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HiStories Re-told

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Table of contents

Coda

Miscellany

Reviews

"This England". Shakespeare's Histories in the Twenty-First Century: Text, Genre, Performance

Donatella Montini

> *H.* The plaies that they plaie in England, are nor right comedies.
> *T.* Yet they doo nothing else but plaie euery daye.
> *H.* Yea but they are neither right comedies, nor right tragedies.
> *G.* How would you name them then?
> *H.* Representations of histories, without any decorum.
> (Florio 1591, 23)

The Queen Is Dead, Long Live the King

The topic of *Memoria di Shakespeare* 9/2022 on Shakespeare's *Histories* could not be more timely. Political upheaval, a war in the heart of Europe, the death of a queen and forthcoming ceremonies of succession feature as a staple of our morning papers and evening news. In saying this, I am certainly not invoking the old adage "Nothing new under the sun", let alone implying that nothing has changed since Shakespeare's time, still less, as in fact we very often see happening, looking to Shakespeare's verses and stories for the explanation of, and even the solution to, all the world's ills.

What can be observed, however, is that such is Shakespeare's cultural authority in anglophone countries and cultures that his representation of British history continues to attract attention and stimulate intellectual reflection. In a very recent contribution, Paul Stevens once again reminds us that Shakespeare's drama is "woven into the fabric of our culture: when its lines are quoted by Colonel Collins of the Royal Irish on the eve of the Iraq War or more recently by the eulogist at Senator McCain's funeral, no one has to explain

where phrases like 'band of brothers' come from" (Stevens 2021, 221). Well into the twenty-first century, even the most dramatically contemporary history of Great Britain is represented through the echoes of William Shakespeare's language: *This England*, a very recent BBC production, starring a mimetic Kenneth Branagh as a Boris Johnson disastrously managing the COVID-19 pandemic, once again borrows the notorious lines uttered by John of Gaunt in *Richard II*:

> This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-paradise,
> This fortress built by nature for herself
> Against infection and the hand of war,
> This happy breed of men, this little world,
> This precious stone set in the silver sea,
> Which serves it in the office of a wall,
> Or as a moat defensive to a house
> Against the envy of less happier lands,
> This blessèd plot, this earth, this realm, this England.
> (Shakespeare 2005, II.i.40-50)

"This England", a hymn to the homeland, in which the anaphoric presence of "this", a small deictic, here both temporal and textual – an empty sign, in Jakobson's terms – makes it valid at any time and in any context, at the same time allowing comparison with another time and another context, in this case with an obviously critical and sadly ironic description of today. Did Shakespeare imagine and guess or even plan that his "this" could be used by others, in other times, for their "this"?

Why and how Shakespeare's views on (English) history and politics continue to matter nowadays is both obvious and mysterious at the same time. In recent years, the study of past and present relations between Shakespeare and popular culture has been transformed: a number of factors which include the very condition of postmodernity, in which traditional distinctions between high and low culture have been eroded, have led to an appropriation of 'the Shakespeare brand' in many forms: "Throughout history, Shakespeare's enduring high-cultural status has coexisted with a multiplicity of other Shakespeares, recycled in

stage performance and cinematic adaptation, political discourse, literary and theatrical burlesque, parody, musical quotation, visual iconography, popular romance, tourist itineraries, national myth, and everyday speech. Shakespeare can be quoted in support of an individual declaration of love or an act of war; his works have acted as sources of inspiration for everything from high opera to the porn movie; his image turns up in the unlikeliest of locations" (Shaughnessy 2007, 1-2; see also Maley and Tudeau-Clayton 2010). In this context, the long tradition of the Bard's myth (Taylor 1989) and the gradual and constant appropriation and dissemination of a Global Shakespeare that never seems to lose its appeal encounter a culture of convergence (Jenkins 2006) that feeds on itself, chews up the products it appropriates and returns them, the same but different. This leads us to take stock of the phenomenon from time to time and revisit the presumably original source of influence, the text and performance of Shakespeare's plays. The terms "history" and "story" could be used almost interchangeably in Shakespeare's time and "one of the dominant meanings of 'story' during the period was a narrative of events that were believed to have taken place in the past" (Lidster 2022, 8), and this allows us to present our "HiStories Re-told" without fear of straying from a rootedness in history. Certainly, this issue does not offer, nor could it do it, an exhaustive overview of the fields of inquiry related to the histories. Rather, by selecting a few areas of interest that continue to evolve, the aim is to provide an example of the range and vitality of Shakespearean criticism on these plays.

Genre, text and language are the topics on which we offer a fresh look, examined through different fields involving textual editing, literary criticism, theatre and reception studies. Criticism in the twenty-first century tends to emphasize the shift in Shakespearean studies away from both traditional liberal humanism and the approaches of the late twentieth century, such as new historicism or cultural materialism, feminism or psychoanalysis – which indeed played a particularly prominent role in the analysis of Shakespeare's history plays – in favour of approaches like disability and ecofeminist studies, or posthumanist and cognitive ethology studies, which surreptitiously repropose a decontextualization of the Shakespearean text, now called upon to flexibly respond to

questions of the present times (Gajowski 2020). The articles in this issue of *Memoria di Shakespeare*, however, while ranging in different fields, and in constant dialogue and confrontation with the culture of the present, strongly argue the need to root Shakespeare's texts in their historical and cultural context as the only possible approach for a rigourous investigation.

Genre, Text, Language

The longstanding question of the genre of Shakespeare's plays about English kings opens the issue: John Florio's dialogue (1591), which frames this introduction, highlights the core of the matter by pointing out the uncertain nature of plays performed in Elizabethan England which were "neither right comedies, nor right tragedies", but "[r]epresentations of histories, without any decorum". As is well known, about thirty years later, it was the Folio of John Heminges and Henry Condell that clarified the point, for the first time distinguishing the genre of dramas about history. Moreover, and with a further specific act of selection, the Folio only included in the genre those dramas dedicated to English kings (and allocated *Macbeth*, for instance, and *King Lear* to the tragedies). Also due to the Folio's editorial design was the arrangement of the works according to the order of the English kings and not the order in which the works were composed. However, "order matters", as Emma Smith writes in her essay ("Shakespeare's Serial Histories?"), where she argues that "the Folio reordering of the history plays is a specific intervention that does not necessarily reflect reader expectation or authorial intention". Smith puts forward various kinds of evidence to support her hypothesis: she points out that other contemporaneous collections of Shakespeare's works, such as the Jaggard Quartos, or the Quarto history plays were presented as autonomous works, and as such were titled as tragedies. By challenging the natural status of that chronological order of the kings' lives, the ideological and artificial project made by Heminges and Condell emerges as "a deeply embedded fiction" and proves that "the editorial arrangement of plays in the First Folio prioritises and, in so doing, constructs genre".

It is interesting to note how the issue of order continues to be relevant in present times and touches on aspects of communication

and contact with the recipient of the message through the media in the twenty-first century. When this is television, by definition the most popular medium for the international success of series, the preference for a chronological order of the stories of the kings seems to be confirmed. On more than one occasion, British television has appropriated a product ready-made, one might say, and Shakespeare's histories have been framed within a possible serial structure[1]. Certainly, this responds to the need to offer an audience unfamiliar with the subject matter the sequence that apparently explains the reasons for the events – from the usurped reign of the legitimate King Richard II to the battle that ends the civil war and establishes the new order – but there are certainly deeper motivations that have to do with mass communication, with the very pleasure of narration that prevails over representation, a 'plottification' of the theatrical text that aligns it with the potential of the medium: Emma Smith herself, among others, has observed that "[t]he Folio encourages the experience of reading serially, an experience in which the endings of individual plays are subordinated to the onward movement of the sequential narrative" (Smith 2007, 147). Ultimately, the parallels between television programming and early modern theatre programming, and the consumption of Shakespeare's plays in the theatre and on television, highlight again some reciprocal relations between Shakespeare, serialization and popular culture in our time.

On the subject of the order of the histories, a special contribution may also come from the work of textual editing, which is undergoing a very rich expansion today. It is well known that scores of scholars – mostly white and male, we have to say – have worked over time to propose new philological evaluations and new amendments to the text, a long chain of names which have begun to flank the author's name as 'grand possessors', rightly or wrongly claiming a sort of new creation of the text, both written and performed, but necessarily in print. As Amy Lidster, in fact, reminds us, "[t]he vast majority of early modern history plays that

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[1] Series such as *An Age of Kings* (1960) or *The Hollow Crown* (2012-16) have popularized the stories of kings for the general public by associating them with occasions of national significance, such as the 2012 Olympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

have survived have done so because they were printed. Our access to history plays is substantially determined by the publication process and the strategies of selection that have motivated stationers' investment in them" (Lidster 2022, 18).

Along this line, Rory Loughnane's essay "Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Traces of Authorship"[2] offers a chronological summary of the publications and stagings of Shakespeare's *2* and *3 Henry VI*, *The First Part of the Contention* and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, evaluating the works before the printing of the First Folio in 1623. The essay addresses the difficulties of determining co-authorship and establishing the canons of both Marlowe and Shakespeare. Although Loughnane focuses primarily on finding traces of Shakespeare's authorship in these works, he also notes that "[t]here are no known allusions in either Marlowe's own work or that of others that connect him to the *Henry VI* plays". Moreover, despite Marlowe's notoriety and the publication of three of his works in 1594 with Marlowe's name "prominently displayed on each title-page", the earliest printed versions of Thomas Millington's *Henry VI* contain no reference to Marlowe, nor does Shakespeare's name appear on the title page. According to Loughnane, the reasons why the names were omitted may be that the plays were not yet associated with a particular playwright, shedding light on the complex procedures that early modern dramatic texts went through in order to be staged and published.

What is very often not highlighted about the theories and editorial practices that have accompanied the revision of Shakespeare's text over time, however, is the cultural and social context in which this revision has taken place. As Sonia Massai sharply puts it in her 2007 book *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor*: "Like any other textual practice, editing is embedded within wider cultural and literary contexts, which affect the way in which editors feel they should re-present early modern printed playbooks to their readers" (Massai 2007, 204). Certainly, the task of the Shakespearean editor risks turning into a Sisyphean effort, in which

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[2] We gladly reprint here online, for the courtesy of Routledge, Rory Loughnane's essay published in *The Birth and Death of the Author: A Multi-Authored History of Authorship in Print*, ed. Andrew J. Power (New York: Routledge, 2020), 54-78. For this piece Loughnane was awarded the 2019 Calvin and Rose G. Hoffman Prize for distinguished scholarly work on Christopher Marlowe.

one aspires to reconstruct a text understood as original and 'authentic', erroneously in search of the perfect text, especially if we remember the very fluidity of the concept of text in Elizabethan theatre. Quite different is the role of the editor seen as a bridge between two (or more) worlds and between cultures, in search of a product that is not meant as an antiquarian relic, but in synergy with the changes that language itself undergoes, taking into account not only production, but also reception. Sonia Massai, currently in the process of preparing a new edition of *Richard III* for the fourth Arden Shakespeare series and as one of the general editors of the forthcoming Cambridge Shakespeare Editions series – the first female editor whose mother tongue is not English – addresses these critical points in conversation with Andrea Peghinelli. In her textual editing of *Richard III*, calling in diversity studies, from disability to BIPOC, Massai vigorously reminds us how doing this work on the text means interpreting it, and how many different meanings a work like *Richard III* can have for new generations of readers, scholars and spectators, if only a proper attention is paid to history, gender or skin colour.

Margaret Tudeau-Clayton's essay shifts to the discussion of another crucial issue running through the text and performance of Shakespeare's historical plays, namely the king's word and language. In particular, her article analyses the unique Shakespearean case of "the King's English" trope in the Folio version of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and the ironical allusions to the language of the new Scottish king, virtually excluded as an official language. The play explicitly postulates "the King's English" as a language that members of the community share even as they are continually embroiled in miscommunication (Magnusson 2012; Tudeau-Clayton 2018). It is an issue that reverberates in the words of the first and second tetralogy and ostensibly calls into question the relationship between language and nation, and between language and Englishness, in dialogue and confrontation with other languages and linguistic variations which move across the historical scene as key markers of social and cultural identity, as well as ideological representation of difference. Drama, as an oral and aural medium, is well-suited to this type of investigation because it functions as a place in which the audience

is exposed to different modes of speech in dialogue with each other, and this contributes to highlighting ideological associations between the concepts of standard English and linguistic authority (Reynolds 2008). It would appear that, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, "the King's English" is compared with Latin and French, as rival languages in terms of cultural prestige and linguistic richness, and is even allowed to be "hacked" by "other" languages without this being seen as a threat to a still rising linguistic authority (Montini 2021).

The Histories in Italy

In an act of deliberate defamiliarization from a 'natural' connection between the histories and the English nation and culture, an essay and a specific bibliographical review focus on reception studies at the theatre and on academic criticism and refer to the Italian context of the pre-COVID19 twenty-first century, aiming at insights into performances and critical productions as received and perceived by non-English eyes and ears. In so doing, innovative perspectives are presented on both the collection and analysis of data, and a new methodological light is also shed on that chapter that in Italian criticism on famous authors or works used to go under the title "La fortuna di…".

    In the context of the current emerging interest in the sonic and aural environment of the British stage and academic research, Emiliana Russo's "Italian Soundscape in Performance: Voices, Accents and Local Sonorities of Shakespeare's History Plays in Italy (2000-2020)" describes the reception of the histories in Italy as a privileged case study for investigating possible experimental innovations in a non-English speaking country. The article expands that strand of research that goes by the name of "theatrical phonetics" and concludes that "the phonetics of the stagings of the Shakespearean histories in the period 2000-2020 mostly assumes the guise of uniformity: the reviews depict a rather homogenous universe" in which dialects are in the minority, Italian accents are not contemplated, and Shakespeare's language is expected to be "elegant and non-scurrilous".

    Remo Appolloni opens the section devoted to reviews of Shakespearean publications and provides a specific web-based

investigation into Shakespeare's history plays in the twenty-first century academic studies in Italian language, so as to measure the interest and popularity of this genre. Especially in view of the new trends of web-based research, statistical analysis and pattern recognition, a systematic digital and quantitative approach to a bibliographical review is combined with a qualitative approach, used to organize data and the reference categories for the analysis.

Coda

Franco Marenco's thought-provoking essay, "Craftsman Meets Historian: Shakespeare and Material Culture", closes (but it could also have opened) the monographic part of the issue by recalling Shakespeare the historian essentially as "a *playwrighter* and *stagewrighter*" and reminding us of "the coexistence of two tracks of development, the artisanal and the artistic – the artisan or craftsman drawing his material from the 'shifting assemblage of humans, tools, and raw materials inhabiting a specific environment' – and, on the other hand, the original, the personal, innovative breakthrough – shirking the conventional and the repetitive – in other words, *art*". We are among those who believe that maintaining a firm and conscious grasp with both of these tracks of development, without loosing contact with the written and performed text, nor forgetting the contexts and even the strictures of the era in which that text was conceived, is the only way forward for good Shakespearean criticism.

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Shakespeare's Serial Histories?

Emma Smith

The order of Shakespeare's history plays in the 1623 Folio involves the most substantial editorial intervention of that volume. Renaming and ordering the plays in chronological order has cast a long shadow on interpretations. This article revives interest in the history plays as individual Quarto publications, suggesting that they had narrative independence during the period.

Keywords: Histories, Serial drama, First Folio, Publishing, Reception

Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies

It is not clear what principle of organisation the compilers of *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* were using when they arranged the plays in their two classical genres. Beginning with *The Tempest* and ending with *The Winter's Tale*, the comedies do not seem to conform to any perceptible sequence – chronological, thematic, alphabetical; the tragedies are apparently similarly random in their order. Charlton Hinman's exhaustive investigations of the sequence of printing the plays in the Folio also makes clear that they often did not proceed in the order established by the catalogue, partly to accommodate copyright problems (Hinman 1963), so we cannot even claim that the plays' order is pragmatic, registering the sequence in which they were presented to the printshop for composing into lines of type. If the comedies and tragedies evade any attempt to narrativise the order in which they appear in the Folio, however, the middle genre, histories, is quite different. The editorial recategorisation of the history plays is the First Folio's most obvious, large-scale intervention into their

presentation and meaning. Order matters. In this article I argue that the Folio reordering of the history plays is a specific intervention that does not necessarily reflect reader expectation or authorial intention.

The First Folio includes on its catalogue page under the heading "Histories" ten plays. These are organised by the chronological sequence of their titular monarch. The play on the reign of King John comes first; *Henry VIII* last. In between are eight plays, titled to clarify them as a sequence: "The life and death of Richard the second", "The First part of King Henry the fourth", "The Second part of K. Henry the fourth", "The Life of King Henry the Fift", "The First part of King Henry the Sixt", "The Second part of King Hen. The Sixt", "The Third part of King Henry the Sixt", "The Life and Death of Richard the Third". The titles are syntactically equal in format, aligning their kings through parison. The content has also been standardised. History has silently become 'English history': the plays based on Roman historical material, or on ancient Britain (*King Lear*) or Scotland (*Macbeth*), are allocated elsewhere. The word "history" has stabilised into its modern meaning, leaving behind the early modern fuzziness which could produce *The Most Excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice* (1600), where "history" and "story" are synonymous. In the catalogue, the numbers, both of monarchs and of parts, are orderly and clear. Henry IV comes before Henry V who comes before Henry VI. Part one always comes before part two. Important to the appeal of the First Folio order is that it immediately seems to naturalise itself, so that any other order would seem chaotic and counterintuitive. How else could these plays be presented?

The Folio catalogue is thus the print instantiation of what has become a deeply embedded fiction about Shakespeare's history plays: that they make narrative, political and theatrical sense as a collected sweep rather than as individual dramas. The director Trevor Nunn, talking about performing the plays in sequence, has called them "the first box set", evoking the familiar modern idea of a narrative serial in which each episode traces both a self-contained story and a contribution to a larger story-telling arc (Nunn 2015). A reader of Shakespeare's Folio, therefore, is implicitly encouraged to binge-read the history plays, consuming them like a modern serial

narrative in which the end of an episode is only provisional, and the narrative satisfaction and consumer pleasure of the engagement is achieved through completion. In this narrative, Bosworth field, where Richmond defeats Richard III, is the early modern series finale, where the episodic narrative goes out on a dramatic high.

In her book *Consuming Pleasures*, Jennifer Hayward locates a shared morphology of serial fictions from Dickens to soap opera, but her list of these features could well encompass Shakespeare's history plays too:

> A serial is, by definition, an ongoing narrative released in successive parts. In addition to these defining qualities, serial narratives share elements that might be termed, after Wittgenstein, "family resemblances". These include refusal of closure; intertwined subplots; large casts of characters (incorporating a diverse range of age, gender, class, and, increasingly, race representation to attract a similarly diverse audience); interaction with current political, social, or cultural issues; dependence on profit; and acknowledgment of audience response (this has become increasingly explicit, even institutionalised within the form, over time). (Hayward 1997, 3)

Those large casts, topical references, ongoing dynastic and political narratives, and the engagement with audience enjoyment via the popular serial character of Falstaff, all resonate with Shakespeare's histories. And ever since the beginning of the twentieth century, although not before, it has been relatively common to perform Shakespeare's history plays in sequences, often the *Henry VI* plays and *Richard III*, or *Richard II* and *Henry IV* – or both. More recent examples on stage include the English Shakespeare Company directed by Michael Bogdanov during the 1980s, and the Histories Cycle directed by Michael Boyd for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2006-8; the medium has been appropriate for television, the home of the modern serial too, in serialisations such as *An Age of Kings* in 1960 (Smith 2007) or the BBC series *The Hollow Crown* (2012-16 [Földváry, 2020]). Such large-scale theatrical enterprises have often marked commemorations or anniversaries, such as John Barton and Terry Hands' *The Wars of the Roses* at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon in the Shakespeare tercentenary year of 1964.

Serial understanding of the history plays has become a theatrical norm – and, to a large extent, a critical one too. As Amy Lidster points out in her account of history play publication, the Folio catalogue is "a retrospective division propelled by the publication process – and specifically by *this* publication venture, which has had an immense (and sometimes unproductive) influence on critical approaches to early modern history plays" (Lidster 2022, 1). Lidster emphasises that the Folio division does not reflect some pre-existing essence of these particular plays: rather, it "offers a *reading* of them, and its construction reflects the interests and strategies of those who took part in its publication" (1). It is a reading that has been hard to escape. From E. M. W. Tillyard's influential idea of the Tudor myth (Tillyard 1944) to Jan Kott's parable of historical circularity in which "every Shakespearian act is merely a repetition" (Kott 1964, 9), criticism has tended to find meaning in the sequence rather than the individual plays.

In this article I want to re-establish the Folio ordering of the history plays as a specific intervention, not a natural reflection of authorial intention or readerly expectation. By undoing the assumptions of serial reading, it is possible to return the history plays to a pre-Folio existence in which individual plays can speak more loudly than the series, and other voices can join the depiction of English history. I emphasise some of the counterevidence showing how early modern readers encountered Shakespeare's history plays before the First Folio, arguing that they were differently popular, and popular severally rather than serially. To put it another way, the history plays were not consumed by early readers as equally significant episodes in a wider narrative; they were a collection of plays some of which were better – more enjoyable, satisfying, resonant – than others. Readers encountered these works grouped together with other plays rather than within this narrow authorial and historical sequence. My focus is on reading plays in print rather than in the experience of the theatre, although what we know of the performance schedules and repertory of the early modern stage would seem to confirm the autonomy of the individual plays over the anachronistic Folio sequence.

Print History prior to the Folio

In prioritising historical chronology, the Folio's order entirely dispenses with any sense of authorial chronology. Figure 1 compares the Folio order of plays with what we understand of their order of composition.

Folio order	Putative order of composition/performance
King John	*2 Henry VI*
Richard II	*3 Henry VI*
1 Henry IV	*1 Henry VI*
2 Henry IV	*Richard III*
Henry V	*Richard II*
1 Henry VI	*King John*
2 Henry VI	*1 Henry IV*
3 Henry VI	*2 Henry IV*
Richard III	*Henry V*
Henry VIII	*Henry VIII*

Fig. 1.

The right hand column does suggest that there are some internal sequences – the two parts of *Henry IV* and *Henry V*, for instance – but it does not, of course, take account of the other plays Shakespeare was writing in the meantime. The Oxford Shakespeare (Shakespeare 1986) – the first modern complete works to dispense with the Folio organisation and attempt to present the plays in chronological order – places *Titus Andronicus* between the *Henry VI* plays and *Richard III*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* between the two Henry IV plays, and *Much Ado About Nothing* between them and *Henry V*. Both in terms of the order of composition, and in terms of plays of other genres that are interspersed across the decade, that's to say, the histories do not form a coherent sequence.

These discontinuities are amplified when looking at the pre-Folio print existence of the history plays, as in Figure 2.

Folio play	Pre-Folio print existence
King John	Not printed, although *The Troublesome Reign* (1591) is related, and Q2 (1611) attributed to "W.Sh."
Richard II	5 editions, all called "tragedy"
1 Henry IV	6 editions, "The History of Henry IV"
2 Henry IV	1 edition as "The Second part of Henry IV"
Henry V	3 editions
1 Henry VI	Not printed
2 Henry VI	2 editions as "The First Part of the Contention"
3 Henry VI	2 editions as "The True Tragedie"
Richard III	6 editions, all "tragedy"
Henry VIII	Not printed

Fig. 2.

In part this pre-Folio publication history attests to the popularity of history as a genre during the 1590s and beyond. Shakespeare's history plays are the most reprinted of his dramatic works. But it also highlights distinct patterns of marketing and, by implication, consumption that emphasise the autonomous enjoyment of individual playbooks rather than their place in a putative sequence. We can see this by comparing those history playbooks with titles suggesting that they are part of a series with those that emphasise singularity and completeness. The two most reprinted texts, *Richard II* and *Richard III*, are each titled as tragedies in their Quarto forms. This genre is heavily end-stopped: it does not easily generate sequels, nor the expectation of a sequel. Where a tragedy is part of a larger implied narrative it usually provides the conclusion (as in *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of York*, the second part of *The First Part of the Contention*). Thus, Marston's sequel to his *Antonio and Mellida* is the tragedy *Antonio's Revenge*; the anonymous *First Part of Jeronimo* provides a prequel to the popular *The Spanish Tragedy*. In these examples, tragedy provides the concluding episode. More commonly, tragedies are standalone dramas, where a sequel is a ludicrous thought. The retitling of these plays into "The Life and Death of" in the Folio presents the individual lifespan not as a tragic

arc – where there is nothing afterwards – but an historical one – where the next king rises by the demise of his predecessor.

Others of the Quarto history plays not designated as tragedies are also titled in ways that emphasise their aesthetic and historical autonomy. Perhaps most striking is the play the Folio retitles *3 Henry VI*, which appears in Quarto form in 1595 with the title *The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt, with the whole contention betweene the two Houses Lancaster and Yorke*. The double emphasis of tragedy and 'whole contention' identifies this as a distinctly standalone play title. When Thomas Pavier and William Jaggard published their series of playbooks in 1619, this subtitle was redeployed to introduce a double edition of both parts of the play, more properly deserving of the title *The Whole Contention betweene the two Famous Houses, Lancaster and Yorke*. The Pavier Quartos carried separate half titles for the two parts "The first part of the Contention of the two Famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster" and "The Second Part. Containing the Tragedie of Richard, Duke of Yorke". While Nicholas Grene argues for a sequence of four historical plays on Henry VI and Richard III, "planned as an interlocking series with a narrative rhythm building across the parts rather than in the individual plays" (Grene 2002, 23), this was certainly not available to, nor seen as important or marketable to, readers. Part one was never printed in Quarto form; part two was proposed as a first part to an incomplete story; part three presented itself as entire and complete; *Richard III* was much reprinted as a solo tragedy (from 1597 onwards).

Only two Quarto publications of Shakespeare's historical plays suggest that they are part, rather than whole, and that they are therefore dependent on other books or episodes for their narrative completion. *The First Part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster, wit the death of the good Duke Humphrey* (1594, reprinted in the Folio as *2 Henry VI*) implies that there will be a second, and perhaps even subsequent, parts. (In fact, as we have seen, the sequel actually subverts these expectations, claiming for itself the status of the 'whole contention' between the Lancastrian and Yorkist claims.) Nevertheless, it could be argued that a part one has more autonomy than a part two: the former suggests the reader has begun at the beginning; the latter that she or he has missed a

crucial first step. This may be relevant for the other distinctly serial play: *The Second part of Henrie the fourth, continuing to his death, and coronation of Henrie the fift* (1600). "Second part" and "continuing" both identify this play as the sequel to the prior part, the play called in the Folio "The First Part of King Henry the fourth". Most significant of all is the fact that this serial play, following on from the print popularity of the first part, seems to have made such a little impact on the market. The many readers who generated the sales that supported multiple editions of part one did not, apparently, do the same with the sequel. Part two is the sole Shakespeare's history play published in Quarto to have only a single edition.

2 Henry IV was not, therefore, a narrative or acquisitive necessity for those who had enjoyed the previous instalment (were there Elizabethan completists of that sort?). Indeed, it does not even seem to have succeeded in retrospectively recasting that first play *as* an instalment, since its publication does not modify the title of the previous episode until the Folio. The reprinted Quarto texts of *Henry IV* continue to be called *The History of Henrie the Fourth*. That's to say, part two is titled in the manner of a modern cinematic sequel (for comparison, see for example *Airplane II: The Sequel* [1982] or *Legally Blonde 2* [2003], etc. The unexpected prominence of roman numerals to signal a film sequel may be obliquely Shakespearean in origin, although roman numerals for the monarchs' reigns, and for the numbers of their parts, comes in with a later classicising editorial tradition. The Folio spells out these numbers in words.) The analogy with the cinematic sequel clarifies that this is different from those serial films that function as the second half of a narrative divided into two or more. In modern cinema, such episodic films do not tend to be numbered, but rather titled: e.g., *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), *The Two Towers* (2002), and *The Return of the King* (2003) for Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. The sequel essentially reruns the commercially successful original which has left an ambiguous or somehow contingent ending that can be unpicked for a continuation. By contrast, part two completes a story shaped into a double episode.

For Shakespeare's historical plays on the reign of Henry IV, it is hard to argue that a further play was not always intended from the

outset. The promise of the Prince's "reformation" is anticipated in his soliloquy at the end of I.ii of part one; his inevitable reckoning with Falstaff is flagged up in their exchange in II.iv: "Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world"; "I do, I will". The Queen's Men's play *The Famous Victories of Henry V* combined an account of Prince Henry's prodigal years with his accession to the throne and his victory over the French: perhaps a second part of Shakespeare's play might have been expected to cover similar ground. Looking at the source material, and reviewing the content of both *2 Henry IV* and *Henry* V, it seems plausible to think that this reveals that the original plan for a single sequel play was strategically dilated into two sequels. The extension – for some critics, the stretching somewhat thin – of this material across two sequel plays seems to be less about the historical events that need to be covered, and rather a response to the extraordinary success of the distinctly ahistorical character of Falstaff.

In fact, Falstaff's star persona both shapes and challenges the primacy of historical material in creating the serial, offering an alternative narrative arc that Harold Bloom calls "the Falstaffiad" (Bloom 1998, 249). A glance at these Falstaff plays in print gives more insight into the creation of this counter-sequence. The *Historie of Henrie the Fourth* (1598) is advertised with a plug for the fat knight, drawing on the contemporary popularity of "humours" comedies: "with the humorous conceits of Sir John Falstaffe". (The Stationers' Register entry for this play had used a different, less fashionable phrase: "the conceipted mirth of Sir John Falstaff".) Part two does the same, placing Falstaff in a separate, prominent section on its titlepage: "With the humours of Sir John Falstaffe, and swaggering Pistoll". Henry V picks up some of the theme, offering "with his battell fought at Agin Court in France. Togither with Auntient Pistoll". But an alternative conclusion to this trilogy (Bloom does not, however, admit this into his version of the Falstaffiad) can be found in the publication of a different play: *A Most plesaunt and excellent conceited Comedie, of Syr John Falstaffe, and the merrie Wives of Windsor* (1602). In Quarto *Merry Wives*, Falstaff reaches his title-page apotheosis in having the play named for him, rather than being an additional attraction. This can be seen as a topical marketing device drawing this play into a sequence with the

reprinted editions of Henry IV. It is surely significant that, outside the genre of English history, the retitling of this play into *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is one of the Folio's most prominent editorial interventions. It looks rather as if the Folio text is invested in policing the borders between history and comedy more actively, producing its particular and emphatic historical narrative by reallocating adjacent material and suppressing its echoes. Placing the renamed *Merry Wives of Windsor* among the comedies, just like reallocating plays such as *Julius Caesar* and *King Lear*, drawing on ancient or classical historical sources, into tragedies, shows that the history play genre as presented in 1623 is a specific and critically invested act of generic hygiene.

Authorship and Other History Plays

Just as the editorial arrangement of plays in the First Folio prioritises and, in so doing, constructs genre, so too, of course, it establishes a distinctly authorial canon. Arguably, for the first time, Shakespeare's plays are presented and consumed within the framework of his authorship: the edition innovates, and then immediately naturalises, the reading of its plays in the context of other plays by the same author. But the dramatic engagement with medieval English history, on the early modern stage and in print, extended far beyond Shakespeare's authorship.

Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson's catalogue *British Drama* lists titles of numerous extant and lost plays during the 1590s that are connected with chronicle and popular history of the Middle Ages. These include *James IV*, *The life and Death of Jack Straw*, *King Edward I*, *Harry of Cornwall*, *Buckingham*, *Longshanks*, *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, *Edmund Ironside*, *The Life and Death of Harry I*, *1* and *2 Robin Hood*, *A Comedy of the King of England's Son and the King of Scotland's Son*, *The Famous Wars of Henry I*, *Pierce of Exton*, *1* and *2 Henry Richmond*, *1* and *2 King Edward IV* and *Sir John Oldcastle* (Wiggins and Richardson 2011-18). Some of these titles suggest at least the nominal organisation of a play from historical sources around the person of the monarch, and are named, like Shakespeare's Folio plays, for kings. But others are named for different historical actors, such as two plays taken from the same

historical period as Shakespeare's *Richard II*: *Pierce of Exton* (Richard's murderer) and *The Life and Death of Jack Straw* (the story of the leader of the Peasants' Revolt). These plays, emphasising non-regal historical personages, resonate with the original Quarto titles of many of Shakespeare's history plays, which emphasise a range of characters beyond the monarch. *Henry IV*, for instance, mentions "Harry Percy" and Falstaff as well as the king himself; *The First Part of the Contention* names Duke Humphrey, the Duke of Suffolk, the Cardinal of Winchester, Jack Cade, and the Duke of York on its extended crowded title. Like Shakespeare's plays, some of these other history plays seem to be serial or two-part: there are double plays on Robin Hood, on Henry Richmond, and on Edward IV, for example. There are thus immediate similarities in the scope, titling, and presentation of Shakespeare's Quarto history plays with other plays in the same period.

Medieval English history was a staple of 1590s theatre, to an extent which far exceeded any single author canon. The engagement of audiences – on the stage or in print – might well have read across these authors to connect historical fictions in different modes and styles. The printing of the old Queen's Men's play *The Famous Victories of Henry V* in 1598 was probably an attempt to cash in on the popularity of *Henry IV* published the same year. The publication of Shakespeare's own *Henry V* play in 1600 emphasises parallels with, rather than differentiates itself from, its predecessor: both versions of Henry V's kingly successes name Agincourt on their titlepage. Tara L. Lyons' excellent analysis of play marketing and collections before the Folio reminds us that, even when Shakespeare's name was attached to his works in Quarto (not at all for *Henry V*, and not until 1619 for the *Contention* plays), "we should assume neither that it was prioritized as a principle of collection nor that his authorship inspired the consolidation of his printed plays in the hands of publishing agents and readers" (Lyons 2012, 187-88). Keen playbook buyers at the end of the 1590s, therefore, with a taste for historical drama, might well have been as interested in *The Famous Victories* as they were in *2 Henry IV*: and that episode shaped their understanding and recognition of Henry V when he returned in Shakespeare's own (but unattributed) play of that name. Similarly, the Chamberlain's

Men's depiction of Falstaff in the *Henry IV* plays, originally named Sir John Oldcastle but changed, presumably at the demand of the influential Cobham family, the modern descendants of the proto-Protestant martyr, is in dialogue with the Admiral's Men's altogether more reverential *Sir John Oldcastle* (published in 1600). A second part of this drama was apparently commissioned, according to Henslowe's diary, but is not extant: the 1600 Quarto carries the title *The first part Of the true and honorable historie, of the life of Sir John Old-castle the good Lord Cobham*. Clearly, historical source material lends itself to paired serial or sequel plays.

Richard II is further example of a play that may have been understood in the context of another historical drama not by Shakespeare. Indeed, the earliest printed texts of the play seem to show a specific indebtedness to another retelling of an earlier part of the historical story. This untitled manuscript play is often known as "Thomas of Woodstock", after its central protagonist, Thomas, 1st Duke of Gloucester, and it may have provided audiences with some background to events that otherwise seem mysterious at the start of Shakespeare's own *Richard II*. Shakespeare begins with the altercation between Mowbray and Bolingbroke about the murder of the Duke of Gloucester. The matter cannot be reconciled and the combat between the noblemen is deferred. Much later in the play, the question of Gloucester's death is still unresolved: Bolingbroke interrogates Bagot and Fitzwater about "what thou dost know of noble Gloucester's death", and they in turn accuse Aumerle (IV.i.1-40).

There is, of course, a *Realpolitik* at play here. The suspicion is that Richard himself is culpable for his uncle's death, but neither the characters nor the play seems quite to dare to say so: in a drama finely balanced about the justification for Richard's overthrow, this is a whisper rather than a direct accusation. At a more thematic level, this mystery about the past is the condition of history itself: Gloucester's murder is a moment of historiographical self-consciousness, or metahistory, where the past refuses to give up its secrets and is instead a discursive space for competing interpretations. By beginning the sequence with *Richard II*, a serialist reading of the histories suggests that the prior history of these characters is unreachable.

But there may be a practical explanation for the evasiveness of *Richard II* on the question of Gloucester's murder: the existence of a prior play on precisely this topic. The play of Thomas of Woodstock is all about the events that led up to the death of Thomas, and perhaps Shakespeare's own play expects that some audiences may well be aware of this prior story. A significant reading in the Quartos gives glancing support to this hypothesis. Throughout *Richard II*, Richard's dead uncle is called "Gloucester". But in all the Quartos from 1597 to 1615 (five editions), John of Gaunt is introduced regretting "the part I had in Woodstockes bloud" (1597, sig. B). In the Folio this is changed: "the part I had in Glousters blood". It's as if the Folio, implicitly designating *Richard II* as the start of its own historical sequence, has to erase a reference to something that came before, even though the play is deeply dependent on versions of its own lost past. The historical sequence has to begin somewhere, but that very beginning bases the sequence on a disavowal of its own logic, the continuity and connectedness of historical events.

Relatedly, later critical responses to the play of Thomas of Woodstock have tended to make a claim for it by claiming Shakespeare's authorship (Egan 2006), or to retitle it to imply such proximity. The titles of modern editions – including from the Malone Society *The First Part of the Reign of King Richard II or Thomas of Woodstock* (Frijlinck 1929) and in the Revels Plays series *Thomas of Woodstock: or, Richard II, Part One* (Corbin and Sedge 2002) – demonstrate the epistemological hold of the Folio's history sequence in their own renaming.

If the Folio list severs Shakespeare's plays from the wider culture of historical drama in the 1590s, it also involves prioritising a slightly smaller subset of plays that conform to serial expectation. The tactical suppression or omission of both the first and the last play in the list is commonplace: as historical singletons cut loose from the wider narrative, both *King John* and *Henry VIII* have tended to be ignored in critical discussions of Shakespeare's English histories, and they are similarly exiled from the twentieth- century traditions of serial performance. Nicholas Grene's book *Shakespeare's Serial History Plays* is typical in simply "leaving out the non-serial *King John* and the later *Henry VIII*" (2002, 9). The recent

tendency to retitle *Henry VIII*, following contemporary allusions but not the Folio, as "All Is True", as in *The New Oxford Shakespeare* (Shakespeare 2016), completes this separation by giving the play a title more akin to comedy than history. What is 'wrong' with these plays is not their generic shape or their use of their source materials – in those ways they correspond closely with the other historical plays. Rather, they are outliers chronologically in a genre that has been thoroughly reconceptualised as serial in narrative form. It is an organisational anomaly that the Folio sequence both constructs (through its retitling and reordering) and then has to work to sustain (by ignoring the limit cases). The Folio gives us 'history' as a category, but scholarship has tended to focus on a smaller number of plays than this constitutive group.

If the first and last Folio history plays have been squeezed out of a genre heavily invested in chronological and narrative sequence, so too has another Shakespearean history play. *Edward III*, despite being "materially accepted in the canon as a collaborative work" (Kirwan 2015, 153), is now routinely included in late twentieth-century complete works editions published by Oxford, Norton, and Arden Shakespeare series, but much less evident in critical accounts of Shakespeare's historical drama. The dominance of the Folio sequence means that this historically contiguous play – Richard II succeeded Edward – has nevertheless struggled to find its place in the critical conversation. A sequence of Shakespeare's history plays that began with the French wars of Edward III and the capture of Calais would establish some very different themes, locations, and understandings of the nation, not least a different role for women in political life, than the established sequence beginning with, and implicitly endorsing, Richard II's own martyrology: it is a fascinating counterfactual to think how the Shakespearean history play might look if it began with *Edward III* rather than *Richard II*. The failure of *Edward III* to find a place among the history plays thus reveals something about the critical investment in certain models of Shakespearean history. Recent investigations into the extent of Shakespeare's collaborative writing offers a more general challenge to the serialists: much recent work would suggest that all three *Henry VI* plays, as well as *Henry VIII*, are jointly authored. And while collaborative composition is not

necessarily incompatible with serial organisation, there is, nevertheless, an assumption that authorship and seriality are connected. The interconnectedness of Shakespeare's history plays with wider historical drama in the period is one of the critical losses occasioned by the Folio's organisation, and has distorted analyses of these plays in their larger context.

Early Modern Collections

The Falstaffian trilogy, ending not with Falstaff's overdetermined absence from *Henry V*, but with his central role in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, offers a kind of alternative sequence not confined to those plays the Folio designates as histories. Other early collections of playbooks – both those created by individual readers organising their libraries, and in the proto-collection published by Thomas Pavier and William Jaggard in 1619 – build on this possibility, and show that organisation by genre, or by historical chronology, or even by author, was not standard or inevitable to early buyers and readers.

