Mapping Antony and Cleopatra
Permanence and Mobility
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Selected Publications in Shakespeare Studies (2016-2017)

Elam, Keir, *Shakespeare's Pictures: Visual Objects in the Drama*, London, Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017, 380 pp.

"Ut pictura poësis", "pictura muta poësis", "poësis pictura loquens". It is in these canonic formulae that Italian and continental Renaissance aesthetic theorists initially – to be followed by their British counterparts – tried to synthesize the multiple relations between the traditional 'sister arts', poetry (i.e. literature and drama) and painting. Such relations acquired a new, original quality starting from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries. This quality was the connection between ancient rhetoric and modern iconology: it is the combination of word and picture, their mutual semantic illumination that provides the full meaning and proper understanding of either a literary or artistic text. The link of a figure with a possible conceptual content was ever more perceived as anything but arbitrary. In England, in particular, there was an evident awareness of the deeper, far more than merely illustrative, possibilities of pictorial representation within a literary/dramatic text. This was due not only to the popular tradition of allegorical pageants and moralities, but also to the influence of the Neo-Platonists and their ideas concerning symbols and their signifying power. This awareness gave rise to a theoretical debate about the

major importance of either the linguistic or iconographic aspects of the word/picture relation. If John Hoskins, in his *Directions for Speech and Style*, seemed to privilege the verbal side, foregrounding allegories, similes and parables, Abraham Fraunce, in *Insignium, Armorum, Emblematum, Hierogliphicorum, et Symbolorum, quae ab Italis Imprese nominantur, explicatio*, preferred symbols and icons. Fraunce too laid great emphasis on the fact that it is the relation between word and figure that allows for the significance of the aesthetic text, which is not merely the sum of its parts, just as in a human being *forma* is more than the addition of *corpus* and *anima*. In this sense, Giordano Bruno's *De gl'eroici furori*, published in London during his persecution by the Catholic Church as a heretic, and dedicated to Philip Sidney, confirms a most suggestive link between Neo-Platonic thought and Elizabethan *episteme*.

Shakespeare's knowledge of the intensive argument about the sister arts comes to the fore – just to give an example that is akin to the contents of Elam's book – in the opening scene of *Timon of Athens*, a text thoroughly analyzed in this volume. There, a poet and a painter engage in a competition for the protagonist's patronage. While the poet calls attention to the limitations of portraiture according to the *analogical* model of, say, Lodovico Dolce or Benedetto Varchi – "To the dumbness of the gesture / One might interpret" (I.i.33-34) – the painter echoes Leonardo harshly confuting the supposed hegemony of the verbal over the figurative: a clash over the much discussed, accepted or refuted, idea of "dumbness" of visual arts, descending from Platonic prejudice. Leonte's skeptical question in *The Winter's Tale*, "What fine chisel / Could ever yet cut breath" (V.iii.78-79), is ironically confuted by his approaching a visual miracle such as Hermione's image being brought to life. In *Cymbeline* though, Iachimo convinces Posthumus that he was eagerly invited into Imogen's bedroom (whose upholstery invokes chaste Diana's myth) on the evidence of his familiarity with her room's decorative chimneypiece.

It was only George Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) that deliberately aimed to ground a definitive mutual relation between word and picture in the polyvalent, multimedial 'discourse'

of the aesthetic experience. The same fundamental hypothesis of an inclusive, comprehensive knowledge seems to have oriented Keir Elam's excellent book, whose very title summons up the linguistic components of all the discussion about the *èkphrasis* tradition. Contemporary studies of Renaissance *èkphrasis*, although fundamentally sticking to the analogical model of *paragone*, seem to bypass the troublesome question of the hegemony between the sister arts. In particular, present day debates (this book included) tend to highlight the relevance of related modes of *èkphrasis* such as tableaux, speaking pictures, and emblems, in books as well as in coins, furniture, embroidery, not to mention pageants and masques. *Èkphrasis* brings time to a halt, arresting the dramatic movement to allow the beholder to enjoy moments of either contemplation of a character or exploration of the plot, the eye being understood as a channel between reality and imagination.

This book is beautiful in more than one sense, introduced as it is by the cover image of one of the handsomest young British players, Ben Whishaw (here as Hamlet, but unforgettable to me in his more recent hieratical, mystical portrait of Richard II for BBC2). A beautiful book also in its very rich and appropriately selected iconographic apparatus. Chiefly beautiful though in the elegance of style which accompanies the author's intellectually impressive textual analysis.

