of potential consequences and

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romantic transformations, ending as it does not only with Rosalind and the Duke's restoration of their roles but also with Frederick and Oliver's reformation of their souls.

But counterfeit's "trap" can also more directly refer to the confines of the disguise or pretense itself. In this way, being trapped means the perpetrators of counterfeiting are caught permanently in their disguises, in the very fictional roles they create to escape their troubles or achieve their goals. Put another way, in this second form of counterfeit trap the means of achieving a goal unintentionally become the end or, in some cases, the dead end that would keep impersonators from accomplishing their aims. In the most extreme version of this trap, the character would actually become her or his disguise, unconscious of any existence outside the self that was formerly mere pretense. It is this second form of trap that I am mainly concerned with here. Shakespeare's comedies of disguise tend to trap counterfeit's practitioners in the roles and the worlds they create in a way that goes beyond unintended consequences and collapses the ready distinction between that character's fiction and reality. I say "tend' because the phenomenon takes place much more subtly than the first trap of unintended consequences. As a tendency, counterfeit's trap in these plays has two qualities of note. The first is that it is not complete: characters, as a matter of course, do not fully and conclusively turn into the counterfeit figures they put forth. The second is that it persists and sometimes even arises at the play's resolution, when the loose ends of the first kind of trap are all supposedly being tied up. By allowing for this persistence, the endings of Shakespeare's disguise comedies do not so much resolve the tensions of the first kind of counterfeit trap as transform them into another kind of tension, one that intensifies the palpable nature of dramatic fiction itself.

Of all Shakespeare's comedies, *Twelfth Night* offers perhaps the most extensive and observable instance of both kinds of counterfeit traps. The unintended consequences of

Viola's disguise as Cesario may surpass those of any other Shakespeare comedy. Even an abbreviated list is daunting: Orsino has commissioned Cesario (against her will) to woo Olivia; that same Countess has fallen for Cesario; Antonio's mistaking of Cesario for Sebastian has evoked wrath and insults; Sir Andrew's mistaking of Sebastian for Cesario has resulted in a sound beating (as almost happens to Feste in 4.1); Olivia's mistaking Sebastian for Cesario has moved him to the point that he "wrangle[s]" (4.2.14) with any conclusion other than that he is mad. By the final scene, the play, as the genre demands, has pursued dissonance to its most confused place where Viola's role as feigned Cesario is at the center of a mounting number of seemingly intractable problems.

As the genre dictates, the ending of the play addresses these comic complications. Sebastian's appearance clears up the confusions brought about by Viola's imitating her brother; Olivia's misplaced love finds a place; Orsino understands that his servant is not only loyal to him but also available as a wife; Viola no longer has to endure the blame for thrashing Sir Toby or for abandoning Antonio in his hour of need; she also is on the cusp of marrying the "bachelor" she has been thinking about since she was first informed of Orsino's rule in Illyria.

However, in the act of resolving these complications the play brings about the second sense of counterfeit's trap in which Viola's fiction threatens to become reality. According to terms the play introduces only at the end, reuniting with her brother and marrying Orsino both require Viola's eventual escape from Cesario by having her gender-normative clothes returned to her. She tells Sebastian not to embrace her until "each circumstance / Of place, time, fortune" confirms that she is Viola (5.1.247-48).[1] Orsino likewise makes his marriage to her contingent upon finding her women's clothes: "When that is known, and golden time convents, / A solemn combination shall be made / Of our dear souls" (5.1.375-77). However, as Stephen Booth discusses extensively in

Precious Nonsense, this eventuality never materializes in the play's action.[2] Cesario's restoration to Viola remains potential, not actual. Her deliverance depends on the release of the Captain who has Viola's women's clothes but is being held "in durance" (5.1.278) by Malvolio who has just stormed off swearing revenge "on the whole pack" (5.1.377) of them and who must be entreated "to a peace" (5.1.380) before any of these things can happen. The sense that Viola might be trapped as Cesario is further emphasized by Orsino's address at the end of the play. Orsino persists in calling her by her counterfeit sex ("Boy") and adopted name ("Cesario, come") and identifies her in a grammatical form of simple identity that treats her disguise and her presented gender as real: "For so you shall *be,* while you *are* a man" (5.1.267, 386, 387, emphasis added). If Malvolio is never found and the entreaties are unsuccessful, then, again according to Orsino's stipulations and her own, Viola remains Cesario and a man. Shakespeare has effectively replaced one set of complications with another.

In large part the novelty of the analysis above resides in its emphasis on identity more than in its information about problems remaining at the end of *Twelfth Night.* However, some features of the ending's comic complication are worth pausing over. For one, the play has introduced the second type of trap at the moment it is resolving the first type, even though nothing in the play calls for such a trap to emerge. Thus, the play connects this new complication to the old ones despite the fact that it in no way is a logical or necessary consequence of them. Even more mysteriously, Viola herself is the one who introduces the conditions that could leave her trapped as Cesario and unable to unite with Orsino or reunite with her brother. In an article connecting Viola's "Do not embrace me" to hermeneutic traditions contemporary to Shakespeare surrounding Christ's enjoining Mary Magdalene, "Noli me tangere," Yu Jin Ko acknowledges the mystery of this development: "Why Viola-as-character

defers the embrace seems to me inexplicable."[3] While Ko's focus is on Viola's failed reunion with her brother and how that failure prolongs the pleasure of desire unfulfilled, just as notable is the failure of time, place, and circumstance in the play to confirm her identity as Viola. The conditions, occasions, grammar, and names all conspire to leave Viola not just unfulfilled but also in the counterfeit identity of her own making.

Although the threats of counterfeit's trap are more visible by the end of the play, the potential for Viola to be caught in her fiction has been present since she conceived her disguise. At the point she creates and announces her plan, Viola already focuses on its means much more than its ends. She instructs the captain, "Conceal me what I am" and "present me as a eunuch" to Orsino (1.2.50-53). However, the goal of her disguise she leaves vague, asking the captain only to "aid" her in creating "such disguise as haply shall become / The form of [her] intent" (1.2.50-52). Editors usually (and correctly) gloss this phrasing so that "become" is "suit" and "form of my intent" the "nature of my purpose." Even so, the lines merely announce that she has a plan without specifying her goal beyond serving the Duke. "What else may hap" Viola arbitrarily commits "to time" (1.2.57). Moreover, Viola's phrasing is overly difficult to the point of near obfuscation. We cannot arrive at this typically-glossed meaning without entertaining the older and more common definition of "become" as "come to be."[4] While paraphrasing these lines to mean "help me to adopt such a disguise as shall perhaps come to be the nature of my goal" may be exegetically perverse, such a reading aptly becomes the fate of Cesario at play's end, where "disguise" and "intent" really do threaten to merge. Plus, a visually realized pun on "become" as "fitting" and "come to be" is at the heart of Maria and company's gulling of Malvolio. The "postscript" to Maria's letter instructs the designated reader, "If thou entertain'st my love, let it appear in thy smiling—thy smiles become thee"

(2.5.169-170). Maria's dupe is complete only when Malvolio becomes (turns into) the "still smil[ing]" figure the letter says becomes (befits) him.

The soliloquy in Act 2 where Viola recognizes and states the unintended consequences of her disguise also holds the potential for counterfeit's second-type trap. Viola states the tangle of these unforeseen effects in this way:

> What will become of this? As I am man,
> My state is desperate for my master's love;
> As I am woman, now alas the day,
> What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe.
> Oh time, thou must entangle this, not I,
> It is too hard a knot for me t'untie. (2.2.36-41)

On the level of sense, Viola must mean, "Inasmuch as I am disguised as a man, gaining Orisno's love is hopeless, and insofar as I am really a [heterosexual] woman, Olivia [also heterosexual] is wasting her breath when she sighs for me." However, Viola does not directly say this intended meaning. Getting to this meaning requires that we untie a lexical knot in which identical phrasing is meant to be read in two different senses. The exact grammatical parallel of "as I am man" and "as I am woman" does nothing to prioritize her formerly real self over her now fictional one. The phrases exist in complete parity, not distinguishing any difference between the degree to which Viola is one gender over the other. Catherine Belsey's influential analysis of this soliloquy holds that such an equivalency "disrupts" sexual difference and that Viola "occupies a place that is not precisely masculine or feminine."[5] Such an analysis arises from Belsey's correct sense that occupying equally and at once two exclusive identities is impossible, i.e, if Viola is both, then she must be neither and so exists in some realm of "possible meanings."[6] However, the simultaneity of these two opposing states of being actually provides a way of understanding the "knot" beyond the terms of unintended consequences and in those of the counterfeit trap. The grammatical equivalence compels us to

ask exactly which too-hard "knot" Viola commends to time "t'untie" (2.2.40-41): the problems caused by her disguise or the possibility that her real gender at this point could go either way. Similar to her announcement of disguise, Viola's very articulation of the first kind of counterfeit trap, of the unintended consequences of disguise, already contains the second.

The idea that Shakespeare's comedies, particularly those involving disguise or mistaken identity, are in an important sense transformative is a long-standing part of criticism. At the opening of *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy,* Barber speaks of how comedies "express. . . the experience of moving to humorous *understanding* through saturnalian release."[7] In *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy,* Leo Salinger claims Shakespeare's comedies differ from their Italian precursors because they contain realistic characters and the possibility of real character transformation:

> Shakespeare's characters are not merely capable of being surprised by what happens to them . . . like people in Italian comedies; they can be carried out of their normal selves, 'transformed', observe themselves passing into a new phase of experience, so strange that it seems like illusion. This is only part, indeed, of a more fundamental innovation which in its general effect distinguishes Shakespeare's plays from all previous comedies, that he gives his people the quality of an inner life.[8]

A relative latecomer to this tradition, Karen Newman's *Shakespeare and the Rhetoric of Comic Character* more directly spells out the theory of comedic transformation. In the analysis of *Much Ado about Nothing* near the end of her work, Newman summarizes her argument about comedy as a whole: "Mistaken identity, role playing, and alternative identities are therapeutic instruments which lead characters to self-knowledge, for these comic devices are not simply tools for developing plot, but springboards for experimentation whereby men and women escape from self-delusion to the

self-understanding which enables them to live and learn."[9] This early work of Newman's came out in 1985, in the same year (and by the same press) that John Drakakis's *Alternative Shakespeares* begins, interrupting a critical tradition that reads comedy teleologically as a move to self-understanding. The essays and arguments in Drakakis's introduction and collection classify the premises of work like Newman's as expressions of "liberal humanism" and fundamentally alter criticism as a whole by rejecting the idea that "'consciousness' precedes action, and that dramatic character constitutes axiomatically a unified subject of consciousness."[10] Writing specifically about disguise in 1993, Lloyd Davis critiques the notion that characters transform and learn as upholding "cultural ideals and myths of selfhood."[11] For most of the 90s and 2000s, this materialist critique ended character-based criticism and readings of character transformation.[12]

The tendency of Viola to be caught in her disguise does not challenge Newman on materialist grounds such as those Drakakis names, nor does it fully discount the idea that characters discover their mistakes, change, and even learn. But it does present a truly "alternative" possibility that stands beside and counterpoises the tradition of comedy as progress narrative. In the process of escaping self-delusion, characters are caught in new illusions; instead of being delivered from their problems, they are stuck in the counterfeit creations of others or themselves. In the act of really going somewhere, characters in some way get nowhere at all.

