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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."

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The Dangers of Hosiptality in Shakespeare: the Hostess in *The Rape of Lucrece* and *The Winter's Tale*

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Hospitality recurs across Shakespeare's works in diffuse and complex ways: his characters grapple with the tension that can arise between host and guest, the uncomfortable intimacy of sharing a domestic space, and the balance of debt and exchange that hangs within any hospitable situation. Many representations of hospitality we see in Shakespeare's works reflect an early modern anxiety over the perceived shift in hospitality from a generous practice of charity to a corrosive celebration of excess. My focus here is on the figure of the tragic hostess in Shakespeare who is betrayed by her own adherence to a noble and generous hospitable code of conduct that is ultimately unrealistic. The early modern hostess wields authority through her management of the household and welcoming of guests into the domestic space, and is subject not only to the dangers of a decaying standard of hospitality but to gendered constraints as well. In his early narrative poem, *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), and again in *The Winter's Tale* (1609), Shakespeare presents women damned by an overly generous and guileless performance of hospitality. Examining Lucrece and Hermione in terms of their position as hostesses allows us to consider how women in early modern culture may be caught between the simultaneous responsibilities and risks of being both wife and host.

Felicity Heal has influentially articulated how, in this period, hospitality was a fraught social, moral, and political issue. She explains that

> Something, many authors believed, had gone wrong in the practice of hospitality. It is impossible to read early modern texts without attaching the prefix "decay of" to the notion hospitality, for it was firmly held that the English had fallen from some previous standard of domestic excellence.[1]

This concern over a decay in hospitality from noble to sinful often surfaces in early modern literature. For James Heffernan, Shakespeare's works offer a way to explore early modern conceptions of hospitality. The playwright continuously "test[s] the very meaning of hospitality in his own time," thereby "revealing the worst as well as best that host and guests can do for and to each other."[2] The decayed grandeur that Heal identifies as characterizing early modern hospitality underscores Shakespeare's explorations of the highs and lows of hospitality: he continuously returns to the idea that hospitality can exalt and reify social bonds but can just as easily exploit people's vulnerability to dangerous ends. The ways in which the unstable state of hospitality creates the potential for both joy and danger is illustrated with particular clarity through the figure of the hostess in Shakespeare.

In both Lucrece and Hermione, we see a woman extend hospitality to a man without reservation and as a result become trapped within a violent situation. Heffernan briefly acknowledges the similarities between these two characters, but neither in his work nor elsewhere in critical discussion is there sufficient attention to the connections between Hermione and Lucrece. By putting *The Rape of Lucrece* into conversation with *The Winter's Tale* and contextualizing the role of an early modern hostess, we can see how Shakespeare explores the fraught and potentially tragic position of a woman at the head of a household.

Surprisingly little scholarship acknowledges the centrality of hospitality within *The Rape of Lucrece*. In brief, this classical story details how Tarquin, upon hearing of the supreme beauty and virtue of Lucrece, journeys to present himself before her as a guest while her husband, Tarquin's friend Collatine, is absent at battle. Adopting the role of guest affords Tarquin intimate access to Lucrece, and opportunity to attack her. Hospitality is

the context within which the plot unfolds. While other versions such as Thomas Heywood's 1609 play of the same title feature more subplots or a more extensive cast of characters, Shakespeare's rendition is primarily a detailed exploration of Tarquin's perspective leading up to the rape and Lucrece's reaction in the aftermath. This close study of Tarquin's violence and Lucrece's desolation at many points emphasizes the rape as a breach not just of morality or chastity, but of hospitality.

When Tarquin first arrives, already harboring a violent lust, the narration tells us that "well was he welcomed by the Roman dame" (51), and that "guiltless she securely gives good cheer / and reverend welcome to her princely guest, / whose inward ill no outward harm expressed" (89-91).[3] Here for the first time we see the discord between Tarquin's and Lucrece's understandings of hospitality. For Lucrece, the arrival of her husband's friend is a celebratory occasion that merits feasting, conviviality, and unconditional welcome. She, operating within a noble system of hospitality, "touch'd no unknown baits, nor feared no hooks," unable to read anything sinister in her guest (103). Tarquin, meanwhile, understands that the intimacy of a shared domestic space will offer the opportunity to attack his hostess.

Lucrece entertains her guest over supper, as her duties as hostess require. While the narration focuses solely on the conversation between Tarquin and Lucrece, and the disparities between their intentions, the simple premise of a prosperous household entertaining a powerful guest holds significance. It is worth pausing to consider the labor, elided by the narration, that any hospitable situation entails. While there is no doubt that women occupied a constrained position within early modern society, there is also evidence of the vital, creative, and indeed authoritative role exercised by the noble hostess. In her analysis of country house entertainments during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Elizabeth Zemen Kolkovitch demonstrates the active, strategic role women played in hospitable events. Far from being sidelined or functioning as figureheads, noble women sitting at the heads of households actively engaged with the political negotiations and social power plays arising from entertaining a powerful person within one's home.[4] Further emphasizing the early modern woman's authority as host in her work on banqueting as a form of theatre, Sara Mueller

reframes women's roles in orchestrating banquets to highlight their "creative agency in their own households."[5] The hostess was not merely an emblem of domestic welcome, but an authoritative actant who understood the potential for social development and power exchange in any host-guest relationship. Domestic guides such as those authored by Hannah Woolley indicate the skill and effort of the early modern hostess, with Woolley's *Gentlewoman's Companion* explicitly defending the running of a household as "an excellent and profitable employment"[6] and implying that this employment can contribute to social gain through "the entertaining of persons of Quality."[7]

Thus, Lucrece's welcome is not simply a display of kindness and an invitation to sit for dinner, but rather the skillful, deliberate result of a conscientiously run household. The meal itself could be understood as Lucrece exercising her agency, and any hostess in her position would have fully understood the social importance of entertaining the powerful Tarquin. In fact, in Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece*, Lucrece explicitly describes her position as mistress of a household as requiring great care and work. Addressing a servant, she says:

> Now that your Lord is absent from this house,
> And that the Masters eie is from his charge,
> We must be carefull and with prouidence
> Guide his domestick busines, we ha now
> Giuen ore all feasting and leaud reuelling,
> Which ill becomes the house whose Lo: is absent.[8]

She explains that since all her husband's business becomes her responsibility when he is absent, she must be conscious of this and always be first to rise and last to sleep in the effort to effectively run the household. While we do not hear a similar proclamation of responsibility and labor from Shakespeare's Lucrece, we can acknowledge that her position as head of a wealthy household entails significant work. Entertaining a noble guest such as Tarquin is made possible by Lucrece's continual household management, which engages her awareness of the potential for social and political gain through hospitality.

It is all the more wrenching, then, that Tarquin's calculated assault on Lucrece is framed as a violation not only of her body and chastity, but of the hospitality she extends. In attacking Lucrece,

Tarquin is also dismantling her power as hostess, a parallel which the text makes clear. In order to reach Lucrece's room Tarquin must move past barriers both emotional and literal. Every door he moves through is an "unwilling portal," and the "locks between her chamber and his will" through which he forces himself "all rate his ill," the physical structure of the house resisting as does their mistress (302-309). When Tarquin does at last reach the isolated, unsuspecting Lucrece, he at first attempts to convince her that she should willingly have sex with him to protect herself from the rape and intentional destruction of her reputation that he is prepared to commit. In her response Lucrece rebukes him by invoking the social contract she believes exists between them as host and guest:

> Reward not hospitality
> With such black payment as thou hast pretended;
> Mud not the fountain that gave drink to thee;
> Mar not the thing that cannot be amended. (575-78)

Hospitality, in Lucrece's eyes, is the fountain that Tarquin has enjoyed the bounty of; to now act violently within the context of hospitality is to pollute this from sustenance to poison. There is, in this, an implication of the anxiety over hospitality's decay that Heal identifies: Lucrece upholds the standard of open and free-flowing hospitality which Tarquin, focused on his selfish, violent passions rather than a social ideal, will taint. Lucrece's language highlights how generosity is spoiled through excessive consumption: The abundant fountain of hospitality should be wholesome, but Tarquin's greed for more than what is offered will corrupt this. Lucrece goes on to urge Tarquin not to mar "the thing that cannot be amended." While this could be referring to her virtue, within the close context of this passage it seems to be again referencing hospitality. Once the fountain has been polluted it cannot be redeemed; once the trust between host and guest is betrayed, it cannot be amended.

Part of the fatal issue here is that Lucrece views hospitality as a noble, sacred practice in which host and guest share the intimate space of the home and are bonded through respect. Tarquin, meanwhile, recognizes hospitality as an opportunity for subterfuge and violence. As hostess Lucrece is vulnerable to the stranger in her home; as woman, she is vulnerable to male violence and caught within a restrictive state. This will be mirrored in *The Winter's Tale*,

in which Hermione becomes similarly trapped between a hostess's duty and a woman's vulnerability.

The Winter's Tale opens with two courtiers discussing the exchange of hospitality taking place between the kings of Sicilia and Bohemia. For David Ruiter this scene shows a tension between the Sicilian Camillo's conception of "'true hospitality'—what Derrida would call a sort of Kantian idea/ideal of hospitality," and the Bohemian Archidamus's anxious awareness of the debt that his king has incurred as an extended guest.[9] Heal shows that the loss of the "golden, vanished age of generosity" mourned in early modern writing is often attributed "to man's innate depravity, and to some or all of the seven deadly sins."[10] To Hermione, hospitality is a perfect system that upholds the high moral standard of the domestic space; to Leontes, it is subject to these sins and weaknesses. In the scene that follows, these two competing perspectives of hospitality will play out further as Leontes employs Hermione's help in convincing their guest Polixenes to stay longer, only to then see her success as proof of adultery. Hermione's skill as a hostess makes her vulnerable to her own husband's suspicions, showing again the double bind of a hostess having to enact perfect welcome even when it puts her into danger.

Leontes' attempts to convince Polixenes to extend his visit, which has already stretched nine months, are met repeatedly with gentle but firm rejections. Their friendly back-and-forth includes the exchange:

> *Pol.*   No longer stay.
> *Leon.* One sev'nnight longer.
> *Pol.*   Very sooth, tomorrow. (1.2.20-22)[11]

When Polixenes finally asserts that "there is no tongue that moves" that could change his mind on the matter, Leontes looks to Hermione for help (1.2.26). With her husband's encouragement, Hermione pushes Polixenes further, even reprising the rhythm of her husband's attempts:

> *Pol.*   No, madam.
> *Herm.* Nay, but you will?
> *Pol.*   I may not, verily. (1.2.26)

This launches Hermione into a teasing speech in which she asserts that "verily, / you shall not go. A lady's 'verily' is / as potent as

a lord's," and offers Polixenes a choice to be either her guest or her prisoner (1.2.63-65). In this playful threat to hold Polixenes within her home against his will Hermione alludes to the sinister potential of hospitality, yet she does not see the true danger lurking in the silent, increasingly suspicious Leontes who watches this exchange. Hermione performs her self-proclaimed role of "kind hostess" perfectly, happily occupying an ideal hospitality which is eroding without her knowledge under Leontes's growing jealousy (1.2.76).

Hermione's quick success in persuading Polixenes to remain as guest, and Leontes's rapid dissolution from loving friend and husband to murderous tyrant, has been the subject of much critical speculation, some of which productively considers the role of hospitality. For Ruiter, Leontes sees hospitality as based on sovereignty and exchange, while Hermione, like Camillo, understands hospitality as a social ideal. To her view, the peaceful bond between hosts and guest insulates them from harm, but for Leontes there is something threatening in his wife's success:

> In demonstrating the power to enforce [Polixenes's] coming and going, which her husband appears unable to do, she appears to gain the sovereignty that Derrida claims is necessary for the enactment of hospitality and that Leontes, in some respect, lacks.[12]

Hermione's too-generous, too-friendly performance of the role of hostess seems to Leontes not only to contradict her responsibility to be chaste, but to usurp his authority as king and host. For both Ruiter and Heffernan, Leontes's reaction against Hermione and Polixenes is explicable, if not justifiable. Heffernan, in fact, holds that Hermione is notably flirtatious in her persuasion, and comments that "whenever a male guest is entertained by a woman, whether or not her husband is watching and whether or not she is chaste, she may find herself skirting the razor-thin line between friendship and seduction."[13] In addition to this, he notes, by successfully petitioning a foreign king, she is moving from the domestic to the political, creating further strain. But while I have argued that the early modern woman held creative skill and significant responsibility as hostess, I would be no means extend this to claim that she could hold equal social power to her male guest or fellow host, or that she can always balance the

responsibilities of the hostess with the constraints of a wife. The "razor-thin line" Heffernan describes is often invisible, and can cut. Hermione extends hospitality, as does Lucrece; she is betrayed, as was Lucrece, not through any lapse into flirtation, but through the system of hospitality which is precariously vulnerable to violence and sinister intent, especially for a woman.

In Tracy McNulty's sustained analysis of the figure of the hostess in Western traditions she considers how femininity, or feminine subjectivity, operates within the practice of hospitality. She intentionally distances this feminine subjectivity from a fundamentally welcoming mode characterized by maternal impulse and homemaking and instead uses the "marginalized or devalued position of the hostess" as a lens through which to consider identity and ethics in acts of hospitality. She argues that

> The first important consequence of woman's designation as the personal property of the host is that she is able to act as an extension of the host's personhood. The host's offer of hospitality often depends upon his ability to dispose of the female dependents who make up his personal property, who he offers to the guest as though giving some part of himself.[14]

Leontes extends Hermione as if she is part of himself in his entreaty that she speak and persuade Polixenes. She at first echoes his playful entreaties, but speaks more passionately (and compellingly) than Leontes did. When he sees his wife acting differently than he expects, Leontes fears that his wife and friend "mingle friendship far" and that Hermione might move beyond platonic feelings for Polixenes, towards a desire that is foreign to him (1.2.140). Shocked at the thought of her capacity to be so unlike him, Leontes decides that she has betrayed him and is deserving of death. Of this moment, McNulty comments that the friendship between the two kings is "splintered" by Leontes's misinterpretation of welcome as lust, "thereby introducing rivalry and uncanny difference into what seemed to be a perfectly equal, reversible relation between host and guest."[15] Hermione's enactment of a hospitality that is feminine, authoritative, and decidedly unique from her husband's, has shifted the bond between host and guest to a degree that is, to Leontes, unbearable.

In both *The Rape of Lucrece* and *The Winter's Tale* we see a hostess extending hospitality with unguarded generosity, which

for both ultimately leads to horrible violence being enacted upon them. Both Hermione and Lucrece make the mistake of taking for granted an ideal mode of hospitality, while the others involved recognize the capacity for deception and violence within the host-guest relationship. Of course, the key difference between these two texts is that *The Winter's Tale* has an ostensibly happy ending, with Hermione either returned or revived and the repentant Leontes reunited with both his wife and Polixenes. This ending takes place within another moment of hospitality, as Leontes, Polixenes, and their children enter into Paulina's home to see the statue she claims to have made of Hermione. Paulina intentionally frames this as hospitality, telling Leontes

> That you have vouchsafed,
> With your crowned brother and these your contracted
> Heirs of your kingdoms, my poor house to visit,
> It is a surplus of your grace which never
> My life may last to answer. (5.3.5-9)

Paulina is deeply aware of both the capacities and limitations of hospitality. By reminding Leontes that he is passing within her house, she claims the role of hostess to her king, with all the responsibility and potential gain bound up in hosting noble guests. But she speaks to Leontes's perspective on hospitality as exchange rather than Hermione's ideal mode, putting herself in his debt for the grace he has given and which she can never repay. Indeed, for James Kearney, Paulina's "elaborate hospitality" creates the conditions for reconciliation in part by putting Leontes in the role of guest rather than host for the first time.[16] Ruiter likewise emphasizes the importance of Leontes accepting someone else as host, and moreover directs attention to the very real risk Paulina takes in this moment.[17] Paulina is a successful hostess, but the danger of backlash is still present, and perhaps even actualized in her conscripted marriage to Camillo. While *The Winter's Tale* closes with a redemptive moment of hospitality that repairs the earlier destructive one, it cannot undo the harm Hermione incurred through her practice of hospitality and only reaffirms the precarious position of a hostess entertaining men.

The early modern hostess is a figure of both authority and vulnerability, wielding social and political power while also subject to the demands and the desires of her guests and husband. For

a final demonstration of this, I turn once more to *The Rape of Lucrece*. In the aftermath of Tarquin's attack Lucrece lies alone, a "woeful hostess" left with her grief (1125), and laments that by being raped, she has brought dishonor on her husband. Directing her words to the absent Collatine, she says:

> Yet am I guilty of thy honor's wrack;
> Yet for thy honor did I entertain him;
> Coming from thee, I could not put him back,
> For it had been dishonor to disdain him (841-44).

Here, Lucrece directly articulates the impossible position she was put in as hostess, and indicates the possibility of resentment against her husband. Because of her responsibilities to entertain Collatine's friend, Lucrece was forced to welcome Tarquin into her home, yet by doing so she gave this guest the access he needed to attack her. Lucrece rails against "vile opportunity" for creating the condition of her harm (895). She has been a victim not just of violent lust, but of her position as hostess. For Lucrece as well as Hermione, extending open welcome to a male guest leads to destruction: hospitality creates opportunity for violence.

What we see in drawing together these two texts is Shakespeare's exploration of hospitality's equal capacity for conviviality and destruction intertwined with a consideration of the early modern woman's vulnerability. First, in his early career with the simple narrative of *The Rape of Lucrece*, there is a close focus on the dangers posed by a hostess's ill-intentioned guest; later Shakespeare returns to this figure of a victimized hostess in the more complicated *Winter's Tale*, with consideration of the way hospitality's fraught power dynamics can destabilize intimate and political relationships. Since hospitality occurs within the domestic space, it opens the possibility for women to fully inhabit the position of head of household as Lucrece does in welcoming Tarquin, and to enter into negotiations of social and political power as Hermione does in swaying the opinion of a foreign king. Yet the opportunities opened by hospitality are treacherous, and can expose the hostess to violence and suspicion. An understanding of the way gender and the conventions of hospitality operate upon these characters lends greater nuance to a reading of these texts. While there is a rich body of scholarship on hospitality more broadly in Shakespeare's work and other early modern drama,

the figure of the hostess in particular remains largely overlooked. Increased attention to representations of hostesses in early modern texts can allow us to better appreciate the role women played in hospitality, foregrounding rather than marginalizing women's fraught positions as mistresses of households.

Notes

1. Felicity Heal, "The Idea of Hospitality in Early Modern England," *Past & Present* no. 102, (Feb. 1984): 80.

2. James A. W. Heffernan, *Hospitality and Treachery in Western Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014): 148.

3. William Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece*. ed. Barbara Mowat, Paul Werstine, Michael Poston, and Rebecca Niles. Folger Shakespeare Library. Accessed on October 7, 2021. (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library). https://shakespeare.folger.edu/shakespeares-works/lucrece/

4. Elizabeth Zemen Kolkovitch, *The Elizabethan Country House Entertainment; Print, Performance, and Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

5. Sara Mueller, "Early Modern Banquet Receipts and Women's Theatre," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 24 (2011): 107.

6. Hannah Woolley, *The Gentlewomans Companion; Or, A Guide to the Female Sex Containing Directions of Behaviour, in all Places, Companies, Relations, and Conditions, from their Childhood Down to Old Age: Viz. as, Children to Parents. Scholars to Governours. Single to Servants. Virgins to Suitors. Married to Husbands. Huswifes to the House Mistresses to Servants. Mothers to Children. Widows to the World Prudent to all. with Letters and Discourses upon all Occasions. Whereunto is Added, a Guide for Cook-Maids, Dairy-Maids, Chamber-Maids, and all Others that Go to Service. the Whole being an Exact Rule for the Female Sex in General.* by Hannah Woolley (London, printed by A. Maxwell for Dorman Newman at the Kings-Arms in the Poultry, 1673), 108. Early English Books Online. https://www-proquest-com.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/books/gentlewomans-companion-guide-female-sex/docview/2240862378/se-2?accountid=14553.

7. Woolley, *The Gentlewoman's Companion*, 112.

8. Thomas Heywood, *The Rape of Lucrece a True Roman Tragedie. with the Seuerall Songes in their Apt Places, by Valerius, the Merrie Lord Amongst the Roman Peeres. Acted by Her Majesties Seruants at the Red-Bull, Neere Clarken-Well.* Written by Thomas Heywood (London: Printed by E. Allde for I. Busby and are to be solde by Nathaniel Butter in Paules-Church-yard at the signe of the Pide-Bull, 1608), F2. Early English Books Online. https://www-proquest-com.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/books/rape-lucrece-true-roman- .

9. David Ruiter, "Shakespeare and Hospitality: Opening the Winter's Tale," *Mediterranean Studies* 16 (2007): 106.

10. Heal, "The Idea of Hospitality," 80-81.

11. William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, ed. Barbara Mowat, Paul Werstine, Michael Poston, and Rebecca Niles. *Folger Shakespeare Library.*

Accessed on October 7, 2021 (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library). https://shakespeare.folger.edu/shakespeares-works/the-winters-tale/.

12. Ruiter, "Shakespeare and Hospitality," 165.

13. Heffernan, *Hospitality and Treachery*, 140.

14. Tracy McNulty, *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007): xxxvii.

15. McNulty, *The Hostess*, 242.

16. James Kearney, "Hospitality's Risk, Grace's Bargain: Uncertain Economies in The Winter's Tale." *Shakespeare and Hospitality: Ethics, Politics, and Exchange*, ed. David B. Goldstein and Julia Reinhard Lupton. (New York: Routledge, 2016): 105.

17. Ruiter, "Shakespeare and Hospitality," 175.

Tyranny, Insurrection, and the Crowd:
Julius Caesar, Coriolanus and
Appropriations of the Roman past

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Studies that interrogate Shakespeare's role in the construction of early modern national identity typically focus on his history plays. Far less has been done with Shakespeare's appropriation of Roman history. This article argues that the playwright wrote his Roman plays intending to furnish Tudors with a particular representation of "the most important people (humanly speaking) who ever lived, the concern of every educated man in Europe," and that he did so in ways memorable and compelling enough to influence England's emergent sense of itself as nation.[1] Elizabethans looked to Rome for paradigms of military, political, artistic, and cultural excellence, and they found among the Romans case studies of leadership from the benevolent to the odious.[2]

In no less a prominent publication than the First Folio, Ben Jonson famously accused Shakespeare of having "small Latin and less Greek," a swipe that ignores the bard's grammar school education in Roman literature, history, and rhetoric, not to mention his adult life spent in a city modeled on Rome.[3] It is ironic, then, that Jonson's 1603 play about political conspiracy in Rome, *Sejanus His Fall*, in which Shakespeare himself acted on the stage, would owe so much to Shakespeare's own *Julius*

Caesar. In addition to Shakespeare's four explicitly Roman plays, which include *Titus Andronicus* and the three tragedies based on Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, no fewer than thirteen of Shakespeare's forty or so works are set in the world of ancient Greece or Rome, or one-third of his published plays, as Jonathan Bate observed. Included in these plays is a timeline that stretches from the Trojan war to the assassination of Julius Caesar and the beginning of the end of the Roman Empire.[4]

In his histories and Roman tragedies, Shakespeare achieves a *narrative of nation* by configuring legends, lands, rite and ritual, and fights and figures into a symbolic world of representation and a discourse of national belonging. This symbolic world helped to "structure the way England (or possibly Britain) came to perceive itself as unique and separated from the rest of the world," as Domenico Lovascio writes.[5] As a coherent body of work, this meta story helped Elizabethans to see themselves "in the imaginary as somehow sharing in an overarching collective narrative," as Stuart Hall put it, such that their otherwise humdrum, everyday existence came to be connected with a great national destiny that existed prior to them and that would outlive them.[6] This history is not linear, marked as it is by discontinuities as much as by continuity, by unevenness rather than unbroken evolution, and by rascals every bit as much as by champions. The plays' scenes, settings, and figures oppose each other in wonderfully complex ways, yet together enact a larger national story and gather audiences by animating this national heritage and history. Shakespeare thus becomes "that privileged signifier of Englishness," the only dramatist who is required reading in all of England's schools.[7] It is perhaps ironic that one of the primary sources for English school boys for the official history of Caesar became Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* more than, say, Caesar's own *Commentaries*.

Focusing on *Julius Caesar* and Coriolanus, this article finds in these dramas a catalog of the evils of tyranny and authoritarianism as presented by a wonderfully vivid cast of deeply flawed, startlingly relevant rulers. Shakespeare's enactment of tyranny's threat to any idea of a "commonwealth" features the unforgettable stage figures of Coriolanus, Brutus, Marc Anthony, and Julius Caesar, who, if imagined as a sort of Shakespearean chorus, might be heard to be shouting, "*Sic semper tyrannis*!" The two Roman

plays also enact and warn against the fickleness and absurdities of public opinion. Citizens' willingness to be lied to makes light work for demagogues who prove indifferent to the truth. As Stephen Greenblatt diagnosed it, a self-confident, self-styled populist can easily exploit tribalism or factionalism to create a dangerous space in which "two and two do not have to equal four, and the most recent assertion need not remember the contradictory assertion that was made a few seconds earlier."[8] Greenblatt was thinking about both *Julius Caesar* and Donald Trump, whose four years in the White House brought renewed interest in ideas of tyranny and in the many forms tyrants can take. Greenblatt's book, *Tyrant: Shakespeare on Politics*, seeks an answer to what in 2016 became a startlingly contemporary question: "How is it possible for a whole country to fall into the hands of a tyrant?"[9]

In Elizabethan England, the theater mediated the ideas about nationhood that Shakespeare's facile mind created and animated. As a mass medium experienced bodily, London's plays influenced the collective imagination by creating *witnesses* to the re-creation of English history. Englishmen re-enacted, appropriated, and incorporated English and Roman history as national history, both re-creating and creating a knowledge of the past by and for those in the present. Thomas Heywood wrote in 1612, "To turne to our domesticke hystories: what English blood, seeing the person of any bold Englishman presented, and doth not hugge his fame . . . as if the personator were the man personated? so bewitching a thing is lively and well-spirited action, that it hath power to new-mold the harts of the spectators."[10] To which, in Coriolanus, the tribune Sicinius might say, "What is the city [or nation] but the people?" (3.1.232).[11]

Shakespeare built worlds out of various historical moments and classical Roman stories, producing wholly new meanings via a constellation of cautionary symbols. By demonstrating on the stage how kings and clowns so obviously unqualified to govern could, in spite of their mendacity, cruelty, and venality, persuade a people to follow them, often ardently, the playwright avoids putting the blame entirely on history's tyrants. Fickle, self-seeking publics are culpable in both plays, a topic that Greenblatt explores and for which he creates a typology of "enablers." In *Julius Caesar*, Roman citizens are perfectly willing to believe the lie and ignore the

looming danger of authoritarianism, offering a crown in "foolery" rather than a rebuke, and not once, not twice, but three times.

In this reading, Shakespeare is a social memory maker; in some ways he is the social memory maker, who selects, adapts, and manipulates history, stories, and traditions for theater goers. His audiences, it must be recognized, received but also ignored and adapted what they saw and heard through the filters of their own interests. Seeing the plays together furnished this penny public with a set of memories that, while neither uniform nor stable, did constitute a collectivity. The "circulation of recollections among members of a given community," public memory encompasses what a public remembers, how that public frames these remembrances, and what aspects they ignore or forget.[12] As social or public memory, Shakespeare's plays provided a subjective reconstruction of a national past that looked also to the future, giving this history and this drama the two faces of Janus looking back and looking ahead. As drama, the past is re-enacted and made present and, thus, drama makes that past alive again even as how to move forward is being deliberated upon and decided by the body politic. Playgoers over the centuries have wept over historical events that Shakespeare's plays enact as *contemporary experiences*. Consider the future Richard III's wooing of Anne in the presence of the bleeding corpse of her father-in-law. This sort of communal reception and emotional involvement, accessible to even the illiterate, created the circumstances for the making of powerful bonds of common identity and something we might call national consciousness.

Rome's past cast long shadows on Elizabethan cultural and political thought, permeating England's social imagination and supplying playwrights such as Shakespeare, Jonson, and Christopher Marlowe with a sort of "boxed set" of events, figures, political lessons, and history to draw on. Jonathan Bate's *How the Classics Made Shakespeare* documents this Elizabethan reliance on the Romans and the Greeks, an English "intelligence of antiquity" in the sixteenth century that Shakespeare drew from and to which he contributed much. In fact, in so vividly enacting the classical tradition, Shakespeare *became* the classical tradition. Bate finds and explains the multiplicity of political and cultural imperatives that drove the Elizabethan urge to imitate Roman exemplars. And the Elizabethans were not alone in their fascination with a Roman past

portrayed as a consistent, continuous history, for it is evidenced also in the founding documents, place names, and monuments of the United States.[13]

Conveniently, a re-imagined Roman past seemed to grant writers and thinkers a structured imaginative space in which a sense of national unity could be fashioned in such a way as to seem familiar, a past inhabited by ancient Romans from whom the English claim to be descended, but with plenty of room also for innovation. Many Tudor classrooms used Caesar's *Commentaries* as a textbook from which English schoolboys learned Latin, and sixteenth-century theaters seemed at times to be fixated on the ethical models the Roman Republic offered. Thus, "a play about ancient Rome or ancient Troy was not an escapist documentary about a faraway world," as Marjorie Garber puts it, but something very like "a powerful lesson in modern . . . ethics and statecraft."[14] Plays such as *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* animated an ethical sense of "Roman" virtue on the stage, providing playgoers with images of that virtue that complemented a vast amount of material culture doing the same, including poetry such as the *Rape of Lucrece*, tapestries, visual allusions, stained glass, speeches, and literature.[15]

Julius Caesar

Gerald K. Hunter has said that Shakespeare's typical "Roman" character can be read as shorthand readily recognizable by his audiences as a set of virtues that are "soldierly, severe, self-controlled, disciplined," virtues that add up to Roman integrity. Rome in this context provides a past for Elizabethans that wasn't "simply *a* past but *the* past," as Hunter put it, "since it led to the present."[16] As a set, these virtues explain what the playwright meant when he writes of Antony being struck by a "Roman thought," in *Antony and Cleopatra*'s Act I, to point to just one example. Similarly, for Quentin Skinner, Livy's history of Rome, which is assumed to be one of Shakespeare's principal sources for *Julius Caesar*, along with Plutarch's *Lives*, furnished "the most important conduit for the transmission to early-modern Europe" of the *civitas libera*, or free state, in its account of the early republic and its institutions.[17] The acts both in war and peace of the people of Rome are those of a "free state," "the good and wholesome fruits of libertie," writes Livy,

in Book 2. This free state submitted to "the authoritie and rule of laws, more powerfull and mightie than that of men," language that seems to echo Cicero's ideas about civitas, the social body of the *cives*, or citizens, who are united by law and under a rule of law.[18]

Throughout the Roman plays, "Roman" connotes a robust list of moral qualities and character traits, including constancy, fidelity, perseverance, self-discipline, respect for tradition, and a sense of honor. If these qualities can be summed up in one virtue, it would be nobility. A word search of "nob*," to capture all instances of noble (for example, nobles, nobler, noblest, and nobility) in *Julius Caesar*, yielded a total of forty-five mentions, with Antony's reference to Brutus in Act V as "the noblest Roman of them all" fittingly the last of these mentions in the play. In the opening act, "noble blood" is conflated with all that is good in Rome and, therefore, that which is put at risk if the plebeians are allowed to continue venerating Caesar as a demi-god. The assassination plot's chief instigator, the senator Cassius, drips with sarcasm in the second scene of Act I as he describes Caesar as predator, feeding on the meat of Rome such that its noble blood is lost. As Cassius's memorable lines attest, to not possess or exhibit nobility and its constituent qualities is to not be Roman. For example, as Warren Chernaik noted, in Act I of *Julius Caesar*, nearly all mentions of "Rome" or "Roman" have persuasive intent; they are used by enemies of Caesar to inspire republican independence and self-reliance and to pour "scorn on those who fail to live up to these ideals."[19] For Cassius, tyranny is by no means inevitable. The senators can act, and as free men they must act. It is this logic and concern for the common good that persuades Brutus to join in the conspiracy. When Flavius and Murellus look in on a crowd "making holiday" to see Caesar and to "rejoice in his triumph," Murellus snarls:

> Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?
> What tributaries follow him to Rome
> To grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels?
> You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things:
> O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
> Knew you not Pompey? (1.1.29-34)

Among Rome's shadows, none were taller than that of the "colossus," the subject of so much myth that in early modern English drama Caesar became synecdoche for *Romanitas*, a

model for civilization, culture, and society. Perhaps explaining Shakespeare's fascination with Caesar, at least in part, the would-be emperor's biography allows for a number of interpretations, but certainly in Shakespeare's age he was admired; his assassins merited opprobrium for their venal, vicious treason that occasioned nothing less than civil war. For Elizabethan playwrights, however, the hypocritical, ungrateful, coldly calculating, liberty-wrecking, and, above all, ambitious Caesar proved irresistible, an interpretation amply provided by only a few alterations of the source texts. Did Caesar conspire with Catiline? Were his expeditions to Gaul and Britain heroic or brutal? Did he orchestrate the civil war? In *De Officiis* (*Offices*), Cicero casts Caesar as a treasonous murderer of his own country and, therefore, "a parricidium in the Roman legal sense of treason, which framed Caesar as a criminal of the deepest dye," Lovascio writes.[20] A letter by Cicero deplored Caesar as he "who causeth himselfe to be called the Monarchall Emperour."[21]

But Shakespeare seems to play both sides of the fence, never stating unequivocally whether Caesar is in fact a tyrant or even genuinely presents the threat of becoming a tyrant. There is conflicting evidence. As Madeleine Doran wrote, "until Caesar is dead . . . we hear nothing positively good about him, and afterwards nothing bad."[22] From Caesar himself, we hear relatively little; few title characters have so few lines. Thus, Caesar is more talked about than heard speaking himself. The result is a political canvas for others to paint on, and paint they do. The audience has to figure it out for themselves, which might be Shakespeare's genius, because it means the audience has to reason. More likely is the playwright's knowledge of the audience's familiarity with the many accounts of the historical Caesar in which he is very much the tyrant.

The imaginative turn in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is not asking how it is possible for a whole country to fall into the hands of a tyrant but whether a few good men can stop a tyrant before it is too late and, depending on the interpretation, before the leader has in fact become a tyrant, especially as streets fill with easily manipulated mobs hailing him as Colossus. These few virtuous citizens are led by Brutus, who is such a central figure that Garber has wondered whether the play should instead be named for him; Caesar appears in but five scenes of the play, not counting appearances of and inferences to his ghost or spirit. Although

suicide is presented as the morally good and right response to the looming despotism, rather than contemplate that option as Cassius does, Brutus quickly—many would say far too quickly—instead begins to plot Caesar's death. Caesar must not be crowned, Brutus believes, or is led to believe by Cassius, for that act would "change his nature" and elicit the viper "that craves wary walking: crown him that" (2.1.13-15).

