

## Selected Publications in Shakespeare Studies (2011-2012)

**Jonathan Bate and Dora Thornton, *Shakespeare: Staging the World*, London, British Library Press, 2012, 304 pp., £ 39.95.**

Conceived to accompany the 2012 British Museum 'Olympic' exhibition, the volume combines catalogue text and literary criticism, using artifacts to illustrate London life in 1612 (chapter 1). The authors aim at creating "a dialogue between Shakespeare's imaginary worlds and the material objects of the real world of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century" (p. 10). As a matter of fact, the nine chapters (which analyze, among other things, London, Venice, the countryside, rebellion, witchcraft, explorations, the legacy of Rome and the Monarchy) offer a breathtaking proliferation of objects and a fascinating global perspective. Learned and beautiful, the text itself becomes a simulacrum, a writing of the object. Welcome back, Baudrillard.

Davide Crosara, Sapienza University of Rome

**Sarah Beckwith, *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2011, 228 pp., \$ 45.00.**

Beckwith presents a learned and penetrating study of the grammar of forgiveness in Shakespeare's late, "post-tragic" (p. 2) plays: *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*. This grammar originates from Shakespeare's reworking of the themes of penance, repentance and confession in his late phase. The shift from the Catholic to Protestant conception of forgiveness affects language in the first instance, namely in "the relation between the inherited ritual languages of the Middle Ages and their transformation in post-Reformation England" (p. 8).

Part 1 ("Penance to Repentance") explores the nature of this transformation in detail. In accordance with the Reformation, Elizabethan Eng-

land abandons the sacrament of penance. No longer a rite presided by a visible authority, forgiveness is turned radically inward. While Catholic sacraments had been “signs that caused what they signified” (p. 29), in Protestant theology ritual language lost the power to create shared realities (such as the reality of forgiveness). *Hamlet* perfectly exemplifies this split between a lost, impotent ritual world and a modern, isolated consciousness. Hamlet expresses “epistemological anxieties” (p. 37) that, in Beckwith’s opinion, tend not only to eradicate human agency, but to eradicate the human per se.

Part 2 reads *Measure for Measure* as a comedy that mirrors “a society which [...] had lost the institutions, understandings and capacities for confession” (p. 80), while part 3 illustrates the recovery of a sense of community through rites of forgiveness in the late plays. Beckwith applies Stanley Cavell’s concept of acknowledgment to trace a distinction between romances or late plays and mature tragedies. All these plays (from *Hamlet* to *The Tempest*, from *King Lear* to *The Winter’s Tale*) revolve around themes such as identity or faithlessness, but in *Hamlet* the prince experiences identity as loneliness and in *Lear* faithlessness cannot be mended. Ending in isolation and impotence, the tragedies stage a failure of acknowledgment.

The so-called romances are, on the contrary, post-tragic plays, because they offer a recovery from tragedy through a renewed possibility of mutual acknowledgment. Beckwith sees acknowledgment as a metamorphosis of forgiveness. *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter’s Tale*, and *The Tempest* recreate a version of the forgiven community while transforming the inherited grammar of confession and penance by recovering the voice (*Pericles*), a speech embodying forgiveness (*Cymbeline*), resurrection narratives (*The Winter’s Tale*) or a relationship with the audience (*The Tempest*). With deep philosophical insights and a convincing mastery of history, Beckwith traces in the late Shakespeare the reinvention of a post-sacramental theatre.

Davide Crosara, Sapienza University of Rome

**David Bevington, *Murder Most Foul: Hamlet Through the Ages*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, 256 pp., £ 25.00.**

Following Gary Taylor’s *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History, From the Restoration to the Present* (1989) and Stanley Wells’ *Shakespeare for All Time* (2003), this book is committed to the cultural history of *Hamlet*, with a view to providing new insight and perspective on the play. The central argument is that staging, criticism and editing of *Hamlet* have always gone hand in hand over the centuries, from 1599-1600 to the present day, to such a remarkable extent that the history of *Hamlet* can be seen as a paradigm of the cultural

history not only of the English speaking world, but of Western Civilization as a whole. Bevington's study, however, rather than merely focusing on the play's afterlife, also includes the prehistory of the Scandinavian Saga. This is widely investigated in the first chapter together with a number of other significant sources.

Chapter 2 discusses several adaptations and transformations enacted in the following centuries, thus highlighting the textual instability of Shakespeare's *corpus* as a feature shared by Shakespeare's times and all other ages down to post-modernity. All in all, the seven chapters make up a comprehensive historical map in which *Hamlet* stands out throughout the centuries as a kind of mirror, a touchstone, a key to understanding both the collective and individual self (p. viii).

The empirical cultural historical approach, however, in the end engages with the history of literary criticism and drama rather than tackling a hermeneutic vision of *Hamlet's* many reincarnations through the ages.

Bevington questions the ideological 'errors' imposed on the play by critics and players especially when dictated by Romantic sensibilities – with regard to the psychological dimensions of the characters – at the expense of the 'wholeness' of the text. In this challenge he is particularly indebted to Margreta De Grazia's 2007 *Hamlet without Hamlet*, which he acknowledges as an invaluable contribution to Shakespearean studies after the relativism of the post-modern wave. Notwithstanding, his pages tend to be descriptive, recalling sometimes Polonius's representation of drama. The conventional conclusions about the play's universal appeal are somewhat disappointing after the promised launch of a fresh critical discourse, especially when compared to the writer's many authoritative contributions to Shakespeare studies.

Rosy Colombo, Sapienza University of Rome

**Brian Boyd, *Why Lyrics Last: Evolution, Cognition and Shakespeare's Sonnets*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2012, 227 pp., € 17.61.**

A sequel to *On the Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition and Fiction* (2009), Brian Boyd's new book shifts the evolutionary lens from the study of narrative to that of poetry. The rationale behind the ambitious enterprise undertaken by Vladimir Nabokov's sensitive biographer is to demonstrate the evolutionary origins of literature. Like art in general, Boyd argues, literature derives from the human disposition to play, particularly with pattern. Narrative and poetry are supposed to be radically different mental forms: the former, a sort of "default task orientation of the human mind" (p. 3), likes to

put things in order; the latter craves openness and free play. Unfortunately, this “bio-cultural approach”, as Boyd calls it, does not live up to the promises of refreshing his beloved classical texts (see George Levine’s well-founded objections concerning Boyd’s evolutionary account of fiction: [www.bsls.ac.uk/reviews/general-and-theory/brian-boyd-on-the-origin-of-stories/](http://www.bsls.ac.uk/reviews/general-and-theory/brian-boyd-on-the-origin-of-stories/)). In the first place, the radical difference between story and poetry is rather weak the way it is seen here. Despite recognizing that story and poetry go hand in hand until, after Byron, they become irreconcilable, Boyd does not ask himself why after Byron historical explanations scarcely fit universal arguments. Secondly, the interesting things the author has to say about Shakespeare’s sonnets depend more on solid close-reading than on the evolutionist mode. What is advertised as reinvigorating novelty turns out to be good work in the well-established tradition of textual analysis. It is when evolutionary justifications are offered that indeed Boyd’s writing becomes banal. For example, the ‘real’ motivation behind Shakespeare’s sonnets is sexual selection, which amounts to the fact that females produce “resource-rich eggs”, while males produce “massive numbers of cheap but highly motile sperm to increase the chance that some will reach the far fewer available eggs” (p. 57). And this should explain why “males produced far more sonnets in the English Renaissance than did women, and the same holds true for rap music now” (p. 58)! Social cooperation however intervenes to soften the crudeness of sexual selection: our ultra-social species is equally motivated by “a unique and deep desire” (p. 63) of winning the appreciation of all, even our own competitors. Like Casaubon’s key to all mythologies, Boyd’s bio-logic seems determined to unlock every mystery and perform miracles, witness the solution to the dilemma of human nature. Humans are naturally both hierarchical and egalitarian, as shown by the history of mankind which Boyd condenses in one and a half page (pp. 124-25). One wonders whether Boyd really needed such pseudo-Darwinian scaffolding to contest the psychologist of art Colin Martindale’s prophesy concerning high literary verse’s self-extinction and the poet Don Paterson’s view that Shakespeare’s sonnets make sense only as a narrative of love. On the one hand, Carol Ann Duffy’s splendid sonnet illuminating the final pages of Boyd’s book stands alone as an intimation of immortality for poetry. On the other hand, Boyd’s original insight that centuries of narratives generated by Shakespeare’s sequence of sonnets prove *e contrario* the poet’s intention of frustrating story would have gained more from literary than biological interpretations. From Nabokov’s refined critic one would expect a clear and detailed demonstration in support of his claim that narrative is precluded by the kind of ‘doubleness’ found in many of the most memorable among the first 126 sonnets – rather than, as another reviewer wittily puts it, compare the Earl of Southampton (Shakespeare’s patron) to a silverback gorilla.

Daniele Niedda, UNINT – LUSPIO, Rome

**David Carnegie and Gary Taylor, *The Quest for Cardenio*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, xiv+420 pp., £ 35.00 / € 63.73 / \$ 58.50.**

*The Quest for Cardenio*, published by Oxford University Press in 2012 and edited by David Carnegie and Gary Taylor, is a collection of twenty-six essays by twenty-one different authors, mostly academics, but also men of the theatre. The text is divided into five sections, each of them including essays about similar or related subjects, so that, as a whole, the book encompasses many if not all the different problems raised by the play: composition; linguistic analysis, authorship attribution, transvestism, homosociality, the role of women in *Double Falsehood*; palaeography, recent staging and several others.

This editorial enterprise originates both from the craze for Gary Taylor's reconstruction of *Cardenio*, successfully staged in New Zealand in 2009, and from some subsequent initiatives such as the *Cardenio* colloquium, held at the University of Indiana. Thence the idea of bringing together again all scholars that had already gathered for the colloquium. However, the book is also the most recent result of the discourse about *Cardenio* that has been going on in the last two decades. In its pages some of the most prominent *Cardenio* scholars – such as Gary Taylor, Brean Hammond, Tiffany Stern, MacDonald P. Jackson, among others – seem to dialogue with each other in order to provide precise details, recently discovered information, new interpretations and meanings.

