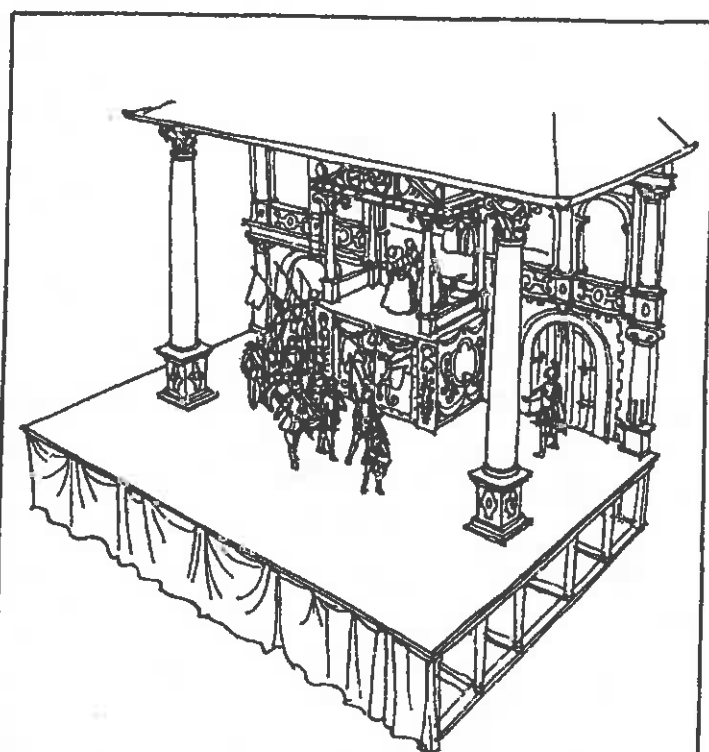


Volume VII

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## ENGLISH GRADUATE REVIEW



## SHAKESPEARE IN PERFORMANCE

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The views expressed in the *English Graduate Review* are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department of English at SUNY/New Paltz.

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*English Graduate Review*

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## Introduction:

H. R. Stoneback

The Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Graduate English Symposium contained in this volume feature the papers of seven of our graduate students, as presented at the "Shakespeare in Performance" Symposium (April 27, 1995). The symposium themes and papers are discussed in the commentary herein by the symposium director, Professor Yu Jin Ko (now of Wellesley College). It should also be noted that the distinguished visiting speaker at the Seventh Annual Symposium was Professor David Bevington, of the University of Chicago, whose evening address, "Shakespeare on Film and In Opera: Performance as Interpretation," was very well-attended and warmly received. Professor Bevington also attended the graduate student paper session and offered acute and laudatory commentary on those papers. Moreover, Bevington praised the overall symposium concept and execution, and noted that such a symposium was both unique for an MA program and worthy of the finest Ph.D. programs.

Together with these symposium papers, we are pleased to include two articles by candidates for the Master's degree in English: "Webs and Wheels: Connections in Time and Space" by Lynne Crockett and "Carpe Diem: Moll Flanders and 18th-Century Motherhood" by Jennifer Benton. The editors of the *Review* stress, as always, that we invite submissions for subsequent issues: essays, explications, book reviews, notes and queries, and letters to the editor. (Please see details regarding submission of items in the backmatter--"Guidelines for Contributors.") We also encourage submission of items for our "announcements" and "Alumni Notes" section of the journal, such as conference announcements and news of accomplishments of our current and former graduate students. For example, in 1995 we reestablished contact with William Brevda (MA New Paltz 1972); since leaving New Paltz, Professor Brevda has earned his Ph.D. at the University of Connecticut, served as Visiting Professor at the University of Groningen in The Netherlands, and taught at the University of Mississippi and Central Michigan University, where he is now Associate Professor of English. He has also published two scholarly books and numerous articles. Scores of New Paltz MA's in English have likewise distinguished themselves, in Ph.D. programs, as teachers and writers, as professors and publishing scholars. From the 1996 class of MA's alone, four students received multiple offers and major fellowships in Ph. D. programs: Adrian Constant, now at the University of Mississippi, Lynne Crockett, now at N.Y.U., Rob Fitzpatrick, at SUNY-Binghamton, and Boris Kolbat, at the University of Texas. Such important news deserves to be reported in these pages--please keep us informed.

The Eighth Annual Graduate English Symposium, "Representations of Academic Life in Literature," was held in April 1996, with Professors A. M. Cinquemani and M. Stella Deen serving as co-directors. Volume Eight of the *Review*, featuring the symposium proceedings and other articles, is currently in preparation. With that issue, Professor Dan Kempton will join the *Review* as co-editor. The Ninth Annual Graduate English Symposium will be held in April 1997. In response to graduate student suggestions, the symposium topic will center on "Sense of Place in Literature" (working title). It is hoped that the wide range of possibilities presented by such a topic will result in a number of fine symposium paper submissions, dealing with works from any period of English and American literature. Please watch for detailed announcements concerning the 1997 symposium during the Fall 1996 and Spring 1997 semesters. A Call for Papers will be issued by the midpoint of the Fall term.

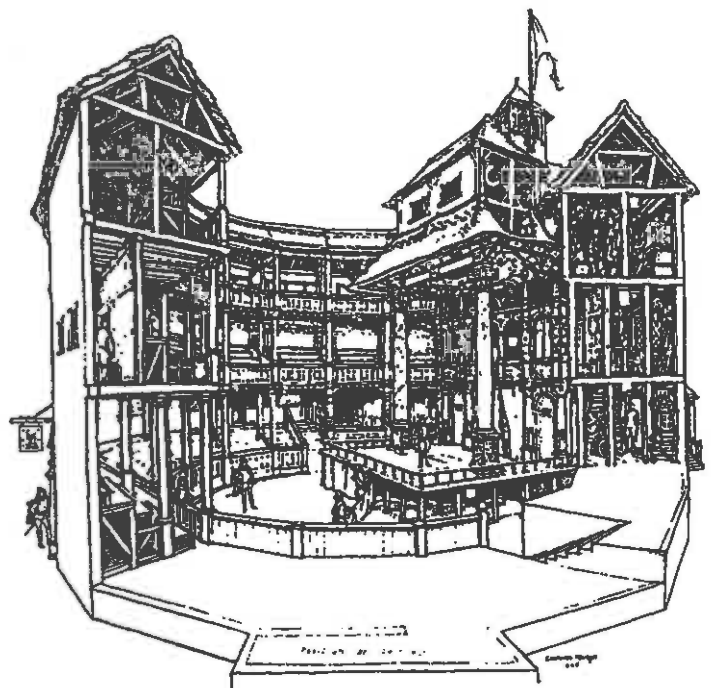
With this issue, Volume Seven of the *English Graduate Review*, we bid farewell to our co-editor, Professor Lawrence Sullivan, who has served since the *Review's* inception in 1989 with extraordinary commitment and intellectual enthusiasm, with editorial acuity and workaday devotion to the production details of this journal. Perhaps a bit of history is in order here: In April 1989 the graduate program of the English Department held its First Annual Graduate Symposium. The distinguished visiting speaker was Irving Howe. Four of our graduate students presented papers dealing with issues raised by Howe's critical *oeuvre*. That first symposium was such a success that it seemed there should be some permanent record of the proceedings. In conversation on the first symposium day, I suggested to Larry Sullivan--or maybe we suggested it to each other simultaneously--that we initiate the publication that became the *Graduate Review*.

In a matter of months, we issued Volume One of the *English Graduate Review*, with the published proceedings of our first graduate symposium. In 1990, we produced a second volume of the review, which--published in more substantial form--included the proceedings of the "Hemingway and Film" symposium, and expanded the journal's range and mission to include other articles and non-symposium matters. That issue, Volume Two, included the screenplay of Brian Edgar's award-winning film, of Hemingway's "Indian Camp" (which had its world premiere at the Second Graduate English Symposium), and received national attention for its contribution to the field of Hemingway studies. Five more fine issues followed: Volume Three "Medieval and Renaissance Women Writers"; Volume Four "Green Thoughts in a Greene Shade" (Seventeenth-Century English Poetry); Volume Five "Sacred Space, Sacred Time: The Literature of Sport"; Volume Six "Gender in Literature: Issues, Perspectives, Language"; and this issue, centered on "Shakespeare in Performance." (Volume Eight, with the proceedings of our symposium on "Representations of Academic Life in Literature" and other articles, is forthcoming.) These first seven issues of the *English Graduate Review* includes articles by a long list of our MA candidates who have gone on to distinguish

themselves as teachers and writers. We are pleased and proud that their publishing careers began in the *English Graduate Review*.

None of the above-mentioned issues would have been possible without the editorial assiduity of my co-editor. On behalf of the graduate program in English, then, I here echo and amplify and record the praise and plaudits and gratitude of the many graduate students Larry Sullivan had worked with over the years; and I inscribe this "Bravo" for his performance. This issue of the *English Graduate Review* is dedicated to Larry Sullivan, on the occasion of his retirement.

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## Introduction to the Symposium Papers

Yu Jin Ko

Shakespeare was the most popular playwright of his era, attracting profoundly engaged audiences from all social classes to an overcrowded theatre notorious for its unruliness. What brought such a diverse crowd to a messy, outdoor theatre and riveted its attention? This question lies at the heart of all the papers in this issue of the *English Graduate Review*, the majority of which were first presented at the Seventh Annual Graduate English Symposium, titled "Shakespeare in Performance." As one might guess, the papers engaged with some aspect of performance as they explored Shakespeare's plays as scripts for the theatre. Although synoptic in this respect, the papers do nonetheless offer a wide range of concerns and interests.

Four papers were originally read during the first of two sessions of the Symposium under the general rubric, "Relating historical fact to contemporary consciousness." This title is drawn from T. S. Eliot's introduction to S. L. Bethell's landmark work *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition*, and points to some of the issues addressed. Bethell's student is an attempt to recover what he thought of as the authentic Shakespeare by reconstructing, first, the popular dramatic conventions that Shakespeare inherited, and second, the kind of mind that would have seen Shakespeare clearly and seen him whole. While endorsing Bethell's project in the introduction, Eliot cautions us, however, against trusting too much in the stability of past artifact; insofar as its meaning is continually rediscovered and resupplied by an ever-evolving consciousness, he suggests, "past artifact: is itself an ever-evolving product. The papers of the first session situated themselves within this dynamic of contrary impulses--between retrieving the past and relating the past, or between factual discovery and interpretive revision.

The four papers in the second session, titled "Staging the Renaissance," continued the concerns of the previous papers but directed themselves towards specific ways of staging Shakespeare today. Indeed, two of the papers derived from an actual performance directed by the speakers. One of the speakers, Ann Marie Phillips, even donned--to the irrepressible delight of all--the very costume for Richard III that she had designed for the performance. In essence, then, the papers engaged with the initial question by imagining or reconstructing performances that transformed scripts into living theatre.

Speaking in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* of the results of midnight madness that the lovers suffer in the woods outside Athens, Hippolyta notes that their minds having been "transfigured so together/More witnesseth than fancy's images,/ And grows to something of great constancy" (5.1.24-26). Clearly her words speak not only of the magic of the woods, but also of the theatre. The papers in this volume essentially explore the magic that continues to transform us in the audience. At the same time, the papers also leave behind, I believe, "something of great constancy."

## "Things Rank and Gross in Nature": The Depiction of Gertrude in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*

Christina Nelson

Deciphering Hamlet's complex personality in order to understand the motivations for his strange and fatal behavior has long been a problem for literary critics as well as stage and film directors. Hamlet has been described as an overgrown adolescent, as a man incapable of making a decision, and as a self-absorbed scholar. In his 1990 film, Franco Zeffirelli opts for another popular analysis of Hamlet: Hamlet suffers from an Oedipus Complex. This interpretation of Hamlet's character has a three-fold effect on the play: Gertrude becomes an active temptress, Hamlet appears psychotic, and Shakespeare's commentary on the nature of leadership is lost.

Zeffirelli opens his film with a scene not found in Shakespeare's play. His portrayal of King Hamlet's funeral provides the viewer with immediate insight into Zeffirelli's intent to present the story of Hamlet as a family drama. The scene begins with a sweeping camera shot of citizens huddled outside the castle dressed in medieval costumes. Once the camera moves inside to the funeral proceedings, it becomes clear that the political and theatrical nature of a king's burial is being downplayed to emphasize the royal family drama about to take place. The entire scene takes place in a dark, closed, and even claustrophobic space. Gertrude looks imploringly at Hamlet and nervously at Claudius. The tension between the characters builds as the camera pans from Gertrude's tear-stained face to Claudius' stern gaze to Hamlet's veiled head. The camera's main focus is the imploring glances Gertrude casts Hamlet's way. Gertrude appears confused and unhappy. Claudius seems stern, unrelenting, and unkind. Hamlet veiled and wearing a coarse brown robe resembles a monk or some kind of truth-seeker. The key moment of the scene occurs when Claudius brandishes a sword and lays it on his brother's coffin so that it points directly at Gertrude.

The phallic symbolism of the scene is not lost on the viewer (or Hamlet) as the camera presents the scene as if the audience was looking through Claudius' eyes and with his lusty heart. The silence of the scene is finally broken by Claudius who coldly declares his intentions to treat Hamlet like a son. In a few brief moments, this scene presents in miniature Zeffirelli's definition of the crux of Hamlet's problem: his confused, hysterical mother has married a man with little or no feeling for Hamlet. Zeffirelli's decision to open with this scene rather than with the ghost scene in Shakespeare's text shapes the audience's understanding of Gertrude and Hamlet. Shakespeare's opening hints that something is rotten in the state of Denmark. But Zeffirelli concentrates on Gertrude's rotten personal judgment; she has chosen an unworthy and

lecherous king for her husband. The information Horatio provides in Act I about the rivalry between Norway and Denmark and the impending threat of Fortinbras is completely cut in Zeffirelli's version. Removing the political context of the play leaves the characters with only personal motivations for their actions. In this light, Queen Gertrude seems confused, flighty and stupid. Shakespeare's commentary on the nature of leadership through his implicit comparison between Fortinbras and Hamlet at the beginning and end of the play is also lost. Hamlet's problem is presented only in how it affects him, but Hamlet's decisions alter not only his own life but the history of Denmark.

After this scene, the film moves to the original beginning of Act I, ii with Claudius and Gertrude holding court. In this scene, the camera keeps its distance from the main characters, allowing the viewer to get a glimpse of the public domain in which this family drama is played out. The camera moves quickly from a distant and public view of the proceedings to a close-up of Gertrude. Again Gertrude appears flighty. Instead of behaving with the dignity of a queen conducting a ceremonial office, she beams like an infatuated school girl at the announcement of her marriage. Zeffirelli's interest in the personal and not political motivations of his characters is especially revealed by his shortening of Claudius' speech. Claudius' speech ends without mentioning the threat of young Fortinbras. These few lines in the original text, meant to be spoken in public, suggest much about Gertrude's motivations for marrying so hastily. Although critics often overlook this insight into Gertrude's options, these lines deserve consideration. With her husband dead and her son away, her decision to marry quickly could easily be based on a desire to discourage Norway from attacking Denmark. Gertrude's role and motivations as a queen are subsumed in Zeffirelli's desire to portray her as a sexual woman who ignites her son's Oedipal desire.

Zeffirelli's emphasis on the personal is further reinforced by his altering of Act I, ii from one scene played out in front of an audience to three scenes: a brief, public declaration of the marriage, an intimate discussion between the King and Laertes and another intimate discussion between the royal couple and Hamlet. In Shakespeare's text, Laertes asks permission to go to France immediately following the announcement of the royal marriage. In the film version, the dialogue between Laertes, Claudius, and Polonius is presented in a library far away from the public eye. Zeffirelli places his emphasis on the relationship between Claudius and Laertes. The camera focuses primarily on them, only moving to Polonius long enough for him to deliver his lines. The interchange between the King and Laertes is intimate, even fatherly. Assisted by the sunlight streaming in the window and the constant exchange of smiles, Claudius and Laertes both seem likable, good-natured fellows.

Claudius' attitude toward Laertes here contrasts sharply with his treatment of Hamlet in the next scene where he is alternately cold and patronizing. Depicting

an intimacy between Laertes and Claudius prepares the viewer for their later collusion, but it does not explain why Zeffirelli chose to separate this scene which many other directors (Olivier, for instance) keep intact. In Shakespeare's text, Claudius moves quickly from publicly granting kingly favor to Laertes to castigating Hamlet for his "unmanly grief." One consequence of Zeffirelli's decision to make this a private and not a public scene is that the implicit comparison between the two young men is lost. Later in the play and film, Laertes will act without hesitation to avenge his father's death while Hamlet is still preoccupied with his philosophical rationalizations. Having this scene separated from the interchange with Laertes and out of the public eye downplays Hamlet's refusal to adopt his political role as the Prince of Denmark. Without young Fortinbras and Laertes as points of reference for Hamlet's behavior, Shakespeare's interest in exploring what type of mind-set is needed in a political leader is ignored in this version of *Hamlet*.

The final third of Zeffirelli's interpretation of Act I,ii highlights all the elements of this family drama and depicts most pointedly Hamlet's obsession with his mother. After the library scene, the camera shifts to portray Gertrude giggling and running, with her long, blonde hair flying about her shoulders, to give Claudius a deep and very public kiss. The camera focuses on the scene from above, clearly offering the audience a view of the scene through Hamlet's eyes (he is hiding in the balcony above). After their long kiss, Gertrude seduces Claudius with imploring looks until he agrees to and go search for Hamlet with her. They find him cloistered in a small balcony room hidden away from the world. To emphasize the familial tension and Hamlet's withdrawal, Zeffirelli has Claudius and Gertrude address Hamlet from across the room. Two of the more effective bits of characterization in this scene include Claudius' wine goblet which suggests his lasciviousness and the way Hamlet winces when Gertrude opens the curtains to let in the light. The movement of the camera back and forth between Claudius and Hamlet intensifies the tension between them and makes that tension the focus of the first half of this scene. Claudius is clearly too uncomfortable to directly approach Hamlet and instead seats himself some distance away and takes a long draft of his drink. In a marked departure from the original text (as if the scene were not a departure enough), Hamlet directs his aside ("More than kin but less than kind") directly to Claudius who uncomfortably ignores this attack. For the next few minutes, Claudius patronizes Hamlet, until goblet in hand, he finally exits the room leaving the mother and son alone for the first time in the film.

With Claudius and the court removed from the scene, Zeffirelli's intent to portray Hamlet's mood swings and withdrawal as the result of his Oedipus Complex is fully revealed. In contrast to the tension and physical distance between Hamlet and Claudius, Hamlet and Gertrude remain spatially close to each other throughout the scene. As soon as Claudius leaves, Gertrude approaches Hamlet and proceeds to touch and stroke him in a decidedly lover-like manner. The

camera makes sure the audience sees this interaction by shifting to a close-up of their entwined upper bodies and focusing on Hamlet's hand as he caresses his mother's waist. Gertrude appears to convince Hamlet to change his attitude and behavior and she bounds from the room like an excited child. The scene ends with Hamlet peering through a window watching his mother who seems to have forgotten about his grief as she runs giggling to frolic with her horses. Hamlet then launches into a soliloquy which Zeffirelli shortens to end with Hamlet shouting, "Frailty, thy name is woman," while he slams the window shut on his mother and the world. Gertrude appears in the frame of the window just as Hamlet pronounces, "Things rank and gross in nature."

Clearly, this scene suggests that Hamlet is both sexually attracted to his mother and repelled by his attraction. His self-loathing is effectively highlighted in the first half of the movie by his constant appearance in small, dark, musty rooms from which he peers out at life unable to be a participant. This interpretation of Hamlet's behavior is reinforced by the fact that the audience has yet to meet the ghost of King Hamlet or to hear the rumors of royal murder. Although in Shakespeare's version, the audience learns of the ghost immediately. Until this point in the movie, Hamlet's behavior appears entirely motivated by his resentment of his mother's hasty wedding compounded by his own sexual attraction to her. He really appears to verge on the psychotic and it is hard to imagine that the audience has much sympathy for his plight. (Then again, this effect could also be due to Mel Gibson's over-acting in this scene--you have to wonder if anyone told him that Hamlet has not yet begun to play act.) Hamlet's attraction to his mother will become painfully obvious in Zeffirelli's staging of Act III, iv when Hamlet passionately throws Gertrude on her bed and kisses her. Their long, excessive kiss is only interrupted by the entrance of the ghost of King Hamlet whom Hamlet regards with an extremely guilty look. The audience is left wondering what might have happened if the ghost had not intruded. Are we to imagine this family drama would have ended with an act of consummated incest as Zeffirelli's direction suggests? Is this ending really the thrust of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*? (No pun intended.)