Brutus's ruminations, to which Shakespeare viscerally provides access—we experience Brutus's thinking and "reasoning," if reasoning it is, *as* Brutus does, in real dramatic time—are strikingly similar to an anonymously written op-ed published in the *New York Times* in September 2018, a piece written by a "senior administration official" that opened a troubling view into a White House seemingly divided against itself.[23] The writer warned that at least some in that White House were deeply concerned about a tweeter-as-president who craved wary walking. Crown him that! "The dilemma—which he does not fully grasp," the anonymous *Times* writer mused, referring to Trump, "is that many of the senior officials in his own administration are working diligently from within to frustrate parts of his agenda and his worst inclinations." As if an echo of Brutus, this inside-the-White House writer penned, "But we believe our first duty is to this country, and the president continues to act in a manner that is detrimental to the health of our republic."[24] Brutus in the first scene of Act II similarly considers the danger to nation its leader presents, which is nothing short of "an insurrection" (II.i.69). Brutus can find no comfort in a secure position in government while ideals, assumed values and mores, the rule of law, and notions of the common good, however vague they might be, are tossed into the air like confetti at a victory parade. And we know how much tyrants love parades, especially those of the military variety. Brutus's seemingly inescapable course of action is regicide, to "kill him in the shell" before evil can be hatched from its egg (2.1.34).

The threat of tyranny in the person of Caesar is foregrounded so early in the play that it is not obvious to theater goers that the character is in fact a tyrant. Caesar's designs are ambiguous, and hints about his fragility and waning vitality work to de-fang the sense of foment and urgent danger to the republic Caesar might pose or inspire. The urgency has to be manufactured, in other words,

which is why the conspirators spring to action. In Act II, Cassius and Casca see their autonomy at risk, or say they do, justifying their claim that Caesar must be defied on behalf of the republic. Punctuated by booming thunder, Cassius tells Casca that to remain free, to deliver himself from bondage, tyranny must be shaken off. Just a scene earlier, Cassius committed to "shaking" Caesar, "or worse days endure" (1.2.330). Brutus is easily persuaded that he and his countrymen sit on the eve of totalitarianism, predisposing him to assassination. In the first scene of Act II, Brutus warns that not to act is to allow "high-sighted tyranny range on / Till each man drop by lottery" (2.1.123-124). When the bloody deed is done, Cinna the poet shouts, "Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead! / Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets" (3.1.85-86).

The conspirators' bloody butchering does prevent tyranny, but it also invites civil war, a potential made more real because of one of the great speeches in all of Shakespeare, Marc Antony's entreaty to "Friends, Romans, countrymen" (3.2.80). That Brutus and Marc Antony are both so compelling as speechmakers underlines the prismatic features of the play: in a scene that resembles a trial, the arguments both for and against the assassination are equally persuasive. Even the great speeches in Act III can be interpreted different ways. Perhaps in his Roman tragedies more so than any other genre, Shakespeare presents multiple sides of the many arguments and disputes. Throughout Shakespeare's history plays, it is the peril of civil disunion that looms largest and most dangerous, the threat that more than any other single danger Shakespeare warns against, critiques, and parodies. Consider the many "weeds in the garden" scenes that populate the plays and the many gardeners in whose hands and words and minds lie the keys to the health of the kingdom.

More than despotism or dictatorship, the foe of England in *Julius Caesar* is civil strife mobilized by forces whose motives rarely rise above self-interest and prestige. Brutus's ideals—honor, the common good, liberty—are bloodied along with his and his co-conspirators' crimson hands, such that he, like Cassius, believes he must end his own life. That so many turn to suicide is perhaps a metaphor for the national suicide of civil war. This is the import of Antony's speech in Act III, when he suggests that the butchery of Caesar shall bring a curse and elicit Caesar's vengeful spirit.

It is an oration that evokes the abattoir and the morgue, replete with references to bleeding and blood and to butchery, burial, and death. Infants are quartered, ruby red lips drip with blood, and "carrion men" carry the stench of foul deeds.

Antony's speech is reminiscent of Carlisle in *Richard II* when he predicts that if Richard is deposed, the "blood of English shall manure the ground" while "future ages groan" because of the "foul act" (4.1.131-132). Antony warns against "fierce civil strife," anarchy, and chaos. In pitting, as Carlisle phrases it, "kin with kin and kind with kind," this chaos will be the confounding of natural order, of families, and of nation. What is conspicuously absent from Antony's oration that is so noticeable in Carlisle's, is pity. Antony is looking forward to what comes next, the unleashing of "the dogs of war."[25] He rouses the crowd to this end, soliciting the help of "Mischief": "Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot: / Take thou what course thou wilt" (3.2.257-258). These are the words of insurrection, incitement, and civil war. To articulate the threat that is afoot is to bring that threat closer, especially if too much thinking about the unthinkable can become acceptance of the unacceptable.

With Brutus and his co-conspirators gone, Antony is loosed and the myth and spirit of Caesar become, with Antony, the agents of revenge. Absent, however, is any firm foundation on which to build a government. The plebeians cannot be trusted; they go from cheering Brutus to following Antony into chaos in forty-three lines. "This Caesar was a tyrant," they cry in III.ii.64. By line 107, they are of the shared opinion that "Caesar has had great wrong." While it is quite a testimony to the power of rhetoric and public speaking, Antony's oratory should not so easily sway the collective mind of the crowds. That it does dramatizes what Gustave Le Bon would later call the "mental unity" of crowds, or the single entity formed in the mass of individuals we call crowds that subsumes the agenda and motivations of any one member. This "unity" is found in a collection of barbarians who respond instinctively to stimuli, and they often do so spontaneously, with violence, ferocity, and enthusiasm. Easily influenced by words and images, these erstwhile "individuals" can be induced to commit acts contrary to any one person's obvious interests, beliefs, and even morals.[26] Tragically, the "Stop the Steal" rally and subsequent riot at the U.S. Capitol on

January 6, 2021, demonstrated anew the raw destructive power of frenzied crowds and what is popularly called a "mob mentality," even on the steps and in the halls and offices of a monument to an otherwise functioning body of democracy and representative government.

Notably, Brutus never saw the danger of allowing Antony to orate. Responding to Cassius's warning against Antony as inspirational speaker, Brutus says, "By your pardon: / I will myself into the pulpit first, / And show the reason of our Caesar's death" (III.i.253-5). Thus, he disastrously overestimates plebeian crowds and, therefore, underestimates their fickleness and manipulability. This is hubris of another kind. Thus, it is the politics of fear that is the danger about which Shakespeare most eloquently warns. Again, the contemporary resonance of *Julius Caesar* is striking, because fear remains an effective, even pervasive form of political rhetoric in the United States and in many countries around the world. Oskar Eustis's timely and controversial production of the *Julius Caesar* in Central Park in the summer of 2017 demonstrated this with a staging that styled Caesar as Trump-like.[27] The verisimilitude led sponsors to cancel and play-goers to walk out. Five years prior to Eustis's staging, the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis put on a production that featured the assassination by right-wing conspirators of an Obama-like Caesar, a production with hip-hop, basketball, and video projections, but little controversy.[28] And in 1937 on the eve of World War II, Orson Welles staged a landmark anti-fascist production at the Mercury Theater with a Caesar that recalled Mussolini. Even in Shakespeare's time, the play's staging would have been recognized for its echoes of the political plots swirling around the crown, none of them more ominously than the potential usurpation by the Earl of Essex.

Coriolanus

Essex's popularity raised for Elizabeth the question of what to do with a returning soldier. This is the question in *Coriolanus*, as well, a play Shakespeare likely used to open the Globe Theatre in 1599, just as Essex was leading an English army in Ireland.[29] Thus, the threats of civil war and political disintegration appear again in a Roman context in Coriolanus, Shakespeare's last political play. The tragic pessimism of *Julius Caesar*, which had been written ten years

prior, seems simply to continue along an inexorable trajectory. Like Caesar's, Coriolanus's vices are simply the underside of his virtues. His "moral assets disqualify him for political success," as Norman Rabkin writes.[30] Coriolanus's mother, Volumnia, tells him flatly:

> You are too absolute,
> Though therein you can never be too noble,
> But when extremities speak. (3.2.49-51)

There is another, perhaps counter-intuitive way to interpret the granite absolutism of the would-be warrior king. For theologian Karl Barth, at the center of world history and in every sphere of human life is sloth, one of the seven deadly sins, albeit one of that list's lesser known and ill considered. But sloth for Barth is not what sloth means in common parlance; laziness would not seem to be Coriolanus's problem. Quite the contrary. A close reading of Barth's take on sloth as a multi-faceted "sin" provides in its facets perhaps the case Shakespeare can be read to be making against tyranny in the form of *Coriolanus*. "Can be read" is the operative phrase because to suggest that the playwright makes a case for or against anything is to risk reckless conjecture. Interpretation of intent in Shakespeare invariably reveals much more about the interpreter than it does about Shakespeare. Perhaps it is enough to say that the rough outlines for such a case can be seen or interpreted in the emphases the playwright chooses to make and in the liberties with history he takes. The stakes are high enough to take the interpretive risk, for the end of the Roman republic (and the rise of autocratic rule) proved the end also for democracy, generally understood, for about two millennia.

At the root or base of sloth, for Barth, is stupidity, or believing that "we can authoritatively tell ourselves what is true and good."[31] Sloth's other facets include inhumanity, or the inability or refusal to care or show affection for neighbor and countryman; dissipation, or failing to act when and where action is needed; and an anxious self-care that either opts out or acts out, usually aggressively, in the face of death or, in the case of Coriolanus, under the threat of banishment, which is a form of civic death suffered by so many of Shakespeare's characters. Thus, sloth manifests as a life that is "pursued without regard for the enduring health of community and place" or nation.[32] It might explain a switch of allegiance from Rome to the Volscians out of personal ambition or pride. Markku Peltonen cited Coriolanus's failure to embrace learning and,

thereby, the essential virtues of negotium as the character's "most serious defect," the one on which all his other flaws ultimately hinged.[33] Wisdom was out of reach. Such disregard for one's own ignorance can easily be interpreted as being connected to what eighteenth-century English critic William Hazlitt called "the insolence of power." Coriolanus's assertion of his own essentiality even as he spits contempt for the "ordinary, unheroic people forced to scratch a living" can be read as just this sort of insolence.[34] Such tyranny pairs privilege and oppression, a sloth-full tandem the play presents as chief threat to the republic and the body politic.

Coriolanus curses from the outset of his play, grunting in clipped, tweet-length pulses. In Act I, with none of the practice and polish of the orators in Julius Caesar, and in sharp contrast to the great orator and embodiment of the republic, Cicero, Coriolanus bellows with bile:

> All the contagion of the south light on you,
> You shames of Rome! You herd of—boils and plagues
> Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorred
> Further than seen, and one infect another
> Against the wind a mile: you souls of geese
> That bear the shapes of men, how have you run
> From slaves that apes would beat! Pluto and hell: (1.4.35-41)

One might think he was addressing a former aide upon the release of a tell-all book, or chastising an exiled personal lawyer once entrusted with his most vital and damaging secrets, including payoffs to porn stars and Playboy models, or perhaps berating journalists for watchdogging his use and misuse of power, as they are missionally obligated to do by their nation's founding documents and law.

Coriolanus believes himself to be above electioneering, posturing, and campaigning, but more damning is his estimation of himself as above the community for which he has fought and conquered. He refuses even to show them his war wounds as evidence of his chief claim to power, which is valor on the battlefield. His disdain for the electorate is visceral:

> Behold, these are the tribunes of the people,
> The tongues o'th'common mouth. I do despise them,
> For they do prank them in authority,
> Against all noble sufferance. (3.1.26-29)

Later in the same scene, Coriolanus calls the commonwealth "the mutable, rank-scented meinie" that can be counted on for little more than "rebellion, insolence, sedition," the same people who he and his noble friends "ploughed for, sowed and scattered" (3.1.82-87). This "cockle of rebellion" is incapable of pursuing the best interests of Rome and, thus, Coriolanus has ruled out the credibility of *any* election, including and especially the one that might anoint him consul. Politically, such a move is not unlike claiming massive voter fraud, vote tampering, and Chinese meddling in elections before they are even held, without a shred of actionable evidence, and after disbanding the election integrity commission authorized to investigate exactly these potential harms. To so recklessly hurl aspersions is to detonate the very process the candidate needs to assume power and the process on which the credibility of the would-be ruler's government would depend.

Coriolanus authoritatively proclaims to himself what is not true and not good; he seeks to stand apart and above, disdaining even to "mingle" with the people. His vitriol is such that Brutus recoils:

> You speak o'th' people as if you were a god
> To punish, not a man of their infirmity. (3.1.99-100)

The logical and inevitable result of a leader's contempt for those he has been elected to govern is that such a leader cannot be expected to pursue that electorate's interests, even that he believes such citizens cannot know for themselves their own best interests. Lacking basic intelligence and reason, the citizens, the rebellious "barbarians" in Coriolanus's terms, should have their rights taken away. Though the events of *Coriolanus* take place long before those of *Julius Caesar*, it is as if Coriolanus had read or seen *Julius Caesar* and taken note: Do not trust the crowd.

In depicting such a tyrant, "the strangely pitiless dramatist," who, as A. D. Nuttall writes, has "not a grain of compassion for the hunger of the starving in this play," fails to include even a line of condemnation.[35] Coriolanus's hostility, however, proves to be political suicide as the people turn on him. The tribune Brutus declares late in Act III that, "There's no more to be said, but he is banish'd" as an enemy of the people and, therefore, of Rome. The citizens subsequently ratify Brutus's verdict: "I say it shall be so"

(3.3.126). Sealing his fate, Coriolanus huffs and puffs and blows fire:

> You common cry of curs, whose breath I hate
> As reek o'th'rotten fens: whose loves I prize
> As the dead carcasses of unburied men
> That do corrupt my air: I banish you,
> And here remain with your uncertainty.
> Let every feeble rumour shake your hearts:
> . . .
> For you, the city. Thus I turn my back:
> There is a world elsewhere. (3.3.144-149, 158-159)

If Shakespeare can be read as arguing against civic ills, it might be that failure on the part of either the governed or their governors is failure of the entire nation. Certainly, the theme of civil disunion's danger is continued. Coriolanus disdains, even curses, the citizens, who he believes to be rebellious. Being so disdained and cursed by their supposed leader, the citizens not surprisingly respond with hostility and, eventually, violence. Is the political debacle that results the fault of the people or of their leader who so aggressively goaded them? Each denies the legitimacy of the other; each banishes the other as enemy of the nation.

Reading Barth's exegesis of sloth as an indictment, Coriolanus is guilty of both stupidity and of inhumanity, or the inability or refusal to care or show affection for neighbor and countryman. In fact, so incapable of affection for countryman is Coriolanus that he is described variously in the chronicles as machine, engine, and thing. Coriolanus's "thingness" is a theme Shakespeare foregrounds in the play by showcasing Coriolanus's lack of facility with words and conversation, his immoveable commitment to his particular sense of integrity of self and, therefore, unwillingness to "act" or play the part the politician, and his drone-like obedience to the remote-control direction and manipulations of his mother. These flaws conjure Coriolanus as soul-less "thing": a harvester, a mower, a weapon of mindless mass destruction. To the Roman general Cominius, Coriolanus is the citizens' god, leading them "like a thing / Made by some other deity than nature, / That shapes man better" (4.6.109-111). Menenius, too, calls Coriolanus a "thing," an "engine," a cold, even brutal banality brought to bear against his own nature (5.4.13, 15). The author of much of that nature,

Volumnia, herself draws attention to the "thingness" of her son when praising him for his prowess on the battlefield:

> his bloody brow
> With his mailed hand then wiping, forth he goes,
> Like to a harvest-man that's tasked to mow
> Or all or lose his hire (1.3.26-29)

It is conspicuous that in a key scene, the second scene of Act III, Shakespeare furnishes Volumnia with sixty-one lines and, as response, the harvesting, threshing, mowing son can muster but eight monosyllabic lines. As Nuttall summarizes the character, "There is something very sad in the way this artfully brutalized piece of nothingness is at last brought to deny its own conditioning."[36] For Rabkin, the image presented throughout the play is "of a terrifying automatic warrior, the inhuman mechanism of destruction."[37]

For evidence of dissipation, or of taking no action where it is urgently needed, Shakespeare foregrounds the corn riots in a mashup of Roman and English history perhaps meant to help Elizabethan audiences make connections, emotional and otherwise. Shakespeare's Roman mob mirrors the 1607 Midland Revolt in England that occurred just prior to the writing of *Coriolanus*. For some critics, this blending of historical events is evidence of the playwright's own contempt for the common people, even for democracy.[38] And yet elections are held in the play, a "specimen," in A. D. Nuttall's description, of "rudimentary democratic machinery" and one of a few moments in the two Roman plays when the desires and designs of the people are made known.[39] In addition, parallels with the Midlands Revolt are part of a portrayal of the citizens of Rome as "capable of reasoning" and of rational deliberation, as Annabel Patterson has noted.[40]

Importantly, in Act II, these same citizens Coriolanus so reviles are shown to be civil, even patient with the contemptuous and contemptible would-be consul in a depiction that underlines the warrior-leader's lack of both civility and patience. This "rabble" of rakes is seen and heard deliberating, debating, and ultimately choosing Coriolanus, knowing full well his virtues and vices. In short, as Chernaik observes, "the Roman citizens consistently follow the rules of the game" even while Coriolanus flatly rejects the rules, the game, and anyone willing to play it.[41] Bate called this

the dilemma of the play: to be successful in war a state needs strong leadership, but the restless man of military action has no time for the inglorious arts of peace.[42]

While trotting out the usual parade of Roman officials, customs, manners, and allusions, Shakespeare takes great liberties with history in depicting *Coriolanus*'s corn riots, and such license in his plays always invites analysis. While seemingly quite careful to get the play's literary allusions right and, conspicuously, avoid the anachronisms that his contemporaries enjoyed ridiculing him for, Shakespeare freely manipulates his Roman and English history.[43] Plutarch's *Life of Coriolanus* presents public dissatisfaction displayed mainly through passive resistance. In Shakespeare's hands, however, the reaction to famine resulting from drastic hikes in food prices is revolt.[44] This Hydra wants the reins of government, but in *Coriolanus* as in *Julius Caesar*, the many-headed monster is incapable, even unqualified by nature, to take them. "[I]f all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south, and their consent of one direct way should be at once to all the points o'th'compass," one citizen confesses (II.iii.14-16). It is this instability and unreliability that disqualify the citizens to assume power, a theme repeated in several of Shakespeare's history plays.[45]

And yet nowhere in the play does Shakespeare declare Coriolanus wrong or, more appropriately, unfit and possibly immoral.[46] In the food shortages of the early seventeenth century as in Yemen in 2018 and in Ireland during its many famines, people went hungry and even perished not because there was, in absolute terms, a shortage of food, but because action was not taken by the wealthy and powerful to get food to those who most needed it. This is sloth. In the New Testament's Book of James, the writer admonishes the "rich people" that the right response to such material need is to "weep and wail," because while the poor starved, the rich hoarded. "You have fattened yourself in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the innocent ones" (James 5:1-6, New International Version). In admonishing the one-percenters and tending to his poor flock, James equates inaction with murder. It is a startling accusation. Similarly, in *Coriolanus*, a citizen pleads in the first scene:

Care for us? True, indeed, they ne'er cared for us yet. Suffer us to

famish, and their store-houses crammed with grain: make edicts for usury, to

support usurers: repeal daily any wholesome act established against the rich, and

provide more piercing statutes daily, to chain up and restrain the poor. If the wars

eat us not up, they will: and there's all the love they bear us. (1.1.59-63)

The oppressive forces depicted in Shakespeare and in James are similar. The playwright portrays the starving poor as unstable, fickle, incapable, and violent. In Shakespeare's larger project, consciously or not he is dramatizing how violent political disorder occurs and the damage that is done to the nation as a unit. Preventing this disorder is the responsibility of all of any nation's constituent parts. Mostly by negative example, the Roman tragedies, as Shakespeare's history plays, put into stark relief the indivisibility of the body politic from that body's government, be it a monarchy, a republic, or a democracy, as well as the necessity of the rule of law as a binding principle. In establishing cause-and-effect, Shakespeare can be read as exalting a "horizontal comradeship" and shared character that marks a healthy sense of nation.[47]

There is ample evidence of the virtues of order, political harmony, and self-sacrifice toward a greater, common good, but nowhere does Shakespeare seem to commit himself or the play to such a program.[48] Various interpretations compete even four centuries after its penning. The genius of Shakespeare's presentation of contradictions without resolution, without a clear endorsement or condemnation, explains in part why *Coriolanus* has been staged in such different ways. The play has been more popular in continental Europe than in Britain; more than a hundred performances in Germany were staged in each of the decades between 1910 and 1940. Translations published in Nazi Germany described Coriolanus as "the true hero and Führer" who led an otherwise misled people, a false democracy . . . weaklings."[49] A production at the Comédie Française in 1933 led to riots by socialists and fascists that eventually closed down the theater. By 1977, however, at least one German production excised from the

play anything that might lead an audience to sympathize with the warrior machine.[50]

Conclusion

For tyrants as for radical right-wing elements across the globe, the means to power include the institutions of a free society and fear-motivated populism and nationalism. Designed to prevent tyranny, these institutions are, for the would-be tyrant, a one-way street dismantled or de-fanged once that tyrant wears the proverbial crown. Such a disaster of sovereignty can only occur with widespread complicity, which is the problem Shakespeare so vividly enacts in *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*, plays that ask, as Greenblatt identified the question, whether there is a way to stop a commonwealth from abandoning its ideals, self-interest, and even common sense and authorizing a "leader" obviously unfit to govern.[51]

Shakespeare used his theater to warn against both tyrants *and* the base instincts and tribal tendencies of disgruntled, disenfranchised citizens and the factionalized politics that pseudo-populist "movements" require. A reach back to an ancient Rome for contemporary, Elizabethan-era dramas that so aptly describes twenty-first century contexts reveals a playwright acutely aware of the fragility of national identity and the common good. A society splintered into irrational political tribes is "particularly vulnerable to the fraudulent populism," Greenblatt concluded. "And there are always instigators who arouse tyrannical ambition, and enablers, people who perceive the danger posed by this ambition but who think they will be able to control the successful tyrant."[52]

We will never know what Shakespeare's intentions in so vividly manifesting such threats to even relatively stable societies such as his were, beyond, of course, an afternoon spent being entertained and diverted. But, we can marvel at a rhetorician so aware of the complexity and contingency of collective life and so able to create out of the fabric of language such memorable characters that could thrive in the resulting chaos until—*sic semper tyrannis*—cooler heads and a more rational body politic prevailed. Brutus hails both the "common weal" and the "ancient strength" of the people, conjuring notions of *libertas*. The Roman goddess *Libertas*, who was created with the republic to mark the overthrow of the

Tarquins, represents, therefore, the double-edged sword of revolt claimed in the name of the commonwealth.[53] The playwright created these characters and gave them words, all the while eluding or otherwise fooling Elizabeth's censors, in part by largely avoiding religion, but more by appropriating the historical past for playgoing experiences lived and then remembered in the present, albeit with "a certain degree of amnesia" necessary to remember in particular ways and to participate in the volatile negotiation of a new national consciousness.[54]

Notes

1. T. J. B. Spencer, "Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Romans," *Shakespeare Survey* 10 (1957): 28.

2. Domenico Lovascio, "Rewriting Julius Caesar as a National Villain in Early Modern English Drama," *English Literary Renaissance* 47, no. 2 (2017): 219. For more on how Rome permeated the Elizabethan and Jacobean social imagination, see Jonathan Bate, *How the Classics Made Shakespeare* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 2019); Reuben Brower, *Hero and Saint: Shakespeare and the Graeco-Roman Heroic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); Colin Burrow, Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Paul Cantor, *Shakespeare's Rome: Republic and Empire* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983); Chris Fitter, *Majesty and the Masses in Shakespeare and Marlowe: Western Anti-Monarchism, The Earl of Essex Challenge, and Political Stagecraft* (London: Routledge, 2020); Lisa Hopkins, *The Cultural Uses of the Caesars on the English Renaissance Stage* (Aldershot, 2008); and Geoffrey Miles, *Shakespeare and the Constant Romans* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

3. Dedicatory poem in the Shakespeare First Folio. The seeming pejorative appears about one-third into the poem of otherwise tribute to Jonson's "beloved" author, Shakespeare, implying that the line is back-handed praise. Colin Burrow, in *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity*, notes that Jonson's critique could alternatively mean "even supposing (counterfactually) that you only had a smattering of Latin and less Greek, the major classical dramatists would still admire you" (2).

4. Bate, *How the Classics Made Shakespeare*, 9. One of Bate's stated purposes in writing his book is to "contextualize Shakespeare within the wider 'intelligence of antiquity' in England in the sixteenth century, for example by tracing the visual allusions to ancient Rome in Elizabethan London and by exploring the political and cultural imperatives that drove the urge to imitate Roman exemplars" (15).

5. Lovascio, "Rewriting Julius Caesar," 219.

6. Stuart Hall, *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017), 138.

7. Hall, *The Fateful Triangle*, 152.

8. Stephen Greenblatt, *Tyrant: Shakespeare on Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2018), 38.

9. Greenblatt, *Tyrant*, 1. The author is echoing A. D. Nuttall, who wrote in 1988 that in *Julius Caesar*, "we saw a fundamental problem of democracy

broached: what happens when the people choose tyranny?" A. D. Nuttall, "Shakespeare's Imitation of the World," 91-98, in Harold Bloom, ed., *William Shakespeare's Coriolanus* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988), 92.

10. Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors: In Three Books* (1612, reprinted London: The Shakespeare Society, 1841), 21.

11. All references to the play are to *The RSC William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (New York: The Modern Library, 2007).

12. Matthew Houdek and Kendall R. Phillips, "Public Memory," *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*, https://oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-181.

13. See, for example, Gordon S. Wood, T*he Idea of America: Reflections on the Birth of the United States* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011).

14. Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: First Anchor Books, 2005), 410.

15. George K. Hunter, "A Roman Thought: Renaissance Attitudes to History Exemplified in Shakespeare and Jonson," in *An English Miscellany Presented to W. S. Mackie*, ed. Brian S. Lee (Oxford University Press, 1977), 94.

16. Hunter, "A Roman Thought," 94-95.

17. Quentin Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 44. Fitter reads an anti-monarchic critique in Shakespeare's heavy use of republicanism, though he finds it mostly in the history plays (*Majesty and the Masses in Shakespeare and Marlowe*).

18. Warren Chernaik, *The Myth of Rome in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 33; Cicero, Somnium Scipiones (De re publica, vi), c3.

19. Chernaik, *The Myth of Rome in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries,* 79.

20. Lovascio, "Rewriting Julius Caesar," 233.

21. Markku Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and the Republicanism in English Political Thought*, 1570-1640 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 46, cited in Fitter, *Majesty and the Masses in Shakespeare and Marlowe*, 49.

22. Madeleine Doran, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Language* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), 77.

23. The author, Miles Taylor, identified himself in October 2020. Michael Shear, "Miles Taylor, a Former Homeland Security Official, Reveals He Was 'Anonymous,'" *New York Times* (28 Oct. 2020), https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/28/us/politics/miles-taylor-anonymous-trump.html).   Taylor was chief of staff at the Department of Homeland Security at the time of the published opinion (see note 30). The piece describes Trump as "impetuous, adversarial, petty and ineffective." Taylor also anonymously wrote *A Warning*, a book describing Trump as an "undisciplined" and "amoral" leader whose abuse of power threatened the foundations of American democracy. [Miles Taylor], *A Warning* (New York: Hachette Publishing, 2019). Taylor, who resigned from Homeland Security in June 2019, published his admissions online: https://milestaylor.medium.com/a-statement-a13bc5173ee9.

24. Anonymous, "I Am Part of the Resistance Inside the Trump Administration," *New York Times*, 5 September 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/05/opinion/trump-white-house-anonymous-resistance.html.

25. Chernaik, *The Myth of Rome in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, 102.

26. Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1892, republished New York: Dover Publications, 2002).

27. Michael Paulson, "Oskar Eustis on Trump, 'Julius Caesar' and the Politics of Theater," *The New York Times*, 17 June 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/13/theater/donald-trump-julius-caesar-oskar-eustis.html.   The production was for the Free Shakespeare in the Park series put on by the Delacorte Theater.

28. For information on and an excerpt of the play, see Rob Melrose, "Julius Caesar—The Guthrie Theater," 2013. http://www.robmelrose.com/julius-caesar.html.

29. Bate, *How the Classics Made Shakespeare*, 114.

30. Norman Rabkin, "The Polity in Coriolanus," in Harold Bloom, ed. *William Shakespeare's Coriolanus* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988), 52.

31. Ellen Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 140.

32. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture*, 142.

33. Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and the Republicanism in English Political Thought*, 172.

34. Chernaik, *The Myth of Rome*, 180. In the Trump administration, such insolence was evidenced often, including its "Find Something New" campaign to encourage those jobless to learn a new skill. "Now as a result of COVID, people need to, unfortunately, in some cases, learn a completely new skill," Ivanka Trump said in announcing the tone-deaf campaign. "White House-Backed Campaign Pushes Alternate Career Paths," *New York Times*, 14 July 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2020/07/14/business/bc-us-white-house-jobs-campaign.html.

35. Nuttall, "Shakespeare's Imitation of the World," in Harold Bloom, ed., *William Shakespeare's Coriolanus* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988), 93.

36. Nuttall, "Shakespeare's Imitation of the World," 96.

37. Rabkin, "The Polity in Coriolanus," 56.

38. See, for example, George Brandes, in *William Shakespeare, A Critical Study* (New York: 1902), and M. W. MacCallum, *Shakespeare's Roman Plays and Their Background* (London, 1910), 470. Similarly, E. C. Pettet in 1950 pointed out that as a "substantial landowner," Shakespeare saw the Midlands Rising of 1607 as a threat to property. "Coriolanus and the Midlands Insurrection of 1607," *Shakespeare Survey* 3 (1950): 36-37.

39. Nuttall, "Shakespeare's Imitation of the World," 92.

40. Chernaik, *The Myth of Rome in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, 182.

41. Chernaik, *The Myth of Rome in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, 191.

42. Bate, *How the Classics Made Shakespeare*, 113.

43. For evidence of literary care, see the references by the play's female characters to Homer and the Tale of Troy, as well as the very names of these characters, which all come straight from Plutarch.

44. Phillips, ed., *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Coriolanus, A Collection of Critical Essays* (Prentice-Hall, 1970), 8.

45. Oscar James Campbell, "Shakespeare's Satire: Coriolanus," in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Coriolanus*, 29.

46. Nuttall, "Shakespeare's Imitation of the World," 93.

47. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Books, 1983), 7.

48. A. P. Rossiter, "Coriolanus," in Harold Bloom, ed., *William Shakespeare's Coriolanus* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988), 64.

49. Chernaik, *The Myth of Rome in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, 181.

50. Chernaik, *The Myth of Rome in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, 181.

51. Greenblatt, *Tyrant*, 2.

52. Greenblatt, *Tyrant*, 186.

53. See Chaim Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome during the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950).

54. Mark Lawrence McPhail, "A Question of Character: Re(-)signing the Racial Contract," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 7, no. 3 (2004): 395.

Would-Be-Politics: Early Modern Travel Writing and the Drama of Political Expertise

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I n what may be the most quoted aphorism on early modern diplomacy, the English ambassador Henry Wotton famously wrote to a friend that "[a]n ambassador is an honest gentleman sent to lie abroad for the good of his country."[1] While most critical uses of this aphorism emphasize the double, or possible triple entendre present in Wotton's use of "lie," it is worth considering that Wotton defines the work of ambassadorial labor as a mode of political travel. While Wotton's comment does highlight the degree to which the job of the agent of state is to deceive their host for the betterment of the nation, it is also key to public and social understandings of clandestine government service that this was labor performed away from the British homeland. This essay examines discourses of foreign travel with an eye turned towards the degree to which it was imagined as aspirational labor which could generate social and political capital for travelers. Looking at the drama of Ben Jonson and his representations of the aspirational traveler, this essay argues that *Volpone* critiques social discourses which sought to valorize travelers as educated servants of state who could serve as educators to English audiences.

Early modern political commentators viewed travel into foreign countries as part of the larger regimen of an aristocratic education. While some commentators such as Roger Ascham in the 1570 *The*

Schoolmaster or Thomas Nashe in the 1594 *The Unfortunate Traveler* viewed travel with a measure of skepticism, among both critics and proponents of foreign travel there was a persistent belief that, assuming a well-honed mind, the observation of foreign customs and practices could make one a better servant within the English diplomatic corps.[2] This belief then promoted the proliferation of travel, as the English government began encouraging aristocratic travel to build a more educated diplomatic corps.[3] Mark Netzloff's recent study on the intelligence work performed by the early modern traveler reminds us that "[f]ar from inhabiting distinct social spheres, the diplomat and traveler are brought together through the circulation of news and intelligence."[4] Scholarship such as this seeks to demonstrate the degree to which the state sought to mold travelers into useful agents of intelligence and the ways in which travelers communicated these lessons back to the English public.

Central to this essay's exploration of the early modern traveling intelligencer is Lisa Jardine and William Sherman's theorization of "knowledge transactions," the form of social exchange by which early modern political actors emphasized their status as scholars to alter the social framing of their service to wealthy patrons. They write, "[t]his kind of activity…we call a 'knowledge transaction'; the working relationship established between noble employer and his professional reader is what we call in our title, 'scholarly service.'"[5] Exploring the work of the traveler as a kind of scholarly service, wherein the traveler demonstrates their fitness for employment through their ability to serve as a political useful traveler, this essay builds upon critical conversations addressing the manner in which drama of the period represents and critiques these forms of knowledge transactions. Practical guidebooks, loosely termed *ars apodemica*, taught travelers how to best position themselves as economic participants in systems of knowledge transactions and in turn, travelers played up their own status as scholarly servants as a means of accumulating cultural capital. Histories of travel writing have tended to emphasize their place within economic marketplaces, focusing on the growing demand for increasingly elaborate and detailed travel narratives to the farthest reaches of the globe, particularly as travel came to stand in for English desires to participate in what Carl Thompson isolates

as the economic "opportunities [travel] opened up for trade, conquest and colonization."[6] Early modern English audiences had a voracious appetite for the consumption of travel writing and as a result, the travelling class could parley their travels into economic advancement through both private demonstrations of skill and public accounts of their travels.