All in all this miscellany is a milestone in the *Cardenio* cultural debate; scholars who take an interest in Jacobean theatre, Shakespeare's collaborative plays or in the Shakespearean canon should really not miss it, although it may make for very enjoyable reading for the general public, too.

*The Quest for Cardenio's* elegant style, lively language and almost fictional sense of detection connected with the effort of discovering or recreating the lost Jacobean play contribute to convey the strong sense of community that characterises the contributors; in addition, these very same elements give the volume a mesmerising power, to the extent that even the reader interested in only one of the different essays won't be able to put the book down until its last page.

Giuliano Pascucci, Sapienza University of Rome

**Paola Colaiacomo, *Le cuciture dell'acqua*, Roma, Bulzoni, 2012, 168 pp., € 10.20.**

*Le cuciture dell'acqua* [*The Seams of the Waters*] is, in essence, a study on Shakespeare and the origin of the modern body, in which Paola Colaiacomo highlights the playwright's superb interaction with the multifarious changes oc-

curing in his times. Among them, the rise of the merchant class that forced its way out of rigid feudal rule, epitomized also by the most luxurious apparel reserved for the monarch and a few higher ranking nobles. It was no coincidence, as Colaiacomo points out, that Elizabeth I put into effect a number of Sumptuary Laws in order to contain the “outrageous excesse of apparel” (p. 24) of her subjects and protect the use of local textiles against the “superfluitie of unnecessary forreyne wares” (p. 25), which pertained to the aristocracy only.

Through a careful analysis of costumes and props, understood not just as the object of plain stage directions, but rather as evidence of the still liquid mutations affecting the structure of social classes in late sixteenth-century England, Colaiacomo succeeds in unveiling the propulsive strength of clothing within Shakespeare’s body of work. From Macbeth’s “borrowed robes” (I.iii) to Hamlet’s “glass of fashion” (III.i), from Julius Caesar’s mantle to Rosalind’s male attire, it is evident and – according to Colaiacomo – was evident also to his contemporaries that Shakespeare did not simply dress his characters for the stage, but invested specific garments with a powerful visual and symbolic impact.

Colaiacomo unfolds her argument by discussing four topics: the invention of the modern body, deformity, nudity, and mutability. Each chapter deals with several Shakespearian texts, which are contextualized in the mutable culture of their times, revealing page after page the transition from the constraints of the Middle Ages, through the classical models of the Renaissance, to the Machiavellian perspective of the baroque period.

Among the characters discussed by Colaiacomo, Pericles is a paramount example of her thesis, because his armour retrieved from the deep waters by fishermen, even though rusted by the corrosive power of sea waves, still enables him to participate in the tournament and win the love of Thaisa. “Le cuciture dell’acqua” of the title refer to this very armour, to its being re-assembled, ‘made up’ by the fishermen’s efforts and through “the rough seams of the waters” (II.i); therefore, transformed from a rigid object of nobility into a recycled garment intended for a new beginning.

In Shakespeare’s plays apparel has its own language, words which effectively shape the modern body (p. 23). As Colaiacomo highlights, in Shakespeare the ancient figurativeness and the new technology of silence, inscribed onto the printed page, coexist through the plasticity of the word; making the body on stage a visible word and the garment its signifier.

Laura Salvini, University of Cambridge

**Rocco Coronato, *La mano invisibile. Shakespeare e la conoscenza nascosta*, Pisa, Pacini, 2011, 169 pp., € 25.00.**

**Laury Magnus and Walter W. Cannon, eds, *Who Hears in Shakespeare? Auditory Worlds on Stage and Screen*, Madison, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012, 249 pp., € 81.94.**

The sensory universe of Shakespeare's plays is the focus of two stimulating recent studies: Rocco Coronato's *La mano invisibile. Shakespeare e la conoscenza nascosta* [*The invisible hand. Shakespeare and hidden knowledge*] and the collection *Who Hears in Shakespeare?*

Drawing on early modern and medieval theories of vision and imagination, Rocco Coronato argues that Shakespeare's plays entail an epistemic shift from knowledge conceived as the result of the right interpretation of what is visible, to a form of knowledge that must be achieved through an immersion into the invisible and the unrepresentable. Coronato traces how, initially a metaphor for enlightening intellect, the faculty of vision is increasingly called into question in the modern era, while a different notion of invisibility emerges. The inscrutability of the divine order gives way to the opaque chaos of the modern self, of which nothingness constitutes a fundamental part. In this way, the book maintains, Shakespeare's characters do not question the visible world as that which manifests the invisible macrocosm through its every microscopic sign; however, once that correspondence is broken, vision must acknowledge the blurring interposition of desire and passion. The six plays that Coronato analyses – *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Hamlet* – present the invisible of modern subjectivity under three main forms: the individual self grappling with fleshly desire and with the unruliness that precedes the law; the self dominated by the will to live, all too eager to kill the Other in order to achieve self-fulfilment; a self that accepts the darkness of mortality and the possibility of non-existence, and confronts the problematic call to action that springs from it. A leitmotif throughout the book is the theme of confrontation with the shocking reality of mortal flesh. Shakespeare is able to 'produce bodies' which irrevocably consign man to destruction and loss, yet not before the motion and the contortions of fleshly passions have consumed him. In Coronato's reading, *Hamlet* enacts a meeting with the double, in which the prince confronts the spectre of his own non-existence, and, like the invisible Lamord, becomes 'demi-natured' and 'incorpsed', exploring with the invisible eye of the mind the darkness of non-being that devours his very life.

The aural complexity of Shakespeare's plays is under scrutiny in *Who Hears in Shakespeare?*, a study stemming from recent scholarly work on the auditory dimension of early modern drama. Part 1 outlines a poetics of hearing for the early modern stage. The second section, "Metahearing",

investigates how different modes of hearing – such as eavesdropping, or eavesdropping on an eavesdropper’s aside – may create conflicting responses in the audience and produce original interpretations. Part 3 tackles several directorial styles in the adaptation of Shakespeare’s plays from the stage to other media, in which the sense of hearing is no longer tied to the actor’s body and is governed by different conventions. Andrew Gurr opens the collection by investigating the auditorium disposition of all playhouses built before 1660, in which the expensive seats were often situated at angles where good viewing was impossible, poles apart from the cinematic arrangement of modern theatres. Only late in Shakespeare’s productions did a shift occur from a circular disposition conceived for hearing to a frontal orientation based on viewing. James Hirsh, then, reviews the main conventions that governed the reception of soliloquies, challenging the assumption that they were addressed to playgoers as privileged hearers. Instead, Hirsh suggests, soliloquies were self-addressed speeches that could be overheard by other characters, so that they could be intentionally misleading. In chapter 3, Walter Cannon investigates moments when the act of hearing is doublefold, such as when the audience listens through the ear of a disguised character. From another perspective, Jennifer Holl theorizes gossip – surprisingly, *male* gossip – as the model for a transgressive communication, in which truth circumvents the controlling strategies of the official channels. Laury Magnus, next, analyses the implications of the Ghost’s supernatural speech in *Hamlet*, and David Bevington investigates the connection between hearing, overhearing, hallucinatory states and the creation of conceptual spaces in *The Tempest*. J. Anthony Burton proposes a new reading of Shylock’s asides, introducing the gestural dimension into the discussion. Kathleen K. Smith’s contribution brings to the fore the interplay of internal and external audiences, and, in chapter 9, Bernice Kliman arrives at a convincing reading of *Measure for Measure* based on aural considerations. In the last essay in part 2, Nova Myhill theorizes the opposite of the aside – the inaudible whisper – as a mode of communication that excludes the audience from the dramatic world. In part 3, Kenneth Branagh’s adaptations of eavesdropping scenes are analysed, both in the comedies and in the tragedies; in chapter 12, Gayle Gaskille reviews Trevor Nunn’s film adaptation of *Twelfth Night*; Erin Minear concentrates on the act of overhearing in *Othello* in different filmic adaptations. The book closes with an afterword by Stephen Booth, who ponders the rare moments in Shakespeare’s theatre when the intended audience does not listen.

Maria Grazia Tonetto, Sapienza University of Rome



**David Crystal, *"Think on my Words": Exploring Shakespeare's Language*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, reprint edition 2012, 254 pp., £ 13.99.**

David Crystal once again offers an incredibly learned overview of linguistic issues in an accessible, engaging, and thought-provoking book on Shakespeare. While potentially irritating to extreme bardolaters in its aim to debunk some of the myths that have surrounded the dramatist's use of language for centuries, the book manages to persuade the reader that taking into account historical linguistic facts not only does not subtract from his greatness, but rather highlights that he was a man perfectly at ease with a language that afforded him certain freedoms.

Integrating both the semantic and pragmatic approach to answer the fundamental question of "what language does" (p. ix), Crystal sets out in his first chapter to clear up the "spider's web of myths" (p. 2) that has been woven around Shakespeare's language, which, he argues, hinders a true encounter with it. Such a web includes the idea that Shakespeare had the largest vocabulary of any English writer of all time (the 'quantity myth'), or that he invented a sizeable percentage of the words now in use in English (the 'invention myth'), or that the English spoken in Shakespeare's time was fundamentally different to ours, thus inherently difficult and in need of translation into modern terms (the 'translation myth'); or even that the distinctiveness of Shakespeare's style may be understood as homogenous, rather than subject to variation (the 'style myth') – which, of course, if it were true, would not explain why authorship disputes are still raging on in Shakespearean studies.