Zeffirelli's interest in the personal forces him to rely almost entirely on Hamlet's descriptions of Gertrude. It is Hamlet who condemns Gertrude as lustful. No other character in the play offers any solid support for this characterization. The ghost comments on her incestuous marriage, but his position as her former husband and as possibly a figment of Hamlet's imagination makes his comments on her somewhat suspect. In any case, Gertrude's words and actions reveal her to be intelligent and kind. Her gentle reminder to Hamlet that "all that lives must die" stands in stark contrast to Hamlet's obsession with death, and she deftly deals with Polonius' foolishness with a pithy direction for "more matter, with less art." In his zeal to interpret Hamlet's motivation for murder, Zeffirelli does Gertrude a disservice by portraying her as Hamlet's temptress. Through their intimate contact with menstruation and childbirth, women have long been associ-

ated with the darker side of sex and death by philosophers. Hamlet's obsession with sex and death and the misogyny he expresses toward Gertrude and Ophelia are not simply reflections of his own personal problem; they reflect a historical attitude toward women. Zeffirelli's depiction of Hamlet and Gertrude's family romance loses Shakespeare's lesson on the political nature of leadership. Contemporary women, however, can't miss the lesson in sexual politics offered by Zeffirelli's interpretation.

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## Doublet and Hose: Rosalind Takes a Walk on the Wild Side

Richard Hamilton

The role of the boy actor in Shakespeare's comedies has in recent years drawn more and more critical attention, primarily for its potentially subversive effects on the traditional notions of the unified, closed text, and the unified, undivided conception of the male/female subject. In particular, recent criticism argues that especially in those plays which overtly draw attention to the meta-theatrical being of the boy actor, the playwright begins to undermine or subvert the standardized contemporary teleologies used to explain sexual difference by establishing an autonomous figure in the boy actor who cannot be comfortably resolved within the discursive field of the play, who is not subject to the contingent demands of meaning within the space of the theatrical presentation. Furthermore, in recognizing the sexual identity of the boy actor beneath the female character he portrays, the playwright is seen to create a meta-theatrical awareness which is calculated to complicate the resolution of the dramatic oppositions within the play by drawing attention to and implicating a discursive universe exterior to dramatic action. Thus the plurality of the boy actor is not limited merely to issues of gender identification, but can also be seen as emblematic of the blurred distinction between character and actor, theater and audience, signifier and signified. Much of the criticism of the boy actor has understandably centered around the character of Rosalind in *As You Like It*.

If we are to accept the precepts outlined above, it would seem that to draw on these subtle distinctions inherent in the text a director would have to cast the role of Rosalind to a boy, thus resuscitating an effect which has been undermined by three centuries of mimetic essentialism in the "naturalized" productions of Shakespeare since women started playing the female characters. That is, not only should a boy be cast in the role, but that very fact of the boy's boyness should be immediately evident to an audience. But to do so today might be interpreted as an overtly sexist move to reassert male authority in representation. "The prospect of returning such roles as Rosalind to male actors could be seen as a retrograde, sexist step, and remains in that respect problematic. Given the cultural and economic forces at work, perhaps the best one can hope for is a compromise" (Soule 135).

But why is the best one can hope for a compromise? Clearly male transvestitism is seen as a political threat, one which subverts a notion of autonomy, and in this not much has changed since the Renaissance. However, I



would like to argue here that such a performance does not question merely the notion of feminine gender, but of masculinity as well; contemporary hesitancy to stage such productions is much more a product of homoerotic anxiety than it is due to worries about political correctness, or pressure put upon theatrical representation by a feminist lobby. It doesn't seem to me that in theory or on paper too many feminists would disagree with the notion of gender as constructed. In effect, if both genders are seen to be constructed, then the issue of sexism is non-existent.

Some understanding of the Elizabethan convention of boys playing women's roles is necessary to truly appreciate the ideological pendulum swing between that time and our own. Boys seem to have taken the stage for a variety of reasons which are not altogether compatible. On the one hand, it is argued that men played women's roles so that women would not be subjected to the immoral temptations of the theater. On the other hand, the immoral effects of the theater upon men was also a concern in the anti-theatrical texts of the time. Lisa Jardine quotes such a tract by Dr. John Rainoldes, called *Th' Overthrow of Stage-Playes* (Middleburgh, 1599): "A womans garment beeing put on a man doeth vehemently touch and moue him with the remembrance and imagination of a woman; and the imagination of a thing desirable cloth stirr up the desire" (9).

As Stephen Orgel points out, much of the subtext of these tracts were concerned with a latent homosexuality that could be found in the convention. The "true" etiology of the theater, Orgel argues, is that "what the spectator is 'really' attracted to in plays is men. The deepest fear in anti-theatrical tracts, far deeper than the fear that women in the audience will become whores, is the fear of a universal effeminization" (16-17). In a society where men are seen to be the model of perfection, women are merely imperfect men. Effeminization therefore is not only a threat to the individual male but to the established order of the patriarchy. That this was a valid fear in the Renaissance is borne out by medical treatises which assert that in the womb we all start as female, but that through an assertion of heat the male genitalia pushes outward. The focus in these tracts is on edifying a male power which is compromised in the fantasy of role-reversal depicted on the stage, in "losing the strength that enabled the male potential to be realized in the first place" (Orgel 14).

Such anxieties have also been shown to manifest themselves in Elizabethan sumptuary laws, which attempted to codify distinctions in dress in order to maintain the natural distinctions between the sexes and various social ranks. The obvious irony is, how natural could those distinctions be if they were so easily simulated by wearing the wrong clothes? In this view the construction of gender seems to be quite arbitrary and perilous, as Rosalind's ironic comment on her apparel bears out.

I could find in my heart to disgrace my man's apparel and to cry like a woman; but I must comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat: therefore courage, good Aliena! (II.iv.3-6)

Here Rosalind's clothing disguises not only the outward show of a woman but shores up an alternative interior personality as well. An act later, Rosalind's clothing has the opposite effect. "Good my complexion! dost thou think, though I am caparisoned like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition?" (III.ii). The resulting confusion of the effect of clothing or outward affectation on the individual is dramatized in the shifting of Rosalind's attitude between her Rosalind and Ganymede personas. This is complicated even further by the boy actor beneath the role.

By not allowing women to play the female roles, the theater might also be seen as preserving an interpretative authority over gender distinctions in the same manner, where the "feminine" was seen not as a complicated construction but rather as an outward affectation, one that could be easily simulated by a bit of makeup, the right clothing, and the proper pose. Men therefore limited the potentially destructive play of gender role-reversal by limiting it to theatrical representation and playing the parts themselves. In doing so, they also implicitly supported a misogyny which devalued any notions of an autonomous femininity. A woman was merely an incomplete man, and this fact enabled the boy, the undeveloped man, to easily play the woman's part, albeit the serious moral risk was recognized.

What this view amounts to is an exercise of meaning-making power not unlike the sexual power men exercised over women as well. As Orgel puts it,

Indeed, the function of sexual pleasure is generally said in the medical literature to be that it enables men to overcome their natural revulsion at the imperfection of women, and enables women to overcome their natural distaste for and fear of childbearing, which would mean, in Renaissance terms, their distaste for being women. (Orgel 13)

By relegating the function of pleasure to procreation, a woman's function is objectified in the sexual economy, and she becomes valuable only in relation to the importance the patriarchy places on her ability to provide legitimate male heirs. Thus sexuality, political power and economic stability is relegated to the male.

Conversely, the power exercised by men in such a society can also be seen as challenged by the changing role of the woman, particularly in relation to the family. For while women had not yet attained a position in the emerging mercantile society of 16th century England that was distinct from their position in the

feudal society, by Shakespeare's time that position was beginning to erode. Catherine Belsey points to this erosion as manifest in an emergent meaning of the family induced to evolve from pressures put upon it from the outside. In the intimate, affective realm which comes into being with the emergence of a set of differences between work and leisure, public and private, political and domestic, the place of women and children is newly defined. The home comes to be seen as a self-contained unit, a little world of retreat from the conflicts of the marketplace, and at the same time a seminary of good subjects, where the wife enters into partnership with her husband in the inculcation of love, courtesy and virtue in their children. (173) It is this movement toward a woman's increasing authority within the home that recent critics have seen reflected in the challenge to gender distinctions raised by the theater. "To point a finger at woman's affecting of the badges of male office--dress, arms, behavior--was to pin down a potent symbol of the threat to order which was perceived dimly as present in the entire shift from feudal to mercantile society" (Garden 162). On one level this is an adequate explanation for the propensity of women characters masquerading as men in Elizabethan drama, but on another it does not comprehend with what amount of irony the meta-theatrical subtleties in drawing attention to the boy actor beneath the women were played out.

Critics disagree on the extent of such an awareness' Lisa Jardine states that "The ordinary play-goer does not keep constantly in his or her mind the cross-dressing implications of 'boys in women's parts', but it is nevertheless available to the dramatist as a reference point for dramatic irony, or more serious double entendre" (Jardine 12), whereas Lesley Anne Soule sees the boy actor in *As You Like It* as not only "the subverter of the fiction of ideal character and the myth of Rosalind" but as the challenger of "the authority wielded by mimesis over our experience of identity and love" as well (Soule 136). The exact nature of the boy actor's subversive potential for Elizabethan audiences might never be known. It is unclear exactly how Elizabethan audiences reacted to the convention of the boy actor, and whether or not they happily suspended their disbelief, and it is difficult today to draw analogies in our own conventional experiences regarding the representation of gender. As Kathleen McCluskie has stated, "the essentialism of modern notions of sexuality cannot bring together the image of a boy and the image of a coherent female personality, except through camp notions of sexual ambiguity as a cohering mode of interpretation" (130).

But it precisely through camp notions of sexual ambiguity that a modern production of the play might succeed in generating a critique of the coherent personality, whether it be male or female. Instead, such a production might emphasize the potential of Rosalind-as-Ganymede's love prate as a subversive critique of not only gender distinctions but of other related discourses. In this sense the "sexual disguise" is not necessarily seen to promote an autonomy in the female character, since that autonomy is undermined by the conscious association of disguise with the boy actor, but rather to emphasize its similarity with other types

of disguises and postures adopted by lovers. I believe if the emphasis for a modern production were on the inadequacies of gendered distinctions, and that these inadequacies were centered around the inadequate reproduction of the feminine in the boy actor's portrayal of Rosalind, the idea of a boy actor would become more readily acceptable. Staging *As You Like It* in this vein would necessitate that an element of camp run throughout the production, but it would not be finally necessary to recast all the female's roles to boys. Likewise, a director shouldn't feel restricted to casting all the male roles to men. In other words, those issues that contemporary criticism sees raised in the character of Rosalind might equally apply to other characters in the play, particularly Phebe and Silvius, who are explicitly recognized as playing sexual roles opposite to their "nature."

Further tension could thus be generated between a meta-theatrical awareness of "actual" sexual identity as opposed to "fictional" sexual identity as represented in the actor's costume or the actor's adopted persona. In this sense the distinctive characteristics in dress might be blurred through the adoption of abstract costuming, say a similar design for all actors only differentiated by color. That is, by removing the comfort of familiarity in recognizable costumes, an abstract approach to clothing might draw an audience's attention to the arbitrarily constructed notion of the differences manifested in the outward appearance of gender. Why are little boys dressed in blue and little girls dressed in pink? Seeing gendered differences as more a product of culture and less a product of essentialist notions of sexuality would be one purpose of such theoretical costumes. The generated effect would try to approximate the ironies in Rosalind's comments on her dress. "Good my complexion! dost thou think, though I am caparisoned like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition?" (III.ii) The "doublet and hose" is constantly referred to and reiterated within the play as a sign of difference, but the visual insignificance of that difference should be immediately evident to the audience. The audience should be capable of seeing that any "reality" beneath "appearance" is one which is colored by the importance one places on the "appearance" at hand.

Of course, the distinction between "appearance" vs. "reality" is a common theme in Shakespeare's plays, often expressed as a comparison between the stage and the real world, and this is most famously expressed in Jaques "All the world's a stage" speech in the play under consideration. Thus the blurred distinction between the sexes might also be emphasized in the theatrical space as well, demonstrating how "the practice of boys playing women calls into question the relationship between the actor and his role, the nature and limits of theatrical representation, and the connection between the theater and world beyond" (McCluskie 120). This might most easily be accomplished by obliterating the "fourth wall," and instead establishing an intimacy between the actors and the audience by having the actors speak directly to the audience, as if the audience were complicit in the stage action, as in the epilogue: If I were a woman I would

kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me and breaths that I defied not. (Epilogue) By drawing the audience into the action of the play, the actors establish a dialogic relationship with an alternative discourse community, thus enabling them to deliver ironic comments on the action of the play. Furthermore, individual characters are not seen as unified wholes, but rather plural constructions of "character" and "actor," or rather "charactor" as some have suggested. Thus by the end of the play those fictional "characters" are appropriated by the narrative, while the autonomous "actors," with just as much reality as the characters, have to be appropriated by the audience.

Particularly, this method should be used to draw attention to the distinct characteristics of Rosalind, who might be seen throughout those scenes in the forest of Arden to "vibrate" between the Rosalind and Ganymede personas. Ganymede is a markedly more antic character than Rosalind, especially in the mock marriage scene, and his antic disposition should be stressed. Furthermore, the actor's "maleness" should become more and more evident as the scene progresses, the effect of which should implicate Orlando into an alternative relationship with homoerotic overtones. This would be the ultimate unsettling of an essential audience's notions of traditional sexuality. For a modern audience the subversion of "natural" gender in such a production must reveal the similarities beneath the difference, and see both men and women as products of their society and culture. That the play validates that construction again through the court and restoration of rightful dukedom, through the elaboration of Hymen's court masque, should not mitigate the subversive elements given play in the forest of Arden. Rather, it should be seen as a contingent accommodation made in order to "bar confusion," but a confusion which always threatens to resurface from beneath the costumes and personas that the characters adopt. In other words, the trajectory of "Rosalind" should be distinct from that of the boy actor, represented in the narrative proper by the antic Ganymede. Finally, the play should be unable to completely accommodate, or subject to closure, the issues of representation and of disguise or fabrication as exemplified by an awareness of the boy actor. That such a production to modern audiences seems untenable not only marks our theatrical distance from Elizabethan England, but also reasserts a sexism that has not mitigated since that time, despite inroads made by contemporary feminism, for it can be seen that the very reasons the Elizabethans had for keeping women off the stage are now the reasons we keep them on it. Ideas of what constitutes the "feminine," though reinvested in modern parlance, is still seen today as an essentialist ideology. Recent productions of the play have not addressed the issues raised by contemporary criticism. Even in those productions where boy actors have been used, the overall effect was to create the realistic illusion, rather than to assert the autonomy of the boy actor. This trend is unfortunately validated by politically correct notions of feminism. But why can't the autonomy evinced in the boy actor also make us aware that (in the scope of the play) the "feminine" is an inadequate male construction?

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## Where the Boys Are: Rosalind, Cleopatra, and Dil

Sarah Maupin Wenk

Dil: A girl has her feelings.  
Fergus: Thing is, Dil, you're not a girl.  
Dil: Details, baby, details.

*The Crying Game* (237)

In *Still Harping on Daughters* Lisa Jardine presents a complex and thoughtful discussion of the erotic implications of the boy actor in the Elizabethan theatre. Several pages into her first chapter, however, she suddenly clarifies her terms:

The eroticism of the boy player is invoked in the drama whenever it is openly alluded to; on the whole this means in comedy, where role-playing and disguise is part of the genre. In tragedy, the willing suspension of disbelief does customarily extend, I think, to the taking of the female parts by boy players; taken for granted, it is not alluded to. (23)

In one sentence Jardine dismisses a world of possibilities. Her conclusion seems illogical on two fronts, one concerning the audience and one the plays themselves. Why would an audience willingly accept that the boy actor appearing before them was actually a woman during one performance, and then view another performance, possibly with the same actor, and experience it as a complex erotic irony? Surely the audience's responses would be more consistent. There is, of course, no countering the statement that Shakespearean comedy and tragedy are different. The comedies do often focus on gender switching and its ensuing complications, and most of Shakespeare's tragic female characters make no direct reference to the fact that they are being portrayed, on Shakespeare's stage, by young boys. But the presence of the boys is not diminished by not being alluded to, either by Shakespeare or by his characters. They are still there, they are still boys, and they still have an effect upon their audience. And in the case of *Antony and Cleopatra*, the text itself refers to the fact of the boy player in ways that even the most passionately willing suspension of disbelief cannot glide past. The ironies and the eroticism may be more subtle, but they are there.

The layers of identity that characters can embody are, of course, more numerous in the comedies that involve women characters in disguise. In a sixteenth century performance of *As You Like It*, for example, a young boy actor portrays a female character named Rosalind who disguises herself as a young boy named Ganymede who then pretends to be Rosalind in order to soothe the lovesick heart of Orlando, the man Rosalind loves. When words come out of the mouth of this boy actor, which of these people is in fact speaking? The three personae interact in a variety of ways, illustrated in III.v., when Rosalind berates Phebe for her rejection of Silvius, who has been praising Phebe in the conventional language of courtly love, telling her that her cold looks will kill him. The terms of her attack reflect Rosalind's assessment of her own situation as a woman. She has lost her place in the hierarchical patriarchy, first losing her father's protection and then being banished from the court by her uncle. She has no home, no family, no rank, no wealth. Even before her banishment she tells Orlando, when she gives him her chain, "Wear this for me, one out of suits with Fortune,/That could give more, but that her hand lacks means" (I.ii.258-9). Her value, particularly in terms of being marriageable, has been reduced to nothing. Phebe, on the other hand, is receiving the attentions of a man who gladly and energetically over-estimates her value, and praises her in the most inflated conventional courtly style, the style, that is, in which Rosalind would expect to be praised were she her former self. But this praise is lost on Phebe, who rejects it outright, and that is what evokes Rosalind's angry, female, response. As her speech progresses, however, her voice changes from Rosalind's to Ganymede's and then to the boy actor's.

Who might be your mother,  
That you insult, exult, and all at once,  
Over the wretched? What though you have no beauty . . .  
Must you be therefore proud and pitiless?  
Why, what means this? Why do you look on me?  
I see no more in you than in the ordinary  
Of nature's sale-work. 'Od's my little life,  
I think she means to tangle my eyes too! (III.v.35-44)

Rosalind's first attack on Phebe is spoken in her own voice. Phebe should be grateful, she says, to be praised so highly. But when Phebe begins to look longingly on the person she has taken to be a young boy, Rosalind must try to reassert her Ganymede persona, to be a man and at the same time deflect Phebe's amorous attention. The questions "What means this?" and "Why do you look on me?" are the point at which Rosalind's voice begins to give into Ganymede's, and he speaks the line beginning "I see no more in you . . ." But it is the boy actor, speaking to the audience, who says, "'Od's my little life," and acknowledges Phebe's innocent but comical mistake. The audience and the actor are in on the joke, and this understanding is communicated directly between them, in an extra-theatrical space that is separate from the one in which



the play takes place. It is in this space that the boy actor asserts his existence to the audience, and ensures that he cannot be forgotten, ignored, or absorbed into theatrical convention.

In conversation with Orlando the Ganymede voice mocks and criticizes what Rosalind would be were she not at odds with Fortune, and is free to speak when Rosalind has distanced herself from the defining social order. The boy actor's voice is freer still, observing and commenting upon the entire situation, upon all of the voices that he incorporates, mocking those characters in the play who do not share what he (and the audience) knows<sup>1</sup>. But in Cleopatra the third layer of disguise is not present and the commentary is more subtle. The boy actor, therefore, is generally less vocal, more subtextual, an understated presence integrated into Cleopatra's character, a part of what she is, but not as vocal a part as Ganymede becomes of Rosalind.