The set of plays published under mysterious circumstances in 1619 by Thomas Pavier and William Jaggard are traditionally known as the Pavier Quartos, but recently renamed the Jaggard Quartos by Zachary Lesser (Lesser 2021, 78). Ten plays were printed in nine volumes, with a particular preponderance of history plays, most probably because these were the bestsellers of Shakespeare's Quarto back-catalogue. The printing project seems to have begun with the aim of producing a serial edition: the copy of *The First Part of the Contention* and *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of York* was presented under the unifying title *The Whole Contention betweene the two Famous Houses, Lancaster and Yorke*. Half titles split the drama into "The first part of the Contention of the two Famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster, with the death of the good Duke Humfrey" (A2) and "The Second Part. Containing the Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, and the good King Henrie the Sixt" (I). Most significantly, the signature numbers are continuous, and a third text, *Pericles*, completes a set of three, beginning with Gower's entrance at sig. R. As Lesser observes, many library catalogues list this edition under the heading of *Whole Contention*,

considering it part of the same single title, and there are several extant copies with these plays bound together (Lesser 2021, 37; Shakespeare Census n.d.). This Pavier/Jaggard serial begins like a historical narrative but then moves to something different: two plays on medieval history are yoked to a medieval poet, Gower, who opens a play based on his own *Confessio Amantis*.

For whatever reason, rest of the Pavier/Jaggard Quartos did not continue with this serial impulse. Nor were the selection entirely Shakespearean: *Sir John Oldcastle*, the Admiral's Men's play discussed earlier as part of the larger landscape of medieval history plays, was reprinted in 1619. Like other of these reprints, *Sir John Oldcastle* bore a false date, 1600, perhaps to pass copies off as part of the initial Quarto printing of that year. But unlike the other plays in the same category, Pavier and Jaggard reattribute the play in the course of reprinting it (so the titlepage is not, in fact, the same as the earlier edition it mimics). The 1619 edition of the play adds "Written by William Shakespeare" to the titlepage. Another non-Shakespearean or apocryphal play that was included in the collection was *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, first printed in 1608 with an attribution to Shakespeare both on the titlepage and in the Stationers' Register entry. The 1619 edition repeated this authorship claim.

There is no consensus about what Pavier/Jaggard were trying to achieve with their 1619 project, but A. W. Pollard's then-influential view that these were simply unauthorised and pirated editions now seems implausible, not least because Jaggard was given the commission to produce the Folio only a few years later (Pollard 1920). But this curious part-collection, initially apparently planned as a serial with continuous signatures, is neither a historical sequence nor an entirely comfortable authorial one. Although the reattribution of *Sir John Oldcastle* may suggest an attempt to reconcile its authorial coherence, the inclusion of *Pericles* and the *Contention* plays, all of which are collaborative (which may possibly be why *Pericles* was not included in the 1623 Folio), compromises any such order. The other plays included in this group of reprints were *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *King Lear*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Henry V*. Lesser's fascinating recent work on this collection also reveals that Thomas Heywood's play *A*

Woman Killed with Kindness seems to have been part of some of the early collections of Pavier/Jaggard Quartos, including the so-called Miss Orlebar copy, now in the Folger Shakespeare Library. A manuscript table of contents has survived from this now disbanded collection, listing *A Woman Killed with Kindness* as the first play in the volume, followed by a mini-sequence of *Henry V* and *The Whole Contention* (Lesser 2021, 60-62). *Pericles*, which, as discussed, was printed as if it would follow immediately from *The Whole Contention*, is separated from these plays in the Orlebar binding. What Lesser's extensive examination of extant Pavier/Jaggard Quartos reveals, however, is that the main intention behind their publication was to "creat[e] a group of quartos that could be sold as a bound set" (66).

This pre-Folio serial or collected publication offers an entirely different narrative and reader experience from the organisation of history plays in the Folio. Sonia Massai's argument that Pavier and Jaggard were working to "whet, rather than satisfy, readers' demand for a new collection of Shakespeare's dramatic works" (Massai 2007, 107-8) suggests that this collection of Quartos was a proof of business concept for the more ambitious First Folio publication: a "pre-publicity stunt", as she puts it (119). If so, its completely different organisational principles underscore, and denaturalise, the specific editorial intervention made in the Folio's catalogue sequence.

Other evidence about how readers collected individual play Quartos and bound them into collections or *sammelbände* is scattered but points in the same direction: that the Folio collection by genre in general, and by historical chronology for the history plays in particular, was the exception rather than the norm. A commonplace book belonging to Sir John Harington lists volumes of his playbooks (those volumes have since been lost or disbound) gathered into collections of between eleven and thirteen plays. These lists show a preference for volumes as miscellanies, filled with works in different genres and by different authors. One indicative volume, for instance, includes *The Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet* alongside Jonson's *Sejanus* and *Every Man in His Humour* and Chapman's *Monsieur D'Olive*. It also suggests a mini historical cluster: the two parts of *Henry IV* and then *Richard III* (Harington's

Richard II, which might have been expected here, is in another volume with *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Volpone*, and *The Spanish Tragedy* [Greg 1962]).

Harington's apparent sense that the two parts of *Henry IV* made sense together in the same volume was shared by other readers: the Shakespeare Census reports copies at the Hunterian in Glasgow, in Princeton University Library, and at the Folger which bind them together. There are apparently no extant volumes which include *Henry V* as part of the sequence (Shakespeare Census n.d.). But there are other collecting and grouping possibilities too. A volume at the Newberry Library binds the two parts of the *Contention* (what the Folio calls *Henry VI Part 2* and *3*) together with *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Sir John Oldcastle*. Because so many Shakespeare Quartos have been disbound from earlier collections, it is hard to reconstruct their place in early libraries, but the surviving copies suggest that the Folio's organisation by author, or by genre, or by historical sequence, was not already available, desirable, or necessary for readers.

Conclusion

Many aspects of the Folio's hold on Shakespeare studies have been challenged in recent decades. That the earlier Quartos were, as John Heminges and Henry Condell put it in their prefatory letter "To the Great Variety of Readers", "maimed, and deformed, by the frauds and stealthes of injurious imposters" (Shakespeare 1623, sig. A3) has been interrogated and largely rejected as an adequate account of the variants between Quarto and Folio texts. Similarly, their claim that the Folio represented Shakespeare's entire canon, "absolute in their numbers", has also come to be seen as a sales pitch rather than an authoritative account, as *Pericles*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and numerous other parts of plays from *Arden of Faversham* to "Sir Thomas More" are increasingly seen as part of the canon. That the history plays are best understood – perhaps even, implicitly, were *intended* – as a sequence is one claim of the Folio that is ripe for reassessment. The prior textual lives of these plays, and their use by early readers, show that seriality was not inevitable or necessary then, and should not be now.

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Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Traces of Authorship[*]

Rory Loughnane

This essay analyses the documentary evidence identifying Shakespeare and Marlowe as co-authors of the *Henry VI* plays and the alternative versions of parts *2* and *3*. Drawing together studies in attribution, anonymity, biography, and the book trade, the essay offers a chronological analysis of various forms of evidence. In doing so, it seeks to situate and contextualise the early anonymous publication of the alternative versions, while providing external documentary support for the internal attribution evidence linking Shakespeare and Marlowe to these plays.

Keywords: Marlowe, Nashe, Attribution studies, Authorship, Anonymity, Book history, Biography, Publication, Textual studies

Authorship and Authority

The compilers of *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (1623) made every effort to claim authorial authority for the thirty-six plays they collected, selected, and supplied for the 'First Folio' collection. In their prefatory address "To the Great Variety of Readers", John Heminges and Henry Condell state that they wish "the Author himselfe had liu'd to haue set forth, and ouerseen his own writings", but, as Shakespeare died seven years earlier, they have taken on the responsibility to "onely gather his

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works"[1]. The two men, actor friends of Shakespeare and sharers in his old company, were in a good position to judge the authority of the works compiled. In gathering these plays, they claim they have taken "care" and "pain" to publish versions that are "cur'd, and perfect of their limbes"; that is, versions qualitatively superior to earlier publications of Shakespeare's works: "stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious impostors"[2]. The prefatory address thus acknowledges that many works attributed to Shakespeare already exist in different versions, a subject this essay will discuss, while marking a distinction between those versions which they include and which they claim have authority, and those which they exclude and which, by inference, have lesser or no authority. This simple binary construction understates a rather more complicated textual situation, as we shall see. Their prefatory address also clearly attributes all of the plays included to the hand of Shakespeare alone ("the Author himselfe […] his own writings"). The works included, the compilers claim, have authority; they are, they insist, authoritative.

One of the best-known and most-often-repeated claims about the Folio collection is that half of its thirty-six plays were never printed before. The claim, like most broad statements about Shakespeare, needs further nuance. The Folio collection prints the only extant substantive version of seventeen plays: *The Tempest*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *As You Like It*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Winter's*

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[1] For Heminges and Condell's responsibilities in collecting, selecting, compiling, and supplying the texts for the First Folio, see Taylor 2017. Citations to Shakespeare's works, unless otherwise recorded, are from individual editions in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Critical Reference Edition* (Shakespeare 2017).

[2] Which plays, or set of plays, the actors are referring to remains in question. In the bibliographic tradition it had been assumed that Heminges and Condell differentiate between the 'good' and 'bad' early printings available, but David Scott Kastan argues that the actors simply mean *all* earlier printings are imperfect "perhaps because to men of the theater a cheaply published playbook could be nothing else" (Kastan 1999, 91). Lukas Erne suggests that they might be alluding to the Pavier Quartos: "the only Shakespearean playbooks published between Shakespeare's death and early 1622, when work on the Folio began" (Erne 2003, 258).

Tale, *King John*, *1 Henry VI*, *All Is True*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Cymbeline*; that is, there exists no other earlier text or version for any of these plays. Twelve plays in the Folio collection are more or less substantively similar to earlier printed versions: *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry V*, *2 Henry VI*, *3 Henry VI*, *Richard III*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, and *2 Henry IV*; that is, each of these earlier versions follows, however roughly, the narrative outline of the Folio texts, often with significant verbal overlap. The Folio collection includes five plays in more or less substantively identical versions to those printed earlier for which there exists only one substantive version: *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Richard II*, and *1 Henry IV*; it includes three plays in more or less substantively identical versions for which there exist more than one version: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard III*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. There are, then, two anomalous cases. *The Taming of the Shrew* shares the same plot and sub-plot as *The Taming of a Shrew*. However, the two works are so fundamentally different in language and style that some scholars doubt whether *A Shrew* has any independent *Shakespearean* authority; it exists, more or less, in a category of its own. Then there is *Titus Andronicus*, which was printed earlier in three near-identical versions, the last of which forms the basis for the Folio text, but the 1623 printing includes an additional scene. As this summary indicates, it is not as simple as saying that half of the plays in the Folio had never been printed before; in fact, the Folio version of twenty-six plays (or twenty-seven if Titus Andronicus is included, with its added scene) are substantively new or variant; that is 75% rather than 50% of the works included.

Heminges and Condell are right then to foreground issues of authority in their prefatory address: the First Folio collection offers something that differs in substance from what was previously available to purchase piecemeal in earlier printed versions. But in foregrounding the authority of the printed texts that they include ("absolute in their numbers, as he conceiued the[m]"), they also incidentally or deliberately situate that authority in a model of solo authorship that the collection perpetuates through its possessive

title. Yet we now know that nine works included in the collection –
that is, one quarter of the plays – include substantive writing by
authors other than Shakespeare: (in Folio order) *Measure for
Measure*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *1 Henry VI*, *2 Henry VI*, *3 Henry
VI*, *All Is True*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Macbeth*.
Shakespeare is undoubtedly the primary author in the collection,
but he is not the only author. There are also two categories of
Shakespearean plays excluded from the collection. First, there are
seven plays, all co-authored, in which Shakespeare's hand has been
identified: *Arden of Faversham*, *Edward III*, *Sir Thomas More*, *Pericles,
Prince of Tyre*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *The Spanish Tragedy* (additions
in the 1604 quarto), and *Cardenio*[3]. Second, there are the alternative
versions of Shakespeareach of thesee's plays that differ
substantively from the versions included in the First Folio, the
twelve plays plus *A Shrew* noted above. Each of the twenty
ostensibly Shakespearean works excluded is subject to its own
contingencies of composition and transmission, and it would be
reductive to generalise about how and why some plays were
included when others were not. But whatever the rationale for
inclusion or exclusion – economic, marketing, availability of text,
quality of text, (co-)authorship of text – these acts of selection by the
compilers of the First Folio created a distinction, reinforced by
Heminges and Condell's prefatory remarks, in the perceived
authority of those plays and play versions that made the cut and
those that did not. We live in a post-First-Folio world and therefore
know which plays and play versions were included. It was not
always like this. There was a time before its publication in 1623
when for many plays the only printed version that existed was the
'alternative version'; these were not 'alternative', they were the only
versions mediated via, and preserved in, print. This essay returns
us to a pre-First-Folio world, focusing in particular upon the
authorship and authority of early alternative versions of *2* and *3
Henry VI*: *The First Part of the Contention* (first published in 1594) and
The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York (1595). It addresses
authorship through a set of plays, first composed in the late

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[3]   For the evidence supporting the attribution of these plays, see the relevant
       entries in Taylor and Loughnane 2017.

sixteenth century, for which early anonymous 1590s versions and later authoritative 1620s versions are preserved. It first offers a chronological reading of events connected with these plays, and the other two parts in the 'first tetralogy', *1 Henry VI* (first published in 1623) and *Richard III* (first published in 1597). To this discussion, I draw on more recent findings about the co-authorship of *1-3 Henry VI*, situating the chronological sequence in the context of not only the transmission of Shakespeare's works but also writings by his co-authors, Christopher Marlowe, and, to a lesser extent, Thomas Nashe.

Plays about Henry VI: A Chronology

1592

On 3 March 1592 a play titled "harey the vj" is entered in the account books of Philip Henslowe, an entrepreneur who owned the Rose playhouse in Southwark, on London's south bank (Foakes and Rickert 1968, 16). The entry is marked "ne", almost certainly indicating that it is a new play[4]. The debut performance took in a large sum, "iij^li xvj^s 8 d" or 3 pounds, 16 shillings, and 8 pence. There were fourteen further performances of "harey the vj" by midsummer that year[5]. The playing company for each of these performances was the Lord Strange's Men.

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[4] With multi-part plays, as Roslyn L. Knutson has demonstrated, Henslowe's habit was to identify the first part by its basic unnumbered title, while indicating the part number for subsequent parts (see Knutson 1983). As Taylor and Loughnane note: "Thus, 'Harey the vj' could be *1 Henry VI*, but could not be the play that the Folio identifies as *3 Henry VI* […]; it also seems unlikely to be the play which the Folio identifies as *2 Henry VI* […] which we have no reason to believe was ever called the first part of *Henry VI*" (Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 515).

[5] The play was performed regularly over four consecutive months: March (7, 11, 16, 28), April (5, 13, 21), May (4, 7, 14, 19, 25), and June (12, 19) (Foakes and Rickert 1968, 16-19).

1593

The play "harey the 6" (or "harey the vj") is revived by the Lord Strange's Men at the Rose on 16 and 31 January 1593 (Foakes and Rickert 1968, 19-20)[6].

1594

On 12 March 1594 "a booke intituled, the first parte of the Contention of the twoo famous houses York and Lancaster" was entered to the stationer Thomas Millington in the Stationers' Register (Arber 1875-94, 2:646). Sometime later that year this work, a short play about episodes in the life of Henry VI, was printed in quarto format by Thomas Creede for Thomas Millington (London; STC 26099). The title-page for *Contention* does not indicate either author or theatrical provenance.

1595

Sometime this year a play titled *The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt, with the whole contention betweene the two Houses Lancaster and Yorke* was printed by P[eter] S[hort] in octavo format for Thomas Millington (London; STC 21006). The play was either not entered in the Stationers' Register before publication or the record is lost. This short play portrays episodes in the life of Henry VI that roughly follow on in historical sequence from the events portrayed in *Contention*. The title-page for *True Tragedy* does not indicate author but notes that the play was "sundrie times acted by the Right Honourable the Earle of Pembrooke his seruants", that is, Pembroke's Men.

   In *True Tragedy* appears the line: "Oh Tygers hart wrapt in a womans hide?" (sig. B2ᵛ). This line connects the unidentified author of *True Tragedy* to a minor kerfuffle among London's dramatists a few years earlier. The author of *Greenes, groats-worth of witte* (London, 1592; STC 12245), most likely Henry Chettle, plays on this passage in calling out another dramatist for plagiarism ("beautified

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6   See Manley and MacLean 2014, 339. The total takings for the seventeen recorded performances of the play are the most of any Lord Strange's Men play at 35 pounds and 8 shillings. The play is also the most frequently performed play by this company.

with our feathers") and presumption ("with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you")[7]. This offending dramatist is an "absolute *Iohannes fac totum*", and "is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a country" (sig. F1ᵛ). Within months, Thomas Nashe (in *Pierce Penilesse* [London, 1592; STC 18378]) and Henry Chettle (in *Kind-harts Dream* [London, 1592/1593; STC 5123]) have denied their authorship of the passage in question.

1597

On the 20 October Andrew Wise entered "The tragedie of kinge Richard the Third" in the Stationers' Register. It was published anonymously later that year, printed by Valentine Simmes and Peter Short, with the title-page noting that it "hath been lately acted" by the Lord Chamberlain's Men (London; STC 22314). The published play continues, roughly speaking, the historical narrative sustained in *Contention* and *True Tragedy*.

1598

Andrew Wise re-issues *Richard III*, now attributed on its title-page to "William Shake-speare" and printed by Thomas Creede (London; STC 22315).

1600

Sometime this year Thomas Millington decides to re-issue both *Contention* and *True Tragedy*. We cannot know for certain which play he re-issued first, though it seems reasonable to assume that they appeared in their serial order ("first contention" to "whole contention"), with demand for *True Tragedy* possibly fuelled by the availability of *Contention*. The 1600 second quarto printing of *Contention* is undertaken by Valentine Simmes for Millington, principally set from the 1594 first quarto (London; STC 26100). The second printing of *True Tragedy* is undertaken by W[illiam] W[hite] for Millington and, although principally set from the 1595 octavo, it is now printed in the larger quarto format thereby matching the format for *Contention* (London; STC 21006a).

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7   For Chettle's authorship of the work, see Jowett 1993.

Also, in 1600, Samuel Nicholson picks up on the same passage from *True Tragedy* that had appeared in *Groats-worth*: "O wooluish heart wrapt in a womans hyde" (London; STC 18546; sig. C1ᵛ). Nicholson's poetic work, *Acolastus*, also includes several passages which borrow from *Venus and Adonis*, the first work published in Shakespeare's name and a best-selling poem of the 1590s (first published in 1593, it was re-issued in 1594, 1595, 1596, and 1599) and *Lucrece*, another literary sensation published in Shakespeare's name (first published in 1594, and re-issued in 1598 and 1600)[8]. While these borrowings tell us nothing about the authorship of *True Tragedy*, it does indicate Nicholson's familiarity with Shakespeare's accredited works in print.

1602

On 19 April 1602, the Stationers' Register records that Millington transfers the rights to the "ij books" of "The first and Second pte of henry the vjᵗ" to another stationer, Thomas Pavier (Arber 1875-94, 3:204). At the same time, Millington transfers to Pavier the rights to "Thomas of Reading" and "Titus and Andronicus". The former had not yet appeared in print; the latter, generally accepted to be Peele and Shakespeare's play, had been published anonymously twice, in 1594 and 1600. In 1598 Francis Meres identified Shakespeare as author of *Titus Andronicus* in *Palladis Tamia*, among other plays[9]. Meres never mentions any plays about the life of Henry VI.

1619

Thomas Pavier arranges for *Contention* and *True Tragedy* to be published together under a single title: "The Whole Contention between the two Famous Houses, Lancaster and Yorke". The plays are printed by William Jaggard in an undated quarto (London; STC

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8   For these borrowings, see Bemrose 1964.

9   Meres notes: "As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines: so *Shakespeare* among yᵉ English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witnes his *Ge[n]tleme[n] of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Loue labors lost*, his *Loue labours wonne*, his *Midsummers night dreame*, & his *Merchant of Venice:* for Tragedy his *Richard the 2. Richard the 3. Henry the 4. King Iohn, Titus Andronicus* and his *Romeo* and *Iuliet*" (London; STC 17834; sig. Oo2ʳ).

26101). Both plays are principally set from earlier printed versions, with minor corrections, alterations, and additions introduced in an attempt to improve or cohere perceptibly faulty elements in the earlier versions. The title-page to the set makes three significant claims. First, it adverts to the serial nature of the plays saying it is "Diuided into two Parts". Second, it claims that this version of the plays improves and expands upon earlier printed versions: "newly corrected and enlarged". Third, it identifies an author for the plays: "Written by *William Shakespeare*, Gent".

Pavier appears to plan initially for *The Whole Contention* to be printed as part of a larger volume. The serial plays were bound together with *Pericles* – the signatures for the histories run A-Q4ᵛ, *Pericles* runs R1-Aa⁴, Bb1 – and it seems likely that Pavier's plan was to bind these with a further seven plays. Though the exact sequence of events is impossible to determine, on 3 May the Court of the Stationers' Company ordered its members that "It is thought fitt & so ordered That no playes that his Maᵗʸᵉˢ players do play shalbe printed wᵗʰout consent of some of them" (quoted in Murphy 2003, 40)[10]. This decree, barring publication of King's Men plays without their consent, was prompted by a letter of complaint sent to the Court by the Lord Chamberlain, William, Earl of Pembroke, on behalf of the playing company[11]. Whether pre-empting, interrupting, or responding to Pavier's plan, the other seven plays were not printed as a set (with continuous signatures): *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *King Lear*, *The Chronicle History of Henry the Fifth*, *Sir John Oldcastle*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Although the other seven plays were printed singly, these ten plays (total) were also sometimes sold as a bound-together set of quartos[12]. Only *The Chronicle History of Henry*

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[10] It is generally assumed that the reason seven of the Pavier Quartos bear false dates represents the stationer's attempt to somehow circumvent the ruling banning further printings. See Kirschbaum 1955, 198-99 and Kastan 1999, 84-85.

[11] For the relationship between the Pavier Quartos and the injunction, see Murphy 2003, 39-41.

[12] The evidence for this lies in the unusual absence of stab-stitch holes for sewing and binding. As Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass note, "Of the Folger's nine copies or part-copies of *The Whole Contention*, only three have stab-stitch holes, while six do not (and were therefore sold not as pamphlets but as parts of bound

the Fifth failed to identify Shakespeare as solo author on its title-page. All of the plays had been published before, and the title-page attribution remained the same in the Pavier version for seven of the plays: *Pericles*, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *King Lear*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* were all still attributed to Shakespeare[13]; while *The Chronicle History of Henry the Fifth* was still issued anonymously[14]. The plays newly attributed to Shakespeare are, therefore, *1 Sir John Oldcastle* and the two plays that form *The Whole Contention*.

1623

On 8 November 1623, two prominent London stationers, Edward Blount and Isaac Jaggard, enter into the Stationers' Register "Mr William Shakespeers Comedyes Histories, and Tragedyes" (Arber 1875-94, 4:107). In doing so, they enter the names of sixteen plays to be published that are "not formerly Entred to other men"; that is, that have not been entered previously by other stationers. Included among the "Histories" is "The thirde parte of Henry yᵉ sixt". Later that month, *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* is published. In the catalogue's second section on Histories, which run in historical chronological sequence from *King John* to *Henry the Eight* there appear three plays together on the *First*, *Second*, and *Third Part of King Henry the Sixt*, followed by *The Life and Death of Richard the Third*. The *Second* and *Third* parts reveal much verbal and narrative overlap with, respectively, the earlier-printed *Contention* and *True Tragedy*. Indeed, the *Third* part includes the exact line

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books); of their six copies of *King Lear*, four have stab-stitch holes and two do not. Of the Huntington's nine 'Pavier Quartos', only two have stab-stich holes" (Lesser and Stallybrass 2015, 129n18).

[13] See William Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* 1600 Q1; William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 1600 Q1; William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* 1602 Q1; William Shakespeare, *King Lear* 1608 Q1; and William Shakespeare, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* 1609 Q1.

[14] It did, however, repeat that "the Lord Chamberlaine his Seruants" performed it "sundry times", a possible indicator of the play's authorship and provenance; Shakespeare's company, for whom he was lead dramatist, performed under the aegis of the Lord Chamberlain from 1594 to 1603 (the same company was identified as The Lord Hunsdon's Men from late summer 1596 until 17 March 1597, when they reverted to the other title).

witnessed in *True Tragedy* that is played upon in *Groats-worth* and *Acolastus*: "Oh Tygres Heart, wrapt in a Womans Hide" (sig. o6ʳ; 4.137). The *First* part is seen in print for the first time.

Anonymity

Drawing strictly from the known early performance history and print publications, it is evident that Shakespeare-as-author is only first firmly connected in print in 1619 to a set of serial plays about the life of Henry VI. The two history plays, *The Whole Contention*, had been published separately earlier, both anonymously. In 1619 these history plays were published as part of a larger collection of plays, most but not all of which had been attributed to Shakespeare before. Only *1 Sir John Oldcastle* and the plays in *The Whole Contention* are newly attributed to Shakespeare in 1619. In terms of the documentary evidence outlined until 1619, there is no more reason to trust the attribution of *The Whole Contention* to Shakespeare than *1 Sir John Oldcastle* (he is as linked to the Wars of the Roses through *Richard III* as to Oldcastle through the *Henry IV* cycle), while the short true-crime play *A Yorkshire Tragedy* holds as strong a claim to Shakespeare's authorship at this time as *Pericles* and *King Lear*[15]. If, in 1619, you were minded to trust Pavier's attribution for *True Tragedy*, the *Groats-worth* business and the opaque allusion to "Shake-scene" could now be re-read as alluding to Shakespeare.

Much changes with the 1623 publication. Of the Pavier plays, *Pericles*, *1 Sir John Oldcastle*, and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* are all out. Near-identical versions of *The Merchant of Venice* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are in. The Folio *King Lear* is slightly variant to the version already published, including some 300 new lines while lacking 100 lines found in the 1608 and 1619 quartos. The Folio

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[15] Francis Meres identifies both *The Merchant of Venice* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as Shakespeare's in 1598. Shakespeare's authorship of *1* and *2 Henry IV* is well attested in early editions (in 1599 Q2 and 1600 Q1, respectively), to which *The Chronicle History of Henry the Fifth* and *Merry Wives* bear a clear relationship. *Sir John Oldcastle*, given the strong likelihood that John Oldcastle was the original character name given to John Falstaff, would also suggest a plausible Shakespearean connection. See Taylor 1986.

versions of *Merry Wives* and *Henry V* vary much more radically from their respective earlier quarto versions. And, the focus of this essay, the Folio plays of *2 Henry VI* and *3 Henry VI* represent significant longer and highly variant versions of *Contention* and *True Tragedy*. That they are 'versions' of each other, as with the versions of *Merry Wives* and *Henry V*, is evidenced by overlap in narrative, character, and language. The identification of Shakespeare as author of the Folio *Henry VI* plays (as also Folio *King Lear*, *Merry Wives*, *Henry V*) leads to the default position that Shakespeare is also the author, or co-author, of the earlier published substantively similar versions. So, now, the opaque documentary evidence about the plays' authorship above, which only first firmly connected Shakespeare to *Contention* and *True Tragedy* in 1619, must be re-read with Shakespeare's authorship in mind.

If authoritatively Shakespearean, why is he not identified as their author until 1619? This question is essentially unanswerable, but we can at least contextualise this situation of anonymity. *Contention* (1594, 1600) and *True Tragedy* (1595, 1600) are both published anonymously twice in Shakespeare's lifetime. The anonymous first publications of *Contention* and *True Tragedy* in 1594 and 1595 are actually not at all unusual in the context of Shakespeare's early career. The first preserved play title-page to identify Shakespeare as author is *Love's Labour's Lost*, published in 1598 (London; STC 22294). Earlier anonymously published Shakespeare plays are *Arden of Faversham* (1592), *Titus Andronicus* (1594), *Edward III* (1594), *Richard II* (1597), *Richard III* (1597), and *Romeo and Juliet* (1597)[16]. The conditions of authorial composition do not seem to matter: the first three of these plays are co-authored; the cluster of 1597 printings are all considered solo authored. None mention Shakespeare, or, for that matter, anyone else.

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[16] The 1598 quarto of *Love's Labour's Lost* is almost certainly not the first edition of the play: its title-page adverts to the fact that it has been "Newly corrected and augmented *By W. Shakespere*", and a book catalogue listing exists for a 1597 copy of the play. We cannot know whether this lost first edition had Shakespeare's name on the title-page. The catalogue belonged to Edward, Viscount Conway. See Freeman and Grinke 2002.

The anonymous publication of *Contention* and *True Tragedy* in 1600 is a bit more surprising. From 1598, Shakespeare's name begins to appear regularly on play title-pages: excluding *Contention* and *True Tragedy* for now, of the fourteen plays now attributed in part or wholly to Shakespeare published between 1598 and 1600, nine identify Shakespeare as author[17]. Three (or, possibly, four) are reprints of plays that had previously been published anonymously with the same title: Q2 *Richard III*, Q2 *Richard II* and *1 Henry IV* (and, possibly, Q2? *Love's Labour's Lost*). That is, from 1598, there appears to be a conspicuous effort to identify Shakespeare as the author of new or heretofore anonymous plays. This is a trend that would continue. Of the twenty Shakespearean plays published between 1601 and 1616, including five first editions, all but two identify Shakespeare as author on the title-page (Q2 *Chronicle History of Henry the Fifth* in 1602 and Q3 *Titus Andronicus* in 1611).

We cannot say with any certainty why some of Shakespeare's works were published anonymously and others were not. What is evident, however, is that Shakespeare's name was marketed more conspicuously from the late 1590s onwards. Not only were previously anonymous plays now reprinted with Shakespeare's name prominently displayed, but plays were also falsely attributed to his pen. For example, play printings of *The London Prodigal* (1605; "By William Shakespeare"), *The Puritan Widow* (1607; "Written by W. S."), *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608; "Written by W. Shakspeare") and *The Troublesome Reign of King John* (second edition 1611; "Written by W. Sh.") each include false ascriptions to Shakespeare or plausibly

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[17] Sixteen printings of fourteen plays: Q1 and Q2 *1 Henry IV* (1598); Q(2?) *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598); Q2 and Q3 *Richard II* (1598); Q2 *Richard III* (1598); Q2 *Arden of Faversham* (1599); Q2 *Romeo and Juliet* (1599); Q3 *1 Henry IV* (1599); Q2 *Edward III* (1599); Q1 *2 Henry IV* (1600); Q1 *Henry V* (1600); Q1 *Much Ado About Nothing* (1600); Q1 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1600); Q2 *Titus Andronicus* (1600); Q1 *The Merchant of Venice* (1600). Ten title-page ascriptions for nine plays: Q1 *1 Henry IV* (1598); Q(2?) *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598); Q2 and Q3 *Richard II* (1598); Q2 *Richard III* (1598); Q3 *1 Henry IV* (1599); Q1 *2 Henry IV* (1600); Q1 *Much Ado About Nothing* (1600); Q1 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1600); and Q1 *The Merchant of Venice* (1600).

imply his authorial contribution[18]. Such title-page ascriptions to Shakespeare in his own lifetime, authentic and false, indicate that there was at least some value attached to marketing his name.

Persistently anonymous Shakespearean plays form, then, a rather curious sub-set within the accepted corpus. *Contention* and *True Tragedy*, along with *Arden of Faversham*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Edward III*, and *Romeo and Juliet* represent six of the seven Shakespearean plays published only anonymously in his lifetime. (I will turn to the seventh momentarily.) All six of these plays are printed more than once before his death, and all six are printed twice between 1592 and 1600. Neither *Arden of Faversham* nor *Edward III* make the Folio cut; perhaps notably, these are the only two of the six not reprinted or known to be revived between 1600 and 1623. The surviving printed texts for both *Arden of Faversham* (London, 1592; STC 733 and London, 1599; STC 734) and *Edward III* (London, 1596; STC 7501 and London, 1599; STC 7502) are relatively clean and unproblematic texts. That they, rather than *Titus Andronicus* or *Romeo and Juliet*, or the versions of the *Henry VI* plays, were omitted from the First Folio, may be as likely a product of circumstance (e.g., unavailable, forgotten, etc.) as choice. The other two plays are identified as Shakespeare's in print during his lifetime. Francis Meres, commending Shakespeare's "most excellent" skills in both comedy and history in *Palladis Tamia* (1598), lists *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet* alongside ten others[19].

We need not search for a pattern to explain why a sub-set of Shakespeare's plays might be published anonymously: the explanation for each could be entirely different. However, it would be careless not to observe that five of these six plays (excluding *Romeo and Juliet*, momentarily) share two notable qualities: (1) each

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[18]   One possible early example of this is *Locrine* (1595: "Newly set foorth, ouer-seene and corrected, / By *W. S.*"), though it is difficult to see the point, or to gauge the effect, of this given Shakespeare's near invisibility in print, outside of the two narrative poems, by this stage.

[19]   The rest of list comprises six (or seven) plays attributed to Shakespeare in early printed versions (*Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV* [meaning either the first or both parts]), three plays only first published, and thereby attributed to Shakespeare, in the First Folio (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Comedy of Errors*, and *King John*), and one unpreserved or 'lost' play (*Love's Labour's Won*).

belongs to the earliest part of Shakespeare's career, almost certainly before the formation of the Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1594; and (2) each was co-authored. Either quality may factor into their anonymous publication, but I think the relative *earliness* of the five plays is more significant for several reasons. In all five cases, the reprints are based upon the earlier-published editions (rather than the underlying manuscript). The title-pages do not change significantly other than to either enhance the attraction of the play in question (e.g., the title-page to 1600 Q2 *Titus Andronicus* adds Shakespeare's playing company "the Lorde Chamberlaine['s Men]" to its list of companies) and to note any change in the stationers involved (indicating intellectual property rights to the work and also those involved in its production and sale). In each case, someone thought it was worthwhile re-issuing the play, but the content did not change. In some cases, the rights to publish the text changed (*Titus Andronicus*), in others it did not (*Contention*, *True Tragedy*). In either scenario one could suggest reasons for why a change might not be introduced: a retaining owner might not think to change what had already sold successfully, while a new owner might not know (or care) about the work's authorial provenance. But, I think most significantly, Shakespeare's contribution to these five plays – again, recalling that each is co-authored – pre-dates his joining the Lord Chamberlain's Men company. Of the twenty-seven canonical plays printed (and reprinted) in Shakespeare's name between 1598 and 1616, twenty-two identify both the name of the author and his company on the title-page. And the two non-canonical plays attributed or plausibly attributed in print to Shakespeare over this period – *Thomas Lord Cromwell* (by "W. S."; London, 1602; STC 21532 and London, 1613; STC 21533) and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* ("by VV Shakspeare"; London, 1608; STC 22340) – similarly record both author and company. Shakespeare and the Lord Chamberlain's Men/King's Men were, overwhelmingly in print, a package deal. His actions before 1594, primarily working on pieces with multiple authors and most likely for a variety of different companies, are much harder to pin down, and this is reflected in the print attributions for these early plays.

   Romeo and Juliet is, perhaps, more of an outlier. It was only attributed to Shakespeare in the undated (1622?) fourth quarto

edition. The first quarto of 1597 is a highly variant version of the play to that found in later quartos and the First Folio. It is some 26% shorter in length than the 1599 second quarto (upon which subsequent printings are based), but follows the same general narrative, character trajectory, and with much verbal overlap. John Danter is identified as printer on its title-page. Danter is a largely overlooked figure who looms large in the early print trade associated with Shakespeare. He is one of the printers of the incendiary *Greenes, groats-worth of witte* (1592), which seems to slander Shakespeare. He also first enters *Titus Andronicus* in the Stationers' Register on 6 February 1594, appears to transfer the publishing rights soon after, but is retained as the printer of the anonymous first quarto which appears later that year[20]. There is no Stationers' Register entry for *Romeo and Juliet*, but it seems likely that Danter, as the only person identified, was both printer and publisher. He probably transferred his license to publish the play soon after. The also-anonymous 1599 second quarto, published by Cuthbert Burby and printed by Thomas Creede, offers a "newly corrected, augmented, and amended" version. While Danter's actions do not explain how or why *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet* were published anonymously, his quick transfer of license in both cases suggests that his priority was to capitalise quickly. The title-pages to both anonymous first quartos opt to highlight the popularity and theatrical provenance of the plays: "The most lamentable Romaine tragedie of Titus Andronicus As it was plaide by the right honourable the Earle of Darbie, Earl of Pembrooke, and

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[20]   The 1594 first quarto of *Titus Andronicus* was printed by John Danter for Edward White and Thomas Millington. The title-page to the 1600 second quarto printing of *Titus Andronicus* only records Edward White's involvement. Millington, however, transferred the rights of the play to Thomas Pavier on 19 July 1602. Curiously, the 1611 third quarto recorded White's name once more. Both Millington and White, therefore, thought that they had the rights to the play: Millington in transferring it to Pavier in 1602 and White in publishing it again in 1611. Discussing this issue, Lukas Erne concludes that "the explanation which best accounts for the evidence is that Danter transferred the rights in *Titus* to White and Millington after entering it but before the play was published" and that the two men functioned as publishers as well as book-sellers for the first quarto (Erne 2013, 139-40). Pavier later chose, for whatever reason (rights, economics), to not include it in his 1619 collection.

Earl of Sussex their seruants" and "An excellent conceited tragedie of Romeo and Juliet As it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publiquely, by the right Honourable the L. of Hunsdon his Seruants".

That the new-and-improved second and third quartos of *Romeo and Juliet* were published anonymously is hard to explain. One curious overlap is that the same stationer, Cuthbert Burby, arranged for the anonymous publication of *Edward III* (1596 and 1599) and the second quarto of *Romeo and Juliet* (1599). Above, I noted that two plays, *Richard III* and *Richard II* (and, possibly, *Love's Labour's Lost*), were first issued anonymously before being identified as Shakespeare's in his own lifetime, contrasting these with the persistently anonymous *Contention* and *True Tragedy*. Both of the *Richard* plays were only first published in 1597 and re-issued within a year with the Shakespeare attribution included. The biggest change with these re-issued plays, which were substantively reprints of the first editions, was the inclusion of Shakespeare's name on the title-pages. In other words, Shakespeare's name was added to enhance the commercial appeal of these works. With *Romeo and Juliet* and *Edward III*, Burby does not seem to recognise the attraction of Shakespeare's name. This is all the more surprising given that the first play ever attributed to Shakespeare in print, *Love's Labour's Lost*, is published by Burby the year before. Looking at Burby's catalogue of published plays in the 1590s, only Robert Wilson's *The Cobbler's Prophesy* also identifies an author on its title-page. The other six, including *Romeo and Juliet* and *Edward III*, are all anonymous: *Mother Bombie* (1594, 1598; attributed to John Lyly), *A Knack to Know an Honest Man* (1596; author unknown), *Orlando Furioso* (1599; attributed to Robert Greene), *George a Greene* (1599; author unknown[21]). Q2 *Romeo and Juliet*'s anonymous printing may then be better explained by the stationer

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[21]   *George a Greene* is published anonymously (London, 1599; STC 12212). Two inscriptions on the title-page to a copy of the play quarto held by the Folger Library, made by the Master of the Revels, George Buc, attribute the play variously to an unidentified minister who played the title role (the claim is attributed to Shakespeare: "Teste W. Shakespeare") and Robert Greene (as identified by Edward Juby). See Nelson 1998.

involved; a Burby play-text at that time is more likely than not to be published anonymously.