Having dispelled some of these myths to paint a more coherent picture of the English language of Shakespeare's time, Crystal goes on to examine the material conditions of textual transmission that have a bearing on any reading that aspires to pay close attention to language (chapter 2); while long-standing issues in Shakespearean textual studies are addressed, this is done in a comprehensive yet compact way, enabling wider audiences to familiarize with them. The following chapters deal with "Shakespearean graphology" and print conventions, as well as the complexities of early modern English spelling and pronunciation (chapters 3-6). It is when reflecting on metre and rhyme that Crystal's argument for a better understanding of the linguistic and historical context of Shakespeare's writing gives way to considerations on the nature of poetic language, which hinges precisely on "something [that] has to be done to language to make it special" (p. 117); it is only through a full understanding of the conventions of poetic language of the age that it is possible to appreciate the foregrounding of a departure from convention.

In the closing chapters of the book (7, 8, 9), Crystal delves into the depths

of Shakespeare's vast vocabulary. And it is in these chapters that Shakespeare's greatness as a "creator of language" (see Nadia Fusini's editorial piece in this issue) is fully displayed: for Crystal shows effectively that it is not the number of words used or invented by Shakespeare that counts, but rather *what* he did with the words he did have at his disposal. Not only in the sense of creating new words, Crystal points out, but especially by "creating new senses from existing words" (p. 164) – see his use of unconventional collocations, for example, which break normal patterns of speech to create new and strikingly unfamiliar effects, making him "one of the greatest rule-breakers the language has seen" (p. 173) – and thus, one might add, one of the greatest poets. The same kind of appreciation can come from a deeper knowledge of the grammar of early modern English, which frees us from naive ideas about Shakespeare's language, allowing us to avoid reading more into what is merely a convention of the age, but at the same time helps us fully comprehend nuances of style in crucial passages, such as the ones which hinge, for example, on the *ye/you* distinction or word order. Finally, the same attention to the complexities of speech interaction – we *are* at the theatre, after all – is paid, again by contextualizing pragmatic strategies within the linguistic conventions of the age.

The book is invaluable, in that it is accessible, highly enjoyable both to the specialized reader and the broader audience; and in that it argues persuasively that it is impossible to get very far in appreciating Shakespeare if his language is not looked at *within* the context of early modern linguistic practices. Only then is it possible to begin to understand the marvellous things he did with words.

Iolanda Plescia, Sapienza University of Rome

**Janette Dillon, *Shakespeare and the Staging of English History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, 150 pp., € 60.28.**

Janette Dillon's book is an innovative, challenging study within the field of critical studies of Shakespeare's history plays – a brilliant example of how a structural approach may be fruitfully integrated with strong hermeneutic overtones.

Swerving away from the classic empirical tradition of E. M. W. Tillyard's historical criticism focused on Shakespeare's political commitment in his early phase, Dillon looks at the plays through the lens of early modern staging, conducting a close analysis of stage practice as constitutive of dramatic action.

Apart from drawing attention to stage directions and stage pictures, Dillon highlights the symbolic relevance of objects in their setting on the scene,

focusing on the use of stage properties, particularly the use of the chair of state developed in *Henry VIII*. A number of chapters interestingly explore the semantics of space with special focus on the interdependence between a vertical and a horizontal axis. Accordingly, she draws a link between the recurring theme of discord enacted in the events of the civil war and the linguistic and rhetorical patterns of Shakespeare's dramaturgy, which "explicitly put a divided perspective on show" (p. 39). With a difference, however, between the First Tetralogy – in which the stage is built as a unitary picture, by means of symmetrical balance and analogy – and the reversal of the same paradigms in the uneven frame of the Second Tetralogy. With perceptive insight, Dillon probes into Shakespeare's shaping of history on the stage as a development from the harmonious (and sometimes static) architecture of the early compositions to a more dynamic setting, which questions not only history but also the significance of its representation, thus foreshadowing the mature experiments in the metatheatrical mode.

Chapters on the relevance of bodies on stage, as well as their location and posture, alternate with chapters on strategies of staging of the self, particularly soliloquies: "moments when stagecraft forcefully scripts an intensity of engagement between actor and audience which has similarities to the close-up" in films (p. 82). In this light, Dillon's most compelling pages deal with Richard II's soliloquy as a mode of speech. Each soliloquy is analysed in its own specificity: from the early ones, in which tragic emotion is part of a spectacle mounted for public consumption, to the last one, when the fallen king, alone on stage, speaks about himself to himself alone, and drama shifts into monodrama.

Rosy Colombo, Sapienza University of Rome

**Michael Dobson, *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance: A Cultural History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, paperback edition £ 19.99 / \$ 29.99.**

This is indeed a groundbreaking monograph, which effectively ushers in a new field of research on amateur stagings, making up for its marginalization in academic studies. Professor Dobson's argument is that in some cases amateur performance deserves more attention than professional production, which is often conventional and devised as a commodity in the British cultural market. The book starts by shaping a tradition of private, domestic theatricals, examined from the seventeenth century on, with careful attention paid to women's productions: from the very first recorded one, an excerpt of *The Winter's Tale* (1774) analysed within the context of the morality debate on the supposedly shameful display of women on stage.

As for Shakespeare in public (chapter 2), the book accounts for the rise of amateur dramatic societies, which Dobson tackles in two directions: first focusing on the burlesque performances in London as a result of (and a challenge to) the seventeenth-eighteenth century monopoly on Shakespeare by the Theatres Royal; then shifting to the lower class actors' appropriation of the canon in the nineteenth century; such representations claim resistance to the commercial hegemony of the professional stage.

Chapter 3 is a gem within the cultural historical approach. It provides an analysis of "Shakespeare in exile", highlighting British military performances during such crucial wars as the American Revolution and World War II: in the first case the staging of *Richard III* and *Macbeth* was meant to support the cause against usurpers, whereas the main character of *Coriolanus*, cast by the American soldiers as a lover of liberty, made a strong argument for "the necessity of tyrannicide" (p. 132). However, Dobson's most remarkable pages on this kind of "expatriate performance" concentrate on the ordeal of allied prisoners of war in World War II, who reinvented Shakespeare in the most chilling of environments; for instance, performing *The Merchant of Venice* at a location fifty kilometres from Dachau, which was perhaps a questionable undertaking.

Dobson's final chapter on the twentieth century substantiates his authoritative role in militant Shakespearean criticism as a long-time reviewer for *Shakespeare Survey*, and currently the Director of the Shakespeare Institute at the University of Birmingham, by carrying out research into the British avant-garde production, thereby further developing his claim that the tradition of non-professional performances is central to Shakespeare's inheritance.

The book tends in fact to blur the boundaries between professional and amateur performance: perhaps not always convincingly, but surely with historical accuracy. It deserves a special acknowledgment in the field of cultural studies, since its main issue is the difference of Shakespeare, whose plays are inscribed in a history which, far from being founded on the classical paradigm of a stable ontology, embodies a process of change into multiple identities, each play transformed according to a different cultural context.

Rosy Colombo, Sapienza University of Rome

**Simon C. Estok, *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, x+182 pp., € 69.00.**

**Dan Brayton, *Shakespeare's Ocean: An Ecocritical Exploration*, Charlottesville-London, University of Virginia Press, 2012, xv+257 pp., € 30.00.**

Applying ecocriticism to Shakespeare studies seems less radical today than

it seemed only a few years ago, when English studies departments in the Western world and beyond had not yet witnessed the recent flood of scholarship in the field. A flood tightly linked with the conference panel sessions organized by institutions such as the International Shakespeare Association, the British Shakespeare Association, the Shakespeare Association of America, but also the Modern Language Association and the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment. This does not mean that a considerable number of these contributions is not motivated by a certain skepticism and even hostility towards ecocriticism, but that still proves the interest and the achievement of its new hermeneutic approach to Shakespeare and to literature in general. As Oscar Wilde once wrote, "there is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that it not being talked about".

To date, besides an indeed large number of papers, five books that apply ecocriticism to Shakespeare have been published, two of which are discussed in this review. The latter deal with distinct, though at times convergent aspects of Shakespeare's concern with the natural environment: on the one hand, the primeval and ever relevant human fear of nature's unpredictability, redefined here as *ecophobia*; on the other, the importance of the *sea* and of the *maritime dimension* in early modern England and in the human experience in general. Both works go deep into the inquiry of their specific issues, but they also offer a broad and precious introduction to the ways one can 'do' ecocriticism with Shakespeare.

Estok's book examines a number of Shakespeare's plays and characters such as *King Lear*, *Coriolanus*, *2 Henry VI*, *2 Henry IV*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, Caliban, Shylock, Portia and Antonio, but also representations of various phenomena such as weather, night, sleep, gender, race and food, with a special focus on their environmental dimensions. The author's aim is to articulate both a critical methodology and a political theory eligible to reveal how the underlying ecophobic ethics in Shakespeare's plays (supposedly typical of Western thought) determine certain power relationships. The result seems to be a deconstruction of Shakespeare's own ecophobic vision of the natural world, ultimately questioning the traditional idea of the playwright as a universal and timeless literary genius, and opening a new political path towards a post-Shakespearean "ecological humility".

Despite the fact that the book is indeed worth reading, and rich in new and original ecocritical insights into Shakespeare's work, the overall ecophobic theory defended in it appears rather puzzling. Two are the main reasons, the first of which lies primarily in the somewhat naive understanding of environmental fear as anti-ecological attitude. Such an understanding denies the evolutionary process in which the 'struggle for survival' has for thousands if not millions of years been linked with the not only human ability to preserve life against the *dangers* coming from the environment. Thus,

if we substituted the term 'ecophobia' with the term 'hygiene' in its broadest sense, we would come to the conclusion that the truth about ecophobia is that it has been the very motor of the preservation and progression of human life and civilisation in time, and that a literature that stands for this is doing a good job. Only diachronically can we interpret the contemporary *excesses* of ecophobia, which are primarily tied to the development and the demands of a trapping industrial free market economy, as negative for human and non-human life.