Perhaps the best, if not the only, contemporary example of this kind of gender layering is the character of Dil in Neil Jordan's film *The Crying Game*. Dil appears at first as a young woman, but is later revealed to be a man in drag. Once that fact has been made undeniably clear, Dil occupies approximately the same gender position as Cleopatra. The audience sees the character's appearance as female, but knows that behind that appearance is a male body. Later in the film Dil is disguised as her dead male lover Jody. There the comparison becomes closer to Rosalind in that a male actor who has been disguising himself as a woman is now disguised as a man. Although the disguise is actually closer to the "real" identity of the actor, the audience cannot forget the intermediate persona, Dil herself. The irony is heightened in the film by the final confrontation between Dil/Jody and Jude, the only (biologically) real woman in the film. Jude's behavior, however, is as far removed from conventional notions of feminine behavior as Dil's body is from female anatomy. Jude is cold, violent, sexually manipulative and aggressive, wears dark suits, and carries a gun. Dil and Jude finish the film in a version of an old male ritual, the shoot out. Jude, the woman who behaves like a man, shoots at Dil/Jody, and Dil/Jody, the man who lives as and is perceived as a woman, shoots at (and kills) Jude. Yet even as Dil the male person performs a conventionally masculine act in a highly conventional male film scenario, and kills the person who is threatening Fergus, the man s/he loves, her complex identity cannot be forgotten. Dil is simultaneously herself, himself, and a version of Jody.

Rosalind disguised as Ganymede has this same kind of fluid identity. When she speaks, the voice is sometimes her female-from-the-court voice, sometimes Ganymede's, and sometimes the boy actor's. In *Antony and Cleopatra* this kind of layered experience is an integral part of the entire play. In *The Common Liar* Janet Adelman discusses the essential structures of Shakespearean comedy and tragedy, and concludes that *Antony and Cleopatra* differs in some interesting ways from standard conceptions of tragedy. "Simultaneous versions

of experience which can compete on equal footing are generally not given us in the tragedies; in *Antony and Cleopatra* we are given precisely this simultaneity of competing versions" (51). This can also be said of the character of Cleopatra. She is simultaneously several different beings, and one of the challenges of the play is to keep up with her ever-changing identities <sup>2</sup>.

In the first scene it becomes clear that defining exactly who and what Cleopatra is will be a difficult task. Antony and Cleopatra are performers, aware that they are the focus of attention for everyone around them, constantly playing to an onstage as well as an offstage audience. Their very first conversation turns into a kind of public competition over whether or not they will hear the messengers from Rome. After Antony has lavishly praised her and their love, Cleopatra dismisses his speech as "Excellent falsehood!" and says, in an aside, "I'll seem the fool I am not.-- Antony will be himself" (I.i.40-43). Phyllis Rackin says "Cleopatra's action throughout . . . is seeming: she is a contriver of shows, mostly for Antony's benefit, but he is by no means her only audience" (203). It is apparent, forty lines into the play, that there will be questions about who Cleopatra is and how easily she can manipulate her identity. Antony's identity is also difficult to pin down. Cleopatra asserts that he "will be himself," but barely ten line later, when Demetrius expresses surprise that Antony has not heard the messages from Rome, Philo responds by saying, "sometimes, when he is not Antony,/He comes too short of that great property/Which still should go with Antony" (I.i.57-59). Sometimes he is Antony, sometimes not. As Adelman says, the convention which posits that in literature

character is knowable as it rarely is in life, that characters act in accordance with certain constant, recognizable, and explicable principles which we and they can know . . . does not operate in *Antony and Cleopatra*. There the characters do not know each other, nor can we know them, any more clearly than we know ourselves. (22)

In Cleopatra, however, this unknowable quality seems far more deliberate and controlled than it does in Antony, who seems to change from moment to moment based on what other people want, need, or expect from him. Cleopatra's mutability is much more deliberate. In *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* Jonas Barish says, "with Cleopatra . . . change is the law of her being . . . [Her existence takes shape as an unwearying series of improvisings and self-mutations]" (129). Later in the play, Cleopatra appears to behave seductively toward Thyreus, and when Antony sees this he becomes enraged and turns against her, accusing her of exactly what she appears to have done: "To flatter Caesar, would you mingle eyes/With one that ties his points?" to which Cleopatra answers, "Not know me yet?" and proceeds to defend her love of Antony until he is appeased (III.xiii 156-57). But her question is extremely ambiguous. It could just as easily indicate her virtue--"Don't you know me better than that? I would never betray you that way"--as it could her opportunism--"Don't you know me

better than that? I'll do whatever I have to do to survive." Antony does not know Cleopatra. There is no sure way of knowing her. A few lines later, after Antony has roused himself to do battle with Caesar, Cleopatra says,

It is my birthday.  
I had thought t' have held it poor; but, since my lord  
Is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra. (III.xiii.185-187)

Each moment, it seems, is her birthday. She is constantly re-born, constantly re-defined. If she will now be Cleopatra again, who was she just before she said those words? She changes herself to manipulate events and those around her; Antony changes as he is manipulated, both by her and by Caesar.

The question of Cleopatra's identity, and of her gender, comes up in a short exchange between Enobarbus and Charmian, who have been talking to the soothsayer. Enobarbus (who ought to know) says, "Hush! here comes Antony." Charmian responds, "Not he; the Queen" (I.ii.82-83). On the surface the lines may seem insignificant, but they clearly indicate some confusion of identity. How can Enobarbus mistake Cleopatra for Antony, even from a distance? And since the physical distance on the stage could not be very great, the mistake seems inexplicable. But it raises questions related to gender. After all, both of the actors performing these roles on Shakespeare's stage were male, and Cleopatra's maleness was known to the audience. Why not to her fellow characters as well? She is Cleopatra and she is the boy actor. It is possible to read these lines as indicating that she shares enough characteristics with Antony that even devoted followers can confuse them.

The other side of this, of course, is the possibility that Antony is being effeminized by his association with Cleopatra. Yet this again recalls the boy actor, and the Puritan fear that the exposure of men to this theatrical convention would be harmful to their masculinity. Stephen Orgel, in "Nobody's Perfect," outlines the antitheatrical argument, the fear that:

male spectators . . . will be seduced by the impersonation [of the woman by the boy actor], and, losing their reason, will become effeminate, which in this case means they will lust not after the woman in the drama, which would be bad enough, but after the boy beneath the woman's costume, thereby playing the woman's role themselves. (16)

And Barish discusses William Prynne's *Histriomastix* (1633), which he calls "a gargantuan encyclopedia of antitheatrical lore." In this work Prynne over and over (and over and over) condemns the theatre, particularly in terms of the dangers of effeminacy, lewdness, lustfulness. A great deal of the Puritan argument against the theatre is based in condemnation of men wearing women's

dress. *Antony and Cleopatra* is self-consciously theatrical on many levels, and one of them may well be an acknowledgment of this charge against the transvestite actor. Antony is, after all, spending a lot of time around a boy dressed as a woman, and suddenly his closest advisor sees a woman and thinks it is him. This confusion of gender identity is raised again in I.iv. when Caesar comments upon Anthony's behavior in Egypt: "[he] is not more manlike/Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy/More womanly than he" (5-7). To the Romans, Antony seems to be losing his manhood; and Cleopatra seems to be acquiring it. As the play goes on, this sense of Antony's waning manliness continues. In IV.xiv., after he has been told (falsely) that Cleopatra is dead, Antony complains that

I, that with my sword  
Quarter'd the world, and o'er green Neptune's back  
With ships made cities, condemn myself to lack  
The courage of a woman . . . (56-60).

These lines precede his suicide attempt, and are borne out by it: Antony cannot even die like a man (though his servant can). He is carried to Cleopatra's monument, hoisted up to her in a scene that verges on the parodic, and there he must invent a noble death for himself, a better, manlier, end:

[I] do now not basely die,  
Not cowardly put off my helmet to  
My countryman -- a Roman by a Roman  
Valiantly vanquish'd. (55-58)

But he has not been valiantly vanquished by anyone. He has only died badly for Cleopatra's lie. Throughout the play Antony becomes weaker as a soldier, a Roman, and a man. His association with Cleopatra, who is, on one level, a man, un-mans Antony. Antony and Cleopatra's talk is full of sexual banter that teases and delays satisfaction. She is always rejecting him, he is always winning her. They keep themselves in a constant state of sexual anticipation, and this is heightened by the presence of the boy actor. He helps to make Cleopatra unobtainable, exotic, exciting yet dangerous, forbidden. The boy actor as Cleopatra is an impossible object of desire, arousing appetites he cannot fulfill, just as Dil is for Fergus, who is powerfully drawn to her, but cannot possess her in the way he wants to, as a man possesses a woman. In the play and in the film the sexuality that would be physical were the female partner of the couple truly female becomes verbal instead. It becomes the teasing banter of *Antony and Cleopatra* and in *The Crying Game* it becomes exchanges such as

Dil: So let's kiss and make up, hon.  
Fergus: Don't call me that.  
Dil: Sorry, darling.

Fergus: Give it over, Dil—  
Dil: Apologies, my sweet.  
*Fergus smiles in spite of himself.* (234)

The presence of the boy creates a different kind of sexual tension, one that has no acceptable physical outlet. If no attention is drawn to the boy actor by the text, his impact is minimized, which in a play such as *Romeo and Juliet* is necessary in order not to distract from the plot. (Sometimes, in other words, Jardine is right.) But Cleopatra is already from another world. She is dark, powerful, mysterious, legendary, Other. She is indefinable; she is unlike anyone else. "Other women cloy/The appetites they feed," says Enobarbus, "but she makes hungry/Where most she satisfies; for vilest things/Become themselves in her." She is the woman who makes bad seem good, who makes the forbidden delicious. And among the many things she is and seems to be is a young boy, adding yet another element to her "infinite variety" (II.ii.241-244).

The most famous acknowledgment of the presence of the boy actor is in the monument scene, after Cleopatra and Caesar have met there<sup>3</sup>. In spite of Caesar's assurances that she will be treated fairly and with dignity, Cleopatra knows better, knows that this boy will take her back to Rome and humiliate her with public display. And she expresses her fear in terms of theatre and performance:

the quick comedians  
Extemporally will stage us, and present  
Our Alexandrian revels; Antony  
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see  
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness  
I' th' posture of a whore. (V.ii.216-221)

This humiliation is Cleopatra's worst fear, and what drives her to her death is her desire to "conquer/Their most absurd intents" (V.ii.225-226). Yet these intents, this humiliating representation by a boy, is exactly the same one through which she speaks the lines that indicate the insufficiency of the representation. It is the boy who speaks, if he does not squeak, with Cleopatra in these lines, undeniably calling attention to himself. As Rackin says,

Insisting upon the disparity between dramatic spectacle and reality, implying the inadequacy of the very performance in which it appears, the speech threatens for the moment the audience's acceptance of the dramatic illusion. (201)

For that moment the artificiality and imperfection of representation is made completely clear, and yet the illusion is maintained. In *The Crying Game*, after Dil has been literally exposed as a man, she continues to look like, and to be, a

stunningly beautiful and feminine woman. The audience must absorb both identities and simultaneously apply them to the experience of Dil. And on some level, the acknowledgment of the male presence behind the female facade actually heightens the facade, makes Dil somehow even more feminine in her exposed disguise than she was in her impersonation. After he learns that Dil is a man, Fergus returns to the bar where she is a regular. His vision of the bar is now completely different. Suddenly it is full of the crudest and most unattractive transvestite men. But in the center of this grotesquery is Dil, radiant. For her the illusion of femininity is more feminine than reality; the awareness of artifice increases the effect of that artifice. The audience is re-absorbed into the illusion, but with an increased awareness of that illusion's power and effectiveness. In the same way Cleopatra is glaringly exposed here, and the exposure calls attention to performance and to illusion. But it also points to what Cleopatra has been all along, and continues to be--exotic, unknowable, protean, one woman embodying infinite variety.

The speech also introduces Cleopatra's most dramatic (and final) performance in the play, her suicide, for which, Rackin points out, "she even changes costume . . . onstage" (209). As she prepares to die, she goes through a process of transformation, a rejection of her previous identities:

I have nothing  
Of woman in me; now from head to foot  
I am marble-constant; now the fleeting moon  
No planet is of mine. (V.ii.238-241)

After she has, so to speak, exposed her non-womanhood, and rejected, at least for a moment, the means through which she is being represented, she continues to re-define and re-conceive herself. Here she transforms herself into something more than human, something greater, it seems, more solid and immutable than any person could be. Throughout the play she and Antony have mythologized themselves, identifying themselves with the gods. Here Cleopatra is idolizing herself, making herself into a solid marble image of constancy. In this moment she attempts to synthesize all of her identities into something greater than anything she has been before. Rackin says "for once in the play we can see before us the greatness that was only boyed in what we beheld earlier" (209). But just at this moment, the clown enters. He brings the asps, but he also brings a very different sensibility into the tomb. Cleopatra has been creating a rarefied atmosphere around herself, rejecting the idea of any kind of satisfactory representation, re-casting herself as a marble figure of virtue, rejecting all change and inconstancy, re-creating herself as more than woman, more than queen, more than mortal. But the clown has no comprehension of what she is in the process of creating. He does not speak her language. He does, however, bring with him a different way of looking at things, one that is both clearer and more clouded than the others in the play. To him Cleopatra is no idol. When

she asks if he remembers anyone who has died from the asp's bite, he replies that he heard of one yesterday, "a very honest woman, but something given to lie, as a woman should not do but in the way of honesty" (V.ii.252-253). This could well describe Cleopatra herself, who in combining all qualities, combines honesty with lying. But the clown's rendition of her contrasts sharply with the effect she is trying to produce at that moment. He reintroduces a reality into the scene that comes from the outside world, and he forces Cleopatra to acknowledge and deal with him by not taking her hints to leave, and continuing to engage her in skewed conversation. When he says "I know the devil himself will not eat a woman. I know that a woman is a dish for the gods," his humor threatens to color her death. The humor serves a dual purpose here. It re-casts a human light on Cleopatra, and it provides a comic backdrop against which her death can show more clearly as tragic. She must now either die absurdly or rise above his comments.

The clown and the boy actor are not strangers. When Rosalind becomes Ganymede and releases the voice of the boy actor, she takes on, in part, the voice and characteristics of the clown figure. She becomes a commentator upon the world outside the play, one who exists in that extra-theatrical space inhabited by player and audience. In *Antony and Cleopatra* the identities of boy and clown are more discrete, but the exposure of the boy actor brings in the clown and his external sensibility. And the clown brings with him the voice that this boy actor cannot assume. Cleopatra cannot, given the constraints of plot, become a boy in this scene. She can, indirectly, say she is one, but she cannot turn into one and take on the clown's voice. The voice and the perspective are provided by the clown himself, and his wit, combined with the exposure of the boy's presence, changes the atmosphere of the scene.

Cleopatra's final speech manages to both transcend and subvert all her previous identities. Her voice is highly complex here. The boy actor has been too recently exposed to have completely disappeared, and the clown's humor has brought Cleopatra back into the real world. In the speech she begins by having her women dress her, costuming her for her last performance, but the performance is to be on a higher level than that of queen. She has, she says, "Immortal longings," she hears Antony call her, and she replies, "Husband, I come!" (V.ii.284-290). In these words she is Cleopatra as woman and as lover; but her recent acknowledgment of her identity as a boy brings a strong sense of the play's sexual complexity to the word "husband." The lines that follow contain some of the play's most transcendent poetry: "I am fire and air; my other elements/I give to baser life" (V.ii.292-293). She moves from being wife to being pure ethereal power. She is ready to die a noble, courageous death, but she also pauses to reassure herself that there is little to fear in death if Iras can die so easily. Then she suddenly becomes concerned that Iras will meet Antony in heaven before she does, displaying a jealous streak that is all too human. Finally, she re-casts herself as mother, holding the asp and asking Charmian,

"Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,/That sucks the nurse asleep?" (V.ii.312-313). Here she is mother, as she was just wife. And yet by creating a domestic identity for herself and then associating it with her suicide, by creating a seemingly simple image in which baby, nurse, and sleep mean both what they mean and much, much more, she transcends any mundane connotations of wife- and motherhood, and creates a new image that simultaneously evokes the everyday and the immense.

To the end, Cleopatra is shifting and mutable, combining human qualities with something larger, showing her courage and questioning it in an instant, always a woman of infinite variety. She absorbs all attempts to define her. She is and she surpasses her representation by a boy actor. She is and she surpasses the human world where women lie in the way of honesty. She is and she surpasses the woman who loves Antony and the monarch who rules Egypt. At the end of *As You Like It*, the social order is restored and each character reestablished in the hierarchy except for Ganymede, who simply disappears. Dil's female persona is fully restored at the end of *The Crying Game* as she, along with the other wives and girlfriends, visits her man in prison, a wall of plexiglass between them presenting a transparent but solid barrier against sexual ambiguity. But there is no simple settlement of Cleopatra's existence. She has never separated herself from herself. She enfolds the boy actor, keeps him with her, cutting the cord by which disbelief is suspended, and displaying him as a part of her identity right to the end. She does not die as one thing or another, but as what she has been all along, complex and elusive, existing simultaneously as all possibilities.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Ganymede also mocks, by implication, Cleopatra when she is at her most peevish. In Ganymede's

I will weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain,  
and I will do that when your are dispos'd to be merry.  
I will laugh like a hyen, and that when thou art  
inclin'd to sleep (IV. i. 154-157)

can be heard a trace of Cleopatra's "if you can find him say, /Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report/ That I am sudden sick (I. iii. 3-5). The conception of woman as manipulator, woman as contrary, woman as petty, is part of the humor shared between the boy and the audience. This is, of course, a definition of woman that only partially encompasses Cleopatra. When she speaks these lines, the audience knows she is only partly herself.



2 This shifting and groundlessness that Adelman sees as informing the entire play--"certainty, even of a limited kind, seems essential to the tragic experience . . . [But] nothing goes unquestioned in this play" (15-22)--is also evident in the background of the action. The characters themselves comment on the inconsistency of the common people's political loyalty, calling them "our slippery people" (I.ii.192) and referring to the way "this common body/ . . . Goes to and back, lacking the varying tide,/To rot itself with motion (I. iv. 43-47). This changeability carries over to the play's protagonists who are mutable and indefinable.

3 It is an interesting irony that after Antony's death, the two figures left to resolve the plot are both boys, one Caesar, who is referred to a "Boy" by Antony throughout the play, and who would in all probability be played by a young actor, and the other boy impersonating Cleopatra. At the same time that these two boys represent the two poles of the play--Rome and Egypt, the world and the flesh, light and darkness--they are also two versions of the same figure.

## ***A New Direction for Richard III. 1. 2: The Seducer Seduced***

**Carrie Landi**

As Act 1, scene 2 of *Richard III* draws to a close, even Shakespeare's archvillain Richard seems amazed at his conquest of the woman whose husband and father-in-law he admits to having murdered. The question, "Was ever woman in this humor won?" lingers not only in his mind at the end of the wooing scene, but also in the minds of many a viewer/critic (227). A nineteenth century scholar remarked of Lady Anne that "in marrying the murderer of her husband she had shown a weakness almost incredible" (Dash 196). It is, however, one of the most difficult scenes in all of Shakespeare to present to a modern audience who, weaned on the ubiquitous realism of television, expects a certain verisimilitude in its performances. It is for this reason that contemporary productions have moved in the direction of a psychologically more complex Richard.