As proponents of travel understood that it could serve an educative function, travelers were encouraged, as Andrew Hadfield notes, to "learn how to observe the correct details, and take useful notes on the experience,"[7] reflecting an emerging empiricist strain of archival production amongst early modern travelers. As Noah Millstone argues, early modern political culture emphasized the training of the individual to properly read both the history of politics and the contemporary state of Europe, and a key aspect of this training was the consumption of writing which framed itself as politically educative.[8] To aid in this process, the foreign traveler, operating independently of the state, was tasked with filling in the gaps in the early modern English diplomatic archive. Travelers, in turn, sought to leverage this archival production, using their observational skills to note their preparedness to serve in stable positions with the English government. Coupled with an emerging public market for tales of travel to far off lands, this led to a mass proliferation of both salacious narratives of travels into foreign spaces, and texts theorizing the proper way in which travelers should engage with their journeys abroad which served to legitimate the value of these travels as knowledge transactions. These texts posed a threat as they were often produced by travelers who had little claim to expertise beyond wealth and the scant reading of guidebooks to travel. Travelers like Ben Jonson's Sir Would-be Politic, a downwardly mobile English gentleman, are represented as foolish reflections of the idealized politically astute reader who treats their travels as a demonstration of their political competency. The play critiques the intellectual valorization of this mode of intelligence work, reminding audiences through the farce of Would-be's humiliation that his travels have not advanced his political position nor educated him as a competent reader of politics.

The stage participated in this outgrowth of foreign travel writing through the repeated attempts by playwrights to recreate

foreign sites within the space of the theater, as Shakespeare and his contemporaries frequently sought to reconstruct foreign spaces on the stage. Shakespeare displays an ambivalence towards foreign travel, presenting Laertes's travels to France as educative and framing Othello's education resulting from his travels abroad as a significant component of his value to the state of Venice, but also showing that travel fails to fully provide the social stability Othello craves. While playwrights often viewed the recreation of foreign spaces on the stage as offering the potential for a political education, aligning themselves with the Aschams of the era who viewed reading about the foreign as preferable to actual travel, the proliferation of plays depicting salacious narratives of Italy only served to enhance the public's fascination with the idea of foreign travel. Stephen Wittek suggests that this theatrical investment in the movement of and salability of current events constructs the material conditions required for figures like Would-be to profit from their acquisition of foreign intelligence. He argues that "[b]y enabling people to think through current events in an interconnected, analytical, familiar, and emotional manner, theatrical discourse assisted at the birth of one of the most important concepts in the history of literature: the idea of news."[9] This interconnected process of interpretation and analysis is key to both the economic value of news production and the public function of foreign intelligence gathering as it is understood as a project of state service, and it is a part of Would-be's project as he maneuvers through Venice. Daniel Carey reminds us that travelers were often addressing such a public readership and thus, "[t]he traveller acted as mediator, describing the strange and unknown while avoiding deceitfulness, on behalf of readers seeking the double benefit of truth and entertainment."[10] Readers and viewers of staged travel thus may have been less on their guard and less adept at discerning truth from fiction than readers of more clearly fictional narratives. Jonson's Volpone is, then, suggestive of a deeper anxiety with the problem of the boorish court sycophant. By placing him in the center of this cycle of inaccurate knowledge transactions, the play suggests an anxiety surrounding the very idea that a political education within the theatre can truly be free of the threat of Would-be Politics and their terrible political reads.

These forms of knowledge transactions, in which early modern travelers attempt to parlay their travels into lucrative positions of

political importance, in turn become key to public understandings of the kinds of political education circulating in English society.[11] Ideas surrounding political education reach early modern public audiences through both the public dissemination of political theory and the dramatic use of this theory in the theater. Here, I draw on András Kiséry's understanding of political competency, his term for "a familiarity with—and a facility in discussing—the business of politics that is put on display in sociable exchange as a marker of distinction," for the backbone of this essay's exploration of representations of travel and foreign intelligence as kinds of cultural capital that an individual is trained not merely to possess but to perform.[12] Early modern audiences came to understand the theater as a site of political education, one grounded in the developing logics of statecraft as an analogue for stagecraft and this article looks towards both the origins of these discourses of competency in humanist travel writing and their appearance in the plays of the period.[13]

Given that the English government was only beginning to develop a large-scale archive of political intelligence under the purview of spymaster Francis Walsingham in the late 1500s, England lacked the intelligence infrastructure present in other comparable diplomatic powers, such as Venice.[14] As a result, much of the work of early modern English diplomats in terms of knowledge production derived out of the tradition of the Venetian relazioni, detailed writings on the specific nature of foreign states recorded by travelers and ambassadors.[15] Attempting to replicate this project in an English context, travel was transformed into a model of government service for politically aspirational travelers. This was particularly noticeable when this work was performed by the educated elite and politically mobile class, as it could be leveraged to fill in the gaps left by a subserviced diplomatic corps. To understand and prepare for travel is to prepare to serve as a member of the foreign diplomatic corps, even if indirectly.

The English government worried that ill-equipped travelers would fail to remain steeled against the temptations of foreign travel, and therefore required license and state permission.[16] The traveler was encouraged to learn the customs and behaviors of the foreign state to best serve as an asset for the state intelligence apparatus. However, such learning is nigh impossible to draw

out, as Would-be does, from the playbooks and aphorisms of the stage (5.4.41-42),[17] as the myth of Venice far outstrips the reality of Venice.[18] *Volpone* isolates this concern within Would-be's embrace of the popular image of Venice, drawn from plays and the handful of stock political thinkers that an early modern theater going audience would regularly associate with Italian governance. This is a failed political education, one drawn out of a desire to perform knowledge of Venice. Would-be may imagine himself as an idealized English traveler, but the play foregrounds the degree to which his attentiveness to popular discourses, drama and narratives fails to produce a useful or politically productive character of the state of Venice.

While Would-be's political education is drawn from the language of early modern *ars apodemica*, its material content finds itself drawn almost exclusively from the logics of the stage. By placing his secretive notes within the space of the playbooks, he is replicating the vision of Venice that is common to the early modern stage.[19] Peregrine, in dressing down Would-be, off-handedly suggests to the audience that Would-be "would be a precious thing / to fit our English stage" (2.1.57-58). Would-be's Venice is a dangerous space controlled by powerful merchant interests and the spies that they employ to protect their assets and on this stage, he is not wrong, as the play affirms the cold, bureaucratic heart of Venice.[20]

To counteract false visions of the foreign state, *ars apodemica* sought to construct the ideal traveling subject who could push through public rumor and enter foreign spaces as a studied traveler. Emphasis has been placed on the travel guidebooks of figures such as Thomas Palmer and Francis Bacon, whose well-received books of advice for travelers transformed the *ars apodemica* into a component part of a political education.[21] One such text, John Florio's advice to travelers, in his 1591 treatise, *Second Fruits to be Gathered of Twelve Trees* underscores the degree to which observation, dissimulation and careful attunement to productive sight were privileged skill sets among early modern travelers. John Florio was an Italian tutor and an English spy, as well as an influential translator who worked closely with Italian agents on the continent, and his writing reflects an understanding of travel that privileges the skillsets needed to act as a productive agent of

state.[22] He writes, "[a]nd if you will be a traveller, and wander safely through the world: wheresoever you come, have alwayes the eies of Faulcon, that ye may see farre, the eares of an Asses, that ye may heere wel, the face of an Ape, that ye may be readie to laugh, the mouth of a Hog, to eat all things, the shoulder of a Camell, that you may beare any thing with patience, the legges of a Stagge, to flie from dangers."[23] To travel well, one must be able to exceed the baseness of human senses and the invocation of these animalistic qualities serves to valorize the traveler who shapes their body and temperament in the service of their travels. Whereas the writings on spies and other informants which liken them to dogs and birds tended to dehumanize the political agent, reducing them to mere instruments of their master's will, Florio's vision of the animalistic traveler highlights the training and skillful self-fashioning necessary to draw out the productive skills of the animals his writing invokes.[24] It is performance of one's malleability which marks out the desirable traveler. While this advice is positioned as a project of personal safety, the attentiveness to the observational awareness of one's surroundings indicates the degree to which early modern travel literature collapses travel, hermeneutic skills, and intelligence collection.[25]

This sense of the traveler as mimic of the natural world aligns with the play's investment in the dramatic form of the animal fable. Jonas A. Barish's famous attempt to align the play's two comic subplots hinges on the placement of Sir Politic and Lady Politic into the logic of the play's moralizing beast fable, casting them as Poll Parrots, "recalling that parrots not only habitually chatter, they mimic."[26] Would-be and Lady Would-be are consummate mimics, envisioning themselves as adept dissimulators capable of entering into the space of Venice and using their knowledge of the city to blend in with the locality. This Jonson views as a mode of folly that the play seeks to punish, but it is worth considering the degree to which the project of mimicry is itself at the heart of the project of the astute and judicious traveler. Both Would-bes come to understand simulation and feigning, here more active and intentional models of social mimicry, to offer opportunities for the generation of both economic and social capital. Just as Volpone schemes as a fox, or Corvino preys as vulture for status and material gain, the Would-bes mimic as parrots for prospective economic advancement. This

is what draws Lady Would-be to Venice (2.1.11-13); she earnestly comes to believe that by cultivating the impression of her own Venetian-ness she can advance her political and social aspirations.

Picking up on these social discourses, drawn out of popular travel writing, Would-be imagines himself as the idealized vision of the educated, traveling intelligencer and in doing so, the character works to undermine the logics of political and social advancement that underscore the *ars apodemica*. Would-be is a downwardly mobile member of the English gentry, a "poor knight," (2.1.26) who believes his time in Venice may aid his ailing fortune. Would-be imagines his own travels acting as a kind of knowledge transaction, and in doing so, he frames his travels as a site of personal and political promotion contingent on the specific subset of skills which he imagines to be vital to his travels, skills that he has cultivated through an attentive practice of reading and a careful training of his observational and interpretive skills (4.1.1-9). At the same time, he envisions ways in which the cultural capital made visible in his travels can be parlayed into personal economic gain, thus laying bare the degree to which knowledge transactions are not meaningfully distinct from other modes of paid service, evidenced in his comically long list of possible money-making schemes (4.1.49-53, 60-65, 68-75, 85-99, 100-108, 112-125). Within the play, Would-be is not merely a sycophantic fool, but he is a sycophantic fool whose engagement with the discourse of the ennobled English traveler has made him overconfident in his skills and their relevance to his own state service, because he believes that this performance of competency is key to reversing his ailing economic fortunes. Highlighting the incompetence of the traveler, the play envisions a world in which the false promises of the aristocratic traveler are laid bare to the English audience. Rather than affording audiences a discursive space to join in the conversations of the *ars apodemica*, the play makes visible the follies and failings of these social promises, while simultaneously calling into question its own relationship to the discourse of travel and knowledge production.

As an ambitious traveler, Would-be positions himself as a politically competent reader of men and politics in the mode prescribed by the *ars apodemica*. To demonstrate this political competency to his fellow traveler Peregrine, he speaks of his time

interfacing with an agent of the English government abroad, saying:

> He has received weekly intelligence,
> Upon my knowledge, out of the Low Countries,
> For all parts of the world, in cabbages;
> And those dispended again to ambassadors,
> In oranges, musk-melons, apricocks,
> Lemons pome-citrons, and such-like; sometimes
> In Colchester oysters, and your Selsey Cockles. (2.1.68-74)

Here, Would-be's triumphant declaration of his own understanding of the intelligence apparatus associates intelligence with food, framed as the luxurious consumption of the state, traded between ambassador and agent as if it were a delicacy. Consumed as an act of ritual exchange between agents of state, Would-be places his intelligencers in a place of public commerce. Here, Would-be envisions the exchange of sensitive information a knowledge transaction wherein the state agent's role is not meaningfully distinct from any other merchant or trader, going into foreign lands so that they may return with valuable goods. That Would-be likens the labor of the intelligencer to the exchange of food for the state underscores that he views this mode of travel in a language of economic exchange, seeing these travels as commodities for trade in the markets of London. Would-be reads all his interactions through a logic of mercantile capitalism, wherein the agent's primary goal is the accumulation of valuable commodities that can be exchanged for economic and social capital.

This practice of poor reading extends into Would-be's sense of his own self-fashioning as a skillful dissimulator, as he imagines himself a discerning political reader that can teach generations of English travelers how to learn from his own example. Advising Peregrine, the play's judicious and thoughtful Englishman, on the proper habits of a traveler, Would-be echoes the language of Florio's advice to travelers, stating that he considers himself to have infiltrated the Venetian polis. He brags, "I now have lived here, 'tis some fourteen months; / Within the first week of my landing here, / All took me for a citizen of Venice / I knew the forms so well" (4.1.36-39). Relying on citations of Contarini's *The Commonwealth and Government of Venice*, he mirrors the habits of other comedic sycophants, citing knowledge drawn from abstract guidebooks to

demonstrate a competency in the ways of government. That he positions this reading in the same context as his purchase of a home in Venice and his dealing with local Jewish merchants suggests that Would-be views reading habits as a strategy for covertly entering foreign spaces, in the vein prescribed by Florio, Palmer and other proponents of English travel (4.1.40-41). This attachment to the informative power of reading, here marked as a comic misappraisal of knowledge, mirrors contemporary debates concerning the relationship between knowledge accrued through books and knowledge accrued through travel, particularly as it pertains to foreign intelligence.[27] As a student of travel literature, Would-be attempts to demonstrate his competency through engagement with political writing, but he is only able to frame his own learning through popular citation making this more of a performance of his own imagined expertise in line with his useless but braggadocious knowledge of the English intelligence apparatus. For instance, Would-be cites Machiavelli, echoing the kinds of demonstration by aphorism that Anthony Esler, in his study of the education of the Elizabethan gentleman, notes as indicative of the failure of the humanist education that compels Englishmen to travel and seek out foreign texts. Demonstrating awareness of this failure, he notes the Earl of Essex bemoaning that "the most of the noblemen and gentlemen of our time have no other use of their learning but in table talk."[28] Would-be's reading of Machiavelli reflects on this fear, becoming a practice of citing expertise not because it is useful, but because the citation establishes him as a reader of Machiavelli.[29] While he has attempted to garner a political education through an attentive practice of reading and commenting upon the requisite skills of the traveler, his emphasis on demonstrating that he has read these texts has left him with little more than a collection of citations used to show that he has either read them or overheard them in use.

Beyond this misreading, the mere fact that Would-be cites Machiavelli denotes the degree to which his reading is understood to be insufficient and cursory, positioning him closer to the performance of knowledge described by Kiséry than that described by Millstone. In a span of fifteen lines, Would-be cites a Florentine philosopher from the early 15th century, a French theorist from the middle of the 16th century and a recently translated history by

Contarini, a Venetian Cardinal (4.1.25-40). The collection of works that Would-be cites to display an understanding of contemporary Venetian customs are neither particularly contemporary nor particularly Venetian. Would-be invokes Machiavelli not as a specific theorist but instead as an understandable cultural reference point for a political theorist. As with his citation of Bodin, which is little more than name dropping a second theorist, his invocation of the works of Machiavelli are meant to signal that he has knowledge of recognizable political thinkers whose writing grants weight to his otherwise airy claims.

Thinking of these demonstrations of citation as learned bits of political advice, given freely to a fellow traveler, Would-be is positioning himself as an educator and a learned compatriot to his fellow Englishmen, which marks him out as far more threatening than endearing to the much more keen-eyed Peregrine. Would-be enacts a performance of political competency without a trained eye turned towards the complexity of travel. He is an overly excited lecturer delivering empty advice to a student who clearly sees through the façade. The tension here lies in the demands placed upon the public to adequately distinguish the Politic Would-bes from the Florios of the world. Theatrical performances of political competency rely heavily upon both the playwright's and the audience's ability to distinguish useful and performative political advice and it is not frequently the case that the bad political teacher is transparent as Would-be, particularly when aided by the legitimacy of print writing in the vein Wittek describes. The humor of Would-be hinges upon the presence of an audience surrogate figure, played deftly by Peregrine, who is savvy at seeing through the performative bluster of the Would-be Politics of the world.

Netzloff's history of the development of travel as a source of information suggests that early modern travelers were instructed to keep detailed records of their own travel as a means of demonstrating their value to the state. He writes "[t]hese journals served not only to display travelers' literary and rhetorical skills but also to testify to the knowledge they had acquired through travel."[30] Would-be's notes reflect this logic, as he seeks to use them to educate Peregrine under the promise that he "not reveal," them to others. (4.1.83) However, as Peregrine reads the notes, he finds an unfocused, diary-like account of an aimless day's travel, full of

information that would be of no use to a reader. In Would-be's notes, he consciously recalls a conversation with a Dutch merchant on the "Ragion Del Stato," suggesting that even within his notes to himself, he upholds the weight given to citation as a means of demonstrating competency and a note that "at St Mark I urined," (4.1.141,144) playfully demonstrates the degree to which Would-be is incapable of understanding the weight of his travels, viewing his visit to Saint Mark's Cathedral as focused on the voiding of his bladder. Feeling that the takeaway from his meeting with the Dutch Merchant was the fact that he burst a toothpick reinforces Would-be's failure to internalize advice to travelers, as he makes careful and diligent efforts to record his actions and observations in Venice, but he is aimless and unfocused, accounting for everything he has done in Venice, regardless of how mundane or misguided.

This sense that Would-be seeks to stand in as an educator motivates Peregrine's desire to humiliate and correct Would-be's misguided aspirations. It is not only that Would-be is incompetent, but that Would-be is, in fact, accurately understanding the performance of competence and therefore must be disciplined lest undiscerning audiences confuse performing knowledge for imparting knowledge. Carey makes clear that "[h]owever assiduously travel writers deployed rhetorical techniques to confirm their integrity, the decision of whether to invest belief in their accounts rested with readers,"[31] and the play suggests that Peregrine, and by extension Jonson, worry about the readers' ability to distinguish fact from farce. Peregrine's scheme recognizes the general danger that Would-be poses to the English body politic if he is not dissuaded from his aspirations as a traveler. Speaking of a plan to cast Would-be out of Venice and into one of several remote Mediterranean cities, Peregrine worries that Would-be would "have his / adventures put I' the Book of Voyages / and his gulled story registered for truth" (5.4.4-6). This line notes the degree to which the authorizing power of the form of the travel narrative grants a degree of legitimacy to the fictions woven by authors wishing to overstate or fabricate their claims, particularly for the advancement of their personal authority. Further, it suggests an anxiety in Peregrine concerning the state of the public archive of knowledge were Would-be's story "registered for truth."[32] Peregrine here expresses a distaste for the possibility that Would-

be may be granted a measure of increased legitimation were his story to enter the literary marketplace and therefore be understood as truth in the same way that Volpone's Mountebank is granted legitimation via his invocation of medical authority, at least in the minds of someone as undiscerning as Would-be (2.2.8-13). That this writing might be treated as useful or valuable political intelligence marks the degree to which travel writing, when treated as a product of state service, becomes dangerous if not sufficiently policed. Were his words to be taken for truth, as Peregrine fears, it is not merely that English audiences might buy into Would-be's exaggerated stories of the secret maneuvers surrounding Venetian diplomacy, but they would accept the underlying assumption that Would-be's travels grant him, and those like him, an authoritative voice on the inner works of the state.

Peregrine attempts to address this problem through the public humiliation of Would-be, eliminating Would-be's claims to authenticity by pre-emptively entering his story into the public record as a kind of gossip, as Would-be observes in his commentary that this "shall be the fable of all feasts, / The freight of the *gazetti*, ship-boys' tales; / And, which is worst, even talk of public ordinaries" (5.4.82-84). That Peregrine's only recourse to the threat of Would-be's travels entering public consciousness is to disarm the threat by rewriting his place within the public sphere, via the power of rumor and the public press, suggests that the inertia of the public knowledge economy prevents figures like Peregrine from challenging their centrality to public discourse. The play dramatizes Would-be's final reduction into an animal as he takes to hiding from Peregrine and the merchants within a tortoise shell, comically literalizing his attempts to simulate the animalistic qualities of Florio's astute traveler.[33] The performance of this scene hinges upon the physicality and assertiveness of the merchants' efforts to tread upon and kick at the tortoise. This is a deeply physicalized act of violence visited upon the body of Politic-Would-be, imagined as a resolution to the threat posed by Would-be's intervention in Venetian politics and his continued threat to English political spheres.

Kiséry locates the necessity of disciplining Would-be in his belief that he is a worthy political competent, a person deserving of reward and advancement for his knowledge and skills. This is

then understood as a moment in which theatrical audiences can applaud themselves for occupying the place of Peregrine on the stage, carefully discerning the expert from the fool, and joining in the mockery of Would-be. Reading the moment as the stage self-reflexively examining its own place in the creation of political knowledge, Kiséry sees Jonson celebrating the potential of the stage to produce a lay knowledge of politics precisely through its ability to make visible the inefficacies of the performance of political knowledge, arguing "[t]he authority of the wit and the dramatist regulates the social uses of knowledge—the human, ethical, cultural underpinnings of how knowledge is deployed in society—rather than presuming to regulate knowledge itself."[34] I wish to expand upon this and make visible the ways in which Jonson contrasts the stage with other means of displaying authority. That Would-be would be a good fit on the stage does not unnerve Peregrine, because on the stage, his manifest failures as a political thinker are visible to their audience. Peregrine's fear is that he has metaphorically left the stage to enter the space of the foreign and therefore is in danger of accidently siphoning off some of the professional legitimation that Kiséry suggests is part of the social advancement promised by the sufficient demonstration of one's political competency.

The staging of this scene is a slow escalation of humiliation delivered to Would-be in his tortoise disguise, as the merchants poke, prod and threaten to jump upon the meandering beast. While this is a scene that visits a bout of comedic violence upon the body of the sycophantic stage operative, it is presented as a deeply personal attack on a particularly foolhardy traveler, intended to serve as punishment for a perceived slight against Peregrine's strong English character. Rather than producing a criticism of the underlying concerns that motivate his travels, Peregrine and the merchants attempt to punish the ways in which Would-be leverages his travels as a means of garnering social capital, localizing the violence in the threat that Would-be's narrative be "taken for truth." Here, we see a Bakhtinian vision of the carnivalesque punishment of the overly ambitious fool in the service of defanging his threat, imagining a world in which we may strike the fool to eliminate his threat to the social body. Would-be's incompetence does not absolve him of his outmoded desires for social advancement, it merely makes it easier

to punish him. Would-be can become a receptacle for the play's derision for aspirational servants who seek to feign expertise. The punishment of Would-be then becomes a larger social punishment of the poor interpreters of texts whose travel writing misleads and beguiles the English public.

The play does not merely ask audiences to contemplate how they interpret characters like Would-be and his insistence on his skillful political and social observation, but it asks audiences to reconsider the archives that they access to perform this interpretation, particularly as it locates figures like Would-be as travelers who participate in the construction of that archive. By envisioning a world in which all the promises of travel writing fail, the play contemplates the degree to which the politically ambitious servant is always stymied by the many layers of interpretation and misinterpretation that make the social discourse of the playhouse and the tavern possible. The play's concern with Would-be is that he is both wildly entranced by the prospect of political advancement through his travels and woefully gullible when it comes to matters of the *arcana imperii*. He is presented as an educated man, drawn from the lower ranks of the English nobility, but his extensive education has not schooled him in how to navigate the satirical world in which Jonson places him. This is the folly of Would-be that the play seeks to punish to prevent him from taking on the role of educator and guide to travelers and political agents less discerning than Peregrine. It is a fear of the social power possessed by the politically motivated agent that compels Peregrine to assert that Would-be must be punished. He is dangerous because he represents a desire to spread political knowledge to other potential Would-bes.

Imagining an audience filled with English subjects garnering a political education from the space of the stage is, to Jonson, to imagine a sea of miseducated Would-be Politics. Would-be becomes transformed into a self-reflexive critique on figures central to Kiséry's understanding of political competency, providing a political education on the failure of political education. Rather than the judicious political reader envisioned by theorists of travel such as Florio and Palmer, he is a boorishly poor reader of the machinations of state, who has nonetheless convinced himself that the very act of travel and observation legitimates

his reading of the political world. Would-be's notes run the risk of being understood as a legitimate representation of the arcana imperii, precisely because of how they mobilize the logics of travel writing.[35] Would-be is, to the last moment of his own punishment, deeply insistent in his belief that his notes are a register of political importance. Whatever Would-be imagines about his own notes in this moment, it is significant that he imagines that his skills of observation have produced a small measure of intelligence and that that intelligence incriminates him as a hostile foreign agent. Here, Would-be is simultaneously buying into the logic of his own project of "seeing like a statesman" and demonstrating the degree to which his "drawn out of playbook" notes fail to allow him to truly see like a statesman.

The play is not simply inviting criticisms of Would-be and his similarly educated ilk, but it is further asking audiences to consider the degree to which any political knowledge that they may possess or that those within their social sphere may profess is part of the larger sphere of political interpretation that shapes Would-be's view of the world. Rather than embracing the productive knowledge of the playhouse as a site for political education, *Volpone* is a play wary of those who profess political knowledge pieced together from an archive of politically-minded literature. While Kiséry's reading of the political discourse in the period extolls the virtues of the Habermasian social exchange of political knowledge, Jonson's play offers a bleaker view of the social potential of this mode of political engagement among nobles and commoners alike.

Notes

1. A. J. Loomie, "Wotton, Sir Henry (1568–1639), Diplomat and Writer," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 23 Sep. 2004; Accessed 17 Feb. 2022. https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30001.

2. For a more detailed history on anti-travel literature and its afterlives, see Sara Warneke, "Educational Travel: The Enthusiasm, the School-master and the Reaction," in *Images of the Educational Traveller in Early Modern England* (Lieden: EJ Brill, 1995), 41-73.

3. Andrew Hadfield, "Motives for Travel and Instructions for Travelers," in *Amazons, Savages and Machiavels: Travel and Colonial Writing in English, 1550-1630 An Anthology*, ed. Andrew Hadfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 11-16.

4. Mark Netzloff, *Agents beyond the State: The Writings of English Travelers, Soldiers, and Diplomats in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 40.

5. Lisa Jardine and William Sherman, "Pragmatic Readers: Knowledge Transactions and Scholarly Service in Late Elizabethan England," in *Religion, Culture, and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 102.

6. Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing*, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 41.

7. Hadfield, *Amazons, Savages and Machiavels*, 12.

8. Noah Millstone, "Seeing like a Statesman in Early Stuart England," in *Past and Present* no. 223 (May 2014): 82.

9. Stephen Wittek, *The Media Players: Shakespeare, Middleton, Jonson, and the Idea of News* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015), 8.

10. Daniel Carey, "The Problem of Credibility in Early Modern Travel," in *Renaissance Studies* 33, no. 4 (2019): 528.

11. For one such example, see *A Relation of a Journey begun Anno Domini 1610*, a travelogue written by George Sandys, which was integral in demonstrating his skills in husbandry and governorship leading to his eventual appointment as part of the nascent Virginia Company.

12. András Kiséry, *Hamlet's Moment: Drama and Political Knowledge in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 9.

13 Kiséry, *Hamlet's Moment,* 123.

14. For a more complete history of Venice's relationship to the development of English espionage, see Christopher Anderson, *The Secret World: A History of Intelligence*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 118-140; Alison Plowden's *The Elizabeth Secret Service* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991) and Ioanna Iordanou's "The Spy Chiefs of Renaissance Venice: Intelligence Leadership in the Early Modern World," in *Spy Chiefs: Volume 2: Intelligence Leaders in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia*, ed. Paul Maddrell, Christopher Moran, Ioanna Iordanou, and Mark Stout (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2018), 43-66.

15. "Relazioni described the geography, economy, and demography, the social, religious, political, and military structures of the country visited, and offered an analysis of the nature of the regime, its domestic and especially foreign political ambitions and alliances." Kiséry, *Hamlet's Moment*, 106.

16. Hadfield, *Amazons, Savages and Machiavels*, 12. For a more detailed reading of the role of travel licenses in Volpone, see Mark Netzloff, "Jonson's Volpone and the Information Economy of Anglo-Venetian Travel and Intelligence" in *Mediterranean Identities in the Premodern Era*, ed. John Watkins, Kathryn L. Reyerson (London: Routledge, 2014), 77-79.

17. Ben Jonson, *Volpone or The Fox*, in *Ben Jonson's Plays and Masques: A Norton Critical Edition*, ed. Richard Harp (New York & London: Norton & Company, 2001). All further citations of Volpone are drawn from this edition.

18. For a more complete history of the mythology of Venice on the English stage, see David C. McPherson, *Shakespeare, Jonson and the Myth of Venice* (Newark: University of Delaware Press), 27-51.

19. For a more detailed history of the relevance of private collections of notes to early modern intelligence work, see Nicholas Popper, "Archives and the Boundaries of Early Modern Science," *Isis* 107.1 (2016): 86-94.

20. Mosca, for instance, notes that Corvino employs "a guard of spies ten thick upon her," to oversee his wife. (1.4.123.)

21. Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Travel, and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance 1545–1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 32.

22. Desmond O'Connor, "Florio, John (1553–1625), Author and Teacher of Languages." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 23 Sep. 2004; Accessed 8 Aug. 2019. https://www-oxforddnb-com.libezproxy2.syr.edu/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-9758.

23. John Florio, *Second Fruits to be Gathered of Twelve Trees, of Diverse by Delightful Tastes to the tongues of Italians and Englishmen* (1591). Quoted in David McGinnis, *Mind Travelling and Voyage Drama in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave, 2013), 92-93.

24. For a more detailed history of the relationship between trained animals and spies, see Bill Angus *Metadrama and the Informer in Shakespeare and Jonson* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 14-16.

25. Florio was far from the only thinker to approach travel as a kind of intelligence gathering. For instance, Thomas Palmer's, *An essay of the Meanes How to Make our Trauailes, into Forraine Countries, the More Profitable and Honourable* (1606) specifically relates the traveler and the intelligencers, advising spies in a section on "regular travel."

26. Jonas A. Barish, "The Double Plot in Volpone," in *Ben Jonson's Plays and Masques*, ed. Richard Harp (New York: Norton, 2001), 399.

27. Warneke, "Educational Travel," 47.

28. Quoted in Anthony Esler, *The Aspiring Mind of the Elizabethan Younger Generation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1966), 64.

29. For a more detailed history of readings and stagings of Machiavelli, see Victoria Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetorics From the Counter-Reformation to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 93-131.

30. Netzloff, *Agents Beyond the State*, 46.

31. Carey, "The Problem of Credibility in Early Modern Travel," 536.

32. With a possible emphasis on registered's connotation of "Recorded; officially set down, esp. in a book or list." "registered, adj. and n." *OED Online*. June 2019. Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.libezproxy2.syr.edu/view/Entry/161296?rskey=fHU5Tw&result=2&isAdvanced=false.

33. Ian Donaldson tracks the history of the tortoise as a symbol of political prudence in "Jonson's Tortoise," *The Review of English Studies* 19, no. 74 (May, 1968): 162-166.

34. Kiséry, *Hamlet's Moment,* 265.

35. A fear that Would-be comically announces when he shouts "bid my wife's women / to burn my papers" (5.4.60-61) worrying that the Venetian government will take the papers as proof of his threat to the state.

"In a sieve I'll thither sail": *Macbeth* Comes to Madagascar in *Makibefo*

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*E*arly in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the First Witch complains about a sailor's wife who refused to give her any chestnuts. In what seems to be a threat of vengeance, she says, "Her husband's to Aleppo gone, Master o'th' Tiger: / But in a sieve I'll thither sail, / And like a rat without a tail, / I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do."[1] The title of this essay is intended to reflect the far-flung nature of the statement as well as the fragility of depending on a sieve for such travel. But even though great distances and fragile vehicles are involved, the claim that something will be done is repeated twice. When Shakespeare travels cross-culturally, it can be just such a lengthy and perilous journey; bringing Shakespeare in or passing Shakespeare through a sieve means that something will inevitably be lost. In the best cases, however, Shakespeare does, and he does, and he does.

In 1999, director Alexander Abela released a film entitled *Makibefo*.[2] The film "takes Macbeth to the Antandroy people of Faux Cap in the south-east corner of Madagascar,"[3] exchanging the wastes of Scotland for the beaches of Madagascar—that much is fairly clear. What is less plain is what the film brings back from its journey and how the non-Malagasy should respond to the film.

Alexander Abela "was born in Britain"[4] with a mixed heritage: "On his father's side hailing from . . . Lebanon and Malta, and

on his mother's side hailing from Greece, Italy, and Syria."[5] In an interview with Mark Thorton Burnett, Abela reflected that he "belong[s] nowhere. I feel English but in England I'm not accepted as an Englishman . . . [the] Lebanese . . . don't really accept me, and in Greece or Italy I don't feel at home."[6] This perceived displacement may be one of the keys to the success of his work with what might equally be called "displaced Shakespeare."

At the end of "Madagascan Will: Cinematic Shakespeares / Transnational Exchanges," Mark Thornton Burnett offers this charge:

> Urgently needed is a move away from the separate bracketing of the "foreign Shakespeare" and a reversal of the unidirectional "cultural flow" that, as Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan state, invariably travels "from the 'west' to the 'rest.'" As Romana Wray argues, there is surely possible in the discipline of Shakespeare on film "integration . . . a prioritizing of the 'inclusive,' and . . . a critical method that is as particular as it is comprehensive."[7]

Burnett's desire is something like that expressed by Alexander C. Y. Huang in *Chinese Shakespeares*, where he convincingly displays the necessity for critical language that will be dismissive of neither Shakespeare nor China, rightly objecting to the attitude that he describes as the "This is how they do Shakespeare over there; how quaint" mentality too often brought to bear on the subject.[8]

I began the project of writing this essay with these ideas in mind. The spectre of Laura Bohannan's "Shakespeare in the Bush," with its pejorative title and condescending tone in describing what, for Bohannan, is the utter inability of the Tiv people of Nigeria to comprehend the plot of *Hamlet*, also hovered in the background.[9] In her account, an attempt to present the plot of *Hamlet* to the Tiv results in their interrupting the narrative with what, to her, are irrelevant questions and correcting the story with what, to her, are unacceptable alterations to the plot. Her presentation of the story and the Tiv's interruptions and questions are amply illustrated by this exchange:

> That night Hamlet kept watch with the three who had seen his dead father. The dead chief again appeared, and although the others were afraid, Hamlet followed his dead father off to one side. When they were alone, Hamlet's dead father spoke.
> "Omens can't talk!" The old man was emphatic.

"Hamlet's dead father wasn't an omen. Seeing him might have been an omen, but he was not." My audience looked as confused as I sounded. "It was Hamlet's dead father. It was a thing we call a 'ghost.'" I had to use the English word, for unlike many of the neighboring tribes, these people didn't believe in the survival after death of any individuating part of the personality.

"What is a 'ghost?' An omen?"

"No, a 'ghost' is someone who is dead but who walks around and can talk, and people can hear him and see him but not touch him."

They objected. "One can touch zombis."

"No, no! It was not a dead body the witches had animated to sacrifice and eat. No one else made Hamlet's dead father walk. He did it himself."

"Dead men can't walk," protested my audience as one man.

I was quite willing to compromise.

"A 'ghost' is the dead man's shadow."

But again they objected. "Dead men cast no shadows."