The second reason for doubting the ecophobic theory in relation to Shakespeare has more closely to do with Estok's understanding of Shakespeare himself and of Western thought more generally. There is no aspect of his place and time that Shakespeare has not absorbed and returned, even unconsciously, in its purest complexity. One of these is certainly the human attitude towards the natural environment. In stating Shakespeare's ecophobic ethics Estok avoids calling into question the wide-spread, well-established and opposite influence of the hermitic and Franciscan model in early modern Europe, which is one of declared *ecophilia*. We clearly find this influence in a central and in the end humbly triumphant Shakespearean character such as Edgar. In this connection it would be important for ecophobic theory to increase the spectrum of its inquiry. Nevertheless, ecocriticism is by all means a discipline in the making, and Estok's book on Shakespeare remains a fundamental pioneer work in the vast field indeed.

Brayton's book belongs to, or even initiates in its own way, a whole new branch of ecocriticism now called 'blue cultural studies' as in opposition to the 'green' ones. At the center of his exploration – containing some at times excessive apocalyptic tones – lies the literary and cultural history of the seas covering seventy percent of the Earth's surface applied to Shakespeare's work, with the aim to rethink the relationship between man and sea in the face of our contemporary global environmental crisis. It is undeniable that the material and not merely metaphorical presence of the sea and of the maritime dimension is a recurring one in Shakespeare. Brayton, like many serious ecological literary scholars, combines his knowledge of letters with an in-depth knowledge of a scientifically based marine environmental history, and a long personal experience of life at sea and with the sea, which creates a unique 'terraqueous' atmosphere. It is a beautiful book opening completely new horizons in the comprehension of Shakespeare's plays as "a counterexample to the culture of plunder" of the natural environment, and of the sea in particular. Differently from Estok, Brayton sees in Shakespeare's environmental imagination an exception in Western thought (being understood that such a summary judgement is problematic), and a model for what our own should be.

Caterina Salabè, Sapienza University of Rome

**Stefan Herbrechter and Ivan Callus, eds, *Posthumanist Shakespeares*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 261 pp., £ 50.00.**

Deliberately engaging with Harold Bloom's celebrated study, this volume investigates Shakespeare's "invention of the posthuman" (p. 220). Starting from the assumption that in our society "the human can no longer be taken for granted" (p. 5), Herbrechter's Introduction draws an interesting parallel between early and late modern cultures: they share a deep awareness of technological change and the same "ambiguity about the distinction between nature and culture, the boundaries of the body, biology and spirituality, materialism and idealism" (p. 12). Shakespeare is at the core of this redefinition of the human.

The first part of the book ("Reading Shakespeare 'after' Humanism") provides, among other things, a poststructuralist interpretation of the human/inhuman dichotomy in *The Merchant of Venice* (Stefan Herbrechter) and a study of the blurring of distinctions between human and non-human animals in *Titus Andronicus* (Bruce Boehrer). Part 2 ("Posthumanist' Readings") offers an analysis of *King Lear*, *Coriolanus*, *The Merchant of Venice* and the late plays. Lear's "humanisms" in contention (Andy Mousley, p. 103) embody an existential and philosophical enquiry about identity and the fate of the human, while the "cyborg god-thing" Coriolanus (Mareille Pfannebecker, p. 124) incarnates (via Hobbes) Derrida's conception of sovereignty as historical prosthesis, simultaneously providing a chance to refigure the political in the tragedy. Part 3 ("Hamlet, 'Posthumanist'?") reads *Hamlet* from a Heideggerian (Laurent Milesi) and a Deleuzian (Marie-Dominique Garnier) perspective. The last essay examines the graveyard scene as a culminating point in Hamlet's "accommodation to the idea that, in Hegel's words, 'the actuality and existence of man is his skull-bone', and our awakening to the idea that the posthuman may be nothing more than that" (Ivan Callus, p. 229). That skull is the orb we inhabit, the globe around which both the humanist and posthumanist perspective revolve. The volume brilliantly embraces this perspective, suggesting challenging and thought-provoking reflections.

In the afterword, Adam Max Cohen describes how his personal experience with cancer forced him to reread the relationship between technology and identity in Shakespeare's age. Shakespeare has never been so human.

Daide Crosara, Sapienza University of Rome

**Ton Hoenselaars, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, xxii+298 pp., \$ 90.00, paperback edition \$ 29.99.**

This collection of essays on playwrights from John Lily to Richard Brome covers the whole gamut of Elizabethan to Caroline dramatists till the closing of the theatres, with a final essay on the history of performance covering most of the authors of the period. It is a well-informed and variously interesting survey on the Elizabethan theatre, often analysing Shakespeare's contemporaries in the light of their relationship to the Bard – or of his to them.

The essays are all up-to-date to the latest findings of criticism, though they differ as to the level of originality: some are little more than a survey of the various works of a particular author (offering the reader also the plot and the characteristics of individual plays), and some work on a higher level. Often they try to oppose the received ideas about a playwright, as Matthew Steggle does in his "Urbane John Marston", where he disputes the traditional image of a Marston who is solipsistically aggressive towards audiences and towards the idea of performance itself, and establishes him as a playwright creatively enmeshed in the theatrical culture of his time, frequently collaborating with fellow authors, and becoming a sort of post-modern, sophisticated professional; or as Carvalho Homem does, in his essay on Massinger, trying to redeem him from the scathing and influential dismissal T. S. Eliot carried out in his essay written in 1920. Most critics start from the most known platitudes about their author (the contraposition between 'natural' Shakespeare and classic, cold Jonson in Chernaik's essay on the latter; the famous, proud claim by Heywood – stated by Jean H. Howard to be the only fact about him known to most scholars of the period, which would be worrying – to have had "an entire hand, or at least a maine finger" in 220 plays); they examine those clichéd remarks, find them wanting and identify new angles from which the playwrights' work can be seen. This certainly happens, though implicitly, in "Thomas Middleton and the Early Modern Theatre", by Michelle O'Callaghan, where the critic, who in the past produced a rather commonplace volume on *Thomas Middleton: Renaissance Dramatist*, uses the results of Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino's *Thomas Middleton: Collected Works and Companion* (only neglecting the little known tragedy *Hengist, King of Kent*), and repeatedly employs unusual though certainly justified words like metaphor, metonymy, symbol as key words fit to describe Middleton's production: a rare phenomenon for a writer who, up to the 1970s and 1980s, was described as a kind of English Zola, with a flair for 'photographical realism' as his main characteristic: certainly a reductive vision of the great author.

In some essays, though they veer on pure information and are therefore not so thrilling for the specialist, an interesting perspective is reached: as in



Lisa Hopkins's "John Ford: Suffering and Silence in *Perkin Warbeck* and 'Tis Pity She's a Whore", where, though no exciting new ideas are proposed, the portrait of the playwright comes out effectively from the deep knowledge the critic shows of his work.

Three more essays certainly deserve mention, rising as they do above others in originality and insight: Richard Wilson's "The Words of Mercury: Shakespeare and Marlowe", where the critic takes his start from Bloom's recent *Anatomy of Influence* (2011) and proceeds to depict Shakespeare as distancing himself from Marlowe's histrionic manifestations of his persona in his plays and from his aggressions to the public. Shakespeare's famous dissolution of his personality is referred to the contrary attitude in Marlowe, his sadistic and predominant presence in his characters; Shakespeare's approach to his audience, a literary system "in which playgoers were kingmakers" (p. 39), is again seen as distancing his output from the Marlovian one.

Ton Hoenselaars's "Shakespeare: Colleagues, Collaborators, Co-authors" is a dense survey of Shakespeare's relationship to the playwrights of his time, investigating the question of authorship, and ending with a quotation of Lukas Erne's provocative idea which sees modern editors and producers as partners in the creation and the echoing of the various works: "there is no reason to exclude ourselves as collaborators" (p. 114).

Finally, Robert Henke's essay on Webster dwells on the "generative paradox" (p. 181) according to which the playwright is divided between his deep involvement with the urban networks both of his father's work and of his collaborators in the theatre, and the individuality and independence of an 'author' who mistrusted the audiences of public theatres and cured his manuscripts with the devout attention and the intertextual creativity of 'learned authors' such as Jonson and Chapman.

Daniela Guardamagna, Univeristy of Rome Tor Vergata

**Ton Hoenselaars, ed., *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation*, revised edition, Arden Shakespeare, London, Bloomsbury, 2012, 357 pp., £ 16.99.**

This successful edited collection of essays, which originally came out in 2004, has been newly updated and re-published by the Arden Shakespeare series, a welcome example of continued attention paid to an area of studies that has tended to be marginalized in the past, and which the collection has done much, then as now, to promote and bring to the fore of Shakespeare studies. In fact, as Hoenselaars, editor of the collection, persuasively argues in his Introduction; "Translation is not simply another subdiscipline within

Shakespeare studies [...]. [It] marks an area of interest which overlaps with every imaginable Shakespearean subdiscipline, thus deserving the status of an equal partner in the academic debate" (p. 2). Hoenselaars goes on to detail the various facets of Shakespearean translation to be taken into consideration: from the role of translation in the Renaissance, to early translations of Shakespeare, to the neoclassical and Romantic traditions, and finally to the living language of Shakespeare in present-day translations and adaptations, in which the intersemiotic aspect of translation takes centre stage, giving rise also to the controversial, and appropriative, phenomenon of 'tradaptation' – translation *cum* adaptation.

The individual topics of the essays are worth detailing here for anyone who may have missed the book the first time around. They are divided into three sections, the first of which reflects on the relationship between Shakespearean texts and different cultures (Dirk Delabastita, Susan Bassnett, Tet-suo Kishi, Alexander Shurbanov and Boika Sokolova, Shen Lin, Rui Carvalho Homem); translation practices and the figure of the translator (Jean-Michel Déprats, Maik Hamburger, Alessandro Serpieri, Werner Brönnimann, Peter Llewellyn-Jones); and the tradaptation/adaptation issue, with a special focus on the post-colonial perspective (J. Derrick McClure, Alfredo Michel Modenessi, Leanore Lieblein, Martin Orkin). An extremely well-informed fourth section by Dirk Delabastita offers suggestions for further reading on Shakespeare and translation, which has been updated especially for this re-edition and is thus of invaluable use to anyone working in the field or simply wishing to re-approach Shakespeare from the angle of what he has meant to peoples and cultures the world over.