The text itself goes a long way in the creation and presentation of a somewhat less villainous villain; this is evident from his opening monologue in which his villainy may be seen as the result of sour grapes; because he is not fit to court "an amorous looking glass," he is "determined to prove a villain" (I. i. 15 & 30). Yet, in this scene where Anne is to be seduced, the problem remains as to the staging of a confrontation which is believable because it is rooted in the psychology of both participants. If the vice-like quality of the primary actor in the work is played down, what is to be done with his victim who appears, in comparison—particularly in the Olivier version—to be as psychically complex as a five year-old? Lady Anne often appears either drugged or mesmerized. Too easily led she is neither interesting as an individual character nor able to aid in the construction of a psychologically layered (and increasingly villainous) Richard. William Richardson, an eighteenth-century critic, viewed Anne as "a character of 'no rational or steady virtue, and consequently of no consistency of character'" (169). Yet, Richardson appears to intuit a great deal as he suggests that it is "resentment, rather than grief which she expresses" (169). This reading of her character not only makes more sense than the traditional reading, but it allows for a character of greater depth and recognizes a potentially credible base from which to develop Anne's character and allow her, like Richard, a solid purpose. This is not to say that Anne's precarious societal position does not justify a portrayal which presents her as psychologically vulnerable and emphasizes the tragedy of her lack of power; however, the difficulty of this is evident from recent attempts. One modern production produced applause at Richard's conquest and even Olivier's version produced little better than the shell of a character in the place of Anne. Clearly, it is time for a reconsideration of approach (Dash 4).

One way in which to lessen the incredible quality of the seduction is to stage the scene as one in which Richard and Lady Anne are viewed as precursors to the Macbeth clan. Both characters are depicted as strong, complex figures with individual political interests; this allows a director to side-step questions of probability and entranced inevitability which undermine the impact of a powerful and psychologically complex Richard. To present Anne in a manner similar to Richard avoids credibility problems for the modern audience and underscores the milieu in which one might very well be willing to take a "bunch-backed toad" to bed for reasons of political expediency (I. iii. 244).

Anne thus becomes nearly as great a villain as Richard. This type of interpretation has the additional advantage of simultaneously creating a basis both for initial sympathy for Richard and a plausible rationale for his subsequent actions that is completely in keeping with the one stated in the play's opening; one can further humanize Richard the vice figure if we see him as "double-duped." A director can emphasize the psychological realism of Richard by showing him as more vulnerable; Gloucester sees what he wants to see in inverse proportion to what is reflected in the mirror. He becomes the falsely emboldened suitor-believing that his act has worked purely as a result of its own power-and is unaware of the counter-plot and act of Anne. While Richard is still generally convincing, in this version, he has met his (almost) female equivalent. Anne has plans of her own and understands Richard better than he realizes--although not quite as well as she has imagined, for, in the end, she has underestimated the growth of his lust for power. With an ultimate recognition of his false success, a temporarily taken in Richard will become even more intent in his course of ruthless destruction and anxious to rid himself of this reminder of his true lack of amorous appeal. The two will have deserved each other, highlighting the cut-throat hierarchy in which they exist and thrive--until undone by their own inflated confidence in their powers.

With the turbulent, chaotic, and dangerous nature of this world and its inhabitants made apparent, the emphasis of this interpretation may also explain the need for such controlling language as is evident in the rhetorical stichomythic pattern which is employed while all else totters above the proverbial political and personal abyss. And, with an eye towards a greater degree of psychological realism, Anne's strength would help to explain her ability to return such lines; it is difficult to believe that a weak and distraught Anne would be able to return such powerful lines to a terrifying murderer. This type of presentation should ultimately result in a sense of the overall moral indignation one would feel in times of such successive acts of violence. Just as at end of *Titus Andronicus* where the response of the crowd is anything but spontaneous after the carnage, Anne, despite her self-implicating machinations, can also serve to reveal the horror and fear turned numbness which finally, as shown in this scene, becomes the self-serving scheming of a person enmeshed in such a world. Her part is to be played with a weary if mischievous sense of ennui; the moral sense is numb and

she is faced merely with the reality that she must fend for herself in a world where one's protectors are being offed at an unpredictable rate.

None of this interpretation, like the greater humanizing of Richard in recent years, is beyond the possibilities which are in the text. One need not cut a single line from the standard editions. It seems merely that since Richard is the primary figure in the text, he has received the attention and consideration necessary to produce an interesting, complex, and therefore credible, figure on the modern stage. *This* interpretation of an empowered Anne simply extends the psychological consideration afforded the primary figure to one whose presence—since brief—is usually given less attention. This version lends both figures an increased credibility and complexity. While variations are possible, a production in which each side retains his and her relative dignity and strength tends to best underscore the seriousness of the play's thematic implications. There is a subtlety in this reading which could easily be thrown off and the two combatants may simply reverse their roles: Anne becomes completely the actor/vice figure while Richard becomes merely a victim of his own vanity. Although these are elements this interpretation utilizes, this is not the whole of their characters. There is also a great temptation to play the scene farcically, which would undermine the true pathos of what each has become or will become as a result of his and her respective situations.

This question of farce arises almost immediately with Anne's entrance and initial speech. To convey her situation and her intent, the temptation is to make Anne a humorous vice figure—this lands a director right back to the problem of a believable Richard since, as appealing as each of these characters can be in his or her own right as a comic vice figure, the likelihood of one realistically depicted character falling for the other's antics is greatly diminished. Therefore, leave the body off stage and do not dress Anne too enticingly. Keeping the body off stage emphasizes her emotional distancing from such events; it also helps resist the temptation to have her knock the corpse about, as she is to be played as disgusted with having to deal with this burial.

Act I, Scene 2 opens as Anne commands the guards carrying the body of her father-in-law:

Set down, set down your honorable load,  
If honor may be shrouded in a hearse,  
Whilst I obsequiously lament  
Th' untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster (1-4).

To Anne, this is but a thankless task which means that she will have to start anew to establish herself. For this reason, "Set down, set down" in line 1 will be delivered with an air of disgust and weary resignation. "Obsequiously" of line 3 will take on an ironic tone. This less than altruistic manner will be further em-

phasized from the beginning as line four's "untimely" is also emphasized; any-time is a bad time for a character to find herself on the losing side. Therefore, the lament which follows is one that reveals her disgust at the whole messy business of political power; she does not hate the former king, her father-in-law; she just tends to regret his loss more from a personal perspective than a moral one; her tone is like Hamlet's after he mistakenly murders Polonius.

Meanwhile, Anne will look about the stage for Richard with whom she intends to make her next political association; she knows, however, that she must make him believe his own suit is a success. This intention should be obviously indicated by her visually searching for him at the close of her lament. (This is also a point where there is a farcical temptation to have Lady Anne reading something entitled "How to Get a Husband" which she would hastily conceal at Richard's approach.)

As Anne's monologue continues, the audience will be made aware of her character. At the line, "I pour the helpless balm of my poor eyes"--knowing Richard is not yet about--Anne retrieves a vial from her pocket and applies such tears so that *they* at least will not be "helpless" in convincing Richard of her sincerity. The audience also sees the degree of her actual sorrow as she gestures to her mourning clothes when remarking that Richard "makes us wretched" (18); Anne would rather be wearing anything else.

Now impatient with the wait for Richard to arrive, Anne's tone changes as she believes that all her preparations have been in vain. This further reveals her intent and explains what is otherwise, ultimately, a curse upon herself as she wishes, "If ever he have wife, let her be made/As miserable" as she has been made by the death of her husband and his father (26-7). However, since Anne--at this moment--does not believe that her plan will work out, she is not cursing herself but merely revealing her own annoyance at his failure to appear. She is, nevertheless, reluctant to give up her plan. This will be made clear as she hesitatingly commands her men to head towards Chertsey with the body, but also instructs them, while continuing to look about for Richard, to stop "as [they] are weary of [the] weight" of their load while she laments (31-2). And, ultimately, it is as a result of her sluggish, halfhearted retreat that she does run into Richard as originally hoped/planned.

Once Richard enters, Anne must now do what Richard is famous for throughout the work: allow the audience to see her true feelings while convincing the person with whom she speaks that she is in earnest. This is not to imply that she does not truly dislike Richard, however; this will have to be moderated for her purpose; she must bait him but not anger him into giving up nor allow him to suspect her of controlling the situation--she believes that her safety is only even temporarily secure in her playing upon his vanity. As Richard enters she must show her relief only to the audience. It is at this point that her act begins, and

she will play the angered but enticing widow. Also, to emphasize further the strength of her character, the corpse will be set down not at his command, although it will appear so to him, but, rather, the audience and the bearers will see her nod in acquiescence with Gloucester's demand.

Anne begins to bait Richard with taunts of "devil" and "dreadful minister of hell"; she knows he will take this as a challenge if she does not overdo it. Richard will be trying his best to entice her since he believes her act and is intent on playing his own part and will move toward her. She will also emphasize "thy" when referring to Richard to indicate an interest in him. The whole section takes on an erotic undertone as certain lines become newly significant and are delivered at close range. Since each character is a would-be seducer, there is an obvious increase in the occurrence of double entendre in this interpretation. This is epitomized in the exchange in which Anne is traditionally staged as only cursing Richard as he impudently asserts his fitness for her bedchamber. When Anne replies, "Ill rest betide the chamber where thou liest," he answers, "So will it, madam till I lie with you," to which she responds, "I hope so." This may as easily be read and directed such that Anne's reply, "I hope so" implies that she does hope he will rest uneasily in his impatience until that time, as this union will represent the consummation of her political aspirations. Anne's plan will place her within the power structure from which she had been summarily removed with the murder of her husband and father-in-law.

The interchange continues in successive bouts of repartee; it is a viciously aggressive flirtation. Anne's "wonderful, when devils tell the truth" is laden with a knowing sarcasm and becomes especially ironic in that neither participant has much to do with this virtue. As the scene progresses, the blocking will continue to reflect who is advancing in the attack and who is retreating--or allowing the other to believe that he or she is. Anne as well as Richard will also continue to interact with the audience to reveal his or her actual feelings.

A new dynamic is thus apparent in the spitting section in which Anne leans forward and allows Richard to think she will kiss him but spits at him instead. The audience will see a furious Richard pause to compose himself and fall back into character. Anne's true thoughts are easily conveyed in the sword segment while Richard bears his chest with his face averted; she makes evident that she would not mind killing this man for all the difficulty he has caused her, but, it is also clear that she will not. Anne will show her disgust and impatience since she knows that to do so would be to her detriment if not suicidal.

Both characters will, by turns, fall in and out of the act they have imagined for themselves. Anne appears purely angry and upset to Richard but will reveal various states of mind to the audience. When Richard lies about her husband's murder, she will show her bemusement at his audacity to the audience in a half-smile and slight shake of the head he does not see. Similarly, as Richard is

acting to his utmost, truly pouring it on, as in his weeping plea (153-170), she must show that she is on to him; Anne, played with an air of fascinated admiration, is a character who can truly appreciate his acting while not being taken in by it.

Ultimately, Richard will believe she is taken in and will give his closing speech (227-263) in a truly surprised fashion and actually think himself to be at least a little "proper" if not "marv'lous proper" indeed (254). To convey this, the line "Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot" is to be delivered as if there were an implied "quite" at the end. The director may also arrange the stage such that Anne exits, relieved at ridding herself of her burial burden (and after obviously appraising the value of the ring he has given her), but is still seen through a window, possibly in a wall running across the rear of the stage behind Richard, in order to overhear his surprise at his success and his remarks about his appearance to which she will be seen to shake her head.

Thus, through the attention to a potential psychology for Anne which would explain the success of such an otherwise incredible seduction which is underscored through the blocking, whole sections of the scene as well as individual lines take on new subtleties. The complexity of the encounter greatly increases as the devious nature of each character unfolds to the audience and in response to the other's act. Neither is an unbelievable participant or character unworthy of our caring what happens to them. Each is able to engage the audience in a fascinating and compelling manner, and both Richard and Anne may be seen as victims of circumstance--the political milieu and the precarious societal position of women--as well as victims of their own avarice, vanity, and pride. Just because you happen to be misshapen or a woman does not necessarily mean you are free from accountability any more than it necessitates that you are solely a victim. Indeed, one may be both of these and have a fascinating proclivity for manipulation as this interpretation reveals. This is the true genius of Shakespeare: in not bestowing strict staging instructions for his works upon subsequent generations, he has left their linguistic complexity radically open and subject to infinite interpretation.

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## Clothing the Layers of Ambiguity: Costume Variations for Shakespeare's *Richard III*, Act I, Scene ii

Ann Marie Phillips

If we subscribe to Richard Steele's witticism that the "The First Dramatick Rule is to have good clothes/ To charm the gay spectator's gentle breast/ In lace and feather tragedy's express'd/ And heroes die unpity'd if ill-dressed," then we must also consider the criticism, when costuming Shakespeare, that he deliberately neglected costumes for his productions. F. M. Kelly charges:

when we fall back upon [Shakespeare's] writings for evidence of the appearance of his characters in their habits as they live, we have to confess that he is less circumstantial than almost any of his fellow dramatists. Had he shown more interest in details of the outer man, were he richer in such touches as enliven, say Jonson, this question of a fitting wardrobe would hardly be the moot point it has become (SCSS 11).

Although elaborate sketches of his characters' costumes, and the richer 'touches that enliven' them, may be lacking (since Elizabethan productions were outfitted in the fashion of the time), evidence of the bard's belief in the formative power of clothing is not; in fact, Shakespeare often symbolized a psychological, political or social metamorphosis within the physical change of clothing. Hamlet, for example, comes on stage shrouded in what Gertrude calls his "inky cloak" of melancholia--the outer trappings of his inner grief. A few scenes later, Ophelia, by relating the disorder of Hamlet's offstage dress, relates the disorder of his emotions; this is the unseen transitional state wherein he sheds the inky cloak and prepares to don the garb of his forthcoming 'antic disposition.' Although this transformation is not part of the action of the play, some directors, like Olivier, briefly portray the discomposed state of Hamlet's dress to visually communicate his emotional turmoil. Thus, the interpretive power of costume sustains the staged illusion, and semiotically promotes certain psychological dimensions of characters to an audience. The gap, then, between Shakespeare's lack of explicit costume direction, and the few but significant references to clothing within many of the plays allows for an ambiguity of character interpretation that the costumier of modern productions must explore.

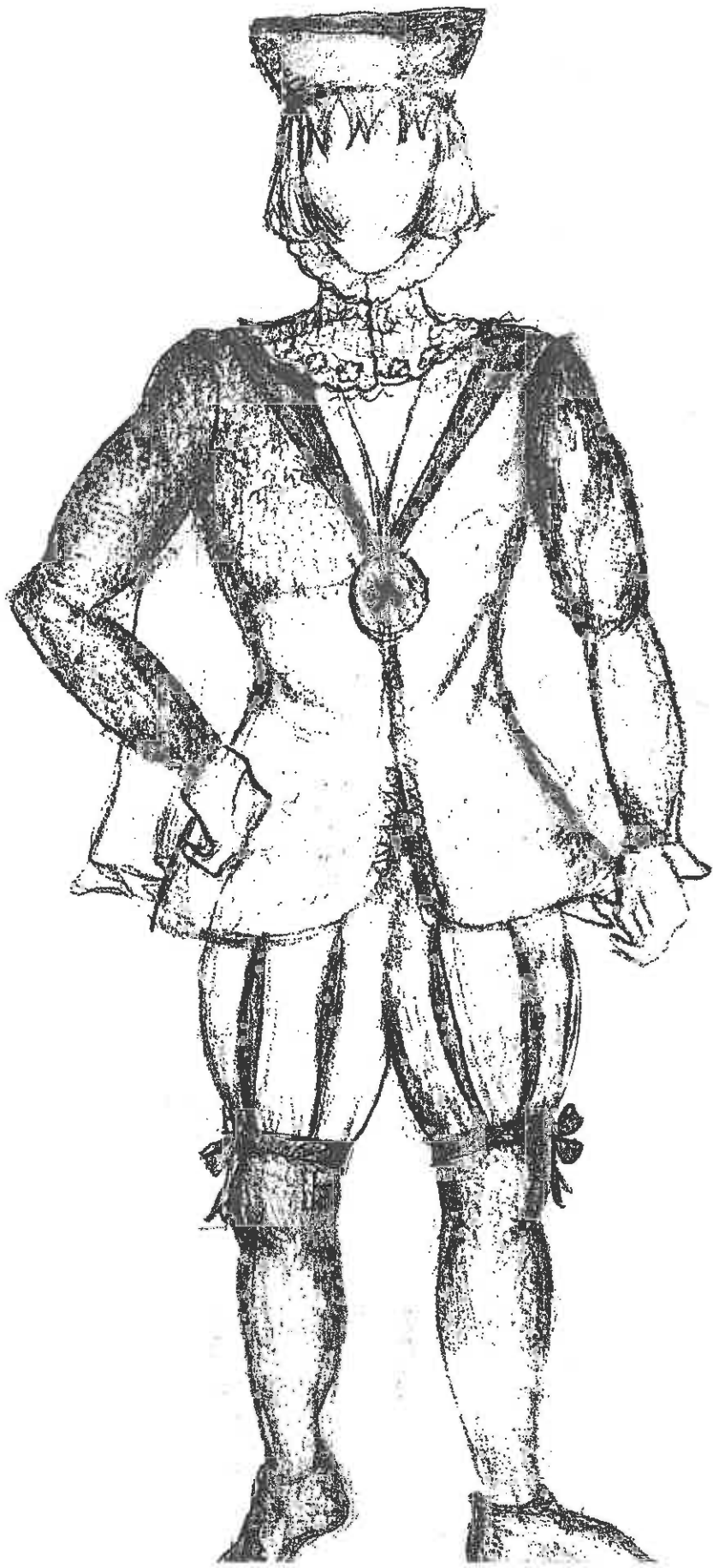
Perhaps Shakespeare's *Richard III*, in Act I, Scene II, the seduction of Lady Anne, provides the quintessential example of this. Historically, from the Elizabethan theatre to the Victorian, characters were simply costumed in contemporaneous dress of the productions, but Richard demanded his costume be given



special attention: he was too much a villain (just as Prince Henry V was too much a national hero) for everyday dress. Pains were taken by costumiers to produce their wardrobes (CS 40). After all, where else in Shakespearean drama are the instructions to the costumier as explicit as when Richard states after the successful seduction: "I'll be at charges for a looking glass,/And entertain a score or two of tailors/To study fashions to adorn my body:/Since I am crept in favor with myself,/I will maintain it with some little cost" (1.ii)? The costumier is instructed by the text to introduce a new wardrobe for Richard at this point, and it may be assumed that this change in costume, as a sort of supplemental text, enhances the illusion of a parallel psychological change that Richard undergoes as he acquires, or rather usurps, political power. Ah, but there's the rub; Richard himself has been an illusion in this seduction scene--an illusion to Anne--and the costumier must find means to convey the illusion of his illusion. These are the layers of ambiguity that allow for two primary ways of costuming Richard.

First, the costumier can begin with Richard's Machiavellian seduction of Anne, who is nothing more to him than a stepping-stone to the throne. His costume here reflects his sinister and powerful nature. When Richard says he will entertain a tailor, then, his new cock-suredness of physical appearance is genuine. This is to say he is smugly pleased with the results of his Machiavellian seduction, and then alters his wardrobe in such a self-satisfying way. His clothes, then, become the text of his perverse seductions of the throne. The costuming that begins after this scene will imply his eventual demise because of his decadent ways in a flourishing narcissistic wardrobe worthy of the "amorous looking glass." His costume hereafter semiotically represents his political decadence.

An alternative mode of presentation would be to portray the self-consciousness of Richard's performed seduction, rather than the self-consciousness of dress he applies to himself after the scene. Richard is essentially performing to woo Anne, and as such is first costumed as an affected suitor straight from the "amorous looking glass." The primary emphasis of this costume is to reflect the 'play within the play' since the audience is well-aware of his insincere intentions. Since he scorns the suitor role as soon as Anne is offstage, he too must scorn the idea of adorning his body; he knows, after all that he is "So lamely and unfashionable that dogs bark at [him] as [he] halt[s] by them" (1.i 1-23). He casts off, then, his costume as costume and is subsequently clothed in the textual fabric of his power-mongering--that is, the Machiavellian costume. The two costume variations, as we can see, are reversals of each other in subsequent scenes: either the Machiavell becomes narcissistically affected, and his decadent costume foreshadows his demise, or the affected suitor casts off the costume of his 'play,' and resumes the sinister costume of his nature.