The seventh Shakespearean play only to be published anonymously during Shakespeare's lifetime is *The Chronicle History of Henry the Fifth*, which was first printed in 1600 and reprinted in 1602, and, as we have seen, 1619. This play is a shorter, substantively alternative version of Folio *Henry V*. The quarto text is roughly half the length of the version included in the Folio, omitting the Folio text's Prologue, Epilogue, and Choruses and greatly cutting Henry's extended speeches, while following a similar narrative arc. Again, there is little doubt that both texts are versions of one another, and the broad consensus is that the quarto text, however transmitted, post-dates the Folio; that is, that it is a cut version of the text that underlies the Folio text. Indeed, that both plays are versions of each other was recognised early: a title-page inscription on a copy of the quarto text possibly made by George Buc, then Master of the Revels, notes that the play is "much ye same w[i]th y[a]t in Shakespeare"[22]. If by Buc, this must have been written between 1610 (when Buc became the Master) and 1622 (when Buc appears to have gone insane), and therefore precedes the publication the Folio text. Again, if by Buc, it demonstrates the Master of the Revels' awareness of the existence of, and correspondence between, different versions of the play. It firmly attributes another unpublished version to Shakespeare alone (i.e., "that in Shakespeare"), while simultaneously announcing the correspondence between it and the printed version (i.e., "much the same"). Whether the author of the inscription had read the other version or seen it performed or both is unknown. What is known is that the author was able to distinguish the authorial authority of one version from another, while still observing a correspondence between the versions that we can recognise today.

As with Burby above, there is another stationer figure who connects several of these anonymously printed Shakespearean

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[22] Alan H. Nelson records this inscription in a copy held at the Huntington Library; he notes that the inscription may be in Buc's hand but it is not certain. The inscription was recorded at http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~ahnelson/BUC/quartos.html, but this website is now retired. For further discussion of this inscription, see Dutton 2016, 174.

plays. Thomas Millington was involved with the publication of the first and second editions of *Contention* (1594, 1600) and *True Tragedy* (1595, 1600). Millington, as we have seen, is also one of the stationers involved with the publication of the anonymous *Titus Andronicus* (1594, 1600) and the publisher of *The Chronicle History of Henry the Fifth* (1600). These are the only Shakespearean plays which Millington publishes. Three are shorter, substantively alternative versions of plays that would later appear in the First Folio. The fourth, *Titus Andronicus*, most likely dates from the very beginning of Shakespeare's career (c. 1589) and has passed through at least four company hands at this stage. All are anonymous. The author who connects these four works, Shakespeare, seems in all instances fairly distant.

Shakespeare and Others

So far, I have been searching for connections to Shakespeare in the trace documentary history of the *Henry VI* plays. I do so because this has to be our default position. The *Henry VI* plays are included in the First Folio, and there is no reason to distrust the authority of its compilers. Heminges and Condell, sharers in Shakespeare's old company, and evidently close friends of the author (the author left both men money in his will, along with Richard Burbage, to purchase rings in his memory), lend authority to those works included in terms of both their authorship and text. From the Stationers' Register to title-page ascriptions to the First Folio preliminaries, I have sifted through the documentary evidence that connects one man, Shakespeare, to a set of plays about the life of Henry VI that exist in multiple versions. I then situated the anonymous publication of the early versions of these plays in the context of Shakespeare's early career and the publishing industry. The plays' earliness was considered one significant factor, but so too their anonymity seems to be tied to the nature of the texts. Of the set of seven play-texts that were persistently published anonymously in Shakespeare's lifetime, five were either excluded (*Arden of Faversham*, *Edward III*) or appeared in substantively different versions (*Contention*, *True Tragedy*, *Chronicle History of Henry the Fifth*). The other two plays had already been confirmed as

Shakespeare's by Francis Meres in 1598. *Titus Andronicus* appeared in the First Folio with a newly added scene. *Romeo and Juliet* appeared in its hastily re-issued longer version in 1599; this version had again been re-issued in 1622 with Shakespeare's name on the title-page.

This search for traces of Shakespeare is complicated by recent work in attribution and textual studies. It is now thought that all three plays about the life and times of Henry VI are co-authored. In the *Authorship Companion* to the *New Oxford Shakespeare*, Gary Taylor and I set out these findings at length[23]. For *2 Henry VI*, we argue that an original version of this play was written by Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and most likely another author, as-yet-unidentified. An important caveat is that we do not claim that this original version is represented by *Contention*. Our 'best guess' date for this original version is 1590. For *3 Henry VI* we propose that an original version of the play was written by Shakespeare, Marlowe, and most likely another author, also as-yet-unidentified. Again, importantly, we do not claim that this original version is represented by *True Tragedy*. Our 'best guess' for that original version is 'late 1590'; that is, after the original version of *2 Henry VI*. For *1 Henry VI*, we argue that an original version of the play was written by Thomas Nashe, Marlowe, and another as-yet-unidentified author. Shakespeare may or may not have been an original co-author, but his most substantive contribution to the play seems to belong to a slightly later period. An original version of this play was completed by March 1592, taking into account the entry in Henslowe's account book. And we argue that Shakespeare revised all three parts, of which at least two he was an original co-author, at some period between 1594 and 1597, but likely soon after the formation of the Chamberlain's Men, which happened sometime in the second half of 1594 – our 'best guess' for the Shakespearean revisions and/or adaptation is 1595 – and he did so to create a unified tetralogy of plays, along with *Richard III*, for the newly formed company. The First Folio versions of all three *Henry VI* plays therefore include stratified writing in multiple ways in terms of authorship and chronology. They each bear textual

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23   See Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 493-99, 513-17.

witness to a time, before 1593 (when Marlowe died), when two or more authors produced a version of the plays that were later revised by Shakespeare.

I must now not only search for Shakespeare, but Marlowe, Nashe, and any trace of other unknown authors too. The *Groats-worth* business provides an entry point. As *3 Henry VI* has always been primarily associated with Shakespeare in modern scholarship, in full knowledge of its inclusion in the First Folio, there has been little consideration given to how oddly targeted the allusion is. An author writing in 1592 assumes that a reader could connect to Shakespeare an adapted version of a phrase they can only have heard onstage: modernised as "tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide". Perhaps it makes better sense when one considers that this section of *Groats-worth* is explicitly addressed "To those Gentlemen […] that spend their wits in making plaies", and that others obliquely referred to, "thou famous gracer of Tragedians" and "yong Iuuenall, that byting Satyrist", have been traditionally identified as, respectively, Marlowe and Nashe (sig. E4ᵛ-F1ʳ). Another "fellow" scholar "about this Cittie", who is "in nothing inferiour" to Marlowe and Nashe, is, like the author-persona of Greene, "driuen […] to extreme shifts" (sig. E4ᵛ-F1ʳ). This dramatist has been plausibly identified as George Peele, the co-author of *Titus Andronicus*[24]. As I argue elsewhere, the implied charge of plagiarism against Shakespeare ("beautified with our feathers") may allude to Shakespeare's use of a partial script by Peele to complete *Titus Andronicus* (Loughnane 2016). But it may also allude just as plausibly to something suspect in Shakespeare's dealings with Marlowe and Nashe: as we have seen, both men's writing has been detected in the *Henry VI* plays.

The fall-out to the *Groats-worth* allusion is familiar territory: Nashe denies authorship of this "triuiall lying Pamphlet" in an epistolary preface to the second edition of his *Pierce Penilesse* (1592; sig. ¶v), while Chettle, now considered the genuine author of the piece, denies his involvement, writing "it was all *Greenes*, not mine nor Maister *Nashes*, as some vniustly haue affirmed" in *Kind-harts Dream* (1592; sig. A4ʳ). He notes how the piece caused offence to

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[24] The author, perhaps pointedly, swears "by sweet S. George" in this passage.

"one or two" of the "play-makers" alluded to. Chettle says he knows neither man, and that he is especially glad he does not know one of them (presumably Marlowe, though it could be Peele; Chettle makes it clear that he knows Nashe), but he expresses regret for allowing the publication of such offensive material about the other:

> I am as sory, as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because my selfe haue seene his demeanor no lesse ciuill than he exelent in the qualitie he professes: Besides, diuers of worship haue reported, his vprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writting, that aprooues his Art. (sig. A4ʳ)

This passage is generally assumed to refer to Shakespeare. The support of "divers of worship" (meaning those of gentlemen status) is as plausible in 1592 for Peele, a university-educated scholar, as Shakespeare. But Peele seems less likely to have taken offence at the comments in *Groats-worth*, which largely paint him as a victim of sorts.

I draw attention to the *Groats-worth* kerfuffle to highlight its foregrounding of issues of authorship. One author is offended by another author, and the identity of both the offended and offender is in question. Nashe denies authorship. Chettle denies authorship. And Greene, most importantly, cannot decide the matter from beyond the grave. Shakespeare, almost certainly the "onely Shake-scene", seems to take offence at whatever duplicitous action is implied by "beautified with our feathers".

For modern readers the allusion to Shakespeare might seem so oblique as to make Shakespeare's response appear overly-sensitive, yet the publisher of *Groats-worth*, William Wright, appears to have recognised its libellous danger: the entry for the Stationers' Register reads "uppon the perill of Henrye Chettle" (Arber 1875-94, 2:620). Shakespeare appears to have registered his offence among friends soon after publication, and Chettle must make pains to play down his role. (Greene dies on 3 September; *Groats-worth* was entered in the Stationers' Register on 20 September; and both responses by Nashe and Chettle are published before the year is out.) By doing so, Shakespeare, as author, draws an explicit link between the line

parodied from *True Tragedy/3 Henry VI* and himself. In rejecting the perceived insult, he identifies as author of this line from the play.

But just how readily would anyone have identified Shakespeare with this line from a then-unpublished stage play? Living in a world where *True Tragedy* and the First Folio exist, scholars can identify the line in question, but it beggars belief that this one mid-scene line would be instantly familiar to readers in 1592. Relatedly, would any reader in 1592 have identified Shakespeare as author of this line, that scene, or the entire play? The author of *Groats-worth* seems to recognise that Shakespeare is the author of this line from this play. By parodying it, he, the author, is making an explicit connection between the line and Shakespeare-as-author. An attentive reader in 1592, working through this gossipy section about London's dramatists, might have caught the pun on Shakespeare in "Shake-scene", might just possibly have recognised and remembered the line from a stage play she or he had seen, and put two and two together. Yet there is something of an insider's game about the *Groats-worth* business. After all, the reference to "Shake-scene" comes *after* the parodied line from the *Henry VI* play. Rather the allusion seems intended for those who might immediately recognise the frame of reference for the parody, and who might know who wrote this specific line in this co-authored play. Otherwise, after all, the allusion fails to work; modern scholars only recognise it because of the subsequent print tradition. It is a joke about an actor-dramatist for actors and dramatists that foregrounds the role of authorship.

Shakespeare's authorship of the "tiger's heart" line is supported by recent attribution scholarship. Both the studies of Craig and Burrows (2012) and Segarra et al. (2016) firmly attribute the fourth scene of Folio *3 Henry VI* to Shakespeare. (As the line is the same in *True Tragedy* as in *3 Henry VI* – and indeed almost all of York's 39-line speech is identical or broadly similar – we can assume shared authorship.) It is striking that the charge of plagiarism against Shakespeare is in connection to the third part of the tetralogy from *1 Henry VI* to *Richard III*. Attribution and dramaturgical evidence suggest that Shakespeare took over an incomplete script by Peele in completing *Titus Andronicus*, which could at least be interpreted as a form of plagiarism: passing off a co-authored composite work

as one's own; indeed, interestingly, it is the only coauthored work that Meres identifies as Shakespeare's own in 1598. So, why not quote from *Titus Andronicus*, especially in a text where the titular author of *Greene's Groatsworth* identifies with Peele's struggles? The recent attribution studies that identify multiple hands, including Marlowe's, in the *Henry VI* plays, direct our intention to the modes of co-authorship that produced each of the plays in the set of works.

Gary Taylor offers an exhaustive account of the evidence for why *1 Henry VI* post-dates the two other plays (Taylor 1995). In brief, the plays *2* and *3 Henry VI* do not require any reader or audience familiarity with *1 Henry VI*, while the first part intermittently assumes a reader or audience's knowledge of the later parts. Shakespeare's contribution to *1 Henry VI*, the only extant version of which is the Folio copy, actually appears to be fairly limited: scenes II.iv, IV.ii, and IV.v (traditionally IV.iv). It is largely agreed that Nashe is the author of the opening Act (I.i-vii), while Marlowe's hand has been most persuasively identified in III.ii-viii (traditionally III.ii-iv) and V.iii-v. The authorship of the rest of the play is contested. As noted above, all three Folio texts of the *Henry VI* plays appear to have been revised by Shakespeare sometime after the formation of the Lord Chamberlain's Men playing company in late 1594. As a project for Shakespeare, this makes good sense: the newly formed company has four plays, including Shakespeare's *Richard III*, about the Wars of the Roses that could be performed serially if parts of it were slightly revised to allow for greater continuity.

The play represented by Folio *1 Henry VI* is commonly associated with the performance of a play recorded ambiguously as "harey the vj" in Philip Henslowe's 'Diary' or account book. As we have seen, Henslowe marked the play as "ne" in his account book, meaning it debuts on 3 March 1592[25]. If the original composition of "harey the vj" post-dates the original composition of the two other parts, and Shakespeare was involved in writing the other parts, then why was he not part of the consortium of authors who wrote the prequel? There are only two options for this: either Shakespeare was not asked to be involved or Shakespeare did not want to be

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[25]   See note 4.

involved. Both scenarios are intriguing to consider. With the former, Shakespeare's involvement was not wanted, required, or facilitated for whatever reason: proximity, company involvement, social network, reputation, etc. With the latter, Shakespeare himself chose to opt out for whatever reason, which might be the same: proximity, company involvement, social network, reputation, but also his own schedule and agenda. What is striking is that in 1592 two new plays in this specific Wars of the Roses cycle debuted: one, "Harey the vj", a prequel to two plays already in existence; and two, *Richard III*, a sequel to the same two plays in existence. Shakespeare was likely uninvolved in the original composition of former collaborative enterprise, while he is the sole author of the latter. The furore of late 1592, clearly about authorial practices, may emerge into sharper focus: is the author of *Groats-worth* alluding to Shakespeare striking it out alone with *Richard III*, with a play that builds upon earlier collaborative serial work ("beautified with our feathers")? This is just a conjecture, but one that foregrounds issues arising from collaboration, giving consideration to how and why authors choose who they work with or do not.

One of the authors of the prequel, Nashe, describes the writing of history plays such as those in this Wars of the Roses cycle in the earlier-cited *Pierce Penilesse*. This is the same text in which he denies authorship of *Groats-worth*. In a passage defending plays (and the activity of play-going) as "a rare exercise of vertue", he clearly alludes to the history prequel in which he has recently had a hand, noting:

> How would it haue ioyed braue *Talbot* (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred yeares in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and haue his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least, (at seuerall times) who in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding. (sig. F3ʳ)

With the phrase "the terror of the French", Nashe is quoting from his own section of the prequel (I.vi.20), yet he never explicitly identifies himself as author. This self-quotation is not without irony, as Sarah Neville astutely observes. The speaker in the play,

Talbot himself, is repeating a phrase spoken by his French captors: "By explicitly quoting not only himself and Talbot, but also Talbot's ironic repurposing of others' words, Nashe's commendation of history plays suggests that he saw a kind of symbiosis existing between 'buried' sources and 'living' performance" (Shakespeare 2017, 2:2389). Perhaps an attentive reader of *Pierce Penilesse* in 1592 would have recognised the quotation from a play they had seen performed? Perhaps they knew the same author they were reading had contributed to that play? Perhaps they connected the quotation to the author? Perhaps, or perhaps not. Given the hasty retreat beaten by Chettle and Nashe, we can only be certain that at least one attentive reader certainly did.

There are no known allusions in either Marlowe's own work or that of others that connect him to the *Henry VI* plays. He dies before any version of these plays appears in print. Given Marlowe's involvement, the anonymous early printings of *Contention* (1594) and *True Tragedy* (1595) are more surprising. Marlowe's death in 1593 was a *cause célèbre* among those of a literary and/or puritanical bent, producing several accounts in the years that follow. See, for example, George Peele's description of "Marley […] unhappy in [his] end" in *The Honour of the Garter* (London, 1593; STC 19539; sig. A1ᵛ), or Thomas Beard's *Theatre of God's Judgement*, where "Marlin"'s ("Marlow" in the annotation) death is a result of his "atheisme & impiety" and he is described as "a Poet of scurrilitie" (London, 1597; STC 1659; sig. K5ʳ)[26]. Marlowe's death, as well as the punishment and fall of his ex-housemate, the dramatist Thomas Kyd, was likely notorious. This rise in Marlowe's prominence either coincides with, or translates into, the sudden visibility of his name in print. Three of his plays are first published in 1594 and

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[26] See also William Rankins' *Seven Satires* where he alludes to Marlowe's atheism in a passage that refers to Machiavelli and Turks: "such as haue hell-borne Atheisme taught" (London, 1598; STC 20700; sig. B4ʳ). Francis Meres in *Palladis Tamia* (1598) picks up on Beard's criticisms explicitly and claims "so our tragical poet *Marlow* for his Epicurisme and Atheisme had a tragicall death" (London, 1598; STC 17834; sig. Oo7ᵛ-8ʳ). William Vaughan in *The Golden Grove* (1600), in a section about atheists, recounts Marlowe's death in Deptford and cautions the reader to "see the effects of Gods iustice" (London, 1600; STC 24610; sig. C4ᵛ-C5ʳ).

Marlowe's name is prominently displayed on each title-page: *The Massacre at Paris* ("Written by Christopher Marlow"; London; STC 17423), *Edward II* ("Written by Chri. Marlow Gent"; London; STC 17437), and *Dido, Queen of Carthage* ("Written by Christopher Marlowe, and Thomas Nash. Gent."; London; STC 17441). If Marlowe's involvement with the plays underlying *Contention* and *True Tragedy* was well known – that is, if authentically *Marlovian* – it is surprising in this context that Thomas Millington did not attempt to capitalise upon this upturn in interest in this author.

After the burst of Marlowe-attributed publications in 1594, things get a little quieter in the years that follow. *1 & 2 Tamburlaine* are re-issued in 1597, once more anonymously. Then, in the years 1598-1600, there develops an interest in Marlowe's poetry. His *Hero and Leander* is published on its own in 1598 ("By Christopher Marloe"; London; STC 17413), while, in the same year, *Hero and Leander* is published with a continuation by George Chapman ("begun by Christopher Marloe"; London; STC 17414). Henry Petowe also publishes his own continuation of the poem ("penned by that admired Poet *Marloe*"; sig. A3^v), which does not include Marlowe's part (London, 1598; STC 19807). In 1600, Marlowe's translation of Lucan's *Pharsalia* is first published ("by Chr. Marlovv"; London; STC 16883.5), and, in a separate edition, Marlowe's incomplete *Hero and Leander* is published with *Pharsalia* ("by Christopher Marloe"; London; STC 17415). Thus, by 1600, of the eleven authentically Marlovian works published, only *1 & 2 Tamburlaine* were published anonymously. This can be explained, however, in that they were the only plays by Marlowe published during his lifetime (and before the furore surrounding his death), and subsequent reprintings were based upon the first copy; indeed, the only subsequent publications of *Tamburlaine*, which divided the two parts, *1 Tamburlaine* (London, 1605; STC 17428) and *2 Tamburlaine* (London, 1606; STC 17428a), were also published anonymously. The only subsequent substantively Marlovian texts to be issued, *Doctor Faustus* (A-Text 1604 "by Ch. Marl" [London; STC 17429]; B-Text 1616 "by Ch. Marklin" [London; STC 17432]) and *The Jew of Malta* (1633; "by Christopher Marlo" [London; STC 17412]) all identify the author by name.

Conclusion; or, Searching in Jaggard's Shop

That Thomas Millington's first publications of *Contention* and *True Tragedy* neglected to identify either Shakespeare or Marlowe as author requires some explanation. Looking back, it would seem economically prudent for the publisher to have done so. When Millington chose to make an investment in the plays, as he also did with *Titus Andronicus* and *The Chronicle History of Henry the Fifth*, he must have assumed there was some market for them and therefore probably knew of a version of these plays in performance. This need not necessarily mean he knew the identity of the authors involved, not least given the murky co-authorship of the plays underlying *Contention* and *True Tragedy*. But that said, Millington seems to have taken a curiously particular interest in publishing Shakespearean titles. That Shakespeare's name did not appear on the title-pages might then seem odd, but it is not inexplicable. Versions of *Contention* or *True Tragedy* might have been performed often; certainly, the one (non-Shakespearean) play in this cycle we do have records for, "harey the vj", was performed regularly. That the earliest of these plays in the (later established) cycle, first written c. 1590, were popular seems certain – inspiring, as they did, both a prequel in "Harey the vj" and sequel in *Richard III* – but that does not mean they were readily associated with Shakespeare or Marlowe or anyone else c. 1594-95 when Millington made his investment. As we have seen, Shakespeare's name did not appear on any printed play-text until 1598, so an attribution in 1594 or 1595 would have been an outlier. Marlowe's involvement as co-author of the plays underlying *Contention* and *True Tragedy* may have simply been unknown[27]. Shakespeare's adaptation of the three parts, post-1594 for Chamberlain's Men, probably made the connection between that specific author and this play-cycle much clearer. That Millington re-issued the plays in 1600 without emending the title-pages to add Shakespeare or anyone else's name could have been simply pragmatic; while the printer ornaments

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[27]   The attribution evidence for the text underlying the Folio copies of *2 Henry VI* and *3 Henry VI*, albeit adapted by Shakespeare, suggest Marlowe was never the dominant hand in either collaboration. See Taylor and Loughnane 2017, 496, 498.

and details change between the mid-1590s and 1600 editions, the title-wording and layout is almost identical in both reprinting jobs. That reprints often failed to correct or augment relevant title-page details is common in the period[28].

As we have seen, Shakespeare's earliest works, and particularly his early co-authored works, are those most likely to be published anonymously in his lifetime. These persistently anonymous works, or versions of works, are also those most likely to be excluded from the First Folio. Like *Contention* and *True Tragedy*, *Arden of Faversham* and *Edward III* are early co-authored plays that are published anonymously in Shakespeare's lifetime and excluded from the First Folio. Where *Contention* and *True Tragedy* differ from these other early anonymously printed co-authored works is that other versions of these plays are preserved in the First Folio. All modern scholars, working as we do in this post-First-Folio world, read *Contention* and *True Tragedy* with their respective Folio versions in mind. Reading one against the other, as we do now, we can tell that these are versions of the same play(s) and that the 1623 versions are not only longer but also superior. Before 1623, readers could only compare what they could purchase with what they might have seen on stage. Frequently disparaged by scholars as 'corrupt' or 'bad' quartos, *Contention* and *True Tragedy* were for a time the only versions of something that could otherwise be enjoyed intermittently in performance[29]. Given both plays were reprinted twice, for many readers this must have sufficed. But does this mean that *Contention* or *True Tragedy* had any authority in their own day?

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[28] For example, the title-page to the fourth quarto of *Richard III*, printed in 1605 (London; STC 22316), recorded that the play "*hath bin lately acted by the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Newly augmented, by William Shakespeare*", a word-for-word reprint of the 1598 second quarto title-page description (London; STC 22315). The change in company title, post-1603, to "*the Kings Maiesties seruants*" is only first reflected in the 1612 fifth quarto (London; STC 22318).

[29] As this essay suggests, the perceived inferior quality of these highly variant shorter versions does not adequately explain their anonymous publication. See also Terri Bourus' "The Good Enough Quarto: *Hamlet* as a Material Object" (Bourus 2019), whose formula about 'good enough quartos' could be usefully applied here. The relative 'badness' of these texts, and especially *Contention*, is the subject of another forthcoming study by the present author.

No-one has found a George Buc (or someone similar) for *Contention*, *True Tragedy* and their First Folio counterparts – someone who compared the versions and said they are "much ye same w[i]th y[a]t in Shakespeare". But, in fact, that missing figure has been hiding in plain sight. In 1987 William Montgomery demonstrated that the compilers of the First Folio consulted the 1619 third quarto printing of *The Whole Contention* for certain passages in what was to be *2 Henry VI* (Montgomery 1987, 175-78). As both the Pavier quarto and the Folio text were printed at Jaggard's printing shop, that quarto text may have been readily available for consultation. So, too, it seems likely that those in Jaggard's printing shop consulted the same quarto for passages in *3 Henry VI*, thereby acknowledging that it also represented a version of the same play. These actions seem almost incidental, but in their activity of remembering, searching, consulting, and inserting, the compilers of *2 Henry VI* recognised that the plays were versions of one another. Of these, remembering seems most significant. That they remembered the other texts, and how they acted upon this memory, tells us that they, too, recognised that the play-texts were versions of one another. Faced with corrupt passages in the manuscripts underlying the Folio texts, they had two choices: print what they could of the corrupted material, placing their trust in those textual witnesses, or substitute material in their place. Someone remembered the 1619 quartos and someone connected the versions. That someone did this may seem obvious to us today – we can all recognise that one text is a version of the other – and perhaps it was for those in the printing shop, too. But through their series of actions in the printing shop, beginning with someone remembering, we know that those early texts were granted at least some authority.

Coda

Roland Barthes' claims about the death of the author (1967), from which this volume takes its theme, have long held an influence in western criticism. Barthes' critical position was that a literary work could and should be approached without consideration of the social and biographical context which produced it; that our

understanding of the author, and our conception of his or her intentions, actually imposes limits upon our reading of the text[30]. This chapter, in a more pragmatic way, is about the deaths of authors and what happens posthumously to their works. Marlowe is dead by the time *Contention* and *True Tragedy* are published anonymously. Shakespeare is dead by the time Heminges and Condell claim Shakespearean authority for the versions of these plays printed in the 1623 First Folio. We cannot know how readers between 1594/1595 and 1619 read and understood *Contention* and *True Tragedy*; whether they read these works biographically with the lives of the infamous Marlowe or the leading dramatist of the Chamberlain's/King's Men in mind; whether they found the printed texts flawed or in some way unauthoritative; whether they marked any connection between the texts available and those performed by Shakespeare's company. From 1619, readers may have felt more assured in connecting these versions to Shakespeare. From late 1623, readers of both the early versions and the Folio texts may have recognised their textual correspondence, conflating the Shakespearean authority of both versions. Until the last decade, at least within the Shakespearean critical complex, the early versions have helped sustain various arguments about Shakespeare's early career, company involvement, transmission via print, and so on. Now, with the recent attributions, these versions must be re-read with the other author figure of Marlowe in mind. These anonymous sixteenth-century texts, the sorts of works for which the authors are dead in both a real sense and, *à la* Barthes, theoretical sense, have, over a series of claims, counter-claims, and investigations, from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century, become the works of known authors. Or, approaching the situation from another angle, the actions of these sixteenth-century authors in co-producing these plays (however they might be transmitted into print) are revealed through the traces that they and others have left behind. The de-anonymised texts – partially, at least – reveal the actions and interactions of the dead to the living. Whether that imposes new

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[30] Signing the essay, Barthes likely appreciated the innately paradoxical situation of a named author asserting this critical position. See Seán Burke's *The Death and Return of the Author* for a critique of its ahistorical foundations among other things (Burke 1992).

limits on our interpretation of these sixteenth-century texts is left for those who take Barthes' claims at face value, but, at least, it makes these anonymous textual artefacts recuperatively and commemoratively social.

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Textual Editing and Diversity: Shakespeare's *Richard III* as a Case Study

Sonia Massai, Andrea Peghinelli

This conversation explores the big questions that are re-defining how scholars approach the editing of Shakespeare's works in our historical moment, from who gets to edit Shakespeare to how they choose to represent the Shakespearean text to their readers. Shakespeare has traditionally been edited by white, male scholars trained in prestigious academic institutions in the Anglo-world. What happens when women and BIPOC scholars, or scholars whose first language is not English, get to edit Shakespeare? And what happens when editors approach the task of re-editing Shakespeare for a more diverse readership? By using examples drawn from Shakespeare's *Richard III*, this conversation shows how differently this history play can be edited and how differently it can be made to mean for new generations of readers, students, and theatre-goers.

Keywords: *Richard III*, Editing, Textual studies, Performance, Diversity

The rise of the 'professional' editing of Shakespeare in the nineteenth century, when editors started to be commissioned among scholars employed by universities, and the systematic methods of textual analysis and editorial rationales ushered in by the New Bibliography in the twentieth century have informed our understanding of textual editing as requiring a specific set of technical skills and specialist knowledge. However, editing also (and inevitably) involves acts of interpretation: what early edition should be used as the 'base-text' for a modern edition; what features of an early edition should be valued and preserved and what features should be modernized or emended; what constitutes an 'error' or 'variation'; what words should be glossed and what sense or meaning should be foregrounded as relevant or

appropriate; what critical or artistic interventions in the history of the reception of Shakespeare should be singled out in the editorial apparatus? As an act of interpretation, editing is historically situated. In other words, editing is 'of its own time' because it belongs to the wider and ideologically informed realm of the 'history of ideas'. In this conversation, we consider the extent to which current editorial practices reflect (or perhaps resist the impact of) wider changes in the field of Shakespeare studies. We focus our conversation on recent editions of, and current thinking about, Shakespeare's *Richard III*, highlighting the need to allow diverse voices and diverse histories to emerge from our (editorial) engagement with (literary) history.

Andrea Peghinelli (AP): Establishing the text is commonly perceived as being the first task of an editor of Shakespeare, but probably this is only the beginning. Working on a new edition of a play presents many challenges and it is a complex process of decision making, always inevitably compared to, and sometimes drawing on, previous scholarly work on that play. Twenty-first century editors have resources and possibly scope for changes not available to their predecessors, especially after newly discovered facts and innovative critical perspectives have shed new light on different aspects of the 'text' as it has been transmitted by the editorial tradition. Considering, then, recent editions of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, what are their main features? What is distinctive about how they re-present the text and the history of its reception to their readers?

Sonia Massai (SM): All the so-called 'gold-standard' single-volume editions of *Richard III* currently available to theatre practitioners, researchers, and to instructors and their students are now on average fifteen to twenty years old[1]. These editions offer exhaustive accounts of how Shakespeare dramatized historical source materials, while borrowing from earlier literary and dramatic accounts of the reign of *Richard III*. Compared to editions

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[1]   In reverse chronological order, the main recent critical editions of *Richard III* are Siemon 2009; Jowett 2000; Lull 1999 (updated in 2009).

prepared in the third and fourth quarters of the twentieth century, their introductions and notes pay more sustained attention to non-literary texts, such as libels, satires, and invectives – 'inter-texts' or 'co-texts' rather than direct sources – that made up "the discursive environment" within which the play took shape (Siemon 2009, 28-39). They also devote more space to the play in performance (Lull 2009, 41-47 were added to the original edition of 1999 to cover stage productions that had taken place over the intervening ten-year period). While scholarly and exhaustive in their analyses of all main features of the play and its reception, these editions have inevitably started to seem a little dated. Two main events have marked the reception of *Richard III* since they were published: the discovery and excavation of Richard's remains in Leicester in 2012 and the rise of disability studies. Their editors could have predicted this turn of historical and critical events that has triggered fresh readings of Shakespeare's fictional representation of the nature and extent of Richard's disability, for which we now have archaeological evidence. More generally, though, these editions adopt a traditional, top-down approach to the way they present (editorial) knowledge to their readers that no longer belongs to our historical moment and to the need to decolonize and diversify the academic curriculum. Rather than directing their readers' attention to places where the play refuses interpretative closure and encourages us to (re)discover different voices and histories, these editions confront their readers with a towering amount of knowledge that they can only benefit from as passive recipients.

AP: The relationship between Shakespeare's play and the historical Richard III has been explored in several different ways, and it is well established that Shakespeare mainly relied on the great sixteenth-century chronicles (mostly Raphael Holinshed and Edward Hall, who, in turn, relied on Thomas More's *History of Richard III*) as sources for this play. We also know that there was a wider range of other sources available to the playwright, other documents and different accounts not always accessible to present-day scholars – it is not possible, for instance, to trace Shakespeare's references to an unrecorded oral tradition. You mentioned the recently discovered archaeological evidence as an element brought

forward to encourage new readings. The digging up of a royal body Shakespeare greatly contributed to shape, accordingly to his contemporaries' needs of illuminating history, could be read as an essential process of archaeology: the retrieval of lost remains to add – or re-write – missing pages to that story.

Do you think that going back to the historical context would help looking at the text – and consequently at characters – under a different light or to focus on otherwise neglected possible readings? What kind of signs were left on the dramatic text by such a treatment of history, where the exploration of the behaviour of an individual character, under given circumstances, is dangerously superimposed over the chronicling of events? Would you suggest that a new edition of Shakespeare's *Richard III* can foreground other aspects of the text or its reception to offset the conservative influence of long-established editorial and critical practice and to connect more explicitly with our own historical moment?

SM: Yes, I believe that reconsidering the range of historical accounts of the reign of *Richard III* that were available to Shakespeare and how they may have affected his re-presentation of this historical figure can help us revisit received critical and editorial approaches to this play. Each new generation of editors and readers will of course find different aspects of this rich and complex play that will seem to need further exploration. I am personally vexed at the uniformity of critical readings of (and editorial approaches to) the so-called 'wooing scene' (I.ii).

In this scene, Richard addresses a grieving Lady Anne, whose husband and father-in-law he first claims and then denies having killed. Editors tend at best to record the fact that there is no historical or fictional precedent for I.ii in the play's known sources; at worst, they identify a precedent in an earlier Latin play, Thomas Legge's *Richardus Tertius* (1579), but this claim is factually wrong[2]. Furthermore, their readings of this scene patronize Anne as weak

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[2] See, for example, Jowett 2000, 157-58: "Richard's seduction of Anne is not recorded in the chronicles, but is presented in *Ricardus* [sic] *Tertius*". In fact, in *Richardus Tertius*, Anne features as "Anna Regina uxor Richardi" and Richard attempts to seduce Elizabeth, eldest daughter of King Edward and Queen Elizabeth ("Filia Eduardi Major"), not Anne, in III.iv.

and morally compromised. John Jowett, for example, concludes that I.ii is a "temporary mirror" that gives "Anne […] an illusory sexual power that disarms danger and shapes destiny":

> This is the fantasy to which she is subjected, and, hesitantly, the temptation of fantasy prevails. Anne gives in to Richard, calling him "dissembler" […]. Her chiding is that of the resentful though forgiving lover. The word accusatorily reflects back on the self-deceit of the speaker, who both sees and disregards the insincerity. (Jowett 2000, 43)

"The episode has no visible consequence whatsoever for his ambitions to the crown. Instead it serves as a key exposition of Richard's charismatic charm" (41). Siemon chimes in: "Anne's laments and curses so quickly change to murmured submission that Richard's delight at female fickleness […] and her shame at her 'woman's heart' […] seem validated" (Siemon 2009, 19). What can a new edition of *Richard III* do to provide a different angle on this key moment in the play?

As an editor myself, currently in the process of preparing a new edition of the play for the fourth Arden Shakespeare series, I was prompted to look again at Lady Anne by my own sense of discomfort at how her character has been presented in earlier editions. It had always seemed to me that editors and critics, rather than Anne, fall for Richard and validate his rhetorical powers. Before I started working on my own edition, I had only gone as far as assuming that, as a woman and a Lancaster at the court of her triumphant enemies, Anne is not so much 'wooed' as 'won' by Richard, meaning that she has very few other options open to her to ensure her survival. But when tasked with preparing a new edition, I followed my hunch and decided to find out more about Anne to try and establish what Shakespeare's original audience may have remembered about her and how 'her-story' may have affected how they responded to I.ii.

I soon realized that there is more to Anne than what editors have chosen to mention about her so far. In a nutshell, what editors generally do not tell their readers is that the historical Richard and Lady Anne had been married for nearly a decade by the time Edward IV died in 1483. Anne's father, Richard Neville, Earl of

Warwick, had been one of the most powerful allies of Richard's father, the Duke of York, and of his children, so much so that he was dubbed 'the Kingmaker' when his unfaltering support ensured Edward IV's accession to the throne on 4 March 1461. Anne was born and had been raised as a staunch Yorkist. It was only in 1469, when Warwick got tired of the king's ingratitude and rebelled, that Anne was used as a pawn and married off to Edward of Lancaster, the son of King Henry VI and Queen Margaret. Warwick was killed at the Battle of Barnet on 14 April 1471 and Anne's husband, Prince Edward, at the Battle of Tewkesbury on 7 May 1471. Anne rejoined Edward IV's court as Richard's wife shortly thereafter. Shakespeare's original audience would have remembered that her marriage to Richard lasted for over ten years and that they had a son, who tragically died shortly after Richard's accession to the throne in 1483.

While Tudor chronicle 'his-stories' say very little about Anne, there are other, earlier accounts that document 'her-story'. Most arresting is the visual evidence of a dashing young couple in the heraldic roll compiled and beautifully illustrated by John Rous, one of the two priests of the chantry of Guy's Cliffe just outside Warwick (https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-rous-roll). The roll includes Richard twice, first holding Warwick Castle on his left hand, with a boar at his feet, looking quite dashing in full armour[3]. The second drawing shows Richard with Anne next to him as his queen consort[4]. Over the page, Rous included a drawing of their

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[3] The text underneath this drawing reads: "Rex Richardus tercius – born in the Castel of Foderiyngay a myghti prince / in his dayes special gode lord to the town & lordship of Warrewyk wher yn the castel he did gret cost off byldyng / In the which his most noble lady & wyf was born and at gret instance of her he of his bounteous grace with owt fee or fyn / graunt to the seyd borowh frely by charter / as kyng William Conquerour his noble progenitor a fore tym gret previlagis".

[4] The inscription underneath reads: "The moost mighty prynce Rychard / by the grace of god kynge of ynglond and of fraunce and lord of Irelond / by verrey matrimony with owt dyscontynewans [discontinuance] or any defylynge yn the lawe by eyre [heir] / male lineally dyscendyng from kynge harre the second / all avarice set a syde Rewled hys subjettys In hys Realme ful commendabylly / poneschynge offenders of hys laws / specyaly Extorcioners and oppressors of hys comyns and chereschynge tho[se] that were vertues [virtuous] by the

son Edward, Prince of Wales. Another early chronicler, the Burgundian Jehan de Waurin, reports that "as early as 1464 Warwick wished to marry both his daughters to the king's brothers, one of whom, Anne's future husband Richard […], was his ward and apparently living in his household from 1465"[5].

The temporal distance that separates these earlier historians from Shakespeare should not lead us to assume that their accounts of Anne's lifelong relationship with Richard was unknown to him or his contemporaries. In his recent revisionary account of the reign of Richard III, finalized and published in the wake of the discovery of Richard's remains in Leicester, Philip Schwyzer points out that the early 1590s occupied a "distinctive historical moment in relation to [the play's] subject – a period after the extinction of living memory, but still within the horizon of what is variously termed 'active' or 'communicative memory', the period of 90-120 years in which memories may be transmitted over three or four generations" (Schwyzer 2013, 71). The Lady Anne we think we know via Shakespeare's play (the weak victim of Richard's power to deceive and seduce) may not have been the Lady Anne his original audience remembered (the rich heiress of one of the most influential families in the country, whose supporters and patrimony helped Richard establish his power base in the North of England).

By encouraging the readers of my edition to rediscover 'her-story', I am also hoping to invite a more open-ended reading of this scene: why would Shakespeare surprise his original audience by departing so dramatically from what they were likely to remember about Anne? Perhaps to give them (and those of us who care to find out more about her) a chance to resist Richard's 'charismatic charm' and, along with it, the spin that Tudor chronicles had placed on

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whyche dyscrete guydynfe [guiding] he gat gret thank of god and love of all hys subjettys / Ryche and pore / and gret lavd [loved] of the people of all othyr landys a bowt hym".

5   *Recueil des Croniques et Anchiennes Istories de la Grant Bretaigne*, as summed up by Michael Hicks in his entry for "Anne Neville" in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB).

earlier historical accounts?[6] I believe that I.ii represents a crucial moment in the play, where the blatant departure from recorded and 'communicative' memory was meant to help the original audience and readers resist the temptation to conflate Shakespeare's fictional Richard III, and his charisma as a character, with *Richard III*, which, as a play, and as I show elsewhere[7], raises important questions about who is (re)telling the story, and who is (re)writing history.

AP: Whether we consider early modern England as a 'proto-colonial' world, or if we think instead that a colonizing imagination had not yet assumed the imperial ambitions that would subsequently connotate English society, we can probably agree that there is an urgency to question and reappraise the way in which a culture is portrayed within the histories of colonialism. In the need for a present re-configuration, "a postcolonial, *proleptic* gaze on the [early modern] period via Shakespearean drama", as Jyotsna G. Singh wrote, "is particularly potent in questioning teleological historical time" (Singh 2019, 82), and it probably allows us to adopt an anti-colonial attitude in the present and re-think the relationship with a past as a series of shifts in the evolving trajectory of Shakespearean reception.