From the standpoint of criticism, it would be hard to overstate how important the questions of what is an actual self and what is a counterfeit self, in drama and the real world, have been to late twentieth-century philosophical, psychoanalytical, and sociological thought and to Shakespearean criticism. Its prominence in Shakespeare and early modern English studies reaches back at least to Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. Greenblatt argues that culture in early modern England witnessed an "increased

self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process."[13] His work's influential thesis is consistent with post-modern theories of the subject and maintains that the self, the real self that dwells and hopes to advance in the world, is a kind of fiction—an invention or fabrication that subjects fashion—and that written fictional texts are parts of strategies that create these selves. In *Guise and Disguise: Rhetoric and Characterization in the English Renaissance,* Davis defines the function of disguise in terms that are consonant with Greenblatt's ideas of self-fashioning: "Disguise represents a calculated effort by a character to resolve problems or realize goals through manipulating identity in certain situations."[14] Extending Greenblatt and others' notions of the fictional self to drama, Davis asserts, "There may never be a 'disguise-less' character; instead, it is the degree or intent of deception and the control over the effects of disguise that vary."[15] As a way of acknowledging the factitious nature of human subjects while preserving their distinction from disguised dramatic characters, Davis calls disguise "a personal palimpsest" that "establishes ordinal and temporal hierarchies among primary, secondary, and possibly more personae."[16] Although related on some theoretical level, disguises in drama differ from self-fashioning in that the counterfeit selves that characters fashion are secondary, distinct from the primary selves these characters hope to advance even if those disguises are part of the advancement. In terms of the framework that Davis is establishing, Viola's situation, as an instance of the counterfeit trap, threatens to invert or disrupt these hierarchies of personae at all of the stages above (announcing her intent, voicing her predicament, and supposedly resolving her problems). Viola dissolves an identity that is clearly primary to create a secondary identity in such a way that it impedes her ability to "resolve problems or realize goals." Put another way, even if the subject marks a kind of existence where the fictional becomes real, the threat in these comedies that characters might become their

counterfeits works against the self-fashioning that Greenblatt has in mind.

More thoroughly than *Twelfth Night, The Taming of the Shrew* brings into focus both forms of counterfeit trap and the relationship between the two insofar as they permeate all levels of action including Induction, main plot, and subplot. The comic subplot in which Lucentio pursues Bianca by disguising himself as the Latin tutor Cambio and having his own trusty servant Tranio take his identity as a scholar and as official suitor has escalating consequences that involve the "supposed Lucentio" getting a Merchant to disguise himself as the "supposed Vincentio" (2.1.411). The subplot's comic climax in 5.1 involves a kind of confusion between fiction and reality in which the "right Vincentio" (5.1.106) is unable to prove his real identity (he has already been called a woman in the previous scene) and is threatened with jail by his "supposed" son Tranio. Clarification can only occur when the real Lucentio marries Bianca and returns to validate the existence of his real father. When Lucentio arrives at the last possible moment, he tells Baptista in a summarizing couplet, "I have by marriage made thy daughter mine, / While counterfeit supposes bleared thine eyne" (5.1.107-08).

This solution sounds simple enough, but the play has prolonged this marriage and delayed Lucentio's return and has done both in terms of the counterfeit trap. In his most recent appearance in 4.4, Lucentio, who is on the verge of getting what he wants, seems to be less of himself and more of his counterfeit. Even though the two are alone, his other servant Biondello persists in calling Lucentio "Cambio" and twice refers to Tranio as "my master," once to initiate discussion and later to say that he cannot tarry because his "master" has given him orders to ready the priest at St. Luke's. Part of the persistence of these titles could be contractual: i.e., Biondello is compelled by prearrangement to call Lucentio 'Cambio' and Tranio his master. However, earlier dialogue seems to stipulate the opposite. The understanding that Biondello

has with Tranio requires only that Biondello call his fellow servant 'Lucentio' "in all kinds of companies" but not "when [they are] alone." (1.1.246-47). Based on this logic, moments such as this are tailor-made for Lucentio and Biondello to revert to their customary titles and roles.

However, it is not just that Biondello is using the disguised names unnecessarily; Lucentio, on the whole, is really acting as if he is not quite all there, especially at the moment Biondello communicates the plan for elopement:

Biondello: Cambio!
Lucentio: What sayst thou, Biondello?
Biondello: You saw my master wink and laugh upon you?
Lucentio: Biondello, what of that?
Biondello: Faith, nothing; but h'as left me here behind to expound the meaning or moral of his signs and tokens.
Lucentio: I pray thee, moralize them.
Biondello: Then thus: Baptista is safe, talking with the deceiving father of a deceitful son.
Lucentio: And what of him?
Biondello: His daughter is to be brought by you to the supper.
Lucentio: And then?
Biondello: The old priest at Saint Luke's church is at your command at all hours.
Lucentio: And what of all this? (4.4.73-89)

Inexplicably, Lucentio does not understand that Biondello is referring to Lucentio's opportunity to elope with Bianca while Tranio and the Merchant (or Pedant) are busy giving "counterfeit assurance" (4.4.92) to Baptista. This failing is even more baffling because Lucentio has already discussed this exact plan with Tranio in 3.2. While the others are offstage for Katherine and Petruchio's wedding, Lucentio tells Tranio,

> Were it not that my fellow schoolmaster [Hortensio in disguise]

> Doth watch Bianca's steps so narrowly,
> 'Twere good, methinks, to steal our marriage,
> Which once performed, let all the world say no,
> I'll keep my own, despite of all the world. (3.2.137-40)

Lucentio is failing to recognize the device of his own plotting. Considered further, this moment is Lucentio's best opportunity for release from Cambio. Biondello is laying before him the easy pathway to deliverance from the unintended consequences of his disguise, a release that Lucentio himself initially contrived. Yet, at this moment, counterfeit identity asserts and reinforces itself, as if it has taken on a life of its own. It is almost as if Lucentio has become someone else altogether.

Some possible explanations for Lucentio's behavior come to mind. The first is that the scene is a protracted comic exposition meant to give Biondello a chance for antics. Perhaps Lucentio's uncharacteristic thickness is the result of suddenly cold feet or a fear that Bianca is unwilling to go through with the elopement—possibilities he suggests when he asks, "She will be pleased; then wherefore should I doubt?" (4.4.105). However, neither of these explanations fully accounts for the consistent mistaken identity that takes place throughout the entire episode. It is as if Lucentio has become alienated from himself and from his plans and teeters on becoming his disguise rather than himself. Even the final line of the scene, in which he resolves to marry Bianca, has him doing so as Cambio rather than as Lucentio: "It shall go hard if Cambio go without her" (4.4.106). The bawdy double meaning of "it shall go hard" suggests that the reason Lucentio will marry Bianca is one of the same reasons that Sly in the Induction eventually accepts the counterfeit that he is a lord rather than a tinker: because of his desire for his "lady far more beautiful / Than any woman in this waning age" (Ind.2.60-61). Driven by a bodily impulse that is neither sly nor lordly, Sly asks, "Am I a lord, and have I such a lady?" before concluding, "Upon my life, I am a lord

indeed" (Ind. 2. 66, 70). Lucentio's statement of resolve does not confirm that he no longer sees himself as Cambio but that Cambio will not get to enjoy sex if he does not marry (with the implication that marriage to Bianca requires that he be Lucentio rather than Cambio).

The possibility that Lucentio might have really become Cambio casts new light on his hardly credible response to Bianca's claim that "Cambio is changed into Lucentio," and his own that "Love wrought these miracles" (5.1.116-7). According to his hyperbole, Lucentio's change into Cambio and back could not have occurred without divine intervention. But the larger significance in terms of the plot is that while Lucentio has inexplicably struggled to understand Biondello's meaning and slough his role as Cambio so that he can marry Bianca, the welter of complications in 5.1 has grown so intense that the play abandons the attempt to resolve the subplot in the action. Whatever resolution has occurred at the opening of 5.2 (where Lucentio announces, "At last, though long, our jarring notes agree") has taken place in the ether offstage. Therefore, *The Taming of the Shrew* ends with a conundrum. The play never resolves its subplot even though its subplot is resolved, and behind this conundrum is the counterfeit trap.

The chance that Lucentio might actually become Cambio is a more serious version of the Induction's farcical premise in which a Lord creates a counterfeit life for the tinker Sly in hopes that the drunk "beggar" will "forget himself" (Ind.1.40) and believe that he is a mighty lord. The difference is that Lucentio by his own suggestion falls; Sly by the schemes of others. Of course, the extent of Sly's transformation into the identity that has been counterfeited for him is debatable. At no stage in his existence does Sly's grasp on identity ever seem more than tenuous, descending as he has from "Richard Conqueror" (Ind.1.4) and moving through a series of veritable non-professions to reach his "present" trade of tinker (Ind.2.19). While Sly may not know that he is being

victimized, he still does not make a convincing lord. But more telling than the fate of Sly is that of the schemers who concoct and effect his counterfeit in the first place. This fate is impossible to witness because in the only surviving version of the play called *The Taming of the Shrew,* the Lord and his servants never reappear to release themselves and others from their counterfeit designs. Effectively, all participants remain trapped in a permanent saturnalian role reversal where the Lord, gentlemen, and servants curtsy to Lord Christopher Sly.

If it does not offer an answer to whether Katherine is tamed, the context of these counterfeit traps certainly presents a new way to frame the problem of her taming in the play's finale. Unlike Tranio, Katherine does not put on disguises, at least not any that are verifiable as such. Petruchio schemes to tame Kate by altering her identity through a series of announced counterfeit ploys and scenarios (2.1.167-79, 306-21; 4.1.177-200, 4.5.6-10) that compel her participation. Like Sly, she is the object of others' designs. Katherine herself never visibly practices subterfuge, at least not until 4.5 when she self-consciously obeys Petruchio's command that she call the sun the moon and old Vincentio a young woman. Such self-conscious obedience to Petruchio would place Katherine in a category different either from Sly, whose self-cognizance is at no point beyond question, or from Lucentio, who inclines toward unselfconsciously becoming Cambio before reemerging as Vincentio's right son. The question is how seriously we are to take Baptista's hyperbole stated as fact: that Katharine has actually become "another daughter" deserving "another dowry" and is no longer Katherine—that "she has changed as [if] she had never been" (5.2.121-22). It is possible that in her final speech we are witnessing the summit of the counterfeit trap, a place where an imposed role looks so exactly like a real self that it is impossible to tell where one ends and the other begins.

By the end of the play this indeterminate condition has extended from Katherine to her audience on stage who

might be just as tightly wrapped in the new fictional world as Katherine. Almost all present on stage desired at some level that Katherine would become a tamed Kate, but all are also (whether literally or figuratively) held captive by the insistent nature of this new self and her compelling speech. Lucentio's designation of Katherine as a "wonder" bears witness to the aporia both in the phenomenon of her sudden change and in the audience witnessing it. The episode on the whole is little short of transforming.

Although not a disguise comedy in the vein of *Twelfth Night* and *The Taming of the Shrew, Much Ado About Nothing* still concerns characters whose pretended selves have a tendency to become real and investigates as thoroughly as these other plays the complications and traps arising from counterfeiting. The play's variations on the counterfeiting motif are numerous. First none of the major lovers willingly assumes a disguise in the hopes of achieving some goal, romantic or other. Similar to the imposed identities of Sly and Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew,* the eventual lovers Benedick and Beatrice unknowingly have their counterfeits affixed to them, here by the scheming Prince Don Pedro and his confederates. Also like Katherine's marriage, this romantic comedy's promised happy ending depends on the focal characters really becoming or being the selves that others counterfeit for them. Additionally, careful viewers or readers suspect that Benedick and Beatrice may already be the lovers that the conspirators pretend they are. The subtext of disappointed past love between the two is so powerful and their transformation (once each hears of the other's affection) into lovers so rapid that it is difficult to know whether the loving selves the Prince and others ascribe to them are counterfeit or just latent. Hence, counterfeiting may exist only in theory, not in reality. However, once the two acknowledge their love (at least to themselves), they have trouble performing the real love they supposedly feel for each other—as if real life is a series of postures that feel fake or

that one might perform inexpertly. Even at the play's end, the question of whether Benedick and Beatrice's love is real or feigned is not fully resolved. We are left with characters in positions remarkably similar to those in *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Twelfth Night.* Benedick and Beatrice cannot be fully verified as their counterfeit selves or as the selves prior to their counterfeits. Upon receiving their own written proof against their denials of love, Benedick figures the two of them as physically, and so ontologically, divided: "A Miracle! Here's our own hands against our hearts" (5.4.91-92).