"They do in my country," I snapped.[10]

The conclusion she reaches is that Shakespeare is not and cannot be universal. My response is to explore how elements in the plot of Shakespeare's play could be altered to tell a comprehensible and moving story to the Tiv people. A careful consideration of Tiv beliefs could make the transmission of a comprehensible *Hamlet* relatively easy and poignant. The objection to the ghost of Hamlet's father could be overcome by presenting that character as either "an omen sent by a witch" (29) or "a dead body the witches had animated to sacrifice and eat" (30)—in other words, a Zombi— suggestions made by members of the Tiv. Claudius could also be held responsible for Hamlet's madness because of witchcraft, and Laertes could have "killed his sister by witchcraft, drowning her so he could secretly sell her body to the witches" (33).

When first introduced to *Makibefo*, I considered the film a chance to provide evidence contrary to Bohannan's thesis, establishing that a Shakespeare play could be made deeply and thoroughly comprehensible to another culture. My hope was to be able to view, appreciate, and comment on *Makibefo* as a Malagasy artifact, significant in its own right—and also quite interesting because of its retelling of the plot of *Macbeth*. Nonetheless, I find it difficult to say much of substance about the film without

constant reference to Shakespeare's play. What seems evident is that Bohannan's claim that Shakespeare is not universal is only the case when Shakespeare becomes an inflexible entity presented without consideration of audience, historical setting, or cultural context. Consider, for example, the critical and commercial success of Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, which is both foreign and comprehensible to Scottish audiences and local and comprehensible to Japanese audiences.[11]

In other words, *Makibefo* is a place where east and west can meet. Unlike the James Ivory film *Shakespeare Wallah*, in which a troupe of actors perform Shakespeare to a postcolonial India to which Shakespeare is less and less relevant, *Makibefo* has the opportunity to be that which Laura Bohannan sought and dismissed as impossible: a retelling of a Shakespeare play that is comprehensible, relevant, and meaningful to spectators from a multiplicity of cultures.[12]

The most extensive account of the process of the production of *Makibefo* is Burnett's. He gives us information regarding how the plot of *Macbeth* was first brought to the Antandroy: "It is clear from *Makibefo* that the re-imagining of the play derived from a non-textual encounter with Shakespeare, and this is confirmed in the director's observation that a 'comic strip . . . and photographs' were initially used in local explanations of the Bardic narrative."[13] Vanessa Gerhards fleshes this out somewhat, mentioning that "the Antandroy were unfamiliar with modern and contemporary films, TV, or Shakespeare before Abela arrived."[14] The material I've read on the film is silent on Abela's familiarity with the Antandroy before arriving in Madagascar, but the film itself provides ample evidence that the making of the film involved more than simply— and "simply" isn't the right word—teaching the Antandroy Shakespeare. Indeed, the closing credits help illustrate this:

> The Antandroy people of Madagascar who played the characters and helped in the making of this film are an ancient tribe with a truly great sense of pride, honour and tradition. A poor people in what is already a poor country, they have few possessions and little knowledge of the outside world. As simple fishermen, they live off the ocean that crashes against their unchanging shoreline and take one day at a time. The majority of the actors have never seen a television let alone a film, and have never acted before in their lives.[15]

Indeed, there is not much modern scholarly attention paid to the Antandroy. They are often only briefly mentioned as one of many tribal groups, as in this explanation of the etymology of their name: "In many cases, ecological references for people who live in a particular habitat without necessarily having distinct socio-cultural characteristics are identified with tribal identity. The island of Madagascar is a prime example, with such references as "Antanala" (the forest people), "Antandroy" (the people of the thorny cactus forest), and "Antankarana" (the people of the rocks and caves)."[16]

The dual direction of the cultural exchange is navigated throughout the film by the narrator, though various discrepancies between the narrator of the film and the story of the film form a complicated matrix of the exchange. Additionally, many elements of the film may be lost on viewers who have only a vague understanding of the cultures of Madagascar. When I first saw the film, I missed much of significance because of my ignorance; doubtless, I still miss a great deal, but the research I have been able to do has enabled me to see more of the elements of Malagasy culture that are part of this film.

The opening shot of *Makibefo* is just such an element. It provides an image of four carved wooded posts called *aloalo* in the sand of a beach with the ocean in the background *(see fig. 1)*.[17] These are funeral sculptures usually placed over a family tomb, as in fig. 2.[18] From the limited material I have been able to find on *aloalo*, their placement in this film seems very unusual, especially given that "the family tomb is the most sacred of all hallowed places"[19] and that maintaining it and the land associated with it is important enough to cause considerable economic hardship, including bringing migrant workers back to the tomb frequently despite the consequent loss of productivity.[20] The *aloalo* on the shore suggest either that this is a burial ground or that we are to consider the land itself to be tomblike.

The opening shot provides an unmediated glance at an element of Malagasy culture; however, a mediator soon arrives in the form of the film's narrator. It is interesting to note that the question of audience, for the DVD release at least, is somewhat indicated by the languages available in the subtitles. English, English for the hearing impaired, German, French, Spanish, and Portuguese are

Fig. 1. *Aloalo* in the Opening Shot of *Makibefo*

Fig. 2. "*Aloalo* and cattle horns on a Mahafaly tomb in southwestern Madagascar."

all available—but not the language of the Antandroy. Those who speak the dialect of Malagasy employed by the Antandroy use do not need subtitles, of course—except, perhaps, for that part of the film that is in English, which is confined to the role of the narrator. In the closing credits, this role is listed as "Storyteller"—Gilbert Laumord is the actor portraying the role. A glance at his LinkedIn page lets us know that he's from Guadeloupe, French West Indies.[21]

After the opening shot, we are introduced to the narrator. The camera settles on a man sitting on the beach near the *aloalo*. He has his eyes closed, and he appears to be deep in thought. But he opens his eyes, focuses them on the camera, and begins to deliver,

in slightly-accented English, a narration that provides us with an introduction to the story we're about to hear.[22] His narration follows the plot of Shakespeare's play far more closely than the film itself will. His voice, therefore, seems to serve as a deliberate connection between the western audience viewing this film and the Malagasy structures and cultural elements that make up the film. He begins with these words:

> In a land washed by the ocean a tribe of people lived in sight of sands and crashing waves. Their king was a noble king, who gave his people peace and harmony. And amongst his subjects many were good and true. But none more so than Makibefo. Indeed, it was the king who entrusted Makibefo to capture a fugitive and to bring him back to the village.[23]

No title card has yet appeared, but the setting and the direction of the storytelling leads us to see Makibefo as the central figure.[24] For those familiar with *Macbeth*, this introduction also offers the first evidence of a slight deviation from Shakespeare's plot, turning the rebellion of Macdonwald and his collusion with Norway into an errand to bring back a fugitive.[25]

As the narrator continues, another alteration to Shakespeare's plot becomes clear:

> On the way, Makibefo, in the company of a trusted friend, met a witch doctor, who told him that though the king was merciful he was also weak. He prophesied that a time would come, as surely as the tides, when peace and harmony would no longer sweeten the lives of the people. The witch doctor looked deep into the eyes of Makibefo and saw that the gods had singled him out as a future leader. He inscribed solemnly the ancient symbol of the favoured one on his head band.

Here, the narrator allows us to understand that the three Wëird Sisters have been conflated into one "witch doctor," to use the narrator's term. For the remainder of this essay, I'll employ the (perhaps) more apropos Malagasy term *ombiasy*—"Healer, seer, advisor, spirit medium, shaman"[26]—to describe this character. Not much later in the play, the words of the narrator are enacted for the camera—but with, as we shall see, some key differences. Here, the *ombiasy*'s declaration is supported with a connection to the tides that wash over the land. The prediction he makes will come to pass as inevitably as do the tides.

In the narration that follows, we get a summary of how the *ombiasy*'s first prediction comes to fruition:

> The king indeed was merciful and pardoned the fugitive. But his son had no mercy and killed him instantly. The witch doctor proved to be the teller of truths and Makibefo began to believe that he was a man destined for greatness.

In both narratives—the Malagasy text and Shakespeare's—the eponymous character is convinced of the veracity of the full prophecy because a part of it comes to pass.

The narration stops short of telling us the entire plot of the film, but it does take us to a depiction of how Makibefo's wife responds to her husband:

> His wife too had understood the ancient symbol. Her husband had been blessed by the gods. She exalts him to overthrow the king. Makibefo recognized the truth in his wife's words. But he knew too that once he had committed the ultimate treachery there would be no turning back. The blood that they would wash from their hands would not so easily be washed from their souls.

The opening narration closes with a line that seems to allude to the opening of Lawrence Olivier's *Hamlet* ("This is the tale of a man who could not make up his mind"[27]):

> This is a tale of damnation.

It is spoken after the camera cuts to a book lying on the beach and after the narrator has picked it up and opened it. Like Lawrence Olivier's line, *Makibefo*'s tends to close out possibilities—to simplify the complexities inherent in the film itself (and in the play that inspires it) into a single sentence.

In terms of both the film *Makibefo* and the play *Macbeth*, it is an oversimplification. But it may be a necessary one. Whatever audience is viewing this film—initially, it would have been a French audience, though "Makibefo initially played only in one theatre for a three-week period"—that audience is presented with a framework for viewing it.[28] Given that it's a "tale of damnation," considerable latitude is provided for the way that damnation plays out. Still, as in Olivier, we're given a yardstick by which we can measure the film itself.

Vanessa Gerhards's reading of this opening connects it to the local culture, arguing that it moves from oral to written tradition: "Stories are passed on orally from one person to another in the local culture and the film takes up this tradition in order to place itself firmly into the Antandroy life and context; a film *by* them and *for* them."[29] She points out that the conclusion to the narrator's introduction turns to "the next level of storytelling . . . reading the written word aloud to someone else."[30] However, the levels don't stop there. In addition to these two layers, the film itself provides a third—the transmission of both oral and written language by the medium of video. And that third layer is itself complicated in numerous ways. Just as Olivier's *Hamlet* is not just a story of "a man who could not make up his mind," *Makibefo* is not just "a tale of damnation."

The narrator's opening the book can be read in different ways, but the likeliest reading is one that suggests that the story we are about to see comes from the book itself. At the end of Makibefo's encounter with the *ombiasy*, the film suddenly cuts to the narrator, who glances between the book and the camera, giving the impression that he is breaking off from the story he has been relating to us to offer some additional explanation. He says (or reads) this: "Hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter. Why do you start and seem to fear things that do sound so fair?" Here, and at ten other points during the film, the narrator reads a portion of the text of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* that relates to the events portrayed in the film.[31]

If the narrator exists in a liminal position between east and west, the character of the *ombiasy* is more firmly rooted in the culture of Madagascar. Instead of the three marginalized, ambiguous figures of Macbeth's text, Makibefo is encountered by a single ombiasy—a more central, more respected figure in the culture—one whom it would not be inappropriate for even a king to consult. In the film, the ombiasy suddenly appears to Makibefo and Bakoua (the film's Banquo analogue) while they are resting during their journey back to Danikany (the Duncan analogue) with their prisoner. The narrator's account of the meeting is far more detailed than the meeting itself, which is quite sparse and only contains one line of dialogue from the *ombiasy*.

The film shows us the *ombiasy*'s unexpected arrival and his lengthy and penetrating stare at Makibefo. He then participates in a particular kind of divination called *sikidy*, which involves throwing seeds and arranging them mathematically into columns.[32] After completing the *sikidy*, he faces Makibefo and says, "Malikomy will murder your prisoner against Danikany's will. What he will lose, you will gain and king you shall be." He then proceeds to make circular marks on Makibefo's forehead, indicating the position where a symbol of high office, as in fig. 3, will be placed.[33]

Kanusiky-Sakalava, of Morondova.
(From a Photograph by Dr A. Völtzkow.)

Fig. 3: "Kanuisky-Sakalava, of Morondova."

While this ritualistic marking takes place, Bakoua looks on askance, finally interrupting the ceremony by taking the *ombiasy*'s arm and saying, "Enough of your lies!" The *ombiasy* leaps out of the frame, and the film gives us a jump cut to a snake slithering across the sand. A voiceover from the narrator overlaps the stunned reactions of the men, who fall backward into the sand: "Hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter. Why do you start and seem to fear things that do sound so fair?"

The disjunction between the scene and the two quotations from *Macbeth* conflated in a single line is intriguing. The *ombiasy* has indeed told Makibefo that he will be king, but the two men have not started at that fair-sounding news. Instead, they started at what appeared to be the *ombiasy* transforming into a snake.

The role of the Lady Macbeth analogue in response to the news serves the same function in Antandroy culture as it does in Shakespeare. She is acting outside the norms of her culture. The film underlines this in two ways. First, she attempts, against her husband's objections, to put some paint on her husband's forehead. He pushes it away twice, but the third time, she puts a dot on his forehead and then traces a circle around it. Her persistence and her clear desire to gain a higher station in her society are illustrated in this action. As Burnett puts it,

> The representation of Valy Makibefo/Lady Macbeth's . . . more obvious agitation for greatness carries in its wake the cultural specificities of the histories of Madagascar and the place of women in the local economy. Electing to live outside the village, Valy Makibefo/Lady Macbeth, it is implied, entertains an alternative perspective on the world to that of the other villagers. Her alacrity in painting the local symbol of royalty on her husband's forehead, and the emblematic devices displayed on her togalike shawl, announce her will to betterment.[34]

The second place her ambition is underlined in the film is in an equivalent to the dagger scene in *Macbeth*. Makibefo is sitting on the shore when the Lady Macbeth analogue approaches him. She arrives with a literal dagger (immediately after the narrator, in voiceover, says, "Come, thick night, and pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell"), and she attempts to hand it to him. When he does not take it, she places it blade down in the sand immediately in front of him and retreats, crouching in the sand a few feet away from him. When he still delays, she reclaims the knife and heads to the dwelling of the Duncan analogue. We then see her ready to stab Duncan herself, but Makibefo takes the dagger from her and performs the deed himself.

Although the scholarly material on the Antandroy is sparse, the consensus of a number of more informal sources is uniform in stating that the Antandroy culture is patriarchal. For a wife to be ambitious to this degree—to contemplate and to be ready to act

out the murder of the leader to ensure a higher place in society for herself (and, coincidentally, for her husband) runs contrary to the expected gender roles of the society. We have, in *Makibefo*, Lady Macbeth easily transplanted into Antandroy culture.

By the scene that is analogous to the feast in Act III, scene iv of the play, Makibefo has dispatched Danikany (Duncan), and we have seen Bakoua (Banquo) victorious at a wrestling competition that seems to be a part of the obsequies for Danikany. Scenes of a *zebu* being led out of its pen for slaughter (and/or sacrifice—the distinction isn't clear) are interspersed with scenes of Bakoua walking along the shore. While the *zebu* is tied and readied for sacrifice/slaughter, two men approach Bakoua, who readies his spear to defend himself. As the *zebu*'s throat is slit, Bakoua is killed by the two men. The next sequence begins with Makibefo, now with the circle of office on his forehead, raising the head of the *zebu* above his head, proclaiming, "I am your new king" *(see fig. 4)*. It is also the first time we see the circle of office on his forehead.

Fig. 4: Makibefo Raises the *Zebu* Head

My first thought on viewing the scene demonstrates my western, *Macbeth*-trained sensibility: I connected the *zebu*'s head with Macbeth's head as presented by Macduff at the end of Shakespeare's play, and I wondered whether the end of the film would catch up the image. I should, instead (or in addition), have considered the image of the horns of the *zebu*—an image that is provided in the horn-topped *aloalo* of the opening shot *(see fig. 1)*.

Burnett helps explain the cultural elements of this moment in the film:

> In the protagonist's lifting to the sky of the decapitated, horned head of the *zebu* is communicated both a diabolical association (Makibefo metaphorically crowns himself with the sign of his evil) and a totemic suggestion (because the frequently seen totems are also horned, a manipulation of the local cult is implied).[35]

The image, therefore, puts Makibefo in two positions: he is an *aloalo* indicating something dead underneath, and he is embodying a position of prestige. Fig. 5 provides an image of a Antandroy man with his hair shaped into the image of horns, which seems to indicate some level of status in the Antandroy culture.[36]
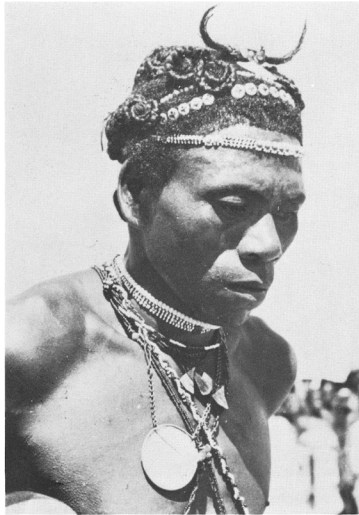
Fig. 5: "An Antandroy tribesman."

The scene with the *zebu* head also connects the world of the Antandroy to the world of the filmmakers, though we only learn this through the penultimate shot in the credits:

> An on-screen announcement informs us that the "ox . . . was sacrificed in our honour according to the customs of the Antandroy people and was distributed to the families involved in the making of *Makibefo*." The *apologia* is provided for the benefit of Western audiences at the same time as an authorial

voice enters the narrative in order to stress an experience defined by mutual respect.[37]

The ending scene of *Makibefo* provides a point of clear and direct connection between the Antandroy narrative and Shakespeare's play. The Macduff analog arrives with a number of pirogues (standing in for Birnam forest) and challenges Makibefo. Makibefo (according to the subtitles) says this as they ready themselves for the battle:

> Makidofy! Makidofy! Fight me! . . . Makidofy, you of all men I have avoided. My soul is too much charged with your blood already. And you are not of a woman born. Fight me!

As Makibefo and Makidofy circle each other, Makibefo suddenly seems to give up. As a soundtrack of rhythmic breathing increases in volume, he sinks to the sand without raising his spear. Makidofy then stabs him, and the narrator delivers these lines:

> Let the angel whom thou still hast served tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb ripp'd. I will not yield to kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet and to be baited with the rabble's curse. Thou opposed, being of no woman born, yet I will try the last. Before my body I throw my warlike shield! Lay on, Macduff. And damn'd be him that cries, "Hold, enough!"

Makidofy removes the headband that symbolizes the office of the leader, and, with a final breath, Makibefo lies still. The image then crossfades to the waves breaking on the shore and then crossfades again to the narrator, who closes his book and simply stares into the camera. The credits (all in English) then roll, taking us from the description of the Antandroy people through the cast to the final note about the Zebu.

For Burnett, that notice provides one point where "the transnational exchanges that help to shape the film are recognized but not elaborated upon, and a mixed sense of unmanageable distance, shared endeavours and different agendas is momentarily suggested."[38] I'm not convinced that it must be read in this relatively pessimistic way. In *A Dream in Hanoi*, a documentary about a collaborative production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* put on by Vietnamese and American actors in Vietnam, the cultural conflicts—though they are eventually and successfully overcome—nearly bring the production to a standstill. Yet the

motive force of the Shakespeare play and the actors' determination to purse the collaboration present a unity despite cultural difference. More demonstrative of "unmanageable distance" is Orson Welles's *Voodoo Macbeth*, which sets the play in Haiti with only standard editing to the text and does not provide much insight into Haitian history or culture.[39] But *Makibefo*, like the better-known *Maqbool*[40] or Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*,[41] seems verily to transcend "the separate bracketing of the 'foreign Shakespeare'"[42] decried by Burnett and others to provide something very rich and only moderately strange to audiences from both east and west.

Notes

1. William Shakespeare, Macbeth, Arden Third Series, ed. Sandra Clark and Pamela Mason (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), I.iii.7-10.

2. *Makibefo*, directed by Alexander Abela, featuring Martin Zia, Neoliny Dety, and Gilbert Laumord (1999; DVD, Philipp Hinz | Scoville Film, 2008).

3. Mark Thornton Burnett, "Madagascan Will: Cinematic Shakespeares/ Transnational Exchanges," *Shakespeare Survey* 61 (2008): 239.

4. Burnett, *Shakespeare and World Cinema*, 25.

5. Burnett, *Shakespeare and World Cinema*, 25.

6. Alexander Abela, qtd. in Burnett, *Shakespeare and World Cinema*, 25.

7. Burnett, "Madagascan Will: Cinematic Shakespeares/Transnational Exchanges," 254-55.

8. Alexander C. Y. Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 36.

9. Laura Bohannan, "Shakespeare in the Bush," *Natural History* (August-September 1966): 28-33.

10. Bohannon, "Shakespeare in the Bush," 30.

11. *Throne of Blood* [Kumonosu jô (a.k.a. *The Castle of the Spider's Web*)], directed by Akira Kurosawa, featuring Toshirô Mifune and Isuzu Yamada (1957; DVD, Criterion, 2003).

12. *Shakespeare* Wallah, directed by James Ivory, featuring Shashi Kapoor and Felicity Kendal (1965; DVD, Merchant Ivory, 2004).

13. Burnett, "Madagascan Will: Cinematic Shakespeares/Transnational Exchanges," 240.

14. Vanessa Gerhards, "Multicultural Macbeths: *Maqbool* and *Makibefo*," in *Locating Shakespeare in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Gabrielle Malcolm and Kelli Marshall (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), 185.

15. *Makibefo*.

16. S. N. Sangmpam, *Ethnicities and Tribes in Sub-Saharan Africa: Opening Old Wounds* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 9.

17. Sangmpam, *Ethnicities and Tribes in Sub-Saharan Africa, 9*; *Makibefo*.

18. Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *The Malagasy Republic: Madagascar Today* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), inset between 148 and 149.

19. Thompson and Adloff, *The Malagasy Republic,* 187.

20. Thompson and Adloff, *The Malagasy Republic,* 188; cf. 258, 264, and 324.

21. Gilbert Laumord, LinkedIn, https://gp.linkedin.com/in/gilbert-laumord-gilbert-58279969.

22. No Henry Higgins, I cannot presume to identify the precise accent here, but it may be that we are hearing the accent of an English speaker from Guadeloupe.

23. All material quoted from the film is drawn from the film's subtitles and follows their spelling and punctuation.

24. We won't see one until three minutes into the film, and then we just get "Blue Eye Films presents." At 5:23, we get "Makibefo" with the parenthetical "(Macbeth)" appearing below it a few seconds later. No other titles or credits appear until the end of the film.

25. Please note that, in pointing out the differences between Shakespeare's play and *Makibefo*, I do not intend to be criticizing the film for its alterations; however, that method provides the clearest understanding of the way the Malagasy version of the plot works.

26. Robert H. Bennett, *I Am Not Afraid: Demon Possession and Spiritual Warfare: True Accounts from the Lutheran Church of Madagascar* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2013), xx.

27. *Hamlet*, directed by Laurence Olivier, featuring Laurence Olivier, Jean Simmons, Basil Sydney, Eileen Herlie, Norman Wooland, Felix Aylmer, and Terence Morgan (1948; DVD, Criterion, 2000).

28. Burnett, *Shakespeare and World Cinema*, 26.

29. Gerhards, "Multicultural Macbeths: *Maqbool* and *Makibefo*," 185.

30. Gerhards, "Multicultural Macbeths: *Maqbool* and *Makibefo*," 185.

31. The other points are these lines: (as Makibefo travels back to the village) "Hail, King that shalt be! This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou might not lose the dues of rejoicing by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell"; (after the Lady Macbeth analogue tries on a crown of sorts) "That I may pour my spirits in thine ear, and chastise with the valor of my tongue all that impedes thee from the golden round, which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem to have thee crown'd withal"; (after the execution of Kidoure) "Can the devil speak true? Truth is told, as happy prologues to the act of the imperial theme. This supernatural soliciting cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill, why hath it given me earnest of success commencing in a truth? Cawdor is dead! If good, why do I yield to that suggestion whose horrid image doth unfix my hair and make my seated heart knock at my ribs, against the use of nature? Present fears are less than horrible imaginings. My thought, whose murder is yet but fantastical, shakes so my single state of man that function is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is but what is not"; (after the Macbeths agree to go through with their plan) "If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly. If the assassination could trammel up the consequence, and catch with his surcease, success; that but this blow might be the be-all and the end-all, here, but here, upon this bank and shoal of time, we'll jump the life to come"; (when Makibefo is presented with the dagger) "Come, thick night, and pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell";

(after the ghost of Bakoua appears at the feast) "Blood has been shed ere now, i' the olden time, ere humane statute purged the gentle weal; Ay, and since too, murthers have been perform'd too terrible for the ear. The time has been that, when the brains were out, the man would die and there an end; but now they rise again, with twenty mortal murthers on their crowns, and push us from our stools. This is more strange than such a murther is. I will tomorrow, and betimes I will, to the witch doctor. More shall he speak; for now I am bent to know, by the worst means, the worst. For mine own good all causes shall give way. I am in blood stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more, returning were as tedious as go o'er. Strange things I have in head that will to hand which must be acted ere they may be scann'd"; (after the Macduff analogue has fled) "Now does he feel his secret murthers sticking on his hands, now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach; those he commands move only in command, nothing in love"; (after Lady Macbeth's walking in to the ocean) "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of recorded time. And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more. It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing"; (after the Macduff analogue returns) "Led on by Malcolm, his brother Donalbain, and the good Macduff. Revenges burn in them; for their dear causes would to the bleeding and the grim alarm excite the mortified man"; and (after the final battle) "Let the angel whom thou still hast served tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb ripp'd. I will not yield to kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet and to be baited with the rabble's curse. Thou opposed, being of no woman born, yet I will try the last. Before my body I throw my warlike shield! Lay on, Macduff. And damn'd be him that cries, 'Hold, enough!'"

32. Cf. James V. Rauff, "The Varieties of Mathematical Experience," *Natural History* (September 2003): 54-55, 58-60.

33. C. Keller, *Madagascar, Mauritius, and the Other East-African Islands* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1901), 66.

34. Burnett, *Shakespeare and World Cinema*, 30.

35. Burnett, "Madagascan Will: Cinematic Shakespeares/Transnational Exchanges," 241.

36. Thompson and Adloff, *The Malagasy Republic: Madagascar Today*, inset between 148 and 149.

37. Burnett, "Madagascan Will: Cinematic Shakespeares/Transnational Exchanges," 241.

38. Burnett, "Madagascan Will: Cinematic Shakespeares/Transnational Exchanges," 241.

39. *Macbeth* [a.k.a. *The Voodoo Macbeth*], directed by Orson Welles, featuring Jack Carter, Edna Thomas, Canada Lee, Maurice Ellis, Federal Theatre Project (1936; We Work Again, Federal Works Agency, 1937).

40. *Maqbool*, directed by Vishal Bharadwaj, featuring Irfan Khan and Tabu (2003; DVD, Music Today, 2004).

41. *Throne of Blood.*

42. Burnett, "Madagascan Will: Cinematic Shakespeare/Transnational Exchanges," 254.

"Dip Napkins in His Sacred Blood": Mourning as Catholic Resistance in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*

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I n his *True, Sincere and Modest Defense of English Catholics* (1584), Cardinal William Allen protests against Lord Burghley, William Cecil's pamphlet "The execution of justice" (1583). For the Jesuit, who in a previous work celebrates the "glorious martyrdom" of twelve reverend priests who led the Counter-Reformation in England,[1] the official stance of Queen Elizabeth's principal minister aims at undermining Catholic martyrology and harboring state paranoia against the Catholics' treason: "They went about by divers proclamations, libels, and speeches, first to make the people believe that all Catholics, and especially Jesuits and such priests and scholars as were brought up in the Seminaries or Colleges out of the Realm, were traitors."[2] Allen's contestation of the accusation showcases how slippery and blurred the semantics of faith and the dynamics of persecution in England were, especially after the Protestants appropriated the martyrological discourse by making John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1563), also known as *The Book of Martyrs*, made into an official reference alongside the Bible in Anglican churches under Queen Elizabeth I.[3] Traitors in the eyes of the political authorities and the reformed church, martyrs in the eyes of their co-religionists and the compassionate watchers of their executions, the Jesuits were subjected to oppositional views and paradoxical testimonial accounts, while their activities and executions called for divergent interpretations. This situation

made the legal authorities fail to rally unanimous approval against the persecuted or to ensure that people's support would not shift grounds, despite the host of tough legislations they passed during that period.[4] Furthermore, this tense environment generated ambivalent feelings with regard the recently suppressed ritualized practices of collective mourning and remembrance of the dead, and, paradoxically, reinforced the need for relic-making among the English Catholics. Amidst this religious strife and along the actual sites of execution in England, the Elizabethan stage dramatized spectacles of violence, torture and suffering characterized by what French anthropologist René Girard terms mimetic rivalry that results in sacrificial crisis or failure of sacrificial ritual.[5] It is in light of this anthropological perspective and against the background of "the Reformation martyrdom crisis"[6] in Early Modern England that this study examines Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, a tragedy that foregrounds the contemporary debate over the identity of the scapegoat, and particularly over the performative rituals of mourning. The first two parts analyze the differing commemorations of Caesar's murder by the two contending camps among the Romans. The inconclusiveness of these polarized perceptions calls for speculation, in the last part, on the significance of Caesar's ghost in the context of disputed performances of mourning.

1. Caesar as Traitor:

From the outset, *Julius Caesar* illustrates a latent division among the Romans, with a group of merry-making workers on the one hand, ready to celebrate Caesar's triumphal return from Munda, and two infuriated tribunes on the other, who view the occasion as a mournful one, inviting tears and lament over Pompey's kin whom Caesar has defeated (1.1.1-76).[7] Cassius, the mastermind of the plot against Rome's foremost general, is aware not only of this endemic rift among the citizens, but also of Brutus's ambivalent feelings towards Caesar, who is, at the same time, his close friend, "a role model" he wishes to imitate, and "an insurmountable obstacle" that stands in his political path.[8] Hence, Cassius seizes the opportunity of a resonant public cheer wherewith the plebians "choose Caesar for their king" (1.2.79) to create a sense of mimetic rivalry in Brutus, a staunch defender of republicanism who utterly despises autocracy. Cassius urges Brutus

to topple the scale of the pro-monarchists and comforts him about the allegiance he already enjoys among "many of the best in Rome" who hold him as far worthier than Caesar (1.2.59). Later, at night, he throws at Brutus's window letters he forges "in several hands," "as if they came from several citizens" (1.2.315-316), in order to further instill in him the illusory belief that the number of the adherents to their anti-Caesarian camp has grown, thus making their claim to the legitimacy of the murder more substantial. The mechanism that Cassius sets at work and that Brutus very soon adopts is one that underlies all communities. René Girard calls it "mimetic rivalry" or "acquisitive mimesis" which, he explains, "divides by leading two or more individuals to converge on one and the same object with a view to appropriating it."[9] Brutus now seeks to rally unanimous approval for his labelling of Caesar as traitor to the Republic, making him bear sole responsibility for "the time's abuse" and "high-sighted tyranny" (II.1. 115, 117). He claims that the dispute over Caesar's nature will transform mimesis from acquisitive to "antagonistic," whereby "the entire community will find itself unified against a single individual;" hence the community *and* the victim play a beneficent role in bringing about the resolution of the conflict.[10] Brutus therefore designs the murder of Caesar as a pre-emptive sacrifice that would be purgative and salvational for his country. He invests Caesar with the role of a scapegoat or *pharmakos*, which, by definition, has the dual nature of the sacred or *sacer*: Evil and cursed if he remains alive in the community, beneficent and blessed once he is symbolically expelled from it.[11]

After the assassination of Caesar, the Republicans vie with the Pro-Caesar monarchists for control of commemorative practices. Oscillating like the recusants' in Post-Reformation England between martyrdom and treason, Caesar's identity is subjected to rival understandings. Indeed, as they bathe their arms up to the elbow in Caesar's oozing wounds, Brutus and his co-conspirators congratulate themselves on the decisive social import and prospect of their performative gesture, proclaiming that they have initiated a sacrificial ritual that will, "ages hence," be repeatedly carried out "in states unknown and accents yet unborn" (3.1.112). Confident that they have channeled violence in and outside Rome, they proleptically fantasize a pacifying social custom enacted by mock-

murderers and in which Ceasar will bleed only "in sport," hence symbolically, probably through a sacrificial animal (3.1.114). Eager to control Rome's collective memory and to steer public opinion towards the upholding of the Republican tradition, the executioners forge a national sign by which the signified, Caesar's blood on their weapons, has for signifiers "Peace, Freedom and Liberty" (3.1.109-110). Caesar's death is turned into a synecdoche by which "Tyranny is dead" (3.1.78) and the commemoration of the event is shaped into a festive celebration thanks to which Caesar's executioners believe they will henceforth be dubbed "the men who gave this country liberty" (3.1.118). Just as he rejects the designations "butchers" and "murderers" for himself and his partners (2.1.165, 179), Brutus prescriptively frames the funeral ceremony with censorship, warning Antony: "You shall not in your funeral speech blame us / But speak all good you can devise of Caesar" (3.1.245-46). As he presses to have the murder officially received as a purgative sacrifice (2.1.165, 179) in which violence is "purifying and pacifying,"[12] Brutus promises to honor Caesar's corpse and to perform "all true rites and lawful ceremonies" due to him (3.1.241). This seemingly paradoxical treatment of the victim fits within the logic of the scapegoating mechanism as expounded by Girard: The death of the sacrificial victim or of its surrogate generates the rebirth of the community "in a new or renewed cultural order" and helps to sustain its unity.[13]

   This interpretation of the murder is resisted and challenged by the pro-Caesar faction that reverses the tide by deflecting the accusation of treason onto the executioners and by rehabilitating the victim at the centre of a mourning ritual. Caesar is no longer the seed of malevolence which, once extracted and expelled from the community, turns into a benevolent and propitiatory talisman. He is still a sacrificial victim, but one that is perceived and presented as the target, not the source of evil. Now Caesar's scapegoating appears to be that of an innocent martyr who rids the community of its own ills by absorbing them. Furthermore, the second commemoration carried out by Antony mirrors the ambivalent feelings that the official framework of Reformation England generated regarding the elimination of the Catholic rites of mourning, on the one hand, and the execution of Catholic dissidents, on the other.