Elam insists that *his* Shakespeare picture book is *not* a book of either pictures of Shakespeare or about illustrations of characters and scenes taken from the plays, but a book primarily concerned with the *role* of pictures in Shakespearean drama, and the use to which the dramatist puts visual objects in the plays, as well as material objects in the plots. In the words of a well-known Renaissance *topos*, if 'the play is the thing', then what is this thing? Is it a physical object, previously observed by the dramatist in his own mind and transferred from there, by means of verbal or visual or technical devises, to the eyes of the spectators? Or is it just an illusion, a counterfeit? And what is a picture, a figure at the theatre? Is it real? Is it objectively seen by the actors? What do the public really see? Fascinating conjectures, that the reading of Elam's pages continuously provokes, stimulating one to enquire *more*, and more.

At the same time the author, following Shakespeare's lead, forces us to consider that a play is not a picture: never, ever could a visual object, or a figure, a painting, a portrait coincide with the global meaning of a play. A 'modern' drama cannot be the equivalent of a static Medieval morality play, which was made up of a succession of more or less *vivants tableaux.* Drama is movement, action, it is sensorial, and multimedial, linked as it is to the primary 'object' of the play, that is the actor's mobile and continuously reshaping physicality of the actor's *body* itself.

In any case, the visual 'objects' that Elam's research privileges here are not so much general 'pictures' as, far more specifically, *portraits.* Dramatic portraits like those of King Hamlet and Claudius in the famous closet scene (embodied in the cover illustration of this volume), or Portia's effigy in Bassanio's casket in *The Merchant of Venice,* or Olivia's miniature in *Twelfth Night.* But the theme of portraiture, in Renaissance dramas, inevitably calls for attention to the related problems of *perspective*, which Elam's meticulous analysis surely does not elude. What are the modalities of Shakespeare's perspectives? How are both actors and public (and readers as well) allowed to observe a painting? Can they have a 'natural' perspective, both frontal and linear, *à la* Alberti, or an artificial and distorted one, lopsided or slanting, *à la* Lomazzo? Or is the painting an anamorphosis *tout court*? The author's perspicuous capacity for focusing on details without losing control of his overall, systematic view of this particularly interesting literary/artistic phenomenon, makes his analysis of *Twelfth Night* exemplary in being both extremely functional and productive. Its center of interest is the 'double image'; double in many senses. It is double because Shakespeare elaborates two meanings of the term 'counterfeit', simultaneously being either a perfect copy or the false simulacrum of a given object. Double also (even triple!) because the dramatist uses the term 'perspective' as: 1. how the human physiological eye 'naturally' observes a thing; 2. how a lens or a mirror, or any technical device for that matter, if located between the eye and the object, can alter the vision; 3. what the beholder actually sees, when his eye is not in front of but one-sided to the object of vision.

And finally, what I find and mostly appreciate in this book is the author's appropriate and competent concern for the *emblematic* lineaments of the *pictures* or *figures* or *portraits* that are involved in Shakespeare's plays: one field of research which I have always particularly cherished. There are various ways of looking for figurative connections and emblematic elements in Elizabethan and Shakespearean drama. The easiest way is searching for direct borrowings or transparent quotations, although the emblematic image is frequently so closely integrated in the dramatic movement that it tends to lose static and/or pictorial quality. A different manner of emblematizing the theatrical object or scene is the insertion in plays of allegorical pieces, in the form of tableaux or dumb shows which provide figurative commentaries on the action, determining the same reciprocally explanatory combination of word and image that is functionally central to any emblematic method. In any case, as Elam clearly shows, emblematic images can often be the simplest of objects, banal stage properties, which nevertheless prove to be invested by the dramatist with an allegorical meaning that is ostensibly derived from his knowledge of emblem repertoires. Nevertheless, even without the use of stage properties, a fragment of the dramatic dialogue can become emblematic, when a well-known emblem is implied in theatrical discourse which presupposes a mimetic, corporeal interaction between words and gestures. In other words, to go back to the repeated dramatic and theatrical Renaissance introjection of the classic *èkphrasis* theme, what is either the real or the theatrical 'thing'?