Despite its variations on and departures from typical disguise comedies, *Much Ado*'s plot is like them in one essential way: it still dramatizes the dangerous consequences for those who author counterfeits. At the outset, Don Pedro, Claudio, Leonato, and others hubristically figure the task of bringing Benedick and Beatrice into "a mountain of affection th'one with th'other" (2.1.349-50) in terms of a divine power that would out-Cupid Cupid: "If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer: his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods." (2.1.366-67). However, the main result of their efforts is the chaos normally associated with the love-god. The point in 4.1 where Don Pedro's scheme to create love meets Don John's scheme to destroy it turns out to be a dangerous intersection. For the same affection that Don Pedro and Claudio have engineered tilts the play further towards tragedy. In his effort to prove himself the lover the conspirators plotted for him to become, Benedick requests Beatrice to, "Come, bid me do anything for thee" (4.1.287). Beatrice's avenging reply, "Kill Claudio," obligates Benedick by chivalry to disprove her assertion that "There is no love in" him should he continue his refusal (4.1.292-93). Benedick recommissions the same hand that he just used to swear love to promise that he will make Claudio "render [him] a dear account" (4.1.330).

Other than Don John's ploy to ruin Claudio's happiness, the most influential fabrication in the latter part of the

play is Friar Francis' scheme to falsely publish Hero's death, a pretense that results in both types of counterfeit traps. The Friar claims Hero's pretended death will be doubly-reformative—that it will be so moving that it will restore Hero in everyone and especially Claudio's eyes and will make her recently betrothed mourn for his shamed beloved, going so far as to "wish he had not so accused her," even if he still believes "his accusation true" (4.1.232-33). When it comes to the result, the Friar is so wide of the mark that were the play not terrifying, it would be comical. Instead of leading to reconciliation, the Friar's plan magnifies hostilities. It is not just that Claudio infuriatingly fails to react the way the Friar predicts, but the pretense of Hero's death is also what really gives Benedick the footing he needs to follow through with the promise he made Beatrice to challenge Claudio for Hero's disgrace: "You are a villain; I jest not: I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare… You have killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you" (5.1.143-47). The characters become so caught up Hero's pretend death that it verges on creating real deaths.

However, the character for whom the Friar's scheme exceeds practical, physical consequences and threatens to alter his very identity is Hero's father Leonato. This threat emerges most clearly at the opening of 5.1 in Leonato's dispute with Antonio about whether or not he feels or exhibits his grief too passionately. Against Antonio's objections that he "seconds" grief, Leonato argues for the singularity of his mourning ("Bring me a father that so loved his child") and asserts that in such a case all counselors against grief would prove eventual hypocrites given the inevitably of succumbing to grief when we actually feel it.

> No, no, 'tis all men's office to speak patience
> To those that wring under the load of sorrow,
> But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
> To be so moral when he shall endure
> The like himself. (5.1.27-31)

This episode is among the most complex of any in Shakespeare's comedies, and its complexity pivots on the question of what portion or element of his grief is counterfeit and what in it is real.

These questions arise from two different ambiguities. The first has to do with the point of reference. For what is Leonato grieving, for his daughter's disgrace or for her death? If it is the first, then his mourning is real, but if it is the second, then his mourning would appear to be an invention meant to draw from Antonio the very kind of reaction that Leonato receives. However, the source of his grief is difficult to locate. In this opening part of the scene, Leonato does not specifically allude to this source other than stating a deep love for his daughter. Immediately before his and Antonio's encounter with Claudio and the Prince, Leonato mentions his soul's confidence that "Hero is belied," but such a statement does not rule out the possibility that he is grieving for her death rather than her slander (5.1.42). When Leonato challenges Claudio later in the scene, he sincerely links the slander to Hero's death, "I say thou hast belied mine innocent child. / Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart, / And she lies buried with her ancestors" (5.1.67-79).

The issue of whether Leonato's mourning is real or feigned is complicated by the question of what Antonio knows. Neither the 1600 Quarto nor the 1623 Folio's stage directions for 4.1 list Antonio among those present when the Friar invented the ploy. At this point, the play has not revealed whether Leonato has informed Antonio of the Friar's deception. If Antonio does not know, then it is possible that Leonato is merely counterfeiting the grief that Antonio warns him against feeling too palpably. In claiming his grief is irrepressible, Leonato may be adhering closely to the Friar's instruction to "publish it that [Hero] is dead" and to "maintain a mourning ostentation" (4.1.204-05), even to his brother. That Leonato's argument to Antonio is essentially one for why his "mourning ostentation" cannot

help but be maintained further suggests the likelihood of this explanation.

So, at what point does Antonio know about the scheme? In his brief analysis of the uncle's absence from the Church-Scene, J.C. Maxwell argues that Antonio could not possibly be aware of Hero's death at this point in 5.1 for reasons both aesthetic and practical: "It is simply that the opening dialogue between Leonato and Antonio in V.i. cannot plausibly take place between two speakers both of whom know that Hero is still alive."[17] While Maxwell may be correct, by the latter part of this long scene Antonio clearly is aware of the ruse because Leonato is volunteering a woman he claims to be Antonio's daughter as Hero's replacement. The play does not dramatize what happens offstage in the time between Leonato's receiving his daughter's exculpation and his reappearance to castigate Borachio and Claudio. Although Maxwell does not suggest that Antonio's ignorance means that Leonato is merely pretending to grieve, this possibility is much more likely if his brother does not know of the Friar's scheme.

However, the expertise of Leonato's performance might suggest that his mourning here is not feigned. Leonato, it turns out, is a terrible actor. In the improvised dialogue where Don Pedro, Claudio, and he attempt to gull Benedick, Leonato is the one whose performance stumbles most visibly. When the Prince prompts Leonato to recount the "effects" of passion Beatrice shows, Leonato awkwardly defers to Claudio: "What effects my lord? She will sit you—you heard my daughter tell you how" (2.3.111-12). Additionally, in the same ruse to convince Benedick of Beatrice's love for him, Leonato weighs in on a matter related to his argument about grief to suggest in general that counterfeiting strong emotion is impossible. To Don Pedro's doubting prompt that Beatrice "doth but counterfeit," Leonato attests to the inability to feign real passion, a point that complements his later contention about the impossibility of hiding genuine sorrow: "O God, counterfeit! There was never counterfeit of

passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it" (2.3.106-08). But as in 5.1, context dents the authority of his statement. After all, Leonato's utterance about counterfeiting takes place within a larger counterfeit frame. Does Leonato mean what he says? Or is such a statement a truism so readily available that even as poor an improviser as Leonato can seize upon it regardless of whether he subscribes to the belief or not?

Recent critics writing on mourning and grief in *Much Ado About Nothing* take Leonato's grief as sincere. In an excellent analysis of "the dangerous control that the giver of comfort can all too easily wield over the needy person who suffers," Fred B. Tromly assumes Leonato's show of grief is thoroughly authentic.[18] Although he recognizes a certain unflattering "self-mourning" behind Leonato's professed grief for his daughter, Tromly uses Leonato's reaction to his brother as a model of the "characteristic" treatment of consolation in Shakespeare "in which a character who is grieving resists the counsel that another character has proffered."[19] From a different perspective Alan Döring, in his consideration of mourning's "performance" in *Much Ado,* focuses solely on the parodic potential residing in the "silly rhymes" of Claudio's funeral rites, and not on Leonato's public grief which precedes it. Döring calls the ritual "parodic" in the sense of "incongruity" because Hero's still-living status makes the application of mourning rites "out of place," saying, "The heavy-handed rhymes [of Claudio's bad verses] reflect this fundamental incongruity between the solemn modes of mourning and their present use."[20] Döring adds that Claudio needs not be cognizant of parody for it to exist, noting, "the immediate protagonists, Claudio and Pedro, are unaware that the rite they perform is a counterfeit production."[21] Here, Claudio's ignorance that "Hero's death is counterfeit" is significant for creating the distance and incongruity that are necessary for parody.[22] In light of both these critics, the question arises of how Leonato's knowledge that "Hero's death is counterfeit"

might affect the relationship between speaker and speech in this scene. Döring does not extend to Leonato the possibility that his mourning too is a "counterfeit production," nor does Tromly consider how the potential for counterfeiting itself might spur resistance to Antonio's "proffered" counsel. Each shows in a different way how the default is, as Benedick does in 2.3, to credit "the white-bearded fellow" (2.3.120) at his word.

From the combination of his bad improvisation and his utterly convincing performance that seems to convince audiences both on stage and off also arises the possibility that Leonato has somehow become less than clear himself on the source of his mourning or the difference between the counterfeit he perpetrates and reality. In the turmoil of emotions over his daughter's disgrace and the question of what he should believe about her, Leonato has perhaps begun treating the fiction of Hero's death as real. Thus, Leonato may be speaking with sincere conviction when he tells Claudio, "Thou hast killed my child; / If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man" (5.1.78-79). With Leonato's grief, the audience must, like those judging Hero's blush at the nuptial, struggle to determine whether these signs and semblances of mourning are true or not. The issue, however, goes beyond whether or not the audience can discern Leonato's sincerity. It is possible that Leonato is, as Döring claims for Claudio and Don Pedro in their mourning, "unaware" that his grief "is a "counterfeit production."

The prospect that Leonato has become his counterfeit offers a more powerful way of understanding the puzzling claims and exclamations uttered during Hero's unveiling at her second nuptial to Claudio:

Hero: And when I lived, I was your other wife
And when you loved, you were my other husband.
Claudio: Another Hero!
Hero: Nothing certainer:

One Hero died defiled, but I do live,
And surely as I live, I am a maid.
Don Pedro: The former Hero! Hero that is dead!
Leonato: She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived.
(5.4.60-66)

The four speakers here make at least three claims about Hero's present identity with respect to her counterfeit death. First, Claudio claims and Hero confirms that the bride before him is not the former or the dead Hero but another Hero altogether. The other Hero, this Hero claims, "died defiled." Don Pedro counters their certainty and exclaims joyously that she is the same Hero, the "former Hero," but in doing so avouches her, in present tense, as the dead Hero that was supposedly mere counterfeit. In performance, one must imagine that Don Pedro's delivery registers the delight of finding Hero alive, but denotatively his words preserve Hero's alleged death, even when she stands before him and claims that she is both alive and "a maid." Leonato would appear to correct one or all by saying that Hero was dead only while her slander lived and that the death of that falsehood has resurrected Hero. Even the Friar's assurance that he will qualify their "amazement" holds to the rhetoric of authenticity: "When after that the holy rites are ended, / I'll tell thee largely of fair Hero's death" (5.4.67-69). As stated, not one of these interpretations of the present Hero disconfirms the counterfeit report that she was (or is) dead. All evidence the tenacity of the counterfeit death that was created for Hero. Even living and breathing before Claudio, Hero cannot be said to have fully escaped the counterfeit death the Friar crafted for her.