Reading this volume one is reminded more than once of the claim made by Giorgio Melchiori, a scholar for whom, being Italian, the translation of Shakespeare was vital: translation, to him, is the very answer to the question of "What to do with *Hamlet*", a question which he pondered in a short essay published in *La traduzione di Amleto nella cultura europea* (ed. Maria Del Sapio Garbero, Marsilio, 2002). What is one to do, then, first and foremost, with *Hamlet*? Translate it, is Melchiori's straightforward answer. And it is the only possible answer, he goes on to explain, if we are truly aware that Shakespeare wrote his plays to be translated, in every possible sense of the word – translated on stage first of all; translated by the flesh and blood and gestures of actors; translated by the audience; and yes, of course, translated by translators.

Iolanda Plescia, Sapienza University of Rome

**Sujata Iyengar, *Shakespeare's Medical Language: A Dictionary, Continuum Shakespeare Dictionaries*, New York, Continuum, 2011, xvi+416 pp., £ 150.00.**

One can easily see how a long-standing interest in Shakespeare and in cultural representations of the human body prompted Renaissance literature scholar Sujata Iyengar to compile this ambitious reference book. Organized in dictionary form (though not according to the most accessible layout), this is a very useful collection of medical-related terms in Shakespeare's oeuvre, from *Abhorson* to *zany*. Anyone looking for a traditional dictionary of early modern medicine will nonetheless be disappointed. As the author points out in her Introduction, early modern concepts of embodiment are at the core of this investigation of both diseased and healthy bodies in Shakespeare's works: "this book maintains that the experience of health and disease in the early modern world is experiential, phenomenological, embedded in everyday life rather than restricted to a sector designated discretely 'medical'" (p. 6). At the same time, Iyengar clarifies that this is not a book about retrospective diagnoses of characters or an evaluation of Renaissance medicine vis-à-vis contemporary practice. The overall impression nonetheless is that this book does not provide the encyclopaedic worth its title promises. Far from advocating a rigid approach to compiling dictionaries, I am not persuaded that a number of entries summarizing medical textbooks of the time and some close reading of relevant Shakespearian extracts will satisfy the reader who wants to learn more about "what it means to be an embodied being in a still-mysterious material and metaphysical world" (p. 9). By way of an example, the entry on epilepsy does not mention that Shakespeare's derogatory use of "epileptic visage" in *King Lear* is the first recorded instance of the adjective 'epileptic' in an English text. I would finally recommend Iyengar's dictionary as a valuable starting point for researches on bodies in Shakespeare, but it cannot supplant the wealth of previous studies on human anatomy or single pathologies in the Bard's works.

Maria Vaccarella, King's College London

**Christa Jansohn, Lena Cowen Orlin, Stanley Wells, eds, *Shakespeare Without Boundaries: Essays in Honor of Dieter Mehl*, Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2011, 393 pp., £ 50.00.**

This *Festschrift* pays homage to Dieter Mehl, the well-known Renaissance and medieval scholar and first President of the reunited German Shakespeare Society. The volume conveys the idea of Mehl as a "boundary crosser" (Ann Jenialie Cook, p. 15). In political terms, Mehl crossed the border between the two Germanies, trying to bring together scholars from both sides of the Wall and

negotiating an end to the division of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft that arose during the Cold War. In aesthetic terms he advocated the crossing of boundaries (which he envisaged as always artificial and ideologically oriented) between genres, languages and media. The numerous essays included in the volume are consistent with this attitude: they investigate the proliferation of Shakespearean objects and illustrations as a way of producing meaning “beyond the boundaries of page and stage” (Caterine M. S. Alexander, p. 320); theatrical blogs and websites as an attempt to go beyond the pass-door (Peter Holland); poetic drama as a specific genre in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and *As You Like It* (Alexander Shurbanov); “The Limitations of the First Folio” (Paul Edmonson and Stanley Wells); and the collapsing boundaries between faith and skepticism in Shakespeare’s use of the Bible (Piero Boitani). This is a book full of voices that resonate with freedom and intellectual curiosity.

Davide Crosara, Sapienza University of Rome

**Jeremy Lopez, ed., *Richard II: New Critical Essays*, Milton Park-New York, Routledge, 2012, special Indian edition 2013, £ 75.00.**

The book is a collection of essays by eleven contributors of different nationalities and uneven critical interests, distinct in themes as well as methods, yet all sharing the editor’s project of answering the call launched in John Russell Brown’s workshop on *Richard II* for a change which might give Shakespeare’s Histories a more permanent and relevant place, both in the scholarly and in the popular imagination. What is *new*, as the title suggests, is first of all the structure of the book, built on the pairing of the essays along two principles: on the one hand, essays which clearly diverge from each other are positioned one after the other; on the other hand, pieces which complement each other respond to one another even from opposite sides of the collection. A telling example is the relationship/interconnection between the Introduction – with its concern with historical criticism based on long-standing, static literary critical conventions, which, the author warns, have become unproductive – and the last chapter on the deposition scene, engaged as it is with performance studies.

Lopez’s Introduction is itself a chapter in its own right. It provides a multifarious, analytical survey of the history of criticism on *Richard II*, developing from the “peculiarly homogeneous character” of historical criticism of the last century, persistently engaged in analogy and opposition as “the explicit and central concern of most critical responses to most theatrical engagements” encouraged by the play, and a modern performance approach, featuring new historicist criticism towards a refashioning of Shakespeare’s vision of English national history.

The essays move from political history to theatre history; from genre to gender issues; particularly engaging is Roslyn L. Knutson's claim that in transforming and perfecting the history play matrix, Shakespeare in fact kills it. Others contemplate the dialectic relationship between stage performance and publication (with interesting implications for the authorship question); Bridget Escolme challenges the press and scholarly responses to 1995 Fiona Shaw's controversial *Richard II*; Melissa Sanchez focuses on the female characters of the play, and drawing upon the work of Judith Butler argues that Ernst Kantorowicz's well-known study on *The King's Two Bodies* has "helped to produce a view of political process and identity that occludes, or cannot accommodate, female bodies" (p. 39). In conclusion what makes this volume *new* is the way critical voices intersect, engaging in discourses which, like politics, transcend the borders of the text as well as the borders of England; thus reinvigorating the old-fashioned image of Shakespeare as a chronicler of the past.

Rosy Colombo, Sapienza University of Rome

**David Lucking, *Making Sense in Shakespeare*, Amsterdam-New York, Rodopi, 2012, xiv+233 pp., \$ 71.16 / € 52.00.**

David Lucking's book focuses on the way Shakespeare's characters "make sense of experience through the medium of words" (p. xi). Some of them inquire into the reasons why things happen, especially when they lose their certainties, as in *King Lear*, where the question about the cause of thunder contains a philosophical dilemma that stems from ancient times. Once again, this book stresses the playwright's interest in notions of causation and motivation, which are related to knowledge and meaning. In line with his previous study on names in Shakespeare (*The Shakespearean Name: Essays on Romeo and Juliet, The Tempest, and Other Plays*, 2007), Lucking here delves into the function of a number of words (for instance, "cause") that occur in Shakespeare more often than others. In so doing, he touches the terrain of both philosophy and narrative theory, because it's through words that the characters account for the reason and the way things happen.

After an introductory chapter on "The Cause of Thunder", each section is dedicated to one of the plays written around the turn of the sixteenth century, when Shakespeare was arguably involved in the issue of knowledge. Lucking's analysis shows how the true determinants of human actions, which can greatly influence the succession of events, remain obscure despite the rationale laid out by some protagonists, for example Henry V and Brutus. George Lakoff's theory of metaphor as a cognitive tool and the famous statement that "metaphors can kill" are interestingly applied to *The*

*Merchant of Venice*, especially to the metaphoric narratives told by a Shylock who starts perceiving Antonio's body as something that can be divided and weighed. While showing that the narrative construction of reality takes on different forms in *Hamlet* and *Titus Andronicus*, the volume's own narrative is fluid and engaging. Shakespeare, Lucking reminds us, greatly contributed to phrase the question as to whether the motives of human actions can ever be understood.

Stefania Porcelli, City University of New York

**Michele Marrapodi, ed., *Shakespeare and Renaissance Literary Theories: Anglo-Italian Transactions*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2011, 321 pp., € 81.72.**