As a further aspect of the richness of this book, it is impossible not to mention the very useful Appendix dedicated to 'Shakespeare's iconographic lexicon' – the first to appear so far, at least to my knowledge – which offers lots of information about the wide specter of terminology deployed by the dramatist, and the variety of genres implied in his drama as well.

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Findlay, Allison and Markidou, Vassiliki, eds, *Shakespeare and Greece*, London, Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017, 304 pp.

Making an overdue yet vital contribution to early modern cultural and literary studies, the collected essays in *Shakespeare and Greece* are, paradoxically, quite timely. That is, while the contributors clearly agree with critics like Colin Burrow, Neill Rhodes, Simon Goldhill, and Tanya Pollard (among others) that it is high time we correct "the stock blindness" of literary criticism "to Shakespeare's Hellenism" and start to revise "the scholarly consensus on the place of Greece in Shakespeare's imagination as well as the Renaissance more broadly" (Pollard), the essays in this volume extend and amplify the current scholarly interest in reassessing the Latinate culture of sixteenth-century English humanism. Despite the many plays Shakespeare set in Greece – Athens, Thebes, Mytilene, Ephesus, Antioch, Tarsus, and Tyre – his awareness of certain Greek words and etymologies (e.g. *threnos* in *The Phoenix and the Turtle*), and his evident attraction to Greek romance, our understanding of Shakespeare's Hellenism and how it might have resonated among contemporaries has been blinkered by the fact that, until this book, there has been "no sustained examination of early modern perceptions of Greece" (p. 2). It is a worthy and timely project and these wide-ranging essays will, I believe, prompt others to pursue further investigation still.

Expanding the field of inquiry beyond the Latinate heritage within which recent assessments of humanism's unintended consequences have been conducted, this book brings a long absent party back to the table. The editors' introduction draws together the findings of those few scholars who have persisted in gathering evidence of Greek influence in early modern England. Kirstie Milne, for example, analyzed the impact of Erasmus's and Thomas Linacre's Hellenism to demonstrate that there were at least 23 Greek texts published in England between 1534 and 1603. Among them are the *Homilies* of Chrysostome as well as work by Homer, Aristotle, Aristophanes, Demosthenes, Plato, Herodotus, and Plutarch. She therefore argues that Greek was "a live idiom among the Elizabethan political and cultural elite, a language freighted with religious and

political significance". To this observation, the essays in this volume add that it was freighted with literary significance as well. Between 1535 and 1590 there were 130 Greek grammar books inventoried at Cambridge with a similar pattern at Oxford; and the presence of a range of Greek writings in undergraduate curricula (most prominently Aesop, Lucian, Isocrates, Homer, and Aristotle) meant that when graduates moved into other professions, including school teaching, they brought that training with them. I would add that even Latin grammar school texts frequently rely on Greek writers and words: a Latin translation of Aesop inaugurated school language training; and the most popular rhetorical manual in the country, Reinhard Lorich's Latin translation and expansion of Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata*, is filled with references to Greek authors and Latin-to-Greek explanations of rhetorical and literary terms.

But at the moment in which British writers struggled to put vernacular invention on par with the ancient texts offered to them as exemplary models, and thus transported so many Greek literary genres into English, Greece had at least two histories – ancient and early modern and they were not easily reconciled. As the editors rightly stress, Greece's early modern subjection to the Ottoman empire 'unsettled' ancient Greece's cultural capital as an idealized model for European civility, power, and letters. In *A Digression Touching the Hierarchie and miseries of Christians under the Turks* (1613), Samuel Purchas represents the turning point – the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453 – as the degeneration of the city that once was "the New-Rome daughter and Imperiall heir" to "Old Rome", "a modell of Paradise", and "a terrestrial heaven", into "Mahometople […] the setting of Mahumetan dregs", "the stage of earthly and hellish Furies, the sink of blood and slaughterhouse of death" (p. 27). Given the wide spread figuration of London as a new Rome, Purchas's didactic purpose for narrating "this Tragedie" is clear: he offers Constantinople as a "mirrour of miserie" to touch Londoners with "fear in ourselves for like punishments" (p. 27). Humanist exemplarity and the cultural capital of that venerable ancient Greek genre, tragedy, meet the fearsome spectacle of the contemporary Turk. But in this and other texts, the editors argue,

when "the eastern 'other' is presented as a reflection of the self", the inversion unsettles the distinction between ancient and contemporary Greece while also disturbing the presumed difference between Englishness and the 'barbarism' of Ottoman rule.