A similar ambiguity about what is real and what is counterfeit inhabits Hero's claim that the other Hero "died defiled" and that the Hero before him is a "maid". Most immediately Hero intends the statement as a defiant assertion of her own virginity, a correction to the defilement with which Don John or, more pointedly, Claudio's public slander stained her. The participle "defiled," however, is a

surprising choice because it would seem to suggest that Hero is admitting to the crime of which she was accused. That "defiled" appears only in the Quarto and not in the Folio aids editors who wish to avoid the word and its entanglements. Other editors have looked for ways to dismiss the Quarto's use of "defiled." J.P. Collier emends it to "belied" in his 1858 edition and then in 1877 to "reviled," a change he claims "must be welcomed by everybody."[23] The Arden Third Series' editor Claire McEachern sidesteps the issue altogether by keeping "defiled" but glossing it as "slandered" and so reads the term as an allusion to the actions of those who accused her falsely of her crime rather than to the crime itself. But "defile" at almost all other places in Shakespeare's works (*All's Well That Ends Well, Henry V, The Rape of Lucrece*) means "morally foul or polluted" and suggests illicit love or sexual violation.[24] Only Edgar in 3.6 of *King Lear* attaches the term to the "false opinion" whose "wrong thought defiles" him. As a synonym for "morally polluted," "defiled" is more consonant with the terms Leonato, believing Hero guilty of premarital disloyalty, attaches to the child he wished was adopted rather than his own, one about whom, "*smirch'd* thus and *mired* with infamy," he would disclaim, "No part of it is mine" (4.1.133-34, emphasis added). Additionally, glossing "defiled" as "slandered" obscures the essential contrast that Hero is trying to define between the dead Hero who was unchaste and the live one before him who, sure as life, is a "maid". But to make this point, Hero risks ceding the impossible, that the dead Hero really was unfaithful. Although Hero is clearly innocent, by applying "defiled" to her "dead" self, Hero does not clearly or fully differentiate between the slanders of the accusers and the crimes for which she was accused. "Defiled" ironically suggests that the label attached to the Hero before has stuck, as if the counterfeit claim made the reality on its own. Such an idea, that at some level the accusation and crime become inseparable, might give further meaning to the inappropriate and unwittingly bawdy double entendre in Claudio's elegy

the Lord reads at Hero's tomb that claims Hero was "[d]one to death by slanderous tongues" (5.3.3). Insofar as "defiled" belongs to the text of *Much Ado About Nothing* and preserves its general meaning, her use of the term only makes more intense the point that Hero is making about slander and women, that the damage done by false reports is equal to the report itself and cannot be simply undone, that shattered nuptials cannot be repaired, but must be remade into and out of something new.

The timing in *Much Ado* of counterfeit's potential transformation into reality is also important. *Much Ado* resembles both other comedies in that the second type of counterfeit trap is emerging at the very moment a character is or should be undergoing delivery from the first. In an important foundational work on disguise comedy, Victor Oscar Freeburg points to a general truth about the relation between disguise's problems and its discovery: "The disguise ceases to be active the moment it is discovered" because such discoveries remove "the cause which produced the difficulties."[25] However, *Much Ado,* like these other comedies, seems to neutralize discovery's key function. At the moment that Hero's counterfeit is being discovered and her previous self is being delivered and restored, the language in the play keeps insisting, in spite of ocular proof to the contrary, on the impossible idea that this figure is "another Hero" and that the heroine might indeed have died. An obvious question is what the persistence of Hero's counterfeit self, even if merely rhetorical, means to *Much Ado*'s resolution. To the extent that the counterfeit becomes real and Hero is not the same, can the play be said to reach a comic resolution that depends on revealing Hero's death as mere disguise, securing her redemption, and conjoining her with Claudio? The point is not to claim that these lovers are different figures but that the consistent validation of the counterfeit forms a distraction and a problem even at the moment where distractions and problems should fall away.

The presence in all three plays of the second type of counterfeit trap, along with its timely occurrence at the resolution of the first type and in such a way that it risks preventing that resolution, suggests something about how Shakespeare is working counterfeit identity in these comedies. Shakespeare employs counterfeit traps of unintended consequences and of potential metamorphosis into disguise as ways to increase pleasure by making more intense certain core experiences of plays and theater. At the center of theater is disguise and counterfeit. Plays involving disguise and its consequences are already a pleasurable redoubling of the common feature of theater whereby actors impersonate roles and these impersonations provide the occasion for all succeeding action. Inasmuch as the consequences of counterfeiting are unintended and occur outside the control of characters who dissemble, they also create tension with the audience's experience of a play as scripted, predetermined, and designed. Disguise plots offer a kind of pleasure in which the counterfeit nature of dramatic character and theatrical action gets experienced first as a tension and then as a release from that tension in the resolution of the play, where order is restored only at the closing.

The second-type trap, or the tendency of characters to morph into their counterfeits, intensifies the necessary antithesis to theater's experience of character as a kind of disguise. What for actors are counterfeits become for characters real identities. Theater is the process of converting the fiction of the actor in the real world into the reality of the character in the play's world. Drama, therefore, is an experience whereby the counterfeit becomes the only reality characters know. Beyond the transformation of counterfeit into life, theater adds another potent experience of what is real and palpable in a fictional medium. Theater is the sole artistic form in which real human bodies with their own (real) identities are used to animate imaginary characters with fictional identities. For the audience, the counterfeit trap recreates the

tension in the simultaneity of real and imaginary that exists in the experience of dramatic characters. Characters whose counterfeit identities tend towards becoming their real selves enlarge the experience whereby fictional selves are already a kind of "real" self in that a real entity occupies the fictional one. The tension between the two terms of counterfeit appears most evident in the figure of the cross-dressed romantic heroine in early modern England. Because boy actors played women's parts, for a female character to cross-dress entailed that a counterfeit be removed in the very act of another's being assumed and so activated a return to the actor's "reality" even as the character's fictions were mounting. The second-type counterfeit trap seems to be another instance of the principle involved in the cross-dressed heroine whereby the pursuit of disguise and counterfeit in the plot triggers, at least by the end, the impulse toward the real.

The special thing about these Shakespeare comedies is the way they use and activate the second type of counterfeit trap at the precise moment that audience is being released from the tension of the first. The plays, therefore, move audiences from one property of drama (that all characters play artificial roles) to its complement (that the roles are the reality of characters). In part, the second form of counterfeit trap comes first to replace the plot's problems of dissembling and then to compound them, especially insofar as it presents a new hurdle to resolving these problems. However, this impediment does not completely negate resolution in these plays. For one, the transformations are not fully enacted. At the end of the plays, characters approach becoming their counterfeit selves, but they have not verifiably and fully transformed into what was previously false. Viola has become Cesario, Lucentio has become Cambio, and Hero has died more in language than in fact, more in potential than in finality. Therefore, less-than-complete transformations in part block resolutions from becoming fully complete. The interaction between these two competing impulses creates a

new type of energy at the end of the plays when one might expect by generic convention the main energy to disperse. Even at the ending, the plays continue their drive toward resolution in spite and even because of these new elements that would halt it. Through the counterfeit trap, Shakespeare has discovered a way to sustain the energy of comedies by compounding the paradoxical tensions of drama to the very end, keeping audiences captive even at the very point of their release.

Notes

1. All quotations from this and other Shakespeare plays are taken from the Arden Edition, third series. *Twelfth Night,* ed. Keir Elam (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008); *The Taming of the Shrew,* ed. Barbara Hodgdon (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010); *Much Ado About Nothing* (2015), ed. Claire McEachern (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010).

2. See the section called "The Last Few Minutes of *Twelfth Night*" in Stephen Booth, *Precious Nonsense: The Gettysburg Address, Ben Jonson's Epitaphs on his Children, and Twelfth Night* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 183-212.

3. Yu Jin Ko, "The Comic Close of Twelfth Night and Viola's Noli Me Tangere," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48 (1997): 395.

4. *OED Online*, s.v. "become," accessed Oct. 19, 2018, http://www.oed.com.mu.opal-libraries.org/view/Entry/16784?redirectedFrom=become#eid.

5. Catherine Belsey, "Disrupting Sexual Difference: Meaning and Gender in the Comedies," in *Alternative Shakespeares,* ed. John Drakakis (London: Menthuen, 1985) 187.

6. Ibid., 189.

7. C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 3-4 (emphasis added).

8. Leo Salinger, *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 222.

9. Karen Newman, *Shakespeare's Rhetoric of Comic Character* (New York: Menthuen, 1985), 118.

10. John Drakakis, ed., *Alternative Shakespeares,* 11, 10.

11. Lloyd Davis, *Guise and Disguise: Rhetoric and Characterization in the English Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 15.

12. More recently, Shakespearean criticism has returned to once passé questions of character. A central collection that helped reopen serious academic investigation into character-based readings of plays is Yu Jin Ko and Michael W. Shurgot, ed., Shakespeare's S*ense of Character: On the Page and From the Stage* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012).

13. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 2.

14. Davis, *Guise and Disguise,* 4.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., 10.

17. J. C. Maxwell, "The Church Scene in Much Ado: The Absence of Antonio," *Notes and Queries* 14 (1967): 135.

18. Fred Tromly, "Grief, Authority, and the Resistance to Consolation," *Speaking Grief in English Literary Culture: Shakespeare to Milton,* ed. Margo Swiss and David A. Kent (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2002), 25.

19. Ibid., 23, 12.

20. Tobias Döring, *Performances of Mourning in Shakespearean Theatre and Early Modern Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 164.

21. Ibid., 165.

22. Ibid., 161.

23. William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing: A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare,* ed. Horace Howard Furness (1899; repr., New York: Dover, 1964), 282.

24. *OED Online*, s.v. "defile," accessed Oct. 9, 2018, http://www.oed.com.mu.opal-libraries.org/view/Entry/22974?redirectedFrom=breathe.

25. Victor Oscar Freeburg, *Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama: A Study in Stage Tradition* (New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1915), 9, 10.

ACTING SHAKESPEARE: A Roundtable Discussion with Artists from the Utah Shakespeare Festival's 2018 Production of *The Merchant of Venice*

Kate McPherson
USF Play Seminar Director

Featuring: Lisa Wolpe (Shylock), Josh Innerst (Gratiano), Wayne Carr (Bassanio), Edna Nahshon (Author: "Wrestling with Shylock: Jewish Responses to *The Merchant of Venice*")

McPherson: My name is Kate McPherson and I'm one of the Play Seminar Directors here at the festival, so I'm really used to directing audience traffic and discussions. That's what I do for the seminars, and that's my role again here today. I'm very happy to introduce to you the actors' panel. We have Lisa Wolpe, Josh Innerst, Edna Nahshon and Wayne Carr, and there will be plenty of opportunities for you to ask them questions. I think I'm going to kick it off with just one question that I'd like each of them to answer, and then we'll pitch it out to you. Each of you are playing multiple roles, so when you speak I'll ask you to say what your roles are. Then you can just talk with us a little bit about something that you really brought to

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embodying that particular role because we're really grateful that we have actors here to embody the role. And maybe some great joy you found in that embodiment or some little challenge. And I'll let you pick rather than say, 'What was the hard thing you did?' If there's something you're really loving, you can talk about that as well. So we'll start with Lisa and then go to Wayne.

Wolpe: Thanks for having us. I play Shylock, and when I play Shylock, I don't talk to anybody backstage because I'm not in the same play as anybody else. Everybody else seems to be in some kind of comedy, and I'm having the worst day of my life. So I just withdraw and I do my work inside my mask, and I don't interact with other people. And then tonight I do *Henry VI*, which is fast and, for me it's very light, because I have very little to say and none of it has any depth. I play the Duke of Bedford, who usually appears in the play in a wheelchair, and I asked my director for a *Game of Thrones* wig, which I wear braided down my back. That's what I do, I wear my *Game of Thrones* wig and my cape billows in the wind and I stand in the rain and I say things. And then I run around as a character called Lucy, who is usually also a guy, and I give news under great duress for four and a half minutes. And then I play Joan of Arc's father and I put on the creepy outfit of the old shepherd, and I have a 56-second scene that goes from 'Oh, my long-lost daughter!' to, 'burn her!' Very fast character development. And then I understudy Leslie Brott as Mistress Quickly, which if you haven't seen *Merry Wives,* is a whole other can of fish.

Innerst: I'm Josh, hello. Last night you saw me as Gratiano in *Merchant of Venice.* Tonight you'll see me as Salisbury and Suffolk in *Henry VI* Part One, and in *Merry Wives* you'll see me as Pistol and Robert. I understudy Geoff Kent and Michael Elich in *Henry VI,* so I act Talbot and York in that. I'll talk about Gratiano because you all just saw that. I brought as much of myself to Gratiano as I could because it was important to me that that character does and says the

things that he says from a place of positive choice, because I think he does and says reprehensible things, and it's easy to classify that as a villain, or as a villainous choice. And I thought it was much more interesting if any choice he makes come from a place of love and of positivity, because it's a little more challenging if you see someone that you maybe like, or is funny, doing horrible things. It means you have to reconcile that image as more than a stereotype.