2. Caesar as martyr

By displacing the object of remembrance from the self-proclaimed "sacrificers" (2.1.165) to the sacrificed Caesar, Antony establishes what Tobias Döring terms in his analysis of women's laments in Shakespeare's *Richard III*, "a counter-memory."[14] The performance of mourning Antony enforces has Catholic undertones in Post-Reformation England. England now championed inward over communal devotional practices, and witnessed the dissolution of chantries and the banning of religious ceremonies for the dead, like funeral processions, dirges and intercessory prayers.[15] In this context, Antony's funeral oration is ostentatiously performative as it relies not only on rhetoric, but also on visual signifiers, from location to props, to facial expressions.[16] The forum, which is a secular location, becomes a virtual or alternative religious space that offers a compensation for the suppressed ritual of mourning. This open area, along with the stage that represents it, functions like the heterotopias that are, in one of Michel Foucault's definitions of the concept, "counter-sites" in which "the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted."[17] Although he claims that he comes "to bury Caesar, not to praise him" (3.2.75), Antony weaves his funeral oration around the figure of his deceased friend, summoning up his glorious past, his generous gifts and his virtuous deeds. He also gives precedence to the corpse by bidding the "poor poor dumb mouths," Caesar's wounds, to speak for him (3.2.218). Under King Edward VI, the Second Book of Common Prayer omitted the prayers for the dead, making such a practice, in the words of the Protestant reformer Thomas Becon, "vain, superfluous and unprofitable."[18] Commenting on this significant shift, historian Eamon Duffy argues that the dead: "could neither be spoken to, nor even about," and adds that "the oddest feature of the 1552 burial rite is the disappearance of the corpse from it."[19] Furthermore, with "eyes [that] are red as fire with weeping" (3.2.116), Antony elicits in the commoners what Richard II calls "the external manners of lament."[20] But before he succeeds in making them shed their "gracious drops" (3.2.192), he challenges them into expressing their love and grief, asking "What cause withholds you then to mourn for him" (3.2.104)? Antony's exhortation looks back to the aesthetics and in particular to "the physiologies of mourning" that

the Protestants in Post-Reformation England strove to regulate.[21] The medieval representations of the Virgin's and the Magdalene's "excessive" mourning over the crucified Jesus Christ came under attack, and the wailing for the dead, associated with "the time of popery" in one of Hugh Latimer's sermons, was submitted to measure.[22]

The subversive burial rite takes on further performative accents when Antony descends from the pulpit where he is supposed, at Brutus's behest, to deliver a formal speech, and asks the crowd to "make a ring about the corpse of Caesar" (3.2.158). Then, like a stage director, he orchestrates a play-within-the play, in which the corpse and the mantle are chief props of a "piteous spectacle" (3.2.196) as one of the horrified watchers exclaims. As he ostentatiously displays Caesar's bloodied mantle and body "marred as you see with traitors" (3.2.195), Antony turns them into sacred relics and objects of veneration, bringing audience compassion to a higher pitch.[23] Just before his assassination, Caesar too finds the image of his sanctified body appealing in Decius's interpretation of Calphurnia's dream. Appearing like a statue that offers "reviving blood" (2.2.88) to sustain and save the people, his body bears striking similarities to that of the "lactating Christ" in late medieval Christian allegory.[24] Caesar finds equal satisfaction in the image of tokens of remembrance the Romans keep from his body to serve as "tinctures, stains, relics and cognizance" (2.2.89). This image of Caesar as idol and martyr is yet again projected by Antony who, in his funeral oration, presses for a ritualistic performance in which the commoners "kiss dead Caesar's wounds, / And dip their napkins in his sacred blood, / Yea, beg a hair of him for memory" (3.2.133-135). If Caesar's executioners self-complacently assert that they shall be remembered by future generations as Rome's benefactors each time their "lofty scene [is] acted over" (3.1.112), Antony calls for a rival commemoration whereby Caesar's remains are preserved and bequeathed "as a rich legacy / Unto [the Romans'] issue" (3.2.137-138).

The iconographical construction of Caesar as martyr exposed to public gaze and the intimacy created by interaction with his mutilated body, resonate with the dispute over the legitimacy of claims to martyrdom across the confessional spectrum in Shakespeare's time. While the over one hundred graphic accounts

of the Marian martyrs in *Foxe's Acts and Monuments* enjoyed great popularity and were enforced as the official documents on martyrology, the persecuted recusants, keen on imitating Christ's suffering, offered a rival martyrology by defining their fatal ends as staged crucifixions and offering their tortured bodies and blood and bones—future relics—as "didactic and inspirational tools against Protestantism."[25] Antony's staging of a "piteous spectacle" (3.2.196) with Caesar's mantle and body recalls the last words on the scaffold of the most prominent figure of the Counter-Reformation, Edmund Campion, who quotes St Paul: "We are made spectacle unto God, unto his angels and unto men."[26] Likewise, Antony's call for the watchers to collect Caesar's blood and body remnants as a treasured memory testifies to "the visual and even tactile interaction" between recusants and their martyrs, a feature that Robyn Malo underlines as prominent in Post-Reformation England, in comparison with the pilgrims' practices during the Middle Ages.[27]

In the context of Post-Reformation England where religious idolatry and the veneration of the saints and their relics had been decried as popish, "salvage of [these] grisly remains" during burial rites, especially those of eminent recusants, "had become an act of collective resistance."[28] Hence, the authorities demanded that the drawn-and-quartered bodies of Catholic dissidents be quickly removed or burned and their clothes dispersed so as to prevent the crowd from gathering body remnants and garments, or saturating handkerchiefs with blood.[29] The 1584 collection titled *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophea* ("The Victories of the Anglican Church") evidences the authorities' attempts to curtail Catholic performances of mourning. One of Cavalieri's wood engravings in this collection traces the whole sequence of the execution at Tyburn in 1581 of three priests, Edmund Campion, Alexander Briant and Ralph Sherwin. The last stage shows a corpse being sunk in a burning furnace. The intention behind this device was to preclude any attempt from the crowd to rush towards the corpse in hope to snatch a body part or dip handkerchiefs in its blood.[30]

In *Julius Caesar*, the two representations of the assassinated general as martyr testify to the demise of relic-worship and collection in Post-Reformation England: The first is a "dream," "a vision" interpreted by Decius, in which "great Rome shall

suck / Reviving blood" from Caesar and "great men *shall* press / For tinctures, stains, relics, and cognizance" (2.2.83-89 emphasis added). The second is a wish Antony spells out, hoping the Romans, after hearing Caesar's generous legacy in his will, "*would* go and kiss dead Caesar's wounds, / And dip their napkins in his sacred blood, / Yea, beg a hair of him for memory" (3.2.133-135 emphasis added). Thus, in both instances, it is rhetoric that replaces the actual performance of relic gathering, and fills in the void of the incarnational aesthetics of the Catholic tradition.

3. "Caesar's Spirit": Sacrificial Crisis

None of the Roman attendees of Antony's funeral ceremony gets a relic from Caesar's mantle or body. Instead, they rush in the streets to "fire all the traitors' houses," and to "pluck down forms, windows, anything" (3.2.246, 250). Hence, the murderers' and Antony's intended rituals are both disrupted. They devolve into what Girard terms sacrificial crisis. This social phenomenon, he explains, indicates "the disappearance of the difference between impure violence and purifying violence." In this case, "reciprocal violence spreads throughout the community."[31] The degeneration of the religious burial into a civil war is already foreshadowed by Antony's first shock at the sight of the "bleeding piece of earth" (3.1.254). Indeed, his emotions slip from grief to resentment and he confesses to a servant who sheds tears with him: "Here is a mourning Rome, a dangerous Rome" (3.1.288). He thereupon dresses a secretive political rebellion in the trappings of a funeral oration and as soon as the plebeians disperse bent on wreaking havoc, he cynically observes: "Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot" (3.2.251). Through his powerful rhetoric in his address of the commoners, he proves to be a "Jesuitical Machiavel", a commonplace label used for Catholic activists in Elizabethan England who were, in Protestant J. Hull's description, "well practised in Machiavel, turning religion into pollicie."[32] After having whetted his audience against Caesar's murderers, he tactically hides behind disclaimers:

[L]et me not stir you up
To such a sudden flood of mutiny …
For I have neither wit nor words nor worth,

> Action nor utterance nor the power of speech,
> To stir men's blood. (3.2.203-204, 214-216 emphasis added)

These political intentions he defends himself against resonate with the official accusation that the 1585 Act against Jesuits and Seminarists leveled at the priests who "have of years come or been sent … to *stir* up and move sedition, rebellion, and open hostility within the same her highness's realms and dominions, to the great endangering of the safety of her most royal person, and to the utter ruin, desolation, and overthrow of the whole realm." These priests were proclaimed traitors and accused of "high treason" by the same act.[33]

Dramatically, though, the civil war lies beyond Antony's manipulation of the crowd. Caesar's defender acts like Apollo's Pythia, ventriloquizing the victim's wounds which "like dumb mouths do ope their ruby lips / To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue" (3.1.260-261). The prophecy announces that Caesar's spirit will be released from the mutilated body, and will be "ranging for revenge" (3.1.270), empowered by the Greek goddess of mischief and ruin, "[With] Ate by his side come hot from Hell" (3.1.271). This spirit, which later on takes the demonized form of a ghost, functions as more than a simple "post-mortem memorial."[34] Indeed, Caesar's ghost appears not only to claim due remembrance and completion of "maimed rites," but to torment the living and demand reparation for death just like Hamlet's father whose double injunction calls hearers to "remember me" and also "revenge his foul and most unnatural murder."[35] Although unsubstantial and fickle, the ghost's overwhelming presence shapes and directs the action of the second half of the play. It presides over "domestic fury and fierce civil strife" (3.1.263), and effects retaliation by "turn[ing] [the murderers'] swords / In [their] own proper entrails" as Brutus acknowledges in his moment of recognition (5.3.95-96). Thus, Caesar's revenge operates as a sacrificial crisis that reopens the cycle of violence and invalidates both commemorations: the executioners' festive one, and the pro-Caesarians' mournful one.

Furthermore, with its destructive energy, Caesar's ghost supports the suppression of the performances of mourning in that it absorbs the diabolical function that the Protestants attributed to the relics their confessional enemies venerated. Indeed, early modern reformers, and especially demonologists like William

Perkins and Samuel Harsnett discredited the belief in the efficacy of relics and in their allegedly propitiatory and miraculous powers, and flouted their use in healing therapies and exorcist rites, condemning these as demonic and witchcraft-related practices. They also established a link between the salvage of the Catholics' remains on execution sites and the collection of body parts in nocturnal witches' Sabbaths.[36]

Thus, Caesar's ghost functions as a visual and secular manifestation of suppressed beliefs that the Reformation expunged. It recalls the deprivation of the Catholics, who are forbidden their rites of mourning and, by enforcing due remembrance, it relocates purgatory in the mental landscape of the spectator.[37] Reflecting on the role of the spectral figure in Elizabethan drama, Thomas Rist argues that "[t]he ghosts of revenge tragedy repeatedly fear being forgotten, reflecting the anxiety of Catholics and religious waverers that without due memorial the dead in purgatory would languish in torment."[38] If the gathering of Caesar's remnants is aborted, the remembrance of his martyrdom is enforced by his ubiquitous spirit that hangs over both his allies and his enemies.

Conclusion

In one of his confident assertions, Caesar represents himself like the mythical Medusa: "When they shall see the face of Caesar, they are vanished" (2.2.11-12). But, while Medusa's killing power is annihilated once her head is cut off, Caesar's disembodied presence after his death is formidably powerful. Before Brutus's petrified eyes, it is a "monstrous apparition," "some god, some angel, or some devil, / That mak'st [his] blood cold, and [his] hair to stare" (4.3.275-278). Antony's prophecy is at work: Caesar's ghost functions like Ate seeking revenge. Arguing that, in revenge tragedies, "the demise of the cult of the relic had ushered in the cult of the fragment," Margaret Owens suggests that the "severed body parts […] represent a nightmarish return of the suppressed ritual forms, including the veneration of relics."[39] So do the ghosts that invest the early modern stage. As Tobias Döring explains, in Elizabethan tragedies, the representation of the unappeased spirits of the dead, like Caesar's, resonates with the topical issue of the executed Counter-Reformation priests, and the resilience of Catholic mourning rituals.[40] More than their relics, it was the ghosts

of the martyrs that the authorities dreaded. Like Caesar whose assassination breeds an unsuspected number of pro-monarchists in an otherwise Republican country, and leads to mutiny and civil war, Edmund Campion, the "Hydra" or "dragon" as he was described by Elizabeth's Regius Professor at Oxford, not only remained alive in the memory of his friends and sympathizers, but he also bred "a harvest of new men," i.e., new converts to the Old Faith.[41] Ghosts of the past thus prove to be, like relics in Alexandra Walsham's phrase, "an absent presence" that haunts Shakespeare's England and stage.[42]

Notes

1. William Allen, *A Briefe Historie of the Glorious Martyrdom of Twelve Reverend Priests, Father Edmond Campion and his Companions*, in *Unpublished Documents Relating to the English Martyrs*, ed. J. H. Pollen. S.J., London: Burns and Oates, 1908. For other examples of martyr literature, see Thomas M. McCoog, "'The Flower of Oxford': The Role of Edmund Campion in Early Recusant Polemics," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 24, no. 4 (Winter, 1993): 899-913; Alexandra Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 262.

2. Baron William Cecil Burghley *The Execution of Justice in England, London*, 1583; William Allen, *A True, Sincere and Modest Defence of English Catholics*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), 79. On the reception of William Allen's pamphlet by Elizabeth's government as "A false, seditious, & Immodest offense," see Cyndia Susan Clegg, "Justice and Press Censorship in Book V of Spenser's 'Faerie Queene,'" *Studies in Philology* 95, no. 3 (Summer, 1998): 243.

3. See Jessie Childs, *God's Traitors: Terror & Faith in Elizabethan England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 19.

4. See Alice Dailey, "Making Edmund Campion: Treason, Martyrdom, and the Structure of Transcendence," *Religion & Literature* 38, no. 3 (Autumn, 2006): 74; David K. Anderson, *Martyrs and Players in Early Modern England. Tragedy, Religion and Violence on Stage* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 85-86. On the legislations passed against the Catholics under Elizabeth I, see John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England,1558-1689* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 86-87.

5. For a parallelism between the scaffold of execution in Shakespeare's England and the scaffold of revenge tragedy, see John D. Staines, "Radical Pity: Responding to Spectacles of Violence in *King Lear*," ed. James Robert Allard, Mathew R. Martin, *Staging Pains, 1580-1800: Violence and Trauma in British Theater* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 76-77; David K. Anderson, *Martyrs and Players*, 9.

6. Anderson, *Martyrs and Players*, 85. For an overview of "martyrological controversies" in 16th and 17th century England, see Susannah Brietz Monta,

Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-5.

7. All references to Shakespeare's play are from William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, The Arden Shakespeare, ed. David Daniell (London: Thomas Nelson, 1998).

8. René Girard, "Collective Violence and Sacrifice in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*," *Salmagundi* 88-89 (Fall 1990- Winter 1991): 399.

9. René Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, trans. Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer (1978, republished New York: Continuum, 2003), 26.

10. Girard, *Things Hidden*, 26.

11. See René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (London: The Athlone Press, 1988; London & New York: Continuum, 2005), 61, 271-279.

12. Girard, *Violence*, 61.

13. Girard, *Violence*, 269-270.

14. Tobias Döring, *Performances of Mourning in Shakespearean Theatre and Early Modern Culture* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 54.

15. On inwardness in post-Reformation grief, see Patricia Phillippy, *Women, Death and Literature in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9. On the dissolution of the Chantries, see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England. 1400-1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 139-141, 364-375, 454; Ethan H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 235-270. On Shakespeare's personal witnessing of the religious practices during his time, with a particular focus on his son's death in light of burial rites, see Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World. How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (London: The Bodley Head, 2014), 311-313.

16. Catholicism and Protestantism have been perceived as, respectively, "the religion of the eye" and "the religion of the ear." See Beatrice Groves, *Texts and Traditions: Religion in Shakespeare 1592–1604* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 55, 59. See also Wietse de Boer and Christine Göttler eds., *Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013), 178.

17. Michel Foucault, *Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias*, trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 24.

18. Thomas Becon, "The Displaying of the Popish Mass," (1555) in *Prayers and Other Pieces of Thomas Becon*, ed. John Aye (Cambridge University Press, 1844), 277.

19. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 474-475.

20. William Shakespeare, *King Richard II*, The Arden Shakespeare, ed. Peter Ure (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 4.1.296.

21. See Döring, *Performances of Mourning*, Chapter 3: "The Physiologies of Mourning," 110-148.

22. Hugh Latimer, "Sermon on the Gospel of the Twenty-Fourth Sunday at Trinity," (1485) in *The Sermons of the Right Reverend Father in God, and Constant Martyr of Jesus Christ, Hugh Latimer, sometime Bishop of Worcester. Volume 2* (London: Printed for James Duncan, 1824), 212. On other sermons

calling for moderate mourning, see Thomas Rist, *Revenge Tragedy and the Drama of Commemoration in Reforming England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 19-21. On the Protestant attacks on the Mater Dolorosa figure and rituals of mourning, see Katherine Goodland, "Inverting the Pietà in Shakespeare's King Lear," in *Marian Moments in Early Modern British Drama*, ed. Regina Buccola and Lisa Hopkins (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 47-74.

23. Naomi Conn Leibler views Antony as a peddler who turns Caesar's body into "a collection of relics." "'Thou bleeding piece of earth': The Ritual Ground of *Julius Caesar*," *Julius Caesar*, ed. Richard Wilson (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 138.

24. Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 107.

25. Robyn Malo, "Intimate Devotion: Recusant Martyrs and the Making of Relics in Post-Reformation England," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 44, no. 3 (2014): 539. On the iconographical importance of Foxe's document, see O.T. Hargrave, "Bloody Mary's Victims: The Iconography of John Foxe's Book of Martyrs," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 51, no. 1 (March 1982): 7-21. On the recusants' *imitatio Christi*, with a particular focus on Edmund Campion, see Marianne Dircksen, "Martyrological Themes and the Revival of Catholic Identity in Robert Persons' *De Persecutione Anglicana*," S.A. Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies 29 (2019): 102-104.

26. On Campion's scaffold-speech with an analysis of the word "spectacle" as related to martyrdom, see Alison Shell, "'We Are Made a Spectacle': Campion's Dramas," *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits. Essays in the Celebration of the First Centenary of Campion Hall, Oxford* (1896-1996) ed. Thomas M. McCoog S.J. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1996), 112-113.

27. Robyn Malo, "Intimate Devotion," 533.

28. Richard Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare. Studies in Theatre, Religion and Resistance* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 190.

29. See Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, 189-192; Patrick Gray, "Caesar as comic antichrist: Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and the medieval stage giant," *Comparative Drama* 50, no. 1 (2016): 14.

30. For a reproduction of Cavalieri's engraving, see Todd P. Olson, "Pitiful Relics: Caravaggio's Martyrdom of St. Matthew," *Representations* 77, no. 1 (2002): 124. Despite the authorities' precautions, a few relics of the three martyrs were rescued, like Campion's thumb and rope, and a piece of bone from Sherwin's body. See Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, 191; Jacqueline Adrienne Pedder, "Saints and Relics During the English Reformation of the Early Modern Period 1558-1625: "How Far Did This Catholic Belief Continue/Change from Medieval England?" University of Huddersfield, 2018, http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/34706/, 64-66.

31. Girard, *Violence*, 51.

32. J. Hull, *The Unmasking of the Politique Atheist* (1602). Quoted in Daniel Stempel, "The Silence of Iago," PMLA 84, no. 2 (March 1969): 253.

33. Quoted in Henry Bettenson and Chris Maunder ed., *Documents of the Christian Church* (1943, republished Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 257-258. Emphasis added.

34. Rist, *Revenge Tragedy*, 14.

35. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, ed. Philip Edwards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5, 1, 186; 1.5.91; 1.5, 25.

36. See Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, 189-192.

37. Mark Rose argues that ghosts and spirits are magical substitutions for the belief in the real presence of God. See "Conjuring Caesar: Ceremony, History, and Authority in 1599," *English Literary Renaissance* 19, no. 3 (1989): 298.

38. Rist, *Revenge Tragedy*, 14.

39. Margaret E. Owens, *Stages of Dismemberment: The Fragmented Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Drama* (Newark: University of Delaware Press), 206.

40. See Döring, *Performances of Mourning*, 154.

41. Quoted in Döring, *Performances of Mourning*, 154. See also Gerard Kilroy, *Edmund Campion: A Scholarly Life* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 384-385.

42. Alexandra Walsham, "Relics, writing, and memory in the English Counter Reformation: Thomas Maxfield and his afterlives," *British Catholic History* 34, no. 1 (2018): 78, https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2018.3.

"Those That Were Enwombed Mine": Adoptive Mothering and Genre in *All's Well that Ends Well* and Shakespeare's Romances

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ntil fairly recently, scholars have tended to group *All's Well That Ends Well* with *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida* as one of Shakespeare's "problem plays." Recent scholarship has sought to re-categorize *All's Well* as a romance or tragicomedy instead—a play better suited to comparison with *The Winter's Tale* or *Cymbeline* or *Pericles*. Bryan Love, for example, argued in 2011 that *All's Well* is an early step in Shakespeare's journey toward writing his later tragicomedies and romances.[1] Similarly, in a 2014 article, Byron Nelson seeks to separate *All's Well* out from *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida*, and instead categorize it with *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*—a move, he suggests, that makes it seem "a fresher and more powerful play."[2] While I do think *All's Well* shares a number of features of these later Shakespearean romances, I will be arguing, through a lens that focuses on mothering (both biological and adoptive or surrogate) in these plays, that *All's Well* ultimately fits neither of these generic categories, but rather forges a distinctive subgenre of its own.

Even as *All's Well* has become increasingly associated with Shakespeare's romances, so scholars have begun to explore those romances and tragicomedies as, in different ways, a "maternal" genre—a genre uniquely interested in examining and even

embodying mothers' roles and experiences. In 1994, Helene Wilcox argued that "Shakespeare's tragicomedy . . . finds its patterns of action, language, metaphor, and resolution in motherhood, drawing on ideas of maternity in nature, society, royal images, and ordinary experiences. The genre itself, then, may be characterized as a maternal form; the play might usefully be seen as the ultimate maternal body."[3] In response to this claim, Helen Hackett (2000) argues that "The idea of Shakespeare's tragicomic romances as maternal in genre is fruitful in so far as maternity is inherently tragicomic, but the tradition which connects maternity with the actual *generation* of romance narrative is present in most of these plays only in repressed form."[4] More recently, in an article on Shakespeare's romance plays (among which she, like Wilcox, includes *All's Well that Ends Well*), Karen Bamford concludes that, "in *All's Well that Ends Well* and *The Winter's Tale*, to an extent unparalleled in Shakespeare's canon, the wishes of mothers finally matter more than the wishes of fathers."[5]

As these authors point out, *All's Well that Ends Well* does share many elements of the later romances—among them, reunions of mothers and daughters. Just as Thaisa regains Marina and Hermione regains Perdita, so the Countess regains Helena in the end. But what these analyses fail to address is the way in which biological mothering is disrupted by surrogate or adoptive mothering (or, arguably, the way biological mothering disrupts adoptive mothering). In her analysis of the reunion of the Countess and Helena, Bamford notes that the Countess's benevolence toward her adopted daughter, Helena, is distinctive and "runs counter to the conventional representations of both stepmothers or foster-mothers and mothers-in-law . . . and the Countess occupies both those roles in relation to Helena,"[6] but Bamford does not explore further how this observation sets *All's Well* apart from (rather than in alignment with) the other romances with which she groups it. And Bamford fails entirely to mention the widow mother of Diana, a mother whose mercenary desires might be better left unfulfilled at the end of the play.

Some scholars have observed the importance of the adoptive relationship between the Countess and Helena—not in terms of genre, but in terms of female agency and also early modern perceptions of adoptive parenting. For example, in a 2011 essay,

Erin Ellerbeck argues that "the grafting metaphor [for the adoption of Helena into the Countess's family] suggests the Countess's and Helena's power to fashion and refashion their own outcomes within patriarchal hierarchies."[7] And in a 2013 article, Hiewon Shin argues that by "Creating such a refreshingly positive adoptive mother for Helena, Shakespeare defies traditionally accepted notions of negative surrogacy"—thereby undercutting a cultural uneasiness about surrogacy and adoption in his own time.[8]

Yet in plays written not long after this one (and of arguably the same or at least a related genre), the adoptive or surrogate or step- parents undercut familial bonds—especially when those bonds are associated with daughters. Most notable among these adoptive mothers are the Queen of *Cymbeline*, who seeks the murder of her stepdaughter, Imogen, because Imogen rejects her son as a potential suitor; and *Pericles*' Dionyza, who likewise seeks the death of her ward, Marina, because Dionyza does not want her ward to outshine her own daughter. In both cases, the surrogate mothers feel threatened by their wards, who evade their control and undercut their authority and that of their children. Imogen refuses to acquiesce to Cloten's attempts to court her—indeed, she remains faithful to her exiled husband Posthumus—and thereby evades the Queen's attempts to control and potentially to profit from her by achieving the crown through the union of her son with Imogen. According to Cornelius' report of the Queen's confession in Cymbeline, Imogen "Was as a scorpion to her [the Queen's] sight, whose life, / But that her flight prevented it, she had / Ta'en off by poison," and the Queen also ultimately sought "to work / Her son into th' adoption of the crown" (5.5.45-47, 55-56).[9] Similarly, Dionyza defends her attempted murder of Marina to her husband by asserting that Marina "did disdain my child and stood between / Her and her fortunes" (4.3.31-32), and that this

> . . . pierc'd me through,
> And though you call my course unnatural,
> You not your child well loving, yet I find
> It greets me as an enterprise of kindness
> Perform'd to your sole daughter" (4.3.35-39).[10]

In both cases, the adoptive mother sees her actions as "natural"— as defending her aspirations for the fortunes of her own child— rather than as disrupting nature by undertaking murder.

The one "good" adoptive mother in the plays traditionally categorized as romances has already died—and the children she helped raise were boys. Belarius (who has kidnapped Cymbeline's sons and pretends to be their father) reminds us of his deceased wife Euriphile, who "wast their nurse; they took thee for their mother, / And every day [they] do honor to her grave" (3.3.104-5). The wife of the *Winter's Tale*'s shepherd seems to have died even before the shepherd brings Perdita home, so though the shepherdess was "Both dame and servant; welcom'd all, serv'd all; / Would sing her song, and dance her turn" (4.4.57-58) at the festival, Perdita never seems to have enjoyed her presence in a maternal way.[11]

Indeed, in the later romances, it is only the biological mothers who experience the longing for a reunion with their daughters, and ultimately—in a way that supports Bamford's thesis about maternal desire and the romances—achieve that reunion. At the end of *Winter's Tale*, Hermione essentially ignores her husband's exclamations, and focuses entirely on her daughter as she asks, "Tell me, mine own, / Where hast thou been preserv'd? where liv'd? how found / Thy father's court?" (5.3.123-25). Like Persephone returning to Ceres, Perdita brings "natural" springtime to Sicilia, and renews the "natural" cycle as she rejoins with her biological mother. Similarly, even as Marina's heart "Leaps to be gone into my mother's bosom" (5.3.45), Thaisa embraces and claims her, "Blest, and mine own" (5.3.48). Echoing the precise words of Hermione, Thaisa reclaims her daughter (even at the expense of her father's claims) and emphasizes the "natural"—and uncanny— bond between them.

In *All's Well that Ends Well*, the pattern of mother/daughter or adoptive mother/daughter relationships is reversed. In *All's Well*, it is the biological mother of a daughter who commodifies and essentially sells her daughter, while (as Ellerbeck and Shin have noted), it is the Countess as adoptive mother who proves the most loving, and who is willing to side with her adoptive daughter over her biological son when the latter disowns the former. I will be suggesting that this reversal contributes to the problematizing of the genre of this play and, in fact, removes it from the realm of both "problem play" and "romance" as it becomes a near-tragedy that doesn't so much "give birth" to comedy (as Helen Wilcox has suggested[12]), but rather, as I here propose, "adopts" it.

The tragedy to which *All's Well* is perhaps most closely linked is *Romeo and Juliet*, and this connection emerges initially through names. In Shakespeare's source for *All's Well* (the *Decameron*), the Helena character's name is Julietta. The Shakespearean name change distances Helena from the tragic world of that character, and connects her with the brightly comic Helena of *Midsummer*. In addition, whereas the Widow (Diana's mother) in the source is unnamed, in *All's Well*, she is the Widow Capilet (connecting her with Lady Capulet of *Romeo and Juliet*). Furthermore, I would suggest, as mother/daughter relationships in Shakespeare go, these two are strikingly similar, for in both cases, the mothers negotiate either against their daughters' wills or without their consent to broker an arrangement that will be economically (and also presumably relationally) advantageous to the family. Both mothers recognize the economic value of their daughters' (perceived) virginity, and both work to capitalize on that value. Lady Capulet of *Romeo and Juliet* urges Juliet to be the book cover that would "beautify" Paris, the "unbound lover," such that Juliet can "share all that he doth possess, / By having him, making yourself no less" (1.3.87-88; 93-94).[13] When Juliet finally refuses Paris, and Lady Capulet realizes that there is no chance of the union, she casts off her daughter entirely: "Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word. / Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee" (3.5.202-3).

Similarly, although the cost for her daughter is participation in a bed trick rather than marriage, the Widow Capilet of *All's Well* sells her daughter's services for financial gain. When Helena agrees to pay the Widow Capilet of *All's Well* for her daughter's participation in the bed trick ("Take this purse of gold, / And let me buy your friendly help thus far / Which I will over-pay and pay again / When I have found it" [3.7.14-17]), the Countess—without consulting her daughter—confirms to Helena that, "I have yielded" (3.7.36), and places her daughter Diana in Helena's hands.[14] Emily Gerstell has convincingly argued that, by agreeing to the bed trick plan with Helena, the Widow will be enabled, "though cooperation with Helena and manipulation of Diana, to move closer to her former 'well born' estate" (3.7.4); "Whereas the 'virgin' gets the precepts, . . . the Widow reaps the rewards."[15] Ultimately, the widow merely uses her daughter's virginity (highlighted by her name, Diana) as an item of value to Helena—and in the end, of

value to the Widow herself, as Helena pays her for her services. It is notable, too, as Gerstell points out, that Helena's payment to the Widow will be used as Diana's "dower" (4.4.19)—though Diana herself had said just two scenes before that she prefers to "live and die a maid" (4.2.74).[16] Thus, the Widow is willing to overwrite her daughter's desire in her (the widow's) bid for her own personal gain.

In the end, Diana does as her mother bids, and thereby negates her own desires—a sort of self-annihilation. She sets up the rendezvous with Bertram, and informs us, after she has done so, that "My mother told me just how he would woo, / As if she sate in 's heart. She says all men / Have the like oaths" (4.2 69-71). The Widow Capilet has schooled her daughter in the clandestine endeavor in order to ensure its success, and Diana has performed well. But in the end, Diana's choice to remain a virgin is undercut when the King, assuming she will marry, extends to Diana a choice (on the condition that she is still a virgin) that echoes the request of Helena in the beginning: "If thou beest yet a fresh uncropped flower, / Choose thou thy husband, and I'll pay thy dower" (5.3.327-28). Helen's initial request and the king's granting had disastrous consequences that set the potential tragedy of the play in motion, and that led Diana to being in the disastrous situation in which she finds herself. To choose would be to restart the cycle (not of life and rebirth, but of discord and disarray); but not to choose would be to defy the king, and likely her mother.

The play has demonstrated the shortcomings of choosing a spouse—especially in a one-sided way—from the beginning. Helena had wished to choose her own husband, and cured the king so she could receive this favor of choice at his hands. Yet when she does make the choice, she faces rejection and loss as a result. The sexual union—in which Bertram himself doesn't know he has engaged—results in Helena's pregnancy, and thereby her ability to reclaim Bertram. But this "young one" that she feels "kick" within her was conceived through trickery—not Bertram's choice—and is among the agents (along with the ring) that compels him to remain in the marriage with Helena. In this play, unlike in the *Decameron* source (in which the Julietta brings her strapping twin boys to meet their father), the child has not been born. And like the unborn child, I would suggest, the comedy of *All's Well* has not been "birthed" as it has in the later romances. The "reunion" in the

end here—between wife and husband, father and unborn child—scarcely lives up to the high drama of the reunion between Leontes, Hermione, and Perdita; Cymbeline, Guiderius, Arvergaus, and Imogen; or Pericles, Marina, and Thaisa. If anything, Bertam's reunion with Helena is reminiscent of Angelo's forced marriage to Mariana (or Lucio's forced marriage to Kate Keepdown, whom he has impregnated) in *Measure for Measure*—parallels that land the play back in the realm of the "problem."

And yet, there is a happy reunion at the end of the play—that of Helena and the Countess. When she catches a glimpse of the Countess, Helena shifts her attention from Bertram to the Countess (never to return it to Bertram), and exclaims with happiness, "O my dear mother, do I see you living?" (5.3.319). Her attentiveness to the Countess at the expense of her husband is suggestive of Hermione's attention to Perdita at the expense of Leontes (another reversal). But notably, as we know, the Countess is Helena's adoptive, rather than biological, mother. This is not the reunion of Ceres and Persephone, but that of Tethys and Hera—a surrogate mother who has chosen to protect and nurture, and an adopted daughter who (having earlier resisted the idea of the Countess as "mother") has chosen to accept the relationship. Whereas earlier instances of "choosing" in the play—primarily, the choosing of a spouse—have led to discord, this one leads to the construction of a loving family. It is this choice, I would argue, that opens the space for the play to choose to lift itself out of the realm of tragedy and into that of comedy.

As Helen Wilcox establishes her argument about Shakespeare's tragicomedies as a "maternal" genre, she draws heavily on the language and imagery of childbirth. For example, she sees these plays as "laboring in near tragedy but eventually and with difficulty giving birth to a life-affirming conclusion."[17] According to her argument, "Like childbirth, the endings of the tragicomedies can only come about at the appointed time."[18] She even suggests that Helena's statement in the first scene of *All's Well* that "Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie" refers not only so self-sufficiency, but also to "the female power of reproduction, bearing 'in ourselves' the life of the future."[19]

But notably, the mother whom Helena knows and acknowledges throughout the play did not bear Helena "in herself." Indeed, according to the Countess, Helena was rather

"bequeath'd to my overlooking" (1.1.38-39), and the Countess has been left with the choice of how to define the relationship. Early in the play, she claims to Helena that, "I am your mother, / And put you in the catalogue of those / That were enwombed mine" (1.3.142-4). Even though Helena "ne'er oppress'd me with a mother's groan," claims the Countess, "Yet I express to you a mother's care" (1.3.142-48). The Countess's language is deliberate, indicating agency and choice: she has consciously placed Helena in the catalogue of her biological children, and has chosen to care for her in a maternal way. Later, when the Countess receives word that Bertram has rejected Helena, she asserts to Helena, "He was my son, / But I do wash his name out of my blood, / And thou art all my child" (3.2.66-68). This angry outburst later proves to be just that—a moment of fury that the Countess backs away from as she expresses concern for her son through the rest of the play. But her deliberate choices in relation to her son and adopted daughter set her apart from, for example, Cymbeline's Queen, who supports Cloten only because he is her biological son, and seeks Imogen's death only because she is a threat to Cloten's power. *All's Well* emphasizes the issue of choice in parenting in a way that none of the later romances and tragicomedies do.

What, then, does the fact that the final happy reunion involves an adoptive relationship suggest about the genre of this play? I would argue that, whereas the later romances emphasize natural cycles (birth, death, rebirth)—and represent adoptive/surrogate parenting as unnatural, outside of these cycles, aligned with the tragic—*All's Well* emphasizes instead the importance of human (and dramatic, and generic) choices and their consequences. It is the power of Helena's initial choice for Bertram that sets the play in motion, and the proffered choice of Diana that spins the possibility into the future. But it is the choice of the Countess for Helena—and Helena's acceptance of that choice in the end—that brings the comic ending into being.