Shakespeare's plays are progressively used to tell stories about diverse lives and experiences. This is particularly evident in the performance history of specific plays – such as *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Tempest*, for instance – that have been appropriated by the formerly colonized, resonating, thus, with anti-colonial voices. From the mid-twentieth century on, responses to Shakespeare have been inflected by early decolonization movements, the impact of postcolonial theory and criticism, in particular by non-Western intellectuals (Edward Said's *Orientalism* is a case in point), all of which have prompted theoretical and political reorientations. After the postcolonial turn, Shakespearean studies and productions have

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[6]   Even Rous wrote a very different, scathing account of the reign of Richard after the accession of Henry VII, possibly due to his desire to please the new king or possibly because he believed the rumour according to which, after their son's death, Richard poisoned Anne so he could remarry and secure a new heir.

[7]   Forthcoming in *Cahiers Élisabéthains*.

become more cross-cultural and cosmopolitan, originating diverse non-Western pluralized readings and revised texts in intercultural adaptations.

Unfortunately, the editions of the Shakespearean texts we have inherited are often still shaped in accordance with assumptions no longer acceptable to us, going as far as distorting elements of the plays in their early printed Quartos and Folio versions. To what extent, then, can the editing of Shakespeare, and of *Richard III*, reflect the pressing imperative to decolonize the academic curriculum and to diversify the field of Shakespeare studies? What would a diverse edition of Shakespeare, and of *Richard III*, look like?

SM: *Richard III*, as an English history play, would seem to lend itself less intuitively to re-readings that aim to decolonize the curriculum, if by "decolonizing" we mean, strictly speaking, revisionary approaches that unpack colonial and imperialist representations of 'otherness'. However, we now tend to understand identity as intersectional, that is, as the product of multiple (as opposed to binary) determinants of subjectivity[8]. In keeping with this understanding of identity formations (and politics), we have also started to think of 'race' and 'ethnicity' as closely interrelated to 'gender' and 'sexuality', 'religion' and 'nationality', to name just a few categories that shape our sense of self. By the same token, we now tend to think of 'non-race' texts as equally implicated in the construction of intersectional identities. It is, for example, worth noting that, though not a 'race' play like *Othello* or *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard III* activates (and questions) a conventional alignment of 'fair' with 'good' and 'foul' with 'evil'. In V.i, Buckingham refers to Prince Edward as the "fair son" of "holy" King Henry (V.i.4)[9]. In the next scene, Richmond refers to news of his father's defection from Richard's ranks as "fair

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[8]   See, for example, Maalouf 2001, 159: "[We] should […] see our identity as the sum of all [our] various affiliations, instead of as only one of them raised to the status of the most important, made into an instrument of exclusion and sometimes into a weapon of war".

[9]   All quotations from the text of *Richard III* are from my forthcoming Arden Shakespeare Fourth Series edition.

comfort" and to Richard as the "foul swine" that "[l]ies now even in the centre of this isle" (V.ii.6, 10-11). The heart of the homeland is usurped, its "summer fields and fruitful vines" (8) are spoilt by a tyrant whose lack of 'fairness', literal and symbolic, marks him out as unfit to rule. The closing lines in this scene, though, ring a discordant note: an exultant Richmond, egged on by his allies, proclaims that "[k]ings it [that is, hope] makes gods, and meaner creatures kings" (24). Richmond's hubris can be at worst off-putting when modern editors and theatre directors draw their readers' and their audiences' attention to it; but it would have sounded downright blasphemous to early modern spectators. Incidentally, even in Holinshed, whose chronicles for the most part toe the Tudor party line, Richmond is startingly likened to a 'viper', even as Richard is conventionally referred to as a 'boar'. Even while praising Richmond, Holinshed compares the small size of his invading army to "the small viper" that is "the huge buls deadlie bane" and to "a little curre" that "dooth catch a bore boisterous and big" (Holinshed 1587, 754). My edition of *Richard III* will highlight how the play simultaneously mobilizes and critiques the 'fair'/'foul' binary (and how this binary, so central to Shakespeare's dramatic imagination, has been used to theorize the provenance of the printer's copies from which his plays were set)[10].

AP: The rise of Shakespeare from England's national poet to global playwright has exacerbated the lack of correlation between the homogeneity of its editors and the exponential increase in the diversity of its readers worldwide. As a matter of fact, academic interest in intercultural Shakespeare has been mainly focused on the influence of rewritings – adaptations and appropriations of his plays – in the shaping of diverse audiences throughout the world. 'Global Shakespeares' have acquired dramatic prestige of their own; besides, the influence of other cultures shapes intellectual and aesthetic prospects and artistic visions of contemporary Shakespearean productions, festivals, and interpretations.

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[10] On this slippage between the use of "fair" and "foul" in Shakespearean and early modern drama and its appropriation by New Bibliographers, see Adams 2021.

Contemporary theatre historiography markedly shows how Shakespeare has been 'de-versified'; therefore, the critical feedback and the responses that diverse audiences can also bring may broaden and enrich our understanding of what constitutes an intercultural, and hence heterogenous, 'Shakespeare's global performance community'. This attitude is crucial to a consideration of Shakespeare as a contemporary writer whose work is shaped by his 'reader' – director, adapter, spectator – in their moment, and could be a step forward towards systemic change and diversification in the field of Shakespeare and early modern literary and textual studies as well. Recognizing the activities of reading, analysing, and editing as responding to and engaging with each other could help establishing a set of textual possibilities prompted by those who act upon the texts rather than the edited texts acting upon the reader.

A diversifying practice should probably discontinue the concept of the universality of Shakespeare to consider different backgrounds and identities as potential assets rather than barriers to their interpretation of his plays. One might therefore want to ask whether a diverse edition of Shakespeare, and of *Richard III*, can be produced without diversifying the group of scholars who have traditionally been tasked with the editing of Shakespeare and without eliminating remaining gatekeeping practices. Can, thus, the editing of Shakespeare be diversified by being put into conversation with neighbouring subfields, within which scholars and practitioners also work very closely with the text, including translation, dramaturgy, and (decolonial) pedagogy?

SM: Shakespeare studies often transforms itself as a discipline either in response to cultural and societal change or to inspire it. However, the specialist knowledge involved in the preparation of scholarly editions of Shakespeare continues to be produced within one of the least diversified subfields in our discipline: textual editors are still predominantly white, male, and trained at established higher education institutions in the West.

During the first one hundred years in the history of the professionalization of the scholarly editing of Shakespeare (mid-1860s to mid-1960s), less than 5% of editors were women and 0% of

editors were BIPOC scholars, or scholars from 'white-other' backgrounds whose first language was not English. Since the mid-1970s, the number of women editors has grown, but it still represents just over 12% of editors. Ethnically and linguistically diverse editors still represent only 2% of all editors[11].

I believe that my role as editor of *Richard III* for the fourth Arden Shakespeare series (and as one of the general editors of the forthcoming Cambridge Shakespeare Editions series)[12] is not only to engage with (and commission editors willing to engage with) non-English and non-Western critical and performance traditions. While of course an important development in its own right, bringing critical editions of Shakespeare in conversation with 'global Shakespeares' is not enough to diversify the field (and the kind of editions that scholars have traditionally produced). As well as striving to produce diverse editions, that is, editions that grant visibility to other histories and other voices, editors and general editors of Shakespeare should also act as facilitators, by extending the conversation about the ideas and practices that have shaped the edition of Shakespeare and other literary classics to include other literary scholars, translators, and theatrical practitioners, who work closely with the text in ways that are comparable to textual editing and can inspire diverse approaches to editing.

The conversation should also include non-scholarly communities who work with Shakespeare in ways that challenge its traditional alignment with a (generally white, generally Western) cultivated elite. A prime example of good practice is Shakespeare in Prison (SIP), a signature community programme run by the Detroit Public Theatre[13]. Frannie Shepherd-Bates and Matthew Van Meter, the Director and Assistant Director of SIP, are preparing the first critical edition of *Richard III* written by

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[11] These figures are based on single-volume series starting with the first Arden Shakespeare series and excluding series that are currently under preparation.

[12] https://www.cambridge.org/core/browse-subjects/literature/announcing-cambridge-shakespeare-editions-series?utm_source=hootsuite&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=JAZ_CSE+announcement.

[13] https://www.detroitpublictheatre.org/shakespeareinprison.

incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women. In their own words:

> *Richard III in Prison* provides insight and perspective on Shakespeare's text. It builds on the rich legacy of annotated Shakespeare texts, but it also uniquely and explicitly centres the experiences and words of marginalized people without exoticizing or exploiting them. It is not 'about' prison, or the people locked up there, filtered through a narrator – it gives direct access to them, in their own words. It presents the contributors' ideas for what they are: valuable contributions to Shakespeare scholarship and an exciting way to introduce new readers to Shakespeare's work.[14]

The time seems right not only for *Richard III in Prison* but also for a series of 'Shakespeare in Prison' editions that will genuinely diversify our sense of what this play (and Shakespeare more generally) is and can be about.

AP: Considering that "the history of a play in the theatre can often show where the energy and shape of it lie", as J. S. Bratton and Julie Hankey wrote in the "Series Editors' Preface" of the Cambridge Shakespeare in Production (Bratton and Hankey 1999, viii), and that a major contribution to the definitive acknowledgment of "the Shakespearean imprint" in *Titus Andronicus* – a play that had been almost forgotten – came, as Giorgio Melchiori remarked, after the admirable staging directed by Peter Brook at Stratford in 1955 (Melchiori 1994, 29), what do you think is the role of the stage history of a play in editing a Shakespearean text?

For instance, in the discussion about diversity in textual studies of *Richard III*, the issue of staging disability in early modern drama is taken by scholars as emblematic. In disability studies, as you mentioned before, Richard's character is often taken up as Shakespeare's most representative case and interpreter of physical diversity. The ambiguity about how to interpret Richard's physical form and how to dramatize his body, as a matter of fact, marks the history of the play's staging. A recent Royal Shakespeare Company production was heavily marketed as the first casting by the Royal

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[14] Personal communication.

Shakespeare Company of a disabled actor in the leading role. The frequency of disabled actors earning major roles appears to be growing in British theatre; however, do you think the literalism affecting casting in this particular case, instead of serving to "enhance the performance and impact of the production", as director Gregory Doran stated (quoted in Marshall 2022), inevitably shifted the focus of the story of Richard being mainly about his disability?

SM: I would agree that key productions of Shakespeare (or any other ancient, early modern or modern classic) can radically change the way we think about it, the range of interpretations it can elicit, and their relevance in a specific place or moment in time. Gregory Doran's RSC production of *Richard III* undoubtedly marks an important milestone in the history of the company. And it is quite fitting that *Richard III* should function as a vehicle for the establishment of fairer working conditions for actors affected by physical or mental disabilities within the theatre industry: after all, *Richard III* is the first play in the English canon to have placed disability centre-stage. There is however a risk in overdetermining Richard's disability, especially after the discovery of Richard's remains in 2012 has helped experts establish that he was affected by scoliosis, a condition that affects the alignment of the shoulders (and that could have been hidden by clothing and armour), and not kyphosis, a condition that affects the shape of the back (and would have been harder to hide). 'Literalism' is another risk that comes with casting an actor affected by a physical disability to play Richard, since Richard's disability, especially when compared to how it was represented in earlier dramatic and non-dramatic sources and analogues, becomes less stigmatic and more symbolic (see Wilson 2022) and is in many ways *enabling* rather than *disabling* (see, for example, Love 2019; Williams 2021).

Diverse casting makes more sense when it encourages audiences to think less literally about physical or mental disability. Ivo van Hove's *Kings of War*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's first tetralogy (the three parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III*), is a good example of a production that encouraged this approach to understanding ableism and disability in less literal (and

oppositional) terms. In this production, Hans Kesting's Richard III wore suits that were visibly too tight for him, thus suggesting that his alienation from the rest of the York court stemmed from personal and social maladjustment rather than from a congenital physical disability. He also delivered all his monologues (except the last) to a large mirror. No other character took the slightest interest in the mirror; Richard, by stark contrast, self-fashioned himself, time and time again, before it, showing how dis/abled identities are fluid constructions that respond to cultural and societal pressures and pre-/mis-conceptions about what constitutes dis/ability[15].

In other recent productions, other types of 'literalism' have proved thought-provoking and popular, but also overdetermining. In Thomas Ostermeier's production (2015), for example, Lars Eidinger's Richard, whose athletic body, once he took off a prosthetic hunched back in I.ii, displayed no other visible markers of disability, nevertheless burst on to the stage fully formed as a confident, malevolent deceiver. Eidinger's Richard seduced the audience even before he successfully wooed Lady Anne. In Doran's production, Arthur Hughes's Richard has been praised for "go[ing] some way to correcting the false equivalence" of deformity and malignancy (Akbar 2022). Similarly to Eidinger's Richard, though, Hughes's Richard is a "handsome, swaggering sociopath" (Akbar 2022) – and not a character whose deformity attests to the inevitability of warped and compromised moral bearings. At least in this respect, Hughes's Richard aligns with other Richards, played with extraordinary panache by the best actors in their generation (from David Garrick to Ian McKellen), who glamorize this equivalence without questioning it.

Conclusion: Year of Richard III

When we first planned this conversation, we did not know that three major productions of *Richard III* would revive public attention in this English history play in 2022. Opening almost simultaneously in Canada, the USA, and the UK, three productions of *Richard III* at the Stratford Festival in Canada, the Free Shakespeare in the Park

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15   For more details about this production, see Massai 2018.

in New York, and at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon adopted radically different approaches to casting and characterization. At the Stratford Festival, Colm Feore, who is not disabled, was coached by a disability consultant to impersonate a character affected by scoliosis (rather than stigmatized by a hunched back). In this production, Richard was less affected by "a medical disability than a social and cultural one"[16]. In New York, Danai Gurira, a black actor who is not disabled, played Richard as "an action hero":

> Looking like a supervillain in black knee-high boots and stretch denim trousers, with her hair shaved into heraldic patterns, she is unflaggingly energetic, vocally thrilling and, as events become more hectic, more and more convincing. (Green 2022)

In this production, where Lady Anne is played by Ali Stroker, who uses a wheelchair, the bodies of the actors actively encouraged the audience to think critically about what constitutes a disability (or social disadvantage). Likewise, director O'Hara's idea to express Richard's diversity by casting a black woman to play this role prompted the same audience to explore his 'toxic masculinity' from a fresh angle, thus making his misogyny seem grotesque. As mentioned above, Hughes, who is affected by radial dysplasia, tapped on his own experience of disability to infuse his Richard with the power of lived experience.

All these productions were praised and critiqued to a similar extent, since their individual approach necessarily excluded other possible approaches to understanding Richard and the fictive world of the play in ways that resonate in our time. Classics are often radically altered in performance in order to ask new questions that can overturn traditional assumptions, but innovation can produce contrasting effects – greater freedom in casting can lead to overdetermining literalism – which neutralize its potential benefits.

We hope that this conversation will encourage editors of Shakespeare (and other literary classics) to prepare editions that

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[16]   Ann Swerdfager, spokesperson for the Stratford Festival, quoted in Tracy 2022.

similarly are of (and speak to) our historical moment. Like these productions, editions that foreground the questions and approaches that matter to us will seem more partisan and perhaps less scholarly to those who believe that editing is purely a technical task. As we suggest here, while requiring specialist knowledge of textual production in Shakespeare's time, editing his works is also an act of critical interpretation. It therefore seems important that, at a time when our field, like many other academic fields and sectors of society, is trying to strive for higher standards of equality and inclusion, editors should acknowledge their own historical and ideological situatedness and model their practice to reflect the critical, open-ended nature of the knowledge-making process that goes into producing a scholarly edition of Shakespeare (or any other literary classic). Even more crucially, we hope that this conversation will encourage literary scholars, translators, and theatre practitioners, as well as communities like SIP, to take ownership of the editing of Shakespeare as a powerful strategy to mobilize his works to talk to (and for) them.

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"The King's English" and the Language of the King: Shakespeare and the Linguistic Strategies of James I

Margaret Tudeau-Clayton

This paper takes a fresh look at the one Shakespearean instance of the trope of "the King's English" in the Folio version of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which, it argues, is a Jacobean version that thus ironically references the language of the new king from across the linguistic as well as political border with Scotland. The irony is, however, prudently ambivalent, as is the treatment of the ideal of linguistic plainness with which the trope was associated and which James advocated both publicly and privately. Consistently critiqued in Elizabethan plays, the claim to plainness – a class-inflected ideal associated by cultural reformers with the defining national character of the English – is advertised as a value in *King Lear* and asserted insistently by the eponymous 'mirror' for a king in the Folio version of *Henry V* which, again, I argue, is a Jacobean version. The staged humiliation (*Merry Wives*) and banishment (Henriad) of John Falstaff offered, moreover, a strategy for dealing with linguistically extravagant English courtiers for a king who sought to occupy the cultural centre of his new kingdom despite the exclusion of his language from 'the King's English'. However, the ambiguity with which the claim to plainness is treated in the Jacobean plays leaves open the interpretation of such a claim as a strategy of coercion, or a cover for malicious purposes, in particular the will to power.

Keywords: King's English, Linguistic plainness, James I, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

The phrase, or trope as I prefer to call it, of "the King's English" features in just one place in the Shakespearean canon: the Folio version of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*[1].

Elsewhere I have discussed this instance in the context of the origin of the trope and other early instances, to argue that

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[1] Editors tend merely to cite Dent without noting that "the King's English" is among the idioms he acknowledges may not "legitimately" fall into the category of the proverbial (Dent 1981, 147, 263).

Shakespeare treats ironically the notion of a bounded normative linguistic centre it represents and exposes the social exclusions performed by its use (Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 46-71). Here I want to reconsider the Shakespearean instance in relation to the point made by Giorgio Melchiori that "the King's English" is one of several references to the national language which are absent from the 1602 Quarto, and which draw attention to the misuses and "abuses of the English tongue" (Shakespeare 2000b, 8, echoed in Magnusson 2012, 244n12). Why this focus on the national language in the Folio version? Among other reasons I want to propose "the unsettling novelty of a Scot ruling the English" (Ivic 2020, 17), the arrival, that is, of a king from across the political border with Scotland whose accession to the English throne in 1603 troubled the boundaries of the national language together with the national identities of both the English and the Scots, as Christopher Ivic has fully explored. My argument will thus bear out the claim made by Richard Dutton that the Folio reflects a Jacobean version of the play (Dutton 2016, 254). Specifically, the trope of "the King's English" acquires another level of ironic resonance in this context, although the irony is ambivalent, prudently so given the harsh punishment meted out to dramatists who overtly mocked the language of the king.

There is ambivalence too towards the ideal of linguistic 'plainness' with which the trope of "the King's English" was associated and which was explicitly espoused by James both publicly, in his first speech to the English parliament (published 1604) and his treatise on kingship, *Basilicon Doron* (published first in Edinburgh in 1599, then in revised form in Edinburgh and London in 1603 [King James VI and I 1994, xxx]), and privately, in his correspondence with Queen Elizabeth. I have argued elsewhere that Shakespearean drama after 1603 appears to turn towards James's publicly declared linguistic policy of plainness, but that, where plainness is overtly advertised as a value – notably in *King Lear* – it is also exposed to interrogation (Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 123-31). I take this up here in order to suggest more specifically that through this interrogation Shakespeare draws attention to the difficulty if not impossibility of the project of "plainnesse and sinceritie" publicly declared by James as the

defining qualities of his "Eloquence" (King James VI and I 1994, 146). The stakes of this declaration were especially high because English cultural reformers recurrently asserted a class-inflected notion of (citizen) plainness as proper to the English, thereby differentially defined from their continental neighbours, in particular the French. This is referenced, as I show, in a speech by the eponymous figure of Richard III whose claim to a 'plain' Englishness is exposed as a cover for manipulative malice – a critique that will then be explicitly voiced by Cornwall in *King Lear*. This leads me to a fresh consideration of the Henriad, especially the wooing scene in the Folio version of *Henry V* by the eponymous hero who lays claim to a defining English plainness differentiated not only from the French, but still more overtly from linguistically extravagant elite English males exemplified by the tacitly referenced figure of John Falstaff. Glancing at the declared linguistic policy of James, this added insistence on the plain speech of "the mirror of all Christian kings" (Shakespeare 1995, II.Chorus.6) bears out Dutton's case for the Folio version as "broadly the version of the play performed at court in 1605" (Dutton 2016, 182n15). Offered a gratifying reflection of his declared linguistic policy in this 'mirror', the king may too have discerned in the banishment of Falstaff a strategy for dealing with linguistically pretentious English courtiers. However, like the glance at the language of the king in the Folio version of *Merry Wives*, the glance at the king's publicly declared linguistic policy of 'plainness' in the Folio version of *Henry V* is ambivalent, leaving open the possibility that a claim to plainness may cover malicious purposes or serve as a strategy of coercion, as, I show in conclusion, it serves as a strategy of coercion for James in his correspondence with Elizabeth I.

I want to begin with the point made by J. K. Chambers and Peter Trudgill that the distinctions between national languages, dialects and varieties are frequently drawn not for linguistic but strategic political and cultural reasons (Chambers and Trudgill 1998, 3-12). This is illustrated by the dynastic rupture at the beginning of the fifteenth century when the English preferred by London citizens was privileged as the national vernacular by the Lancastrians, especially Henry V, over French, the other national

vernacular, as Ardis Butterfield calls it, which was preferred at court, a move made in part because Henry needed the support of wealthy London citizens to finance his war effort (Butterfield 2009; Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 59-61). It is in this move that the origin of the trope of "the King's English" is widely assumed to lie (Blank 1996, 172n38), even though the first recorded instance – in Thomas Wilson's hugely successful *Arte of Rhetorique* – dates only from 1553[2]. This instance is nevertheless ideologically in line with the putative origin insofar as the trope is mobilised by Wilson to produce performatively the normative bounded national language it represents through exclusion of Latinate words, in particular "French Englishe" and "Englishe Italianated" imported by well-travelled elite men (Wilson 1982, 326). As in the move by the historical Henry, an English national language is preferred over Romance languages from which it is defined as distinct, a class-inflected distinction that implies defining differences of national character. This is illustrated by early instances of the trope, including the instance in the Folio version of *Merry Wives* in which the figure of a Frenchman, Dr Caius, is at once an habitué of the court as he informs us – "*Je m'en vais voir à la cour la grande affaire*" (Shakespeare 2000b, I.iv.46-47) – and the object of the exclusionary thrust of the trope of "the King's English" which is invoked at the opening of this same scene by his English housekeeper: "here will be an old abusing of God's patience and the King's English" (4-5)[3]. *Merry Wives* is of course set at a moment just prior to the reign of Henry V – in Q Falstaff evokes "the mad Prince of *Wales* […] stealing his father's deer" (Shakespeare 2020, xviii.66) – as are the first two plays in the Henriad. The history plays and comedy are, moreover, connected, as the Quarto title pages advertise, through the figure of the linguistically extravagant English courtier Falstaff. His banishment by a self-declared plain speaking king finds an analogue in his humiliation by plain dressed, plain

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[2] For discussion of the alternative suggestion that the origin lies in Chaucer's description of Richard II as "lord of this language", see Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 70-71.

[3] For other early instances of the trope used to exclude French speakers, see Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 48-52, 64-69.

speaking citizens in the comedy even as it resonates with Wilson's requirement that, in order to achieve "one maner of language", "we must of necessitee, banishe al […] affected Rhetorique" (Wilson 1982, 329) (see further below). It is in this treatment of the linguistically extravagant English courtier that James may have discerned a strategy for dealing with uppity, linguistically pretentious English courtiers in his ambition to occupy the cultural centre of his newly acquired kingdom, despite the obstacle of his language which, even when 'anglicised', lay at once inside and outside the boundaries of English, like the French with which it was associated.

For the point made by Chambers and Trudgill is illustrated still more egregiously by the dynastic rupture two hundred years after the Lancastrian coup when the arrival of a Stuart king from across the border with Scotland put pressure on the distinction between English and Scots and the definition of the national vernacular. The porousness of the distinction is exemplified by the first translation into verse of Virgil's *Aeneid* by the accomplished Scottish poet Gavin Douglas, which was completed in Scotland in 1513 and first published in London in 1553 by William Copland[4]. As I have shown, Douglas represents the language of his translation as drawn from proximate and related vernaculars with shifting and permeable boundaries, and the Scots and the English as neighbours rather than nations, anticipating supporters of the union under James (Ivic 2020, 115). The distinction between the vernaculars is, moreover, blurred by translation practices: Douglas's predilection for "anglicised forms" was noted by Priscilla Bawcutt (Bawcutt 1976, 145) and "his taste for Southern verb forms" by D. F. C. Coldwell who described the language of the translation as "a kind of English" that "did not prevent Londoners from reading him" (Douglas 1957-64, 1:111, 127)[5]. This is in line with Douglas's pro-English politics and his orientation towards London where he spent his last days, and where he is buried. More important is the cultural ambition, explicitly

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[4]   See Tudeau-Clayton 1999, 515-17; Tudeau-Clayton 2009, 393-94.
[5]   See also Blank 1996, 154.

expressed in a "Conclusio", that his translation be read "[t]hrow owt the ile clepit Albyion" (Douglas 1957-64, 4:187, line 11), that is, by a constituency of readers coterminous with the boundaries of a geographical totality that "conteyneth Englande and Scotlande", as "Albion", "the most auncient name of this Ile", is glossed by Thomas Cooper in his 1578 Latin-English dictionary (Cooper 1578).

Under James, "Albion" became interchangeable with "Great Britain", as on the facing title pages to Michael Drayton's 1612 edition of his *Poly-Olbion*: a poem "Upon the Frontispiece" calls upon readers "Through a Triumphant Arch, see Albion plas't", and under the engraved figure on the facing page to which this refers is written "Great Britain" (Drayton 1612). Britain is evoked too by Alexander Hume in the preface to his tellingly titled project for a national grammar dedicated to James: *Of the Orthographie and Congruitie of the Britan Tongue*, written probably around 1617 when James made his first (and only) visit to Scotland after acceding to the English throne, but not published until the nineteenth century (Hume 1865, v-xi). This project for a grammar of "the Britan tongue" clearly served to promote the closer political and cultural union of England and Scotland to which James aspired, notably through the adoption of the style of "Great Britain". As the Venetian secretary in England wrote to the Doge and the Senate on 17 April 1603, James was "disposed to abandon the titles of England and Scotland, and to call himself King of Great Britain" (Ivic 2020, 112), while James, announcing his accession as James I of England to his Scottish subjects, called upon the inhabitants of both realms "to obliterat" prior differences "and with ane universall unanimitie of hartis conjoine thameselffis as ane natioun under his Majesteis authoritie" (141n3).

In his prefatory dedication to James, Hume recalls a scene in which the king addressed the need for an authoritative national language. First "reproving [his] courteoures" (presumably his English courtiers) who "on a new conceat of finnes sum tymes spilt (as they cal it) the king's language", James then declared that he "wald cause the universities mak an Inglish grammar to repress the insolencies of sik green heades" (Hume 1865, 2). Hume may have invented the scene since this declaration is an

endorsement (indeed almost a commission) of his project, but it would no doubt have pleased his royal addressee since it corresponds to his aspiration to cultural as well as political authority. A double gesture is performed by James here: first, he rejects one idea of the normative centre represented by "the king's language", which, through the distancing parenthesis "as they cal it", is located among English courtiers; then, he projects a new centre of which he is the efficient "cause" or originating authority. This is comparable with a scene described by John Chamberlain in a letter of January 1608 in which James is told by the (again presumably English) "Lordes" that it is "not the fashion" to have a play "on Christmas-night" as he desires, to which he retorts in irritation: "what do you tell me of the fashion? I will make yt a fashion" (Chamberlain 1939, 1:250). Both scenes testify to a will to refashion and occupy the centre whether of linguistic or cultural national habits in his new kingdom.

That the phrase "the king's language" used by the courtiers in Hume's scene circulated as a variant of the trope of "the King's English" is borne out by my corpus of early instances (1553-1699) (Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 48-52). For, like the third variant "the Queen's English", to which I will return, "the king's language" features twice, first in an Elizabethan drama performed in the 1560s, published in 1571, then in a university drama performed probably in the 1630s, published in 1654, thus both before and after the instance in Hume's preface. This variant was clearly more appropriate than "the King's English" for James as it was for Hume who sought to elide the difference of English and Scottish under the totality of "the Britan tongue" as James sought to elide England and Scotland under the style of "Great Britain". Hume's totality of "the Britan tongue" was of course very different from the "one maner of language" which the trope of "the King's English" was mobilised to serve in the first recorded instance in Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*. Nevertheless, the idea of a bounded normative authoritative centre which the trope represents is used in this scene, as it is by Wilson, as a disciplinary instrument, specifically to exercise control over linguistically pretentious elite males who are contemptuously put down by James as "green heads" (ignorant fools) – an instance, we might say, following

Urszula Kizelbach, of a strategic use of impoliteness to assert power (Kizelbach 2014, 173-88). Indeed, Wilson opens this passage in his *Arte* by advising against "sekying to be over fine" (Wilson 1982, 325) as the English courtiers are motivated by "a new conceat of finnes" in the scene described by Hume. Wilson's call to banish affected rhetoric may then lie behind the scene as may the dramatisation of this call in the banishment of a linguistically extravagant English courtier in a play known as "Sir Iohn Falstaffe" which was performed at court some four years prior to James's trip to Scotland, as I take up below (Tudeau-Clayton 2010, 93; Shakespeare 1989, 37).

The passage in which Wilson introduces the trope of "the King's English" is glossed in the margin "Plaines what it is" (Wilson 1982, 325), an association of the normative centre with the value of plainness, which is prioritised by Wilson as it is not in his sources (notably Cicero). This valorisation of plainness finds echo in the first speech of James to the English parliament (published 1604), which closes with the declaration that "it becommeth a King [...] to vse no other Eloquence then plainnesse and sinceritie" and "this sort of Eloquence may you euer assuredly looke for at my hands" (King James VI and I 1994, 146). Leah S. Marcus, followed by Neil Rhodes, has argued that this "cultivation of a 'plain style'" was one of the ways James "sought to present his reign as a marked departure from the queen's" (Marcus 1988, 111; Rhodes 2004, 40)[6]. In another sense, however, it was no departure for James who had already laid claim to this style in his correspondence with Elizabeth, as we shall see, and urged it on his son Henry in *Basilicon Doron*, his guide to kingship composed in 1598, first published in Edinburgh in 1599 and revised for publication in 1603, first in Edinburgh, then in London. Here James advocates as appropriate to a king a "plaine, honest, naturall" language which he defines, like Wilson, by what is

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[6] James is perhaps also consciously defining his policy against the "[s]ystemic dissimulation" practised across Europe in line with the advice of Justus Lipsius: "Dissimulation was presented within a framework of political morality in which the end (stability and order) justified the means" (Greengrass 2014, 568).

excluded: on the one hand, "any rusticall corrupt leide" and, on the other, "booke-language, and pen and inke-horne termes" and above all "mignard and effoeminate tearmes" (King James VI and I 1994, 53-54), such terms, that is, used by courtiers who seek to be fine – here gendered as effeminate, which implies the 'masculine' character of the recommended "plaine" style. Yet, if he espouses the value of plainness, James uses in this very passage a word, "leide" (a style of speech or writing), which was not current on the English side of the border and never would be. According to *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* (*up to 1700*) (or *Scots Leid*), the word is derived from Old English "leden", but it is used with the sense of a speech style as here by James, or of a national language, as in the dictionary title, only in Scotland from the fifteenth century on (https://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/lede_n_4). James had used it earlier, arguably in both senses, in a sonnet laying out the qualities required of "the perfyte poet" "to expres […] / His full intention in his proper leid" ([James VI] 1584, sig. Kiiiiv), as Gavin Douglas had used it in his translation of the *Aeneid*. Though this is the anglicised edition of the *Basilicon Doron* published in London in 1603, it has not, as Christopher Highley claims, "eradicated all vestiges of the Scots vocabulary and forms" (Highley 2004, 54). There remain many words such as "leide" – a particularly resonant instance as it happens – that remain outside the boundaries of English. Perhaps James expected or hoped that, as the language of the king, his use of such words would bring them into the pale of the national language. Rather, as Highley has pointed out, the difference of his language, which was still more evident in "the unfamiliar idioms and accents" of his spoken language, "made claims about a community of language between England and Scotland ring hollow" (54). Community of language was asserted by James who in his speech to the English parliament evoked "Language, Religion, and similitude of maners" together with the geographical entity of "one Island" as the manifestations of God's preordained will for the union of England and Scotland (King James VI and I 1994, 135). But the difference of his language was admitted even by enthusiastic English supporters: Robert Fletcher, for instance, described James as "Prince of our English Tribe" but recognised that, if not

alienated "from us" "by nature", he was "from our vulgar speache" if "not much" (Ivic 2020, 21).

Soon after the accession of the new king, the first English-English dictionary was produced by Robert Cawdrey, perhaps in part as a response to the unsettling effects on the national vernacular of the arrival of lexical strangers from the North. That Cawdrey viewed his lexicographical project as in line with, and furthering, Wilson's project to limit the arrival of lexical strangers – in Wilson's case from the South, especially France and Italy – is signalled by the preface which lifts almost verbatim and without acknowledgement Wilson's passage on the value of plainness, including the reference to the King's English and the call to "banish all affected Rhetorique, and vse altogether one manner of language" (Cawdrey 1604, sig. A3v). The two peoples from North and South respectively had long been associated as allies against the English, an alliance discussed in the opening of *Henry V* (Q and F) and recalled in the comic vignette of a Frenchman, Scotsman and Englishman in *The Merchant of Venice*, modified in the Folio version, probably to remove the offense to James: "the Scottish lord" who boxes the Englishman's ear and receives "surety" from the Frenchman becomes in F "the other lord" (Shakespeare 2010, I.ii.72-78). James himself had close family and diplomatic ties with France and, as Highley points out, some of the courtiers that accompanied him from Scotland "had been educated in France and would have spoken with French accents" (Highley 2004, 55). Such blending of the two languages would have rendered audible the old alliance between the two nations against which the English sought to differentiate and separate themselves linguistically as well as politically, Wilson through mobilisation of the trope of "the King's English", and Cawdrey through the drawing of boundaries of inclusion/exclusion in the first English-English dictionary.

In the November of the year that Cawdrey's dictionary was first published, Shakespeare's comedy *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was performed at court. For Dutton this "is very likely to have been the occasion for what we know as the folio version of the play, or something very like it" (Dutton 2016, 253). Crucial evidence for Dutton is the replacement of "council" by "King" in

Falstaff's first utterance: "Now, Master Shallow, you'll complain of me to the Council, I hear?" in Q (Shakespeare 2020, i.19) becomes in F "Now, Master Shallow, you'll complain of me to the King?" (Shakespeare 2000b, I.i.102-3). In his edition of the Quarto version, David Lindley too thinks this is possible evidence that the Folio "reflects a Jacobean version of the play" (Shakespeare 2020, i.19n), a likelihood that, for Dutton, is strengthened by the absence of references to either king or queen in the Quarto (Dutton 2016, 254), although he fails to notice Falstaff's reference to "the Prince of Wales" and his father the king (quoted above), which is not in the Folio version. As well as evoking the origin of the trope at the historical moment when English was preferred over French, the introduction of "the King's English" (which neither Dutton nor Lindley discuss) together with other references to the national language suggest that, like the introduction of "the King", it reflects the Jacobean context. This is all the more likely given that the third variant of the trope – "the Queen's English" – was first used in the 1590s, by Thomas Nashe in 1592 and Gervase Markham in 1598, who both use it exactly as "the King's English" was used – to assert performatively an authoritative centre through exclusion – thus acknowledging the queen's sovereign, implicitly 'masculine' cultural authority. This is confirmed by the absence of this variant in subsequent early instances (until 1700)[7]. It is surely this variant that would have been used if the trope had been included in the versions of the play performed, as the Quarto title page advertises, "by the right honourable my Lord Chamberlains Servants […] before her Maiestie", however these versions may have varied from the version reproduced in the Quarto.

In the Quarto, Mistress Quickly comments of the French Doctor Caius merely "He is a parlous man" (Shakespeare 2020, iv.22). In the Folio version, she is more expansive: "here will be an old abusing of God's patience and the King's English" (Shakespeare 2000b, I.iv.4-5). As I have shown, this instance of the trope is unique among early instances inasmuch as it is used by an

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[7]   See Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 48.

illiterate low born English female whose own language excludes her from the centre it represents, which is treated ironically even as the social exclusions performed by its use are highlighted[8]. Additional ironic significance accrues around the trope in the context of a new king whose 'leide' puts into question the boundaries of the national vernacular and troubles the notion of a normative authoritative centre, as his own attempts to occupy this centre indicate. The irony is, however, ambivalent with respect to its object: is it the language of the new king or the trope of "the King's English" that is the object of the irony? Or both? Does the idea of an authoritative normative centre seem still more absurd in the context of a new king who would be excluded from it by his language? Or is it the remoteness of the king's language from this centre that is highlighted? Are we invited to recognise that the language of the king is as remote from this hypothesised centre as the language of a Frenchman or indeed the language of an illiterate English female? Such ambivalence was prudent given the harsh response to explicit satire mentioned by Highley: in 1605, *Eastward Ho*, the comedy collaboratively produced by Jonson, Chapman and Marston, which mocked James's accent, "landed Jonson and Chapman in prison", and, in 1606, John Day's *The Isle of Gulls* had "all men's parts […] acted of two diverse nations", according to a contemporary, that is, with accents to distinguish Scots from English, for which, as the account continues, "sundry were committed to Bridewell" (Highley 2004, 56).

Like the introduction of "the King", the introduction of the trope of "the King's English" into the Folio version of *Merry Wives* illustrates how the change of regime impacted down to details the work of the in-house dramatist of the company rapidly renamed "the King's Men" in another act of cultural appropriation by James. This impact is of course apparent everywhere, as many scholars have discussed. It is perhaps most prominently marked linguistically as well as thematically by the turn from "England"

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[8]   As I point out, there is only one other instance (from 1639) in which the trope is used by a female speaker and she is a sober citizen wife more like Mrs Page and Mrs Ford than Mrs Quickly (Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 67).

to "Britain". As Hugh Craig observes: "There are 159 instances of the word 'England' in the sole-author plays performed before 1603, compared to three in the plays from the later period, and there are just twelve mentions of 'Britain' in the early plays compared to thirty-four in the later ones" (Craig 2018, 83-84). At the level of genre, the relatively new and still malleable form of the history play is reshaped, on the one hand, as tragicomedy (or what is later called romance), in *Cymbeline* and *Henry VIII*, which both ostensibly promote the politics of reconciliation sought by James within Christendom as well as within Britain[9], and, on the other hand, as tragedy, in the so-called Scottish play *Macbeth* which "was determined by James's accession to the English throne" (Ivic 2020, 41n8). Drawing on Holinshed for its plot, like the history plays of the 1590s, *Macbeth* raises the figure of a Scot to the stature of a tragic hero, as others have pointed out, in contrast to the prior tendency to represent the Scots as what A. R. Braunmuller describes as "a comical, alien, dangerous, and uncivilised people" (Shakespeare 1997b, 9). Tellingly, the Scotticisms in the play are negligible, as Highley notes (Highley 2004, 57). There is rather a community of language between the Scottish and English speakers, which is in telling contrast to the plays by fellow dramatists mentioned above, as well as to the lived experience of both Scots and English in London, but in accordance with James's view of a common language as one of the manifest signs of the predestined unity of the two nations (quoted above). The treatment of the king's 'leide' in the tragedy exhibits thus as much if not more prudence than the ambivalent glance at it through the trope of "the King's English" in the Jacobean version of *Merry Wives*.