Carr: Hi, my name is Wayne. I play Othello in *Othello*, I play Bassanio in *Merchant*, and I play Alcippe in *The Liar*. And a challenge for me with *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* was that I didn't like the plays.

McPherson: That's a really big challenge.

Carr: Yeah, it's a huge challenge. It's one of the reasons why I decided to take the season. Because I never really liked *Othello*, and I read *Merchant* and I was like, 'What the heck is this? Why are they doing this play?' I had seen it a long time ago, but they had carnival outfits on. It was strange. It was in Milwaukee, and it was insane. I walked away going, 'That was fun. What was that about?' So when I read it, I thought, 'this is a tough play to do', and I was just curious why we were doing it, and that became intriguing to me. So I'm still dealing with that.

McPherson: So let's get the questions and ideas out to the audience and ask some questions of the panel. This is one of our keynote speakers, Edna Nahshon, a noted scholar of Jewish American theatre and theatre history.

Nahshon: There's usually, regardless of the nature of the production, there's a certain erotic tension between Antonio and Bassanio. You can do it in a more conservative way, but the electricity's there in the air. And it's also there with Portia. I mean, she kicks him out of her life, out of both their lives. With the casting the way it is, what's your relationship with Antonio?

McPherson: What is the nature of Bassnanio's relationship with Antonio?

Carr: That's a great question. I would love to throw that back to you, what you think. If it was difficult for you to figure out, that's good. This is what we said in rehearsal. Because people brought that up and our director, Melissa Pfundstein said, 'Yeah, I don't want to play with that.'

Nahshon: But still, what is the relationship?

Carr: As far as I'm concerned the relationship is one of friendship. Bassanio is like a socialite to me, he's like the male Kardashian of the time. He hasn't really done anything to earn his wealth and status; he's just born into it and given some money that he blows away. So they're buddies; they're friends.Because she didn't want to play with anything romantic, or any kind of other relationship, she just didn't want to touch that.

Nahshon: But there's also the age difference.

Carr: There is, yes.

Nahshon: So she [Leslie Brott as Antonio] looks like your aunt, frankly.

McPherson: Or grandmother.

Carr: No! Either way, it's a friendship. Our friendship is one that is close enough that he will lend me 3000 ducats to go on a voyage to win a lady that will help me financially. Again, I am having difficulty with this play ans was hoping you would help me out.

McPherson: Who has another question for the panel? Yes?

Audience Member: So last night when the conversion declaration happened, the entire audience gasped. And I want to know what did that do for you as actors the first time you had that reaction from an auditorium full of people?

Wolpe: Well I was warned by people who have worked here over the years to be prepared to be openly laughed at, that traditionally the Christians would celebrate this and laugh at that moment. Which, because my father's family were rabbis back to the 1600's, is truly offensive. And yet all I can do is bring all the humanity I can to the role, and

fight for my place in humanity in that play, in that scene, in that moment. And inevitably someone will jeer at me, but the people around them feel their discomfort increase as they realize the political complexity of the people that they're sitting amongst. And my hope is that people go home and have conversations. One night I went home, which is one block from the theater, and I'm walking by this 6-year old girl after the show, and she's saying to her parents, 'Well, even if they force him to go to church–' She was trying to work out the political correctness and the moral compass of the group as a whole. And because it's a problem play I don't think you can settle those issues. But as you know, a diverse audience here is rare. Cedar City is not representative of a fully diverse community, but it might be representative of Shakespeare's London. (I don't know, I wasn't there). There certainly were some Jewish people there, and there certainly were some people who were not white people there.

McPherson: And people who were not Protestants also, right? There were Catholics who had been forced to convert.

Wolpe: The forced conversions in the audience were many, and the mistrust of one another, and the subterfuge. I don't know if you guys have seen Bill Cain's Equivocation. It's a great play [about learning to lie] that you might be interested in.

At the time when they're burning the skin off of your feet demanding, 'Come on now, you're a Catholic, right?', or if you were practicing Wicca and they were crushing your bones in a metal cage, you would at some point recant, as you see with Joan of Arc. 'Sure! Whatever you say. Stop burning me.' You know? There's a tension between the truth and social agreement. I'm sure that's true in Utah, where the LGBTQ youth is committing suicide at three times the rate they were before Trump was elected. There's a schism within society, and everybody does not really get along. Everybody's needs are not met, and everybody is not accepted, and people are coat-switching like mad. That's something I worked on with

Jessica, in terms of coat-switching. And the actress is good enough that I play that whole scene with her, and I leave, and I [as Shylock] don't know Jessica's leaving. Even though I know the play by heart, I'm like, 'I did not know you were leaving me today.' Every day I go off stage and I'm like, 'Oh!'

She's cheating, right? She's giving me love, but underneath it's not love. Whatever the resolution is, that's the heartbreak. That people will look in your face and lie to you, on any level. Even if it's Bassanio and his new wife, and she's trying to figure out, 'What is the measure of virtue? What does a ring mean anymore? Why did you come here, what did you want from me, and who is this man?' I talked to Jim Edmondson who played Shylock here 20 years ago and he told me that he literally threw up in that moment on the stage at that point. He told me I could not throw up. And you probably all know that the Nazi's did this play a lot. This play has been used a lot as a propoganda piece on either side of the coin.

McPherson: As other cast members who are not embodying this character who is forcibly converted in the play and as actors what have you heard and how have you reacted to that?

Innerst: Well, we did talk a lot about prepping for this audience experience. But I've done this play before. I did it in Virginia, just outside of D.C., and we got the exact same reactions. We would have applause occasionally. Onstage, I think that is a moment that the whole cast fractures. Because I know Antonio is doing it from a place of mercy, an attempt to save this life in some form. I know you [Shylock] receive it very differently, and it pisses Gratiano off. I [as Gratiano] hate it, because I intend to kill you the moment we leave the stage and this stops that from happening. And I can feel the reactions differently amongst the cast. Sometimes we work so hard in rehearsals to get on the same page, and I love that here we're all on different pages, because the audience is totally on different pages. I've had long conversations with audience members, being stopped just outside the theater for twenty

minutes talking about that specific moment. And so, whether people are celebrating it or mourning it or discussing it, I love that there is a reaction. I would rather have an extreme reaction amongst the audience than no reaction. So I really love that moment because suddenly you have to realize, 'Oh yeah, there's a lot of people in this room.' And you're all on different pages.

McPherson: That's right. There's 800 people in this theater who each bring something different to the production when they see it, and so they react across the spectrum. Wayne? Thoughts about that?

Carr: That's one of the hardest parts in the play for me, and I have to try my best to stay in the framework of the character that we've created for this play and not burst into tears, because that's what I feel like doing. And Bassanio does have an emotional reaction to that, there is something going on with him during that moment, but Wayne thinks it's the most horrible, nasty thing that I've seen on the stage.

McPherson: I saw both of the first previews of the show, and we had Melinda Pfundstein [the director of *The Merchant of Venice*] at the seminars then to share with audiences her vision and process on the show. And a patron brought up this moment of forced conversion and the fact that many people in the theater that night had laughed. The patron was very upset by it, and I affirmed that. I said, 'Yes, wasn't that cringe worthy?' And Melinda very sharply stopped me and said, 'Wait. People bring different things to the theater, and you don't invalidate what they bring. Even if you are bothered, it doesn't mean that what they did doesn't mean something to them, and people don't always laugh.' And she reminded me that people don't just laugh for one reason. People laugh out of shock; they laugh out of discomfort; they don't necessarily laugh out of amusement. They laugh because it's such a bitter moment. Maybe they laugh because they know that Shylock won't ever actually really convert. That he may say one thing, but that he won't ever abandon his faith underneath. So there is this range of reactions.

Innerst: What's tricky about it is that it's easy to forget that the text is designed to get a specific reaction. The reason this play is complex is because it operates outside of the moral paradigm that we operate in. But within its own moral paradigm and its historical performance context, it is also operating in a progressive moral paradigm. So it's such a complex pot of things. One of the tasks that we didn't talk about in rehearsals that we should have is how we deal with a text that is designed as a comedy when it is also a tragedy. Because we are performing a tragedy which is often working at odds with the text, and it seems in moments like that that the reaction is diverse. Sometimes just letting the actual text and the way the writer designed the text sing, it doesn't quite work with a modern audience, or with modern performances.

McPherson: I brought my students to a production here in 2010 and told them, 'This is called a comedy but don't necessarily expect to laugh. It's a comedy because of the marriage plot, and this was a generic expectation in Shakespeare's time.' And then the production was both laugh-out-loud funny—this was when Tony Amendola played Shylock in 2010—and also incredibly tragic at the same time. And the students came to me, saying, 'You told us it wouldn't be funny and then it was funny.' And I had to say, ' I can't determine that necessarily.' It's a really complex question. It's definitely Shylock's tragedy, there's no question.

Wolpe: Either it is or it isn't. As Edna said [in her keynote], Shylock has 350 lines and Portia has over 500. So it's not that big of a part. Like Gertrude or Ophelia, it's a supporting plot. There are three others: there's Arragon and there's Morocco, and there's the Jew. And we all speak differently and are from somewhere else and get rejected and humiliated and have our lives altered. It's directorial, but also the plan of the playwright to alternate comedy with tragedy on the very same theme, so I have to go out and offer my response to my daughter after Salarino mocks me and calls me a dog and howls at the moon and laughs at me, and after Geoff Kent comes out and does

the funniest Spanish prince he could come up with. But it's the same theme, as in all Shakespeare plays, the same theme over and over, scene by scene, you know. Should Ophelia be buried in sanctified ground is asked by the gravediggers, is repeated by Ophelia, etc. Like, 'where does your soul go?' in Hamlet, this is 'What do you do with the Other? And how is that funny, and how does it get to you?' A lot of it is directorial, or it's in the hands of the actors in terms of 'How deeply are you mocking this? And with what intention are you mocking this?' Because there are other ways to play Arragon; he doesn't have to be a clown.

McPherson: But as audience members we're glad in a production as tragic as this that we do get these moments of lightness, right?

Wolpe: You can be glad if you want to, if you think everything's funny. But at a certain point its hydrofoiling if you think everything is funny, and I don't think it's funny, and we differ it's a problem.

Audience Member: Well there's a huge part of this play that you don't control, and that is the audience. I'm thrilled that I was with an audience that gasped, because I would have been appalled if I was with an audience that clapped at that moment. And I'm taken right back into that moment of thinking 'How can they do this terrible thing?' When they were playing that scene, I was thinking, 'Let me go up and help this person.' As an audience member I wish you had had your own applause. Because I wanted to honor that.

Wolpe: Thank you.

Audience Member: My problem with this play, from the time I first read it as a 19 year old in a college Shakespeare class, has been the hypocrisy of the Christians. This last time that I reviewed it, the word that stuck out for me was 'mercy'. And there is *zero* mercy on the part of the Christians, even though they are preaching it and begging for it. I'm a Christian, so I'm not picking on anyone. But that's the part that makes this play totally disgusting for me, and I keep trying to like

it and I can't. But, I see it again and again and enjoy it and appreciate that, as you've all said, it's an extremely complex play. But the part that, for me, is the final word, is that the Christians are just mean and disgusting. And the conversion scene infuriated me because they are totally merciless. And the corresponding motions–gestures—between Shylock and Jessica in those last moments reinforce the idea that the Christians will never accept you, and you may never accept them. But they're perpetuating the idea of the Other. That will go on, this war isn't over.

McPherson: We have a dichotomous production. There's one show happening on the stage where everyone is dancing and happy that they've got the ladies back and they actually didn't sleep with somebody else. But there's another show off to the side, so can you talk about that mercy aspect a little bit, Wayne? As Bassanio, you're in the court room; what do you want while you're there?