Dedicated to the memory of Giorgio Melchiori (1920-2009), this book collects both the mature versions of contributions presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Shakespeare Conference held at the University of Palermo in 2006, and original chapters. It is part of the Ashgate Anglo-Italian Renaissance Studies series, which aims to trace the connections of early modern English drama with Italian culture and dramatic tradition. Accordingly, the book focuses on the manifold appropriations of Italian culture in Shakespeare and early modern English drama, maintaining that, to the contemporaries, Italian Renaissance culture held the status that Marx and Freud held in the twentieth century: no one could escape the influence even in the absence of a proven philological link. The circulation of 'theatregrams' and 'fictograms' from Italian *novelle* constitutes the basic theoretical principle of the whole collection. Italian literary theories are read alongside the Elizabethan dramatic conventions, and compose the background against which Elizabethan innovations often become patent. The essays of part 1 ("Art, Rhetoric and Style") are devoted to formal and theoretical issues. Stephen Orgel insists on the meaningfulness of incoherence in Shakespeare's plays: on the one hand, this is evidence that Shakespeare sometimes changed his mind; on the other, it is puzzling that incoherence has remained a feature of the texts for centuries. Robin H. Wells addresses the much debated topics of subjectivity, authorship and writing, claiming that Renaissance poets had a clear concept of what it meant to be an author. John Roe analyses the role of Italian rhetoric in fostering Elizabethan poetics, as well as the discourse of patronage and the interplay of Petrarchan conventions in the *Sonnets*. Mariangela Tempera shows how the outdoing of Senecan and Italianate theatregrams works in *Titus Andronicus*, and Adam Max Cohen reads *The Winter's Tale* alongside the treatment of wonder in early modern Italian literary discourse. Part 2 ("Genres, Models, Forms") opens with a contribu-

tion by Frances K. Barasch, who sketches the *Commedia dell'Arte* milieu in which Shakespeare completed his apprenticeship and identifies Italianate patterns in *Hamlet*, such as the Pantalone family as a model for the garrulous Polonius and his sexual obsession. Next, Hugh Grady adopts a Machiavellian theoretical stance to read *Julius Caesar*, whose 'neutrality', he argues, is crucially indebted to the Machiavellian amoral outlook of political behaviour. In chapter 8, Anthony Ellis writes about the comic *senex*, comparing Shakespeare's *As You Like It* to Ruzante's *L'Anconitana* to identify common strategies for the investigation of specific social problems. Without claiming identifiable genetic ties between the two playwrights, Robert Henke tackles technical and thematic homologues in Shakespeare's and Ruzante's works. Next, Michele Marrapodi traces the genre of the Shakespearean *tragedia mista* back to Giraldi Cinthio's writings and identifies the *commedia grave*, in which the *topos* of the wondrously virtuous and constant woman proves dominant, as one of the genres that inspired Shakespeare's *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*. The ambivalence of the Italian Carnival, especially as it used to take place in the cities of Venice and Verona, is central in François Laroque's essay. In his reading, the Italian Carnival offers both a thematic unity and an aesthetic principle of hybridity and subversion. Focusing on *Richard II*, Susan Payne links the play's insistence on optical and horticultural paradigms to the Italian Renaissance perspective theories and especially to anamorphosis. English courtesan drama is the subject of Keir Elam's contribution, which connects it to Italian courtesanship and to Venice as its symbolic centre. Duncan Salkeld analyses the sixteenth-century debate of the *paragone* between two arts, which found in Leonardo da Vinci one of its illustrious practitioners and left its mark not only on Shakespeare's poetry but also on the plays, especially on *Timon of Athens*. The closing essay, by Michael Wyatt, sketches a conspicuous Italian presence in the Stuart court culture. The Italian community in London, he notices, contributed to the financing of the welcoming ceremony held for King James I. An afterword by Louise George Clubb reinforces and clarifies the theoretical standpoint that sustains the collection, insisting on the natural circulation of cultural elements by which the contamination between Renaissance Italy and Elizabethan/Jacobean England can be claimed to have taken place even in the lack of traceable links, on which, however, research has recently been developing.

Maria Grazia Tonetto, Sapienza University of Rome

**Unhae Park Langis, *Passion, Prudence and Virtue in Shakespearean Drama*, New York, Continuum, 2011, x+180 pp., \$ 95.16 / € 69.54.**

**Kathryn Schwartz, *What You Will: Gender, Contract, and Shakespearean Social Space*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011, xii+304 pp., \$ 57.09 / € 41.72.**

**Kaara L. Peterson and Deanne Williams, eds, *The Afterlife of Ophelia*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, ix+272 pp., \$ 62.85 / € 45.93.**

Three volumes recently published in the United States discuss Shakespearean female characters in depth, as well as the representation of women's virtue and passion in Shakespeare. Unhae Park Langis links an ethical and philosophical approach to an interest in cognitive issues and body studies. Her volume *Passion, Prudence and Virtue in Shakespearean Drama* examines the early modern concept of virtue in the light of a philosophical tradition that stems from Aristotle. The values of prudence and moderation are crucial to the period, when such notions are clearly divided along gender lines. However, the author argues (against Aristotle) that the Aristotelian concept of virtue is better embodied in Shakespeare's female characters (that Park Langis calls *viragos*) than in men's *virtus*. Moral action occurs at the confluence of prudence, rational will (that entails choice), and virtuous desire (p. 22). Langis's compelling analysis crosses various theatrical genres (comedy, tragedy and romance), and different human spheres of interaction (domestic, courtly, and civil). The tragedy often occurs in the imbalance between the genders, when passions are not ruled by prudent strategy, or because both sides tend to hypervirtue (as in the case of Othello and Desdemona). On the contrary, passions controlled by women's willful reason are directed towards well being (Helena in *All's Well* is a case in point).

Women's agency is also the hub of Kathryn Schwartz's *What You Will: Gender, Contract, and Shakespearean Social Space*. The volume considers women characters that conform to their time's conventions, in a way that challenges the heterosocial hierarchy of the society they live in. It analyzes the theoretically dense concept of will as the female counterpart of masculine reason. Ideally divided into two parts, the book focuses first on the philosophical aspects and rhetorical construction of gender and misogyny in the early modern period (chapters 1-3). Secondly, it analyzes Shakespearean texts that engage and subvert conventions of gender, through women that consciously reiterate the social role imposed upon them. Through their constancy, virtue, and chastity, characters such as Helena, Isabella and Cordelia demonstrate that "wilful conformity confounds distinctions between affective allegiance and appropriate defiance" (p. 11). Through an articulated use of poststructuralist and gender theories, Schwarz discusses the role feminine volition plays in forging dynamic contracts in the "Shakespearean social space".



The last book in this triad, *The Afterlife of Ophelia*, focuses on one specific Shakespearean character. Drawing on Elaine Showalter's essay "Representing Ophelia: Woman Madness and the Responsibility of Feminist Criticism" (1985), the collection of essays edited by Kaara L. Peterson and Deanne Williams examines the way in which the interpretations of Ophelia through the ages mirror the ideology and concerns pivotal to the cultures that represent her. Since the character is already mediated in *Hamlet*, the various representations of Ophelia analyzed in the volume are 're-mediations' in painting, photography, later theatre, cinema, and social networks. A valuable book for those interested in both adaptation and appropriation of Shakespeare's characters and in gender theories, the volume shows the still ongoing process of regeneration and reinvention of Shakespeare's most popular female character. It also features essays by renowned scholars such as Lois Potter, fascinating illustrations, and an afterword by Coppélia Kahn, which links together the various chapters of the collection and tells a 'different story' about Ophelia.

Stefania Porcelli, City University of New York

**Neema Parvini, *Shakespeare and Contemporary Theory: New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*, London, Bloomsbury, 2012, 240 pp., \$ 34.95.**

Not only is this book a history of recent Shakespearean criticism, it is also an effective introduction to relevant strains of contemporary theory, meant for both students and scholars. It provides, moreover, a fully-fledged contribution to Shakespearean studies. Parvini charts crucial turns and changes in the study of Shakespeare. He starts from the character criticism and formalist approaches dominant in the first half of the twentieth century and goes on to trace the rise and hegemony of New Historicism and Cultural Materialism, foregrounding their preoccupations, interpretive logic, and style of communication. He discusses a great variety of theoretical concepts, broadening his focus to discuss the thinkers that have inspired or influenced them. Besides showing the ways in which the works of Shakespeare have been understood by twentieth-century critics, this book constitutes, therefore, a concise, useful introduction to thinkers like Gramsci, Althusser, and Foucault. At the same time, moreover, *Shakespeare and Contemporary Criticism* takes its own critical position. In discussing contemporary theory, Parvini historicizes it: in his conclusion, he emphasizes the need to supersede 'anti-humanist' approaches that imply a view of human nature as a blank slate filled by 'culture'. With an eye to evolutionary studies and neurobiology, Parvini invites students of Shakespeare to explore the vital relation between texts and their readers.

Riccardo Capoferro, Sapienza University of Rome

**Don Paterson, *Reading Shakespeare's Sonnets: A New Commentary*, London, Faber & Faber, 2010, paperback edition 2012, 500 pp., £ 9.99.**

Paterson, a poet himself, offers what we may call a non-academic, informal, and in some parts humorous, reading of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. The book is composed of an Introduction, two short final notes on the sonnet form and its metre and an individual commentary on each of the 154 sonnets. What the author is attempting, as he states himself, is to engage with the poem "directly", to see how the poem "works", what it is "saying about us" and "about the author".

The tone – which has irritated some readers – is colloquial, at times chatty, and though Paterson shows himself to be well acquainted with the critical history of the collection, previous scholarly interpretations are thrown in almost as asides, critics are mentioned by their initials, and no footnotes are given which could allow readers to trace the references. This clearly provides a flowing and attractive prose and favours an immediate approach to the sonnet itself, an approach which is never shallow and often fresh, though perhaps more difficult to accept for those used to traditional commentaries. Similarly in the actual comments themselves Paterson does not mince his words, referring for instance to the "procreation sonnets" as a "rather dull run", a "warm up experience", or paraphrasing, for example, the famous first line of *Sonnet 2* ("When forty winters shall besiege thy brow") with "When you are old and look like train-wreck", an undoubtedly original approach aimed at removing the awe which generally surrounds the words of Shakespeare. As for the much debated issue of the relationship with the "fair youth" whom Paterson prefers to call simply "young man" there is no hesitation that the feelings expressed reveal an erotic passion.

It is this direct and simplifying attitude which characterizes the book, the everyday, non-academic jargon has been praised by some as the better way to come into contact with poems; in addition Paterson does provide technical observations which reveal his poetic sensibility and his erudition. This new commentary stands out for wit and humour, for its apparent disrespect for formal criticism and for its ability to decipher some of the more complex verses in the *Sonnets*. It also faces us with the more general problem of the 'correct' way to approach and interpret poetry. Nonetheless, this book alone would not be sufficient for those unfamiliar with the Shakespearean text and its critical tradition.

Maria Valentini, University of Cassino

**Eric Rasmussen, *The Shakespeare Thefts: In Search of the First Folios*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 237 pp., \$ 17.00.**

This is a most entertaining self-professed “literary detective story”, which Shakespeare and Sherlock lovers alike will thoroughly enjoy. It chronicles the adventures of Rasmussen and his team of “First Folio hunters”, who set out on a globe-wide journey to embark on the remarkable project of cataloguing each of the 232 known copies of Shakespeare’s First Folio, as well as trying to locate copies known to exist but never found. The Folio is a fetish not only for Shakespeareans, it turns out, but especially for the rich, who have variously aspired to its ownership as a status symbol (as the emblematic efforts of Henry Clay Folger, president of Standard Oil, who managed to amass 82 copies, stand to prove).