Though no one mentions this, Rome occupied a similarly contradictory place in the English imagination: in any given text, one must ask, is this Cicero's Rome or that of the Papacy? One conclusion I drew from this volume is that to assess the complex literary and social terrain of British classicism requires one to remain sensitive to the contradictory associations surrounding both Greek and Roman imperial precedents as they mix and clash across sixteenth-century literary history as well as other discourses seeking to define English national identity and emergent aspirations for imperial authority. To take a resonant example from the editors' introduction: in *A Discourse of Civill Life containing the ethike part of morall philosophie* (1606) Lodowick Bryskett worries that the English language "has not the copiousness and sweetnes that both the Greeke and the Latine haue aboue all others". But he offers translations "taken from Greeke and Latine Philosophie" in the hope of allowing readers to "feel the true taste of the healthfull and delicious fruites" which can be beneficially digested without the reader being "constrained to fetch them from Athens or from Rome". By turns defensive and confident, Bryskett undertakes the translator's task in the belief that in the end, the mother tongue can, indeed, promote a civil society to rival ancient Athens or Rome.

The essays in *Shakespeare and Greece* address early modern perceptions, and adaptations, of Greek language and culture in light of the many tributaries that brought them to English shores. First, the editors usefully and carefully survey the Greek authors with entire texts translated into English in the sixteenth century: Thucydides (1550), Diodorus Siculus (1569), Heliodorus (1569; reprinted 1577, 1587, 1605, 1606, 1622, 1627), Demosthenes (1570), Herodotus (1584), "Longus", *Daphnis & Chloe* (1587), Theocritus (1588), Plato's *Axiochus* (1592), and a collection of works from Aristotle and Plato (translated from Amyot's French version in 1598). In addition, Gower translated *Apollonius of Tyre* in *Confessio Amantis*, which in turn went through

two editions in the sixteenth century and was then translated a second time in 1576. The introduction also reminds us to pay attention to the lively presence of Greek and Latin snippets in books of epigrams and excerpts, like John Sturm's *Ritch storehouse or treasurie for nobilitye and gentlemen* (1570), as well as to the numerous extracts from Greek philosophy and epic poetry in Montaigne. The least one might say is that the editors and contributors have marshaled an impressive evidentiary case for taking a much more careful look at British Hellenism than we have yet to do. But the volume as a whole aims to move beyond source study – with several writers arguing explicitly or implicitly that by contrast to the translation and transmission of whole works, the wide-spread humanist habit of excerpting and quoting Greek authors effected a "rhizomatic", "scattered" and "horizontal transmission" that the editors, along with Liz Oakley-Brown, compare to Deleuze and Guatarri's *A Thousand Plateaus*.

A further tributary for English Hellenism, of course, was Greek romance – a late form that emerged after "the relative decline of Greek nationality" by writers who emerged in a dispersed, cosmopolitan, and imperial framework (p. 24). The author of *Leucippe and Clitophon* lived and wrote in Alexandria; Heliodorus, in Syria. And so the editors, following Stephen Mentz, suggest that romance was an individualistic mode of writing deracinated from ancient communal values; and it sold well in London after 1570 to consumers of all kinds because these works had the potential to "dignify mercantile adventures in the New World" (Mentz). The evident appeal of Greek romance to Shakespeare and many other sixteenth-century writers lies beyond the scope of a volume seeking to track the various modes of literary and cultural influence. But as the editors suggest, it is clearly an area in need of future research and interpretive attention. I mention it here not merely as a goad to future work but because most of the essays in this volume turn on a similar interpretive move: each brings a strand of Greek culture, literature, or philosophy to light as it intersects with early modern English practices, desires, aspirations, and anxieties. Among the distinctive sixteenth-century English concerns to which numerous Greek

precedents are brought to bear: the commercial and geographic expansion of mercantile capital; anti-theatricalism and stage responses to it; humanist pedagogy and practice (in particular, *in utramque partem debate*); polemics about civic virtue and effective governance, including the lure and perils of republicanism; anxieties about the status and social value of vernacular literary invention; and the uneasiness resulting from the new science and rediscovery of philosophical materialism. These are familiar and still thriving fields of interrogation in early modern studies, but this volume has the distinct virtue of revealing how the English reception, imitation, and dissemination of Greek culture – ancient and early modern – played a crucial role in shaping each one of them.