If the impact of the new king on Shakespeare's work has been thoroughly explored, there has been no discussion of the turn to plainness as a value which, as we have seen, is promoted by Thomas Wilson and advocated by James as the style proper to a king, both in *Basilicon Doron* and in his first speech to the English

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[9]   On the "vision of harmonious internationalism and accommodation that mirrors James's own policy" in *Cymbeline,* see Marcus 1988, 122.

parliament. I have discussed elsewhere how the change of regime is retrospectively mythologised as marking a cultural turn away from sartorial as well as linguistic extravagance in the university play *Lingua* (Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 127). The turn is also dramatised in the Jacobean comedy *All's Well That Ends Well* (by Shakespeare with input from Thomas Middleton), which stages the violent exclusion of a figure of such extravagance, tellingly named Monsieur Paroles[10]. What is more, the value of 'plain' speech is asserted through the figure of the virtuous Diana in her chastisement of the seducer Bertram, who is under the influence of this figure of (French) cultural extravagance. But the turn is most evident in the history play cum tragedy of Britain, *King Lear*, which has other links with the concerns of the new king dramatising as it does "the perils of dividing the kingdom" to which, as Rhodes points out, James draws attention in a passage in *Basilicon Doron* that Shakespeare may recall (Rhodes 2004, 49- 50). Plainness is most evidently promoted as a value in the opening scene when Lear puts his daughters to the test and rejects the honest Cordelia whose plainness is set in contrast and opposition to the extravagant flattery of her hypocritical sisters[11]. The value of plainness is, however, subsequently complicated in a self-conscious reprise of the opening opposition in an exchange between Reagan's husband the Duke of Cornwall and the Duke of Kent in his disguise as Caius. In this corrosive exchange, which is in both Q and F, each of the discursive modes – of plainness and of flattery – is mockingly mimicked. Thus, in response to the bluntness of Kent as Caius, Cornwall mimics the plain speaking truth-teller: "He cannot flatter, he; / An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth; / An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain" (Shakespeare 1997a, II.ii.96-98). He then proceeds to assume the role of truth-teller himself giving voice to a critique of the claim to plainness as a cover for vicious purposes: "These kind of knaves […] in this plainness / Harbour […] craft" (99-100) – a very exact

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[10]   French for "words", comparable to Mistress Quickly's description of Caius in Q as "a parlous man" (discussed above). See Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 128-31.

[11]   I draw on and develop here the argument in Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 126-28.

gloss on earlier figures such as Iago and Richard III, as I take up below. Kent disguised as Caius responds by mimicking the speech style of the flatterer opening, in verse, with a Latinate variation of the claim to truth-telling – "Sir, in good faith, or in sincere verity" (103) – and then linguistically debasing himself in a hyperbolic representation of the "great aspect" (104) of Cornwall which he likens to "the wreath of radiant fire / On flickering Phoebus' front" (105-6). Called on by Cornwall to explain himself, Kent/Caius, in prose, sets what he calls his habitual "dialect" of plainness against the "flatterer" and denounces "[h]e that beguiled you in a plain accent" as "a plain knave" (107-9). The opposition between plain speech and flattery, respectively associated with prose and verse, is thus turned as an opposition between imitable "dialects" or "manner[s] of speech", as "dialect" is glossed by Cawdrey (Cawdrey 1604, sig. D2v), which might be assumed to cover (vicious or virtuous) purposes – a point ironically underscored for spectators by Kent's disguise as Caius. If Cornwall's critique of the claim to plainness is discredited by his self-evident viciousness, the proliferating ironies of this exchange cast a shadow over the opening advertisement of the value of the "plainnesse and sinceritie" which James had publicly announced as the defining qualities of his "Eloquence" (quoted above). Indeed, against James's definition of plainness here – "Speeches […] so cleare and voyd of all ambiguitie, that they may not be throwne, nor rent asunder in contrary sences" (King James VI and I 1994, 146) – Shakespeare sets the ambiguity from which no utterance is exempt, including plain speech, which may be interpreted as it may be used "in contrary sences". The opening advertisement of plainness as a value is, moreover, in contradictory tension with the dense complexity of the language actually practised by characters – whether vicious or virtuous – not only in *King Lear* but also more generally in Shakespeare's Jacobean plays, including the Scottish tragedy which is notorious for the opacity of the language of its characters.

Deeply ambivalent, then, the plays of the in-house dramatist of the King's Men nevertheless mark an ostensible turn towards plainness as a value following (in both senses) the king's declaration of plainness and sincerity as his official linguistic

policy. This is a turn away from the Elizabethan plays which, I have argued, tend rather to critique the claim to plainness, whether as an illusion, in comedies (most prominently *Love's Labour's Lost*), or as a cover for a will to power, in tragedies and histories (Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 120-22). Most important here is the figure of the king in waiting, the eponymous Richard III who, early in the play, complains about those who "complai[n]" to the king that he is "stern", plaintively generalising his case as that of "a plain man" who "cannot flatter" and whose "simple truth" is "abused" by "silken, sly, insinuating jacks" (Shakespeare 2009, I.iii.43-53). Without precedent in any of the sources, this speech, in particular its reference to the "French nods and apish courtesy"

(49) practised by sly flatterers, evokes, I have argued, the discourses of Protestant cultural reformers who denounce the tendency of English elite males apishly to imitate foreign cultures and languages, especially French and Italian, and who assert plainness as the self-differentiating (class-inflected) value of the Protestant English (Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 123-24). Most egregiously, William Harrison, in his *Description of England* (1587), denounces not only the English who seek apishly to imitate foreign cultures, especially the French (Harrison 1994, 145-48), but also the tendency of the French to dissimulate evil purposes under courteous language, a practice he contrasts with the defining English Protestant "virtue" of dealing "with singleness of mind, sincerely and plainly" (447) – exactly as James will promise to deal with his English subjects. For spectators to a self-evident dissimulation, Richard's mimicking of the discourse of English Protestant cultural reformers carries a critical thrust in its suggestion that the claim to plainness may serve as a cover like the sly flattery to which it is opposed, anticipating the explicit critique by Cornwall (discussed above). Indeed, plain speech is still more "insinuating" (to use Richard's word) because of its power to 'beguile' – the verb used by Kent when he denounces the dissembling "plain knave" who "beguiled" Cornwall. For as well as an idea of deception, this verb, frequently in Shakespeare as well as more generally, carries an idea of seductive charm. The claim to plainness carries, that is, an insidious power to disarm precisely because of its apparent lack of guile. To this beguiling

power of the plain speaking English man Richard adds that of
victim, casting himself as an object of injustice to solicit sympathy
for the "wrong" (Shakespeare 2009, I.iii.42) done to him. Like and
with the claim to English plainness, this claim dissimulates the
manipulation it seeks to effect.

Between the evidently vicious Richard and the evidently
virtuous Cordelia/Kent there are morally ambiguous figures that
lay claim to plain speech, notably Prince Hal and King Henry V in
the Henriad. Both lay claim to plain language in opposition to the
same figure of linguistic extravagance, the English courtier Sir John
Falstaff. Falstaff is, moreover, the most prominent link between the
Henriad and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, as the Quarto title pages
advertise, a link erased in the 1623 Folio, which puts them into
different categories and gives the history plays new titles. It is
perhaps for this reason that modern critics have tended to look for
differences rather than likenesses, a tendency that reached its
apogee in the claim that "Shakespeare conceived the Falstaff who
turns up in Windsor as a direct antithesis to the character he created
for the history plays" (Gajowski and Rackin 2015, 7). Against this
perilous hypothesis of authorial conception we may set the
advertised continuities on the Quarto title pages, even if these may
be primarily a printer's selling strategy – precisely advertisements.
These continue into *Henry V*, though the figure through which
continuity is advertised is no longer Falstaff (who is present only in
the narrative of his sickness and death told by others) but "Auncient
Pistoll", as he is named on the title page of the Quarto of *Merry
Wives* echoed on the title page of the Quarto of *Henry V*: "The
Cronicle History of Henry the fift, With his battell fought at *Agin
Court* in *France*. Together with *Auntient Pistoll*". As David Lindley
points out, the epithet "ancient" is never used of Pistol in the
comedy, but it is used repeatedly in the second part of *Henry IV* and
in *Henry V* to which an advertised connection is thus made by
Thomas Creede who printed the Quarto of *Henry V* in 1600 and the
Quarto of *Merry Wives* in 1602 (Shakespeare 2020, 31n).

At the level of plot, the comedy (in both Quarto and Folio) stages
the humiliation of the linguistically extravagant Falstaff by English
citizens who espouse plainness of language and dress,

while the *Henry IV* plays (again in both Quarto and Folio) stage first his humiliation, then his banishment by a prince turned king with decidedly citizen values, including the claim to an English plainness of language (Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 76-77). In the first *Henry IV* play, Prince Hal provokes the proliferation of Falstaff's increasingly ludicrous fictions, then puts a stop to them with "[m]ark now how a plain tale shall put you down" (Shakespeare 2002, II.iv.247-48), a tactic comparable to that of the two wives who lead Falstaff into ever more grotesque performances before finally putting him down[12]. More specifically, Mrs Ford puts a stop to Falstaff's extravagant wooing – preferring her "plain kerchief" (Shakespeare 2000b, III.iii.53) to the elaborate Venetian headgear in which he imagines her dressed. Falstaff is, moreover, associated with the parable of the prodigal son in both the Henry plays and the comedy. In the comedy, his chamber is described by the Host of the Inn as "painted about with the story of the Prodigal" (IV.v.6-7), while in the first *Henry IV* play Falstaff himself alludes to the parable (Shakespeare 2002, IV.ii.33-35) and, in the second, proposes "the story of the prodigal" as a theme for the interior decoration of the tavern (Shakespeare 2016, II.i.143- 44), perhaps to match his chamber in the comedy[13]. Prodigal or, as I prefer, extravagant is how the linguistic habits of both Falstaffs might be described, notably as illustrated by his predilection for "synonymia", or "the Figure of Store" as it is Englished by George Puttenham (Puttenham 2007, 299), through which he disseminates even as he displays his linguistic capital. In the comedy, Falstaff varies terms of dismissal when Pistol and Nim refuse to carry his love letters, comically delaying the action he calls for: "Hence,

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[12]　Compare too the moment in *The Merchant of Venice* – a comedy contemporary with the history play which follows it in the *New Oxford* edition – when the bourgeois master Lorenzo seeks to curtail the proliferating wordplay of the servant clown Lancelet Gobbo by asserting: "I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning" (Shakespeare 2010, III.v.51-52). In both cases, the assertion of plain speaking dissimulates a master's will to control the extravagant – wandering and prolific – language of a social other.

[13]　Horbury argues that it is less Hal (as critics frequently assert) than Falstaff that is cast as the prodigal and that, as such, he is "sacrificially excised" in *Merry Wives* as well as in the Henry plays (Horbury 2018, 313, 318).

slaves, avaunt! Vanish like hailstones, go!" in Q (Shakespeare 2020, iii.53) is expanded in F to "Rogues, hence, avaunt! Vanish like hailstones, go! / Trudge, plod away o'th' hoof, seek shelter, pack!" (Shakespeare 2000b, I.iii.78-79). In the second *Henry IV* play, Falstaff varies two sets of terms in a comparison of Hal's psychological inheritance to "lean, sterile and bare land" which he has "manured, husbanded and tilled" with the help of "good *store* of fertile sherris" (Shakespeare 2016, IV.ii.117-20, emphasis mine), which self-consciously references the figure "of Store". This practice of "synonymia" carries, I have argued, an idea of the national language as open, expanding and inclusive, which, in the Folio version of the comedy, is figured in "the gallimaufry" Falstaff is said to love (Shakespeare 2000b, II.i.104), in contrast and in opposition to "the King's English" (I.iv.5), which, as we have seen, carries for cultural reformers such as Thomas Wilson an idea of the national language as an authoritative bounded centre of 'plainness' produced by exclusion of Latinate and Romance word forms imported by well-travelled elite males (such as Falstaff).

It is as a variation of the (recurrent) nation- and class-inflected opposition of speech styles – the insincere Latinate language of elite/foreign flatterers and the sincere language of true English plain speakers – that we might describe the elaboration of Henry's speeches in his wooing of the French princess Katherine in the Folio version of *Henry V*, a scene which is more than three times the length of the equivalent scenes in both the Quarto version and the *Famous Victories* (1598), the source on which Robert Smith has argued the Quarto version of this scene closely draws (Smith 1998). In the Quarto version, Henry introduces himself as a "blunt wooer" and calls on Kate to tell him "in plain terms" if she loves him (Shakespeare 2000a, xix.23, 51), echoing very precisely the "tell me in plaine termes" of the source, as Smith observes (Smith 1998, 61; Anon. 2007, 46). He does not comment, however, on the national difference immediately observed in the source by Henry who claims he "cannot do as these Countries do" in their prolix wooing (46). Traces of this nationally inflected contrast may be heard in Q, in the "false French" used by Kate of Henry's attempt at speaking her language (Shakespeare 2000a, xix.49), and more clearly in F, in Henry's juxtaposition of his "false French" with his

"true English" (Shakespeare 1995, V.ii.218-19) and his praise of the Princess as "the better Englishwoman" for her distrust of deceptive male flattery (122). More prominent in F, however, if linked to the national distinction, is the class-inflected contrast developed by Henry who asserts in prose the plainness of his character and language: "I speak to thee plain soldier" (149-50), "a fellow of plain and uncoined constancy" (154). Reiterating the association of prose with sincere plainness and verse with insincere flattery (discussed above), Henry sets his plainness against those who "look greenly" and "gasp out [their] eloquence" (143-44), "fellows of infinite tongue that can rhyme themselves into ladies' favours" but that prove untrue (156-58). If, as I have argued, this may glance at the insincere flattery of Mrs Ford by the extravagant English courtier Falstaff (Tudeau-Clayton 2020, 77-78), the insistence on plainness glances rather at the official linguistic policy declared by James in the speech to parliament (1604), an addition which would thus support Dutton's argument that the Folio version follows rather than precedes the Quarto version and is "broadly the version of the play performed at court in 1605" (Dutton 2016, 182n15). It would doubtless have pleased James to see the figure described as "the mirror of all Christian kings" (Shakespeare 1995, II.Chorus.6) lay claim to his officially preferred speech style, especially in contrast to the insincere elaborate style of English elite males. He would too have been pleased by Henry's assertion, developed from Q's "we'll break that custom" (Shakespeare 2000a, xix.73) to "nice customs curtsy to great kings [who] cannot be confined within the weak list of a country's fashion. We are the makers of manners" (Shakespeare 1995, V.ii.266-69). Perhaps he recalled this two years later when he declared his will to break custom at the English court and "make yt a fashion" to have a play on Christmas night (see above). Certainly, it furnishes support for his will to occupy the cultural centre.

In both Q and F, Kate is shown to be sensibly suspicious of male wooing tactics. But Henry's assertion of plainness may also 'beguile' her – as Kent in *Lear* suggests plain speakers may do (see above). As a character Henry has indeed tended to beguile rather than arouse suspicions until relatively recently when he has come

to be viewed more sceptically. Karen Newman (among others) has argued that the claim to plainness is a cover for a will to mastery over the female and foreign other (Newman 2009, 91), while P. K. Ayers has suggested that the description of the insincere fellows of infinite tongue might be applied to Henry himself who changes rhetorical styles to suit his purposes and who specifically "chooses the medium of plain speech to create a part for himself", whether "that of a common man among men" or as a plain English man in his courtship of the French Kate (Ayers 1994, 260). The opposition of plainness to affected eloquence thus tends to collapse as plainness is exposed as itself an instrument – "a kind of polite cover", as Ayers puts it, "for the naked reality of his demands" (254), a strategy, that is, of coercion.

That Henry's wooing style is strategic is a view that readers/spectators of the *Famous Victories* are invited to adopt by two monologues which frame the scene of wooing. In the first, Henry "*Speakes to himself*" about the "face" he should assume "to gaine her love" (Anon. 2007, 46); in the second, he declares he will take her whether or not he obtains her father's consent, if necessary by force (47). There are no such revelations in either version of Shakespeare's play. In the case of the Folio version, readers/spectators are left to decide for themselves what to make of the king's insistence on his plainness. Shakespeare allows, that is, for ambiguity, which, according to James, plainness is by definition without (see above).

Shakespeare was no doubt unaware that James himself had used a claim to plainness as a strategy of coercion in his correspondence with Elizabeth I, notably in a letter of January 1587 in which he made a final desperate attempt to prevent the execution of his mother Mary Queen of Scots (which would take place a couple of weeks later). The stakes could not have been higher since James sought to secure not only a reprieve for his mother (for political more than for affective reasons), but also his own position as Elizabeth's successor. He begins by summoning the manifold political "straits" he would be "driven unto" by the "thing itself" (as he refers to the execution), appealing to her to "pity my case" (King James VI and I 1984, 81-82). Projecting himself as an object of pity, he then proceeds to introduce his case

against the execution by a circuitous apology for his "plainness" which has previously caused offense:

> I doubt greatly in what fashion to write in [this] purpose, for ye have already taken so evil with my plainness as I fe[ar if] I shall persist in that course ye shall rather be exasperated to passio[ns in rea]ding the words than by the plainness thereof be persuaded to consider r[ightly] the simple truth. (82)

Hardly a model of plainness, this seeks to pre-empt a hostile reaction to his case by suggesting it would spring from exasperation at the plainness of the words, which would prevent Elizabeth from being "persuaded" of "the simple truth" such plainness conveys. Not unlike the plain speaking truth-teller mimicked by Cornwall, he then turns with a "yet" to assert that (despite this), preferring "the duty of an honest f[riend]", he has "resolved in a few words and plain to give y[ou my] friendly and best advice appealing to your ripest judgement to discern t[here]upon" (82) – a judgement he has already sought to determine by suggesting any reaction other than agreement with the "simple truth" of his "plain" words would be motivated by "passions". Proceeding to argue that the execution of his mother would be a violation of the divine right of kings, he warns of the disastrous consequences for Elizabeth of the act, which would provoke "the universal (almost) misliking of you" across Europe and imperil her "person and estate" (82-83). These are plain words indeed – direct, outspoken and unambiguous – which might well have provoked the queen's anger, a response James seeks to prevent by the apology for his plainness which, whether consciously or not, he uses as a strategy of coercion. James did not of course succeed in persuading Elizabeth who herself deployed an assertion of honesty when, after the fact, she wrote to him in February to claim her innocence of the "accident", as she calls the execution, which, though "deserved", was not "meant" by her – a claim she bolsters by asserting: "as not to disguise fits most a king, so will I never dissemble my actions but cause them show even as I meant them" (Elizabeth I 2000, 296). This rhetorical 'cover up' is followed by assurances of her friendship and support for James

which hint at the pay off if he accepts her claim to innocence, which he does, if grudgingly, in late February, calling on her for "full satisfaction" with regard to his political aspirations to "unite this isle", to secure, that is, his position as her successor (King James VI and I 1984, 84-85).

If Shakespeare did not have access to this correspondence, he shows from early in his career how the claim to plainness could be used as a strategy of manipulation as well as a cover by a king in waiting (Richard III) and, later, how even an exemplary English king might make strategic use of such a claim. Following the accession of James in 1603, I have argued, Shakespeare's treatment of the claim to plain speech is less unequivocally critical than it is in the 1590s, asserted as it is, if ambiguously, by this exemplary king in the Jacobean *Henry V* and advertised as a value in *King Lear*. Both plays reflect the declared espousal of plainness and sincerity by James in published texts to which Shakespeare did have access – *Basilicon Doron* (1603) and the first speech to parliament (1604). In turn, I have suggested the king may have taken note of how the exemplary plain speaking king deals with a linguistically extravagant English courtier. My case that the king and dramatist paid mutual attention to their treatments of the language and linguistic strategies of a king bears out the arguments made by others for a mutual shaping influence between James's writing and Shakespeare's Henriad. Neil Rhodes, for instance, has pointed out parallels between *Basilicon Doron* and the Henriad, especially *Henry V* (Rhodes 2004, 45-46), while Jane Rickard has suggested a likeness between the scene in the second *Henry IV* play when the prince takes the crown from the bedside of his sick father and the *Meditation upon St Matthew* written by James in 1620 and dedicated to his son Charles as a preparation for his job as king (Rickard 2015, 244-47). To these we may add the argument made by Urszula Kizelbach that Shakespeare's history plays offered a practical guide for princes like *Basilicon Doron* (Kizelbach 2014). In *King Lear* as in the Jacobean version of *Henry V*, Shakespeare holds a mirror up to the king's declared linguistic policy of plainness but also exposes it to interrogation showing that it may be as ambiguous as the ornate eloquence to which it is opposed and likewise serve as a cover for a will to power. In this

respect, the claim to plain speech was like the trope of "the King's English" with which it was associated. As the Jacobean version of *Merry Wives* hints, the new king from across the border would ironically be excluded by his language from the normative centre the trope represents, despite his official espousal of the plainness with which it was associated and despite his attempts to occupy the cultural centre of his new kingdom. The implicit advice to the king is then perhaps not to be 'beguiled' by cultural authority any more than by claims to plainness – his own as well as that of others – but to remain vigilant as to the purposes they may dissimulate, above all, the will to power.

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Italian Soundscape in Performance: Voices, Accents and Local Sonorities of Shakespeare's History Plays in Italy (2000-2020)

Emiliana Russo

While scholarship on the utilization of dialects and accents in stagings of Shakespeare's plays on the British stage has recently emerged (Massai 2020; Lee 2020), systematic discussions on the "theatre phonetics" (Calamai 2006, xvi, my translation) of Italian Shakespearean productions struggle to be initiated. In particular, scholarly output seems to limit itself to various references to or a mild consideration of single productions, or even to gloss over the treatment of histories. As a result, this paper engages with performances of history plays in the first two decades of the new millennium, from 2000 to 2020, with the aim of determining their phonetic garment. Through a qualitative analysis of reviews, websites, videos and information provided by theatre practitioners, I investigate whether standard Italian, accents or dialects are used in performances put on in Italian theatres in the selected time frame, showing the limited embracement of phonetic alterity. In addition, only partially drawing inspiration from the publications of the English-speaking world, I focus on critical attitudes and expectations towards the Shakespearean (translated) language and go beyond the phonetic dimension, which reveals the existence of prefabricated ideas. From a broader perspective, my research ultimately aims to contribute to informing international aural and reception studies centred on Shakespeare as an author performed worldwide.

Keywords: Italian, Dialects, Accents, Sonorities, Histories, Performances, Italian scholarship

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Introduction

As Paula Blank puts it, Shakespeare's texts only "offer a smattering of regional dialect words or pronunciations, including some from the playwright's native Warwickshire" (Blank 2016, 219)[1]. Yet, in more recent years, unrecorded local sonorities have been utilized in the staging of the Shakespeare's works, at least on the British stage. In fact, regional accents, 'unwritten' in the plays, have been employed in productions ascribable to, among the others, the Complete Works Festival (2006-2007) and the World Shakespeare Festival (2012)[2]. Albeit not always appreciated by critics, some of the performances have stimulated reflection and discussion regarding aural diversity, and have recently resulted in scientific publications such as *Shakespeare's Accents* by Sonia Massai (2020) and *Shakespeare and Accentism* edited by Adele Lee (2020), prone to analyzing critical attitudes towards the stagings[3].

In light of this sonic 'enrichment' marking the British stage and subsequent scholarly investigation, we might ask whether the Italian theatre, immersed in a linguistically rich country, has also indulged in Shakespearean acoustic experimentation. Such a hypothesis, far from being solely based on Italy's sociolinguistic situation, could also be suggested by the following primarily theatrical factors: the country's long tradition of dialectal theatre (Stefanelli 2006, 133; Lucia 2018, 649) and the greater dramatic experimentation with accents in the second half of the twentieth

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[1] The expression "a smattering of" conveys the idea of a small amount, which is echoed by Gelderen's reference to the author's 'non-abundant' use of dialect: "Shakespeare uses dialect for special purposes as well, but not abundantly" (Gelderen 2006, 188). Going back in time, already in the first half of the twentieth century, Willcock had acknowledged the presence of "[a] number of dialect words (some of them traceable to Warwickshire)" (Willcock 1934, 121), which, according to him, were not to be interpreted as indications of Shakespeare's "local patriotism" (120).

[2] The productions in 'Original Pronunciation' (OP) were *Romeo and Juliet* (2004), *Troilus and Cressida* (2005), *Macbeth* (2014) and *Henry V* (2015), the last two of which corresponded to staged readings. According to David Crystal, in Shakespeare's day actors kept their native accents, which were superimposed on a common phonological system (Crystal 2005).

[3] *Shakespeare and Accentism* encompasses but does not restrict itself to the British theatre.

century (Stefanelli 2011); the increasing contemporary use of such a dialect as Romanesco in genres other than comedies of manners (Giovanardi 2006; see also Giovanardi 2007, 62-90); the growing contemporary practice of retaining accent in performances (Stefanelli 2006, 127); the absence of "conflittualità" (conflict [Binazzi 2006, x]) between standard Italian and dialect (see also Stefanelli 2006, 136) and even between the national language and accents; and, last but surely not least, the translations/rewritings of Shakespearean works in dialects such as *The Tempest* by Eduardo De Filippo in the past century (Segnini 2017).

In fact, several phonetic experiments with the Shakespearean plays have been carried out in the last two decades. The Italian critical literature does not include large-scale works matching *Shakespeare's Accents* and *Shakespeare and Accentism*; rather, it limits itself to references to or discussions of single productions, with no systematic overview of the Shakespearean performances in dialects or accents. To start with, Cavecchi claims that many stagings such as *Ambleto* and *Macbetto* have been "flavoured" with regional languages (Cavecchi 2005, 15), and, according to Stefanelli, these productions, as well as Testori's *Edipus*, conflate "dialectal elements, Lombardisms, archaisms, Latinisms, low vocabulary of popular origin" (Stefanelli 2006, 135)[4]. Additionally, Montorfano briefly discusses regional accents and foreign languages in *Una acerba felicità*, inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*, and other productions of Gionfrida's (Montorfano 2018, 144-45). Interestingly, she maintains that the use of different languages or "multilingualism" has the purpose of "enrich[ing] performances with innovative and authentic elements of truth" (145)[5]. On the other hand, on analyzing

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[4] Unless otherwise specified, all translation from Italian into English are mine. Recently, Margherita Dore discussed Alessandro Serra's *Macbettu* from a linguistic and translational point of view in her paper "Adaptation and Sur/Subtitling for the Theatre: *Macbettu* as a Case in Point", presented at Sapienza University's conference "Shakespeare, Austen and Audiovisual Translation: The Classics Translated on Screen" (1 July 2022).

[5] Another analysis by Valentini (2016) is halfway between theatre and cinema, which is more inclined to phonetic experimentation (Stefanelli 2006, 126-27; see also Ferrone 2006, 5). The scholar deals with the tragedy *Julius Caesar* as staged by Fabio Cavalli and presented by the Taviani brothers; such a production

Ruggero Cappuccio's *Sogno di una notte di mezz'estate* (2016), Lucia makes linguistic considerations and defines the production as "*de facto* reshaped and deformed also by the adoption of a strongly spurious language contaminated with the sound scores of the Neapolitan dialect of learned tradition" (Lucia 2018, 658). Therefore, individual stagings of Shakespearean tragedies and comedies[6] have, to some extent, attracted scholarly attention in terms of phonetics, whereas so far theatrical productions of histories[7] seem to have escaped such a scientific exploration.

Within this framework, this paper aims to take as a model recent scholarship surfacing in and concerning the British world, and to expand and enrich that strand of research that might go by the name of "theatre phonetics" (Calamai 2006, xvi) in relation to the productions of Shakespeare's plays in Italy. Given the dearth of studies specifically overviewing the phonetic dimension in the staging of histories, I have engaged with the latter in the first two decades of the new millennium, from 2000 to 2020, with the aim of determining their phonetic aspect[8]. Particularly, I have investigated

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resorts to various regional languages such as Neapolitan and has the merit of facilitating the acting of the performers-prisoners, and of making the language "natural, spontaneous" (Valentini 2016, 188). It is interesting to notice that dialects seem to be particularly exploited in stagings in prison. In this regard, Tempera claims that "[t]ranslated into modern Italian or, more frequently, into a variety of dialects, the plays become linguistically accessible to the composite prison population and offer roles that can be successfully adapted to suit the personalities of the inmate players" (Tempera 2017, 265).

[6] I have recently been made aware of Cimitile's (phonetic) analysis of Luigi Lo Cascio's *Otello* in Sicilian (2015) and Giuseppe Miale di Mauro's *Otello* in Neapolitan (2017) (Cimitile 2021).

[7] As Ferrone and Stefanelli claim, in the previous century cinema has shown a greater predilection for phonetic experimentation than theatre (Ferrone 2006, 5; Stefanelli 2006, 126-27). Focusing on dubbed films, in the case of Olivier's *Henry V*, Nell Quickly's Cockney, a social accent, morphs into "a distinct Venetian cadence" (Soncini 2002, 171), which is reminiscent of *commedia dell'arte* and eliminates the more political shades of the original text (171-72). In addition, in the very same film "the Italian translator re-creates linguistic difference through non-standard lexico-syntactic and phonetic variants" for the three captains (172).

[8] As inferable from Aebischer, the year 2020, marked by the outburst of the COVID-19 pandemic, is a watershed for theatrical productions, which started experiencing a greater digital life (Aebischer 2021), so I chose to stop at its threshold.

whether standard Italian pronunciation, accents or dialects[9] are used in performances put on in Italian theatres in the selected time frame by prioritizing critical portrayals of the stagings. In addition, only partially drawing inspiration from the publications of the English-speaking world, I have taken into account critical perspectives, attitudes and expectations towards the Shakespearean (translated) language going beyond the phonetic dimension. In a broader perspective, such research would ultimately contribute to informing international aural and reception studies centred on Shakespeare as an author performed worldwide.

1. Investigating the Productions

Before delving into the actual findings of my investigation, it is worth specifying what plays were staged in the time period selected[10]. The sources consulted do not record any performances of *Henry VI*, *King John*, *Edward III* and *Henry VIII*, which were then condemned to utter oblivion. On the other hand, when it comes to the histories receiving theatrical attention in Italy, they correspond to the remaining plays – *Richard III*, *Sir Thomas More*, *Henry V*, *Henry IV* and *Richard II*[11] – and the total number of their performances amounts to twenty-six.

   It must be pointed out that for the present study, after identifying the productions, I consulted various articles and reviews in the theatre magazines *Sipario* and *Hystrio* and in online repositories, the last of which also included scanned newspaper

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9 For the sake of clarity, dialects are varieties with "a particular set of words and grammatical structures" and "a distinctive pronunciation, or accent" (Crystal 2008, 142), whereas accents only concern pronunciation, revealing "where a person is from, regionally or socially" (3). In this paper, dialects will only be considered in relation to their phonetic aspects. From now on dialects will also be referred to as non-standard languages, non-standard language varieties and regional languages.

10 I did not consider productions in foreign languages such as *El año de Ricardo* (2013) by Angélica Liddell, those put on by academies, and performances mounted or given by non-professionals.

11 Here the short versions of the original titles have been used.

articles[12]. Due to the limited scope of my research and to the fact that it deals with quite recent, technology-based times – the first two decades of the twenty-first century – I accorded priority to online resources and tools[13]. The language varieties and accents employed in these retrieved productions will now be established, and a discussion of critical attitudes towards the Shakespearean language deployed in the retrieved productions will follow.

1.1. Standard Italian Pronunciation, Dialects or Accented Italians?

To start with, the majority of the twenty-six stagings under investigation seem to resort to the standard pronunciation of Italian, although a clear indication is not always provided. In fact, if in the case of Daniele Pecci's *Enrico V* (2017) the standard phonetic nature of the staging is implied by a reviewer[14], oftentimes the use

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[12] My study consisted of three phases: (1) identification of the theatrical stagings of Shakespearean history plays in the time frame 2000-2020, (2) creation of my corpus and (3) analysis with a focus on phonetic and linguistic elements. Firstly, to identify performances of histories, I had recourse to Gebbia's listings of Shakespearean productions in *Memoria di Shakespeare* (Gebbia 2002, 2003 and 2004), consulted Marenco's *Drammi storici* (Shakespeare 2017) and used the website Teatrionline and the search engine Google News, where the titles of the plays translated into Italian were typed in. In the latter two cases, articles and reviews were consulted, but, when it comes to Google News, only the results of the first twenty pages for each play were considered. Secondly, after identifying the productions in the two decades, I resolved to engage with the ones put on by professional actors or companies in Italian theatres. Having determined my object of analysis, including twenty-six stagings, I proceeded to build my corpus by retrieving reviews, articles, director's notes, videos and information from theatres and companies, which I contacted. Thirdly, once gathered and scanned all the relevant material, I analyzed it concentrating on the reconstruction of phonetic and linguistic elements for every production as emerging from my corpus. For a list of articles, reviews and video recordings consulted but not referenced in this paper, see Appendix.

[13] I have excluded the drama yearbook *Il Patalogo* from my research, in that it does not cover the entire time period under investigation in this paper – it was published only until the year 2009. In a future continuation of this study, I would broaden the scope of my investigation to include further print sources.

[14] "[…] *Enrico V* at the Silvano Toti Globe Theatre in Rome restores all the power and suggestion of the Bard's words, managing to retain the force, height and poeticity of Shakespeare's language and the work's evocative power *even in Italian*" (Boni 2017, emphasis mine).

of standard Italian pronunciation is not signalled whatsoever. For instance, whilst commenting on the linguistic dimension of d'Elia's *Riccardo III* (2008; 2018), three reviewers do not make the slightest reference to standard pronunciation, supposedly taking for granted its adoption (Caleffi 2009; Costa 2018; D'Amico 2018), and neither does the description of the production (Compagnia Corrado d'Elia, n.d.).

A further, not isolated example of the lack of (Italian) pronunciation specification in both reviews and the descriptions of stagings is given by Andrea De Rosa's production, *Falstaff* (2014). According to the director, the production is marked by "cheeky love of life, which manifests itself above all in the form of a love of language, of words, of wit, of the incessant creation of metaphors and wordplays" (Redazione 2014). Here De Rosa points to the value of language in his production but does not mention the kind of Italian adopted, which is, however, suggested by a video of a performance (Teatro Stabile Torino TST 2014) and by the involvement of the translator Nadia Fusini. Not dissimilar in terms of phonetic determination is Roma's and Benvenuti's emphasis on the staging's swearwords and insults, which does not shed light on the diction employed (Roma 2014; Benvenuti 2014).

Then, as standard Italian pronunciation is still of the utmost importance in theatre, its use can be assumed, and appears to be confirmed by the fact that there are no references to accents in the texts. As a matter of fact, reviews do not record, nor hint at, the use of any accent in productions, and, whilst this might be due to their actual absence, one cannot help but wonder how a play such as *Henry V* manages to do without any acoustic device for the characterization of the three phonetically differentiated captains in the three Italian performances retrieved. It cannot be excluded that grammatical errors might replace the anomalous sounds of the three characters; yet, such a solution would irreparably alter the phonetic value of the Shakespearean text, and assign a grammatical incompetence to the characters which they originally do not possess.

Unlike accents, non-standard language varieties or dialects are distinctly signalled or recoverable in the case of four productions: three revolving around *Richard III* and one centred on *Henry V*.

Northern or, more precisely, Lombard dialects are embedded in two stagings of the triad regarding "this sun of York", namely Mauro Maggioni's *Riccardo III. Non siamo sicuri, Clarence, non siamo sicuri* (2000) and Roberto Abbiati's *Riccardo l'infermo. Il mio regno per un pappagallo* (2007-2018), whereas Giuseppe Massa's *Riccardo III (overu la nascita dû novu putiri)* (2012) and Davide Migliorisi's *Enric V* (2019) rely on the Sicilian language. In Maggioni's *Riccardo III*, the title character and the ghosts or figments of Richard's conscience, who are of great significance in the staging, utter what sounds like translated Shakespearean lines, whose order often differs from the one in Shakespeare's play[15]. They appear to shape a rather homogenous linguistic universe, where the figures express themselves in a modern, solemn Italian; however, in this quite uniform microcosm, one exception is audible. Unfortunately, no review is available, but the recording of the production shows that from the beginning of the play, and on several occasions, Margaret adopts the Lombard language[16], which, if one considers the very nature of the former queen, can be read as an explicit sign of her opposition to the title character.

In Abbiati's *Riccardo l'infermo* as well, Northern sonorities are utilized, although it is not clear to what extent. The production, in which Richard becomes an actor impersonating the English king in a hospital, is depicted by one source as substituting English with the "dialect of the Lombard countryside" (Di Biase 2018), and Abbiati's notes themselves hint at such a replacement (Cronache Maceratesi 2014). Yet, as can be inferred from a video (Arti Vive 2011), colloquial Italian must also be available in this staging, which only retains fragments of Shakespeare's language and content (the production "blends Shakespearian shreds into the daily life of an actor/clown with his fears and encounters, the real ones, with people, with illness, with those who were there and this morning when he woke up are no more" [Di Biase 2018]). It can then be said that the Lombard variety is resorted to, seemingly in a limited manner.

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[15] Internet Shakespeare Editions' *Richard III*, based on the First Folio (1623), has been taken into account (https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/Texts/R3).

[16] I am unable to determine the exact type of language (e.g. Milanese) employed.

Not a Lombard variety but a Sicilian one[17] instead is adopted in Massa's *Riccardo III*. In a female-dominated staging, chiefly inhabited by Queen Elizabeth, Margaret and the Duchess of York, Trenti classifies the language used by the only performer on stage, Simona Malato, as archaic Sicilian (Trenti 2013). This visceral and ancestral dialect, as another source remarks, is apt to express the on-stage characters' lamentations and, thanks to them, the echoes of other lamentations supposedly originating from the bowels of the Sicilian land itself (Redazione 2012). Thus, the staging is rooted in the Sicilian language and Sicilianity, whose "anthropologically deeper characteristics" are explored by means of the Shakespearean play, and can be assumed to be linguistically other than *Richard III*, constituting a "free and original reworking of the text" (Redazione 2012).

Lastly, also entrenched in Sicilianity is *Enric V*, directed by Davide Migliorisi, featuring two, maximum three performers (Sturiale 2019)[18], and narrating the play's events such as the Hundred Years' War (Di Mauro 2019). The production configures itself as a comic "cunto siculo" (Sicilian tale [Sturiale 2019]), revolutionizes the Shakespearean language and remodels the original text according to the "idiomatic and declaiming" storytelling of the nineteenth-century Sicilian tradition (Redazione CT 2019). Thus, like in the case of Massa's *Riccardo III*, the Sicilian language does not appear as having an ornamental function in this staging but rather remolds the Shakespearean play adjusting it to – and nourishing it with – the Sicilian culture.

In summary, Italian is predominant in stagings of history plays, and, in terms of non-standard language varieties, only Sicilian and Lombard are used, or have been adequately indicated. Given the accessed descriptions, Lombard varieties are mixed with Italian, while Sicilian seems to be used from start to finish.

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[17]   I am using the definition as offered by the reviews.
[18]   It is not clear what the function of the third actor is.

1.2. *Attitudes and Expectations about Shakespeare's Language*

Unlike the productions in regional languages, limited in number and reliant on a small amount of information, those in standard Italian, thanks to their relative abundance and the copiousness of the reviews retrieved, make it possible to reconstruct some of the critics' general attitudes and expectations about the (translated) Shakespearean language.

Starting on a rather positive note, the elegance and charm of the Italian texts are deeply appreciated in the stagings, and directly traced back to the Shakespearean language. Referring to Pecci's *Enrico V*, Boni maintains that the staging "restores all the power and fascination of the Bard's words, managing to retain the force, height and poeticity of Shakespeare's language and the work's evocative power even in Italian" (Boni 2017). A not dissimilar interest in elegance, previously labelled as "height", might hold true with reference to Peter Stein's *Richard II*, starring Maddalena Crippa: reviewers limit themselves to claim the staging's adherence to the Shakespearean language[19], but a video of the production seems to point to a lofty, high-sounding translation (Teatro Metastasio 2017). Albeit indirectly, the hypothesis of an elegant Shakespearean language appears as corroborated by Guarino arguing with regard to Bernardi's *Enrico IV* (2005-2007) that, at times, the translation is lexically and syntactically inappropriate to the depicted situations (Guarino 2007). Lastly, *Kings. Il Gioco del Potere* (2014) does not immediately appear linked to the idea of elegance – according to Facchinelli, it reproduces "the charm and density of the Shakespearean word" (Facchinelli 2014). However, charm could be seen as related to elegance if one bears in mind the link between "fascination" and "height" established by Boni[20].

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[19] Montanino describes the dialogues as "extraordinarily close to those of the Bard" (Montanino 2017), while Bonci states that "Shakespeare's words resonate in space" (Bonci and Lucarelli 2017).