And so, I would suggest, the reversal in the paradigm of biological parent/adoptive parent in this play ultimately sets it apart from the other tragicomedies and romances. But I think this reversal also sets it apart from other "problem plays" like *Measure for Measure*, in which mothers scarcely appear at all, and in which the tragedy is never really contained in the forced marriages that

are announced at the end. *All's Well That Ends Well* might better be seen as a play whose trajectory makes a deliberate choice of difference—a trajectory in which, like the Countess's choice to "mother" Helena, to bring something constructive out of the deaths of her husband and Helen's father, a comic ending is *adopted*.

Notes

1. Bryan C. Love, "Ending Well: Mixed Genres and Audience Response, 1604-06," *Renaissance Papers* (2011): 53–64.

2. Byron Nelson, "Helena and 'the Rarest Argument of Wonder': All's Well That Ends Well and the Romance Genre," *Selected Papers of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference* 5 (2012): 2.

3. Helen Wilcox, "Gender and Genre in Shakespeare's Tragicomedies," in *Reclamations of Shakespeare*, ed. A. J. Hoenselaars (Amsterdam: Brill Academic Publishers, 1994), 137.

4. Helen Hackett, "Shakespeare's Romance Sources," chapter 9 in Helen Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 156-7.

5. Karen Bamford, "'It Hath Happened All as I Would Have Had It': Maternal Desires in Shakespearean Romance," in *Maternity and Romance Narratives in Early Modern England*, ed. Karen Bamford and Naomi J. Miller (Burlington, VT: Routledge, 2015), 131.

6. Bamford, "It Hath Happened," 126-27.

7. Erin Ellerbeck, "Adoption and the Language of Horticulture in *All's Well That Ends Well*." *SEL Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 51, no. 2 (2011): 321.

8. Hiewon Shin, "Single and Surrogate Parenting in *All's Well That Ends Well*," *SEL Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 53, no. 2 (2013): 337.

9. William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*. All references to Shakespeare's plays are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd edition, ed. G. Blakemore Evans et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997). Line numbers will be referenced in the text of the essay.

10. Shakespeare, *Pericles*.

11. Shakespeare, *Winter's Tale*.

12. Wilcox, "Gender and Genre," 136.

13. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*.

14. Shakespeare, *All's Well that Ends Well*.

15. Emily C. Gerstell, "All's [Not] Well: Female Service and 'Vendible' Virginity in Shakespeare's Problem Play," *Journal of Early Modern Studies* 4 (2015): 196-97.

16. Gerstell, "All's [Not] Well," 201.

17. Wilcox, "Gender and Genre," 136.

18. Wilcox, "Gender and Genre," 136.

19. Wilcox, "Gender and Genre," 137.

"I can no longer hold me patient!":
Cursing and Female Memory in
Richard III

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R esponding to the murder of her two sons by Richard III, Elizabeth Woodville appeals in her grief to the disenfranchised Margaret of Anjou: "O thou well-skilled in curses, stay a while / And teach me how to curse mine enemies" (4.4.110-11). Tacitly acknowledging both her own losses and those of Margaret, Elizabeth's plea underlines the importance of cursing to Shakespeare's women throughout the play. This article will examine how women's curses—defined here as calls for another's misfortune—influence the historical narrative presented in *Richard III*. It will consider the extent to which cursing is presented as a female-coded language in the play and argue that women's curses follow a common structure emphasizing their relationships to the (male) heirs of social power. Each curse begins with a "catalogue of losses," then demands retribution for the causes of that loss. Taken together, the memories expressed in women's cursing offer an alternate narrative of the Wars of the Roses to the one presented by the Yorkists. By countering the male-dominated Yorkist narrative, they can also be read as working against women's erasure from the political narrative, as speeches remind the play's audiences of the very real loss brought about by Richard.

In an analysis which reads the tetralogy as deeply misogynistic, Phyllis Rackin observes that the women of *Richard III* are rendered powerless except for their words.[1] Though she does acknowledge that the plays allow women a rhetorical space in which to present their own alternative narrative of the Wars of the Roses, she dedicates little space to this narrative, concluding that the play presents both female speech and female power as threatening. The threat of female influence at court is undeniable within the tetralogy; however, the importance of the alternative female narrative which emerges from the women in *Richard III* has been underestimated by critics. More recently, Kristin M. Smith has characterized the language of the women as "powerful, corrupt, and illegitimate," linking Margaret's curses to Joan of Arc's sorcery and citing them as a degenerative influence on an already corrupt court.[2] I read this association as unnecessarily reductive. While Joan's character bears an undeniable affiliation to witchcraft, actually calling on "ye familiar spirits, that are culled / Out of the powerful regions under the earth" (5.3.10), Margaret never speaks of witchcraft.[3] In fact, she even links her cursing to the divine: "Can curses pierce the clouds and enter heaven? / Why then, give way, dull clouds, to my quick curses" (1.3.192-93). Although Margaret does not suggest that curses emanate from heaven, her speech here works against any demonic associations. Instead, hoping for her words to be heard by "the heavens," she suggests that they carry the force of divine judgement. Though the subject of her curse, the young Edward, Prince of Wales, is innocent, his death would constitute a York loss equal to that which her son's death brought for the Lancastrians. This "eye for an eye" logic strengthens the biblical associations of her curse, emphasizing Margaret's dual status as both a bereaved mother and a leader of the conquered Lancastrian forces.

While all of the curses in *Richard III* come from women, the first tetralogy does contain a significant curse from a man in *3 Henry VI*. Because it helps to establish the gendered associations of cursing which stand throughout *Richard III*, I will study it briefly here. The curse comes from York after Margaret and Clifford have captured and humiliated him, and its timing is perhaps as crucial as its substance. By forcing York to surrender, Margaret enacts a drastic reversal of gender roles. Her capture of York puts him

in a position of powerlessness which mirrors her own in *Richard III*; this subjugated position prompts York to utilize the female-coded language of cursing. However, York's curse differs from the tetralogy's female curses in that it is preceded not by an account of his own experiences, but an extended slur of Margaret. Referring to her as "She-wolf of France," "Amazonian trull," and "tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide" (1.4.111,114,137-38), he finds fault with Margaret's cruelty as incompatible with her gender: "women are soft, mild, pitiful and flexible, / Thou stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless" (1.4.141-42). York's curse therefore responds more to Margaret's conduct than to his own loss, as he addresses her directly:

> Bids't thou me rage? Why, now thou hast thy wish:
> Wouldst have me weep? Why, now thou
> hast thy will: For raging wind blows up
> incessant showers, And when the rage
> allays, the rain begins.
> These tears are my sweet Rutland's
> obsequies: And every drop cries
> vengeance for his death,
> 'gainst thee, fell Clifford, and thee, false
> Frenchwoman. (1.4.143-49)

York's reference to both his tears and his "sweet Rutland" contribute to the pathetic appeal of the speech. However, even as he appropriates the female language of cursing, York uses nature imagery to distance himself from the emotion which drives his speech. Shakespeare's cursing women are not ashamed to cry. Lady Elizabeth actually uses tears as a measure of wrongs committed against her by Richard when she states that "I myself have many tears to wash / Hereafter-time for time past wronged by thee" (4.4.301-10), and Margaret's aforementioned "tears as salt as sea" (3.2.96) similarly seek to underline wrongs done to her by her husband. York instead makes his tears metaphorical, turning them into a storm before directing their force toward Margaret. King Lear also appeals to nature imagery when cursing:

> I am ashamed
> That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus,
> That these hot tears, that break from me perforce
> And should make thee—worst blasts and fogs upon thee!

> Untented woundings of a father's curse
> Pierce every sense about thee! (1.4.286-90)

Both the imagery and the context of York and Lear's speeches are remarkably similar. The men curse in response to being subordinated by women. In likening their tears to rain, they attempt to avoid the gendered associations of crying by associating it with elemental forces. Lear's speech connects his tears with feelings of emasculation; though York's speech is not so direct, his verbal efforts to transform his tears to rain reflect his fundamental discomfort with the pathetic appeals necessary for cursing. Paula S. Berggren notes: "In a society where men are ashamed to weep, to appear womanly can only be a humiliation, but in avoiding any semblance of the opposite sex, Shakespeare's men cut themselves off from an understanding of the fullest range of human experience."[4] Male appropriation of curse language thus demonstrates the extent to which it is viewed as a female form; men curse only when gender roles have been reversed and focus their rhetoric not on memorialization, but on the defamation of women in power.

When spoken by women, curses in Shakespeare follow a relatively consistent pattern. Aleida Assmann states that women "are the personification of obstinate memories of suffering and the desire for revenge." I wish to build on this concept and break down how women come to "personify" these memories through curse.[5] Women typically begin their curses by emphasizing their loss and emotional distress, then use this evidence to justify the wish for harm to their subject. For the purposes of this paper, I will refer to the verbal structure comprising both the relation of losses and the subsequent ill-wishing as the curse narrative, treating the curse as a rhetorical style rather than a single statement. Early in *Richard III*, Lady Anne delivers a curse which follows this basic pattern; her response to Henry VI's death strongly reflects the rhetoric Margaret uses in response to Edward's death in and makes the first contribution to the alternative historical narrative which emerges through women's speech. Phyllis Rackin observes the power of female speech in Shakespeare's history plays, stating of the female characters that "Shakespeare does give them a voice—a voice that challenges the logocentric, masculine historical world."[6] Anne's curse narrative does just this:

> Poor key-cold figure of a holy king,
> Pale ashes of the house of Lancaster,
> Thou bloodless remnant of that royal blood,
> Be it lawful that I invoke thy ghost
> To hear the lamentations of poor Anne,
> Wife to thy Edward, to thy slaughtered son
> Stabbed by the selfsame hands that made these holes. (1.2.5-11)

Consistent with the aforementioned structure, she begins her curse by enumerating her losses. Furthermore, she actually invokes an audience by calling forth Henry's ghost to listen to her curse, and she does so with the particular aim of making her memories heard. While no characters in the play are present to hear her narrative, her speech performs a critical memorializing function nonetheless; it reminds the play's audience of the Lancastrian narrative told in the three plays preceding *Richard III* and introduces the re-telling of that story as a distinctly feminine act. Anne also portrays herself as a central figure within that curse narrative. By emphasizing her relationship to Henry and Edward, she creates and legitimates a persona which is itself memorialized through its reflection on the dead Lancastrian king and prince. This persona first emerges when Anne refers to herself in the third person as "poor Anne." Unlike Bedford, who characterizes only Henry V in his speech opening *1 Henry VI*, Anne establishes her credibility as mourner by referring to herself as "wife to thy Edward." By asserting her place within the past of the Lancastrian house, Anne also shows herself in the line of cultural memory, demonstrating the power of cursing to form an alternate Lancastrian narrative and asserting her own place within it.

The juxtaposition of Anne's speech with Richard's opening monologue lends a great deal of insight into the way that male and female speech differs throughout the play; this builds on French's observation that the play examines gender by alternating between "masculine" and "feminine" scenes.[7] Aside from the obvious moral distance between the characters, two major characteristics distinguish Anne's female speech from Richard's more masculine one. The first is the way that the two figures reference time. Richard's speech is firmly grounded in the present and future. In fact, Richard speaks the first word of the play, and that word is *now*: his famous "Now is the winter of our discontent / Made glorious summer

by this sun of York" (1.1.1-2) opens with a trochee to emphasize the importance of the current moment. Even as Richard becomes more introspective, he maintains the present tense, referring to himself as "I that am curtailed of this fair proportion, / Cheated of feature by dissembling nature" (1.1.18-19). Richard does not hold that nature cheated him in the past; instead, he *is* cheated, and he characterizes his disfigurement not as a past action but as a present and constant state. The forward-looking speech finishes on the conditional, as Richard muses over the possible outcomes of his plots: "…And if King Edward be as true and just / As I am subtle, false, and treacherous / This day should Clarence closely be mewed up…" (1.2.10-11). Richard begins firmly rooted in the present, and the end of his speech speculates on the possible outcomes of his current plots.

Lady Anne's speech approaches time differently. She rarely refers to the present, instead employing a curse to link past action directly to future outcome. Her early lines emphasize what once was, as she recalls how her own husband was "stabbed by the selfsame hands that made these holes" (1.2.11) and, looking on the body of her father-in-law, imagines "those windows that let forth thy life" (1.2.12). Anne's imagery is intensely physical. By focusing the early part of her speech on the markers of death on Henry's body, Anne makes a rhetorical return to the time of the king's murder, associating his wounds with the absent corpse of her own husband. This past moment acts as the source of Anne's cursing within the second part of the speech. Once again drawing attention to stab wounds, she calls:

> Cursed be the hand that made these fatal holes,
> Cursed be the heart that had the heart to do it.
> …
> If ever he have child, abortive be it,
> Prodigious, and untimely brought to light,
> Whose ugly and unnatural aspect
> May fright the hopeful mother at the view.
> If ever he have wife, let her be made
> As miserable by the death of him
> As I am made by my poor lord and thee. (1.2.14-26)

Looking to the future from the moment of Henry's demise, Anne derives the force of her curse from verbally reconstructing both

Henry's and Edward's murders. Her repeated use of "be" constitutes a central tenet of curse language as utilized by the women of *Richard III*. Like Richard, Anne speculates on future events; however, where Richard schemes and manipulates to achieve his own ends, Anne here uses the force of her own grief to fuel her cursing. Maintaining her use of body imagery, she moves from the physical to the emotional, linking the "hand" to the "heart" which chose to undertake the murder. Kate E. Brown and Howard I. Kushner note that "Dividing hand from heart and heart from blood, Anne's curse enacts a verbal form of the dismemberment she seeks to return upon Richard."[8] By creating an image which links the intangible motive for murder with the physical act of it, these two lines perform on a miniature scale what Anne's speech does in the context of the play. They render the invisible visible, just as Anne's cursing makes her memory of the Lancastrian defeat available to the audience as an alternate narrative to the one presented by the Yorkists. By foregrounding her own pain, Anne's speech acts a powerful counter to Richard's charismatic but villainous rhetoric, which otherwise dominates the play.

Perhaps the most significant link between curse narrative and memorialization is when cursed characters recall the words spoken against them. The potential for this kind of representation is limited in Anne's case as she curses while alone; however, Anne actually memorializes her narrative by referring to her own curse later on in the play. This reflection comes after a significant change in Anne's status from Lancastrian to (albeit hesitant) Yorkist: Madonne M. Miner notes that the women of the play are "caught in a society that conceives of women strictly in relational terms (that is, as wives to husbands, mothers to children, queens to kings), and we see Anne struggle to reconcile her past status as a Lancastrian widow with her current one as a Yorkist queen."[9] This tension is visible as Anne defines herself in relation to the York princes in the Tower: "Their aunt I am in law, in love their mother" (4.1.19). However, she still recalls her Lancastrian past:

> When he that is my husband now
> Came to me as I followed Henry's corpse
> When scarce the blood was well wash'd from his hands
> Which issued from my other angel-husband
> And that dead saint which then I, weeping, followed,

> O, when, I say, I looked on Richard's face,
> This was my wish: "Be thou," quoth I, "accursed,
> For making me, so young, so old a widow!
> And, when thou wed'st, let sorrow haunt thy bed;
> And be thy wife—if any be so mad—
> As miserable by the life of thee
> As thou hast made me by my dear lord's death." (4.1.61-72)

Like Elizabeth of Gloucester, Anne cannot "forget herself," but she retains autonomy over her own memories. By giving up her status as a Lancastrian widow, she also surrenders her ability to present her past as narrative through cursing. However, she becomes a mirror for her own language, actually quoting herself within her speech: "And be thy wife—if any be so mad— / As miserable by the *life* of thee / As thou hast made me by my dear lord's death" (4.1.70-72, italics mine). Yet these are not the exact words Anne spoke previously. Her original curse ran as follows: "If ever he have wife, let her be made / As miserable by the *death* of him / As I am made by my poor lord and thee!" (1.2.24-26, italics mine). She even adapts the context under which she cursed; though she claims that she "looked on Richard's face," she actually addressed her words to Henry VI's corpse before Richard entered the scene. We here see Anne manipulating her own memories to better suit her current situation. Though the scene she describes bears no major differences to the one which played out on stage several acts earlier, her slight derivations are telling; by emphasizing punishment in life as opposed to death, Anne makes her curse pertain to her tortured union with Richard. Anne no longer curses, but by recalling her curse itself, she both alters and memorializes the narrative which she herself put forth. By re-presenting her own curse, Anne maintains some control over her place within the collective memory. She is both the curser and the cursed; by casting herself as the living embodiment of her own words, she fulfills her own predictions and brings them to the attention of the other characters in the scene.

While Anne does bring a crucial Lancastrian perspective to the play, Margaret ultimately becomes its foremost cursing woman. Margaret's very presence in *Richard III* marks a significant departure from Shakespeare's sources which John Jowett calls "both ahistorical and ghostly."[10] Historically, Margaret was exiled

after the Yorkist victory and died in France before Richard took power.[11] While Shakespeare does often depart from his sources, his choice to include her fundamentally alters the historical narrative presented in the play. Unlike Anne, who invokes an audience of the deceased whom she mourns, Margaret demands that her enemies become her audience. Though her presence at court is certainly ahistorical, it is her life, not her death, which haunts the court. Desperate to be heard, she speaks six asides before interacting with any of the Yorkists. These asides provide a Lancastrian commentary on a Yorkist version of events; for, just as Margaret enters the scene, Richard attempts to discredit Elizabeth, referencing his deeds against the Lancastrians as proof of his loyalty to the crown. Though the two characters do not interact, their dialogue coincides. Margaret states that "Thou slewest my husband Henry in the Tower, / And Edward, my poor son, at Tewkesbury" (1.3.119-20). In the next line, Richard presents his version of events: "I was a pack-horse in his great affairs, / A weeder-out of his proud adversaries… To royalize his blood, I spilt mine own" (1.3.122-23,125). Without Margaret's lines, Richard's would be the only voice relating these past events; her presence injects the scene with a real sense of pain and loss and shakes Richard's hold on the historical narrative.

Referring to himself as a "weeder-out," Richard in turn characterizes the Yorkist adversaries as weeds, a dehumanizing image countered by Margaret's characterization of Henry as "my husband" and Edward as "my poor son." While it is true that, on one level, Margaret's references to Henry and Edward as her husband and son are effective pathetic appeals, they also ensure that Margaret is at the center of the Lancastrian narrative she creates. Anne used a similar form of self-definition in her speech when she introduced herself to her imagined audience as "wife to thy Edward, to thy slaughtered son" (1.2.10). Both Margaret and Anne use cursing to voice their own memories, and the stories they tell are, crucially, from the female perspective.

Unlike Anne, however, Margaret does not content herself with an imagined audience to whom she can address her curses. While Anne's curses do memorialize both Henry and Edward for the play's audience, they serve a largely private, epitaph-like purpose; they allow her both to invoke her own memories of Henry and

Edward and to transfer the force of her grief toward the Yorkists who killed them (and their relations). Margaret's curse is a public one. In addition to bringing another Lancastrian perspective to the play, her speech functions as an act of self-memorialization numerous York characters refer to her words throughout the play in her absence. Assmann likens Margaret to a Greek chorus, stating that "She is an allegory of the accumulated burden of guilt, and her presence in the first and fourth acts shows clearly that the overwhelming force of these virulent memories can no longer be contained."[12] While Margaret certainly does memorialize the Lancastrian narrative, Assmann underplays Margaret's agency by characterizing her as an allegory. Margaret is successful in making the Yorkists remember her speech in large part because she insists on being heard ("I can no longer hold me patient"), calling for them to "hear me, you wrangling pirates, that fall out / In sharing that which you have pilled from me" (1.3.157-59). She even singles out particular members of the court to ensure their attention, addressing Richard with "O gentle villain, do not turn away" (1.3.163). Although they come to represent the larger Lancastrian experience across the four plays, Margaret's memories are distinctly her own, and she lays claim to them within her subsequent speech.

By making an association between her own memories of loss and her call for equivalent loss on the York side, Margaret ensures that the Yorkists will remember the narrative which precedes her curse. Her speech effectively binds the Lancastrian past with the York future:

> If not by war, by surfeit die your king
> As ours by murder to make him a king.
> Edward thy son, which now is Prince of
> Wales,
> For Edward my son, which was Prince of
> Wales,
> Die in his youth by untimely violence. (1.3.194-206)

Referring to Henry as "ours," Margaret embraces her role as spokesperson for the Lancastrian side. Her speech draws a direct comparison between her lost family members and the members of the York royal family, which is reinforced by the repetition of "king" and "Wales" at the ends of her lines. Brown and Kushner characterize the power of her words: "Erupting from the position

of the displaced, Margaret's maledictions are at once lamentational and prophetic, comprising a litany of past losses for which her words can 'make' future 'repetition'—can return on her usurpers—but cannot undo."[13] Margaret's own experiences are central to the rhetorical power of her curse. Establishing her loss as equal to the loss for which she calls, Margaret (like Anne) maintains her own presence in the Lancastrian history constructed within her speech. By identifying Edward as "my son," Margaret defines Edward through his relationship to her; her subsequent call for Edward's death comes to avenge not just Prince Edward, but, crucially, Margaret's son.

The power of Margaret's curses to memorialize the Lancastrian narrative is perhaps most evident when she is not on stage. Margaret's curses are initially met with dismissive comments from the Yorkists. Richard tells her to "Have done thy charm, thou hateful, withered hag" (1.3.212), and Hastings calls for her to "have done thy frantic curse, / Lest to thy harm thou move our patience" (1.3.247-48). However, almost every character she mentions in her Act I curse later makes direct reference to her words. John Jowett reflects on Margaret's predictive capacity: "Because she preserves the past and makes it actively meaningful during the course of the play, she in effect preserves the future."[14] Grey is the first character to recognize this capacity. Just before his execution, he states: "Now Margaret's curse is fall'n upon our heads, / For standing by when Richard stabbed her son" (3.3.13-14). Many other characters follow in Grey's footsteps. Hastings, Queen Elizabeth, and Buckingham all remark that Margaret's curses against them have been fulfilled. The play provides no concrete evidence on the retributive efficacy of Margaret's curses; however, Rivers's speech shows how they have been remembered by her York audience:

> Then cursed she Hastings, then cursed she Buckingham,
> Then cursed she Richard. O, remember, God,
> To hear her prayers for them as now for us;
> And for my sister and her princely sons,
> Be satisfied, dear God, with our true bloods
> Which, as thou knowest, unjustly must be spilt. (3.3.15-20)

Neither Grey nor Rivers tie Margaret's cursing to magic; instead, Rivers furthers Margaret's previous association between cursing and heaven. Furthermore, he actually likens Margaret's curse to a

prayer and calls directly for God to "hear her prayers for them as now for us" (3.4.17). This line is particularly telling, for it frames Margaret's speech as an appeal for justice to a higher power. The lords in the scene show that they have remembered both Margaret's account of her own loss and her wish for theirs, but Rivers hints at yet another layer of memorialization. Calling specifically for God to "remember" to act upon all of Margaret's curses, Rivers legitimizes Margaret's curse narrative by suggesting that her words have found divine favor. At least in Rivers's view, Margaret's memories become a driving force of the action; by speaking the memories of her loss, Margaret prompts the divine retribution which leads to her enemies' death. Ultimately, the play's support or rejection of divine support for Margaret's words is less significant than the lords' belief in that support. Remembering her words immediately before their executions, they attest to the effectiveness of Margaret's cursing in prompting her enemies to register her alternate narrative of both personal and Lancastrian loss.

While we see curse language function as an effective method for women to memorialize their experiences, a scene at the end of *Richard III* also lends us insight into the results of cursing for the women who speak those curses. The scene opens with Margaret, Queen Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York competing to prove who has felt the greatest sorrows, but it ends with a remarkable moment of unity between the Yorkist and Lancastrian queens. Observing that the women attain a "tragic dignity," Miner holds that "Margaret, Elizabeth, and the Duchess evidence a new humanity, a humanity apparent nowhere else in the play."[15] The three women unite through their suffering under Richard III: Margaret calls "Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I plead, / That I may live to say, 'The dog is dead'" (4.4.72-73), and Queen Elizabeth concurs with her wish, reflecting that "thou didst prophesy the time would come / That I should wish for thee to help me curse / That bottled spider, that foul bunch-backed toad" (4.4.74-76). Like the men who mention Margaret's curses, Elizabeth here emphasizes the truthfulness of Margaret's words. However, in voicing her desire to curse alongside Margaret, Elizabeth allies herself with the Lancastrian queen in a manner that would be impossible for the men she previously cursed. Responding to Elizabeth's request that she "teach me how to curse mine enemies" (4.4.111), Margaret

explains that her cursing comes through her fixation on her son's death: "Think that thy babes were fairer than they were, / And he that slew them fouler than he is. / Bett'ring thy loss makes the bad causer worse" (4.4.114-16). By tying her curse language to her emotional reaction to her son's death, Margaret characterizes cursing as a distinctly motherly act. The statement is perhaps Margaret's most introspective in the tetralogy. It is fitting that her final speech should reflect on the curse language which she developed alongside her entrance into the English court. Margaret makes her exit from England by teaching her knowledge of cursing to the women around her, solidifying the status of curse language not only as her own legacy but as a female mode of self-expression and memorialization.

Brought together by their joint suffering under Richard, these fallen queens are able to reclaim at least some level of agency by telling their stories of loss and willing them to be remembered through curses. Representing both the York and Lancastrian sides, their physical presence together onstage at the end of the play can be seen to prefigure the House of Tudor and the longstanding domestic unity which accompanied it. But it is their speech which works most powerfully as a counter to the erasure of women's suffering from the cultural memory. Their shared vow to curse is also a vow to remember, a counter to Aleida Assmann's caution that "as long as entry into the cultural memory is conditioned by heroism or canonization, women systematically disappear into cultural oblivion."[16] Though Richard's reign was the stuff of well-established lore in the English Renaissance, Margaret, Elizabeth, and the Duchess work against their own erasure in that history both through their individual curses and by their ultimate union onstage.

Notes

1. Phyllis Rackin, "Patriarchal History and Female Subversion," in *Stages of History*, ed. Phyllis Rackin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 148.

2. Kristin M. Smith, "Martial Maids and Murdering Mothers: Women, Witchcraft, and Motherly Transgression in *Henry VI* and *Richard III*," Shakespeare 3, no. 2 (2007): 153.

3. All quotations from this and other Shakespeare plays are from the following editions: *1 Henry VI*, ed. Michael Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003; *3 Henry VI*, ed. Randall Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

2001); *Richard III*, ed. John Jowett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); *Titus Andronicus*, ed. Jonathan Bate (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 1995).

4. Paula S. Berggren, "Female Sexuality as Power in Shakespeare's Plays," in *The Woman's Part*, ed. by Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz et al. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 21.

5. Aleida Assmann, "The Battle of Memories in Shakespeare's Histories," in *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, ed. Aleida Assmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 53-78, 59.

6. Rackin, "Patriarchal History," 148.

7. Marilyn French, "Power: The First Tetralogy," in *Shakespeare's Division of Experience*, ed. Marilyn French (Bury St. Edmunds: St. Edmundsbury Press, 1981), 68.

8. Kate E. Brown and Howard I. Kushner, "Eruptive Voices: Coprolalia, Malediction, and the Poetics of Cursing," *New Literary History*, 32.3 (Summer, 2001): 548.

9. Madonne M. Miner, "'Neither mother, wife, nor England's queen': The Roles of Women in Richard III," in *The Woman's Part*, ed. Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz et al. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 41.

10. John Jowett, "Introduction," in *Richard III* by William Shakespeare, ed. John Jowett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 45.

11. Carole Levin, "Queen Margaret in Shakespeare and Chronicles: She-Wolf or Heroic Spirit," in *Scholars and Poets Talk about Queens*, ed. Carole Levin and Christine Stewart Nuñez (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 117.

12. Aleida Assmann, "The Battle of Memory in Shakespeare's Histories," in *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, ed. Aleida Assmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 60.

13. Brown and Kushner, "Eruptive Voices," 547.

14. Jowett, "Introduction," 45.

15. Miner, "'Neither mother, wife, nor England's queen,'" 47, 45.

16. Aleida Assmann, "The Secularization of Memory," in *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, ed. Aleida Assmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 52.

What Beard Were I Best to Play It In: Costume and Property Exchange Among Local English Communities

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Introduction

"What beard were I best to play it in?," queries Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1.2.86).[1] Later, he insists that the Lion must be played such that "half his face must be seen through the lion's neck" so as not to scare the ladies (3.1.34-35). Then, returning from his sojourn as an ass, Bottom instructs his fellow actors to "get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps" (4.2.32-33). Where would local players like Snug, Flute and Quince find these costuming items? Do the King and his lords in *Love's Labour's Lost* just happen to keep Russian garb handy for use in disguisings (5.2)? Towards the end of the same play, the Nine Worthies pageant, played by local citizens, requires quite a few specialized costumes and props (5.2). In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, where would Mistress Quickly and the others swiftly find their items for convincingly portraying fairies and hobgoblins in order to trick Falstaff (5.4; 5.5)?

Available records reflect an interesting trend in early modern theatre, showing that many theatre practitioners had resources just down the street or in the next town to help supplement their own productions; additionally, some towns and churches created

substantial rental stocks of theatrical items. Along with the more immediate communities created by local entertainments at church and cycle plays, ales, Robin Hoods and other events, the rental and borrowing of props and costumes was a communal, neighborly act that highlights the support and interaction prevalent in English society in the early modern period. These exchanges are evidence of shared traditions despite borders, politics, and doctrinal disputes and the items themselves are valuable markers of cultural history and tradition.

Theatrical rentals point to a performative network in England which was well established and elaborate. Communities took advantage of the costume stocks of neighboring towns, decreasing their own expenses while augmenting the incomes of the owners. The glimpse we have of this network indicates a much larger and wider-spread performative culture across early modern England than is at first assumed. In some cases, we have no other evidence of a performative event other than the notation of a rental, whether noted by the owner or the renter. The provincial theatre that laid the foundation for the professional theatre of Shakespeare's London was quite well developed. This article will focus on the interchange of costumes and properties across communities in the early modern period of England and reflect on the ways in which this interaction is a form of cultural communication. And the documentation, while never as full as historians would wish, is quite plentiful. Evidence for this study is found in record books from cities, churches and other organizations, many of which have been collected in the *Records of Early English Drama* collection.

Looking at the broader picture of these communities and their theatrical activities demonstrates a much more intricate network of theatre interaction than has been heretofore assumed. These costumes and props are not simply objects but represent much more. While their study is focused on the professional theatre of Shakespeare, Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* discuss the various objects of theatrical production and reference the ideas of Arjun Appadurai, stating:

> Objects, in Appadurai's words, possess "life histories" or "careers" of exchange that invest them with social significance and cultural value…The significance a particular object assumes

thus derives from the differential relation of its present context to its known or assumed past, and potential future, contexts. In order to read the meanings of any object, then, it becomes necessary to trace its 'cultural biography' as it 'moves through different hands, contexts, and uses.'[2]

In 1554 when the mayor of Southampton sent two men to Wilton in the neighboring county of Wiltshire to "fett [fetch] disgysinge apparrell" for their May games, these items were not just pieces of fabric but were objects with a history and significance that weave together people and communities of early modern England.[3] When they were first made, they may have been for one particular use by one particular community member, but their "cultural biography" is much richer. Craig Muldrew writes about this sort of interchange in *The Economy of Obligation*, stating, "the early modern market was not only a structure through which people exchanged material goods, but was also a way in which social trust was communicated, and there is overwhelming evidence to show that contemporaries considered such communication to be one of the most defining features of their society."[4] The exchange of these theatrical items back and forth amongst communities and churches served as a means of cultural communication exhibiting the social trust Muldrew references. Trusting these valuable items to another community displayed a confidence in the other populace and the significance of cross communal interaction. Tracing the recorded movement of these objects from one town or person to another, we witness the "career" of that item as it moves through its history and that of those who rented the object.

In what was at the time an overwhelmingly rural country, towns were the primary source for disseminating culture. There were clear differences in the political and religious ideologies amongst the various regions of England over the course of this period, but theatre was widespread and found across the entire country. Furthermore, even when theatrical entertainments were viewed as politically, socially or religiously dangerous they were still enacted, sometimes in spite of orders against them. Towns helping each other keep these cultural traditions alive by renting items back and forth demonstrates the social trust, as Muldrew phrases it, they had with one another.

The exchanges of costumes and properties reflect a similarity of purpose, pride in community creation, and social interaction that reminds both communities, on either side of the exchange, of a shared perspective. These exchanges emphasize the similarity between these communities, reinforcing shared interests and supporting a sense of belonging and identity. Likewise, these items become suppressible property in times of strife. This is evidenced by the selling and destroying of some costume stocks and properties along with the large-scale destruction of various items deemed "popish" seen during the various waves of Reformation in England. In some cases of political or social stress, these items, along with the theatre performances for which they were used, were suppressed or altered, reducing the community interchange and destroying the cultural value of these items. Through the study of these property and costume rentals and exchanges we witness evidence of social interaction and communal connection.

Recently, scholars have been working to reexamine cycle plays, particularly looking at evidence of complicated layers of performance and meaning.[5] As scholars have worked to rehabilitate the image of medieval plays, particularly in the literary area, not as much attention has been paid to the technical elements such as costumes and properties. While their study is focused on the professional theatre of Shakespeare, Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda argue, "subsequent criticism of early modern English drama has if anything intensified this disregard, although perhaps more by omission than commission: props have barely rated more than a passing mention in the vast majority of studies of Shakespeare and his contemporaries."[6] They make a compelling argument that one of the major reasons that the physical aspects of productions have historically been ignored is that there is a myth that the stage in early modern theatre was bare.

Harris and Korda remark that the physical objects of production in the early modern period were "often intended not merely to catch, but to overwhelm the eye by means of their real or apparent costliness, motion and capacity to surprise."[7] Ultimately in their work they maintain that "…early modern materials are not simply static things, but points of intersection for myriad relations of property and power."[8] An exchange of a costume or property includes within the interchange the intersection of communal

relations. A great deal of time, effort and money was spent on the creation and maintenance of properties and costumes in this period. For example, in 1583 in Coventry, the Chamberlain's and Warden's account book records payments made for "repairing of the 2 swordes & for a great Chape of Silver & gilt for them," and "for tryming & repoyring the velvett hatt with gold Lace, gold ffringe & buttons."[9] Records in Coventry from the Drapers' account also describe paying someone to keep and paint the "hell mouth and settyng ye worlde on fyre."[10] The value of costumes and properties can also be determined by the fact that many wills from the period include theatrical objects as an item to be passed down to heirs and others. Harry Smythe's 1575 will notates an "item for the players geare valewd at xl s."[11] In Taunton, Somerset, the will of Agnes Burton dated 1503 states,

> Item I bequeth to the church of seynt Mary Magdaleyn in Taunton my sute of blacke vestimentes with cope and corporas to the honor of almighty gode Item I geve vnto the said Sepulcre service there my rede damaske mantell & my mantell lyned with silke that I was professid yn to thentent of Mary Magdalen play and a Rochet & a box of siluer & gilt.[12]

These are just a few examples of several wills that give evidence to this practice further exemplifying the value these costumes and items held. Players' gear also warrants many mentions in church inventories, as evidenced in the 1576 inventory of Worcester Cathedral listing: "A gowne of freres, gyrdles, A Kings cloke of Tyshew, a lytill cloke of tysshew, a Ierkyn of greene, a womans gowne, a Ierkyn and a payer of breches, a gowne of silk, 2 cappes and the devils apparell."[13] These items function as prized heirlooms to be recorded and given to the next generation indicating their "careers," as Harris and Korda refer to it, which carries social significance. The items reflect in their cultural biographies a history of performance in these communities, the points of interaction, and perhaps even the cultural biography of the people who are bequeathing them.