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Further Reading

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Laroche, Rebecca and Munroe, Jennifer, *Shakespeare and Ecofeminist Theory*, London, Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017, 216 pp.

This volume is the fruit of a successful project by two distinguished American scholars, Rebecca Laroche and Jennifer Munroe, on ecofeminist theory related to Shakespeare's work. It is part of the new Arden series "Shakespeare and Theory", which was started in 2015 with Evelyn Gajowski as editor. The authors emphasize how "valuing collaboration and polyvocality best illustrates what [they] believe is one of the greatest contributions of ecofeminism". Indeed, it is the complexity of the field of enquiry that calls for more than one mind and point of view to be included, albeit in concise form. As a matter of fact, the discourse of ecofeminism is held at the crossroads of many sectors of knowledge and study – literary, environmental, feminist, gender, post-colonial, social, cultural materialist, post-humanist, etc. – and not many a reader will find him- or herself completely at home in each one of them. Yet it is exactly this demanding aspect of the book that makes it even more compelling.

In a clearly written and very engaging history of ecofeminist scholarship, we learn that the term 'ecofeminism' was coined in 1974 by Françoise d'Eaubonne in *Le Féminisme ou la mort*, a few years before William Rueckert used the word 'ecocriticism' to propose studying literature alongside ecology in 1978. Even what is considered as its founding text, Annette Kolodny's *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters*, came as early as 1975. Thus, if ecocriticism and ecofeminism may in many ways be related to each other – in their both being offsprings of the environmentalist movement of the 1970s – "they each have their own unique trajectory", which is also shown by the fact that the Arden "Shakespeare and Theory" series has two separated volumes dedicated to them. To say it in the authors' words: "Too often relegated to being a subset of ecocriticism, ecofeminism has a scholarly history of its own […] – one that arguably precedes and whose interests extend beyond ecocriticism".

After positioning ecofeminism in the realm of critical theory in general, the book examines its vocation, its themes and its relevance

to Shakespearean studies. The strongest intellectual drive of the theory lies in the fact that it acknowledges the importance of expressing a female counterculture of "compassion for all living things, human and nonhuman alike", by means of a special focus on the ways in which the differences between the human and the nonhuman – in both their material and cultural dimensions – are represented and shaped by gender difference. Ecofeminism implies that there is a link, if not a unity, between all the "multiple and related forms of subjugation" of the female and the nonhuman by male authority, and therefore posits the need for political struggle to stand for a social equity that includes the voiceless unhuman natural world.

The book delves deep into past and present debates about the theories surrounding, feeding and, in a way, 'legitimizing' ecofeminism in the light of the most recent ecocritical, post-humanist and feminist/gender studies. If on the one hand the association between women and nature has made ecofeminism vulnerable to claims of essentialism, it is also true that by and large not all ecofeminist scholars do embrace the 'earth goddess' identity, or consider it as the core of the theory's project. On the contrary, ecofeminism is explained here as a necessary entanglement of environmentalism with feminism from a material point of view, which means mainly considering the different historical power relations connected to gender, race and class that permeate – in Shakespeare's case – early modern life. Its current horizon also unfolds a turn to the intimate, ordinary 'micro-practices' of everyday life (as found, for example, in recipe books), as a possible form of "resistance to the grand narrative of the rise of the market economy".

Some of the major ecofeminist themes discussed in this book are, firstly, the concept of home and domestic relation, in particular in the androcentric 'domestication' practices of women, animals and lands; secondly, the problem of valuing human learning and understanding, with a denial of exclusively Cartesian models of knowledge, agency, and subjectivity; and finally, the tradition of objectifying both women and nonhumans in humanist culture, and more precisely in so-called 'Petrarchism'. All these spheres emerge in

early modern history as containing an often-hidden dimension of what Rob Nixon describes as "slow violence": a devious form of violence that renders its destructive effects invisible and insignificant.

In this context Shakespeare's work is studied as a whole, or as a 'corpus' – sometimes with unconventional and very interesting juxtapositions of texts – providing all the meanings produced by its *material* immersion "in an environment where men, women, animals and plants lived necessarily in relations that were at once symbiotic and in tension". One becomes aware that Shakespeare – unfathomable as he was as a literary person – is not always typical for his age: the polyvocality of his genius, and of theatre in general, allows his audience to develop a highly articulated and non-stereotyped view of matters relevant to ecofeminism and beyond. The volume invites scholars and students to continue the quest for dialogic truth and social equity on this very path.