Since historical costume reproduction of fifteenth-century royalty is financially impossible for a costumier at any level (due to its array of ermines, velvets, golds), he or she must be concerned primarily with esthetically sustaining character interpretation. But history offers much as to inspire aesthetic conceptions. As one costume historian points out

Fashion's pulse beat very weak in the spring of 1483. More attune to the pipes of Fate were the black cloaks of conspirators and a measured tread of soft-shod feet than lute and dance and airy millinery. The axe of the executioner soiled many white shirts, . . . The old order was dying; medievalism, which made a last sputtering flame in the next reign, was now burnt low, and was saving for that last effort . . . the very trend of clothes showed something vaguely different, something which shows . . . the foundations of the world being shaken (EC 214).

There are also two portraits of Richard III which were hung in the Society of Antiquaries in England. In one, "Richard is portrayed with a short sword or dagger in his hand, dressed in a black robe, with sleeves of black or crimson, an underdress of cloth of gold, and a small black cap." In the other, "the king is attired in a robe of cloth of gold over a close dress of scarlet, and a black cap with a pearl ornament" (VS 606).

The former portrait provides an appropriate foundation for Richard's Machiavellian costume, and consists of a robe-like jerkin, a typical male garment, in black, an age-old connotation for political and economic power: "Even without any relief of gold or silver a complete suit of black velvet was fit apparel for a king" (SCSS 32). Richard's jerkin should be made of velvet, but buckram could serve as long as it is "black-worked" edged, embroidered, or decorated (HEC 17). Here, a decorative gimp lines the jerkin's traditional V-shaped opening, while a black belt narrows the tunic at the waist producing a silhouette of Richard's shape, and pre-dating what Kelly calls the effeminate shape of Elizabethan dress. The belt also provides the place to hang a menacing dagger. At the armholes of the jerkin, then, and over the doublet sleeves, hang open, vestigial sleeves, *en vogue* in Richard's era: "Short gowns and upper dresses of various descriptions were worn at this time, with long sleeves, having an opening in front through which the arm came, leaving the outer sleeve to hang as an ornament from the shoulder" (VS 606). These are made of a black and gold rose-patterned lace which efficiently unites the colors of the jerkin while incorporating the roses of the political houses. This subtly suggests he wears his political maneuvers on his sleeve, as it were. For the doublet, a tunic, a long-sleeve black shirt suffices, since it is covered by the jerkin. Beneath the jerkin Richard wears trousers that have inset pleats of gold fabric; these are appropriately called 'slashings' since the accents subtly suggest Richard's *modus operandi*. Since collars were basically flat until 1540, Richard should

wear a low standing collar of white lace which could be subtly decorated in the style of Richard's own historic collar of suns and roses. On his legs, he wears customary trunkhose, while his feet sport small velvet slippers well-suited to eavesdropping and conspiracy. A simple black velvet cap sits atop his head. A small crest of "Richard's favorite badge of cognizance (a white boar)" (VS 606); either hanging as a medallion or sewn onto the cap, comments on his boarish nature. The resultant illusion, then, in its color blend of brooding blacks and royal golds, its combination of fabrics and textures, wraps Richard in a confidence that would seem to guarantee his attainment of the throne.

In an alternate method of costuming, a costumer explores the concept that the silent speech of a suitor's clothing contained a persuasive rhetoric unto itself with its "sweet disorder in the dress" (AYLI III.ii). Through his comedic characters, Shakespeare often parodied the idea that fashion was a love poem that influences the intended's heart. Petruchio, too, parodies this when he attempts to re-costume Kate and thus re-contextualize her in his own fashion of affection, rather than that of the tailor and the haberdasher whom he scorns for upholding "the fashion and the time" (TS IV.iii). Here, Richard will be the fashion, somewhat European, and the time, a bit more modern. The modifications from the first version are simple. The passionate scarlet color of the portrait at Somerset House resurfaces here in scarlet lace sleeves that replace the black and gold of the first version. They are fuller, with more 'gathers,' and longer so that they elongate Richard's movements. The slashes of the trousers should be bombasted or puffed—reflecting at once the bombastic nature of Richard's seduction, as well as the swellings of his emotions. A decorative royal purple satin belt replaces the ominous dagger-carrying belt of the first version, and should uphold a purse instead. Purple is repeated again in a feather on the *berretino*, a larger type of hat worn by noblemen. A white blouse now peeks from behind the doublet, and since white becomes a popular color in the Elizabethan court, it associates the theme of a courtier's pre-occupation with genteel fashion to Richard. A high full-ruffled lace collar replaces the low standing collar. Self-conscious boots replace the demure velvet slippers. Richard should wear no political emblems—no boars, suns, roses, but sport a pair of perfumed gloves instead. Richard is an affected suitor, rather than a political Machiavell, and the costume's touches of scarlet, purple, gold, and white suggest passion, royalty, fidelity—the tenets of courtly love. Incidentally, in 1741 David Garrick set the standard for Richard's costume by completing the play with the decadent courtier version; this style was passed down for over a hundred years to Edmund Kean, whose ermine-trimmed costume of Richard III remains at the London Museum (CS 43).

As we can see, then, the interpretive function of a costume sustains a character's illusion and semiotically reveals psychological dimensions which supplement the verbal or acted play. While today we derive these psychological dimensions primarily from reading (and re-reading) texts and criticism, the largely

illiterate Elizabethan audience had to scrutinize a costume as a text in itself for its denotative clues. Costuming a character such as Richard, therefore, can provide a significant means of representing psychological complexities and by clothing the character in representative garb, one essentially exposes the layers of ambiguity.

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## ***Putting on a New Face: Queen Margaret on Stage in Richard III***

**Joan Perisse**

**W**illiam Shakespeare's *Tragedy of King Richard the Third* has proved to be one of the most successful of his plays in the theater. It has also been subjected, however, to the most radical alterations. Following Cibber and Garrick before him, Laurence Olivier, for example, deemed it necessary to cut characters and lines for his film version, most notably Queen Margaret. He cuts Queen Margaret from Act 1 scene iii completely. I disagree with the idea of removing Queen Margaret from the play, especially from Act 1 scene iii.

In the paper, I would like to demonstrate the importance of Margaret to the drama and suggest ways to accentuate her role as an integral actor in the play. Margaret is an important presence in the play because she represents the past, foretells the future, and symbolizes the key theme in the play.

In the History plays, Queen Margaret appears with increasing prominence in *Henry VI* Parts 1, 2, and 3, and *Richard the Third*. These plays make up the tetralogy, a series of four connected works, in which Queen Margaret is an essential part of the action and plot. As Alfred Harbage notes:

Shakespeare is careful by reference and allusion (particularly through the figure of old Queen Margaret) to preserve a sense of a larger historical continuity of the flow of events, seen in terms of cause and effect, of a past and a future, as well as a bare present. (Harbage 552)

*Richard the Third* represents the culmination of the strife England suffered in the 15th century, and the fall of the house of York from power. Queen Margaret has been a part of that struggle and destruction from the beginning. A strong-minded and determined woman, Margaret had emerged as head of the royal or Lancastrian party to carry on the civil war against the Yorkists. She committed crimes against the House of York and was a victim of their crimes. It is only fitting that she be present, in the final acts of this long history, to witness Richard's fall, her bitter foe, and, after her death, the House of York reunited with the House of Lancaster.

Queen Margaret becomes at once a symbolic figure, "the doom of the House of York," and develops the key theme of murder and revenge in the play. Alfred Harbage remarks on Margaret's role as,

commanding and ominous, and who, in her choric role (she is nothing but a voice), evokes the past, lashes the present, and forebodes the future, setting up in her memorable curse scene (I, iii) the pattern through which we watch, with a growing sense of the inevitable, the seemingly inexorable march of events (Harbage 551).

It is in the cursing scene Act I iii, the focus of my paper today, that she repeatedly emphasizes the major theme of the play: The meting out of inescapable vengeance on those who have committed heinous sins against her and God. In Act 1 scene iii Margaret comes upon her enemies gathered together bickering amongst themselves. She uses this moment to rage against them for the wrongs she has suffered by their hands. In her anger, she curses each person, predicting their individual form of punishment. She lives to see one prophecy after another fulfilled.

An Elizabethan audience familiar with the traditions of Elizabethan tragedy may have recognized the importance of her role and what she symbolizes, but she may not be so easily understood by a modern day audience. To convey her position in tragedy, and in order to accentuate the foreboding atmosphere that Queen Margaret's soothsaying suggests and establish her as a person who possesses the power of prophecy, I would restage the costumes, lighting, sound effects, and scenery to remove the scene from a realistic environment to a surrealistic one and have her pronounce her curses methodically as in a ritual. Creating a ritual element in this scene heightens the mystique of Margaret and emphasizes her potential for possessing powers. Just as the actions of a priest seem more sacred when performed within the atmosphere of his church, surrounded by age old rituals of mass and traditional chants, so does Margaret become more effective when she conjures up curses in an atmosphere of ritual action.

The stage would be completely bare except for a long hallway with archways running across the length of the back of the stage from stage left to stage right. The hallway would be built above the stage approximately four to five feet. Just right of stage center a stone staircase consisting of wide stones would sweep down in a slight semi-circular fashion. There are about five steps to the stage. The archways will face out toward the audience. The hallway would look similar to the cloisters in many medieval churches. Except for this, there are no other sets on stage.



The curtains come up and standing scattered across the stage, paired in conversation, are all the characters in this scene except Queen Margaret and Lord Derby. The stage is bathed in bright daylight and within a few minutes a bell begins to toll. The characters on stage stop their conversations to listen to the tolling of the bell beckoning them forward. The lights begin to dim as they quietly drift toward stage center forming a large circle. If the circle were a huge clock, Elizabeth would be standing at 12 o'clock, exactly up stage center, facing the audience. Going clockwise from Elizabeth would be Richard, Buckingham, Hastings, Rivers, Grey, and Dorset to complete the circle. The lights dim to complete darkness and the bell stops tolling.

The stage is then slowly illuminated in dim light. Each is dressed in the Elizabethan garb of the nobility. The only difference is that each character in the circle is now wearing a mask. The mask is a recreation of a classical Greek drama mask. It is "white face" with exaggerated features. The mouths are gaping open in perpetual lament and complaint. The masks are all identical. I choose to disguise their faces so the audience would not be fooled by their facial features and expressions, but would recognize them as they are seen by Queen Margaret. In having the characters wear masks, there is a loss of individual facial expressions. Each character behind a static mask will give a sense of impersonality which allows the audience to concentrate on the words of the characters. Each mask is the same to create, further, a unity and to represent the group as a community. At this particular moment they are all the same, partners in a crime against Queen Margaret, and they will all be dealt with in the same manner, by her curses.

The lighting at this point is dim and eerie. In the long hallway that crosses the back of the stage, and between the archway openings, a blue light filters down. The stage itself is bathed in a filtered gloomy dark light. As the scene opens, the actors are immobilized as if stopped in time. They are like statues. A spotlight snaps on and spots the first four actors who have dialogue in the scene. This would be Elizabeth and her brother Earl Rivers and her sons Lord Grey and the Marquess of Dorset. They come to life while the other characters on stage remain lifeless and in the dark. They speak their lines until Buckingham joins the conversation. At the beginning of Buckingham's lines (line 18), the spotlight snaps on, and he immediately comes to life saying "Good time of day unto your royal grace." Everyone else still remains inactive.

At this point I have cut the character Stanley, Earl of Derby from the scene. He is cut from the scene because he is not one of the characters cursed by Queen Margaret. Appropriate changes in dialogue that refer to Derby can easily be made by giving Buckingham the Earl of Derby's lines.

They will continue their dialogue, concerning the failing health of Queen Elizabeth's husband Edward IV, and their concerns regarding their future should he

die, until the spotlight snaps on Richard and Hastings, who come to life and enter the conversation. Now the entire circle is flooded in a bright white spotlight and is active. The group has gathered here to discuss the current situation concerning the King's health and what his death could mean to certain factions within the court. They air their grievances and blame one another for their current state of affairs, countering one accusation with another.

Queen Margaret appears on stage during Elizabeth's lines, when Elizabeth states that she would rather be a country maid "than a great Queen" (103). Margaret will be on stage left in the hallway. She will start to cross the stage walking along the hallway toward the stair case. She is positioned behind and over the actors on stage. She is bathed in the eerie blue light, which lights the hallway, and she is also wearing a mask. Her mask is different from the other actors on stage. Her mask is also "white face," but more elaborate and reflects her role as a mystic and prophet. She does not look evil, but all-knowing. Her mask gives her an almost inhuman quality, a ghostly supernatural look to suggest her mystic qualities. The mask is used to help the audience see her in this role of prophet. She is dressed in regal clothing that would suggest her status of queen and of one who holds special powers.

Walking across the stage in the elevated hallway, Margaret has a number of asides or sarcastic comments that she makes between the lines spoken by Elizabeth and Richard (108-154). When Elizabeth complains, for instance, "Small joy have I in being England's queen" (109). Margaret responds, in an aside, "And less'ned be that small, God I beseech him! Thy honor, state, and seat is due to me!" (110-111). Margaret will deliver each one of these comments in the openings of the archways. She will eventually make her way to the stairs where she will walk down two stairs and stop before she is seen by the other actors in the circle (around line 156). Once she arrives at her final destination she will be spotlighted. There will be a bright white blue light on Margaret, and she will never during this scene come all the way down the stairs and mingle with the group. She, elevated and removed, will keep a distance from the group.

As each character interacts with Margaret, they can turn and address her, but never leave their positions on the stage, and they maintain the circle. This will demonstrate the difference in their positions and situations from Margaret's, and the sense of special power she possesses. Margaret is untouchable at this point in the play having already suffered the worst because of the manipulations of each in this group, but they are not untouchable. She is the messenger and dispenser of justice and she will mete out their sentences systematically, sending down one curse after another on their heads.

In lines 187-214 Margaret begins to curse the group below. Her curses are retaliatory curses for what she herself has suffered from their hands, and she calls upon God to punish her adversaries. When she starts this speech, the

lights on the group dim to a dark gloomy hue and Margaret is in full glow under a bright blue white spotlight. As she addresses and pronounces a curse on each person in the group, they will be spotlighted in a blue light, and a bell will begin to toll.

Her first curse in lines 198-208 is addressed to Elizabeth at the 12 o'clock position in the circle under the blue spotlight. Margaret curses Elizabeth's happiness and ironically wishes her long life:

Outlive thy glory like my wretched self!  
Long mayst thou live to wail thy children's death,  
And see another as I see thee now,  
Long die thy happy days before thy death  
And after many lenth'ned hours of grief.  
Die neither mother, wife nor England's queen (202-208).

Once she has finished her curse, there will be a pause while in the background the soft, monotone of a tolling bell sounds as the actors, for the first time on the stage, shift positions. They will walk clockwise and take up the position the person in front of them vacates. The bell continues to toll as one person after the next takes up the position at 12 o'clock. As the Queen utters the curse "That none of you may live his natural age" (212), Rivers, Grey, Dorset, and lastly Hastings walk into the 12 o'clock position, each stepping into the spotlight as she calls out their names.

Hastings pauses at the 12 o'clock position until the queen finishes her curse and the tolling bell stops. He remains in this position while Margaret interacts with Richard; Richard interrupts her curse with "Have done thy charm, thou hateful with'red hag" (214), and Margaret retaliates with "And leave out thee? Stay, dog, for thou shalt hear me" (215); she pauses, the tolling begins and Richard walks into the 12 o'clock position as Margaret curses Richard:

[Let] the worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul!  
Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou liv'st  
And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends!  
No sleep close up thy deadly eye of thine,  
Unless it be while some tormenting dream,  
Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils! (221-226)

The tolling bell ceases as she finishes her curse, and the blue spotlight is switched off and the entire group is again spotlighted as a whole under a bright white light.

The dialogue continues between Margaret and the group rails against Margaret's curses and call her a "false boding woman" and a "lunatic" (246, 253).

The bell begins to toll again, when Margaret begins to curse Buckingham who has criticized her along with the others. She had not intended to curse Buckingham because he had not committed a transgression against her. However, Margaret now curses Buckingham saying, "O, but remember this another day" (298), cursing him to regret his decision not to heed her warning of Richard. He walks clockwise into the 12 o'clock position under a blue spotlight as the bright white light fades. She reads off her last few lines and slowly backs up the stairs, finishes her curse at the top of the stair case, and turns into the hallway to stage right, walking off stage. The bell tolls until she exits the stage. At the end of her lines, her spotlight goes off and so does the blue spotlight on Buckingham (the only light on the group at this time).

The tolling bell, accompanying the curses and the walking of the group around the clock, symbolizes that in time her curses will ring true and each will suffer their own fate in their own time. Other than the faint blue light highlighting the hallway and the arches, the entire stage is dark. The only sound is the tolling of the bell as Margaret slowly exits. During this time, in the cover of darkness, the actors lift their masks to the top of their heads to reveal their faces. If I had a skilled mask maker, he could make the mask appear as headdresses sitting perched on top of the actors' heads. The lights come back on, illuminating the entire stage in bright afternoon sun light, and the actors fall out of the circle, as if out of a trance, and take up casual positions in conversation with one another. Buckingham starts them in motion when he says, "My hair doth stand on end to hear her curses" (303). The scene progresses normally from this point until Richard exits with the first murderer.

The changes made to the scene are to emphasize Margaret's role as soothsayer and prophet of doom. Taking the scene and placing it in a more surrealistic environment might with the added ritual element suggest to the audience Margaret's role as mystic. She becomes more believable to modern day audiences, who are more cynical and skeptical of mysticism than were Elizabethans. The atmosphere produced by the stark stage and eerie blue lighting suggest images of the supernatural, the mask alters her identity to suggest she is more than she appears to be, and the arranging of lines and stage direction give the audience the suggestion that she holds unnatural capabilities.

These changes act as cues directing the audience toward a certain idea using subtle suggestion rather than forcing the audience to accept an idea that to them may be implausible. The scene played in an abstract dream-like quality suggests to the audience that we don't expect them to believe in ghosts and the supernatural, but it allows the audience to accept the idea on another level. The audience can suspend their sense of disbelief momentarily and see Margaret symbolically as the avenger, and seer of justice. Just as Margaret moves from one play of the tetralogy to the next to witness the fulfillment of her prophecies,

so does history relentlessly march on, trampling everyone underfoot, to witness the fulfillment of its destiny.

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## Thrust Through the Tapestry: Playwriting, Stage Lighting, and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

John Langan

He will come straight. Look you lay home to him.  
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with  
And that your Grace hath screened and stood between  
Much heat and him. I'll silence me even here.  
Pray you, be round with him. (*Hamlet*, 3.4, 1-4)

So Polonius, royal counselor, instructs Queen Gertrude of Denmark on the proper reproach to Prince Hamlet for his recent strange behavior. He then hides himself behind a tapestry in the Queen's chamber to listen to her speech with her son. That speech does not proceed as Polonius had intended: though the Queen attempts to adhere to his script, Hamlet turns her words back on her, increasingly rewriting, as it were, the direction of their script to his own ends. Passions flare, and the Queen fears for her life, Polonius, aware that his script has escaped him, calls for help, and Hamlet thrusts through the tapestry with his rapier and kills the royal counselor.

I begin with these events from Act 3, Scene 4 of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* because they serve as a metaphor and microcosm for the events of the entire play. *Hamlet* is very much a play about playwriting: not only because of the celebrated "Mousetrap" play-within-a-play at its center, but because of the way its characters' actions repeatedly lead us to connect scheming and playwriting. I draw the parallel between these notions because both center around plots, suggesting a similarity it will be profitable to explore. In scheming, as in playwriting, the author attempts to shape experience to suit his ends. Of course, the playwright works retroactively with his material while the schemer's script is much more proactive. In both cases, though, that writing is shaped by the author's vision of a completed dramatic work; the difference arises from their chosen media.