Carr: Well I think it's clear what Bassanio wants. He wants an out for Antonio, and wants their privilege to succeed. I had a conversation with Melinda, talking about mercy. She asked, 'Could it possibly be mercy that Antonio says, "No, I don't need Shylock's money." Is it mercy on Antonio's part that he says, "You should become a Christian." Is that possibly mercy?' Again, I'm still wrestling with the play, but she succeeded in making me try to look as much as I can at other points of view, other possibilities where we can see mercy. Does Portia have any kind of mercy with the whole ring situation, for example?

Audience Member: Exactly. I've seen the line said as, and final insult, Shylock gets to be Christian. This Antonio was relatively gentle in the articulation of that line. I've seen it expressed as a snarl.

McPherson: That's right, that line, 'He presently become a Christian,' is not delivered as a vituperative thing. Now, Gratiano, you're a pretty vituperative character in the play. I can't remember your physical reaction at that moment.

Innerst: Well, it starts earlier. The 'quality of mercy' speech is all bullshit for Gratiano. Because he does not want mercy, he wants fairness, or what he considers fairness or justice. It's funny; I also hated this play before I worked on it. And it is now one of my favorite plays. I *love* this play.

It's our job as artists to be professional empathizers, that's what we do. We put ourselves in world views that are often at odds with our own, and we have to tell that story honestly. It's not my job—it's not our jobs—to try to pass judgement on these characters. Often a director tries to do that job, but it's your job as an audience member, to be the one that makes that decision. And so, for me, even though I can say and do horrible things, and I think what we do to Shylock is horrendous, I feel it's important to put myself in Gratiano's positon. If because of a choice I made my best friend was in the position that Antonio was in—I'm getting emotional about it—then there is *nothing* I wouldn't do to save him. I consider myself a pretty good person, but I guarantee that I would say and do horrible things to protect him.

As an audience member, you should be horrified. But for me as Gratiano, that moment of 'Shylock shall become a Christian' is intricately connected to the fact that 30 seconds before that moment we stopped him in the midst of murdering someone. And so that is an infinitely justifiable action for my character and as Gratiano I am pissed about it because I want to hurt Shylock, and I can't because of that.

As artists, it's our job to see our character's point of view very clearly while also acknowledging that there are going to be many other sides to this. And I think the more that we can embrace those dichotomies and the things that don't quite line up, the more complex your experience is hopefully going to be, so that I can do and say these horrible things while also at the same time being able to fully defend why I'm doing and saying them. Now that being said, if I am ever on the other side of the coin, I guarantee you I'm going to have a very strong opinion about it. But that's one of the things

I love about this play, how it fully embraces our humanity. We do shitty things all the time, and we get away with them, often because of the way we look. And what I love about this play is that there is no truly good person in this play. Everybody does reprehensible things, truly reprehensible things. But the people who get away with it unscathed are the people who look and sound like me. And it's important for our audience members to see that, and I think it's one of the great celebrations that I think that I can celebrate in such a difficult play that people don't often like. Sorry, I've talked a lot.

McPherson: That's all right. Lisa, can you talk about Shylock's encounters and thoughts on mercy—this Shylock's, I mean? You've done other Shylock's, what about this one?

Wolpe: I think mercy comes up in the play a lot as a theme, and I think that's what Shakespeare's looking at. If you look at Shakespeare's later plays, there's evidence of dissuasion and political dissatisfaction and disappointment. 'Dis' is the name of the 9th circle of Hell; it's the name of Satan's chair. So when you're disappointed, you put yourself linguistically in Hell. I think we're all disappointed in justice and fairness. I don't know if I have a lot to say about it.

McPherson: As we were discussing in the play seminar with a larger audience this morning, there's a real tension between Shylock's very inclusive statements such as 'Hath not a Jew eyes?' where he embraces common humanity and his later abandonment of any kind of flexibility.

Wolpe: I think he takes an oath in that scene with Tubal when he goes, 'My daughter's never coming back. She's gone to Genoa. All of her values have been corrupted. She's not coming back.' And I believe that Leah, his wife, was killed in a pogrom. For Jews, your legacy lives on in the memory of your children. Which means that this is the end of Shylock's legacy, the end of his life. And this thing of stealing babies—whether in refugee camps or as Americans are doing right now by putting brown babies in cages and forgetting them—

when you take someone's child, you really activate their need to do something about it. And that's what I think it is: a pound of flesh for my child.

McPherson: You've taken my heart.

Wolpe: You took my heart; I will take what's nearest to your heart. He believes that this has to stop and he doesn't know what he can do besides create a legal precedent, to notarize that the one who has stolen from him will pay him back. There is no profit in this. He offers friendship and asks the Christians not to wrong him for his love. And on that day they take his daughter, they take his money, they mock him. They roast a pig, they invite him to dinner next to the pig, and he's like, 'I knew this! I had a dream, why did I not listen to my dream? I should not have gone out.' That's why you don't go out! You're not supposed to go out anyway after sunset in the ghetto. And—he got rolled.

McPherson: He takes an incredible risk.

Wolpe: But the thing is—every member of my family put their suitcases down and got on the Death Trains as they were supposed to. Every member of my family died at Auschwitz, except my father, who picked up a gun and joined the Canadians and started killing Nazis. Because he said, 'It has to stop! You're insane, you can't do this.' So there's a point where as a young person, male or female, you get up and you fight back. Because somebody has to say something and so many people are *saying* nothing and *doing* nothing, as though it weren't 2018 and there weren't elections in America. They're not going to the polls. They're saying, 'Well it's the status quo and the overwhelming majority wants this, and I can't stand up, and it's Utah.' But no matter where you are you should stand up and do something. You should say something.

McPherson: So Shylock takes a stand.

Wolpe: Well the actress takes a stand as Shylock in this particular moment, when I'm going to use theatre to say something. Because this may be an old play, but it is also relevant to today.

McPherson: I'm going to call on some people who haven't spoken.

Audience Member: Lisa, the speech during the trial scene when you talk about purchasing a slave I thought was really a centerpiece of this production. And I was wondering if you could talk about how your perspective as Lisa the actor speaks through that speech of Shylock. It felt to me as though you were accusing the audience. You were pointing out at the audience, looking at the audience, as you delivered that speech. But you two [Innerst, Carr] are the onstage audience for that speech, the people who Shylock is really accusing. So I wondered if you two could also speak to your reactions to that speech at that moment.

Wolpe: I took it upon myself to hook Wayne in because they took Kyle away, and Kyle was standing right there and he had been abusing me throughout the show, but I kept looking at him—he's a black actor—and thinking, 'You're next! Dude, look at your skin color, you are next. Stop it. Learn from me. Don't let this happen to your people.' So I had built this complicated thing with Kyle, and then on the last day of rehearsal the director moved him to the other side of the stage.

McPherson: 'Oh no! My target is now gone!'

Wolpe: And suddenly I look over to Bassanio and I think, 'But Wayne [the actor] is black.' And so, even though he's walking in white privilege, and as Josh would say, 'Because we look like this and we sound like this we get away with it,' I look at him and he doesn't look like that.

Carr: I sound like them, though.

Wolpe: You sound exactly like them; it's fantastic. And I just thought, 'I'm going to break your cover, I'm going to code-switch in the middle of this without permission from the director and ask 'Don't you think he's next?' And then let Wayne deal with it.

Carr: I don't deal with it at all. I think with the way Lisa is delivering the line is not a moment of audience-actor

communication, it's a moment of community. It's Shylock saying, 'I am no different from you in this moment.' He's accusing all of us of this stuff, and I just so happen to be a black Venetian. And yes, the word 'slave' brings a certain wave of attention toward me, but I do my best to be still in that moment and allow the rest of the community to think whatever they want to think.

Innerst: Gratiano doesn't have much of a reaction, Josh does though. Those are two of my favorite speeches—the one right before that, and that. Because the rhetoric is so clear and I think Lisa does such a good job that Gratiano goes away for a second and Josh will sit there and take notes.

McPherson: There's a line in the play after Morocco [played by Jamil Zraikat] chooses the wrong casket and leaves, when Portia says, 'I would have all of his complexion choose me so.' Talk about that in rehearsal with the fact that you, as a black man, are playing Portia's suitor.

Carr: Yeah! Isn't that interesting.

McPherson: Isn't it? What do we do with that?

Carr: Sorry guys, I have no answer for that.

Wolpe: But they also have the complexity of the other. Portia might think, 'This man was raised differently. This man might have seven wives. This man lives in Africa; he has a completely different rule about how empowered you're going to be as a woman in his household.' Whereas Bassanio is an elegant person of the same belief system, so they fit well together.

McPherson: And of course Bassanio doesn't hear her say that, he's not there.

Carr: No, no, he definitely doesn't. The word 'complexion' is just interesting. We're not of the same complexion.

Wolpe: Bassanio has a beautiful speech about the leaden casket, about what's valuable. I know that's written down, but if you imagine saying that spontaneously out of your heart and mind, what an interesting, complex person, you know? Who can weigh this against that and make an elegant

argument and still be handsome, and move well, and have a history with her father and be a part of her world. Whereas Morocco's just coming in on a dare to get something, like a prize.

When I directed this show I had a black Portia and a white Portia alternating in the role. Within the black community there's plenty of classist, 'I want this shade of skin' or 'I don't want that' or 'This is what I want for myself' or 'Here's how much money I have and here's how I think it's going to go.' So I thought that was just as interesting as the rich white girl who is just stupid. Portia's just completely unexposed to anything. But then how does she completely reinterpret the law on a dime? One of the cool things about Tarah Flanagan, who plays Portia, is that she's very, very smart.

McPherson: I wish she were here with us because I would want to speak with her about her complete surrender of all her assets to Bassanio at the time he makes the right casket choice. And this is not what we expect from Portia in some ways, and then is not what we see when she goes to court either. There are fundamental tensions there.

Innerst: She makes interesting choices. She seizes agency when she says, 'I give them.' The meter extends 'I give them,' and she has intentionally stressed '*I give them*.' I'm putting words in Tarah's mouth. but I can hear Portia saying, 'Just so you know, this isn't just dad.'

McPherson: Other questions? Yes, sir.

Audience Member: In that courtroom scene, I'm fascinated by a box in a box. It's three-walled enviroment inside a 3-walled construct, an image of the social construct within a walled environment, and within that there's a moment when Portia as the litigator says, 'that would be oppressive, don't do that.' And logically the response is, why not? The law would allow it. I'm an academic and I hear that all the time, 'We can't do that, we'd set a precedent.' Well why not set a great precedent? So I would love to hear your thoughts on that moment, because that's the pivot; that's the missed opportunity for everyone really.

Wolpe: It was never their intention to create fairness. Any of those wealthy Christian people could have bailed Antonio out before the bond date. Just in terms of mercy, none of the wealthy people around him lend him the money. None of them! I don't know why nobody notices that. They didn't care yesterday. Not enough to loan $3,000 to their friend to save his life. Suddenly Portia's money's on the table and they would be blowing her money to save him. But none of tgave a darn, and they all laughed when the Jew's money and his daughter were abducted.

In the trial scene itself, the Duke says that he can cancel the trial and send them all home. And now you say, 'Oh just do a little wrong to make a bigger right. Just stop this devil.' This is not about fairness. When Portia takes up the idea of the 'letter of the law,' she doesn't have to take it as far as she does. She doesn't have to take all his money and threaten his life. That's her own invention. She begins having never seen the bond before, and begins by saying 'Oh, but there's no blood!" And then they find the statute. But pushing it to that level of alienation is just the kind of injustice we see in our newspapers today. And if the Duke doesn't have a sense of justice, fairness, and the law—which we see in the play the Duke doesn't—then this is Christian oppression, this is not love. This is not Christian love.

That's the first thing Shylock says. 'I'd like to make friends with you and have your love.' 'Love' and 'mercy' are big ideas which are being questioned in the play. And I'm sure they're huge in the Christian community as it actually exists, but in the top 1% that are gathering wealth and just took millions of dollars from Shylock—and are satisfied with themselves for doing it—that's power over, not power from within. And you could talk about how Jesus is a merciful god and the God of the Old Testament is a vengeance god. But it's not God in the room; these are human beings taking each other's stuff and hitting each other over the head like vandals.