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Nay, Charles, *Directing Shakespeare in America: Current Practices*, London, Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016, 362 pp.

America's long-standing engagement with Shakespeare is well documented: in 1835 Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in his *Democracy in America* that "there is hardly a pioneer hut in which the odd volume of Shakespeare cannot be found". Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were among the first American tourists who visited the Bard's home at Stratford-upon-Avon – apparently Jefferson fell upon the ground and kissed it, while Adams cut a relic from a chair that supposedly belonged to the Bard himself, as a souvenir. To own a piece of Shakespeare – this has always been part of the American dream: for some time, the famous showman and entrepreneur P. T. Barnum seriously considered buying Shakespeare's birth house and transporting it to America, while in 1850 Herman Melville was sure that "Shakespeares are this day being born on the banks of the Ohio".

There is also an extensive tradition of notable American performances of Shakespeare's plays: in 1846, during a rehearsing of *Othello* at Corpus Christi, Texas – organized to keep the U.S. troops occupied during a standstill in the war against Mexico – Lieutenant Ulysses S. Grant himself (the future president of the United States) was cast in the role of Desdemona. Three years later, twenty-two people were killed in New York after violent riots broke out during a performance of *Macbeth* at the Astor Opera House; the cause for the dispute was the rivalry between Edwin Forrest, one of the best-known American actors of the time, and the English Shakespearean actor William Charles Macready. If this were not enough, stage actor John Wilkes Booth justified his killing of president Abraham Lincoln in 1865 by quoting Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. One cannot fail to agree with James Shapiro that "the history of Shakespeare in America is also a history of America itself".

Charles Nay's *Directing Shakespeare in America* fits perfectly into this centuries-old tradition of Shakespearean performances in the New World. Drawing from a series of interviews conducted between 2004 and 2016 with over sixty American directors working at major theater companies, Nay presents a thorough "examination of the beliefs, methods and productions" used in the staging of Shakespeare's plays across the U.S. at the beginning of the twenty-first century. His analysis takes into account the specificities of the American multifaceted theatrical landscape, selecting examples from many site-specific productions – large well-supported institutions with considerable resources, as well as smaller productions linked with a university campus or located in the country, far from any larger city. Nay's book intends to be the first comprehensive study of the different ideas, concepts, and strategies employed by directors during the various phases of production: from the assessment of the basic context of a performance, through casting, rehearsal, to tech organization and previews. One of Nay's purposes is to answer the crucial question at the core of every Shakespearean staging: "How *can* the play be best communicated to a contemporary audience?".

The book's strength lies in the clever arrangement of such extremely heterogeneous material; instead of presenting each

interview one after the other, Nay organizes the volume according to the various stages of production, giving the reader an accurate idea of the arduous process of directing a Shakespeare play. After an introduction dealing with "each director's major beliefs, their aesthetic sensibilities, value systems, and how they impact a director's approach and production choices", the author goes on to describe, in part two, the issues related to preparations for rehearsal and production: how the director develops a particular approach, the type of analysis and linguistic research necessary to the preparation of the production text, the technical discussions with designers, and, finally, the organization of casting. This is a particularly delicate procedure, since every director must decide "how to handle race, gender, and perceived sexual orientation in the selection of the company", because every choice could be received in a different way by the diverse members of the audience. Part three focuses on rehearsing the production, from the first day of rehearsals to the final tech and dress rehearsals, discussed in part four. Here are also debated issues related to the word choice and the language structure to be adopted, as well as the rhythm and pacing of the performance, the various character issues, the possible problems arising from the physical space of the stage and the challenge offered by the specific design employed in the production.

Nay's book conveys very clearly the idea that any director involved in a Shakespearean play "must supervise a considerable number of complex and difficult issues", such as "conflating multiple versions and source texts; assuring comprehension of the text's meaning; shaping the delivery of language, verse and imagery; supervising considerably larger character lists than contemporary plays have; establishing the story's setting – historical or otherwise; staging crowd scenes, dances and battles; handling scene changes and special effects", etc. For this reason, *Directing Shakespeare in America* can be read as a useful handbook by directors, actors and theater students looking for some inspiration and willing to scrutinize directorial attitudes and production choices adopted around the U.S.; at the same time, the book will surely be appreciated by anyone eager to learn more about bringing Shakespeare alive in

America, ready "to discover resonances in Shakespeare's text that speak to the audience today".