Rosalind Conklin Hays argues effectively for the importance of theatrical productions as a performance of civic identity, offering a terrific example in the town of Sherborne, Dorset which had a robust civic calendar that, as Hays argues, conveyed both the civic and religious aspects of the community.[14] Additionally,

Hays maintains, in "Crossing County Boundaries: Sixteenth Century Performance and Celebration in Yeovil, co. Somerset, and Sherborne, co. Dorset," that studies should focus less on specific boundaries drawn upon maps and more on regions with regard to artistic exchange and meanings based on evidence of rental exchanges of costumes and properties.[15] As will be shown, these items of theatrical production traveled near and far from their home base further emphasizing the way in which a costume or property could be a point of communal interaction and exhibit social trust.

The study of these physical aspects of the early modern theatre landscape in England provides fascinating information into the workings of this pre-professional theatre. Vanessa Harding reasons, in "Space, Property, and Propriety in Urban England," that

> as a methodological approach to urban history, the study of property needs no apology. Not only is the documentation profuse; it also starts at an earlier date than most other written series. Hence, it can be an extraordinarily fruitful source for tracing long-term changes in the urban economy, the urban environment, urban form, and the regulation of urban life.[16]

While Harding is speaking of actual property in the form of land and buildings, and public spaces, her point is easily applied to the physical properties used in plays including costumes and props. Research into theatrical performance at this time is oftentimes left to the mercy of an early modern record keeper. As Harding suggests, many of our earlier records for theatre center on expenses for physical objects giving us information that may not be as dazzling as a play script or record of performance but includes important information nonetheless. Inventory lists and details from provincial records give evidence of the great care, money, and time that went into creating costumes and props for early modern performance events. Purple satin robes for Jesus, devil heads, tormentor's costumes, gowns with fur trimming, dragons, crowns and numerous wigs and beards indicate that substantial numbers of costumes and properties were created specifically for plays, processions, pageants, St. George days, Robin Hood celebrations, morris dancers and other performative events. Likewise, there are several payments for mending, staining, washing, storing, and even creating new costumes. The costume stocks of several communities

were quite extensive and could serve as costume-rental shops for nearby towns, displaying social trust and points of intersection; this phenomenon offers an excellent beginning point for the exploration of exchanges of costumes and properties during this period.

Costume stocks

One can imagine the small early modern storage spaces crammed with costume items from various past theatrical events. There is detailed evidence in the records of large costume stocks in five towns: Wymondham (Norfolk), Sherborne (Dorset), Yeovil (Somerset), Tewekbury (Gloucestershire) and Ashburton (Devon). Of course, the records vary in details. For Wymondham there are surviving inventory lists but no evidence of exchange, whereas the others show substantial rental traffic with neighboring towns.

While they were among the most remote areas of England during this time, the Southwestern counties of Dorset and Devon had a prolific theatre life. Sherborne, in Dorset, was a market-town with a large abbey presence. Lying on the London-Exeter Road it was one of the few areas of Dorset that saw much in the way of travelers coming from larger cities. The first reference to costume rental in Sherborne occurs in 1549 when St. Mary the Virgin's churchwardens' accounts show they received five shillings from renting their costumes.[17] In 1550 an ale was held for "maynteynge of the pleyenge garments" which raised a moderate income for the church.[18] The churchwardens' accounts of the parish show that they spent time and money maintaining their players' apparel over the years signifying the import of these costumes as valued cultural items.[19]

St. Mary the Virgin in Sherborne continued to rent costumes out to other towns in the early years of Edward VI's reign. In "'Lot's Wife' or the 'The Burning of Sodom': The Tudor Corpus Christi Play at Sherborne, Dorset," Rosalind Conklin Hays conjectures that Sherborne may have shied away from dramatic activity in the late 1540s, responding to religious winds of the time. This would have potentially left them with many costumes simply sitting, gathering dust and might have led to the idea to rent to their neighbors. As she states, "helping others risk wrathful intolerance for misguided theatrical performance was not the same thing as doing it oneself."[20]

The rentals were somewhat profitable and provided for costume maintenance which was convenient considering Sherborne seems to have returned to producing theatre in 1566.[21] If Conklin Hays' assertions are accurate, a seemingly active theatrical town was left with no artistic outlet during this period. The rental of their items to other towns would have allowed the town to continue to participate in performance traditions even when they may not have been able to engage in their own. Sherborne clearly valued the importance of their theatrical past and invested in the costumes they had made and displayed over the years. Even in the midst of religious tension, to which theatre performance was certainly not immune, Sherborne was able to use their costume stock as a means of interacting with their neighboring communities and participating in theatrical presentations, displaying their civic pride.

Beginning in 1555, the records for Sherborne list the renters of their costumes and they range across a sizable area, including more than seven different towns.[22] Over forty-eight shillings, no small sum, was raised by renting the players' garments of St. Mary the Virgin's in Sherborne. In 1572, the records indicate purchases towards a storage location for the players' garments and to make a key for the door to the costume stock.[23] These records suggest a lively performative community in and around Sherborne. Not only were costumes rented to towns within a few miles, costumes were rented to Castle Cary and Wincanton, each over ten miles away, and to Martock about fourteen miles away, all in the neighboring county of Somerset. Over the course of their history, these costume items were imprinted with traditions from Sherborne and each rental town added to the career, as Appadurai refers to it, of the object. Their cultural biography conveys a collaboration between towns, counties and traditions and points of intersection between these communities. Dorset was rural and overall inconsequential in terms of political stress and was a somewhat insular community.[24] Performance traditions were an important way in which the societies in this county interacted and exchanged social communications with communities and people with whom they intersected.

The town of Yeovil in Somerset has records indicating a lengthy history of renting out players' garments. John the Baptist's

churchwardens' accounts show rentals beginning in 1457 and continuing through 1573. These records are in line with the robust theatrical activity in the county as a whole. Over the years there are records of rental income from loaning out their playing apparel to places such as Sturminster Newton, Bradford Abbas, East Coker, Sherborne and Lye. The rentals ranged in income from just a few pennies to more substantial amounts, such as seven shillings for the rental in Sherborne, or six shillings for the rental to the "men of East Coker."[25] In this case we have evidence of two towns that rented to each other at various times with Sherborne having rented to Yeovil in 1561 and vice versa in 1566.[26] Somerset County had public markets in many towns and the medium-sized town of Yeovil's costume stock and rental history indicate its importance as a producer of cultural tradition. These items were elements of civic pride, yet in the case of Yeovil, there may have been an added desire to impress and show their importance in the larger picture of performance tradition in this area.

Another substantial market town, Tewksbury, in the county of Gloucestershire, shows steady rentals of their players' apparel and other items from 1567 into the early 1600s until parish dramas were effectively banned in the area by 1607. These rentals are noted in St. Mary the Virgin's churchwardens' accounts and rentals by "Hyllchurche" and Mathon (Herefordshire) are both named in the records.[27] The church also spent a substantial amount of money to make garments, as evidenced in 1577 when the records indicate over fourteen shillings was spent on costuming.[28] In 1584 the inventory of St. Mary the Virgin indicates they still had several items in their stock including specialized items like hair and beards for apostles and a mask for a devil, suggesting a variety of playing opportunities.[29] The documented rentals indicate busy performance seasons at Christmas and Midsummer for the towns renting from Tewkesbury. As seen with some of the distance of rentals from Sherborne, the town of Mathon was a substantial distance away from Tewkesbury. The cultural biography offered by this collection, like those of Sherborne and Yeovil, displays an interchange of larger towns with smaller neighboring towns to continue important performance traditions. In a county lacking in much archival information regarding performance traditions, these notations offer us a peek into the world of entertainment

in this area indicating support through exchange of items and contributions from larger towns to smaller ones.

Perhaps the most robust records of a costume stock of players' apparel come from Ashburton. Entertainments raised a good deal of income for the parish of Ashburton, which owned an extensive stock of costumes frequently rented out and well-managed and mended. Over twenty-eight pounds worth of expenditures on costume items are documented in the records.[30] Wigs, tunics, gloves, sheepskins, devil's heads and many other items are listed as part of their stock. Players' clothes were hired several times and Ashburton even paid a person to maintain the garments most years.[31] The "hiring" of players' costumes was frequent enough in the practice of Ashburton's costume stock that the records include an entry in 1545 stating "nil received for the hiring out of clothing to players this year" indicating clear changes in performance traditions in the area.[32]

One of the few visible signs of the effect of the Tudor reformations in this area seems to be reflected in the records pertaining to costumes. The sale of costumes during the Edwardian reforms is a common feature in the records of provincial drama. Most communities that somehow survived those reforms with their stock intact eventually did sell their costumes. For example, Bungay in 1577, which sold their stock for two pounds.[33] Amateur provincial theatre greatly declined during Queen Elizabeth's reign and most failed to revive at all after Edward VI's reformations. Starting in 1546 there is a sudden sale of many of Ashburton's costume pieces.[34] More costumes were sold again in 1551, and a keeper of the players' clothes is not paid again until 1554.[35]

This year, 1554, may mark Ashburton's revival of its local plays and replenishment of its costume stock as was happening in other communities during Queen Mary's reign. From that point on there are payments for keeping the costumes and expenses for producing new ones for virtually every year until 1560.[36] In 1556 there are two curious entries in the Ashburton records concerning "paynting the players clothes at Tottnez" and "ffettyng the same clothez from Tottnez."[37] These ambiguous entries offer alternative explanations: that Ashburton was helping Totnes present a play by working on its costumes, or perhaps that Ashburton was attempting to replenish its own costume stock by obtaining some from Totnes. The term

"painting" is used quite often when referring to refurbishing or replenishing a stage item. Ashburton was noticeably a community that took pride in their collection of costumes, willing to spend a good deal of resources in order to take care of it over many years. The items in their stock have a varied cultural biography as their context pre- and post-Reformation converged. When rented, these items represented not only the current context of the play they were rented for, but also their past context and ties to older traditions. The point of intersection between Ashburton and Totnes, for example, included the exchange of costumes that may have held layers of meaning from before the waves of reform in England. Their present context may be for a new play that had not been performed before, but their past context held a reference to past traditions and possible future contexts.

The four towns with rental exchanges from their costume stocks have one thing in common: they are not the largest towns in their county. These towns are important for their counties, all of them substantial market-towns with a performance history in their own right, yet it is important to recognize that the surviving documents show that these larger stocks held and rented out seem to be more common in medium sized communities. The exchanges of these items to neighboring towns indicates a communal interaction and point of intersection that carries with it the pride of the owner and enjoyment of the renter. What better way to show neighborly action than by helping to create entertainment, perhaps religious expression, and joy for your fellow citizens? However, the practice of sharing these items across communities is not just evidenced in towns with substantial rental stocks; it is also apparent in the records from a variety of locations across England.

Evidence of costume exchange

In addition to costume stocks, documentation shows a great deal of rental interaction amongst communities with theatrical items. Kent, a particularly active theatrical area, provides an excellent starting point for discussing this interaction. This history-rich area boasts both an extensive religious history and an impressive entertainment record including a wide variety of performative activity filling most of the yearly calendar. Records in New Romney, in Kent, show that as early as 1490 payments were

made for "hiring" apparel.[38] In 1503 the town rented costumes from Romney and in 1560 they paid three pounds to the "towne of Lydd pty paymt for or appell."[39] Another record shows the payment of ten shillings in 1560 to hire beards, fourteen shillings and four pence to a Mr. Neve for the "hire of or bearde & heres," and also forty pence "in full paymt for a beard lost."[40] There are several payments to Lydd in 1560 which do not specifically name rental items so it is difficult to determine exactly how much and what New Romney borrowed from Lydd other than the more specific references cited earlier.

While we do not have any records of extensive costume stocks in this area like those studied earlier, these entries do indicate that several towns had items available for rental. Kent, at this time, was widely populated with many small market-towns. One of the important notes from this area is the rental of items from a person, Mr. Neve. Not only were these items held by specific towns or parishes, but here is a record of costume items for rental from an individual. Was Mr. Neve someone who specialized in costuming for the plays in his area? Was he a tailor with access to fabrics and notions? Or was he an actor who had taken to collecting a stock? We do not know the answers to these questions, but the fact that a town had a resource who held these items and allowed the borrowing of them gives us an indication of the value of these objects. While the cultural exchange of costumes and props from one town to another can be read as a support of civic exchange and reinforcement of similar values and traditions, renting from an individual brings a new aspect to the cultural biography of these items. Mr. Neve took care of these items to keep them for rental, and was compensated for the loss of one beard indicating he certainly had a list of the items borrowed and expected them returned in good condition. A citizen providing their items for use in these civic or religious entertainments is engaging in the cultural traditions of the town. The point of intersection with this act of exchange is more personal and lets an individual have a more direct hand in the performance life of their larger community.

North of the county of Kent, the Suffolk town of Bungay records several references to renting costumes from Great Yarmouth, Wymondham and Norwich. Starting in 1558, Bungay rented costumes from Yarmouth; and in 1568 the town paid

someone to return rented apparel.[41] The Great Yarmouth records offer us no information regarding the costumes that it owned and rented, however Wymondham records do offer us a glimpse of that town's stock of costumes.[42] St. Petrock in Devon rented togas in 1528 from an unknown town and paid to have them transported.[43] Additionally in Devon, St. John's Bow churchwardens' accounts show rental income from hiring out tunics in 1519.[44] St. Columb Major in Cornwall rented their Robin Hood costumes to an unknown location, for eighteen pence in 1587.[45] The Grocer's guild in Norwich rented hair for an angel and an angel's coat in 1556 and 1558.[46] Finally, in Hampshire, the records of Winchester in 1573 show payments for a man hired to ride to the city of Salisbury for a "scarlet cloak received on loan at the same place for the visit of the Lady Queen."[47] All of these records demonstrate the prevalence of this engagement across the country in a variety of settings and for a variety of types of entertainment.

Larger cities also show records of this interaction. Records from Ecclesiastical London indicate several instances of costume and property rental outlining not only expenses but also income. Most of the entries in London revolve around performances on Palm Sunday ranging from 1485 to 1539 and between several parish churches.[48] In Chester, one of the major cycle play cities, several guilds have entries for rentals of costumes including the Bowyers', Fletchers', Coopers, and Stringers' accounts, the Cordwainer's and Shoemaker's records, the Innkeeper's accounts, the Painters and Glazers guild, and the Smiths, Cutlers and Plumbers.[49] Interestingly, these entries are all in the latter half of the 16th century and include references to "Pilate's clothes" among other things.[50] Despite political and religious pressure, Chester was still producing religious plays and Pilate's costume was still available for use. The cultural biography of this lone costume is fascinating to consider. We cannot say how old it was, or how long it had been in use; if this costume was from an earlier iteration of the Chester cycle prior to the religious upheaval of the Reformation in sixteenth century England, consider the layers of history and context of this one costume. It would hold within it the history of this vibrant tradition of Chester and with each new use a new layer of that story would be added to the cultural biography of the item.

The Chester Innkeepers' account shows rentals in 1583, 1584, and 1589 of "devil's clothes" or demon's clothes;[51] again in 1594 there is a rental for the "hyer of ij dyemenes cotes and for there houdes."[52] Other notations in Chester indicate more rentals including several in 1573, when the records note that the items were rented from Hooton and Poole, nine and eighteen miles, respectively, away from Chester.[53] With such a long and rich history of performance in Chester, it is interesting to consider that smaller, nearby towns would have what they need rather than someone or some organization in the city itself. This is further evidence of the communal importance of these exchanges. They are not simply larger, more wealthy areas helping the smaller, poorer areas. There was an equality of aid in these exchanges where the value is in the item itself and what it can add to a production. The points of intersection in this exchange indicate a reversal of what was most likely the more common experience of the smaller town gaining something from the larger one. In 1574, an entry indicates the purchase of soap to wash the players' clothes which they "borrowed." This entry conveys, similar to the response to the lost beard of Mr. Neve, a care and consideration taken with the rented items. These were treasured and respected pieces of cultural history for these towns and their neighbors and they were treated as such. There was a clear expectation about how these items were to be treated and this further indicates the importance of these exchanges as a cross-community collaboration.

Coventry, another important cycle play town, features many references to hiring harnesses, armor, drums and crests for processions.[54] The Smiths' accounts indicate a payment in 1488 to Mistress "Grymesby" for lending "her geir ffor pylatts wyfe," and then in 1502 for renting a scarlet gown from an unknown source.[55] The Weaver's guild rented beards between 1570 and 1572, and the Draper's rented a devil's coat in 1570.[56] Finally, the Mercer's guild paid thirty-three shillings to rent and transport players' apparel in 1584. Unfortunately, where these items were from is not in the records.[57] Like Mr. Neve in Kent, Mistress Grimsby in Coventry seems to have allowed rentals from a personal stock, specific enough to costume Pilate's wife. The exchange of these personal items emphasizes the aspect of social trust for early modern market exchanges. Mistress Grimsby and Mr. Neve demonstrate trust that

their fellow citizens will care for their items, use them responsibly or replace them and use them in the sacred and secular traditions of their culture.

University towns of Oxford and Cambridge also have evidence of rentals in their records. For example, in 1545, Queen's College Magnum in Cambridge rented armor for a comedy.[58] And in Oxford, St. Peter in the East and St. Mary Magdalen both earned income from the rental of players' garments through the Tudor period.[59] As far back as 1386, the Dean and Chapter Common Fund Accounts of Cambridge indicate a rental in Lincoln for the "hiring of trimmed (or lined) garments for the kings…" for a play on Epiphany day; evidence of, as Appadurai says, these items that "move through different hands, contexts, and uses."[60] These garments must have been splendid to be worthy of the performed kings, let alone to travel the substantial distance from Cambridge to Lincoln, and back again, in order to procure them. This entry is an early example of evidence of the rental of theatre items indicating the historical tradition of this type of exchange.

Costume rentals are not limited to towns; the records indicate that costumes were even rented from the stock of local lords, taking advantage of their players' costume stocks. In 1566 the Bungay Holy Trinity churchwardens' accounts show expenses spent on a play, including apparel that was rented from the Earl of Surrey (Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk).[61] Records from 1554 in Southampton show charges to pay for two men to go to Wilton to fetch "disgysinge apparrell" which may have come from the Earl of Pembroke's Wilton House.[62] While the original cultural biography of these items might have different stories to tell, perhaps masques or other entertainments in a manor house, these items nonetheless serve the purpose of engaging social trust. That trust indicates a parallel purpose to engage in entertaining activity that builds community. The Earls of Surrey and Pembroke entrusted their items to the use of the local parish church or community members, despite differences in wealth and status. Similar to what was noted as Chester rented from smaller towns, the points of intersection in this exchange indicate, as Harris and Korda put it, "myriad relations of property and power."[63] All of these various items indicate a strong and robust theatrical tradition as well as interconnections between communities as they borrowed from one another to create their performances.

Evidence of property exchange

Costumes were not the only rental items in the early modern theatrical world. King's Lynn rented out its processional dragon in 1501, collecting one pound, one shilling for the rental.[64] Unfortunately, the records of King's Lynn do not tell us to whom the dragon was rented, but many Norfolk towns used dragons in their processions. Additionally, many communities put on St. George plays which could require the use of a dragon. The payment collected is quite substantial and indicates the importance of this item. A processional dragon would have cost a considerable sum to make and would be a treasured item for a town whether used in a procession or St. George play, or both. The social trust expressed by renting out this piece of cultural heritage and tradition is impressive.

In Norwich, an angel's crown was rented out several times in the mid-1550s.[65] In Sherborne, Dorset, not only were the players' clothes rented out but also the bells, presumably the bells used in morris dancing, which were rented in 1557 to the town of Martock.[66] In London, St. Stephen Walbrook also rented David's crown in 1530.[67] St. Andrew Hubbard church rented an angel for Palm Sunday in 1526, as well as, "clothes at the tower."[68] Angel wings were also rented along with angel hair and a crest for an angel in 1535 by All Hallows Staining in London.[69]

St. Michael's churchwardens' accounts in Bath, Somerset County, indicate a steady rental situation with their "king's crown" over the course of several years. From 1465 to 1491, their records show income from renting their crown out eleven times for summer king festivities. In 1484 the records state, "they seek allowance of 2s 5d for the renewal of that crown of the church so that it could be painted in various colours and on gold for the same crown, together with the labour of the painter."[70] Clearly, this was a valued item worthy of time and expense to the church. It is important to note that the crowns from these various towns were rented year after year in some cases. Over time the towns themselves could have purchased or made their own crowns for use, or angel wings, or other props, but they choose to continue to rent the items from their neighbors. Just as these items have meaning and importance to the community in which they were created, the rental item itself

becomes a tradition for the neighboring town and a visual example of connectedness and points of intersection.

"Pilate's club" was rented by the Capper's guild in Coventry in 1573.[71] In Chester, the Cathedral Treasurers' accounts show a rental expense in 1571 to "hyre a clothe for ye mansion ouer ye gates."[72] In addition to many instances of renting harnesses, carriages, and other items, the Bowyers', Fletchers', Coopers', and Stringers' accounts note they rented a saddle cloth for the annual Midsummer Eve event for several years in the late 1570s.[73] Additionally, in 1567 the Painters', Glaziers', Embroiderers' and Stationers' accounts show an expense to borrow a "coueryng & A naked child," as well as, "to borrow bottelles" for their Whitsun plays.[74] The same group, in 1585, paid to borrow chains of gold for the Midsummer procession.[75] The Innkeepers records show a rental of six pence for a feather in 1598 for their Midsummer procession.[76] Rentals were clearly not just for costume pieces but also the set dressing and properties needed for many of these events. Perhaps the craftmanship of the property makers in these other towns or guilds were exemplary, or the items were quite dazzling, as Harris and Korda suggest "intended not merely to catch, but to overwhelm the eye by their real or apparent costliness, motion and capacity to surprise."[77] In each of these cases a neighboring town or parish or even a neighbor had an item that would make their entertainment more alluring, and through the exchange of these rentals the imprint of the histories and traditions of these items and these towns becomes more complex and interwoven.

Conclusion

These records have shown that local theatre was complex and well organized in early modern England. Communities relied on each other to produce their work. The standards of early modern theatre history mention this phenomenon only briefly and off-handedly, giving little weight to the importance of it. Chambers, in his *The Medieval Stage*, refers to Chelmsford and the fact that this town rented out garments stating that, "this same practice of hiring garments can be traced at Oxford, Leicester, and elsewhere." Additionally, he mentions a record in 1511 in Bassingbourne for a "garnement man for garnements and propyrts and playbooks." Chambers suggests this was a position created to function as a

"theatrical outfitter" not unlike Ashburton's costumer.[78] Wickham, in *The Medieval Theatre*, references Chelmsford's and Worcester's stock of costumes for hire.[79] However, these references are slight and in passing amidst much more detail on other aspects of early modern theatre.

Theatre historians recognize that theatre was popular and prevalent in England during this period but there is a complexity to theatre relationships at this time that has not been well explored. These communities created a system to work within to maximize their production abilities, and this information greatly enhances our understanding of this fruitful period of theatre history. This network of theatre items further weaves together the rich variety of communities and their playing traditions, displaying a much more intricate tapestry than we may have at first assumed. These items carried with them traditions, cultural biographies and social trust from use over many years, some surviving long past the plays they were originally intended for and all highlighting the points of intersection, exemplifying the trust between these communities and the value of tradition. They reinforced similarities despite differences and the stability of tradition despite change. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, first arguing he can wear a mask to cover his own beard, Bottom finally accepts playing only the role of Pyramus. Then, he ponders the best style of beard to wear for this role suggesting he play it in a variety of options: straw-color, orange-tawny, purple-in-grain or French-crown-color beard (1.2.83-86). The records of the period show that were Bottom to seek them out in a local area, he would have had a good chance of finding an option to rent.

Notes

1. William Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, (New York: The Arden Shakeseare, 2021).

2. Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 18.

3. Peter Greenfield and Jane Cowling, "Hampshire," *REED Online*, 11 October 2021, https://ereed.library.utoronto.ca/records/hamps-ridp227436912/.

4. Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England*. (New York: Palgrave, 1998), 5.

5. For an insightful picture into the details of production of Medieval plays and the ties to the local communities, see Clifford Davidson's *Corpus Christi Plays at York: A Context for Religious Drama* (New York: AMS), 2013.

6. Harris and Korda, *Staged Properties*, 1.

7. Harris and Korda, *Staged Properties*, 4.

8. Harris and Korda, *Staged Properties*, 16.

9. Records show xxvij s viij d and xv s j d spent, respectively. R. W. Ingram, *Records of Early English Drama: Coventry* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 299.

10. Ingram, *REED: Coventry*, 257.

11. David N. Klausner, *Records of Early English Drama: Hertfordshire/Worcestershire* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 444. Resident of Worcester.

12. James Stokes, *Records of Early English Drama: Somerset* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 227.

13. David N. Klausner, *REED Hertfordshire/Worcestershire*, 447.

14. Rosalind Conklin Hays, "'Lot's Wife' or 'The Burning of Sodom': The Tudor Corpus Christi Play at Sherborn, Dorset," *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 33 (1994): 104.

15. Rosalind C. Hays, "Crossing County Boundaries: Sixteenth-Century Performance and Celebration in Yeovil, co. Somerset, and Sherborne, co. Dorset," *Early Theatre* 6, no. 2 (2003): 73-95.

16. Vanessa Harding, "Space, Property and Propriety in Urban England," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32, no. 4 (Spring 2002): 551.

17. Rosalind C. Hays, *Records of Early English Drama: Dorset* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1999), 262.

18. The ale raised fifty-two shillings and eight pence. Hays, *REED: Dorset,* 262.

19. Hays, *REED: Dorset*, 262. Another example of this is shown in the payment to Katerine Walles "ffor brusshynge of the Corpus christi Garmentes." They did not just pay someone to oversee the stock, but also to take special care of the items.

20. Hays, "Lot's Wife," 112.

21. Hays, "Lot's Wife," 114. A reference to a Corpus Christi play in Sherborne occurs in 1571 when John Dier is paid for making and devising garments for the Corpus Christi players. These references make it clear that Sherborne had a large and substantial costume stock that was worth maintaining. Hays, *REED: Dorset*, 266.

22. Hays, *REED: Dorset*, 262-5.

23. Hays, *REED: Dorset*, 264, 268.

24. Hays, *REED: Dorset*, 7, 10.

25. Stokes, *REED: Somerset*, 861, 407-9.

26. Stokes, *REED: Somerset*, 408; Hays, "Lot's Wife," 114.

27. Audrey Douglas and Peter Greenfield, *Records of Early English Drama: Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 335-341; as noted by the editor "Hyllchurche" is unidentified due to the common use of "hill" in names around the area. Douglas and Greenfield, *REED: Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire*, 339.

28. Douglas and Greenfield, *REED: Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire*, 337.

29. "Players Apparrell: Item viiij gownes and clokes, Item vij Irkyns, Item iiij capps of green sylke, Item viij heades of heare for the apostles and x beardes, Item a face or vysor for the devyll." Douglas and Greenfield, *REED: Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire*, 339.

30. Alison Hanham ed., *Churchwardens' Accounts of Ashburton*, 1479-1580 (Torquay: Devonshire Press, 1970), 1-194.

31. Hanham, Ashburton, 17, 110, 114, 116, 118. It is possible that income records are not complete given the few records of income for a stock that was well kept and stored over many years. John M. Wasson, *Records of Early English Drama: Devon* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 22-29. John Wyndyatt Taylor is the keeper of the clothes from 1532 to 1537. William Bound is then registered as the keeper of the players' clothes from 1541-1560.

32. Wasson, *REED: Devon*, 337.

33. Wasson, *REED: Devon*, 145.

34. Hanham, *Ashburton*, 118, 120, 126.

35. Wasson, *REED: Devon*, 28.

36. Wasson, *REED: Devon*, 28-29

37. Hanham, *Ashburton*, 136.

38. Malone Society, *Records of Plays and Players in Kent: 1450-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 128.

39. Malone Society, *Kent*, 128, 208; James M. Gibson, *Records of Early English Drama: Kent: Diocese of Canterbury* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 787.

40. Malone Society, *Kent*, 211; Gibson, *REED: Kent*, 786.

41. Malone Society, *Norfolk/Suffolk*, 143, 145.

42. Malone Society, *Records of Plays and Players in Norfolk and Suffolk: 1330-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 131-2. Malone notes "One interesting document at Wymondham which, in contrast to a number of the guild books, has not vanished is a little book, dated 1552, consisting of two large sheets of paper folded into four leaves and containing an inventory of books, writings and other goods belonging to the town (INV). On the third leaf there is a list of 'apparell for the game players,' and Carthew speculates that the 'apparell' might have belonged to 'The Watch and Play Society'." Malone Society, *Norfolk/Suffolk*, 120.

43. Wasson, *REED: Devon*, 48.

44. Wasson, *REED: Devon*, 398.

45. Sally L. Joyce, and Evelyn S. Newlyn, *Records of Early English Drama: Cornwall* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 507-8.

46. David Galloway, *Records of Early English Drama: Norwich* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 37, 43-4.

47. Greenfield and Cowling, "Hampshire," 11 October 2021, https://ereed. library.utoronto.ca/records/hamps-ridp247213968/.

48. Mary C. Erler, *Records of Early English Drama: Ecclesiastical London* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 35, 39, 41, 57, 59, 61, 64-5, 67-8, 73, 86-7, 90-2, 94, 96.

49. Elizabeth Baldwin, Lawrence M. Clopper and David Mills, *Records of Early English Drama: Cheshire* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007),127-

128; again in 1571 their records show a payment to William Rogerson for "a cope & a tenekell". Rogerson is named in the earlier records as the rental source for the 2 copes, so perhaps this is also a rental. Baldwin, Clopper, Mills, *REED: Cheshire*, 138.

50.   Baldwin, Clopper and Mills, *REED: Cheshire*, 245, 299. Lawrence M. Clopper, *Records of Early English Drama: Chester* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 90; Baldwin, Clopper and Mills, *REED: Cheshire*, 142-3.

51.   Baldwin, Clopper and Mills, *REED: Cheshire*, 201, 206, 230.

52.   Baldwin, Clopper and Mills, *REED: Cheshire*, 230, 253; they also rented a cassock for a woman in 1583, Baldwin, Clopper and Mills, *REED: Cheshire*, 201; 1598 rented a cape for the boy in Midsummer processions, 1599 the mayor dismissed the devil riding in the procession and reduced a lot of the elements, 1600 procession restored to previous ways, Baldwin, Clopper and Mills, *REED: Cheshire*, 270-3.

53.   Baldwin, Clopper and Mills, *REED: Cheshire*, 142-3, 150, 159, 167, 180, 187, 188, 304; records include 1572 and 1573 when "gere for the child" was rented; other examples include the Joiner's Carver's and Turner's company renting velvet for a "chylld's clocke" in 1579 and 1580. Clopper, *REED: Chester*, 92, 106, 166; in 1605, they paid 12 pence for renting a hat at Midsomer Eve

54.   Ingram, *REED: Coventry*, 20-290.

55.   Ingram, *REED: Coventry*, 69, 97.

56.   Ingram, *REED: Coventry*, 252, 254-5, 258.

57.   Ingram, *REED: Coventry*, 305.

58.   Alan H. Nelson, *Records of Early English Drama: Cambridge* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 1115.

59.   John R. Elliot, Alan H. Nelson, Alexandra F. Johnston, and Diana Wyatt, *Records of Early English Drama: Oxford* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 39, 108, 929.

60.   James Stokes, *REED: Lincolnshire*, 649. Harris and Korda, *Staged Properties*, 18.

61.   Malone Society, *Norfolk/Suffolk*, 143.

62.   Peter Greenfield and Jane Cowling, "Hampshire," *REED Online*, 11 October 2021, https://ereed.library.utoronto.ca/records/hamps-ridp227436912/.

63.   Harris and Korda, *Staged Properties*, 16.

64.   Mark C. Pilkinton, *Records of Early English Drama: Bristol* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 18.

65.   Rentals occurred in 1556, 1557 and 1558 by the Grocer's Guild Galloway, *REED: Norwich*, 37, 43, 44.

66.   Rosalind C. Hays, Sally Joyce, C. E. Mcgee, Evelyn Newlyn, *Records of Early English Drama: Dorset* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 264.

67.   Erler, *REED: Ecclesiastical* London, 73.

68.   Erler, *REED: Ecclesiastical* London, 66.

69.   Erler, *REED: Ecclesiastical* London, 91.

70.   Stokes, *REED: Somerset*, 762-765.

71.   Ingram, *REED: Coventry*, 262.

72.   Baldwin, Clopper, Mills, *REED: Cheshire*, 137.

73.   Baldwin, Clopper, Mills, *REED: Cheshire*, 178.

74. Baldwin, Clopper, Mills, *REED: Cheshire*, 122.

75. Baldwin, Clopper, Mills, *REED: Cheshire*, 211.

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77. Harris and Korda, *Staged Properties*, 1.

78. E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage: Book III* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1996),122, 141.

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Domestic Subversion as Class Revolution: Dismantaling Gender and Destroying Hierarchy in *2 Henry VI*

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Power is a graph with many axes. In early modern England, as the economic framework shifted and the Protestant Reformation brought religion into debate, these axes became simultaneously unstable and incredibly rigid; definitions were changing, but those with power did whatever necessary to keep it. This essay will examine the classed and gendered continuum of power and the women of *2 Henry VI*'s places on it. These women—Margaret of Anjou, Queen of England and Eleanor Cobham, Duchess of Gloucester—are rebellious within their respective marriages. But because the patriarchy and emergent feudal-capitalism are deeply intertwined in the English hierarchal system, true domestic subversion must be in the same moment a class revolution. To subvert a system of oppression, one must do more than restructure the existing cycle of violence and impose oppressive forces upon a new group. In *2 Henry VI*, Duchess Eleanor's dominant femininity—whether consciously or not—represents the true subversion of all systems of English hierarchy; Queen Margaret's binary masculinity, on the other hand, emulates rather than subverts the patriarchal power which perpetuates cycles of violence within the oppressive feudal-capitalist system.