McPherson: Right. Thoughts on precedent?

Carr and ***Innerst:*** No.

McPherson: Well I know that it was definitely one of the director's big goals in the play to show the best and the worst in each person in the show. And there are many opportunities for that. You have a question?

Audience Member: Yes. The term 'justice' has been coming up a lot, and precedence is a huge part of that. But I'm curious. Justice seems completely arbitrary in these plays, serving only as an ideological method to support a particular community. So I'm wondering how, according to yourselves and maybe also according to your characters, would you each define justice?

Wolpe: Four-year-old brown boy defending himself in the dock in court? What is justice? Its people who have power writing history and other people getting plowed under. If you don't have a political voice, you don't get justice. That's why so many people are running for office. Because people were complacent and they weren't actually working to create a democracy in this country. But now people are stepping up and saying, 'Wait, no let me participate.' It's not justice if you sit back and say nothing. Because the loudest people, as we see when we talking about the audience reaction, are not always the soul of the community. They just are bold about being louder, and that can be taking too much space, or a limited perspective. What do you guys think about it?

McPherson: Josh? You said Gratiano comes on wanting something. He wants fairness, he wants justice.

Innerst: I think in Gratiano's viewpoint, justice is vengeance.

McPherson: He's very obstreperous.

Innerst: Yes, and also there's a large element to this story that I think is in the forefront of the text that this production doesn't deal with, and that is debt. Because it is hard as a modern audience in recent history, that is, within the last hundred years, to look at this play and see anything other than the race issues and the justice issues, but Shakespeare

is writing a play about debt. And it's one element that we don't get to explore—the social element—the cast system of Venice, and how does this group of people work. We don't actually know that people like Bassanio and Gratiano have just frivolously piddled away their inheritances. We just know that we're soldiers and we're students; that's the only thing the text really says about us. But the thing we know about soldiers and students is that society doesn't give a shit about their money. In fact, they're often poor.

McPherson: Some things never change.

Innerst: Right. My character does rotate around the idea that he is poor, in debt and that when I have no power in life the moment I have some outlet for that anger and frustration, it's going to go from 0 to 100 like [snaps] that.' And so that's why for me his idea of justice is entirely vengeance and kill, kill, kill, because it's coming from a place of complete powerlessness. That is Josh bringing something to the play, not the director and I don't think our production tells that story at all. But it's a way that helps me get from point A to point B, that there's an element of debt and of poverty that we don't get to explore, but is actually in the forefront of the text.

McPherson: And it would have been a very raw topic to the Elizabethan audiences of the show because the consequences of debt were, in fact, that you could be jailed. And people died in jail from disesase, from neglect, so it was a very imminent threat to life.

Wolpe: Well and Shakespeare's father was a usurer and Shakespeare was in court all the time over petty money issues. If you're interested in Mary Sidney, who was one of the authorship contenders, when her husband died—and this relates to a woman playing the man—everybody tried to take her stuff the minute her husband was dead. So just as a woman inside of a male who is also being otherized, I get that. It's very hard for me to make a living the way Josh does. I don't get as many auditions as Josh does. He must record

three auditions a week; everybody wants Josh. A 60-year-old woman? Not so much. Do we have the same training? Yes. Does the world want to see us? No. So I'm only entering into a male text because it gives me a range of thought and feeling and emotionality that the female roles won't give me. And if I want the exercise of sociopolitical expression—you want to talk about the 'haves' and the 'have nots'—that's the only thing I want to say about gender flipping the production. Inside Shylock you have a subversive, Jewish lesbian who's saying, 'I saw your world; I saw how you treated me. I can apply that to any other person because I have empathy, and I am an actor. And I can put this in there.' As Josh said, I'm a professional empathizer. Is Shylock a great Jew? No, he's a failed human being. But I can at least celebrate what he's going for.

Audience Member: One thing that was really apparent for me in this production was 'love' and 'loss'. For me, it became very clear—and I think this was your intention—that Shylock didn't decide on murder and vengeance until his daughter was abducted, and that the most violence came from the Christians when the man that they loved, Antonio, was suddenly at risk. And for Portia—and I can't ask the actress if this was her intention—part of her viciousness seemed to come from the pain being caused to the man she loved through Shylock's attempted murder of Antonio. Can you speak to how you tried to incorporate, or how love may have infused your performance of this problematic and tragic—or weirdly vicious—play?

McPherson: Let's start with Wayne.

Carr: Love definitely plays a part of it. I think that's one of the things that has actually been massaging me through this process a little bit. Because I realize that Bassanio has a love, Antonio has a love, everybody loves somebody or something. And sometimes that love makes us do things; as you [Innerst] said about the love you have for your friend—you would do anything, horrible things to protect your

friend. And I think that that's something that really resonates with me in this play and in life. I realize, speaking of justice, the love people have for their culture, their way of life; those friends who I have who are from the south love their culture, and when I have discussions with them about certain things, about statutes or whatever, those things may have a history , they mean something to them. Those people love them and they don't understand why I just don't get it or why it pisses me off. But being the person that I am, the artist that I am, I notice that and I go, 'Oh, they love their culture; there's an attachment there that I just don't get and I don't understand.' And that's where the difficulty comes for me, and why I grapple with this play in a positive way right now, because I realize that love is something that everybody is using as their ammunition to do whatever it is that they're doing.

McPherson: [To Josh Innerst] The question of love?

Innerst: One of the things that I think makes the play interesting is that within its historical context, Shakespeare has written others as more magnified and more minimally human than any of his competitors did. And I think that's one of the reasons we have Shakespeare festivals and not Johnson Festivals.

In his text there is an element of how we ostracize and treat others that this production has brought to the forefront of the text. One of the consistent conversations we had in rehearsals was how easy it is to extend love to ourselves, and how hard it is and how much we fail to extend it to the Other. It's easy for Gratiano to be *so* devoted to Bassanio, and by proxy to Antonio. And because of that choice it's easy to fail to extend love to anybody else.

Wolpe: I did a talk a group of maybe 35 very smart Jewish people who come here every year and they asked me to be on their Actor Panel. Their request was, 'Couldn't you be warmer to Jessica? Where's the man who loves his family. We love each other,' and I thought, 'You didn't write the play. This wasn't written by Jewish people; this is not how Jewish

families behave.' If you study the play, the writer didn't know anything about Jewish people.

McPherson: And likely never would have met any. There were very few.

Wolpe: I can't buy that. People keep saying, 'Well there were no Jews so he didn't know.' I don't think it's true. There were 40 Jewish musicians in the balcony of the Globe Theatre, there was a Jewish doctor attending the queen. But you all can argue amongst yourselves. However, I do think the writer got it wrong in terms of specific things about Jewish culture. It's kind of like trying to say to Othello, 'How exactly did your wife sleep with him 1,000 times when they were on different ships and he just got here yesterday. Are you crazy?' That's the problem, it's a not well-written play either, *Othello*. You know, that's not how people act.

McPherson: Consistency was not necessarily Shakespeare's objective all of the time.

Wolpe: And I don't know if he—or she or whoever wrote the plays—wrote them in ten days or actually thought about these through-lines, do you know? It's dramatic, it creates contrast. But Wayne would've seen the end coming; Othello doesn't. Shakespeare basically rewrote *The Jew of Malta* with a little bit more humanization, but because he didn't do a post-Holocaust, politically correct production, and he was in 1620, he hit a bunch of stuff that hits us in an unevolved way.

That's what we keep doing. What are the roots of Puritanical culture; what was this country built on? How do we keep those ideas running, and how are they incarcerating so many black people and no white people? Where is the money? Follow the money, and how is this stuff getting perpetuated?

I didn't know my Jewish family until about ten years ago. I did an internet search—-before 23andMe—and I discovered them. Then I got a call from a rabbi saying, 'The first Wolpe family reunion will be at the Holocaust Museum in D.C. in two weeks and you'd better be there.' So I went

there and the patriarch told me, 'Never forget!' and I was like, 'Oh my God, this amount of anger. I don't know if I want to take it on.' And then I found all of my relatives and what happened to them and I started going into it. And I thought, 'Well of course we're angry, but where is this heading? As a person who wants to be a love bomb, where is it heading that I'm going to shake my fist in the air and go, 'Never forget!' Who am I yelling at? Current Berliners? Who am I yelling at? Those people are in Argentina and they're 97.'

This wants to evolve into a conversation about next-level empathy and how we feel about our communities. How do we engage in meaningful discussion about problematic things without retreating into our bubble and saying, 'I can only understand it from my point of view.'? For me, as an international person, it's great to perform in Utah where it's a predominantly white, predominantly Christian, predominantly Mormon audience because I would never see that in my travels. I saw an all-white *Othello* in Prague last year and I'm still reeling from the misogyny, from the racism. Having said that, there weren't any black people in Prague. I counted eight black people in seven months there last year. They just don't go to Prague. And that's a place where if your political or religious ideas are different from the established power structure, they literally throw you out the window. All the tourists sites are like, 'Oh this a defenestration—' 'What's defenestration?' It's when they throw you out the window because your religion is different on that day, it's not in vogue. There's all these spots on the sidewalk where people's brains were smashed into pumpkins because Protestantism was out that week and we were into the Alchemists. And I respond, 'Whoa! You just throw people out the window.' The violence in all of our societies is huge, and still present.

McPherson: I would say the Festival's choice to stage these plays this season is creating this incredible dialogue that is really helping people get to these difficult conversations and start to listen.

Wolpe: I don't know. I just saw *Big River*, and I'll try to see *The Foreigner* today. But if you don't have a point of view on these plays it's really important to begin a discussion, because they're deep. Deep American cesspools of accepted hatred. Love means opening your heart to all people, and I'm trying to open my mind and heart in a new place.

McPherson: That's a challenge. Let's get one more question at the back.

Audience Member: I think one of the things Lisa said about gender was very important because last time I watched this production, I really noticed that Shylock's usury is the same as what women do in marriage. Because society doesn't wish people to respond to women's actions as free choice. And so Shylock became a usurer, and the women get married, but society also despises Shylock as a loan shark and women as gold-diggers. Actually what's most striking about this play is that in this play, the gold-diggers are all men. But if a man wants to seek financial security by marrying a rich women, no one despises them. They are not gold-diggers.

McPherson: Because they're marrying up.

Carr: Absolutely. [Laughter]

Wolpe: And then there's capitalism, there's what Antonio is doing. There are all different kinds of usury in the play. One is condemned and the others are not, but you're right and thank you for your smart comment.

McPherson: That's great. Well I believe we are at time, so thank you very much and please thank our actors. [Applause]

UNDERGRADUATE PAPER

A Stranger to His State: Prospero's Isolation through Art

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Richly imaginative and vividly engaging, *The Tempest* showcases some of Shakespeare's most fantastical work. A dichotomy of art and nature in the play works to emphasize a variety of contrasts between civil and savage, freedom and bondage, and community and isolation, contributing depth of interpretation to an otherwise minimally complex plot. Standing at the heart of these oppositions, Prospero controls the play's action as the conflict of art and nature revolves around his identity. Though he isolates himself by resisting human nature and instead pursuing the intellectual edification of his art, Prospero must reconcile both as aspects of humanity to attain the freedom to rejoin society.