Paolo Simonetti, Sapienza University of Rome

Sabatier, Armelle, *Shakespeare and Visual Culture: A Dictionary*, London, Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017, 295 pp.

This volume is part of the "Arden Shakespeare Dictionary" series, directed by Sandra Clark, which follows the even longer standing "Continuum Shakespeare Dictionaries". The aim of the series is to provide "authoritative guides to the principal subject areas" covered by Shakespeare's work. Some of the more recent publications serve as introductions to Shakespeare's medical language, domestic life, national identity, economic, legal and religious language, plants and gardens, animals, insults, women and more. However, the reader should be alerted that in all cases the word 'dictionary' is to be intended as justifying the alphabetical order in which the keywords introducing to each topic are organized rather than as the real work of a lexicographer, which in a modern sense would imply the use of corpus linguistics and parsed corpora both of Shakespeare and Early Modern English.

That said, in this case Armelle Sabatier's specialization in legal English and, in particular, her experience as one of the compilers of a *Glossaire de droit anglais. Méthode, traduction et approche comparative* (2014) guarantee that her treatment of the subject area of this 'dictionary', if not quantitative, is not completely subjective. Ultimately based on her other field of expertise, Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, one is assured that her choice of 244 lexical items (from *alabaster* to *yellow*) is to be considered exhaustive of the topic of visual culture in Shakespeare's work. The organization of each entry in three sections (A. general and historical definitions; B. occurrences and use in Shakespeare; C. critical approaches and interpretations) promises that each entry has received due care as to all its occurrences, meanings and even semantic variations in Shakespeare's times and work.

Moreover, the bulk of extensive bibliographical references (both primary and secondary sources) which the author masters allows her an interpretive close-reading of Shakespeare's plays and poetical works through the chosen keywords in view of the long-debated question about visual arts in England and particularly about post-Reformation culture as supposedly affected by an 'anti-visual prejudice'. This in the end is the declared rationale of Sabatier's book, which puts itself on the tracks of Catherine Belsey's ground-breaking 2012 article on *èkphrasis* in Shakespeare and enlarges on Stuart Sillar's *Shakespeare and the Visual Imagination* (2015) by supporting the idea of a much more diffused taste for and fruition of visual arts in a period of vast building renovation and private luxury.

The short but densely informative introduction testifies to both the different positions in the Elizabethan-Jacobean age and to the opposite critical contributions nourishing the debate since the 1980s. And so does the actual dictionary: on the one hand, a number of entries refer to suspicious attitudes towards visual perception (*look*, *vision*, *gaze*, *view*, etc.), religious iconoclasm (*saint*, *idol*, *superstition*, *mock*, *flatter*, *wanton*, etc.) and censorship (*varnish*, *gleam*, *glitter*, *gloss*, *gild*, etc.). On the other hand, the huge number of occurrences of colours, hues, nuances (not only the primary ones, but also *auburn*, *azure*, *ebony*, *tawny*, *crimson*, *scarlet*, *vermillion*, etc.) with all their cultural associations and rhetorical impact – undoubtedly the most detailed lexical chapter in Sabatier's dictionary – marks the special relation established between pictorial art, material culture (fashion and the 'graphic' production of the times) and Shakespeare's work. Finally, the richness of contemporary craftsmanship and the variety of its products well beyond religious art (*monument*, *statue*, *arras/tapestry*, *hangings/curtains*, *emblem*, *ornament*, *jewel*, *limn*, *portrait*, *miniature*, *chimney-pieces*, *tomb*, etc.), which are all present in Shakespeare's language, bear witness to the epistemic ambivalence of his times towards visual culture.