[20] Discussing Carniti's production (2019), Villatico defines the director's translation as "smooth, clear, with a relentless theatrical rhythm", and claims that, thanks to the performers, it reflects, at least partially, the extraordinary rhythmical richness of the original play (Villatico 2019). Consequently, to a lesser extent, rhythm could be another quality attributed to Shakespeare's language.

On the other hand, what seems to bother critics, even if only marginally, is foul language, which some attribute to modernization. It must be acknowledged that modern or contemporary language[21] in itself does not necessarily attract negative criticism. As an example, Vetrano and Randisi's *Riccardo III. L'avversario* (2018-2020), which, according to Vetrano himself, is set in the present time and makes use of contemporary language (Colasanto 2018), is greatly exalted, being described as "powerful" (Viesti 2019), "beautiful" and "sincere and poetic" (Bandettini 2019). Yet the use of obscene language, associated with modernity in at least one case, is perceived as inappropriate. An instance of this is given by Alessandro Gassman's *Riccardo III*, which, as the director himself reveals, is based on his desire to update the language "through a direct and unfiltered lexical structure" (Gassman 2013). Concretely speaking, the production, marked by considerable cuts affecting both characters and scenes (Raponi 2014), relies on contemporary language (Bruscella 2014), but, rather than colloquial Italian, a lexically and syntactically refined variety is in use, as the verb "contemplare" (to contemplate) and expressions like "di rozzo stampo" (of coarse moulding) suggest (Taskvideo Italia 2014). In this context, Raponi and Raciti lament Hastings's unjustified linguistic impudence: Raponi maintains that "at times the language appears far too modern with some lapses in style, see Hastings" (Raponi 2014), whereas Raciti tends to regard Hastings' foul language as a "pointless provocation", detached from the rest, and as only triggering "convulsive laughter" (Raciti 2014). Raponi's words, linking modernity to "some lapses in style", are not explicit about the presence of foul language, but, in the light of Raciti's clear description, they can easily be interpreted as referring to the use of obscene expressions.

Less openly critical, and more subtle, are the comments regarding the adoption of foul language in Andrea De Rosa's *Falstaff*, which mostly investigates the relation between father and

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[21] Different videos point to the use of a modern language; yet, as I have not watched the entire productions, it is not possible for me to overgeneralize and claim with some degree of certainty that modern-sounding language was used in said performances.

son (Roma 2014), and stars Giuseppe Battiston. As has already been mentioned (see 1.1.), several critics point to the use of swearwords and insults. Specifically, Roma suggests their greater use on the part of Hal ("his language is more vulgar than the master's/father's" [Roma 2014]) and their general abundance ("Vulgarity and swearing, of which the show was overflowing, did not affect the Turin audience, who often applauded and laughed heartily at the right moments" [Roma 2014]), whilst Benvenuti signals their moderate adoption but recognizes the fact that these "scurrilous interjections" "may or may not offend the sensibilities of spectators" (Benvenuti 2014). As can be seen, the reviewers' words are not openly censorious, but Roma's lexical choice ("vulgar") and the very act of noticing the use of foul language on the part of both critics might suggest their surprise and a meagre attribution of insults to Shakespeare's *Henry IV*. For accuracy's sake, the productions might have exaggerated the use of obscene language, but it must also be borne in mind that the play is by no means exempt from it. On the contrary, it is characterized by conceptual and linguistic transgressiveness, ranging from Falstaff's life outside societal rules to the very presence of rude language and Hal's mastery of lower-class language, a form of subversiveness according to Blank (Blank 1996, 34-36)[22].

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[22]   If the use of foul language in productions is tendentially regarded as a form of 'abuse', the deletion of Shakespeare's words in the stagings is not. As two productions dramatizing *Richard III* show, a reconceptualization of Shakespearean plays – if well realized – is not unavoidably seen in a negative light. In the case of Andrea Gambuzza's *Riccardo alla terza. Disappunti di un dittatore* (2011), which highlights the resemblance between Shakespeare's politics and the contemporary one (Solinas 2015), only few passages of the Shakespearean script are retained (Solinas 2015), and, on the basis of a video of the show, the language in use can generally be assumed to be modern, even informal Italian (L'Orto degli Ananassi 2010). However, the linguistic, non-Shakespearean sphere does not draw any negative criticism; instead, Solinas appreciates Gambuzza's idea whereby the content of a text goes beyond its written component exploring the historical, social, and cultural circumstances originating it (Solinas 2015). Similarly positive is the portrayal of Mallus's *Riccardo III* (2018), set at the Globe in a post-apocalyptic future and focusing on the role of society in shaping Richard's monstrosity, and on his diversity (Teatro Carcano Milano, n.d.). As Camaldo claims, the production makes use of the

To sum up, as far as the productions under investigation are concerned, in quite a few cases critics seem to expect high-sounding, charming and non-vulgar Shakespearean words. While it is apparent that the semantic plane is involved, it cannot be excluded that, whenever the elegance and charm are invoked by some of the reviewers, the phonetic level is affected as well. The descriptions taken into account do not allow for a reading in terms of phonaesthetics, but the very existence of the discipline, the importance given to the sonic dimension in Shakespeare's day (Blake 1983; Barber 1997; Hope 2015) and the use of poetry in the original texts suggest that sensible and gifted translators might have shaped sounds in their translations, not just words.

Conclusion

The present study, which has looked into Shakespeare's histories performed in the period 2000-2020 in Italy, delineates a picture of the stagings as molded by the predominance of the standard Italian pronunciation, by the critics' positive attitude towards refined Italian, and their rejection of obscene words.

To begin with, as can be deduced, the adoption of the standard Italian pronunciation is prevalent, with only four productions turning to the Lombard and Sicilian dialects, and employing either some lines in regional languages (Maggioni's *Riccardo III*) or (presumably) entire scripts in non-standard varieties (Migliorisi's *Enric V*). As Massa's *Riccardo III* and Migliorisi's *Enric V* suggest, the use of dialect is linked to the recreation of local culture; yet, at least in two cases out of four, non-standard language varieties also seem to be rooted in, or at least carriers of, subalternity. In

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play's most famous lines (Camaldo 2019), which suggests a general non-adherence to the original language, a hypothesis corroborated by linguistic modernity as displayed in a video of the production (Teatro Carcano 2019). Yet, irrespective of any presumable and 'objective' linguistic distance from the original play, Acquaviva argues that the retention of Shakespeare's "dramatic and lyrical power" is not affected in this staging (Acquaviva 2018), tinted by Palla's (vocal?) capacity to rapidly give life to characters (Camaldo 2019). That said, it is worthwhile to notice that the acceptance of major, almost total cuts should not be overgeneralized, but, in need of further evidence, it might be solely ascribed to rewritings rather than adaptations of the Shakespearean plays.

Maggioni's *Riccardo III* defiant Margaret is the only character using a different, non-standard variety, and in Massa's *Riccardo III* the female protagonists, who oppose, to a greater or lesser extent, Richard, are all implied to adopt Sicilian. Thus, as based on a superficial, external knowledge of the productions, it could be hypothesized that dialects, spoken by disruptive female figures, confirm Enzo Moscato's description, which equates them to languages "of the edge, of the limit" (Moscato 2006, 93). In other words, in the above-mentioned productions these non-standard languages appear to constitute (political) tools voicing and highlighting the subaltern nature of characters, as both opponents of Richard and as females. The production *Riccardo l'infermo* as well might lend itself to being read through the lenses of subalternity. The staging, revolving around an actor in a hospital, possibly conveys the idea of 'otherness' through disease, the opposite of the (allegedly) socially predominant healthiness. Such an idea might be emphasized on a phonetic level by means of Lombard sonorities, but such a reading mostly stems from conjectures and should be substantiated by textual or theatrical evidence.

About the non-standard languages of the productions, it has been noticed that of Italy's vast dialectal cauldron only Lombard and Sicilian have been adopted. One cannot help but wonder why only Sicilian, and no other dialect, is used as a tool for translating or rewriting Shakespeare's histories. More specifically, considering Eduardo De Filippo's twentieth-century translation into Neapolitan of *The Tempest* and the aliveness of such a dialect, pointed out by Segnini (Segnini 2017, 241), or even the strong presence of Romanesco in contemporary theatre (Giovanardi 2007), it is astonishing (and disappointing) to see that neither the language of Naples nor that of Rome features in any production (e.g. in Laura Angiulli's *Riccardo III. Invito a corte* staged in Naples, and in *Riccardo III* directed by Alessandro Gassman, a Roman actor and director).

Focusing on standard Italian diction, it is oftentimes not signalled and seems to be taken for granted, whereas regional languages are singled out, which points to the unsurprising association between the Shakespearean histories and the Italian standard pronunciation in the Peninsula. However, one doubt hovers over the phonetic dimension of the stagings: do the

mounted works only hinge on standard Italian diction, and resort to no accents at all? Given the critics' general specification of regional varieties, it could be plausible to discard the employment of accents in any of the investigated stagings, which, combined with the scant use of non-standard languages, appears as a missed opportunity for embracing the phonetic potential of Shakespeare's histories such as *Henry V*. Nonetheless, based on the increasing use of accents (see Introduction), it cannot be definitively ruled out that critics are or have grown insensitive to accented Italians and no longer record them, which would however result in the reviewers' inability to capture and identify possibly riveting nuances of performances.

Lastly, it has been shown that several comments generate the idea of the Shakespearean language as (sounding) elegant and charming. Such a conceptualization could be coupled with a more or less explicit refusal of foul language, which bucks current linguistically liberal trends and begs the following questions: Do Italian critics expect a softened version of Shakespeare's language? Are they familiar with the texts in English or only with their translations? The latter query opens up a broader issue regarding the legacy of the more prestigious translations of the Shakespearean works published in the twentieth century and probably still in use. For aesthetic or ideological reasons, the latter might have privileged and spread a 'polite' language, thereby creating the expectation that the plays are fundamentally genteel and do not feature or indulge in vulgar expressions. For the sake of precision, it must be highlighted that Shakespeare's works are not devoid of 'unrefined' expressions, an aspect stressed by several texts (Partridge 2001; Kiernan 2007), and nullifying their presence would risk watering down and misinterpreting the original works. That said, to answer the question concerning the use and pragmatic characteristics of Italian translations of Shakespeare's history plays, it would be necessary to conduct some large-scale research, which goes beyond the scope of the present study.

In closing, the phonetics of the stagings of the Shakespearean histories in the period 2000-2020 mostly assumes the guise of uniformity: the reviews depict a rather homogenous universe in which standard Italian diction is presumable, dialects appear in the

minority, accented Italians are not contemplated, and Shakespeare's language is not rarely expected to be elegant and non-scurrilous. The result is that the phonetic nuances of the playwright's works, but, even more, those of the Italian Peninsula, are not done justice to or adequately exploited. But, more importantly, when we think of how subalternity is conveyed by the use of dialect in some of the stagings, the scant adoption of non-standard language varieties makes Shakespeare's history plays lacking in this regard, and irremediably links the productions to a predominantly acoustic non-transgressiveness.

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Craftsman Meets Historian: Shakespeare and Material Culture[*]

Franco Marenco

First presented at the 2021 online edition of the "Seminario Permanente di Studi Shakespeariani", this paper takes its cue from Gary Taylor's 2017 essay "Artiginality: Authorship after Postmodernism" and explores the coexistence and integration of the concepts of 'craftsmanship' and 'originality' within the Shakespearean macrotext. Considering the history plays to be the *locus classicus* for such conflation of the artisanal and the original, the paper specifically examines *Henry V*, *Richard III* (which is contrasted with *Macbeth*), and *Pericles*. At the same time, it also traces a movement from craftsmanship to art.

Keywords: Craftmanship, Originality, Material culture, *Henry V*, *Richard III*, *Pericles*

About Shakespeare and craftsmanship, a few titles come immediately to mind: Muriel C. Bradbrook's *Shakespeare the Craftsman* (Bradbrook 1969), and Andrew Gurr's several studies on the material basis of the Elizabethan theatre (see especially Gurr 1996). For once, however, I want to be up-to-date, and refer my readers to the opening essay, by Gary Taylor, of the *Authorship Companion*, the first volume of *The New Oxford Shakespeare* (2017). This essay bears the bizarre title of "Artiginality", which is meant, I think, to combine "artisanship" (a term allied to "craftsmanship"),

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with "originality". "Artisanship" plus "originality" becomes "artiginality" (Taylor 2017). Arguably, by inventing this new term Taylor means to join but also to divide, to separate. To separate by joining, or to join by separation: that is, to direct our attention to a period of history when "craftsmanship" did not carry with it the weight – the value – that we usually associate with "originality", the hall-mark of *art*, the unique product of the human genius. A craftsman could build a house, or a piece of furniture, or indeed a play for the theatre, without being necessarily original – or, in other words, without being praised for the uniqueness of his work. The artisanal and the original did not go hand in hand. And what Shakespeare, and other Elizabethan dramatists, did was to achieve originality out of a trade, a job, a craft which did not immediately pretend to anything possessing, at that time, the significance and prestige of being "original", in the modern sense of the word. Taylor does not say this (as we shall see, he follows another line of reasoning), but I think we can accept his mix of labels as a starting point of our argument.

Further to excite your interest, I will now say that Taylor himself got this idea from an Italian writer and critic, our old friend Umberto Eco, acknowledging his debt. Eco published, together with Vittorio Fagone, an interesting suggestion about the historical development of human or rather Italian crafts, *Il momento artigiano. Aspetti della cultura materiale in Italia* (1976), which I should like to paraphrase very freely, for the implication this title contains, as "the transition from craftsmanship to mature art in Italian material culture", to which it would be wise to add "during the Renaissance", as Eco does in his essay (Eco 1976). In that precious little book, the difference between "major" and "minor" arts – or, if you allow me to insist on the difference between "unoriginal" and "original" crafts – is importantly located at the historical junction we call "Renaissance", and in this context we can of course include the work of the Renaissance playwrights in England.

Let me quote now Taylor on Shakespeare as a *playwrighter* and *stagewrighter*. Those old-fashioned terms, he notes, were in those times coexistent with those of *shipwright* and *cartwright*, etc. – indicating craftmanship of the traditional order. Here is Taylor: "By returning to this earlier orthographic definition of authors as

wrighters, by re-conceptualizing authorship as artisanal labour, we reconnect the production of new texts to a network of other concepts: the wrighter as *artisan* […], or *artificer* […], or *artist* […], whose *art* […] is admired to the extent that it is *artificial*" (Taylor 2017, 22). And Taylor continues:

> This web of *OED* definitions based on early modern usage unravels the modern distinction between artist and artisan, which (as Umberto Eco notes) depends upon the assumption that art is a subcategory of the beautiful that is useless. […] An artisanal definition of the wrighter challenges the Romantic disdain for artifice; it undoes Kant's segregation of wrighters from other craftsmen, such as painters. […] The artisan is not a Kantian free intelligence: the artisan is a cyborg […]. *A shifting assemblage of humans, tools, and raw materials inhabiting a specific environment*, the artisan can survive only by manufacturing artificial objects desired by others. (22-23, emphasis mine)

Taylor adds: "We can escape from the competing sterilities of the old New Criticism and the old New Historicism by attending to the social, historical, and material complexity of artisanal poetics" (23). Whether or not we accept these final strictures against two of the authoritative critical schools of our day, one thing remains: that Taylor has efficiently circumscribed the area of "social, historical, and material complexity" of our agenda today.

So, let us pursue this line in the history of material culture. Indeed, everywhere in Shakespeare's production we can trace the coexistence of two tracks of development, the artisanal and the artistic – the artisan or craftsman drawing his material from the "shifting assemblage of humans, tools, and raw materials inhabiting a specific environment" – and, on the other hand, the original, the personal, innovative breakthrough – shirking the conventional and the repetitive – in other words, *art*. As we all know, with Shakespeare this movement from craftsmanship to art begins with the all-pervasive derivation from other people's works. Much of what we call "Shakespeare" is actually the creative work of other writers. To quote Taylor again, Shakespeare "had no difficulty cohabiting with another man's imagination", and he "worked primarily by tinkering with an existing artefact" (22). In this sense, there is no need for repetition, he stands opposite to

Kant's idea of genius – the original by definition, the explorer of new worlds, the originator of whole traditions. All the invention and innovation Shakespeare found it convenient to retain refer instead to the architecture of the play, suppressing all shades of didacticism and edification, and working instead on the mystery of human conduct, and on the complexities of the plot. Indeed, his artistic effort is directed to enriching the meanings of what he finds ready-made, mainly by endowing the play with two or multiple plots, as in *King Lear* and *The Merchant of Venice*, thus giving free latitude to the perspective of metadrama, or self-commentary, self-explanation (for instance, the part of the Fool in *King Lear* is entirely metadramatic). All this unconventional energy goes a long way to develop and multiply the inner meanings of his work, through its linguistic and stylistic organization, and through mixing in surprising ways the low, the middle and the high ingredients of discourse, thus giving his style the appearance of being invented on the spot, play by play: of being quite "original".

What is extremely surprising and gratifying is the way he can accommodate the everyday and commonplace with the exceptional, the piece of brilliant bravura; and the *locus classicus* for this coexistence of different strains is to be found in his histories. This is where the two paths of craftsman and artist meet, first of all in the maturing consciousness of the craftsman-artist himself, and then in the collective appreciation of his audiences. And the climax of this coexistence of competing strains comes, quite appropriately, at the end of his first and most applauded dramatic cycle, the histories, and specifically in *Henry V* (1599).

Nobody could deny its author the name and quality of an exquisite artisan or artificer: the core, as it were the heart, of an admirable collective, communal approach to dramatic discourse – in Taylor's words, an individual author operating inside a "shifting assemblage of humans, tools, and raw materials". Listen to how, at the end of the sixteenth century, the resident dramatist, the head craftsman and manager of that particular assemblage, the theatre called the Globe, finds it expedient to excuse himself and his colleagues for the shortcomings, the inadequacy of the ramshackle show which they are going to produce, and which we can with some reason call "artisanal":

                              But pardon, gentles all,
                    The flat unraisèd spirits that hath dared
                    On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
                    So great an object. Can this cock-pit hold
                    The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
                    Within this wooden O the very casques
                    That did affright the air at Agincourt?
                    O pardon: since a crookèd figure may
                    Attest in little place a million,
                    And let us, ciphers to this great account,
                    On your imaginary forces work.
                    […]
                    Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts:
                    Into a thousand parts divide one man,
                    And make imaginary puissance.
                    Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them,
                    Printing their proud hoofs i'th' receiving earth;
                    For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
                    Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,
                    Turning th'accomplishment of many years
                    Into an hourglass – for the which supply,
                    Admit me Chorus to this history,
                    Who Prologue-like your humble patience pray
                    Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.
                    (*Henry V*, Prologue.8-18, 23-34)[1]

Now, let us ask something about all these tags: "this unworthy
scaffold", "this wooden O", "The flat unraisèd spirits", "us, ciphers
to this great account", "For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck
our kings", etc.: what are they? They are, conceived in imaginative
idiom, exactly the "shifting assemblage of humans, tools, and raw
materials" a man named William Shakespeare was facing and then
using on a certain evening in 1599, the première of his play, and
further on, year after year, century after century…

But, at the same time, we could not deny him and his prologue
the most ambitious title of *poet*:

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[1]   All Shakespeare quotations are taken from Shakespeare 2005.

> O for a muse of fire, that would ascend
> The brightest heaven of invention:
> A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
> And monarchs to behold the swelling scene.
> Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
> Assume the port of Mars, and at his heels,
> Leashed in like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire
> Crouch for employment.
> (1-8)

These flamboyant images are features of high poetry, the mark of a true artist, of an art that is already modern, self-possessed, thoughtful and sovereign, subverting and enlivening the pedestrian tomes of medieval chroniclers from which it derives, and making of it a new, that is *original*, dramatic idiom.

They are perfect reminders for the audience, of today as of yesterday, of how the two tracks of craftsmanship and art meet to support one another.

In Eco's words, the major art is building up on the shoulders of the minor art, so much so that Shakespeare is credited nowadays with creating the historical drama of his time – that is, texts suitable for acting rather than reading.

One point we should bear in mind: that the audience was very much a part of our "shifting assemblage of humans", etc., as Bettina Boecker describes in her *Imagining Shakespeare's Original Audience, 1660-2000: Groundlings, Gallants, Grocers* of 2015 (Boecker 2015). A curious witness of what Boecker describes can be found in the journal of a German scientist, Georg Christoph Lichtenberg. In 1778 Georg is in London and goes to a performance of *Hamlet*, starring David Garrick, and at the monologue "to be or not to be" jots down such words: "A majority of the audience not only knows it by heart as the Paternoster, but also, I should say, listens to it as the Paternoster, which is inconceivable for anybody who does not know England. On this island Shakespeare's is a sacred name" (Lichtenberg 1801, 291, my translation)…

Deep down inside the Shakespearean macrotext we can find ample evidence of our two archetypes – the artisanal and the artistic – coexisting and integrating. Nor does the playwright abandon the conscious exhibition of his own manipulations, for instance

retracing somewhat ironically the scheme of the morality play, the kind of drama whose roots go back to the most ancient folklore, and which he uses in its yet immature form in *Richard III* (about 1592). In that most distinctive history play, the protagonist goes as far as 'betraying' – as we would say today – his own perverse disposition with most direct, astounding and vulgar vanity: "I am determinèd to prove a villain / […] / As I am subtle false and treacherous" (*Richard III*, I.i.30-37).

But if we really want to see the traditional, the popular and communal entrenching themselves, and quarrying a most revealing resistance to the claims of modern "originality", we have only to run to the first scene of the third act, when Richard, in one of his usual and repeated apart – i.e. when he breaks all the rules of dramatic illusion and make-believe, and speaks to the audience direct, as if he was among them, donning the garb of the ancient "presenter" of performances, and uncovering with mischievous complacency the ruse with which he intends to deceive characters and audience together: saying that he is "sending to the Tower" the two royal boys he should protect but who bar his way to the throne – meaning, of course, to have them killed. Well, at that time he comments, in an aside that is for us an implicit warning: "Thus like the formal Vice, Iniquity, / I moralize two meanings in one word" (III.i.82-83).

Ah! – we say – here is the old Vice again, the inheritance from the most ancient shows of the Middle Ages, the embodiment of the most wicked, egocentric and blasphemous amorality, keen on deceit and outrageous utterance, full of mischief, duplicity and tell-tale histrionics – making this character the target and at the same time the favorite of the early audiences, which would goad and provoke it to his disruptive function.

And it is the play of *Richard III* that we should take as the term of comparison with what Shakespeare would have written and produced in the new century, after the great achievement of *Hamlet*, when the nation's history was no longer his main preoccupation.

And now, the ideal text for comparison will be *Macbeth* (1606). The genre the two plays share is the same: on the textual level they are both histories, or better chronicle plays, derived from the medieval and Renaissance records visited and exploited by a

number of writers for the stage in the last decade of the sixteenth
century: all witnesses of the Herculean labors involved in the
reduction of those heavy volumes into a viable dramatic form. The
two plays share the same source, the *Chronicles of England, Scotland,
and Ireland* (1577, 1587), collected by Raphael Holinshed and others;
and they both share the title of "tragedy", obvious for *Macbeth* but
less so for *Richard*, which may have needed, in the eyes of the author
and his company, more prestige than the simple title of "history"
allowed. Even the histories of the two leading roles are similar in
showing the thirst for power making of them two obsessive
machines of treachery, suspicion and destruction, sparing no one in
their progress, murder by murder. So far so good, but here is where
their likeness ends. The epochs they represent are different, and so
are their length in terms of performance – the first being the most
extended of Shakespeare's plays, and the second the shortest
(Bloom 1998, 71; Melchiori 1994, 499). Very different are also the
material conditions of their productions, *Richard III* representing for
the author, after his uncertain beginnings with the trilogy of *Henry
VI*, his first serious option to a full career as a dramatist, and a
momentous breakthrough on the market of book-selling, bearing
his name, and reaching more reprints of any other play, even more
than *Hamlet*. At the time of *Richard III*, the author and his company
of eight members acted under the patronage of the Lord
Chamberlain, in front of the rowdy audiences of the Globe, while
Macbeth was produced at court under the direct patronage of the
Stuart king, by a company of twelve, and also as a treat to the King
of Denmark on a royal visit. The story of the play would flatter the
vanity of King James, implying his claim of being the ripest fruit on
the family tree of Banquo, and a lot of other allusions to his
personality and writings, including the *Daemonologie* of 1597, and
to the infamous Gunpowder Plot that was meant to blow up
Parliament together with its monarch. The new setting required
control, sophistication and solemnity, so far kept very much at bay.

Here is Richard expressing surprise at his own success in the
face of his bad temper:

What, I that killed her husband and his father,
To take her in her heart's extremest hate,

> With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
> The bleeding witness of my hatred by,
> Having God, her conscience, and these bars against me,
> And I no friends to back my suit withal
> But the plain devil and dissembling looks –
> And yet to win her, all the world to nothing? Ha!
> (*Richard III*, I.ii.218-25)

In that story the male protagonist remains the dominating figure, while the feminine counterpart cannot but submit… But this rapport is reversed in *Macbeth*: in the frantic scene of the slaying of the king, the killer falters, does not conclude his action, baulks at laying the blame on the sleeping soldiers, and for a telling moment leaves to finish the plot he mounted with his wife, the nameless woman who has atrociously repudiated her own nature, and who now complains:

> I have given suck, and I know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.
> I would, while it was smiling in my face,
> Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
> And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn
> As you have done to this.
> (*Macbeth*, I.vii.54-59)

And her fantastic cruelty is not due to a frenzied motion of anger. It is part of an ice-cold program which she herself appears to have contrived in a previous scene:

> Come, you spirits
> That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
> And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
> Of direst cruelty. Make thick my blood,
> Stop up th'access and passage to remorse,
> That no compunctious visitings of nature
> Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
> Th'effect and it. Come to my woman's breasts,
> And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
> Wherever in your sightless substances
> You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night,

And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell.
(I.v.39-50)

Now, what about originality? This is great, fearful verbal *art*, original and ready to become, in the hands (and voice) of a good actress, great mimetic art, at a vast distance from the declamatory fixity of the Richard-Lady Anne confrontation of a few years before. In the turn of a dozen years, the tools in the hands of the playwright have improved immensely, and his invention was fired.

Not that he doesn't remember his roots: the medieval drama remains very much in his mind and in the mind of his company and audience. Somewhat redolent of the Middle Ages, we have seen, was the Vice in *Richard III*, and in *Macbeth* we have a similar presence, that of the Porter of Macbeth's castle at Inverness, now upgraded to become the porter of Hell:

(*Knocking within*). Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate he should have old turning the key. (*Knock within*). Knock, knock, knock. Who's there, i'th' name of Belzebub? (II.iii.1-4)

Here is a splinter from another kind of communal show, the mystery play which would use the mischievous, picturesque character of a minor devil as a diversion, the spokesman of the gaucherie and wit of the underlings, not as acrimonious as the Vice, but as relevant to the key of the play. This one, in particular, set the critical discussion, from Samuel T. Coleridge (very much adverse to it) down to Kenneth Muir (very much in favor of the black infernal tinge it gives to the scene of the regicide) – all that explains, in synthesis, Macbeth's own words at the end:

I pall in resolution, and begin
To doubt th'equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth.
(V.v.40-42)

The difference between *Richard III* and *Macbeth* sums up the progress of our two trails of communal craftsmanship and personal art, two developments that would remain permanent in their author's production. And this production will be defined more and

more by the sophistication of compositional techniques, by the improving of the narrative force and of the practice of modulating and interlacing episodes, but above all by providing the style with exceptional and previously never tried resources, with new-fangled, daring metaphors, with lexical inventions ready to be incorporated in everyday usage, with language improvements capable of holding an audience chained to "the two hours' traffic of our stage" (*Romeo and Juliet*, Prologue.12) and to remain stamped in collective memory more than those of any other author.

And yet, Shakespeare would never utterly forsake the haphazard and naive manner of his beginnings, especially after his company was affluent enough in 1608 to buy a second theatre, the Blackfriars, on the opposite bank of the Thames – opposite the Globe – where they probably put on the first of an extraordinary series of texts which could well be dated back in some past decades: texts parading their "old age" with pride, and mixing material derived from archaic genres like the stories of magic, sorcery and fairy tales, the pastoral and the adventurous, the encounter with utopias, in short all the panoply of primeval fantasy: a series that would conclude with the jewel of *The Tempest* (1610-11).

What interests us now, however, is the first of these texts, appropriately given the label of *romances*: it is *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* *[…], as it was lately presented by the worthy and ancient poet John Gower* (1608). For unknown reasons, for that mature effort Shakespeare had a co-author named George Wilkins, a publican of somewhat shady reputation. The text, printed in 1609, was so corrupt that it was excluded from the collected works of 1623. The story is a typical rehash, what we would call a *centone*, going through incest, sound love, the tyrant oppressing virtue, envy pestering beauty, the circumnavigation of the Mediterranean, the abduction of the heroine, the final recognition, practically most of the fictional features of the literature of the past – and a good prelude to a deplorable failure. But there is some surprise in store, for *Pericles* was an extraordinary success, continued even in the seventeenth century, beyond the Puritan suppression of the theatres. In its first season, it became the pivot of the diplomatic mission of Giorgio Giustinian, the ambassador of the Republic of Venice, aiming at averting the war between the Republic and the Papacy. He invited

to an evening at the Globe, to a show of *Pericles*, the French ambassador and the secretary of the Florentine embassy. It cost him the astronomical sum of twenty crowns – a worthwhile payment, for his mission was completely successful[2].

Pericles is relevant to our concern above all for its nostalgic quality: Ben Jonson called it "a mouldy tale". And nostalgia is the key to the Prologue, spoken by the character of the fictional author, John Gower, in the following terms:

> To sing a song that old was sung
> From ashes ancient Gower is come,
> Assuming man's infirmities
> To glad your ear and please your eyes.
> It hath been sung at festivals,
> On ember-eves and holy-ales,
> And lords and ladies in their lives
> Have read it for restoratives.
> […]
> If you, born in these latter times
> When wit's more ripe, accept my rhymes,
> And that to hear an old man sing
> May to your wishes pleasure bring,
> I life would wish, and that I might
> Waste it for you like taper-light.
> (*Pericles*, Prologue.1-8, 11-16)

Let us probe more critically into these lines: why this insistence on the archaic, this looking back to "ember-eves and holy-ales", to "lords and ladies" evocative of the Middle Ages? All the play looks back to similar materials, and our answer cannot but refer to the loosening of the knot that kept together the high and the low, the aristocratic and the popular, the stage and the pit of the showground, to that unique experience that the popular theatres were at that moment of history. The old circularity of culture, which was the Globe's quintessence, was disintegrating at that very moment. Shows were under the pressure of a new selectivity, which in society meant the rise of the aristocratic elite, in literary

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2   See Gurr 1996, 83. For this author, *Pericles* is "the biggest innovation Shakespeare ever made".

theory meant the growth of the neoclassical rationality and
regularity, and in the theatrical sphere meant the separation of the
communal arenas and the private playhouses, with productions
more and more far apart for tastes, idioms, and kinds of
entertainment. The heterogeneous public audiences of the
beginnings were splintering up, while the antidote proposed by the
King's Men was the persistently selective, renewed claim to a
universal theatre, the manifestation of totality, whose main task
would be that of including the past as well as the present, fantasy
together with history and magic and moral maturity, and above all
wonder, the high regard and admiration for authors and
companies, against the detachment, the alienation effect the
newcomers such as Ben Jonson and John Webster were pursuing.
Shakespeare's romances were meant to answer the attack of
regularity and symmetry to which the new audiences were
becoming acquainted, and which would prevail later, in the work
of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

This was what the King's Men required of their theatre-goers:
the energetic participation in the imaginative achievement, and
(with it) to the activity of memory: memory of a cohesive, unifying
kind of culture, imbued with the old formulas of magic and ritual.
This is what Prospero recommends to Miranda and the audience at
the beginning of *The Tempest*:

> Canst thou remember[?]
>
>   What seest thou else
> In the dark backward and abyss of time?
> (*The Tempest*, I.i.38, 49-50)

In the dynamic system of the theatre, an epoch-making
transformation was taking place, conceiving and promoting the
single theatrical script no longer as a collective text, anonymous and
polymorphic, "artisanal" in every sense – plays of this kind, the
products of collaboration published anonymously, were countless
by that time – but as the expression of a single individual, in his or
her turn capable of becoming from a simple piece of a collective
body to an absolute creator of new knowledge: so far a process in

its beginning, but looking to the idea of the "artist" that would take shape in the aesthetics of the following century.

And here, a final caution: *Pericles* and its progeny are useful now to advise us against taking those texts as what we might call an exclusively "literary" phenomenon, endowed with all the functions, including the doctrinal and the didactic, covered by literature in our day. For those authors and actors and audiences, the theatre was an activity unrelated with – not to say "alternative to" – "literature" as we conceive it. And it is their muscular quarrying deep down to the depths of tradition that now protects us against thinking that their art of mimesis could be justified by what we can read today in their fragile quartos. Indeed, we should do well to remember that the playwrights of the Shakespeare cast – the Bard with all the rest of them, except perhaps Jonson – did not take much notice of their printed texts, publication being a mere side concern, primacy going instead for them to the factuality and many-sidedness of the stage-shows, the true centre of their artistic interest. There isn't any other reason for the relative scarcity of surviving items from that massive production, and for the famous Shakespearean Folio of 1623 having more than one third of so far unpublished material, including *Julius Caesar*, *As You Like It*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Tempest…*

In conclusion, we may say that among the modern directors the more successful in reviving that important cultural moment have been the twentieth-century avant-garde: Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski, Peter Brook, and today perhaps Declan Donnellan – an avant-garde which, in Artaud's words, has re-vitalized the conception of mimetic art as a practice of "magic and ritual", and the theatre as "an independent and autonomous art, which, in order to resurrect or simply live on, cannot dispense with what differentiates it from the text, the naked word, the literature, and from all the other means of a stabilized sort of writing" (Artaud 1968, xiv, my translation). These words, I think, would have been ratified by our fabulous sixteenth-century entertainers.

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MISCELLANY

The Revenger's Tragedy: Date, Title, Theatre, Text

Roger Holdsworth

As well as fixing a precise date for the play, this study of *The Revenger's Tragedy* offers new evidence for identifying it as the supposedly lost *The Viper and Her Brood*. The reattribution implies that its traditional title is spurious, and the belief that it was written for the King's Men and performed at the Globe is mistaken. It was a Blackfriars play, and commissioned by Robert Keysar, manager of the Blackfriars Children. The essay also examines current editorial responses to the play's text, noting places where commentary is needed but absent, or offered but erroneous.

Keywords: Thomas Middleton, Authorship, Revenge tragedy, Private theatre, Lost plays

No other major English play has had as much bad luck as *The Revenger's Tragedy*. Its title is probably a printer's guess, and not the one its author gave it; the acting company advertised on its Quarto title-page almost certainly did not act it; and when, after remaining anonymous for fifty years, it finally acquired an author, the author it acquired was not the person who wrote it. These errors, certain or probable, went unchallenged for three hundred years, but in the last century the play's fortunes began to turn. Close, independent, carefully objective analyses of the Quarto text by Jackson, Lake, and

Price established beyond serious dispute that the true author of *The Revenger's Tragedy* was not Cyril Tourneur but Thomas Middleton (Price 1960; Lake 1971; Lake 1975; Jackson 1979; Jackson 1981), and the reassignment of its authorship has boosted interest in the play. Annotated editions have appeared under Middleton's name[1], as have critical discussions which are unapologetic about treating it as his[2]. The present essay seeks further to embed Middleton's play in the canon of his work by suggesting that questions which it continues to pose, concerning its date, title, theatrical provenance, and the accuracy of its text, can be resolved or at least clarified once his authorship is assumed.

Unless otherwise stated, Middleton references, including those for *The Revenger's Tragedy*, follow the Oxford *Collected Works* (Taylor and Lavagnino 2007a); those for Shakespeare the second edition of *The Norton Shakespeare* (Greenblatt 2008). The first edition of the play, a Quarto printed at the end of 1607 (some copies are dated 1608), is identified as Q.

Date

Middleton probably wrote *The Revenger's Tragedy* in April 1606. He cannot have done so later than 7 October 1607, for on that day its printer and publisher, George Eld, asserted his ownership of the copyright by entering the play, along with a Middleton comedy, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, in the Stationers' Register. Since a dramatist sold all rights in his play when he sold it to the theatre (Wilson 1970, 19), and theatre managers tended not to release plays for publication while they were drawing audiences to see them performed, it is unlikely that composition occurred any later than the previous year.

Further evidence permits a more precise date. Hippolito's delighted anticipation of the destruction of the ducal regime, "There's gunpowder i'th' court, / Wildfire at midnight" (II.ii.168-69), can hardly pre-date the Gunpowder Plot of 5 November 1605,

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[1]   See e.g. Jackson 1983; Loughrey and Taylor 1988; Jackson 2007; Smith 2012; Minton 2019.

[2]   See e.g. Holdsworth 1990b; Stachniewski 1990; Chakravorty 1996; Neill 1996; Gottlieb 2015; Guardamagna 2018.

foiled when guards found the gunpowder in a midnight search of the cellars beneath the House of Lords (Holdsworth 1990c, 119). Extensive borrowings from *King Lear*, which Shakespeare completed in December 1605 or January 1606 (Taylor 1982, 412-13), point to a date in the first half of 1606. *Lear* was not in print until 1608, so Middleton must be remembering the play in performance, and in 1606 there were no commercial performances of plays after 10 July, when plague closed the London theatres until the following January (Wilson 1927, 124). Two other Middleton plays written in this same six-month period, *A Yorkshire Tragedy* and *Timon of Athens* (the latter a collaboration with Shakespeare), narrow the date still further, for both also borrow from *Lear* but are themselves borrowed from in *The Revenger's Tragedy* (Holdsworth 2017, 379-81).

There is also the question of *The Puritan Widow*. This Middleton comedy, printed and published by Eld in 1607, has verbal links with *The Revenger's Tragedy* which identify it as the later, imitating play (382), and the two plays are further connected in that both respond, though in different ways, to the Act to Restrain Abuses of Players, a parliamentary bill banning profanity and "irreligious swearing" on the stage which became law on 27 May 1606. In *The Revenger's Tragedy* there are two occasions, at IV.ii.46 and IV.iv.14, where it seems that replacing "God" with a more acceptable alternative was not clearly indicated in the manuscript the printer worked from, with a consequent muddling of sense (see Minton 2019, 239, 255, 305). These attempts at revision indicate that the play was already in existence before the ban came into force, and the offending (or soon to be offending) word caught Middleton's or someone at the playhouse's notice as he looked through the completed text – unmethodically, as other uses of "God" were left untouched. The changes need not have been made after 27 May: the bill was passed in the Commons on 5 April and made steady progress through the Commons and the Lords before receiving the royal assent seven weeks later (Gazzard 2010, 518). The theatres would have been increasingly conscious of what was coming.

By contrast, in *The Puritan Widow* the ban is overtly alluded to and spoken of as already in effect. The arrival of Corporal Oath, whose name calls attention to the soldier's proverbial fondness for

scurrilous language, alarms the widow's servants, since he is "the man that we are forbidden to keep company withal". They "must not swear", and the corporal's very presence will get them "soundly whipped for swearing" (I.iii.1-9)[3]. The joke dates Middleton's last comedy for the Children of Paul's to the weeks following the May Act, and this is supported by Pieboard's consulting of an almanac for 15 July, which is said to be "today" and a Tuesday, as indeed it was in 1606 (III.v.241). In choosing this date, Middleton would have allowed time for the play to reach the theatre. He was not to know that when that date arrived the theatres would be closed.

Taken together, these indicators of its date assembled above position *The Revenger's Tragedy* in the following sequence:

Shakespeare, *King Lear*: November 1605-January 1606;
Middleton, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*: January 1606;
Middleton and Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*: February-March 1606;
Middleton, *The Revenger's Tragedy*: April-May 1606;
Middleton, *The Puritan Widow*: June 1606;
Shakespeare, *Macbeth*: June-July 1606.

This gives Middleton a very crowded schedule, even allowing for the fact that *A Yorkshire Tragedy* is unusually short and his share of *Timon* was less than half the whole play. It leaves no room for additional work, which means that Middleton's other comedies for Paul's Boys, often dated 1604-6 (*The Phoenix*, *A Mad World, My Masters*, *Michaelmas Term*, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*), can be no later than 1605.