Rasmussen and his team’s main goal was to produce the most comprehensive and detailed descriptive catalogue of all the accessible copies of the First Folio to date, a feat that was accomplished in 2012 (with the publication, again with Palgrave, of *The Shakespeare First Folios: A Descriptive Catalogue*). This impressive scholarly achievement is well complemented by the narrative of the stories behind the Folios presented in the *Shakespeare Thefts*: while the latter appeals of course to a broader, and not necessarily specialized, audience, it is also extremely informative and well-documented.

The book is also a fascinating journey through libraries all over the world, from the Folger to the second largest Shakespearean collection in the world, that of Meisei, Japan; from the Vatican, where a First Folio brought to Rome by the Royal Shakespeare Company to be blessed by the Pope was accepted by Paul VI who mistook it for a gift (it was later returned after diplomatic negotiations), to the library at the University of Padua, which possesses the only copy now held in Italy.

It is impossible to account for all the captivating stories related in the twenty chapters (the book also contains a useful appendix on the material process of making the First Folio). Perhaps the most intriguing of the tales Rasmussen has reconstructed are the ones that cannot be fully told: the stories, that is, about copies that have been destroyed – lost at sea after the sinking of the Arctic in 1854, or gone up in flames in the Chicago Fire of 1871; but mostly, stolen – by servants or specialized literary thieves. Neither is the requisite touch of *noir* – so crucial to any good mystery story – missing here: as the research progressed, the team noticed with some surprise that a good number of First Folio owners met their end shortly after acquiring the coveted book; the most suggestive instance being that of the young Harry Widener, who met his fate only two years after obtaining his copy, when he reportedly missed a seat on a lifeboat on the night of the Titanic disaster in order to save a copy of Francis Bacon’s 1598 *Essays*, which he could not bear to leave in his cabin. A cautionary tale against unbridled book lust if there ever was one.

Iolanda Plescia, Sapienza University of Rome

**William Shakespeare, *Sonetti*, translation and reading by Pino Colizzi, Roma, Società Dante Alighieri, 2012, 331 pp.+2 CDs, € 18.00.**

Pino Colizzi has produced a new translation into Italian of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* to which he has added his own reading of them which comes with his booklet on CD. As he asserts in his introductory note, it is the musicality of the verse which he first learnt to appreciate on hearing Sir John Gielgud's reading, which led him to attempt a new translation privileging sound. Colizzi has chosen to translate Shakespeare's iambic pentameter with the hendecasyllable which he considers more suitable for the reproduction of rhythm and metre. He has also interpreted the sonnets not as individual, self-contained poems, but rather as a continuous and continuing love story which he feels Shakespeare must have written throughout his life.

The most rewarding experience we draw from this publication is the actual listening to the reading of the sonnets which reproduces the strong musical and rhythmical sense of the original. Clearly, meaning is at times sacrificed for the sake of sound, but Colizzi manages to retain the fundamental content and the imagery of the individual poems.

Two brief prefaces appear in the booklet: one by the critic and poet Elio Pecora who, following Bloom, interprets Shakespeare as the poet who reaches out to us, who cannot be confined to his own historical and cultural context, and commends Colizzi's endeavour for his linguistic choices and particularly for the effect of his performance. The other by Edoardo Zuccato, an expert in translation studies, expresses appreciation for Colizzi's transposition of metre and rhyme and emphasises the fact that most translation choices can only be fully appreciated by listening to the actual reading, a reading, he states, which is not simply "recited" as it would be in a play, but which is "vocalized" as it should be with lyrical poetry.

This new translation, with its popularizing intent, offers the Italian reader and listener yet another occasion to appreciate Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and at times – through the interpretation which inevitably comes from translating – to understand their complexity more fully.

Maria Valentini, University of Cassino

**Stuart Sillars, *Shakespeare, Time and the Victorians: A Pictorial Exploration*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, xxiii+360 pp., £ 50.00.**

*Shakespeare, Time and the Victorians* is another book from the hand of the remarkably prolific Stuart Sillars. His book *Painting Shakespeare* appeared in 2006, *The Illustrated Shakespeare, 1709-1820* in 2008 and now just four years

later this brilliantly researched and fundamentally novel view of Shakespeare in the nineteenth century has been published. Sillars's speciality is the subtle relationship between word and image, and in the nineteenth century, he claims, such was the power of the image that the reception of Shakespeare's plays was determined as much by their representation in visual media (paintings, etchings, drawings, etc.) as it was by performance on the stage. In addition to this the production of Shakespeare in this period was intimately dependent on a kind of historical authenticity that would be incomprehensible to a modern audience. Victorian Shakespeare activity, says Sillars, in performance, editing and painting, is united by bonds ideological, methodological and material, through links both complex and dynamic. At the core of the enterprise was the Victorian idea of history and in Shakespeare the Victorians tried to create a balance between the historical past and the contingencies of the present, but in a context where authenticity was granted a kind of moral seriousness. In the Victorian world there could be no Hamlet in dinner jackets!

Summing up his own project, Sillars says that the purpose of his book lies in: "disentangling and then reassembling these forces, to reveal what is arguably the major force of Victorian Shakespeare activity, on stage and in painting, in illustrated edition, in records of performance through engraving and photograph, and in the construction of the plays in the memory of the reader and viewer" (p. 4).

As the eighteenth century gave way to the nineteenth century, the so-called hierarchy of styles took a firm grip on the world of the visual arts. In this certain genres were considered much superior to others. At the bottom of this hierarchy was portrait and landscape painting and at the top, high and untouchable, was what was called 'history painting'. This involved subjects drawn from myth, battles and significant moments in the, usually, European past, together of course with subjects drawn from Shakespeare. Shakespeare was perennially popular partly because subjects from the plays immediately attracted distinction and second because such subjects were highly saleable. In Britain the genre was frequently steeped in personal sentiment in which the tender emotions of individuals were contextualized in great historical moments. When the young men of the Pre-Raphaelite movement came to the fore, they too saw the possibilities in the Shakespearean subject. And it is here that Sillars detects a watershed in the visual representation, and consequently the wider sense of the significance of Shakespeare's plays. The early Victorian mode of conception he identifies with a painting like Daniel Maclise's well-known *The Play Scene in Hamlet* of 1842. Sillars provides his readers with a brilliant and sensitive deconstruction of this piece and especially the way in which the complex symbolic system works across the picture plane referring to moments in the drama that preceded and succeed this particular event. This, Sillars tells us, is one of the finest yet last pictures

painted in this mode in which the temporal sequence of the play employs such progressive inclusiveness. The Pre-Raphaelites changed this, he argues. In such famous works as Millais's *Ophelia*, and his painting *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* or Holman Hunt's *Claudio and Isabella* the painterly techniques of the Pre-Raphaelites set out new ways of representing the material world and hence new ways of interpreting Shakespeare. The hyperrealism of colour and form creates a powerful tension as it works against the absence of aerial perspective and often of geometrical perspective. In the example taken from *The Tempest*, argues Sillars, the disconcerting eerie otherworldliness of Millais's techniques has a parallel in the supernatural events of the drama in a way previous illustrators would have found impossible.

*Shakespeare, Time and the Victorians* goes on to examine the dialectic between Shakespeare's text and its other visually directed manifestations in the nineteenth century. A chapter on Charles Kean and staging is followed by the 'memorialising' of productions in the journals, especially *The Illustrated London News*, and another on the status of photography in the production of Shakespeare for an audience that may not have seen any staging. The anthologising and fragmentation of Shakespeare's plays then follows, with a section on the development of Shakespearean subject in painting after the Pre-Raphaelites.

Such a brief report cannot do justice to neither the richness nor the complexity of Sillars's work in this book. His range is superb, his analysis usually fine and his choice of example subtle and sensitive. It will remain an outstanding contribution to this field for many years to come. But the field itself lies firmly in the realm of Victorian culture. The book draws upon a detailed knowledge of Shakespeare, but it offers little in terms of commentary or interpretation of Shakespeare's plays. It does provide a remarkable insight into how our ancestors responded to Shakespeare, and it provides access to the response in a remarkably intelligent way. This, therefore, is an outstanding book on one significant element within Victorian culture.

J. B. Bullen, Professor Emeritus, University of Reading

**Laura Tosi and Shaul Bassi, eds, *Visions of Venice in Shakespeare*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2011, xvii+259 pp., £ 60.00.**

In his Introduction to *Visions of Venice in Shakespeare* Stanley Wells outlines just how important Italy was to Shakespeare. From its dark, dangerous and mysterious culture to its warm, fruitful and extrovert life, if it had not existed, says Wells, Shakespeare would have had to have invented it. It is unlikely that Shakespeare ever visited the country, though Well suggests that he may well have been able to read Italian. But the idea of Italy loomed large

in the sixteenth century imagination and at the centre of this fantasy stood Venice followed by Rome. As Tosi and Bassi point out, within the Renaissance response to Italian culture, "Venice is the most enduring symbolic landscape" providing the "ultimate fictional landscape of otherness" (pp. 2-3) because Venice seemed to embody the very Renaissance "culture of paradox". Strangely enough though two decades have passed since the role of Venice in Shakespeare's plays has been reassessed yet the subject occurs in two books almost at the same time and from the same publisher: Graham Holderness's *Shakespeare and Venice* (2010) and this one, *Visions of Venice in Shakespeare* (2011) edited by Laura Tosi and Shaul Bassi.

*Visions of Venice* is comprised of a number of fine and sometimes highly specialized essays from a group of international scholars. The chapters fall into four groups, one dealing with sources, one dealing with politics and religion, one dealing with the mythology of Venice, and the fourth about the reception of the Venetian plays.