In *Hamlet*, playwriting seems almost equivalent to speech: no one can long resist trying to shape the play to his own ends, or seeing the events around him as such a construct. The scene we began considering proceeds to Hamlet offering his own script for his mother to follow *vis a vis* her relations with his uncle. The situation at the play's beginning owes its existence to King Claudius' attempt to secretly assassinate his brother and quietly usurp the throne; as it were, to seize the pen and shape the drama to his own ends. As events unfold, *Hamlet* becomes a drama of the struggle for artistic control among the characters, particularly between Claudius and his nephew. But these would-be artists all confront the same dilemma: their fellow characters will not adhere to the re-

quirements of the scripts they have prepared for them. Everyone has his own agenda to pursue, his own aesthetic power he wished to exercise, and as a result the characters in one would-be playwright's play are frequently stepping outside its bounds to write their own; the action constantly escapes the artist of the moment. And though some of the characters, most notably Hamlet, are more successful at their artistry, none succeeds for very long. Ultimately, all meet the same end as Polonius, slain by the plays they were writing.

If Act 3, Scene 4 is metaphoric for certain thematic concerns of the entire play, we might ask how those concerns could be conveyed in performances of *Hamlet*. In our personal reading of the play, as in a discussion of it, there is time available for a careful consideration of the text and its meaning; the reading even may be stopped if this is desired or necessary. The immediacy of the theater, however, restricts this luxury. We must turn to the additional resources that the theater makes available to us in order to supplement some of what we lose of the play when it travels from page to stage. Needless to say, this means the actors' performances, but it also includes such things as costume, scenery and lighting, any and all of which may be used to highlight a given reading.

One could, for example, associate a particular prop with the current playwright(s): a quill pen, say, jutting from his cap. Thus we would begin Act 3, Scene 4 with Polonius sporting the feather, but we might very well see a surprised look pass across his face when Hamlet storms in with a plume of his own. As Hamlet and Gertrude's argument progresses and the balance tilts increasingly in Hamlet's favor, we might observe Polonius clutch at his cap, as if to hold onto the power he feels slipping away. After Hamlet has slain the counselor, he might stoop down and pluck the quill for himself. Such use of props, however, does not necessarily highlight the extent to which the current schemer's machinations color the events around him.

With stage lighting, though, we possess an instrument obvious enough to identify the playwright of the moment, but subtle enough to convey some of the nuances of the conflicting plots. We might associate a particular color with a particular character and then allow that color to rise, fall or remain constant upon the stage as the character's plot(s) develop, advance and then collide with the other plotters' schemes.

For example: let us associate blue lighting with Polonius, green with Gertrude and purple with Hamlet, and then return to Act 3, Scene 4. Since Polonius is the chief plotter at the Scene's beginning, we would begin in blue light, with a scattering of green to let us know that the Queen is more than a puppet. With Hamlet's entrance, though, and his forthright, "Mother, you have my father much offended" (169) to Gertrude's rebuke that he has offended the King, the purple lighting would rise; not enough to wash out the blue—for the moment, at least, this is still Polonius' play—but sufficient to challenge it. As the

dialogue between mother and son progresses, blue and purple would struggle for dominance as Hamlet and his mother exchange reproaches. With his attempt to "sit . . . [her] . . . down" and "set . . . up a glass / Where you may see the inmost part of you" (171), lines presumably mirrored by some physical action on Hamlet's part, the flare of purple light would emphasize the extent to which Hamlet has seized the pen. Blue and green might surge with Gertrude and Polonius' calls for help, a final attempt on their parts to wrest control of the script from the Prince, but with his thrust through the tapestry and his pronouncement of "Dead for a ducat, dead" (171) his usurpation would be complete, a fact underscored by the sudden extinguishing of all the blue lighting. Of course, with the entrance of Hamlet's father's Ghost a few lines later, a new set of lighting demands would arise--but we will address those shortly.

It is no small accident that Polonius' death occurs in the Third Act of the play, where Hamlet refashions "The Murder of Gonzago" into "The Mousetrap" in an overt and literal display of his artistic abilities. Hamlet is the play's great aesthetic power. He succeeds in exercising that power to the extent that he successfully perceives the design of the particular play of which he is supposed to be part and begins rewriting and redirecting it; indeed, this is true of all the play's characters. It is equally true that Hamlet's end, like that of the other characters, is incurred to the extent that he assumes the role scripted for him by someone else, in this case, the King. Claudius states that he will "work him / To an exploit, now ripe in my device, / Under the which he shall not choose but fall" (227) and the Prince, who so successfully rewrites Claudius' script on the voyage to England, exchanging Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's parts for his and sending them to his death, accepts the role. Hamlet is not omniscient; by the play's end, the events he has had so much to do with shaping have slipped so far from his grasp that it is all he can do to slay Claudius and fulfill the demands of his script. Yet even in the final Scene of the last Act, when the poison is chasing the life out of Hamlet, his creative ability remains strong, and we have the sense that his repeated "I am dead"s to Horatio are his writing himself out of his own play.

The play's disastrous end is not the only place where all plotting comes to naught, or perhaps where we see that the end of every plot is, in some way, death. With the madness and drowning of Ophelia, we reach an event outside the intentions of all plots of all players. Ophelia is not much of a plotter; perhaps because she is possessed of insufficient creative power, or perhaps because she is among the drama's more honest players. Standing at her grave at the beginning of Act 5, we are brought with the plotters to a place outside their writing; a notion suggested literally by the Scene's placement outside Elsinore in the graveyard. The implications of this setting for the plotters seem obvious enough, and, indeed, will be borne out by the end of this Act. If Act 3, Scene 4 is a trope for the struggle among the various plots within the castle, the graveyard represents a space outside them, a trope for their ultimate destinations.



If the raising and lowering of different lighting could be used effectively in the Queen's chamber to suggest the plotters' plots twisting around each other, uniform illumination in the graveyard would suggest that we have come to a place outside aesthetic intentions, to the "undiscovered country." Stark, white light set too brightly would permit us to see the plotters as they might be understood seeing themselves for the first time, with something not too far from honesty. Any symbolic props, any quill pens or what have you, would be gone. Laertes' extravagant praises of his dead sister, Hamlet's even more extravagant responses, come not from an attempt to move each other into one position or another, but from a grief so great it strips away artifice and leaves some basic part of character bare to the wind. It is worth noting that when Hamlet steps forward to the grave he announces himself as "Hamlet the Dane" (255). In this Scene he is no more, nor any less. In a play such as this one, where the major players shift from one role to another, it can be difficult, if not impossible, to pinpoint a moment where we feel we can say that this is this character's most essential self. Act 5, Scene 1 shows us these selves in a harsh clear light, and the lighting would reflect this. The different lights will color the stage again soon enough. For this Scene, we have achieved terrible objectivity.

Such uniform lighting could likewise be used at the play's end, to suggest that we have come to another place outside the plotters' plans. Indeed, it is interesting to note Hamlet's repeated injunctions to Horatio to tell the story of what has happened at Elsinore, with his final breaths redirecting his friend from potential playwright to potential historian. Depending on the extent to which we believe in human beings' ability to escape the need to plot, we might allow the stage lighting to remain uniform with Fortinbras' arrival in that final Scene, or, if our mood is somewhat more cynical, we might raise a new color or set of colors as the curtain falls.

If we accept the Scenes we have considered thus far as representative of the majority of the play's action, either in the thick of one character or another's scheme or completely removed from any and all devices and designs, what then are we to make of the appearance of the Ghost in Act 1, Scene 5 and again in Act 3, Scene, 4? Certainly he is as outside the scope of Claudius' intentions as is Ophelia's death. On the other hand, the Ghost takes an active part in the events of the play. He reveals the truth of his uncle's deeds to Hamlet and charges him with the filial duty of revenge in the First Act, appearing in the Third Act to remind Hamlet of that duty. In this much, at least, he seems yet one more schemer. He shares a name with Hamlet, and it may be significant that tradition assigns the role of the Ghost to Shakespeare himself: he is the outside force that begins the immediate action of the play, the playwright who permits the other playwrights their productions.

Hamlet's identification with that part indicates something of his own creative ability; though the fact that he is only the Ghost's son, not the Ghost himself, indicates his limitations. Of course, the Ghost himself is not omnipotent: though his appearances are dramatic and his knowledge supernatural, he is unable to participate directly in the events of the play. He demands a revenge drama from his son; what results is a revenge tragedy that we may assume outside the scope of whatever intentions he might harbor. Not even a supernatural being, it would seem, can long succeed as a playwright. Inasmuch as he is from outside the spatial world of the play, the Ghost may also be our surrogate in its action. We too are outside the drama, watching it; the Ghost provides us with something to watch, and helps insure it continues on its way.

In lighting the Scenes with the Ghost, then, we would need a balance between his physical separateness from the other characters and his centrality to what happens to them. We would want to assign him a particular color and even style of lighting unique to him: a deep red, say, projected onto the stage by a series of spotlights. Thus in Act 3, Scene 4, when Hamlet has slain Polonius and is in the process of castigating his mother for marrying his uncle, the Ghost's appearance would be heralded by a flood of red light, overpowering Hamlet's purple and announcing that an outside force is about to intervene.

In the First Act, until the Ghost makes his appearance, the general changes in lighting could be done more subtly, until the Ghost speaks to Hamlet and raises the level of the action from a sensitive boy's concern with his mother's too-hasty marriage to his uncle to his concern with his father's murder at that uncle's hand. At that point, the lighting changes could become more pronounced, perhaps increasingly so, until Act 5, Scene 1 jars us out of them.

The Scenes from *Hamlet* I have considered react interestingly and well with a reading of the play as a drama about dramas. While there is the danger that lighting the play to emphasize that idea will reduce it or hinder its meaning, such an interpretation is not fundamentally contradictory to the sense one gets reading the play. In any event, no one interpretation will long hold down *Hamlet*, for this is a play that has a way, like its title character, of finding us in our spots behind the chamber tapestry and, just when we think we have it under our control, thrusting us through the heart.

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## Webs and Wheels: Connections in Time and Space

Lynne Crockett

*All the King's Men* by Robert Penn Warren and *Light in August* by William Faulkner, though very different in terms of character, style, and plot, employ similar images in order to convey similar themes. Both take place in the South, with *All the King's Men* set in Louisiana and *Light in August* in Mississippi, and both Warren and Faulkner are concerned with the alienation of people who are no longer connected to their land, family, or tradition. The images of roads, streets, and highways are prominent in both books, with these paths leading the characters through time as well as space, searching for and/or escaping from themselves. These separate roads come together in each book's central image, which in *All the King's Men* is that of a spider web connecting us all through time and space, and in *Light in August* a wheel, turning onward in time, its spokes connecting the members of the community so that all are bound together in the same motion.

Both Warren and Faulkner are interested in portraying the alienation of self that occurs when one does not know oneself or one's heritage. This alienation may be due to uncertainty about one's parents and one's roots or to the breakdown of the community due to industrialization and the subsequent freedom of movement away from the land. In William Faulkner's novel *As I Lay Dying*, Anse Bundren says: "Durn that road . . . it's always men cant rest till they gets the house set where everybody that passes in a wagon can spit in the doorway, keeping the folks restless and wanting to get up and go somewheres else when He aimed for them to stay put like a tree or a stand of corn" (34-35). If people are meant to be rooted, as Anse says, then the uprooting due to industrialization and the mobility created by roads and cars can only separate people from their source of nourishment, the soil. It is the characters' search for direction and meaning that highlights each of these novels.

Both novels begin on the road; in *All the King's Men*, Jack Burden is in a fast car racing down the smooth, black ribbon of highway:

You look up the highway and it is straight for miles, coming at you, with the black line down the center coming at and at you, black and slick and tarry-shining against the white of the slab, and the heat dazzles up from the white slab so that only the black line is clear, coming at you with the whine of the tires, and if you don't quit staring at that line and don't take a few deep breaths and slap yourself

hard on the back of the neck you'll hypnotize yourself and you'll come to just at the moment when the right front wheel hooks over into the black dirt shoulder off the slab . . . . But if you wake up in time and don't hook your wheel off the slab, you'll go whipping on into the dazzle and now and then a car will come at you steady out of the dazzle and will pass you with a snatching sound as though God-Almighty had ripped a tin roof loose with his bare hands (1).

Warren's sentences carry the reader forward in a rush, just as the car rushes down the highway, leaving the reader slightly breathless and "dazzled" like the hypnotic road. This speeding forward under the illusion of urgency characterizes Jack Burden's movement through much of the book. Harold Woodell believes that writers:

are more prone to use the automobile [as opposed to the bulldozer] as a symbol of the South's modernity. Not only is it a machine capable of great destruction, but it also can move its passengers away from the land, a traditional source of sustenance, and away from the cares and considerations that arise from normal human contact . . . . On the other hand, the automobile may console a driver like Jack Burden, who is looking for a purpose in life. (32)

One reason the automobile does act as a consolation to Jack Burden is that it moves him "away from the cares and considerations that arise from normal human contact;" Jack takes to the road in order to escape his problems; he enters a "travel-dizzy state" in which "all personal connections and personal feelings vanish" (Burt 36). Jack is simultaneously in search of and in flight from his "personal connections" and "feelings." Jack is alienated; he lacks "some essential confidence in the world and in himself," and consequently, he is in search of a sense of connection and purpose (Warren *AKM* 311).

In contrast to the dangerous, breathless rush of Warren's opening lines, Faulkner's *Light In August* begins with peaceful, pleasant Lena Grove walking barefoot down the dusty road: "Sitting beside the road, watching the wagon mount the hill toward her, Lena thinks, 'I have come from Alabama; a fur piece. All the way from Alabama a-walking. A fur piece'" (3). The pace of Faulkner's words is slow and peaceful, just as Lena is slow and peaceful. Lena is a part of the earth, like "a change of season" (52). While Jack Burden is separate from the land around him, encased in a speeding cocoon of metal and fiber, Lena Grove is in harmony with her surroundings, walking slowly in the dust that covers her feet and ankles. During her walk from Doane's Mill, Alabama, to Jefferson, Mississippi, Lena is offered rides by many people, but until the end of the book, we never see Lena in a vehicle other than a wagon. Even when Lena does ride in a gasoline-propelled vehicle, it is slow: "the truck . . . was new and he did not intend to drive it faster than fifteen miles an hour" (494). Lena's character is

both ancient and ageless in her self-sufficiency; she does not need the convenience of modern machines to reach her destination.

The presence of industrialization is apparent in both novels through images of deforestation and waste. In her search for Lucas Burch, Lena leaves behind the machinery in Doane's Mill, a logging town in Alabama:

All the men in the village worked in the mill or for it. It was cutting pine. It had been there seven years and in seven years more it would destroy all the timber within its reach. Then some of the machinery and most of the men who ran it and existed because of and for it would be loaded onto freight cars and moved away. But some of the machinery would be left, since new pieces could always be bought on the installment plan--gaunt, staring, motionless wheels rising from mounds of brick rubble and ragged weeds with a quality profoundly astonishing, and gutted boilers lifting their rusting and unsmoking stacks with an air stubborn, baffled and bemused upon a stumpocked scene of profound and peaceful desolation, unplowed, untilled, gutting slowly into red and choked ravines beneath the long quiet rains of autumn and the galloping fury of vernal equinoxes (4-5).

This picture of Doane's Mill is one of waste; the pine forests are harvested blindly, the men move on, the machinery is left behind to rot, and "the hamlet which at its best day had borne no name listed on Postoffice Department annals would not now even be remembered by the hookwormridden heirs at large who pulled the buildings down and burned them in cookstoves and winter grates" (5). Time is the one force of strength present, as only time will hide the scars left by man and machine. Lena, in her cumbersome fertility, walks away from this desolate landscape, her pregnancy a connection to the future.

These same machine-in-the-garden images exist in *All the King's Men* as well:

There were pine forests here a long time ago but they are gone. The bastards got in here and set up the mills and laid the narrow-gauge tracks and knocked together the company commissaries and paid a dollar a day and folks swarmed out of the brush for the dollar and folks came from God knows where, riding in wagons with a chest of drawers and a bedstead . . . Til, all of a sudden, there weren't any more pine trees. They stripped the mills. The narrow-gauge tracks got covered with grass. Folks tore down the commissaries for kindling wood. (2)

This description is strikingly similar to that of Doane's Mill, especially the demise of the town after the trees are gone. Both Warren and Faulkner show equal disgust toward the mindless waste of the land, and the stripping of the land is symbolic of the stripping of the center of self. Though the destruction of the land is not a core image in either novel, the alienation and deracination of the characters is connected to the loss of community and place. Cleanth Brooks says that the "plight of the isolated individual cut off from any community of values is of course a dominant theme of contemporary literature" (*WFYC* 54). Lena Grove is the one character who is not isolated, who is at peace with herself, and the landscape and imagery that surrounds her is natural and fertile, not fast and citified like the images surrounding Jack Burden or Joe Christmas.

Joe Christmas, in *Light in August*, is characterized by the street, a much less hospitable terrain than the dirt road upon which Lena walks. Joe Christmas's streets are not soft, slow, and dusty but are "savage and lonely;" the description of Lena's road matches her, and the description of Joe's street matches him (258). As François Pitavy writes of *Light in August*, "the landscape" resembles the "characters inhabiting it" (85). Joe Christmas's street has much in common with Jack Burden's highway; it is "a paved street, where going should be fast" (Faulkner *LIA* 339). Cars are not seen that often in *Light in August*, certainly not as much as they are in *All the King's Men*, but Joe Christmas is usually present when there is a car speeding past. Two such scenes stand out as being especially vivid and strange. One occurs the night he stands naked outside of Joanna Burden's home:

He stood with his hands on his hips, naked, thighdeep in the dusty weeds, while the car came over the hill and approached, the lights full on him . . . . He looked straight into the headlights as it shot past. From it a woman's shrill voice flew back, shrieking (108).

Immediately after murdering Joanna Burden, Joe is given a ride by a young couple in a car, who shoot off after disgorging Joe: "The car rushed on, fading at top speed. From it floated back the girl's shrill wailing" (285). These scenes are very much alike, not only in the image of the speeding car, but also in the sound of the "shrill" women "shrieking" and "wailing" as the car speeds away. Cleanth Brooks says that "Joe Christmas is Faulkner's version of the completely alienated man, and the problem of alienation is one of the dominant themes of our century" (*FE* 175). The images of nighttime cars wailing away from Joe help to emphasize his isolation in society; the enclosed car in the night is a self-contained, exclusive world, and the wailing is a part of Joe himself, the part who will always be excluded from the community of man.

Joe Christmas's life is measured in terms of the street. The street is years, rather than miles, long; the street is "savage" and single:

From that night the thousand streets ran as one street, with imperceptible corners and changes of scene, broken by intervals or begged and stolen rides, on trains and trucks, and on country wagons with he at twenty and twenty-five and thirty sitting on the seat with his still, hard face and the clothes (even when soiled and worn) of a city man and the driver of the wagon not knowing who or what the passenger was and not daring to ask. The street ran into Oklahoma and Missouri and as far south as Mexico and then back north to Chicago and Detroit and then back south again and at last to Mississippi. It was fifteen years long; it ran between the savage and spurious board fronts of oil towns . . . . It ran through yellow wheat fields waving beneath the fierce yellow days of labor and hard sleep in haystacks . . . . And always, sooner or later, the streets ran through cities. (224)

Later, when Joe enters Mottstown and ends his flight, he thinks in terms of his street as being "thirty years long" (339). The roads and streets lead into the past and future as well as existing in the present. Allen Tate writes that this "backward glance" of Southern writers is what "gave us the Southern renaissance, a literature conscious of the past in the present" (545). The inclusion of history in these books is what gives them depth of meaning as well as hope for the future; without the past, there is no future. In *Light in August*, Lena leaves her past and walks toward her future; she exists in the present but is a part of both past and future. Joe Christmas is fleeing his past but, as Cleanth Brooks says, is "trapped in the past." Brooks also states that Christmas "has no future" and thus, "no true freedom" (WFYC 330). Because Joe is trapped in the past while, paradoxically, trying to escape from it, he is led back to it: "'I have been farther in these seven days than in all the thirty years,' he thinks. 'But I have never got outside that circle. I have never broken out of the ring of what I have already done and cannot ever undo'" (339). Joe has been farther not only in distance but also in psychology during these seven days; the road is not only measured in terms of distance and time, but also in terms of personal growth. History is, thus, responsible for where a person is at any one moment in time, not only physically but emotionally. William Faulkner believes Joe Christmas to be the one tragic figure in *Light in August*:

He knew that he would never know what he was, and his only salvation in order to live with himself was to repudiate mankind, to live outside the human race. And he tried to do that but nobody would let him, the human race itself wouldn't let him. And I don't think he was bad, I think he was tragic. And his tragedy was that he didn't know what he was and would never know, and that to me is the most tragic condition that an individual can have--to not know who he was (FIU 118).