The April-May date for *The Revenger's Tragedy* explains its many points of contact with *Volpone*, which was acted just before or just after Middleton's play at the end of March 1606 (Parker 1983, 8-9). Both plays are savage satires set in the luridly corrupt Italy of the English imagination, and both employ Italian type-names to present their characters as embodiments of particular virtues and vices; both feature a protagonist (Vindice, Volpone) who delights

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3   The reference is noted by Dutton 2005, 15-16.

in impersonation, and whose habit of congratulating himself on his own cunning propels him to disaster; both begin with a long soliloquy in which the protagonist holds up and addresses an object (a gold coin, a skull) which he offers as a governing symbol of the obsessions which drive both him and the world of his play; and both include a scene of failed seduction in which an allegorically named woman (Castiza: Italian *castità*, "chastity"; Celia, "the heavenly one") resists an assault on her virtue by the protagonist which is first verbal and then aided by a display of gold and finery. There are also what may be verbal echoes, such as Volpone's invocation of "Riches, the dumb god that givest all men tongues" (I.i.22), and Lussurioso's claim that "Gold, though it be dumb, does utter the best thanks" (*The Revenger's Tragedy*, I.iii.28).

Which play influenced which? Though he regularly cast himself as loftily independent of his theatrical contemporaries (once describing Middleton as "a base fellow"), Jonson was perfectly ready to plunder them for plot material and dialogue when it suited him. Even *Volpone*, wholly Jonsonian as it seems, is yet another play which freely echoes *King Lear* (Musgrove 1957, 22-37), while its plot devices of a fake bed-ridden invalid visited in his sickroom by characters feigning concern but actually hoping for profit, and a money-mad schemer who overreaches himself by announcing his own death, are lifted respectively from *A Mad World* and *Michaelmas Term*. That he knew *The Revenger's Tragedy* is attested by his borrowing from it in later plays (Holdsworth 1980).

Nevertheless, even if one discounts the other evidence, it is just as possible that *Volpone* is the imitated and therefore the earlier play. Middleton had taken material from Jonson before this date – in *The Phoenix* (c. 1604) from *Poetaster*, for example, and in *A Trick* (c. 1605) from *Cynthia's Revels* – and his debts to Jonson continued into the following decade, in *The Triumphs of Truth* (1613), *The Widow* (1615), *A Fair Quarrel* (1616), and *Hengist, King of Kent* (1620)[4]. As separate evidence favours it, the date of April-May 1606 for *The Revenger's Tragedy* remains the best choice.

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[4]   See Baskervill 1908, 116-19; George 1966, 154, 299; George 1971; Levine 1975, 217.

Title and Theatre

If this date is right, it becomes virtually certain that "The Revenger's Tragedy" was not the title Middleton gave his play. He called it "The Viper and Her Brood". Three years after writing it, in Trinity Term (that is, in June or July) 1609, Middleton was sued in the Court of King's Bench by Robert Keysar, manager of the Blackfriars Children, who complained that Middleton owed him £16, and that on 6 May 1606 he had given a signed undertaking to pay him £8 10 shillings (perhaps half of the larger debt, plus interest) by the 15th of the following month, but had not done so. Middleton countered that on the very next day, 7 May 1606, he had delivered a play to Keysar, and Keysar had accepted it as payment. The play was "quendam librum lusiorum tragicum vocatum the vyper & her broode": "a certain playbook, a tragedy called *The Viper and Her Brood*".

No other documents survive to tell us how the case was settled, but we can be sure that Middleton was referring to a play he had just written. Why else would a private-theatre manager have lent a dramatist writing mainly for the private theatres such a large sum, other than as an advance for new work? Besides, £16 was around the going rate for a newly commissioned play at this date (Albright notes payments of between £10 and £20 in 1612 [Albright 1927, 221-23]), and in mid-1606 Keysar was "using bonds to guarantee the delivery of plays" (Munro 2020, 271), as he sought to build up a new stable of playwrights following Jonson and Marston's withdrawal from the Blackfriars earlier in the year. Munro cites two bonds with Dekker for £10 and £14 on 4 June, just four weeks after Middleton claimed to have delivered *The Viper and Her Brood*. If Middleton's memory of the date was accurate, he would have accepted the advance from Keysar in March, completed the play in the first week of May, then turned immediately to writing *The Puritan Widow*, which he delivered to the Children of Paul's (assuming the attribution on Eld's title-page can be trusted) in mid- or late June, before plague closed the theatres on 10 July. There is no room in Middleton's 1606 schedule for an additional play. *The Revenger's Tragedy* and *The Viper and Her Brood* must be one and the same.

The text provides strong evidence that *The Viper and Her Brood* was the play's intended title. Vipers served to express a view of women as lustful, treacherous, and lethal, thanks to the belief that the female viper decapitated the male at the moment of orgasm; they were also bywords for filial ingratitude and malice, as the young were thought to kill their mother by eating their way out of her womb, in revenge, it was sometimes suggested, for their father's death. More generally, vipers could characterise any kind of murderous malevolence, especially if it involved poisoning, actual or figurative. In a sermon of 1620, for example, the crucifiers of Christ are "a broode of vipers […] full of venom and malice" (Denison 1620, 124).

The play has many references, both implied and overt, to what I take to be its real title. It has two mothers, Gratiana and the Duchess, who are vipers not only in that they commit acts of treachery against their families, but in being betrayed, threatened, and preyed on by their children. This link between them is asserted visually when at IV.iii.5 one of the Duchess's stepsons runs at his stepmother and stepbrother "*with a rapier*", and twelve lines later Vindice and Hippolito drag out their mother "*with daggers in their hands*". Both mothers are associated with poison. The Duchess twice considers a plan to poison her husband (I.ii.94-97; III.v.211), though for the moment she will betray him only sexually, and thus "kill him in his forehead" (I.ii.107). Gratiana (who in stage directions, speech prefixes and dialogue is always "Mother", apart from a single use of her name) is "that poisonous woman" (II.i.232) whose mother's milk has "turned to quarlèd poison" (IV.iv.7), and who finds that her own words poison her (236).

Elsewhere the viper analogy is more explicit. Spurio is "like strong poison" who "eats" into his father the Duke (II.ii.159); Junior Brother is "a serpent" who wishes to "venom" the souls of his siblings (I.iv.62; III.iv.75); and Gloriana inflicts on the Duke a version of the male viper's erotic destiny when, thanks to her own poisoned face, she is able to "kiss his lips to death" (III.v.105). His revenge achieved, Vindice is happy to die after "a nest of dukes", glancing at the familiar "nest of snakes" (V.iii.125). Gratiana prompts the most sustained parallel. As well as being a "poisonous woman", she is a "black serpent" (IV.iv.131), a "dam" whose words

"will sting" (II.i.131-36), and who has hatched from "that shell of mother" which "breeds a bawd" (IV.iv.10). Middleton may be recalling Brutus's depiction of Caesar as an "adder" whose "sting" requires that the conspirators "kill him in the shell" (*Julius Caesar*, II.i.14-34). Certainly, in having Vindice label his mother "yon dam", he intends a reference to the standard term for the mature female viper, as in Richard Harvey's reminder that "the Vipers Broode […] kill their owne damme which bred and brought them vp to life" (Harvey 1590, 151-52). Gratiana's words will sting not because they will deliver a sharp rebuke to Castiza, but because they will inject her virtue with poison (as they seem briefly to have done at IV.iv.99-135).

Why and when did the play lose its title and become *The Revenger's Tragedy*? Perhaps Keysar disliked what Middleton had called it and insisted on the change; but would he have rejected something as suggestive and intriguing as "The Viper and Her Brood" in favour of this alternative – safe in its way, but bland and clichéd, and about as striking as "The Lover's Comedy" as the title of a play of the opposite genre? Focus should shift, I think, from Keysar to George Eld, and from May 1606 to October 1607, when Eld bought the play, together with *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, from the Blackfriars theatre, and set about entering them in the Stationers' Register and having them printed. There is a choice of explanations. Perhaps, the manuscripts of the two plays which arrived in Eld's shop were incomplete. As both were in Middleton's handwriting, they were some one and a half to two years old, and would have been used, then gathered dust, and perhaps deteriorated, in the theatre's archive. Perhaps, what came to be called *The Revenger's Tragedy* had no title, author, or acting company indicated but began with the first scene of the play proper. *A Trick* had its title, but nothing else. In order to register the plays, Eld did not need to give their author or acting company, but he did need to give their titles, so for the tragedy he had to create one. Not wanting to read the entire text (it was only a play, after all), he would have seen that a character named Vindice spoke the opening speech, and in it called on "vengeance", "tragedy", and "revenge". Had he read further, he would have noticed that Vindice translated his own name: "a revenger" (IV.ii.173). He

would have felt on safe ground choosing the title he did. On this view Eld was acting honestly, and exactly like Sir George Buc, the Master of the Revels, four years later, when, faced with the manuscript of another Middleton tragedy devoid of all information about the play, he invented a title for it: "this second Maydens tragedy (for it hath no name inscribed)". Unlike Buc's, however, Eld's choice was plausible enough to stick.

Having identified the two plays in the Register by means of titles only, Eld printed them one after the other, from the same stock of paper, beginning towards the end of 1607. He printed the tragedy first, adding "sundry times Acted, by the Kings Majesties Servants" to the still authorless title-page, and stopping the press to change the date from 1607 to 1608 as printing ran into the following year. Turning then to *A Trick*, he again added only an acting company ("lately Acted, by the Children of Paules"), but new information about the play reached him while it was at press, of a kind which would assist sales of the Quarto. He recast the title-page so that it now included the author ("T. M."), details of a court performance, and some theatrical history ("in Action, both at Paules, and the Black-Fryers"), this last piece of information establishing that Keysar and the Blackfriars had owned both *The Viper* and *A Trick*.

The other explanation of Eld's managing of *The Revenger's Tragedy*'s manuscript into print involves the likelihood of deliberate deception. Perhaps, the play's title was missing, compelling Eld to make one up, but the naming of the acting company as the King's Men is a different matter. How did Eld come into simultaneous possession of two plays from such widely different sources, allowing the stationers' clerk to bundle them into a single entry in the Register? We have to believe that he bought one from the capital's leading players, an adult company who acted at a public theatre, the Globe, just as he acquired the other from the Blackfriars private theatre, occupied by the child actors managed by Robert Keysar. Throughout the Register, that is from 1554 to 1640, this combination of such disparately sourced plays, in single joint entries or in consecutive entries by the same publisher, is highly anomalous, and quite possibly unique. The link, the common point of origin, is always the theatre company, and this applies whether a single author is involved, or two, or several. Take the following

handful of examples from different points in the Register, where the same publisher has brought two or more plays to be registered on the same day, where different authors are concerned but not named, and a single theatre company is concerned but is not named either:

14 May 1594: *The Famous Victories of Henry V* and *James IV* (Queen's Men);
13 August 1599: *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Longshanks* (Admiral's);
24 July 1600: *1* and *2 Sir John Oldcastle* and *Captain Thomas Stukeley* (Admiral's);
6 August 1607: *The Puritan Widow* and *Northward Ho* (Paul's Boys);
15 February 1612: *The Nobleman* and *The Twins' Tragedy* (King's);
2 April 1640: *The Swaggering Damsel* and *The Prisoner* (Queen Henrietta's Men).

In every case, it is clear that the publisher has obtained his plays from the same theatre company in a single transaction. On these grounds alone, it is more than likely that the Quarto's attribution of Middleton's tragedy to the King's Men is false. Like *A Trick*, and like the other two plays for which Eld acted as publisher, *The Revenger's Tragedy* was a private-theatre play, written for and acted at the Blackfriars by Keysar's company. If support for this conclusion were needed, it is provided by the Quarto of *The Puritan Widow*, published by Eld a few months earlier, where "Written by W. S." appears on the title-page: a yet more blatant attempt to boost sales of the play by associating it not directly with the King's Men, but with their leading dramatist.

Text and Commentary

The following notes supplement editorial commentary on the play and offer corrections to textual decisions where emendation, or failure to emend, is in my judgement mistaken. The three fullest editions currently available are those of Foakes 1966, Jackson 2007, and Minton 2019. Foakes's, a version of which is unfortunately still in print in a Revels Student edition (1996), contains errors and distortions of evidence which form the basis of his claim that

Tourneur wrote the play. (For a small sample, see Lake 1971.)[5] I pass over most of these false claims here, in the hope that this edition will soon be cited only to illustrate a discredited phase of authorship study which took hold in the previous century. Jackson's is the best edition of the three, even though its annotations are necessarily constrained by the limited space available to them in a 'Complete Works'. Minton's commentary is the fullest, but several of her emendations, some resurrected from eighteenth-century editions, others original to her, betray a lack of familiarity with Middleton's idiom.

I have divided the notes into those which defend or reject textual readings, and those which discuss references and usages which have received no or insufficient comment, or have been misinterpreted. Where textual questions are at issue, quotation is from the Quarto text of 1607/8, coupled with the act, scene, and line numbers of the Oxford edition; other notes cite the Oxford edition's modernised text.

Text

I.ii.145-46
Let it stand firme both in thought and minde,
That the Duke was thy Father.

The first line is a syllable short and is often emended to "Let it stand firme both in *thy* thought and minde", a correction readily supported by the possibility that the compositor was confused by the occurrence of "th" at the beginning of two consecutive words in his copy, or by the repetition of "thy" in the line following. However, the result is still a very weak line. Middleton does not share Shakespeare's fondness for doublets, and this one is particularly vacuous. What is the difference between "thought" and "mind" here? And how does such a coupling justify the use of "both", which seems to announce the pairing of two elements

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[5]   In a review of one of the reissues of Foakes's edition J. C. Maxwell observes that "a series of quite specific actual mis-statements about *The Revenger's Tragedy* […] are given a further lease of life" (Maxwell 1975, 243).

which might normally be thought of as distinct? The problems are solved, and the line properly integrated into the passage, if one reads "Let it stand firme both in *thy* thought and *mine*", i.e. "Let us both suppose that the Duke is your father, what then?". The database Early English Books Online (hereafter EEBO) reveals that Middleton uses this "thy/your […] and mine" formula more frequently than any other Jacobean dramatist. There are ten examples in his plays, including one in the previous scene in this play, at I.i.57 ("Thy wrongs and mine are for one scabberd fit"), and another in *Your Five Gallants* which employs "thought": "Your thoughts and mine were twins" (IV.vii.224)[6].

I.ii.186-88
When base male-Bawds kept Centinell at staire-head
Was I stolne softly; oh – damnation met
The sinne of feasts, drunken adultery.

Spurio is lamenting what he takes to be the ruinous spiritual consequences of his bastardising, and picturing the riotous orgy at which he was conceived. Minton emends "met" to "meet" and reads the word as an adjective, so Q's "oh – damnation met" is made to mean "O fitting damnation". This is certainly wrong. The change leaves "The sinne of feasts, drunken adultery" syntactically marooned, so to make any sense at all it has to be presented as an exclamation, whereas "met" marks the climax of a series of past-tense verbs, nine in all, as Spurio tells the story of his conception (beginning "I was begot" at line 178). More decisively, "meet" as a verb frequently appears in a retributive context, where it means both "encounter" and "requite". In Middleton, as well as Ambitioso's "A murrain meet 'em" at III.vi.84, cf. *A Game at Chess*, Q2 version, H3r, "Adultery, oh Ime met now […] / The sins gradation right payd"; also *Women Beware Women*, III.ii.96-97, "O equal justice, thou hast met my sin / With a full weight", and V.i.195-96, "Vengeance met vengeance / Like a set match". This use of "meet" remains common through the century, and is often

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6   The Oxford edition adopted this reading at my suggestion (and with due acknowledgement); see Taylor and Lavagnino 2007b, 552.

coupled with "damnation"; e.g. Lane 1681, 51, "your general Damnation met you"; Pordage 1673, 63, "Monster […] meet Damnation equal to thy Guilt"; and Anon. 1682, 12, "we meet Damnation here".

I.iii.184-85
So touch 'em – tho I durst almost for good,
Venture my lands in heaven upon their good.

Vindice, disguised as the pimp Piato, has been hired by Lussurioso to corrupt Vindice's sister and mother. Instead of challenging their would-be abuser, he ends the scene with an announcement that he will test the honesty of the two women, even though he is fully (or almost fully) confident that they are unseducible. Editors reject Q's second "good", assuming it to be an inadvertent repetition of the first, and replace it with "blood", the only other word which will both supply the necessary rhyme and make sense. "Blood" is then variously glossed as "strength of character" (Foakes 1966; Jackson 2007), "chaste disposition" (Gibson 1997), "virtue" (Maus 1995), "virtuous character" (Minton 2019), or "honesty" (Ross 1966). There are at least three strong reasons to reject this change and retain Q's "good". They are these:

1. The senses of "blood" editors are compelled to offer do not correspond with contemporary uses of the word, especially in moral contexts like the present one, and especially as used by Middleton. In Middleton and elsewhere, "blood" is a pernicious and compulsive force, closely synonymous with "flesh", "lust", and "will", with which it is regularly coupled. A product of the Fall, it is "[o]f that grosse and corrupt nature of man, which is throughout the Scriptures set as enemie to the Spirite" (note on John 1:13; Geneva Bible, 1587 version). "There is no God in blood", Marston's Malheureux tersely explains (Wine 1965, IV.ii.13). This ominous and negative sense of "blood" is everywhere in Middleton, as one would expect of an author deeply influenced by the Calvinist character of contemporary Protestant doctrine, and he charts its destructive operation in both sexes. In *A Fair Quarrel*, for example, he dramatises "the incensèd prison of man's blood" (III.i.69), and in *More Dissemblers Besides Women* "woman's frailty

and her blood" (III.i.226). In the present passage, Vindice is affirming his readiness to stake his spiritual future on his mother and sister's virtue. Q's "good" indicates what he expects to discover, "blood" replaces the Q reading with the opposite of the sense required[7].

2. Q is further supported by Middleton's re-use of the plot device of which the present passage is a part. Vindice decides to "try the faith" of his mother on the slenderest of pretexts – it "would not prove the meanest policy" to make use of his disguise for this purpose (I.iii.176-77) – and despite claiming to know in advance that her virtue is unassailable. He is well punished for his lack of trust when her "good" fails to withstand his skill as a tempter, and she proves corruptible after all. Middleton recycles this episode some nine years later in *A Fair Quarrel*, where Captain Ager, another son of a widowed mother, asks her to reaffirm her virtue before he fights a duel to vindicate it. Initially outraged to find her "good mistrusted" (II.i.113), she pretends to be sexually corrupt to save her son from risking his life. There is an obvious difference between the two episodes (Gratiana really does succumb to her son's interrogation, Lady Ager only pretends to), but both use the same ironic reversal of expectation to uncover the misogyny present in the son's motivation, in both the son stresses the "good(ness)" of his mother as a guarantee of his own spiritual prospects, and both sons veer between trust and mistrust in their view of the mother's virtue. "Certain she's good", Ager declares, but then immediately adds that he needs "assurance in't", since she is "but woman" (*A Fair Quarrel*, II.i.28-31). Later he laments that he has staked "th'assurance of his joys / Upon a woman's goodness" (IV.iii.8-9), which looks back to Vindice's "upon their good". The parallels of plot and language favour the Q reading.

3. Q's use of "good" as a noun meaning goodness in general might cause suspicion, as OED does not recognise this sense. Its closest approach is "A personal quality, a virtue" and "An act of goodness" ("good", B. *n*. III. 8c, d). But this is an oversight, as the more absolute or abstract use is common: it occurs in Shakespeare

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7   Middleton's use of "blood" is discussed perceptively and in detail by
     Stachniewski 1990, 234-43.

(*The Rape of Lucrece*, 656, "these petty ills shall change thy good"), and elsewhere in Middleton; e.g. *The Wisdom of Solomon Paraphrased*, II.251, "Tell them of good, they cannot understand", and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, iii.13, "every thought of good".

The substitution of "blood" removes not only this sense but another, which Vindice is playing on: "good" meaning "property", "what one owns". Surviving now only as a plural ("goods"), the earlier, singular form was still current, as in Luke 15:30: "thy sonne […] hath devoured thy good with harlots" (Geneva version). Vindice means that he will stake his own salvation on his mother and sister's store of goodness. For the same pun elsewhere in Middleton, compare *The Wisdom of Solomon*, XII.81, "Too much of good doth turn unto good's want" (i.e. too much wealth leads to a lack of virtue); also *No Wit, No Help*, i.157 (see the Oxford editor's note), and *The Sun in Aries*, 295-96. Editors' failure to spot the word play is surprising, as "venture", "land(s)", and "good(s)" are constantly combined in commercial contexts (EEBO offers several examples around the date of the play), and the (always disastrous) exchange of land for goods is a theme of Middleton's city comedies, such as *Michaelmas Term*, where "goods and lands" are repeatedly coupled (III.iv.81, 229, 241).

II.i.78-79
There are too many poore Ladies already
Why should you vex the number?

Minton changes "vex" to "wax" meaning "increase", citing in support a Middle English spelling of "wax" as "vex". But there is no evidence that "wax" continued to be spelled in this way, or that "wax" could be used as a transitive verb to make possible the use that her reading requires. OED's only transitive sense of "wax" is "to cover or dress with wax"; otherwise its use is intransitive, with the sense of "become", which is how Middleton uses it elsewhere (e.g. *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, IV.v.41, "you are waxed proud"). Q's "vex" meaning "agitate, disturb" is supported by "vex the Tearmes" at IV.ii.47, and "vex the number" is paralleled in Warren 1690, 65: "*Calbalists* […] so vex (as I may say) and Wire-draw Numbers, as to force and wind them even to what they please".

II.iii.74
That as you please my Lord.

Jackson suggests that "That" may be an error for "That's" (Taylor
and Lavagnino 2007b, 554), and Minton changes to this, but "That
as you…" was a common locution, short for "Let that be as you…".
In Fletcher, for example, cf. "That as you please, sir" in *The Little
French Lawyer* (Beaumont and Fletcher 1647, 61), and "That as you
thinke fit" in *The Custom of the Country* (15).

IV.ii.32
Ile turne myself

Minton emends Vindice's "turne" to "tune" on the grounds that
this continues the musical metaphor he has used in his previous
speech, where he promises to "bear me in some strain of
melancholy" like "an instrument that speaks / Merry things sadly"
(27-30). But the play is fascinated by the instability and malleability
of the self, and images of transformation or "turning" are threaded
through the text. Vindice vows "I'll quickly turn into another"
(I.i.134) and to "turn my visage" (I.iii.9) as he dons his malcontent's
disguise. Later he fears that Gratiana has "turned my sister into
use" (II.ii.97), while Spurio wishes that "all the court were turned
into a corpse" (I.ii.36). One of the main ironies of the play is that
Vindice assumes that these turnings of himself into a melancholy
assassin are temporary and simulated, but finds they more
accurately represent his true self than he realised. As the reformed
or "turned" (V.iii.124) Gratiana observes, her sons are "turned
monsters" (IV.iv.4). Given that Q's "turne" makes perfect sense and
contributes to a series of references which have thematic force, to
remove it in order to create an extended metaphor from music is
not defensible. If Q needed further support, one might cite other
Middleton plays where his interest in the making and unmaking of
the self is evident. In *1 The Honest Whore*, Fustigo is advised to "turn
yourself into a brave man" (ii.115), and in *The Bloody Banquet*
Roxano insists "I would turn myself into any shape" to win the
Queen (I.iv.146). Middleton's interest is still present in *A Game at*

Chess, his last play, where the Fat Bishop vows to "turn myself into the Black House" (III.i.291).

IV.ii.142

with some fiue frownes kept him out.

All editors alter Q's "fiue" (i.e. "five" in contemporary typography) to "fine". It is true that such "u"/"n" confusions are frequent, the result of misreading or an inverted letter. But what is a fine frown? How might it differ from an ordinary frown, and why should Lussurioso, whose power seems virtually absolute, have to rely on anything more than an ordinary frown to get his way? Q again has the stronger claim. EEBO offers no examples at all of a frown being called fine, while "some" followed by a number is common (as one would expect, given the word could – and can – mean "about"), and Middleton several times follows "some" with "five" to indicate an indefinite small number. EEBO gives "some five year" in *A Mad World* and *The Widow*, "some five days" in *The Phoenix*, and "some five or six houses" in *The Meeting of Gallants at an Ordinary*.

IV.iv.41

how far beyond nature 'tis
Tho many Mother's do't.

Q's "'tis" is a press correction; in its uncorrected state Q has "to't". Minton reads "to't" for the sake of the rhyme with "do't", but the resulting "far beyond nature to't" is both clumsy and obscure – intolerably so, the Q corrector must have felt – whereas "how far beyond nature 'tis" is a standard idiom. It is used by Middleton, e.g. *The Old Law*, I.i.411, "how far from judgement 'tis", and elsewhere; e.g. Carlell 1639, E2r, "how almost beyond hope it is".

IV.iv.149-50

no tongue has force
To alter me from honest.

Minton emends "honest" to "honesty" because she can find no example in the OED of "honest" as a noun, but she fails to recognise a stock contemporary idiom in which an adjective is put to quasi-nominal use; cf. "altered from vertuous" (Warner 1606, 351), and "hee was quite / Declin'd from good" (Davenant 1643, 40). The usage survives in "To go from bad to worse".

Commentary

I.i.94-95

a man […];

[…] to be honest is not to be i'th' world.

Another of the play's many echoes of *Hamlet*: "To be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand" (II.ii.179-80). Middleton's version outdoes the pessimism of its source.

I.ii.41
'Tis the Duke's pleasure

Repeated word-for-word from IV.v.51 of Marston's *The Malcontent* (Hunter 1975), an important influence on the early Middleton. The phrase occurs nowhere else in EEBO in precisely this form. Cf. also III.ii.6, "prison is too mild a name", and Hunter 1975, I.vii.31, "Err? 'tis too mild a name". See also below III.v.58-60; IV.ii.138-40; and V.ii.30. This is not the only Middleton play to contain Marstonian phrasing; note, for example, *A Mad World*, I.i.3, where "lifeblood of society" is supplied by *The Malcontent* (Hunter 1975, I.v.38).

I.ii.133-34
I'm an uncertain man,

Of more uncertain woman.

The uncertainty of Spurio's "uncertain" – it means at once "unknown", "not identified"; "puzzling", "hard to define"; and "morally dubious or suspect" – endorses his conviction that his bastardy consigns him to a category outside the human, as well as dooming him to replicate the amorality and lustfulness which

brought him into being. Middleton's interest in outsiders, who might include, as well as bastards, actors and women seen as sexually disorderly, draws him to this play of senses; cf. "an uncertain creature, a quean" and "certain players […] uncertain in their lives" in *A Mad World, My Masters*, III.iii.34; V.i.29-34). The Courtesan of *A Trick to Catch the Old One* complains that her "state" is "uncertain" (IV.iv.10-11). For illuminating comment on "(un)certain", see Ricks 1993, 133-34.

I.ii.179-80

                    Some stirring dish
Was my first father.

The first father was Adam, "the first father of this earthly world, / First man, first father called for after time" (Middleton, *The Wisdom of Solomon Paraphrased*, X.7-8). Spurio is again asserting his sense of being spiritually alienated, of being "[h]alf-damned in the conception" (I.ii.161). "Our first father *Adam*" was "formed immediatly by the hand of God" (Cowper 1612, C3v), but Spurio regards his bastardy as cutting him off from this line of descent.

I.ii.192
I love thy mischief well, but I hate thee

Proverbial: see Tilley 1950, K64, "A King […] loves the treason but hates the traitor"; employed elsewhere by Middleton: e.g. *Women Beware Women*, II.ii.442, "He likes the treason well, but hates the traitor"; also *1 The Honest Whore*, xiii.51; *The Phoenix*, viii.233.

I.iii.53-55
          in a world of acres,
Not so much dust due to the heir 'twas left to
As would well gravel a petition.
"Dust" puns on the slang sense "Money, cash" (OED "dust", *n*. 6), as in *The Wisdom of Solomon Paraphrased*, VII.ix.89-92, where it is also coupled with "gravel" ("what is gold? […] 'tis dust […] 'tis little gravel"), and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, ii.96, where the Husband demands, "Shall I want dust[?]".

I.iii.84-85
Tell but some woman a secret overnight,
Your doctor may find it in the urinal i'th' morning.

Coarsely elaborating the proverb "Trust no secret with a woman" (Tilley 1950, S196); similarly coupled with physical voiding in *The Lady's Tragedy*, II.ii.176-77, "He's frayed a secret from me. […] / […] from a woman a thing's quickly slipped", and *The Witch*, III.ii.121-25, "She can keep it secret? / […] and a woman too? / […] / 'Twould never stay with me two days – I've cast it" (this last example is misunderstood by the Oxford editor).

I.iii.90-91
             I am past my depth in lust
And I must swim or drown.

Ominously (for the speaker) invoking the proverb "Who swims in sin […] shall drown in it" (Tilley 1950, S474).

I.iii.184-85
                         I durst almost for good
Venture my lands in heaven

Referring to the belief that in God's kingdom a piece of land has been allocated to everyone, whether or not one proves worthy to receive it; cf. Davenant 1630, B4v: "he would accompt / Amongst his wealth, the land he has in Heaven"; Rollock 1603, 10: "thou shalt be shut out, thou shalt not have a furrow of land in heaven". Jonson glances at the idea in *Volpone*: "He would have sold his part of paradise / For ready money" (Parker 1983, III.vii.143-44).

II.i.5-6
Were not sin rich, there would be fewer sinners.
Why had not virtue a revènue?

Tilley 1950, R106: "Riches and sin are oft married together". Middleton frequently links virtue with poverty, e.g. *The Lady's Tragedy*, I.i.170, "As poor as virtue"; and note especially *No Wit, No Help*, ii.3, "Has virtue no revènue?".

II.i.122-25
That woman
Will not be troubled with the mother long
That sees the comfortable shine of you.
I blush to think what for your sakes I'll do.

Vindice, in disguise, offers Gratiana gold to corrupt her daughter, and she justifies her acceptance of it by citing a proverb: "[Women] may blush to hear what they were not ashamed to [do]" (Tilley 1950, M553). Her "the comfortable shine of you" is recalled in *No Wit, No Help*, iii.34, "the comfortable shine of joy". This is a unique parallel: "the comfortable shine of" occurs nowhere else in the entire EEBO database.

II.i.130
O, you're a kind Madam.

Editors miss the play on words. Ostensibly, Vindice is thanking Gratiana for the coins she has given him to reward his services, but underneath the compliment he is saying what he really thinks of her: "you're a natural bawd". See OED "kind", *adj*. 4c: "Having a specified character by nature or from birth". OED does not give "madam" meaning "bawd" before 1653, but this sense was common much earlier: see Williams 1994, 2:838-39, some of whose examples imply "procurer" or "brothel-keeper".

II.i.141-43
                    Good honorable foole,
That wouldst be honest 'cause thou wouldst be so,
Producing no one reason but thy will
Minton cites Tilley 1950, B179, "Because is woman's reason", but the passage is more immediately indebted to *Timon of Athens*,

I.i.131-33: "TIMON. The man is honest. / OLD ATHENIAN. Therefore he will be, Timon. / His honesty rewards him in itself".

II.i.147-48

            by what rule should we square out our lives,
But by our betters' actions?

Jackson notes the play on "rule", i.e. "principle, criterion", as well as "instrument for measuring". "Square (out)" also contributes, with the senses "To mark out as a square" and "regulate", "adjust" (OED "square" *v*. I. 1c, II. 4d). Gratiana is again adapting a proverb to suit her argument: cf. Tilley 1950, R43, "Let reason rule all your actions", and Barry 1611, G4v, "the lawe, / It is the rule that squares out all our actions". Her version cynically replaces law or reason with "our betters".

II.iii.86

Here's no Step-mothers wit.

The Duke is commenting on Ambitioso's and Supervacuo's half-hearted pleas for him to spare Lussurioso, who they really hope will be executed. Editors take the Duke to mean "they lack the Duchess's shrewdness" (Jackson) or "they lack their stepmother's intelligence" (Foakes). But the Duchess is the mother of Ambitioso and Supervacuo, not their stepmother. She is, however, the stepmother of Lussurioso, and the Duke is actually saying "this is a prime case of the cunning way a stepmother will seek to turn her husband against any child of his by a previous marriage". The mistake arises from a failure to grasp the force of "Here's no…", which was an ironic way of asserting the opposite. The actual meaning is always "Here's a clear example of", or "Here's an abundance of". Middleton is fond of the expression; e.g. *The Puritan*, I.iv.159, "Here's no notable gullery"; *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, III.i.31, "Here's no inconscionable villainy" (misunderstood by the Oxford editor); and *Hengist, King of Kent*, III.iii.42, "Here's no sweet toil".

II.iii.126-27, 130

      in my old daies am a youth in lust:
Many a beauty have I turnd to poison
[…]
My haires are white, and yet my sinnes are Greene.

Combining two proverbs: "His lust is as young as his limbs are old"
(Tilley 1950, L589) and "Like a leek, he has a white head and a green
tail" (L177). Middleton repeats the second in *The Roaring Girl*,
xi.122, "Their sins are green even when their heads are grey". The
Duke's victims are "turned to poison" by being both lured towards
it and transformed into it, their "beauty" rendered poisonous in the
process. Middleton is recalling his share of *Timon*, where Timon "is
turned to poison" by his parasitic friends (III.i.53).

III.iv.9-10

Thou shalt not be long a prisoner.

The accidental execution of Junior Brother is modelled on the
decidedly unaccidental execution of Clarence in *Richard III*. Richard
has secretly plotted his brother's imprisonment in the Tower, at the
same time assuring him (with a sardonic double-entendre which
only Richard hears) that "your imprisonment shall not be long"
(I.i.115). Once Clarence is in the Tower, Richard's agents arrive with
a commission which compels the keeper to hand Clarence over to
them. Pleading for his life, Clarence protests that his brother "swore
with sobs / That he would labour my delivery". "Why, so he doth",
is the reply, "when he delivers you / From this earth's thraldom to
the joys of heaven" (I.iv.233-36). Junior's death results from a plot
that misfires, but all other details match. Assured by his brothers
that "I shall not be long a prisoner" (III.iv.18-19), he waits in the
prison for "my delivery" (5), but officers arrive with a warrant
which commands the keeper to relinquish his charge to them.
Objecting that his brothers would not have ordered his death, he is
informed that that they have indeed done so, though "grief swum
in their eyes" (48). As for the promise that he will be "not long a
prisoner", "It says true in that, sir, for you must suffer presently"
(60-61). The extra element in Middleton's imitation of the

Shakespearean original – we know that the officers have got the wrong brother, but Junior does not – amplifies the mood of black farce which marks much of the play's action.

III.iv.77-78
Must I bleed, then, without respect of sign? […]
My fault was sweet sport

Jackson and Minton note the reference to medical bleeding, thought to be advisable only under certain astrological signs, but they miss the play on "sign"/"sin", a favourite Middleton pun, though seemingly undetected by all Middleton's editors; among many examples, cf. *The Wisdom of Solomon Paraphrased*, IV.124, "turn virtue into vice's sign"; *The Ghost of Lucrece*, 539-40, "umpire of right, / […] th' assigner of each sign"; and *The Lady's Tragedy*, I.i.24, "'Tis but the sin of joy".

III.v.58-60
Me thinkes this mouth should make a swearer tremble,
A drunckard claspe his teeth, and not undo 'em,
To suffer wet damnation to run through 'em.

Vindice's invective has biblical force: "he that eateth and drinketh unworthely, eateth and drinketh his owne damnation" (1 Corinthians 11:29; Geneva version). Cf. *2 The Honest Whore*, perhaps entirely by Dekker, but sometimes thought to be a Dekker-Middleton collaboration: "to tast that lickrish [= lecherous] Wine, is to drinke a mans owne damnation" (Dekker 1630, B3r). With "wet damnation" cf. "Lickerish damnation" (for lust) in *1 The Honest Whore*, vi.399, and "silver damnation" (for coin) in *The Black Book*, 217. A similar passage in *The Malcontent* might be Middleton's source, or might suggest that the expression was familiar: "O Heaven […] sufferest thou the world / Carouse damnation?" (Hunter 1975, III.iii.126-28).

III.v.76-77
Why does yon fellow falsify highways
And put his life between the judge's lips.

Vindice's "falsify highways" is unhelpfully cryptic. Loughrey and Taylor, reading "high ways" (i.e. upper-class conduct), gloss "impersonate the aristocracy", but this is unconvincing: even if "falsify" could be understood in this way, such impersonation would hardly have counted as a capital crime. It is more likely that the phrase is a compressed version of Middleton's reference to land-stealing in *The Black Book*: "those are your geometrical thieves, which may fitly be called so because they measure the highways with false gallops, and therefore are heirs of more acres than five-and-fifty elder brothers" (308-11). Here "geometrical" is fitting because it literally means measuring earth, and "measure the highways with false gallops" adapts the proverbial "go at a false gallop" meaning "to act dishonestly or wickedly", an expression Vindice himself has used in undertaking to corrupt Gratiana: he will "put her to a false gallop in a trice" (II.ii.44). Vindice's "falsify highways" might therefore be understood to mean "misrepresent the routes of main roads (in order to appropriate the vacant land that results)". If this, too, is unconvincing, it may be that Middleton intends a reference to a different criminal activity which had recently caught public attention and was certainly a capital crime: highway robbery. OED records "highwayman", "highway robber", and "highway thief" as all entering the language between 1577 and 1617. Presumably one of the robbers' *modus operandi* was to falsify road markings in order to lure their targets to a deserted spot.

III.v.88-89
Who now bids twenty pound a night […]
[…] All are hushed.

Editors do not comment on the sum Vindice proposes for an encounter with Gloriana, but it is surely worth making the reader aware that it is staggeringly high. Brothels (unattached prostitutes would have asked less) charged "sixpence to half a crown or so" (Shugg 1977, 301), so at 240 old pence to the pound Gloriana's price is between 160 and 800 times greater than the norm. Assuming a six-day working week, and given a day rate in London at this date of 12 pence for labourers and 18 pence for craftsmen (Boulton 1996,

279), she would cost between 45 and 66 times the average weekly wage. As in *1 The Honest Whore*, where the brothel-keeper also expects "[t]wenty pound a night" (viii.21) from her star performer (though accumulated, it seems, from more than one client), the implication is that membership of the court gives admission to a world of scarcely imaginable opulence and excess utterly remote from the life of the nation it governs.

Commentators fail to discuss not only the sum but the currency. Why does this Italian malcontent suddenly talk in English pounds? The reason is that the switch allows Vindice to step half outside his play and address his London audience as though they were buyers at an auction. "All are hushed" trades on the conventions of theatre to maintain the effect. "All" are indeed hushed – because they are spectators at a play attending to the performance; but the comment is a cue for Vindice to look surprised at their silence, as though he were expecting at least a few bids. Or perhaps he should look grimly unsurprised. Either way, Minton's strange decision to gloss "bids" as "spends" spoils the effect for her readers.

III.v.112-13

        she makes almost as fair a sign
As some old gentlewoman in a periwig.

Another example of the "sign"/"sin" pun (see III.iv.77-78 above), indicated here by Q's spelling of "sine". The fair appearance of sin was proverbial; cf. Middleton's *Microcynicon*, III.21, "sin […] foul yet fair", and Byfield 1615, 2A1r, "our best actions are but faire sinnes".

IV.ii.14

Now the Duke is dead the realm is clad in clay.

Another reminiscence of *Hamlet*: "Imperial Caesar, dead and turned to clay, / Might stop a hole to keep the wind away" (V.i.196-97). The couplet evidently struck a chord with Middleton: cf. *A Mad World*, III.iii.128-29: "Dost call thy captain clay? Indeed, clay was made to stop holes".

IV.ii.138-40

        knowing her to be as chaste
As that part which scarce suffers to be touched,
Th' eye

If this does not draw on a proverb, it may be another echo of *The Malcontent*: "as tender as his eye […] that could not endure to be touched" (Hunter 1975, I.i.18-20); but if this is Middleton's source he has changed the eye's owner from male to female in order to import a broad sexual joke, one which he had already used in *The Phoenix*, ix.309-10: "that jewel / More precious in a woman than her eye, her honour". For "eye" = vagina, see Williams 1994, 1:453-54.

IV.iii.15-16

Most women have small waist the world throughout,
But their desires are thousand miles about.