The collection opens with a discussion of Shakespeare's likely source material for his personal vision of Venice, where the novellas of Giraldi Cinthio seem to come out favourite. The older notion that Venice was a screen used by Shakespeare on which to project the culture of his contemporary London has been largely discredited, but as the second section of this book points out, Venice is constructed as a puzzle of utopian and dystopian qualities that gives a hint of what England might become. Most interestingly Andrew Hadfield shows how Shakespeare probably drew on William Thomas's *History of Italy* (1549) for *The Merchant of Venice* and Virginia Mason makes out a strong case for Shakespeare's dependence on Richard Knowles's *Generall Histotrie of the Turkes* (1603) and the shift in Venetian history, as Knowles records it, from the military prowess identified with Othello and the Machiavellianism identified with Iago.

In the second section on the role of Venetian politics and religion in Shakespeare's texts, Julia Reinhardt points out how the Old Testament figure, Job, was worshipped as a saint in Venice. In a brilliant chapter she outlines his shadowy presence in Shakespeare's Venetian dramas. Job was, she says a figure that represents the commutativity between ancient and modern religious traditions, between Christianity and Islam and between Othello and Shylock.

In the section dealing with the mythology of Venice, Graham Holderness points out how the myth of the city has been created partly by its own inhabitants and partly by its visitors. Surprisingly, modern myths began very early in the Renaissance itself, and had their source in the multicultural population, and the liminal position of the city between East and West. This liminality is touched upon again by Kent Cartwright in his examination of the return-from-the-dead motif that features in *The Merchant of Venice* as well as in Shakespeare's early comedies. The hybrid, liminal city, says Cartwright, "is

the very image of Shakespeare's Renaissance". The afterlife of Shakespeare's Venetian plays in the fourth section is dominated by the work of Stuart Silars who explores the visual representation of Venice in English culture. Silars notices the explosion of interest in an authentic topography after the fall of Venice and the advent of Byronic tourism and its taste for the exotic.

*Visions of Venice in Shakespeare* is a stimulating collection of essays, which using more recent methodologies brings the presence of Venice in Shakespeare's plays up to date. Naturally it does not aim for total inclusiveness, but is intended to act as a stimulus for further work in this field. In opening up new realms of exploration and providing a spring board for debate Laura Tosi and Shaul Bassi are to be congratulated.

J. B. Bullen, Professor Emeritus, University of Reading

**Garry Wills, *Rome and Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 2011, 197 pp., € 19.61.**

**Raphael Lyne, *Shakespeare, Rhetoric and Cognition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, 267 pp., € 64.95.**

**Maria Franziska Fahey, *Metaphor and Shakespearean Drama: Unchaste Signification*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 192 pp., € 62.17.**

Shakespeare and rhetoric still proves a fruitful line of inquiry. The authors of the three books here examined adopt three different angles. Garry Wills's *Rome and Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar* envisages rhetoric in a traditional manner, as the art of choosing and organizing linguistic material to the end of persuasion, even more so in a play which – the author maintains – is about the demagogic skills of its characters. The book was first presented as the Anthony Hacht Lectures in the Humanities given by the author in 2009. Accordingly, its approach is informal and accessible to the non-scholarly reader. Wills examines how the Plutarchian techniques of *syngkrisis*, or joint judgment, and of paired discourses, are woven through Shakespeare's play and are actually responsible for the difficulty in deciding which role is prominent in *Julius Caesar*. In obedience to that structure, the male characters mirror each other, and the same dynamics connects Portia and Calphurnia's roles. Wills moves easily between Elizabethan performances, digressions on their material conditions, and twentieth-century film adaptations.

Raphael Lyne's *Shakespeare, Rhetoric and Cognition* is rooted in the more recent attempt to connect Shakespeare with cognitive sciences, a strand of research which has grown with books like Philip Davis's *Shakespeare Thinking* (2007) or Mary Crane's *Shakespeare's Brain* (2001). Rhetoric, the book suggests, is not to be regarded merely as a guide to eloquent and persuasive



speech. Key rhetorical tropes, instead, have a close relationship with the way thought works and actually happens. In Lyne's reading, tropes are heuristic means that bring together the mind with reality and represent thought while it struggles to take shape. Soliloquies, the author claims, employ rhetorical tropes not to persuade the audience, nor to reveal a hidden interiority, but seem to be devoted to mastering thoughts in moments of cognitive uncertainty. The first chapters offer a detailed critical map of the seminal studies in the field. Chapter 2 develops an unconventional history of rhetorical manuals with Renaissance England as a culminating point. According to Lyne, writers perceived qualities in rhetoric that placed it closer to the origins of intellectual endeavour than to an ornamental enrichment of speech. Synecdoche, for instance, etymologically a 'taking together', mirrors the way in which comprehension takes place in the brain, in which new connections are formed by partial intersections; indeed, synecdochical comprehension occurs when one aspect of something recalls the whole of something else. Similarly, in George Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), 'concept' is presented as a 'taking together', from the Latin *concipio*. In the second part of the book, Lyne analyses both Shakespeare's plays and the *Sonnets*, beginning with *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*, and Bottom's attempt to process his experience of dreaming. A similar formative movement is shown to pervade the rhetorical richness of Imogen's speeches in *Cymbeline*. However, while in *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* and in *Cymbeline* the heuristic finality of rhetoric brings about a sense of delightful enrichment to the way reality is apprehended, in *Othello* cognitive-rhetorical resources lead to a heuristic failure. Othello's metaphors engender problems more often than they solve them, and their discoveries are false. The last chapter, on the *Sonnets*, explores the ways in which Shakespeare achieves insights into extreme feelings by means of rhetorical-heuristic turns, complementing Lyne's findings about the theatrical staging of thought with the more intimate fruition of the *Sonnets*.

Maria Franziska Fahey's *Metaphor and Shakespearean Drama: Unchaste Signification* treats the role of metaphor in Shakespeare's plays from a historicist point of view, reading both Shakespeare and early modern texts with an awareness of how rhetorical tropes gain resonance from the whole of the cultural system. Chapter 2 examines falconry metaphors in *Othello*, reading them along with contemporary treatises on falconry and illuminating how the articulation of Desdemona and Othello's desires, modelled on falconer, hawk, and prey, suggest the failure of the couple's union from the beginning; by voicing those metaphors, Desdemona participates unwittingly in the discourse that disfigures her marriage. Indeed, one of the tenets of the book is metaphor's surreptitious ability to make speakers and auditors beget meanings and conceive ideas without their full awareness. Chapter 3 examines the triangulation of metaphor, sacrifice and violence in *Titus Andronicus*, centring on the way in which the line between words and force, metaphori-

cal and literal speech, is blurred as Aaron transforms the wooing of Lavinia into her hunting with force, twisting conventional metaphors of courtship-as-hunt love poetry into a literal enactment. Chapter 4 is devoted to the more predictable theme of equivocation in *Macbeth*; an analysis of *King Henry IV Part 1* allows the author to explore the role of metaphor in figuring royalty, as Prince Henry, like Christ, succeeds in aligning himself with lofty emblems of kingliness, such as the heavenly sun, and with the earthly emblems of the son of flesh and blood. The instrument of such a twofold figuration of royalty is the carnivalesque doubling of kingly metaphor that takes place in the tavern world. Metaphor, Fahey maintains, is central to the most weighty theological debate of Shakespeare's time, namely the one about the literal or metaphorical status of the Eucharist and of the verb 'to be' in that context. Finally, the book illustrates the role of dead metaphor in *Hamlet*, suggesting a metaphorical reading of the pouring of poison into the king's ear. The last chapter, on *The Tempest*, analyses how the metaphorical misnaming of Caliban as a "fish" orientates the travellers' further observations on the natives, and how the transfer of the word 'fish' onto Caliban actually projects the travellers' own hunger onto the supposed cannibal.

Maria Grazia Tonetto, Sapienza University of Rome

**Christopher R. Wilson, *Shakespeare's Musical Imagery*, London, Bloomsbury, 2011, xi+259 pp., \$ 120.00 / € 90.51.**

**Joseph M. Ortiz, *Broken Harmony: Shakespeare and the Politics of Music*, New York, Cornell University Press, 2011, xvi+261 pp., \$ 46.95 / € 42.11.**

The interest for music in Shakespeare has been recently revived by two seminal books that came out in 2011: Christopher Wilson's *Shakespeare's Musical Imagery* and Joseph Ortiz's *Broken Harmony: Shakespeare and the Politics of Music*.

*Shakespeare's Musical Imagery* has a wide scope and focuses on a number of subjects such as musical theories; their history from the classical world to early modern days; references to music in figures of speech; myth and musical instruments. On rare occasions the book also offers brief comments based on the scores and on the rhetoric of Shakespeare's music – two traits hardly ever found in other essays, due to the interdisciplinary nature of the subject. Such characteristics only add up to Wilson's invaluable work, which will prove useful not only to the Shakespearean readership who takes a special interest in music, but also to the Shakespearean scholar *tout court* for the new light that Wilson's observations shed on the texts.

*Broken Harmony: Shakespeare and the Politics of Music* on the other hand does not revolve around textual or musical analysis. Devoid by Shakespeare of its Platonic ethos, music becomes a promiscuous means of communication.

Therefore on the whole Ortiz is not concerned with understanding the poetic function of each piece of music in Shakespeare. He is instead interested in penetrating the secret of music as a code of non-verbal communication and in its literary, social, political and religious reception and repercussions. He therefore focuses not only on Shakespeare's relationship with Ovid's musical myths, but also on Renaissance treatises, emblems, theatregoers' comments, reformist ideas, and iconoclasm, thus providing a very lively and greatly enjoyable portrait of Jacobean England and its cultural debate about music. It is a pity that the title induces the reader to think that the book is only about Shakespearean music, thus not accounting for the brilliant final chapter about Milton's *A Maske*.

Giuliano Pascucci, Sapienza University of Rome