2 Henry VI is set in a crucial moment in history: the transition from feudalism to capitalism. With this change came a steady increase in inequality; as Sylvia Federici explains, the proletariat grew poorer, women lost access to property, and the Christian moral code became stricter.[1] At the same time, definitions of womanhood and femininity narrowed, and women as "the servants of the male work-force"—domestic laborers—became fundamental to capitalism.[2] Women were a reproductive source, a good to which any man had access; in response to the enclosures of their commons—what Marx calls "primitive accumulation"— low-class men intensified their control of what property remained, including women. The same forces were used to "conquer" both wealth and women: "conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder."[3] Federici calls this domination of women in the wake of capitalism "primitive appropriation" and marks it as a driving force in the wedge between class and gender solidarity—a wedge that would be necessary to quell the possibility of complete uprising during the political turmoil of the ongoing War of Roses.[4]

Gender and class are inherently linked in suppression: the wife is subject to the husband, and servants are subject to the heads of house.[5] This basic model is transferable to English society; in a complicated and imperfect hierarchy, elite women are simultaneously subjugated by men of their own class and the subjugators of people of lower classes. This systematic cultivation of hierarchical conquest is one of the oppressive pillars of capitalism; as women are transformed into means of production and objects of male domination, gendered hierarchy "become[s] constitutive of class rule."[6] To subvert patriarchal roles, then, "feminism needs to refuse this division of labor" in all ways, not just along the lines of the male-female binary.[7] Class hierarchy cannot exist without the patriarchy, and the patriarchy cannot exist without the enforcement of class order, yet gender and class struggles are separated into distinct challenges of different systems of power. For Marx, this is alienation—the separation of the person from human essence; part of human nature is socialization and the joint ability to achieve physical and creative needs.[8] To keep groups quiet and separate is to keep them oppressed.

Despite their mutual dependence, *2 Henry VI* categorically separates the issues of gender and class uprising. Phyllis Rackin

claims the women in *2 Henry VI* "symbolize the dangers of disorder," while the commoners "literalize them."[9] Other scholars simply choose one element or the other to analyze. Stephen Greenblatt's reading of the play as a transformation of status into property relations, which allows aristocrats to subdue peasants without marring their reputations, could perhaps be extended into an analysis of domestic uprising;[10] through this perspective, men must be heroized for tyrannizing women, who could not own property. But even this analysis does not take gender into consideration enough. The question of Shakespeare's radicalism, though, is a moot point, considering his continued reinforcement of patriarchal value, which will be touched on later in the essay.

Scholarship surrounding *2 Henry VI* examines Shakespeare's radicalism predominantly through readings of Jack Cade's rebels. While other texts attempt to fully demonize revolting commoners, Shakespeare aligns himself with many of their values, and the predominant modern scholarship leans toward a reading of Shakespeare as a populist. The enclosure of the commons is presented as an illegal act which must be remedied and Shakespeare's depiction of the rebels is sympathetic with an emergent populist response to economic change.[11] This reading attempts to restore order in England through a strict adherence to the law, which is neither a radical take nor a reformist one, as it wishes to restabilize the systems of power. Others contrast the historical chronicles with the Shakespearean account of Cade's insurgence; because the characters are made more sympathetic in the play than in the source texts, Shakespeare appears to have been a radical anti-elitist. The failure of the revolution demonstrates a relatable flaw which could inspire a sense of mutiny.[12] Yet the rebellion does fail, and other scholars see an entirely different picture: Cade's Rebellion ruptures the country's order and is therefore the cause of England's social problems.[13]

The feminist readings of the text tend to ignore the rebels in favor of Eleanor and Margery. Nina Levine reads Eleanor's punishment as the cause for the collapse of English social order and cites Shakespeare's "reluctance to insist too loudly on the equation between female aggression, witchcraft, and treason" due to respect for his Queen, Elizabeth I, as proof of a rebuke of the punishment system.[14] Yet Eleanor *does* represent an aggressive

woman who commits treasonous acts via witchcraft, and other scholars read the work more harshly: Shakespeare's repression of positively portrayed women "betray[s] deep anxieties about female power and authority."[15] If family is the "basis of order in church and state," Margaret's inversion within her relationship with Henry represents the ineptitude of Henry and the English government.[16] Regardless of Shakespeare's intentions, since the monarchy is an institution of systemized oppression used to uphold class and gender hierarchies, supporting a monarch—regardless of gender—can never be truly radical.

This essay will primarily examine the folio edition of the text, though the disparities between the quarto and the folio are notable. There are several hypotheses in circulation regarding the source of the differences between the two versions of Shakespearean texts: the quarto may be either a memorial reconstruction of a performance or a bardic rewrite specifically for touring productions. The latter seems more plausible for *2 Henry VI*. The quarto is the smaller (and therefore more easily transferable) and more inexpensive text, and the version likely performed for commoners rather than in established theaters. The folio provides a stricter manifestation of the social order by underpinning certain characters—namely Margaret, Eleanor, and Jack Cade's rebels—as the sources of social disorder. The folio, performed for the elite, refuses to question the social other and demonizes these social Others.

According to early modern English values, the woman was the silent, beautiful body, while the man was the mind—the "intellect and spirit."[17] In remarking upon Margaret's "grace in speech, / Her words yclad with wisdom's majesty," Henry subtly masculinizes his bride-to-be and therefore feminizes himself (1.1.32-33).[18] In the same breath, Henry reveals his femininity through his unrestrained emotion; according to Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin, "[t]o love a woman too much marked a man as effeminate" (67). It is partially Henry's piety that leaves him vulnerable to the pitfalls of patriarchy; he swoons "womanlike" and prays hysterically in pious grief over the death of Duke Humphrey, for example, and gently dismisses the rebels, saying, "For God forbid so may simply souls / Should perish by the sword" (4.4.9-10).

Even outside of her relationship with Henry, Margaret establishes herself as dominant and masculine. During the early

modern period, sensuality was a distinctly feminine trait.[19] As Suffolk, Margaret's paramour, drapes himself over the Queen and receives her extramarital kiss, he must in some ways also be the female counterpart to Margaret's "man." Shamelessly, Suffolk describes Margaret's place in his heart: "For where thou art, there is the world itself, / With every several pleasure in the world; / And where thou art not, desolation" (3.2.366-368). While Margaret reciprocates Suffolk's attention, as Queen she also exercises class power over him, which results inevitably in her dominance. In fact, she explicitly calls him a woman upon his defeated response to punishment: "Fie coward woman and soft-hearted wretch!" (3.2.310). Yet her power over Suffolk is more covert than that she wields over Henry because he is not so meek, Margaret must mask her masculine power with a feminine appearance. In early modern England, "detachable parts" like handkerchiefs and hairstyles were essential to engenderment. Margaret knows how to navigate this; her feminine form is a large part of her power.[20]

Margaret navigates a delicate balance; she does not wear masculine clothing or too readily speak out of turn, as such may be grounds for a witchcraft accusation.[21] Physically, she engenders womanhood. Emotionally, too, Margaret performs the femininity expected of her. Upon Duke Humphrey's death, she descends into wild, "womanish" hysterics. She does not demonstrate excessively romantic feelings for the Duke of Suffolk except in private, in reciprocation of his own words. Clearly, she understands "the terms of male discourse" within which she must operate to maintain power without breaching completely the gendered code of conduct.[22] Margaret embodies a gendered revolution that aims to uphold the patriarchal society to maintain her elite class status; she seeks to increase her proximity to masculinity without overtly upsetting the social order.

In some ways, though, even Margaret's subdued domestic subversion seeks to deconstruct the entire system; the emergent capitalistic system of patriarchy attempts to prove women are "unable to govern themselves," and the Queen asserts herself as not only capable within her relationships but as the nation's ruler.[23] In this way, her masculinity could be viewed as a subtle undermining of the English hierarchy. Margaret uses her masculinization, however, exclusively to gain individual power; she is, and wants to

be, a singularity. She does not have solidarity with other women—especially those of lower classes—nor does she acknowledge other women except to attack Eleanor.[24] In essence, Margaret transforms herself not into a powerful woman but into a man. At best, she alters the hierarchy to allow for her own domination; at worst, she subscribes to, perpetuates, and internalizes the existing construction of power by diminishing the social mobility of others.

Women had social power in only two important ways within early modern patriarchy: as adulteresses and as scolds. Margaret, in some senses, is a scold, or a woman who rejects "women's [roles of] 'quiet' and obedience" in a public manner.[25] In contrast with Henry's devout religious nature, Margaret's alignment with scolds places her outside the narrow boundaries of Christian morals. This is perhaps another means of villainizing Margaret for her masculine presentation and chastising Henry for his inability to control his wife. If Margaret is a scold, she embodies both forms of "subversion" provided by the state as outlets for controllable disobedience. The legal line between "scolding" and "witch-speak" is hazy, but the punishments indicate "witch-speak" is far greater a crime.[26] Eleanor's witchcraft accusation and Margaret's complete lack of punishment demonstrate Margaret's careful negotiation of gender and power, as opposed to Eleanor's outright defiance of the bounds of femininity.

In *1 Henry VI*, Shakespeare emphasizes Joan of Arc's status as leader of France, "defining the conflict between England and France as a conflict between masculine and feminine values."[27] If indeed England is the ideal, masculine state, and France the effeminate and therefore inferior enemy, Margaret's introduction to the play as the catalyst for the forfeiture of Anjou and Maine to France is symbolically the weakening of England's masculine power. King Henry VI, the human manifestation of the state, is from the moment the play begins aligned with feminine fragility. Margaret, on the other hand, embodies masculinity and metaphorically relinquishes femininity in the very act of becoming English. Assuming the preceding play had already been written and performed, the construction of Margaret as the dominant, masculine figure in her relationship with the King would have been evident to the viewer even before she was physically present on stage.

Duchess Eleanor, conversely, performs masculinity in a distinctly un-English way: she plots ambitiously to dethrone a seated King.[28] Under the reign of the devout Henry VI, who seems to be coded as Protestant, Eleanor consorts with Catholic priests.[29] Shakespeare entirely constructed this subversion, as the only priest who was accused during her trial, John Home, was quickly acquitted.[30] Furthermore, the historical Henry VI was a Roman Catholic whose reign predated the Reformation; perhaps Shakespeare used this alignment of the villainess Eleanor with the Catholic church and Henry with the Protestant values of introspection and reading to modify the realm of Englishness and appeal to Elizabeth I's Protestantism.[31] Eleanor's eventual punishment—condemnation to supervised exile on the Isle of Man—physically represents her un-Englishness. She is not only outcast from mainland England for her subversion but symbolically relegated to the realm of the masculine, where she will be constantly presided over by the dominant force of Sir John Stanley.[32] Yet the most un-English of Eleanor's actions is grotesquely feminine—the hiring of Margery Jourdayne, a witch.

Eleanor's performance of gender could be read as parallel to Margaret's, especially within her relationship with the Duke. She is ambitious and dominant. Yet she does not seem to be transformed into a masculine entity; rather, she develops an emergent femininity. As she reveals her ambition, she demonstrates a belief in astrology and premonition through dreams: "Tell me and I'll requite it / With sweet rehearsal of my morning's dream" (1.2.23-24). Consistently, she is related to magic and astrology. She is not masculinized through these associations; instead, she materializes the "wrong" kind of womanhood. Distinctly vocal and incomprehensibly powerful, witchcraft was an area of female dominance through "dangerous talk and strange behavior that [was perceived as] peculiarly female."[33] In early modern England, "the inconceivable reality of female authority and the intolerable fact of female power could be rationalized only in terms of the supernatural."[34] In hiring the peasant Margery, the Duchess also in some ways encourages class subversion. Consciously or subconsciously, Eleanor inherently rebels against the feudal-capitalist social structure when she disrupts patriarchal misogyny.

Eleanor also represents a reversal of traditional gender roles within her relationship with her husband Humphrey of Lancaster, Duke of Gloucester and Lord Protector of England. Her first lines are an encouragement for Humphrey to strive for a higher position in the court: "Put forth thy hand, reach at the glorious gold. / What, is't too short? I'll lengthen it with mine" (1.2.11-12). Humphrey, though perhaps the figurehead of loyalty and morality, is feminized just as Henry is. Upon being chided by her husband for recalling a subversive dream, Eleanor covertly emasculates (and, in a subtle display of emotional power, gaslights) Humphrey by asking, "Are you so choleric / With Eleanor for telling but her dream?" (1.2.51-52). Although choler was a masculine humor, irrational anger was a "womanly" trait during the period, and Eleanor weaponizes Humphrey's anger, which seems to be justified, by framing it as uncalled-for indignation.[35]

The play reveals far fewer instances of gender role inversion within Eleanor and Humphrey's relationship dynamic than it does in that of Margaret and Henry probably because women were thought to masculinize "when men fail[ed] to assert control."[36] Unlike Henry, Humphrey checks Eleanor for being "ill-nurtured," or over-educated, and for speaking out of turn (1.2.42). While both women serve to "expos[e] the weakness of patriarchal authority," only Eleanor is punished and abandoned by her husband for her subversion.[37] It is Henry's weakness, not Humphrey's, that Shakespeare wants to critique. Shakespeare is perhaps, in emphasizing Humphrey's feminine inferiority to Margaret, demonstrating sympathy with the lower class. The King's "failings of masculinity" are also failures to reign powerfully—particularly over Suffolk and York, who mistreat those living on their land and enclose their commons.[38]

Shakespeare's portrayal of Duke Humphrey as loyal and righteous plays well into the readings of *2 Henry VI* as a revolutionary text. The other lords scorn him for the benevolence he shows the peasants who live on his land; the nobility often fought during the War of Roses, and his good standing with his citizenry made him a much more difficult target. In Act 1, Scene 3, commoners come to Humphrey for a fair trial in the case of the enclosure of their commons. In his defense against accusations of traitorous collaboration with Eleanor, he says, "many a pound

of mine own proper store, / Because I would not tax the needy commons, / Have I dispursed to the garrisons, / And never asked for restitution" (3.1.115-118). When Suffolk accuses Humphrey of maltreating his commons—the very thing Suffolk himself is doing—he does so because he fears the commoners' potential power if they are treated well, even according to the constraints of systemic oppression. In conversation about Humphrey's assassination, Suffolk worries "The commons will haply rise to save his life," and the rebels do riot upon learning of his death (3.1.240). Shakespeare encourages a diluted version of populism; Humphrey seems to deserve his wealth and power precisely because he does not maximally capitalize off his peasants.

Yet Shakespeare's moral code is complicated; when Sander Simpcox approaches the lords on the street, it is Humphrey who chases him away and orders his punishment. Thus, he is, paradigmatically, at once an emblem of class traitorhood and of state-enforced justice. The genteel Duke, however generous with his commons and caring to Eleanor, upholds the violent framework of punishment that enforces class and gender hierarchies systemically in England. The Duke of Gloucester represents true nobility, and his death demonstrates how governmental corruption quells righteousness. Shakespeare's commentary seems to be not revolutionary but, at best, a reformist appeal to the monarchy. What revolutionary tendencies Shakespeare does show are not rebukes of the processes of acquiring power but the cruel enforcement of those processes; he is sympathetic, it seems, with only the "principled" low-class men who have been wronged by enclosures, but certainly not with the women who have been wronged by the patriarchy.

Notably, while Suffolk is portrayed as feminine for his overt eroticism and Henry for his passion, Margaret is not feminized but villainized for her sexuality. Her adulterous relationship with Suffolk is dangerous "to the good order of the kingdom;"[39] the lurking potential of illegitimate offspring from women's sexual disobedience threatens patrilineal succession to exponentially increasing degrees as one moves up in the royal hierarchy. Margaret as a sexual being, then, is not admirably feminine but immeasurably dangerous. While she may be a powerful woman, the control she exercises is within the patriarchy and therefore "defined in terms

of menace to" it.[40] The paradigm of femininity is that it represents weakness, and is therefore negative; yet the woman who escapes it, even within the confines of the system, is always the villain.

Eleanor, likewise, presents a threat to not just the immediate monarchy but the entire social order of power. She practices witchcraft, which is itself discrediting as it is simultaneously a feminine act and a subversion of expectation.[41] She challenges the God-given power of the monarchs. And when she hires the peasant woman Margery Jourdayne, lending her magic credibility and therefore providing her social mobility, she becomes subject to accusations of witchcraft when. Early modern society often sensationalized witchcraft accusations to exploit women "for political gain" and to defame and discredit them.[42] As a secondary means of disenfranchisement, the Duchess' agency is constantly stripped from her. Shakespeare's female characters—who are performed by men—"are always, in some measure, the instruments of male ventriloquism," but within the text, too, Eleanor's motivations are interpreted as manufactured by and for men.[43]

Upon her conviction, Eleanor is sentenced to life on the Isle of Man, where her every action is predetermined by the state—entirely stripping her of her agency. And even after her punishment has commenced, Suffolk strips Eleanor of her dominance and imposes it upon Humphrey: "The Duchess by his subornation, / Upon my life, began her devilish practices" (3.1.45-46). It is society's inability to recognize feminine power which ultimately gets Humphrey killed. Even the act of conjuring, for which she is arrested and exiled, is said to be "buzz[ed] … in her brain" by Sir John Hum, who is paid by Suffolk and Winchester (1.2.99). This is not evidenced by the real accounts, which indicate the dukes simply took advantage of Eleanor's imprisonment to acquire power. Furthermore, while in the play Hum is in full control of the women's connection, evidence suggests Eleanor and Margery's relationship had existed for as long as ten years before their sentencing.[44] Margery and Eleanor's unseen relationship along with Margaret and Eleanor's hostile vendetta suggest Shakespeare found the possibility of women in solidarity to be too great a threat to represent in a play wherein peasants were already rebelling.

Margaret and Eleanor are perhaps foils; certainly, they are enemies. Both invert the traditional male-female power dynamics

within their marriages, and both are strong women with agency. Yet Margaret embraces masculinity and seems to masculinize herself without disrupting on a systematic level the binary of gendered power. Eleanor and the peasant woman she hires, on the other hand, navigate dominant femininity. While Margaret is a strong woman, she uses what Audre Lorde would call "the master's tools," masculinity, which "will never dismantle the master's house," the patriarchy.[45] Her subversion is less threatening than Eleanor's because she attempts only to transform herself into a man, while Eleanor's subversive femininity undermines the entire patriarchy and therefore one of the pillars of the feudal-capitalist hierarchical system.

This dichotomy can be seen significantly in the women's respective punishments for their subversion. Eleanor is paraded through the streets in open shame and banished to servitude in exile—a supreme display of obedience and submission. But Margaret finishes the play unpunished, though perhaps despised. Her final words once again display Henry's ineptitude and weakness: "Away my lord, you are slow, for shame, away! / … What are you made of? You'll nor fight nor fly. / Now is it manhood, wisdom, and defence, / To give the enemy way" (5.2.72-76). She covertly masculinizes herself by calling retreat, the very thing she is suggesting, "manhood." Simultaneously, she emasculates Henry by displaying his inability to win in battle against York. Moreover, she asserts dominance over the King rhetorically; it is she who has the last word in their final moments on stage, not Henry.

Margery Jourdayne (or, historically, Jourdemayne), the witch Eleanor hires to divine the consequences of Henry's reign, suffers a different fate. A peasant woman who adopted the dark arts as a means of gaining money and social power, Jourdayne's pure existence is subversive, and she is ultimately punished as such. In fact, Margery's sedition is so intense that her speech is limited to one line, and her name is uttered only once, at 1.4.11. In the quarto, she gets another mention—"Rise, Jourdayne, rise"— but this only gives further power to Roger Bolingbroke (after F 1.4.39). Though in the historical accounts she is burned at the stake, Margery's character is simply arrested and swept swiftly offstage to be imprisoned.[46] Witchcraft—acknowledged by the English government as the antonym of authority—was punishable

by public torture and death. That Shakespeare chose to reduce Margery's character almost to nothing, without visibility even for punishment, proves the power a poor woman potentially had against the English state.[47]

Upon Margery's arrest, the Duke of York says, "I think we watched you at an inch," demonstrating once again that the English government understood the potential chaos a powerful woman could cause (1.4.41). According to the real account, this was true: she had previously spent time in custody at Windsor Castle for an "unspecified offence" of sorcery and was released under the condition of good behavior. In fact, Eleanor had been accused of using Margery's sorcery for years beforehand to seduce Humphrey when she was still lady-in-waiting.[48] (Interestingly, Shakespeare chose not to mention Eleanor's adultery. Perhaps this was merely to maintain the simplicity of his female characters, who, to remain dehumanized, had also to remain static and flat, or perhaps, Shakespeare chose not to mar Duke Humphrey's image.)[49] Regardless, Eleanor's continued acquaintance with Margery allowed for Margery's upward economic mobility; her husband was a yeoman whose status steadily increased due to their family's relationship with the court.[50] In this way, Eleanor's domestic revolution gave way to class subversion.

Essential to understanding the anti-capitalist nature of magic is the dissection of the importance of control. The natural objective of capitalism is complete control. Magical belief, to the contrary, emphasizes the spirit and unpredictability in all things, alive or not.[51] The patriarchy, too, aims for total control, and in imagining the power of women's speech constructs an even more menacing "witch."[52] The witch hunt, then, was the attempted imposition of patriarchal domination upon women in a moment wherein social expectations were changing; underscored by the chaos caused by the War of Roses and peasant revolts, subversion by women against emergent capitalist control was an immense threat to the stability of the kingdom. In fact, Federici calls the witch hunt "a class war carried out by other means."[53] The issues of gender and class are inseparable—both are pillars of the oppressive hierarchy; without one, the entire institution would fall.

The oppressed group behavior model, wherein one oppressed group exercises violence against another to try to gain access to

power, can be applied to both the women and the commoners in *2 Henry VI*.[54] While Margaret laughs at Simpcox to demonstrate her strength, Cade and his men provide women as an example of the property items made common for all (4.7.19). The separate systems of hierarchy for class and gender made "gender a problem in the class system, just as class became a problem in the gender system," as neither women nor low-class men had a firm positionality of rank.[55] One of the greatest shortcomings of hierarchy is that even those who benefit most from it must buckle to its constraints. Neither the women nor the lower class may have true liberation if they fight in opposition of each other; the English state made sure to keep the two groups systematically opposed through cyclical oppressive violence, and *2 Henry VI* does not represent any divergence from this pattern.[56]

Of course, the crossover between the two most elite women in England and Jack Cade's rebellious men seems, at first glance, nonexistent. Yet the women, "whose labour fuelled capitalist accumulation but outside of contractual relations," serve to enrich the feudal-capitalist system through domestic work just as the commoners do through manual labor.[57] In fact, some scholars see "domestic work as the key element in the production of labour-power," as it allows for the greater dedication of others in the household to work, fight, or otherwise accumulate wealth.[58] The same system that empowers the monarchy to enclose Jack Cade's men's land and exploit their labor encourages men to use women's reproductive work for capital accumulation.[59] In fact, Cade himself blames his poverty on a woman, claiming his father, originally born to a Countess and an Earl, "[w]as by a beggar-woman stolen away" as an infant (4.2.134). Jack Cade's rebels reproduce their own oppression and impose it onto low-class women to retain some semblance of power, and Margaret reproduces her oppression and imposes it onto the commoners for that same reason.

Eleanor, too, is in some ways an agent of class suppression. She uses Margery Jourdayne, a woman of lower class, to increase her own systemic power; she wants to usurp Margaret to become the Queen. She does not provide any indication that, if Eleanor becomes Queen, Margery will be lifted into the high ranks of society. And upon their respective sentencing, Eleanor does not defend Margery. Eleanor's use of Margery's skills to accumulate power could be viewed as exploitative, since Eleanor reaps the benefits of

Margery's labor. In her attempt to acquire these benefits, though, Eleanor begins to unravel the fabric of early modern English society, the same systems which uphold the monarchy. The extent of the real Eleanor Cobham's understanding of power will never be known, but it is not unreasonable to assume she knew she could not gain power through the sanctioned methods of the system. Perhaps she planned to restructure English society, or perhaps she simply did not realize the potential subversive implications of her acts. Regardless, Eleanor poses a threat to the hierarchy by being a traitor to her class and through gender solidarity, no matter how unstable and imperfect they are.

The rebels' solidarity is also a threat. In the play, illiteracy is a symbol of class solidarity; Emmanuel, Clerk of Chatham, is hanged for being "so well brought up that [he] can write [his] name" (4.2.96-100). This was a moment in which Jack Cade's rebellious words—and maybe even his burning of books—would have rung true to the poorest in the audience and outraged the noblest. Literature and learning were emblems of the gate kept elite. Even Duchess Eleanor was likely not well educated, as she was "once waiting-woman to [Humphrey's] first wife."[60] In that moment, both women's and commoners' speech were becoming "recognized as capable of destabilizing authoritative discourses … and power structures."[61] Perhaps, Shakespeare is revolutionary in giving Cade's rebels a place to speak and unite. Yet education is used against and discouraged in the elite women, just as it is for the rebels, and they are not afforded this same space.

While measuring literacy rates is difficult because many women were taught to read but not to write—a tactic used historically to repress groups' voices—the data reveals a staggeringly gendered literacy. In East Anglia, England, in the 1580s, only 6% of artisan women as opposed to 49% of artisan men could sign their names—a low threshold for literacy.[62] In the 1400s, when the play is set, these rates of gendered literacy were even lower. Class, too, played a part: "at least three-quarters [of tradesmen] were illiterate in the 1560s."[63] The emphasis on Eleanor and Margaret's intelligence and education as well as on the commoners' disdain for literature is poignant; *2 Henry VI*, written and performed in the early 1590s, came amid an "educational recession," wherein literacy rates were dropping and unemployment rates rising.[64]

This is not the only instance in which solidarity could exist but is evaded in the text. Margaret and Eleanor aggressively oppose each other, explicitly demonstrating a lack of female solidarity that disempowers them both. According to Sarah Ahmed, "to become feminist can often mean looking for company;" in these terms, Margaret is not even at the cusp of embracing liberation.[65] The Queen even hits Eleanor on the ear, demonstrating the physical violence which is normally relegated exclusively to the realm of men. Women were pitted against one another by the constraints of early modern English culture; as Laura Gowing explains, they had no formal means of expression of anger or frustration, yet they bore the weight of both gendered and classed oppression.[66] The feud between Margaret and Eleanor is no different.

Margaret reduces her gripe with Eleanor to class; her biggest complaint with Eleanor, beyond her husband's influence over Henry, is that "Strangers in the court do take her for the queen" because she is so rich (1.3.80). Because Margaret is not systemically subversive of the patriarchy, she is fundamentally in competition with any other powerful woman. She clings to "the words of sexual insult" ("callet" at 1.3.84 and the double-entendre of "tainture of thy nest" at 2.1.183), appropriating the tools used by the patriarchy to suppress women and weaponizing them against Eleanor.[67] Paradigmatically, the same solidarity Margaret avoids to preserve her class power could eventually bring social liberation.[68]

Margaret separates herself from the subversive elements in the play in another significant way: admonishing commoners. When she is approached with supplications by petitioners who want to prevent the enclosure of their commons, Margaret tears their supplications and shoos them out of the court, calling them "base scullions" (1.3.41). In the quarto, this destruction of the supplication is attributed to Suffolk.[69] For the elite audience, Margaret is once again the figurehead of the deterioration of English social order, whereas for the common audience that blame is shared with male elites. In Act 2, when the lords speak with Simpcox, all of them, including Margaret, make it a point to ignore his wife. Simpcox's wife, who is not given a name, represents the true bottom of the social order; she is not only a woman but a beggar. Margaret does not hide her contempt for the poor or her cruelty. When Henry laments the fraud perpetuated by Simpcox and his

wife, Margaret responds: "It made me laugh to see the villain run" (2.1.151). Again, she is the more masculine of the two, and again, she is fully removed from compassion for the lower class, marking herself in total class solidarity and distinct from any oppressed community. She transforms herself into the peer of the elite men, masculinizing her mind while maintaining the agreeability of her feminine body. In some ways, she becomes maximally palatable for male consumption; despite her vocal command of power, she presents a careful display of solidarity with the men around her.

The question of female palatability and subordination is complicated. Margaret, Eleanor, and Margery are all strong, capable women, each of whom has her own agency and motivations. Each was a real woman attempting to navigate the treacherous waters of patriarchy. Yet in Shakespeare's retelling of their lives, scholars tend to agree that the inversion of women's roles "clarif[ies] the structure by the process of reversing it."[70] Instead of demonstrating women's powers, *2 Henry VI* is Shakespeare's way of proving women who step out of line will be punished. Even read in a more positive light, the play exposes the deeply misogynistic standards of the patriarchy. The extraordinary woman who uses her power for the greater good—and one could argue Margaret re-strengthens the English throne in the wake of Henry's sheepish deficiency—still inspires only the select few to subvert expectations, rather than sparking systematic change.[71]

To truly subvert the patriarchy, women must develop "alternative models of feminine force" outside of the roles imposed upon them by the gender binary—models like witchcraft.[72] Eleanor and Margery, who exemplify what today might be called divine femininity and represent true subversion of class and gender roles, are thoroughly vilified and silenced—given not even the benefit of a representation that could resonate with audience members. Despite his perceived anti-elitism, then, Shakespeare demonstrates support for the institution of monarchy.[73] Even in his quarto, which perhaps intends to spark revolutionary thought among his low-class viewers, Shakespeare refuses to paint the women of the play in a positive light, and in doing so allows for the continued reproduction of patriarchal control. The text can therefore not possibly be truly insurgent; it embraces one pillar of the establishment just as it subverts the other.

Eleanor dismantles the traditional ideal of femininity and creates, instead, a source of power and dominance that does not adhere to masculine stereotypes. Outside of the rigid restrictions of the gender binary, Eleanor and Margery threaten not only their monarchs but also the patriarchy in its entirety. Still, there is something to be said for Margaret's approach. Situated as she is in the highest seat of female power, she does what she can to not only survive the patriarchy but to command agency. She is the only woman who remains alive and unpunished when the curtains close. In modern western societies, some 400 years after the publication of *2 Henry VI*, the prevailing feminism is still that which hopes to achieve Margaret's status. In the age of the "girl boss" who paradigmatically "wins" the patriarchy and upholds it, it is crucial to recognize the fundamental link between capitalistic class oppression and patriarchal power. Feminism cannot be a simple restructuring of capitalism; without solidarity between all oppressed communities, which seeks to deconstruct every pattern of hierarchy, no liberation will ever be achieved.

Notes

1. Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* (New York: Autonomedia, 2004), 29-31.
2. Federici, *Caliban*, 115.
3. Marx quoted in Federici, *Caliban*, 62.
4. Federici, Caliban, 97.
5. Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 95.
6. Federici, *Caliban*, 64.
7. Sarah Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 85.
8. Silvia Federici, "Marx and Feminism," *TripleC* 16, no. 2 (May 2018): 468–75. 468.
9. Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 204.
10. Stephen Greenblatt, "Murdering Peasants: Status, Genre, and the Representation of Rebellion," *Representations* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 25.
11. Michael Hattaway, "Rebellion, Class Consciousness, and Shakespeare's 2 Henry VI," *Cahiers Élisabéthains: A Journal of English Renaissance Studies* 33, no. 1 (April 1988): 13–22. 18.
12. Ronda Arab, "Ruthless Power and Ambivalent Glory: The Rebel-Labourer in 2 Henry VI," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 5, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 26.

13. Freisner, 171.

14. Nina Levine, "The Case of Eleanor Cobham: Authorizing History in *2 Henry VI*," *Shakespeare Studies* 22 (1994): 117.

15. Rackin, *Stages*, 193.

16. Amussen, *Ordered Society*, 66.

17. Rackin, *Stages*, 147.

18. All Shakespeare quotes are from William Shakespeare, *Henry VI, Part Two*, ed. Roger Warren (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

19. Rackin, *Stages*, 172.

20. Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 159.

21. Federici, *Caliban*, 184.

22. Mary-Catherine Bodden, *Language as the Site of Revolt in Medieval and Early Modern England: Speaking as a Woman* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 58.

23. Federici, *Caliban*, 101.

24. Interestingly, in *Richard III*, Margaret rallies with other women, though it could be argued that upon Henry's death she no longer has the privilege of exercising masculine power and must form solidarity with other women to garner power.

25. Amussen, *Ordered Society*, 103, 122.

26. Bodden, *Language as the Site of Revolt*, 27.

27. Rackin, *Stages*, 151.

28. Ambition was a "masculine" trait. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender*, 330.

29. Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 1997), 76.

30. Jessica Freeman, "Sorcery at Court and Manor: Margery Jourdemayne, the Witch of Eye next Westminster," *Journal of Medieval History* 30, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 352.

31. Henry is also never shown wearing a rosary, praying to a saint, or performing confessional. David Daniell, "Shakespeare and the Protestant Mind," in *Shakespeare Survey* 54, edited by Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 12.

32. Howard and Rackin, *Engendering a Nation*, 77.

33. Sharon L. Jansen, *Dangerous Talk and Strange Behavior: Women and Popular Resistance to the Reforms of Henry VIII* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 144.

34. Rackin, *Stages*, 194.

35. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender*, 329.

36. Howard and Rackin, *Engendering a Nation*, 72.

37. Rackin, *Stages*, 177.

38. Howard and Rackin, *Engendering a Nation*, 71.

39. Howard and Rackin, *Engendering a Nation*, 73.

40. Rackin, *Stages*, 160-1.

41. Federici, *Caliban*, 101.

42. Levine, "The Case of Eleanor Cobham," 109.

43. Rackin, *Stages*, 205.

44. Freeman, "Sorcery," 348-56.

45. Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master's House." *Feminist Postcolonial Theory*, ed. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (Ithaca, NY: Routledge, 2003), 38.

46. Freeman, "Sorcery," 357.

47. Jansen, *Dangerous Talk*, 238.

48. Freeman, "Sorcery," 345-6.

49. Ralph Griffiths, "The Trial of Eleanor Cobham: An Episode in the Fall of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 51, no. 2 (July 1969): 383.

50. Freeman, "Sorcery," 357.

51. Federici, *Caliban*, 173-4.

52. Bodden, *Language as the Site of Revolt*, 27.

53. Federici, *Caliban*, 174-6.

54. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Penguin Education, 1972), 56.

55. Amussen, *Ordered Society*, 3.

56. Federici, *Caliban*, 47.

57. Federici, "Marx and Feminism," 468.

58. Federici, "Marx and Feminism," 473.

59. Federici, "Marx and Feminism," 474; Rackin, *Stages*, 160.

60. A footnote in Warren's *2 Henry VI*. 127n42.

61. Bodden, *Language as the Site of Revolt*, 143.

62. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender*, 164.

63. David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 153.

64. Cressy, *Literacy*, 169-70.

65. Ahmed, *Living*, 66.

66. Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 61.

67. Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, 29.

68. Brown quoted in Bodden, *Language as the Site of Revolt*, 30-36.

69. A footnote in Warren's *2 Henry VI*. 132 n40.1.

70. Natalie Zemon Davis, "Women on Top: Symbolic Sexual Inversion and Political Disorder in Early Modern Europe," in *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*, ed. Barbara Babcock (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 153.

71. Davis, "Women on Top," 157.

72. Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order*, 112.

73. Although the office of the King of England would not lose power to the Parliament for another century, democratic thought had long been ruminating in Europe; given his knowledge of Italy, Shakespeare almost certainly knew about democracy. Van Zanden, Jan Luiten, Eltjo Buringh, and Maarten Bosker, "The Rise and Decline of European Parliaments, 1188—1789," *The Economic History Review* 65, no. 3 (2012): 835–61.