Prospero's art is more complex than it perhaps appears. It comprises the liberal arts, meaning the study and related knowledge of culture, philosophy, and natural science, as well as supernatural disciplines like astrology and alchemy. Consequently, though his art includes magic, it is certainly not limited to it. He begins his relationship with the mind

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while still the Duke of Milan, where he is "reputed / In dignity, and for the liberal arts / Without a parallel"[1] (*Tempest* 1.2.72-74). His reference to the liberal arts is noteworthy, as they form the foundation of his philosophy of the primacy of the mind that will inevitably alienate him from his own humanity. Noting that the "very idea of education" forms the "essence of . . . humanism" in Europe, Professor Jonathan Bate cites Prospero's liberal arts as a "specific…allusion" to the "humanist curriculum," which includes instruction in language, logic, arithmetic, music, and astronomy.[2] In this vein, Prospero perceives himself as a scholar before all else. However, by abandoning the government of his dukedom to his brother, Antonio, and "neglecting worldly ends" to improve his mind in seclusion (1.2.89), he does himself a grave disservice. Antonio betrays him, resulting in the former duke's exile on his forsaken isle, but Prospero first betrays himself, for turning fully toward his art entails turning away from his identity as the Duke of Milan.

On the island, Prospero begins a new phase of life. His devotion to art intensifies with his nearly perfected isolation, and fresh experience with betrayal increases his aversion to the faithless nature of humanity. Scholar Dustin Gish notices that, at this point, Prospero's "art…is no longer limited to books; it is partly derived from [his] study of nature itself," referring to the inhuman nature of the world around him, as opposed to that of human society.[3] This added focus on the inanimate serves to deepen the psychological isolation that leads to Prospero's expulsion from society in the first place. He conceptualizes a binary relationship between art and human nature with study and instruction ideally providing a correction to nature's influence on the human character. While he largely fails in applying this principle to Caliban—who disowns his education with the sentiment that all he gained from language is the capacity to curse (1.2.366-67)—Prospero more easily influences Miranda. On seeing Ferdinand for the first time, her indoctrination

against the possibility of a higher capacity in nature becomes evident, for she believes him to be divine (*i.e.,* not human) based on the principle that "nothing natural" could be "so noble" (1.2.422-23).

Prospero's negative reaction toward nature is visible when he responds sharply to his daughter's defense of Ferdinand, threatening that any additional outburst will make him "chide [her], if not hate [her]" (1.2.480). Considering that Prospero's goal requires the two to fall in love, the intensity of his reaction suggests a response on a philosophical level. As Miranda repeatedly questions her father's actions toward Ferdinand, Prospero rebukes her, saying, "My foot my tutor?" (1.2.473). He seems to feel that nature's assertion of power over the art he has imparted to his daughter motivates her repeated protestations against him.

The power of Prospero's art derives not from the art itself but from his unbalanced devotion to it at the expense of human nature. For this reason, his art is associated with the inhuman, frequently in terms of the divine. Prospero promises Miranda:

> I have with such provision in mine art
> So safely ordered that there is no soul—
> No, not so much perdition as an hair
> Betid to any creature in the vessel
> . . . . . which thou saw'st sink. (1.2.28-32)

Insinuating he possesses God-like powers of protection, he speaks in terms reminiscent of the reassurance found in the Gospel of Matthew that "the very hairs of your head are all numbered" by God.[4] Later, Ariel claims, "Not a hair perished" echoing the sentiment as the embodiment of Prospero's power (1.2.218). Additionally, Caliban recognizes that Prospero's "art is of such power / It would control my dam's god, Setebos, / And make a vassal of him" (1.2.375-77). Thus, ultimate nature in the form of a pagan god would bow to the absolute art that Prospero seeks to perfect, yet in pursuing inhuman power, he must deny his own humanity. The mage's

staff and arcane book featured throughout the play as tools of Prospero's power represent this same singular devotion. As long as the former Duke of Milan wields art over others, he cannot exist alongside them.

For Prospero, the knowledge and mental discipline of art counter what he perceives as the failings of a human nature entirely dominated by negative attributes. His experience with Caliban leads him to conclude that the evil impulses of nature resist, and even refuse, improvement by art. Antonio, Sebastian, Stephano, and Trinculo all enact the corruption Prospero expects. Already established as the "false brother" (1.2.89) who usurped his rule in Milan, Antonio once again acts on the greed of his ambitious nature by inciting Sebastian to overthrow his own brother, the King of Naples. Equally influenced by his base nature, Sebastian willingly joins the plot against King Alonso. He questions Antonio's experience first, asking after the state of his conscience, but Antonio satisfies any reservations the other may have had, responding, "Ay, sir, where lies that?"—as if moral consideration can be simply laid aside (2.1.277-8). Although Sebastian is not intending to personally kill his brother, instead leaving that to his co-conspirator, it is darkly ambiguous whether he would have, given the opportunity. In a less sinister but equivalently distasteful pattern of behavior, the two persistently mock old Gonzalo's efforts to cheer the king, who believes his son to be lost to the sea; and Sebastian antagonizes his brother directly, noting, "you may thank yourself for this great loss" (2.1.125). Heartless nature informs his actions, reinforcing the idea of human nature that Prospero resists.

Though not as egregious in behavior as the would-be usurpers, Stephano the butler and Trinculo the jester also validate Prospero's notion of base nature. As alcoholics completely devoted to the satisfaction of their appetites, they actually manage to remain intoxicated the entire time they spend together on the island. Furthermore, once Caliban has pledged himself to Stephano, the butler commands, "Drink,

servant monster, when I bid thee," imposing the nature that rules him on those in his service (3.1.8). When he learns about Prospero and Miranda, Stephano also agrees to kill a man he has never met and take his daughter to satisfy his appetites (3.2.106-107). Their contemptible nature does not even value an individual's life or freedom beyond possible monetary gain; for, upon encountering the prone form of Caliban exposed to the elements, Trinculo's first impulse is to guess at his market value as an oddity. Similarly, the hope of possibly selling the man motivates Stephano to "recover" Caliban using his wine as a restorative (2.2.76). This pattern of values and behavior illustrates Prospero's motivation in his resistance to nature.

Like some of the nobles newly stranded on the island, Caliban takes this opportunity to attempt to overthrow his master. His instructions to Stephano to "[b]atter [Prospero's] skull, or paunch him with a stake / Or cut his weasand with thy knife" (3.2.90-91), however, reveal a depth to his brutality that surpasses the violent nature of the others. In his Arden edition of The Tempest, Frank Kermode observes that, "Caliban represents…nature without benefit of nurture; Nature, as opposed to an Art which is man's power over…himself."[5] Kermode touches on, but does not quite explain, the idea that Caliban exemplifies Prospero's idea of base nature. His cursed origin as the child of a witch and a demon, his outward deformities, his lust, and his defiance all illustrate Caliban's role as a mirror of Prospero, dedicated to a corrupt human nature at the expense of art. This singular fixation on one element and exclusion of the other leads the audience to perceive Caliban as inhuman. Just as Prospero cannot participate in humanity while serving only art, Caliban cannot be human without it. It is also reasonable to assume that his servant's unapologetic attempt to rape Miranda accounts for Prospero's excessive admonitions against the breaking of chastity before marriage. As critic Michael Payne observes, "[E]ven Miranda believes she is defying her father

in loving Ferdinand."[6] Prospero wants nothing more than for the two to be together, however, publicly evidenced by the wedding masque he orchestrates for the couple with his art. His philosophy may condemn lust as base human nature, but it celebrates love as an ideal goal.

Ultimately, Prospero must reconcile the humanity of both art and nature before he can return to the dukedom he loves. His pursuit of absolute art has caused him to reject his own humanity, leading him to lose the ability to participate in society. In applying art's justice, unmitigated by human tenderness, Prospero throws his proclaimed enemies into a maze of psychological torment, leaving them in that state while he directs his masque to entertain the newly engaged couple. His intentions toward his prisoners are unclear, even as he asks Ariel's impression of their condition. However, when the spirit notes that "if [Prospero] now beheld them [his] affections / Would become tender" (5.1.18-19), interjecting that his own would as well, "were [he] human" (5.1.21), the mage acknowledges that his feelings shall be similarly moved—for he has come to the realization that, "the rarer action is / In virtue than in vengeance" (5.1.27-28). Faced with Ariel's assessment of the tender affections of humanity, Prospero owns his own nature, acknowledging his connection to mankind as "[o]ne of their kind," with the consequent empathy that should entail (5.1.23). He recognizes the co-existence of reason with nature, for there can be no justice when empathy—humanity, even—is sacrificed for vengeance. Critic Maurice Charney isolates this as the "turning point of the play" where "Prospero recovers his human warmth and fallibility."[7] Though certainly integral to Prospero's character, this moment follows another that echoes its sentiment of human frailty with even greater implications.

During the pinnacle performance of Prospero's art, the "most majestic vision" that he orchestrates as a demonstration of his power, he experiences a lapse that punctuates the climax of his development as a character (4.1.118). Recalling

Caliban's conspiracy to murder him causes Prospero to abruptly terminate his production in a state of rage and upset like nothing his daughter has ever seen him display (4.1.134-5). This is the moment that leads him to recognize the failure of his philosophic approach and his need to accept nature. Clearly, Caliban and a few drunken Neapolitans hold no threat for him. Instead, he reacts to his own failure to account for something he had forgotten. The realization that flawless control is unattainable triggers his emotional outburst and rapid reassessment of his human existence. He excuses himself, asking Ferdinand to, "Bear with my weakness," marking his first true admission of vulnerability (4.1.159). Already, Prospero explores his new mode of thinking about natural existence. Eloquently noting the ephemeral quality of individual life, he reflects, "We are such stuff / As dreams are made on, and our little life / Is rounded with a sleep," contemplating mortality as a necessary aspect of living—nature's final punctuation (4.1.156-58). By accepting fallibility and mortality as universal commonalities, Prospero progresses toward reestablishing his connection to humanity.

To perfect his blended approach to nature and art, wherein intellect tempers a complex nature capable of both positive and negative traits, Prospero must give up the power that separates him from the rest of humanity. Regarding this motivation, scholar Robert Kimbrough writes, "Prospero will turn from his books, not for theological reasons, but for human ones; his studies have removed him from the pale of mankind and he knows that he must return…human as he is."[8] He has learned that power is not worth isolation, and he no longer needs the ability to exert control if he is not also able to participate. In breaking his staff, drowning his book, and abjuring his "rough magic," Prospero renounces the tools, symbols, and power associated with his misguided singular devotion to art and denial of nature (5.1.51-57). Correcting the imbalance of his approach to humanity, he abandons his power to exceed human ability and is left with

the natural results of his studies: knowledge, understanding, and authority.

A theme of freedom traces its way through the narrative of The Tempest, contributing to that noticed by historian and literary critic Frances Yates, who writes that the "language [of the play]…is infused through and through with spiritual alchemy and its theme of transformation."[9] Caliban and Ariel both yearn for liberation and successfully transition out of their own sorts of bondage at the hands of Prospero, yet the master himself is not free. Prospero cannot leave his island until he has the capacity to rejoin the society that ejected him. By accepting himself with his fallibility, vices, and weakness, and by acknowledging the need for assistance from the very audience he has been playing to, Prospero demonstrates his transmutation into a whole man at last (Epilogue.16-20).

Notes

1. References are to act, scene, and line of the following edition: William Shakespeare, *The Tempest,* ed. David Bevington (Boston: Pearson, 2014).

2. Jonathan Bate, *Soul of the Age: A Biography of the Mind of Shakespeare* (New York: Random House, 2009), 118, 199.

3. Dustin Dustin, "Taming The Tempest: Prospero's Love of Wisdom and the Turn from Tyranny," in *Souls with Longing: Representations of Honor and Love in Shakespeare,* ed. Bernard Dobski and Dustin Gish (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011), 187.

4. Matt. 10:30 (English Standard Version).

5. Frank Kermode, introduction to *The Arden Shakespeare,* ed. Frank Kermode (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), quoted in David Daniell, *The Tempest: The Critics Debate* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 40.

6. Michael Payne, "Magic and Politics in *The Tempest*," *Shakespearean Criticism* 45 (1999): 276.

7. Maurice Charney, *Shakespeare's Style* (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2014), 150.

8. Robert Kimbrough, "Prospero and the Art of Humankindness," *Shakespearean Criticism* 16 (1992): 442-51.

9. Frances A. Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (Boston: Ark, 1979), 162.