Christmas is trapped in his life on the street because he is both running from, and searching for, himself.

Like Joe Christmas, Jack Burden uses travel as escape, flight, which is most noticeable in his westward trip away from Anne Stanton and Willie Stark, and away from his own past and present, away from himself: "because when you don't like it where you are you always go west . . . that was why I drowned in West and relived my life like a home movie" (309). John Burt writes of the west that it "is not where one solves the problem of self. It is rather . . . where one goes to lose the self" (36). Jack Burden, during his trip west, creates the Great Twitch philosophy, which supports Burt's belief in the westward trip as a means to "lose the self." The Great Twitch theory centers upon the idea that life is no more than an uncontrollable twitch of a muscle, a twitch of which the possessor may not even be aware (310). If we cannot control the twitch, we cannot control anything; life is out of our hands. Thus, Jack is able to shun the burden of responsibility, for if the twitch is unconscious and uncontrolled, why worry about it? If we cannot control our lives, then we have no responsibility for our actions; free will does not exist. Robert Penn Warren says that the "themes" of "naturalistic determinism and responsibility" had "crept in" during the writing of this story ("Introduction" 93). These themes were, and still are, important to twentieth-century American literature, including Faulkner's work. The movement west, into "unreality," is a movement away from one's responsibility, away from one's history (Ruppersburg 112).

Like Jack Burden, in *Light in August* the Reverend Gail Hightower escapes from life through illusion and unreality. Hightower is quite different from Burden; he does not run physically from his problems, nor is he associated with roads and streets as is Joe Christmas, nor even with slow, forward motion like Lena Grove. Hightower is motionless, stagnant. As a child, born to parents who were older, he "grew to manhood among phantoms, and side by side with a ghost" (474). Hightower became fascinated with the life of his grandfather, who died during the Civil War. He romanticized the charge on a henhouse in Jefferson which ended his grandfather's life, and later, he romanticized the Church. François Pitavy says of Hightower that he "sought refuge in the Church," using it as a "retreat, where, far from men, he would be able to construct a perfect existence for himself" (115). Hightower later decided that the woman who was to become his wife was beautiful, not because she was, but "because he had heard of her before he ever saw her and when he did see her he did not see her at all because of the face which he had already created in his mind. He did not believe that she could have lived there all her life and not be beautiful" (479). In the same way, Hightower never really saw Jefferson except as it existed for him at the moment of his grandfather's death. He was not really there in the present; he was living out his fantasy with his grandfather during the Civil War. The moment of his grandfather's raid was the only thing that was real to him, and this was not real because it was past and he had not been there to see it. As Jack

Burden says, "reality is not a function of the event as event, but of the relationship of that event to past, and future, events. We seem here to have a paradox: that the reality of an event, which is not real in itself, arises from other events which, likewise, in themselves are not real" (384). Hightower has no sense of reality because he cannot relate events in the present to events in the past; he lives purely in the past. Hightower's blindness to life, his desire to be isolated in his "perfect existence," is quite similar to Jack Burden's Brass Bound Idealist phase in which he believes "it does not matter what you do or what goes on around you because it isn't real anyway" (30). In his isolation, Hightower feels safe from what he is ignorant of: life and responsibility.

Lena Grove and Joe Christmas are reflected in their road images, and similarly, Gail Hightower's body reflects his stagnation and separateness from physical life; he is described as being both gaunt and obese: "His skin is the color of flour sacking and his upper body in shape is like a loosely filled sack falling from his gaunt shoulders of its own weight, upon his lap" (Faulkner *LIA* 78-79). Hightower's physical flabbiness is indicative of his mental flabbiness; not only is he immersed in the past, the event which obsesses him is "a trivial and vulgar detail" (Hoffman 31). Hightower is lifted from isolation and stagnation by interaction with Byron Bunch who forces Hightower to interact with others, and because of Byron's influence, Hightower delivers Lena's baby. This bringing forth of life stirs Hightower into a new life of his own, which is balanced by the death of Joe Christmas in Hightower's home on the same day of the baby's birth. The double shock of birth and death allows Hightower his own revelation, his own death of "immunity" and birth of responsibility.

Like Hightower, Jack Burden also experiences a "rebirth" in *All the King's Men* (Girault 30). Jack Burden is shocked into the realization that he is responsible for his actions, and this realization occurs when his father, Judge Irwin, kills himself after a visit from Jack. At the time of his visit, Jack is acting as Willie Stark's historian, digging up dirt about Judge Irwin's past in order to counteract the Judge's refusal to support him for reelection. Upon hearing of Judge Irwin's death, Jack's mother accuses him of killing the Judge. Girault believes that Jack's mother's scream at the news of Irwin's death is the point of Jack's rebirth. Jack, like Hightower, only comes to understand himself after becoming aware of the importance of his actions through the death of his friend.

Jack Burden works toward this moment of understanding over a period of many years. When younger, as a graduate student in history, Jack is unable to interpret the meaning behind the diary of Cass Mastern:

Cass Mastern lived for a few years and in that time he learned that the world is all of one piece. He learned that the world is like an enormous spider web and if you touch it, however lightly, at any point, the vibration ripples to the remotest perimeter and the

drowsy spider feels the tingle and is drowsy no more but springs out to fling the gossamer coils about you who have touched the web and then inject the black, numbing poison under your hide. It does not matter whether or not you meant to brush the web of things. Your happy foot or your gay wing may have brushed it ever so lightly, but what happens always happens and there is the spider, bearded black and with his great faceted eyes glittering like mirrors in the sun, or like God's eye, and the fangs dripping (188-189).

Harold Woodell believes that "Jack's inability to understand the Mastern story and his distancing of himself from the morality of his research for the Boss are both symptoms of an emptiness at the core of his being" (56). Jack's emptiness is similar to the emptiness of Joe Christmas; Jack does not know who he is. Mastern understands that life is like a vibrating web only after he is responsible for the death of his friend; like Mastern, Jack is finally able to understand the interrelationship between people after he is responsible for Judge Irwin's death. Irwin's death reveals the truth to Jack about his paternity. The recognition of Judge Irwin as his real father, and the ability to see that his mother had loved Irwin, allows Jack to feel a familial bond with his parents and a center to himself. The past of Cass Mastern is still alive in Jack Burden; his touch on the web is still vibrating and has helped Jack to understand what he himself was forced to realize years ago. We are all touched by the ever-vibrating strands of a huge spider web.

Jack Burden, in accepting responsibility for himself, also realizes his connection to and complicity with all others. Jack knows that Tiny Duffy is responsible for the death of Willie Stark. As he is considering how to turn Duffy in for Stark's murder, Jack has a moment of clarity in which he sees himself as Duffy's brother:

It was as though in the midst of the scene Tiny Duffy had slowly and like a brother winked at me with his oyster eye and I had known he knew the nightmare truth, which was that we were twins bound together more intimately and disastrously than the poor freaks of the midway who are bound by the common stitch of flesh and gristle and the seepage of blood. We were bound together forever and I could never hate him without hating myself or love myself without loving him. We were bound together under the unwinking eye of Eternity and by the Holy Grace of the Great Twitch whom we must all adore. (417)

This realization stunned Jack for a while; everyone "looked alike to me then. And I looked like them" (417). When the opportunity arose for Jack to tell Sugar Boy about Duffy, an act that would surely get Duffy killed, Jack could not do it

(421). The responsibility he had toward Duffy was too great; no matter how weak and repulsive Duffy seemed to him, to kill Duffy would be to kill his brother or himself.

The image of the wheel in *Light in August* is similar to the web in *All the King's Men*, not only in shape, but in meaning. Carl Benson argues that Hightower may be considered the "central figure" of *Light in August*, and it is this centrality of his character that makes him important to the image pattern of the novel (260). Lena and Joe are associated with the road imagery which crisscrosses the landscape of the novel, but Hightower is the character who provides the final image of the wheel which unifies the other characters and themes. The wheel is present as a physical shape in the landscape, with Joanna Burden's home the hub and paths leading outward like "wheelspokes" (257). Joe's street and Lena's road lead them to this same hub, where first Joe, then Lena, live in the cabin behind Burden's house. The connections of roads, streets, paths, and characters are completed through the image of the wheel in the fading "copper light" of August (466).

As the wheel turns, images of Hightower's past go through his mind. He realizes that he has ruined his life, but rationalizes this thought: "I have bought my ghost, even though I did pay for it with my life. And who can forbid me doing that? It is any man's privilege to destroy himself, so long as he does not injure anyone else, so long as he lives to and of himself--" (490). It is at this moment that Hightower realizes he has been responsible for the lives of others in spite of his belief that he has "bought immunity" through his suffering. The wheel of his thought slows for a moment, yet it still moves forward. In horror he realizes that "for fifty years . . . I have been a single instant of darkness in which a horse galloped and a gun crashed" (491). Once Hightower has had his epiphany, the wheel is released and rushes ahead, surrounded by a "halo" filled "with faces" that are "peaceful" (491). In this halo he sees the faces of the members of the community, with Christmas's and Percy Grimm's faces blended together, forming a whole (491-492). At this realization, a "dammed flood within him breaks and rushes away. He seems to watch it, feeling himself losing contact with the earth, lighter and lighter, emptying, floating" (492). This description matches Faulkner's description of Christmas as he dies: "the pent black blood seemed to rush like a released breath. It seemed to rush out of his pale body like the rush of sparks from a rising rocket; upon that black blast the man seemed to rise soaring into their memories forever and ever" (465). The writing in both places is similar in style as well as in wording; Faulkner is connecting Christmas to Hightower, not because Hightower has died (he hasn't), but because they have each been released from their prison of the past. Cleanth Brooks says Hightower realizes that "not only are Joe and Percy Grimm brothers under the skin, but he himself and Joe are also brothers in crime. For if Joe is guilty of the death of his paramour, Joanna, Hightower has been just as guilty of the death of his own wife" (FE 189). William Faulkner said that he placed Hightower's life

story at this point in the novel to highlight the tragedy of Joe Christmas "by the tragedy of his antithesis" (FIU 45). By underlining Christmas's tragedy with his own, Hightower is able to connect the lives of all the townspeople, joining them in the halo that surrounds the turning spokes of the wheel. This is quite similar to Jack Burden's understanding of his brotherhood with Tiny Duffy; to realize responsibility is to realize how we are enmeshed in the same web of life. Hightower's revelation is not only beautifully written, it is also a powerful statement which helps to lift the book from being tragic and hopeless to being tragic and hopeful, and, as Faulkner would say, one that emphasizes the power of endurance: "He had to endure, to live" (FIU 75).

Time and history are wound tightly into the images of roads, webs, and wheels. Jack Burden says of his conversation with Anne Stanton: "I tried to tell her how if you could not accept the past and its burden there was no future, for without one there cannot be the other, and how if you could accept the past you might hope for the future, for only out of the past can you make the future" (435). Jack needed to know who he was before he could accept his place in time, and this discovery occurred only after Judge Irwin died. Joe Christmas never did discover who he was, but before death he discovers time and peace within the loneliness in nature.

While running from the Jefferson officials after the death of Joanna Burden, Joe becomes obsessed with time, with the present, and at the moment that he decides to stop running: "Yes I would say Here I am I am tired I am tired of running of having to carry my life like it was a basket of eggs" (337). He asks a Negro in a passing wagon what day it is; and, upon discovering it is Friday, heads back into the woods:

Again his direction is straight as a surveyor's line, disregarding hill and valley and bog. Yet he is not hurrying. He is like a man who knows where he is and where he wants to go and how much time to the exact minute he has to get there in. It is as though he desires to see his native earth in all its phases for the first or the last time. He had grown to manhood in the country, where like the unswimming sailor his physical shape and his thought had been molded by its compulsions without his learning anything about its actual shape and feel. For a week now he has lurked and crept among its secret places, yet he remained a foreigner to the very immutable laws which earth must obey (338).

Now that Christmas has discovered time, he has purpose and direction, and soon after feels peace within himself and with his surroundings:

It is just dawn, daylight: that gray and lonely suspension filled with the peaceful and tentative waking of birds. The air, inbreathed, is

like spring water. He breathes deep and slow, feeling with each breath himself diffuse in the neutral grayness, becoming one with loneliness and quiet that has never known fury or despair. "That was all I wanted," he thinks, in a quiet and slow amazement. "That was all, for thirty years. That didn't seem to be a whole lot to ask in thirty years" (331).

Joe Christmas moves from one who is a "foreigner to the very immutable laws which earth must obey," to one who finds peace at dawn, "becoming one with loneliness and quiet that has never known fury or despair," which is nature. This peace did not come to Joe while tramping down the thirty years of paved roads, but while he was on the unpaved roads and in the woods. Joe's peace within himself came only after a realization of time and his connection with the earth.

The last sentence of *All the King's Men* effectively captures the theme of both novels: "But that will be a long time from now, and soon now we shall go out of the house and go into the convulsion of the world, out of history and into history and the awful responsibility of Time" (438). Lewis Simpson says that this line "is virtually a condensation of the major theme of the Southern novel of the twenties and thirties" (DG 83). The image patterns that occur throughout the novels serve to emphasize the importance of endurance, history, and "the awful responsibility of time" by connecting the characters to the world around them and to each other, a connection which helps to defeat the characters' isolation. Time is the most enduring figure in the novels, and with time there is hope for the future, for further endurance.

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## ***Carpe Diem: Moll Flanders and 18th-Century Motherhood***

**Jennifer Benton**

The cult of motherhood, a mid-nineteenth century notion, gave rise to the sentimental ideal of the devoted, full-time caretaker who selflessly labored to better the lives of her children; Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* predated this social ideal by more than a century. In the character of Moll Flanders, we see a woman who alternately embraces and abandons her children as her economic situation fluctuates; she presents a realistic portrayal of the dilemma facing a poor, struggling eighteenth-century woman who does not have the advantage of birth control. The novel, published in 1722, two decades before Thomas Coram's founding hospital was established in London and three decades before the British government made any financial provision for orphans (Langer 96), the novel, in part, addresses the position of poor women and their children.

Achieving middle-class security characterizes and motivates Moll Flanders. Michael Shinagal, sums up Moll's maternal behavior, particularly where her son Humphrey is concerned, as a "curious mixture of warm kisses and cold cash." He further suggests that there is a "cash nexus in Moll's actions and motives" (413). Defoe's premise is simple: as Moll struggles to make her way in the world children will only impede her progress; however, when she is in a financial position to care for her children, she does. It is at other times when she must find her next husband or steal to support herself that she simply cannot concern herself with her children (Novak 125). In an era prior to reliable forms of birth control, Moll was burdened with the biological fact of unwanted pregnancy; her relationships resulted in a dozen live births. Their existence notwithstanding, she continued to work toward her dream of entering into middle-class prosperity. As a woman with several children in tow she would be much less successful as a thief or appealing as a prospective wife to a middle-class merchant, and so, Moll must be unencumbered. Ian Watt aptly describes Moll Flanders as the "product of modern individualism in assuming that she owes it to herself to achieve the highest economic and social rewards, and in using every available method to carry out her resolve" (Watt 94). If Moll must relinquish her children so that she can achieve those rewards, her utilitarian perspective allows her to do so without too much regret.

Moll's first marriage to Robin, the son of her wealthy employers, produces two children. After Robin's death her "two children were indeed taken happily off of [her] Hands by [her] Husband's Father and Mother. . ." (Defoe 47). This is the first of several placements that Moll will make for her children throughout the novel and with a "tollerable Fortune" of 1,200 pounds, Moll sets out to find her next husband. Dorothy Van Ghent views Moll's surrendering the children to the

care of Robin's parents, in exchange for money, as "the conversion of all subjective, emotional, and moral experience—implicit in the fact of Moll's five years of marriage and motherhood—into pocket and bank money, into the materially measurable" (Van Ghent 406). Ghent, caught up in the sentimental nineteenth-century notion of motherhood, judges Moll's behavior as "shocking . . . shocking in its simplicity and abruptness and entireness" (406). Assuming the status of a dependent widow is repugnant to Moll, and so, she simply moves on, without her children. Depositing her children with her in-laws in exchange for her freedom and money is, to her, a shrewd transaction; she comments, with an air of self-congratulation: "and that by the way was all they got by Mrs. Betty" (Defoe 47).

Years later when Moll finds herself in Colechester, the town where her in-laws reside, she makes inquiries after the family, the sisters, the parents, the brother with whom she had an affair, even his sons by another marriage, but not her own children (Defoe 209). Henry James would define this oversight as one of Defoe's "stray threads," part of the story that is never resolved. Other critics have suggested that it is a silent judgment on Moll's lack of maternal care. I believe, quite simply, that it is typical of Moll—out of sight, out of mind. If she cannot benefit materially from the relationship, why bother to take it up again. Ever the pragmatist, she pursues only those who can help her. Both Watt and Shinagel agree: "our interpretation should not be allowed to go beyond what is positively stated by Defoe or Moll Flanders" (Watt 110) and that the "oversight poses no problem to our understanding of Moll's character, for her disregard of her children is a consistent part of her personality and her 'history' as she tells it" (Shinagel 408).

Moll subsequently marries a draper who runs through her fortune within two years and he must flee to the continent in order to avoid creditors. They had no children, but the marriage leaves Moll vulnerable to the government for his debts and she goes into hiding until she can procure another husband. While still legally married to the draper, she contracts a marriage to a man who, as it turns out, is her brother. She moves with him to his plantation in Virginia, and there they produce three children, one of whom is Humphrey; the only child of Moll's ever to be called by anything other than "brave boy" or "the child" or simply "it." When she realizes that she is married to her brother, she is horrified and decides that she must return to England, leaving her two children—one is dead—with her birth mother. She asserts: "had things been right, [she] should not have done it [left them], but now, *it was* [her] real desire never to see them" (Defoe 73). Moll rationalizes her decision to abandon her children by maintaining that the incestuous nature of the relationship renders the children "not legal" (DEFOE 81) and, by implication, they do not merit her concern or care. With "[her] own Fate pushing [her] on, . . . [she] obtain'd a very good Cargo" (Defoe 82) and returned to England where she achieves a measure of middle-class stability as the mistress of the married man at Bath.

During this period of relative affluence, Moll describes her son as a "fine boy . . . a charming child" (Defoe 93). Moll recalls her time with the Banker as "the height of what [she] might call [her] Prosperity," with money enough to hire a "wet-nurse to tend and suckle" her child (Defoe 93). After her lover falls ill and finds salvation, he abandons her and the five year old boy with "no Provision made for it" (Defoe 96). As the money disappears, Moll's description of the child reverts from "fine and charming" to simply "it." In one of the most revealing passages on Moll and motherhood, she reflects:

And now I was greatly perplex'd about my little Boy; it was Death to me to part with the Child, and yet when I consider'd the Danger of being one time or other left with him to keep without a Maintenance to support him, I then resolv'd to leave him where he was; but then I concluded also to be near him my self too, that I might have the *satisfaction of seeing him, without the care of providing for him* (Defoe 98 italics mine).

Caught between the "maternal impulse" that humanizes Moll to contemporary readers who are products of the overly sentimentalized nineteenth-century notion of motherhood, and the practical economics of eighteenth-century survival, she chooses to protect herself. She subsequently corresponds with her lover and uses the "well-doing of the Child" (Defoe 99) to bilk him out of fifty pounds. She takes the money and never again mentions the child—where she placed him, if she paid for his keep, or if she visited him. Again we witness the rise to prosperity which allows Moll the freedom to be a devoted mother and the subsequent fall into poverty which forces her to move on.