As we can also read in Keir Elam's book on *Shakespeare's Pictures* (2017), many of the above-mentioned artistic products become performative "visual objects in the drama": not only the so-often quoted living statue of Hermione sculpted by Giulio Romano in

Winter's Tale, but also the portraits of father and uncle in *Hamlet*, the pictures in Portia's boxes in *The Merchant of Venice*, or the miniature portrait set in a jewel exchanged on stage in *Twelfth Night*. With many more objects, which are not *showed* but *told*, even discussed, criticized and contextualized in the frame of contemporary aesthetic debates, like the one on *ut pictura poësis*, also known as the Italian debate of the *paragone*. Thus, the rhetorical device of *èkphrasis* – and off-stage *èkphrasis* – practiced by Shakespeare from as early as the "wanton pictures" in *The Taming of the Shrew* to as late as Iachimo's catalogue of Imogen's room in *Cymbeline*, becomes the hinge concept of what Sabatier defines "visual eloquence": "a major way of exploring the intricate relationship between Shakespeare and visual culture […] visual arts and literature", which challenges an antagonistic vision and overcomes any possible rivalry between the two in the name of the reality of the texts (pp. 7-9).

In this perspective Sabatier's dictionary proves a useful reference tool for historical linguists, art historians and literary critics.

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Tribble, Evelyn, *Early Modern Actors and Shakespeare's Theatre: Thinking with the Body*, London, Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017, 240 pp.

Building upon her ground-breaking, lifelong research ("Distributing Cognition in the Globe", 2005; *Cognition in the Globe*, 2011; *Cognitive Ecologies and the History of Remembering*, 2011), the New Zealand scholar Evelyn Tribble applies her notion of "distributed cognitive ecology" (p. 4) to an accurate analysis of early modern actors' skills, "which links mind, body and environment in intelligent action" (p. 5). *Early Modern Actors and Shakespeare's Theatre: Thinking with the Body* is an in-depth exploration of Simon Jewell's box, which gives the title to Tribble's first paragraph of the introduction to this book and which metaphorically stands for the "Elizabethan actors' picture" – to paraphrase Tillyard's milestone work of the 1940s.

Notions such as "distributed cognitive ecology" (p. 4), "skill" (p. 5), "kinesic intelligence" (p. 11), "kinesic habits of mind" (p. 120) or

"skill ecology" (p. 148) reveal the transdisciplinary nature of this study, ranging from the semiotics of the body to neuroanthropology, from psychology to the philosophy of language. The research's transdisciplinarity is made more harmonious by Tribble's crystal clear and skilfully organised writing style. Moreover, *Early Modern Actors and Shakespeare's Theatre* draws frequent and accurate comparisons between early modern and contemporary actors/roles, which start with the cogent assertion that "[a]ny modern production of a Shakespearean play confronts history, memory and difference" (p. 147). Tribble aptly sheds some light on the significance of specific uses of the human body by Elizabethan actors on stage – especially gestures (chapter 2), fencing (chapter 3), dancing (chapter 4) and what is referred to as "skills behind the skills, qualities of concentration and attention" (chapter 5, p. 125). According to Tribble, this newly acquired bodily awareness should undermine the obsolete conception that "bodies, especially bodies in motion, tend to disappear in textual commentary; words are always privileged over skilful bodies" (p. 58). These are the very same skilful bodies that Thomas Heywood had fiercely defended in the three short treatises of his *Apology for Actors* (1612).

Despite an excellent balance between the critics' opinions, examples from early modern playwrights – not only Shakespeare, whose kinesic style is defined "synoptic" if compared to Jonson's "atomistic" one (p. 65) – and other miscellaneous texts, some parts of the book come across as chains of quotations from scholarly studies and Elizabethan plays. Such sessions sometimes make Tribble's readers lose sight of the primary analytical intent of the volume, so well summarised by its title and so elegantly expressed in its introduction, where the researcher declares her intention of studying the actors' body as a key to understanding/interpreting some critically-debated scenes in early modern drama (e.g. Imogen's awakening scene in *Cymbeline* IV.ii, or *Hamlet*'s fencing match in V.ii). Furthermore, early modern actors' memoirs or autobiographical works such as William Kempe's *Nine Days Wonder* are a rich source to study kinesic intelligence on the Elizabethan stage. These writings, however, are not taken into due consideration in the book, although

a few sporadic references to roles performed by famous actors are quoted (see, for instance, Kempe's clownish talent, pp. 126-27, or Edward Alleyn's interpretation of Marlowe's Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*, pp. 132-40).

All in all, however, Tribble's study about actors' "skill as an independent category" (p. 145) successfully highlights the need to pay attention to any question that derives from the use of the body on the early modern stage, since "[t]he categories through which we view plays are often too firmly tied to the printed page" (p. 145).

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