Her fourth marriage, to Jemmy from Lancashire, comes to an end when they decide, despite their love for one another, to part, as neither one has sufficient funds to support both in the style in which they plan to become accustomed. After they split, the banker renews his marriage offer to Moll, who simultaneously discovers that she is pregnant by Jemmy. Realizing that she will be unable to marry the banker "without entirely concealing that [she] had had a Child, for he would soon have discover'd by the Age of it, that it was born, nay and gotten too since my Parting with him, and that would have destroy'd all the Affair" (Defoe 135). Moll makes plans to stash the infant with a nurse who cares for children in return for cash. The woman who looks after Moll during her pregnancy and bringing-in, Moll's "governess," argues that to place the child is the right thing to do as, she asks Moll: "How were we Nurs'd ourselves? Are you sure, you were Nurs'd up by your own Mother? and yet you look fat, and fair . . ." (Defoe 136). Moll realistically contends that the one time payment practically ensures a quick end to the child's life. She explains:

you give a Piece of Money to these People to take the Child off the Parents Hands, and to take Care of it as long as it lives; now we

kept no company, made no visits, minded [her] Family, and oblig'd [her] Husband; and this kind of Life became a Pleasure" (Defoe 147). To this summation of her final marriage, she adds that she had "two Children by him and no more, for to tell the Truth, it began to be time for [her] to leave bearing Children, for [she] was now Eight and Forty" (Defoe 148). The banker dies and the children are never again mentioned; whether they survived or where she fostered them when penniless and too old to be "courted for a Mistress" (Defoe 148), she establishes herself as a thief under the tutelage of her "governess."

Defoe grants the reader no further encounters with Moll's children in England. However, Humphrey, in Virginia, reappears late in the novel as a prosperous gentleman farmer who will help Moll achieve her long sought-after middle-class status. Moll describes him as "a handsome comely young Gentleman in flourishing Circumstances" (Defoe 252). In exchange for the financial security he provides for her, he earns Moll's devotion. Shinagel astutely observes: "emotion . . . as Moll well knows, is cheap, and she transforms the exchange with her son into a proper business transaction" (Defoe 412). Conveniently forgetting her previous rejection of her "unnatural" children, of whom Humphrey is one, Moll lavishes her affection on him. Humphrey, as Moll well knows, holds the power to the legacy from her mother, Humphrey's grandmother. During this period of anxiety over how to attain the bequest she "began secretly now to wish that [she] had not brought [her] *Lancashire* Husband from *England* at all" (Defoe 262). She is distressed by the prospect that she will, by law, be forced to surrender her newfound wealth to Jemmy, her Lancashire husband, unless she can find some way to conceal its existence from him, "which would by no means be Convenient" (Defoe 262).

During one of the mother-son meetings, Humphrey presents Moll with a bag of Spanish gold, in return Moll presents him with a stolen watch. After accepting the money from her son, Moll gets down to business and questions Humphrey about the amount of income that her inheritance, a small plantation, will generate annually. Humphrey generously tells Moll that he is willing to assume the responsibility of managing the land for her so that she may absent herself while benefiting from his efforts. In a fit of gratitude, Moll observes her son's "tender carriage" and reflects that his generous offer "fetch'd Tears . . . almost all the while he talk'd" (Defoe 263). Driven by the "Passion" of prospective wealth, Moll declares that she has "no Child but him in the World" (Defoe 264). According to Edward H. Kelly, editor of *Norton Critical Edition*, she is in essence telling him that he is her only legal heir and her other living children have no right to her newfound wealth. She emotionally describes the signing of the contracts, which she says she "deliver'd them to him with a hundr'd Kisses; for sure nothing ever pass'd between a Mother and a tender dutiful Child, with more Affection" (Defoe 264). Reminiscent of Colechester, Moll doesn't bother to inquire after Humphrey's sibling, the other child by her brother/husband, whom she left behind when she returned to England. The issue is once again

unresolved and Moll doesn't concern herself with that which is not right in front of her. In this single transaction with Humphrey, Moll is able to demonstrate her devotion and, quite coincidentally, turn a tidy profit--a feat that only the irrepressible Moll Flanders could manage.

Throughout five marriages and numerous affairs, Moll Flanders produced almost a dozen children; eight survived, but only one, Humphrey, reappears. The success of his relationship with Moll is intimately tied to the wealth of the land and the generous services he provides for her. The other children are placed with relatives, or at baby-farms, or are mentioned only to be forgotten. By nineteenth-and twentieth-century standards, we are appalled by what we deem to be a callous disregard for her children; however, Moll is the embodiment of the ultimate survivor. During the hard times of the eighteenth century, scrambling for every economic advancement was a way of life and unwanted pregnancy was an unavoidable result of relationships. In order to move on without regret Moll must firmly believe that she is doing her duty by her children when she places them with caretakers in various circumstances. Moll, after all, who was born at Newgate and fostered in several different circumstances before her fifth birthday, learned early that motherly devotion is a middle-class luxury that has little to do with the life of a poor woman struggling to survive.

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## NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CONTRIBUTOR PROFILES

**JENNIFER BENTON** holds the BA in English Literature (and the BA in History) from the Pennsylvania State University (1986). She also holds the MA (with distinction) in English and American Literature from Kings College, University of London. She is currently an MA candidate and a Teaching Assistant in the New Paltz graduate English program.

**LYNNE CROCKETT** received her BA in English from SUNY/New Paltz, served as a Teaching Assistant in the Freshman English program, and is currently completing her MA studies here. She plans to pursue her Ph. D. in English at New York University

**RICHARD HAMILTON** received a BA in English Literature from SUNY/New Paltz and was a Teaching Assistant in the Freshman English program. He has a special interest in theories of language and criticism, and will be completing his work for the MA in the near future.

**YU JIN KO** (Ph.D. Yale University) is Assistant Professor of English at SUNY/New Paltz, where he teaches Shakespeare and Sixteenth-Century English Literature. His teaching and scholarship are focused particularly on Shakespeare in performance, the subject of the Seventh Annual Symposium, which he directed.

**CARRIE LANDI** has a BA in English Literature from Marist College, Poughkeepsie. She has also studied abroad at Manchester College, Oxford University, Oxford, England, and upon graduating from Marist College, received the English Literature Award. She is presently an Adjunct in the Freshman English program, and will be finishing her MA degree in the near future.

**JOHN LANGAN** received his BA in English Literature from SUNY/ New Paltz; he is a candidate in the MA program and is a Teaching Assistant in the Freshman English program.

**CHRISTINA NELSON** comes from Vassar College with a BA in English literature. She was a Teaching Assistant in the Department from 1992 to 1994 and will be completing her MA degree in the near future.

**JOAN PERISSE** received her BA from SUNY/New Paltz and was a Teaching Assistant in the Freshman English program. She has pursued her special interest in computer-assisted writing programs.

**ANN MARIE PHILLIPS** hold the BA in English from **SUNY/Albany** (1990). She has been a Teaching Assistant in the New Paltz graduate English program and has recently earned her MA in English. She is currently an Adjunct in the Department of English.

**PROFESSOR H. R. STONEBACK** (Ph.D., Vanderbilt University) is Director of the Graduate Symposium, *EGR* editor, Director of Graduate Studies, and Professor of English at **SUNY/New Paltz**, where he has taught since 1969.

**SARAH WENK** comes to us with a BA with Honors in English from **SUNY/Purchase** and with further study in the Ph. D. program at the University of California at Berkeley. Her professional experience includes six years with *The New Yorker* magazine.

### **PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The **Master of Arts Graduate Program at New Paltz** offers several graduate curricula emphasizing the study of English and American literature and language. The **MA** degree requires ten courses (30 credits) at the master's level; the writing of a thesis is optional. The **MA**, **MS** (7-12), and **MAT** degrees may lead to New York State certification in secondary-level English.

### **TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS**

Teaching Assistantships are available to qualified MA candidates. A teaching assistant normally takes two or three courses while teaching one freshman course each semester. Stipend: approximately \$4,500 per year, free tuition for six credits per semester, and a health insurance plan. The degree program for Teaching Assistants requires 30 credits in language and literature and 3 credits in Modern Theories of Writing.

### **RESEARCH AWARDS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS IN LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES**

To encourage and facilitate research by outstanding Master's candidates in Liberal Arts and Sciences, awards will be made for expenses incurred in the preparation of a Master's thesis. This program has been made possible through the generosity of the Arethusa Society. While most of the awards will be for amounts of \$400 or less, the review committee will award the maximum dollar amount for those projects with budgets that justify the expenditure. Students are encouraged to submit applications with budgets that call for \$400 or less.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Applicants must be matriculated Master's candidates who have completed and filed a formal thesis application approved by their department. Applicants must be presently enrolled in a course for preparation of a thesis or

have registered for such a course in a previous semester and presently have an H (Hold) on their record. Except for extenuating circumstances, previous recipients of these awards are ineligible. Projects must be sponsored by a member of the Graduate Faculty who will direct the project. Upon completion of the project, awardees will be required to provide a report on their accomplishments during the grant period.

**EVALUATION:** Projects will be judged by a faculty panel on the basis of merit, design, and feasibility.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURE:** Applications are available from the Dean's Office (Faculty Tower 614).

**Deadline:** April 15th of each spring semester. Awards will be announced by the Dean on May 1st.

### **SOJOURNER TRUTH FELLOWSHIPS**

Qualified minority students are eligible for a full fellowship, an award that includes full financial support for tuition and supplies. Typically, fellowships can average approximately \$8,000 for an academic year; expenses for the year are about \$7,000.

**APPLICANTS** must be of Black American, Hispanic American, Mexican American, or Native American origin, must be accepted (matriculated) in a registered graduate degree program, and must enroll on a full-time basis (12 credits). The fellowship is renewable until the graduate degree is completed. Of course, students must remain in academic "good standing" to retain their matriculated status and, therefore, their scholarship. While admissions criteria vary by discipline, the basic requirements include a cumulative **GPA** of 3.0 for prior work, and acceptable scores on a nationally normed aptitude test, such as the **GRE** or **MAT**. When appropriate, fellowship recipients will be given a service assignment, such as research or teaching assistant, counselor, etc.

### **TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS**

This program provides a full waiver of tuition and College fee at any SUNY Institution for New York residents, even temporarily, in a **SEEK**, **HEOP**, or **EOP** program. Other aid sources, such as **TAP**, **GSL**, **CWS**, may be needed to provide students with full financial support.

**APPLICANTS:** To qualify for the tuition scholarship program, applicants must certify participation in **EOP**, **HEOP**, or **SEEK** as an undergraduate, must be accepted (matriculated) in a registered graduate degree program, and must be enrolled on a full-time basis (12 credits). The tuition scholarship may be renewable



until the graduate degree is completed. Students must remain in academic "good standing" to retain their matriculated status and, therefore, their tuition scholarship. While admissions criteria may vary by discipline, the basic requirements include a cumulative **GPA** of 3.0 for prior work, and acceptable scores on a nationally normed aptitude, such as the **GRE** or **MAT**.

### **THE THAYER FELLOWSHIPS IN THE ARTS**

**TWO THAYER FELLOWSHIPS** are awarded each year to outstanding candidates for graduation from State University of New York, funded through an endowment established in honor of Jeanne C. Thayer, Trustee of **SUNY** from 1974-1984.

The purpose of the fellowships is to serve as a *bridge* between study at State University of New York and first-time entry into a professional career in the creative or performing arts: namely, music, theatre, dance, film and video, creative writing, and the visual arts.

Two awards of \$7,000 are given annually to individuals selected for talent, achievement, and potential as professional artists. The fellowships are available to candidates for graduation in the arts of both baccalaureate and advanced degree programs. They are not intended for students going on to graduate school; those students should apply at the end of their graduate degree program.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Applicants must be enrolled as candidates for baccalaureate and advanced degree programs in the arts in State University of New York. The degree must be completed in **SUNY**. Application must be in the academic year of completion. Students who have returned to the university for advanced study after establishing professional careers are not eligible; the fellowship is intended for those entering a career in the arts for the first time. Applications must be complete when submitted and postmarked by October 30. See the Department Chair for further information regarding application, CHE-105.

### **DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Master's Comprehensive Examination Dates:**

**Fall 1996 -- Saturday, November 2**

**Spring 1997 -- Saturday, April 5**

**MA, MAT, and MS** candidates take Part I of the examination, given in the morning (9-12 AM). **MA** candidates take Part II, given in the afternoon (1-4 PM). The examination is given twice a year; it is always held on the Saturday closest to November 1, and the Saturday closest to April 1 (with necessary variations due

to moveable spring breaks). Students should notify the Director of Graduate Studies in English of their intention to take the examination at the beginning of the semester in which they plan to take it. Sample examinations are on file at the Reserve Desk in the Library.

### **THE 1997 GRADUATE SYMPOSIUM TOPIC**

The Ninth Annual Graduate Symposium is scheduled to take place in April 1997. The symposium topic suggested by the graduate students will center on "A Sense of Place in Literature" (a working title) and will consider a wide range of topics as submissions. Please submit working titles or completed papers for consideration and presentation to Professors Stoneback or Kempton. Detailed announcements and a Call for Papers will be issued in the Fall 1996 semester.

### **THE GRADUATE FORUM**

A new series of graduate English fora, designed to encourage open discussion of critical and scholarly issues in our discipline and a student-faculty sense of community, was initiated in 1995. To date, we have held seven fora during the 1995-1996 academic terms. Professors Cinquemani, Kempton, Stoneback, and Waugh have shared the results of their current research in forum programs; in the Spring 1996 term we presented three programs: 1) John Langan, Teaching Assistant in the English Department, led a lively and well-attended discussion entitled "Roundtable: Critical Discussion of Kundera's *Testaments Betrayed*"; 2) "Films Like White Elephants," a viewing of two Hemingway films and some rare documentary footage, drew a capacity crowd and generated lively discussion; 3) "What Iceberg Means," a lecture by a distinguished visiting speaker, Professor Donald Junkins of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, drew a standing-room-only crowd of well over 100. The diversity of these three sessions indicates the openness of the forum, the wide range and formats of possible programs. We invite graduate students and faculty to propose programs for the Graduate Forum. Please give your ideas and proposals to H. R. Stoneback, Director of Graduate Studies in English.

### **ALUMNI NOTES**

**PENNY FREEL** (MA 1995) is now a full-time faculty member at the University of the Sacred Heart in Tokyo, Japan, where she teaches American Literature and Freshman Composition.

**JOAN PERISSE** (MA 1995) presently an Adjunct in the English Department at SUNY/New Paltz and at Marist College, Poughkeepsie, is pursuing a Ph. D. at SUNY/Albany.

**JOAN PERISSE and MARY FAKLER** have jointly presented a paper, "Merging Voices: Collaboration in the Arena of Learning," at the Post Secondary Conference on Pedagogy at Mohonk (1996); they gave another paper, "The Peer Critiquing Project," at the Eleventh Annual **SUNY** Council on Writing at New Paltz (1996); at the **CIT** Conference at Oswego, they presented another paper, "PEERS: Students Responsible for Effective Enlightenment Participation" (1996), which will be published in the forthcoming *Proceedings of the Fifth SUNY Conference on Instructional Technologies*, an issue dedicated to the theme of "Leverage Learning--Using and Affording Technology."

**JOAN PERISSE** presented a paper, "The Collaborated Conversation," at the Sixth Annual Women and Society Conference (1996).

### **MA THESIS ABSTRACTS**

**Committee Chair:** Daniel Kempton, Ph.D.

Lynne Crockett, MA

*"Fals and soth compounded": the Coexistence of Opposites in Geoffrey Chaucer's House of Fame*

*The House of Fame* presents us with the dilemma of how to find truth within a text. Though Chaucer is primarily writing about writing, his message spreads to areas beyond that of poetry. It is not only the act of writing that distances an event from reality, but the act of perceiving as well. Ovid and Virgil interpret Aeneas's and Dido's love differently not because they were unable to find the adequate words with which to tell the story, but because they have opposing views of the same event. Consequently, when Chaucer infers that there is a fictional element present in all written documents and poems, he is also suggesting that falsehood is present in the very act of perceiving and interpreting life. It is impossible for there to be any one pure and true--factual--interpretation of life if we are each altering it as it occurs.

Because the poem is shifting and changing, it can offer no definitive answer, no conclusion, to the problem of how to portray the truth, not only in one's writing but in one's perception. Consequently, there is no conclusion either to the poem or to the problem; we create our own truths, realities, and expectations. Because of the perpetual act of inventing our lives, we are forced to accept "fals and troth" together. Not only is writing an act of creation, but so is reading, so is living; we interpret events and organize information daily, and in doing so we are inventing our worlds.

## GUIDE TO CONTRIBUTORS

*The English Graduate Review* is an annual publication by the Department of English, SUNY/New Paltz, carrying the best papers submitted by the graduate students enrolled in the program. All submissions are restricted to graduate students in good standing at the institution. Manuscripts submitted should be original material on literary biography, history, theory and methods, analysis and interpretation, and critical syntheses that may emerge from courses or seminars taken at the College. Manuscripts are *blind reviewed* by the Director of Graduate Studies and the journal editors. Manuscripts should be prepared in the preferred style published by the *Modern Language Association Manual of Style* or in that of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th Edition. Please submit *three* clear copies of the manuscript. The entire manuscript, including notes, bibliography, and indented long quotations should be double-spaced. Illustrative materials, such as tables, maps, and graphics, should be done in black ink and should be in camera ready copy. Photographs should have a glossy finish. All manuscripts, on a separate page after the title page, should include an abstract of 50 words or less and biographical information of four to six lines that indicate the author's professional, research, and literary interests. The deadline for submission is April 15th of each year. All manuscripts should be sent to the Director of Graduate Studies, College Hall E, 105.

**BOOK REVIEWS** are invited that relate to specific courses or to literary interests having general appeal to the graduate student body. Please submit two copies. The heading should include the name of the author (s) or editor (s), the title of the book (underlined), place of publication, publisher, date, number of pages, (cloth or paperback), and price. Approximate length of a book review is 1,000-1,500 words. The review should be scholarly in orientation.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** are invited to promote scholarly discussion and debate.

## ABOUT THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

**State University of New York at New Paltz**, founded in 1828, is located 75 miles north of New York City in the Mid-Hudson valley. Its 216-acre campus is approximately equidistant (ca. 10 miles) from Newburgh to the south, Poughkeepsie to the east, and Kingston to the north. The college employs approximately 300 full-time and 150 part-time faculty. The undergraduate enrollment consists of 6500 students (27% of whom are part time) and the graduate enrollment of 2,000 students (89% part time). The student population is multi-ethnic and multi-racial with a significant percent-age of returning students in the undergraduate and graduate programs.

The college has five units: School of Fine and Performing Arts, School of Education, School of Business and Engineering, Division of Health and Physical Education, and a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The English Department is one of the nineteen departments and programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. It offers a major in English and American literature, creative writing, and teacher education on the undergraduate level and an MA in language and literature, an MAT, and MS in English and Education. English Department courses comprise 12% of all FTE in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: it is, in terms of FTE, the largest department in the college. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences maintains a student overseas exchange program with Middlesex University in the United Kingdom.

The English Department numbers among its full-time staff twenty full-time and thirty part-time adjunct faculty and teaching assistants. Among the full-time staff in the Graduate Studies Program in English and American Literature are several noted scholars: a SUNY Distinguished University Professor Arthur Cash (*Laurence Sterne: The Early and Middle Years, Laurence Stern: The Later Years*); John B. Alphonso-Karkala (*Bibliography of Indo-English Literature: 1860-1966, Jawaharlal Nehru: Literary Portrait, Anthology of Indian Literature*); Richard D. Hathaway (*Sylvester Judd's New England*); Rudolf R. Kossmann (*Henry James: Dramatist*); H. R. Stoneback (ed. *Selected Stories of William Faulkner, Cartographers of the Deus Loc*); Anne Trensky, and Jan Schmidt in Women Studies and poetry; M. Stella Deen in 20th-century British fiction, and F. X. Pax in Shakespeare, Daniel Kempton in medieval studies, A. M. Cinquemani in seventeenth-century and modern Italian literature studies, Anthony C. Robinson in the novel, Barry Bort in film and Japanese literature, Rudolf Kossmann in dramatic literature and criticism, and others. It is an active and engaged department of varied intellectual, research, and publication interests: literature, philology, creative writing (the novel and poetry), dramatic and theatre criticism, and translation.