Punning on "waste", i.e. uncultivated land (OED *n*. 1a, 2), as in *The Phoenix*, vi.133-34: "how it moves a pleasure through our senses! / How small are women's waists to their expenses!". As "the waist" was a common euphemism for the genitals, a sexual pun may also be present; cf. "land, like a fine gentlewoman i'th' waist" (*Michaelmas Term*, II.iii.92), and *A Mad World*, IV.vi.106, "'bove the waste, wench" (meaning ostensibly "as well as the waste ground"). Middleton repeats his image of the limitlessness of female desire many years later in *Women Beware Women*, IV.i.39, where Bianca fears that her daughters will "fetch their falls a thousand mile about" (punning on "fall", an item of female clothing).

V.ii.30

Piero
O, let us hug your bosoms!

A startlingly exact recollection of this character's namesake in Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*: "Piero. O, let me hug my bosom" (Hunter 1966, II.i.10). Middleton demotes him from the Duke of Venice to a minor lord.

V.iii.126
How subtly was that murder closed!

All editors gloss "closed" as one of two opposite senses, "concealed" or "disclosed", but the OED does not recognise either of these uses. Cf. "close", *v*. II. 8a, "To conclude, bring to a close or end; to finish, complete", which is the sense here.

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Shelley: Ariel or Caliban?

Maria Valentini

P. B. Shelley placed Shakespeare along with Milton and Dante amongst "philosophers of the very loftiest power" for their ability to communicate the "truth of things" and particularly stated that Shakespeare's characters were "living impersonations of the truth of human passion" (*A Defence of Poetry*). We know Shelley absorbed Shakespeare from a very early age and this emerges from the numerous references we find in his poetry, prose, drama, and letters. As we shall see, *The Tempest* was a major source of inspiration: while in many instances the Romantic poet identifies himself with Ariel, in fact he has much sympathy for Caliban, a sympathy which in many ways anticipates what was to become a political interpretation of *The Tempest*, one that sees Caliban as the dispossessed native. But the borrowings or suggestions from Shakespeare's plays extend to most of the Shelleyan production and it is clearly in Shelley's most successful drama *The Cenci* that the influence becomes more tangible, with very specific references I will point to, especially on a theoretical level: a closer look at *The Cenci* will allow us to examine Shakespearean borrowings, structures, and themes and try to establish how much of its success is owed to this influence, also significant in *Queen Mab* or *Prometheus Unbound*. Therefore, the aim of this essay is to evaluate whether these Shakespearean echoes contribute to current critical appreciation and whether, today, Shelley's unflagging popularity is also, though clearly not only, due to his being an artist hovering, broadly speaking, between his vision of an Ariel and a Caliban.

Keywords: Shelley, *The Cenci*, *The Tempest*, Borrowings

That English Renaissance poets, Shakespeare particularly, but also Milton, Spenser and others, had a major influence on the poets of the Romantic age has been subject to intense and unexhausted critical attention. Jonathan Bate in his book on *Shakespeare and the English Romantic Imagination* goes as far as saying that "[t]he rise of Romanticism and the growth of Shakespeare idolatry are parallel phenomena" (Bate 1986, 6). This impact, though having points in common among the Romantics (broadly, and very generically speaking, the appeal to the imagination), also reflects varying

modes of absorption when we think of first-generation poets and second-generation ones, and each one in turn. In this paper, attention will be drawn to the case of P. B. Shelley.

Shelley was captivated by Shakespeare from a very early age, and it is not surprising that Shakespearean echoes, direct allusions, quotations, and precise references can be found in his prose, his poetry, his drama, his letters, and his journal, an involvement with the Bard which was also noted by his early biographers. David Lee Clark, in his pioneering work of 1939 on Shelley and Shakespeare, relates that Medwin claimed he "was a constant reader of Shakespeare" and through this reading "hoped to invigorate his own style"; Hogg tells us he "read widely in Shakespeare", Trelawny – who was to hold a significant role in Shelly's life – that the young romantic "tried to improve his style by imitating Shakespeare", and Peacock that he "read aloud to him 'almost all of Shakespeare's tragedies and some of his more poetical comedies'" and that he "studied Shakespeare 'with unwearied devotion'" (Clark 1939, 261).

It would be impossible and beyond our scope to point out all the instances in Shelley's work which in some way allude to Shakespeare; a selection of a few of these allusions have been chosen to try to establish their significance within Shelley's poetics. Two main questions will be addressed: one suggested by the title of this paper and prompted by Trelawny's claim that Shelley "seemed as gentle a spirit as Ariel", which was partly a rejection of the portrayal in the press of this radical young poet as "a monster more hideous than Caliban" (Trelawny 1973, 124). Shelley himself in a letter to Hogg of 1811 had written: "I think were I compelled to associate with Shakespeare's Caliban with any wretch […] that I should find something to admire" (8 May 1811) (P. B. Shelley 1964, 1:77). Bate remarks that in fact Shelley "had as much sympathy with Caliban", as we can see, among other instances such as the one just mentioned, in "his idealization of the noble savage in part eight of *Queen Mab*" which, whilst harking back to Rousseau's noble savage, "suggests a political interpretation of *The Tempest* that reads Caliban as dispossessed native" (Bate 1986, 204), an interpretation which, as known, has become almost commonplace. The political appropriations of Shakespeare lead us to the second question: does

Shelley find in Shakespeare "what he thought was a confirmation of his own radicalism", as Clark suggests in the closing lines of his article (Clark 1939, 287)?

Before noting some striking 'borrowings' or allusions within the poems and drama, it may be useful to mention a few examples of what Shelley openly says about Shakespeare. In *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills* (1818), we read in lines 196-99:

> As divinest Shakespeare's might
> Fills Avon and the world with light,
> Like omniscient power which he
> Imaged 'mid mortality. (P. B. Shelley 2002, 200)

His might and power are then divine and omniscient.

In *A Defence of Poetry* (1821), he famously claimed that:

> Shakespeare, Dante and Milton […] are philosophers of the very loftiest power [for] teaching the truth of things. (P. B. Shelley 2002, 640)

And later:

> [C]omedy should be as in *King Lear*, universal, ideal, and sublime. […] *King Lear* […] may be judged to be the most perfect specimen of the dramatic art existing in the world. [Shakespeare's characters are] the living impersonations of the truth of human passions. (644)

This fascination with *Lear* is also expressed in the preface to *The Cenci* (1819), where it is considered one of the "deepest and the sublimest tragic compositions" (P. B. Shelley 2002, 311).

On Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, in a manuscript fragment attached to the preface, he had written a brief note on *Sonnet 111*, the one in which we read about the complaints of having to please the public with his work since the poet does not have private means; Shelley quotes: "[…] 'subdued, To what it worked in, like a dyer's hand'", and comments: "Observe these images, how simple they are, and yet animated with what intense poetry and passion" (Clark 1939, 262).

Finally, in a suppressed passage of *Epipsychidion* (1821), his knowledge and admiration for the *Sonnets* emerge further:

If any should be curious to discover
Whether to you I am a friend or lover,
Let them read Shakespeare's sonnets, taking thence
A whetstone for their dull intelligence
That tears will not cut. (Clark 1939, 262)

These brief examples exhibit recurring epithets: divine, omniscient, universal, sublime, ideal, and so on. These appreciations are similar to the ones Keats expressed when he considered Shakespeare his "presider" and described him as something akin to nature itself; Shakespeare to Keats was like the sea, passages from Shakespeare were like the sun, the moon and stars, and he too considers *King Lear* a major inspiration (he wrote the sonnet "On Sitting Down to Read *King Lear* Once Again" in 1818), and, as Spurgeon pointed out, his Folio edition of Shakespeare contains markings and underlinings in most of Lear's speeches, similes and metaphors (Spurgeon 1966, 49-50). Keats also claimed that the relationship between truth and beauty was exemplified everywhere in *King Lear*. In this sense, both Romantic poets acknowledge the 'pervasiveness' of Shakespeare, that sense of the ideal and sublime they absorbed from Shakespeare which was to permeate their poetry.

Like Keats we find in Shelley's work direct and indirect references to Shakespeare's plays and poems. Just a few examples may be sufficient to try to understand to what extent these are intentional or where and if, instead, they have simply come to be part of Shelley's cultural heritage. Starting with references mostly from the poems, the final part of this work will concentrate on the play *The Cenci*, where the allusions are at times less direct but which in many ways owes more to Shakespeare in terms of structure and themes and where, on a theoretical level, the connection is more interesting. *The Cenci*, as we shall see, also raises the problem of 'voluntary' or 'involuntary' borrowings just mentioned.

In *The Wandering Jew* (1810), canto III, lines 1006-9, we find a direct borrowing from *Hamlet*:

I could a tale disclose,
So full of horror – full of woes,

> Such as might blast a demon's ear,
> Such as a fiend might shrink to hear – (P. B. Shelley 1887, 46)

In *Hamlet*:

> I could a tale unfold whose slightest word
> Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
> Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres. (I.v.15-17)[1]

And in the "Conclusion" to *The Sensitive Plant* (1820), lines 8-11:

> I dare not guess; but in this life
> Of error, ignorance, and strife,
> Where nothing is, but all things seem,
> And we the shadows of the dream. (P. B. Shelley 2002, 432)

we find echoes and a paraphrase from *Hamlet*:

> GUILDENSTERN
> Which dreams indeed are ambition, for the very substance of the
> ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.
> HAMLET
> A dream itself is but a shadow. (II.ii.257-60)

Clearly, apart from the use of the same expression, the whole Shelleyan stanza has a Hamlet ring about it, referring to the life of ignorance and all things seeming rather than being.

    Hamlet and other Shakespearean echoes appear in his *Queen Mab* which, apart from its title, contains an adaptation of *Henry IV*'s famous apostrophe to sleep, and borrowings from *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*. We need only mention the latter from part I, lines 272-74:

> Yet not the meanest worm
> That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead
> Less shares thy eternal breath. (P. B. Shelley 2002, 11)

which recalls Hamlet on Polonius:

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[1]   All Shakespeare quotations are from Shakespeare 1974.

> Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else to fat
> us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. (IV.iii.21-23)

In *Julian and Maddalo*, line 204, there is a direct citation indicated
with inverted commas from *Henry V*:

> And that a want of that true theory still,
> Which seeks a "soul of goodness" in things ill
> Or in himself or others, has thus bowed
> His being. (P. B. Shelley 2002, 211)

King Henry says:

> There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
> Would men observingly distill it out. (IV.i.4-5)

And, according to Langston, Romeo's description of the
drugged Juliet as Death's paramour served as a model for these
lines (384-91) from *Julian and Maddalo* (Langston 1949, 167):

> O, pallid as death's dedicated bride,
> Thou mockery which art sitting by my side,
> Am I not wan like thee? at the grave's call
> I haste, invited to thy wedding-ball,
> To greet the ghastly paramour for whom
> Thou hast deserted me… and made the tomb
> Thy bridal bed… but I beside your feet
> Will lie and watch ye from my winding sheet. (P. B. Shelley 2002, 216)

Where in *Romeo and Juliet* we find:

>   Ah, dear Juliet,
> Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
> That unsubstantial Death is amorous,
> And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
> Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
> For fear of that I will stay with thee;
> Ans never from this palace of dim night
> Depart again. (V.iii.101-8)

It seems evident that, even when the borrowings are not verbatim as in the case of *Henry V*, the tone and imagery reveal the indebtedness to a Shakespearean 'sound' which reverberates in many of the compositions, only some of which have been indicated here.

In Shelley's preface to Mary's *Frankenstein* in which he impersonates the author, he claims the novel "affords a point of view to the imagination for the delineating of human passions more comprehensive and commanding than any which the ordinary relations of existing events can yield", a "rule" to which *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* "conform" (together with the poetry of Greece and *Paradise Lost*) (M. Shelley 1999, 9). Interestingly, these two plays are the same ones which, as Spurgeon in her *Keats's Shakespeare* has noted, are the most heavily marked in Keats's own copy of Shakespeare (Spurgeon 1966, 5), and *The Tempest* particularly appears in many guises in both poets' works. This is probably, as Coleridge had noted, because the play has "especially appealed to the imagination" (Coleridge 1960, 130), and as for Ariel he declares:

> If a doubt could ever be entertained whether Shakespeare was a great poet, acting upon laws arising out of his own nature, and not without law, as has sometimes been idly asserted, that doubt must be removed by the character of Ariel. (136)

Barry Weller, in his article "Shakespeare, Shelley and the Binding of the Lyric", concludes that "in the case of […] Romantic readers the impulse is, without challenging the primacy of *King Lear*, *Hamlet* or other tragedies among Shakespeare's dramas, to claim the Shakespeare of *The Tempest* as an essential lyric dramatist" (Weller 1978, 929).

The Tempest was frequently in Shelley's mind; we read in fact in one of Mary Shelley's entries: "Read Homer and [Hope's] "Anastasius". Walk with the Williams' in the evening. 'Nothing of us but what must suffer a sea change'" (14 February 1822) (M. Shelley 1947, 168-69), and, as is known, Shelley's boat initially named *Don Juan* after the poem by Byron was renamed *Ariel* and Shelley believed the quotation would be a good motto for it. The

Williams, Edward and Jane, visited Pisa and the Shelleys in 1821, where they became friends and Shelley bought Jane an Italian guitar attaching a poem to it, "With a Guitar, to Jane" (P. B. Shelley 2002, 533-35). He wrote other poems to Jane at a point in which his relationship with Mary was becoming more remote declaring an idealised love, which however was not returned. Shelley wrote in a letter: "Jane brings her guitar, and if past and future could be obliterated, the present would content me" (P. B. Shelley 1964, 2:436).

As we know, the poem begins with "Ariel to Miranda", which establishes an immediate connection with the play but at the same time, as Weller observes, defines it more as a supplement since it never appears as a stage direction given the two Shakespearean characters appear together only three times and never actually speak to one another (Weller 1978, 914). Prospero, the master, is mentioned once, but the themes of mastery and servitude are present throughout the poem, from the very first three lines:

> Take
> This slave of Music, for the sake
> Of him who is the slave of thee (P. B. Shelley 2002, 533)

The questions of bondage and freedom are central to Shakespeare's play and here love and art are exposed as forms of subjection. The slave of music is Ariel, or the poet represented by Ariel, or the guitar itself which nevertheless needs human action to make the music. The biographical interpretation is commonly suggested as previously mentioned, with Shelley as the disappointed lover (Ariel), Jane as Miranda and her husband Edward Williams as Ferdinand, and this is represented when we read (in lines 32-39):

> Since Ferdinand and you begun
> Your course of love, and Ariel still
> Has tracked your steps, and served your will;
> Now, in humbler, happier lot,
> This is all remembered not;
> And now, alas! the poor sprite is
> Imprisoned, for some fault of his,

In a body like a grave. (534)

Again, the vocabulary of bondage and imprisonment, which here is applied to the state of being trapped by love, reminds us of Ariel's entrapment in the cloven pine by Sycorax, and the poem continues with the same imagery reminding us that the guitar was once a tree which "[d]ied in sleep, and felt no pain" (534, line 55), and lived again in the form of a guitar. The reference to the tree being felled and the woods in their winter sleep recall the frequent association in *The Tempest* of wood with servitude, such as Ariel himself being threatened to be pegged in the knotty entrails of an oak, but particularly Caliban being forced to cut wood as punishment or Ferdinand given the same task when being tested. Stephano and Trinculo are confined in a lime-tree grove, and finally Prospero too wants his freedom from the 'wooden O'. The poem then, declaredly inspired by *The Tempest* especially through Ariel in his multiple functions of poet, of music, of the guitar itself, is at the same time a prisoner. This aspect of captivity and confinement inevitably recalls Caliban's own predicament. Yet, as Auden, amongst others, was to suggest:

> Ariel *is* song; when he is truly himself, he sings […]. He cannot express any human feelings because he has none. [He is] a voice which is as lacking in the personal and the erotic and as like an instrument as possible. (Auden 1963, 524-25)

And it is perhaps this aspect which mostly inspired Shelley and Keats; what fuels their imagination is pure sound existing in itself and for itself. Weller concludes:

> The guitar is captive to silence from which Miranda can release it, but its own wood imprisons the sound of the natural world, and it is […] Ariel's enslavement to Miranda, which delivers into a bondage, that may also be a liberation, at the hands of Miranda. (Weller 1978, 928)

This is clearly not the only poem which contains strong echoes of Shakespeare's last romance. It has been chosen as an appropriate example of the effect this play, and the character of Ariel, had on Shelley, and its hovering between the love lyric and the themes of

freedom and bondage with, in my view, an unmentioned hint at
Caliban.

Shelley, like Keats, is considered primarily a lyric poet but was
also "a powerful dramatist" working with the theatrical
conventions of his day, and, as Jeffrey N. Cox observes, his
"engagement with drama was a life-long affair" (Cox 2006, 65).
Interestingly, he planned a performance of *Othello* acting as director
with his circle of friends in Pisa. He left us five dramas: the
unfinished *Charles the First* (1819-22), *Fragments of an Unfinished
Drama* (1822), *Hellas* (1821), *Prometheus Unbound* (1818-19), and his
most successful *The Cenci* (1819). He also wanted to write a play
founded on Shakespeare's *Timon*, which he thought, Trelawny
claims, "would be an excellent mode of discussing our present
social and political evils dramatically, and of descanting on them"
(Trelawny 1973, 122), but got no further than planning in his
notebook the first act of a "Modern Timon". In the unfinished
Charles the First, we find traces of Shakespeare, and he had in fact
declared that he intended to write a Shakespearean type of play and
that *King Lear* was to be his model "for that is nearly perfect" (122).
References abound throughout, though frequently not specific,
which can be summarised through the words of the early critic
Newman I. White: a "touch of Shakespearean diction" and
"indifferent puns in the Shakespearean manner" (White 1922, 439).
As we recall, in *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley had said that the
perfection of Lear lay also in its capacity to embrace comedy and in
the character of the Fool, and here he gives King Charles's jester,
Archy, a substantial part which like Lear's Fool sees everything
upside down and also asks "Will you hear Merlin's prophecy"
(Shelley 1905, 253, ii.368), and again, echoing *Lear*, we hear: "Have
you noted that the Fool of late / Has lost his careless mirth" (260,
ii.446-47), clearly resonant with "Since my young lady's going into
France, sir, the Fool hath much pin'd away" (I.iv.73-74). *The Tempest*
reverberates in many instances such as "[a] commonwealth like
Gonzalo's" (253, ii.363) as do *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, but what is
significant overall is the Shakespearean characterization and
overall dramatic structure of the play. Shakespearean references in
other dramas – *Prometheus Unbound* particularly – would deserve a
study of its own given their numerous borrowings and echoes from

many of the plays, but an attentive analysis of *The Cenci*, "the most objective, the most nearly Shakespearean both in dramatic conception and in method of execution of all Shelley's writings" (Clark 1939, 277), may be useful to draw some final conclusions.

The theory of dramatic composition is expounded in Shelley's preface to *The Cenci*:

> In a dramatic composition, the imagery and the passion should interpenetrate one another, the former reserved simply for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is thus that the most remote and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness. (P. B. Shelley 2002, 313)

In the earlier unpublished draft of the preface, in connection with this he had written: "The finest works of Shakespeare are a perpetual illustration of this doctrine" (Clark 1939, 277).

Shelley believed that drama should not have a moral purpose and attempted – as Shakespeare does – to avoid declaring a dogma but rather follow inner passions, thus portraying characters as they are rather than projecting his own beliefs or his own ego into them, once again a very Shakespearean 'attitude'. Jonathan Bate observes that Shelley's account of his aims implies that he has tried to live up to Shakespearean ideals which were cited frequently as the exemplar of sympathy and disinterestedness, the implication being that Shelley would rather be like Shakespeare than, say, like Byron whose characters are frequently impersonations of his own mind (Bate 1986, 208).

In *The Cenci*, we find an indebtedness to *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Richard III* and especially *Macbeth*, only a few of which will be mentioned here[2]. Strangely – or maybe not – the only influence directly acknowledged by Shelley in his play is to the dramatic poet Calderón whom he saw as a kind of Shakespeare; in fact he declares

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[2]   For examples of critical discussions of Shakespearean echoes in *The Cenci*, see Rossington 1997, 315n1.

in a footnote in the play's preface concerning Beatrice's description of the Rock of Petrella (III.i.243ff): "An idea in this speech was suggested by a most sublime passage in *El Purgatorio de San Patricio* of Calderon; the only plagiarism which I have intentionally committed in the whole piece" (P. B. Shelley 2002, 313). Despite this, most critics have rather concentrated on Shakespeare's influence, thus opening up, as Michael Rossington observes, with the term "intentionally committed", the issue of literary indebtedness (Rossington 1997, 305), and the inevitable issue of the anxiety of influence famously raised by Harold Bloom (Bloom 1973). The footnote, in Rossington's view, seems to pre-empt the question of plagiarism and Shelley registers here "as elsewhere, apprehension that openness to work of others might be mistaken for authorial impropriety" (Rossington 1997, 305). The question is also raised in the preface to *The Revolt of Islam* (1818), where he stated:

> […] I am unwilling to tread in the footsteps of any who have preceded me. I have sought to avoid the imitation of any style of language or versification peculiar to the original minds of which it is the character; designing that, even if what I have produced be worthless, it should still be properly my own. (P. B. Shelley 2002, 135)

The question of plagiarism, or literary indebtedness, is clearly one Shelley was particularly conscious of, and in the case of the footnote on Calderón in *The Cenci*, some critics have dismissed it as a bait hiding the true influence from Shakespeare (Cantor 1976, 91), whereas others have considered the Shakespearean echoes as in fact 'involuntary' in that they simply imply an elementary knowledge of Shakespeare which was probably in his mind since boyhood, as George Edward Woodberry, among others, was to observe early last century (Rossington 1997, 305) in commenting on George Bernard Shaw's highly critical evaluations of the play: "It is a strenuous but futile and never-to-be-repeated attempt to bottle the new wine in the old skins" (Shaw 1886, 372).

In the preface, Shelley indicates that the story of the Cenci family impressed him for its tragic and dramatic possibilities but wanted to "clothe it" (P. B. Shelley 2002, 311) for his public in a language

they would understand and appreciate. He observes that Sophocles and Shakespeare before him had used pre-existing stories and adapted them just as he wants to do here. As in *Macbeth*, there is a strong-willed woman who is the mainspring of the action, an old man is murdered, and the murder is planned by the heroine. Clark observes:

> In *Macbeth* the first murder is committed by the principals; in *The Cenci*, it is attempted by the principals; in *Macbeth* the second murder is the work of the assassins; in *The Cenci* the second attempt is by the assassins. In *Macbeth* it is Lady Macbeth who drives and shames her husband to the deed; in *The Cenci* it is Beatrice who drives and shames the assassins to the deeds, in a language so similar to Shakespeare's that it cannot be considered merely accidental. (Clark 1939, 278)

Just a few examples of these similarities might serve to better illustrate the closeness in tone of the two plays. In the first act of the play, Count Cenci plans to violate his daughter (I.i.140-44):

> O thou most silent air, that shalt not hear
> What now I think! Thou, pavement, which I tread
> Towards her chamber, – let your echoes talk
> Of my imperious step scorning surprise,
> But not of my intent! (P. B. Shelley 2002, 319)

Before killing Duncan, Macbeth considers:

>   Thou sure and firm-set earth,
> Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
> The very stones prate of my whereabout,
> And take the present horror from the time,
> Which now suits with it. (II.i.56-60)

In both cases, there is apprehension for their victims, the pavement is like the firm-set earth and there is an inversion where in the one case the count dares his steps to be heard and in the other Macbeth wants them not to be heard, but the similarity is obvious (Harrington-Lueker 1983, 173-74). Even closer seem the words spoken in the murder scenes:

Olimpio
Did you not call?
Beatrice
                              When?
Olimpio
                                        Now. (P. B. Shelley 2002, 360, IV.iii.8)

Lady Macbeth
[…]
Did not you speak?
Macbeth
                              When?
Lady Macbeth
                                        Now. (II.ii.16)

When Beatrice worries about the murder being discovered, she says, "The deed is done" (P. B. Shelley 2002, 364, IV.iv.46), much like Macbeth's announcement to his wife "I have done the deed" (342, II.ii.14). In fact, as Harrington-Lueker rightly points out, there is a recurrence around this idea of being "done"; about the incestuous designs upon Beatrice the Count asserts "It must be done; it shall be done, I swear!" (P. B. Shelley 2002, 327, I.iii.178), and Macbeth repeats variant forms "I go, and it is done" (II.i.62) and famously "If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well / It were done quickly" (I.vii.1-2). It has become a critical commonplace to cite the correspondences between Duncan's murder and Cenci's; the murderers, like Lady Macbeth, hesitate at killing a sleeping old man and strange noises follow the murder (Harrington-Lueker 1983, 175) and Shelley's banquet scene is not unlike Banquo's feast, particularly in their conclusion. Many more instances could be quoted, but it suffices here to note that the allusions function as a leitmotif throughout the drama in speech, images, and characters. These allusions, however, according to Paul Cantor, show a certain dissatisfaction with Shakespeare's view of authority and rebellion and make Macbeth a more attractive rebel than a character such as Lear who appears, for the critic, a more repellent figure of authority (Cantor 1976), a view which is not shared by all but leads to reflect on Shelley's actual interpretation of Shakespeare. Just one reference to *Lear* gives us an idea of a common tone displayed in a state of

rage and the attitudes displayed, for different reasons, to daughters. In the scene known as "The Curse of the Cenci", in IV.i.115-23, 140-59, Cenci says:

> God!
> Hear me! If this most specious mass of flesh,
> Which thou hast made my daughter; this my blood,
> This particle of my divided being;
> Or rather, this my bane and my disease,
> Whose sight infects and poisons me; this devil,
> Which sprung from me as from a hell, was meant
> To aught good use; if her bright loveliness
> Was kindled to illumine this dark world;
> […]
> That if she ever have a child – and thou,
> Quick Nature! I adjure thee by thy God,
> That thou be fruitful in her, and increase
> And multiply, fulfilling his command,
> And my deep imprecation! – may it be
> A hideous likeness of herself, that as
> From a distorting mirror she may see
> Her image mixed with what she most abhors,
> Smiling upon her from her nursing breast!
> And that the child may from its infancy
> Grow, day by day, more wicked and deformed,
> Turning her mother's love to misery!
> And that both she and it may live until
> It shall repay her care and pain with hate,
> Or what may else be more unnatural;
> So he may hunt her through the clamorous scoffs
> Of the loud world to a dishonoured grave!
> Shall I revoke this curse? Go, bid her come,
> Before my words are chronicled in heaven. (P. B. Shelley 2002, 356-57)

A curse which is easily compared with that of Lear:

> Hear, Nature, hear, dear goddess, hear!
> Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
> To make this creature fruitful.
> Into her womb convey sterility,
> Dry up in her the organs of increase,

And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honor her! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen, that it may live
And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her.
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth,
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks,
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
To laughter and contempt, that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child! – Away, away! (I.iv.275-99)

The curses evidently display the same tone, one desiring a daughter to reproduce, the other to be sterile, but in complete wrath and frenzy, with terms emphasizing the presumed unnaturalness of the girls' behaviours and the contempt and condemnation of the fathers. *King Lear* is commonly thought of as the tragedy of filial ingratitude whereas *The Cenci* is somewhat the opposite. *King Lear*, like *Macbeth*, is rooted in a world where God, king and father represent the authority, and this gives the universe its own order; the breaking of which produces chaos which must be restored. Though, as Jonathan Dollimore states, "the view that Shakespeare and his contemporaries adhered to the tenets of the so-called Elizabethan World Picture has long been discredited" (Dollimore 2004, 6), these plays, as most other tragedies and histories, maintain this general framework even when displaying disruption within them, whereas in *The Cenci* this ordered universe is lacking completely and God, Pope and Father represent the powers of evil which, in Shelley's eyes, must be defeated. It is worth considering, as Bate notes, that in the case of this play at least Shelley could be "responding to Shakespeare in […] a 'revisionary' way", as Bloom would say (Bate 1986, 266).

One final play worth drawing attention to is *Othello*. Making allowance for the fact that both Shakespeare and Shelley derived their plots from Italian material of the same period, there are parallels which cannot go unnoticed: the plans of the two Machiavellians, Iago and Orsino, who try to manipulate the action, fail in the end, but only after they have produced domestic murders; the tools through which the villains act, Giacomo and Roderigo, remain entangled in the machinations for their inability

to be heroes or stronger and wiser than their manipulators. Desdemona and Beatrice, albeit different characters, "suffer death" but "remain uncorrupted" until the end (Watson 1940, 612). Iago manages to work on his victim's weaknesses to his own advantages. Similarly, Orsino manages emotions and actions of the Cencis; he says in the second scene of the second act, lines 107-9, 145-46.

> It fortunately serves my own designs
> That 'tis a trick of this same family
> To analyse their own and other minds.
> […]
> From the unravelled hopes of Giacomo
> I must work out my own dear purposes. (P. B. Shelley 2002, 336-37)

Words which would perfectly have suited Iago, as would the following from the first scene of the fifth act, lines 79-83:

> […] to attain my own peculiar ends
> By some such plot of mingled good and ill
> As others weave; but there arose a Power
> Which grasped and snapped the threads of my device,
> And turned it to a net of ruin. (P. B. Shelley 2002, 371)

A clear echo of Iago's net to "enmesh them all" (II.iii.362). Watson notices also a similarity in structure, with the desultory beginning in both plays – Roderigo and Iago in one case, Camillo and Count Cenci in the other, talking about past deeds which however illuminate the characters (Watson 1940, 613-14).

The most obvious parallel occurs in Giacomo's soliloquy on the contemplation of parricide in the second scene of the third act, lines 9-11, 51-52:

> Thou unreplenished lamp! whose narrow fire
> Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge
> Devouring darkness hovers!
>
> And yet once quenched I cannot thus relume
> My father's life. (P. B. Shelley 2002, 351-52)

which displays a choice of vocabulary which cannot but recall Othello's meditation on the murder of Desdemona:

> Put out the light, and then put out the light:
> If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
> I can again thy former light restore,
> Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
> Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
> I know not where is that Promethean heat
> That can thy light relume. (V.ii.7-13)

The terms "quench" and "relume" seem too specific to simply be accounted for by the idea of Shakespeare's pervasiveness and hence of an involuntary appropriation.

The list of borrowings, voluntary or not, could continue, but I believe those mentioned are sufficient to demonstrate the impact the reading of Shakespeare had on Shelley. The 'Ariel' quality of Shelley's work is most prominent in the use of imagery, sound, and primacy of the imagination as we have amply seen, particularly in "With a Guitar, to Jane", which however also introduced in a different guise the theme of bondage and freedom associated with Caliban, a theme which is prominent in all of Shelley's production. This is particularly clear in parts of *Queen Mab* or in *Prometheus Unbound*, which gave Shelley the opportunity of treating in a rather complex way the relationships between various forms of injustice and oppression. Whether the Shakespearean appropriations contribute to Shelley's radicalism, as the pioneering study of Clark suggested, remains an intricate question. He theorized and put into practice in his drama, as we saw, "characters as they really are", avoiding dogmas and hence, as he claimed, not exposing personal opinions through his own lens. His radicalism may be grounded in his reading of Shakespeare (his desire to write a "Modern Timon" is a sign of this) depending on how he read the plays. The critic Sara Ruth Watson in the middle of last century closes her brief study commenting on Clark's claim, observing that whether Shelley "found in Shakespeare 'a confirmation of his own radicalism' needs to be expanded and demonstrated" (Watson 1940, 614). More recent studies may help to shed light on the issue, though not solve it.

Dollimore's *Radical Tragedy* (1984) analyses three Shakespeare plays placing emphasis precisely on their more radical aspects. He dismisses, for instance, both the Christian and the humanist interpretation of *King Lear* (one of Shelley's favourites, as we saw) focusing instead on its political dimension. He stresses particularly those instances in which the King – deprived of his status – reflects on social issues which he was unable to see before. When on the heath, for instance, insisting that his Fool should take refuge in the hovel before him, he exclaims: "You houseless poverty" (III.iv.26), and then: "Oh I have ta'en / Too little care of this!" (32-33). These statements, Dollimore claims, bring to light the separation of "the privileged from the deprived" (Dollimore 2004, 192), a theme the play insists upon and that the critic considers primarily one concerned with power, property and inheritance. Through a process of self-awareness, the realities those in power had been blind to tend to emerge, as also in the case of Gloucester, literally blind, who says to his unrecognized son Edgar:

> Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man,
> That slaves your ordinance, that will not see
> Because he does not feel, feel your pow'r quickly;
> *So distribution should undo excess*. (IV.i.67-70, emphasis mine)

This could have been Shelley's reading of the play and could justify his admiration for it as the most perfect specimen of dramatic art.

The other two plays analysed by Dollimore are *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*: in the first the classic interpretation of love winning over duty – which is not denied – is reinterpreted as essentially a power struggle in which love itself is expressed through martial language and imagery. More obviously in *Coriolanus*, power as strategy is a constant metaphor, but Dollimore, interestingly, reverses the common assumption that Shakespeare portrays the mob as usually fickle and worthless, observing that "the plebeians […] are presented with both complexity and sympathy" (Dollimore 2004, 224). Once again, such a play should be seen within its political and social reality rather than in essential humanist terms.

In 2012 Chris Fitter dedicates a whole book to *Radical Shakespeare*: *Politics and Stagecraft in the Early Career* which intends to demonstrate that in the early plays "his politics are radical, that from his very entry into drama Shakespeare seeks to destabilize establishment ideology" (Fitter 2012, 81). By resituating dramas in specific political moments, Shakespeare, in Fitter's view, articulates public angers: "grievances of military disasters, unpaid troops, and territorial losses [and] of hypertaxation", to mention but a few (245), and concludes, as Clark had implied nearly a century before him, that "the greatest literary genius of the Elizabethan age emerged, from the outset, as a radical playwright" (254).

Factual proofs of a radical interpretation of Shakespeare are exposed in a political-literary article by Antony Taylor titled "Shakespeare and Radicalism: The Uses and Abuses of Shakespeare in Nineteenth-Century Popular Politics". Taylor locates Shakespeare in the tradition of nineteenth-century politics in Britain and illustrates in very precise terms the struggle for the appropriation of Shakespeare by the Chartist movement and radical liberal culture. Shakespeare is seen, in this phase, as a poet of the people. A play such as *Julius Caesar* had already been "adopted by seventeenth-century Whigs as a legitimation of tyrannicide and as a model for the overthrow of James II" (Taylor 2002, 362), with Brutus emerging as the hero opposed to tyranny. In the middle of the nineteenth-century, plays such as *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar*, *Henry IV*, and *King John* were interpreted as precursors of the people's Charter and precedents for later parliamentary reforms. *Coriolanus*, particularly, was a favourite, since the Chartists perceived in it "an attack on the patrician class", authoritarian injustice and "references to food shortages" (367). Taylor's article takes us through the evolution of radical appropriation of Shakespeare until the Tercentenary of 1864 in which memories of Shakespeare held a significant role in the movement of radical protest. "Radical readings", Taylor concludes, "interpreted him as a reformer, a republican, a land nationalizer, and sometimes even a freethinker" (379).

These critical approaches partly help us to answer the question concerning Shakespeare's influence on Shelley's radicalism and can relate to his admitted sympathy for Caliban, and generally to his

siding with the underdog, advocating for a liberal future. Though Shelley never explicitly declares to have found confirmation of his own political perspective through his absorption of Shakespeare's plays, commenting instead, as we saw, on the Bard being "sublime" and "ideal" and "perfect" in his dramatic composition, we cannot exclude that, voluntarily or not, his own socio-political stance was powered also by the constant reading of these plays.

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"Thy physic I will try": Art, Nature, and Female Healing in Shakespeare

Martina Zamparo

As one reads in Aristotle's *Physics*, art both imitates and completes nature, being not only a *ministra naturæ* but also a 'corrector' of nature. Through the major influence of Paracelsianism, in Shakespeare's England the art of medicine was closely associated with alchemy. The latter, as William Newman has noted, "provided a uniquely powerful focus for discussing the boundary between art and nature". By considering the characters of Marina (*Pericles; Prince of Tyre*) and Helen (*All's Well That Ends Well*), this essay investigates the two women's relation to the healing arts and to nature in the light of coeval alchemical and Paracelsian doctrines. The two Shakespearean women employ their healing powers, i.e. their "artificial feat", as well as their knowledge of nature's occult sympathies and antipathies, in the service of a "kingly patient": Pericles and the King of France. The *topos* of the healing of the king is a common trope in Renaissance alchemical literature, where the 'king' represents gold *in potentia* and, thus, the raw matter that has to be purified by Lady Alchymya. In the light of their privileged access to nature's secret workings, women could manipulate nature and heal the human body. The analysis will focus on Marina's homeopathic and, therefore, Paracelsian healing of her father Pericles and on Helen's still controversial medical practice, which seems to exceed both the Galenic and the Paracelsian paradigm.

Keywords: Alchemy, Paracelsian medicine, Galenism, Healing women, Shakespeare's last plays, *Pericles*, *All's Well That Ends Well*

Moving from the Aristotelian claim that art both imitates and completes nature, being not only a *ministra naturæ* but also a 'corrector' of nature, the Swiss alchemist and physician known as Paracelsus writes that "[t]he book of medicine is nature itself" (Paracelsus 1979, 86)[1]. Through the major influence of

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[1] The thesis according to which art imitates and perfects nature (which Aristotle expounds in his *Physics*) was taken to justify the practice of alchemy and also "to attack the Galenic medical art in so far as this art admits to its inefficacy through acknowledging the incurable nature of some illnesses" (Maclean 2002, 75-76).

Paracelsianism, in Shakespeare's England the art of medicine was closely associated with alchemy[2]. The term "chymistry", in particular, indicates "the sum total of alchemical/chemical topics as understood in the seventeenth century" (Principe 1998, 9). William Newman has pointed out that "alchemy" (or chymistry) "provided a uniquely powerful focus for discussing the boundary between art and nature" (Newman 2004, 8). By considering the characters of Marina (*Pericles; Prince of Tyre*) and Helen (*All's Well That Ends Well*), this paper investigates the two women's relation to the healing arts and to nature in the light of coeval alchemical and Paracelsian doctrines. As we shall see, in the two plays, the term "art", regularly employed by the doctors of the London College of Physicians in order to promote "an elitist, patriarchal model of medical work" (Pettigrew 2007, 43), is instead associated with women healers.

In Stuart England, iatrochemical medicine had important religious and political implications and the diseased body was an object of fascination to poets, visual artists, and dramatists, as testified, among others, by Shakespeare's last plays, dominated by supposed deaths and magical reanimations[3]. Most significantly, in the late plays the task of healing is performed by women[4]: Helen, Marina, and Paulina are central in the regenerative pattern of the

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[2]   As Paracelsus writes, "I praise the art of alchemy because it reveals the mysteries of medicine and because it is helpful in all desperate illnesses" (Paracelsus 1979, 60).

[3]   "Iatrochemistry" indicates "[t]he theory or school of thought that existed in the 16th and 17th centuries and regarded medicine and physiology as subjects to be understood in terms of the chemistry of the time" (*Oxford English Dictionary* 1989, 7:592). Recent criticism has drawn attention to the topic of medicine and Paracelsianism in the Bard's later canon. See, among others, Healy 2017; Iyengar 2014, 245-47; Zamparo 2022. On the presence of medical issues in Shakespeare's comedies, see Camaiora and Conti 2016. On the relationship between the history of medicine and the visual arts, see Minni 2019.

[4]   McMullan highlights the problems in establishing which works belong to the group of the so-called 'last plays' (or 'late plays') and posits that *All's Well That Ends Well* could very well be included in this category, being roughly contemporary with *Pericles* and sharing some of the themes and images of Shakespeare's 'late work' (McMullan 2009), a definition which should of course also comprise the plays written after *The Tempest*.

dramas in which they appear[5]. Recent scholarship has revealed that alchemical and Paracelsian philosophy provides a fundamental paradigm through which to discuss the role of female healing in the early modern period. Margaret Healy, among others, highlights "the privileged position of female nature in the new alchemical medicine so closely associated with Paracelsus at the turn of the seventeenth century" (Healy 2013, 77). If Paracelsus writes that "woman is […] superior to man" (Paracelsus 1979, 26), female characters appear in coeval alchemical treatises as representing the art of alchemy, Lady Alchymya, who cooperates with "Dame Nature" (see Figure 1)[6].

Fig. 1. "Alchymya". Title page of George Baker, *The newe Iewell of Health* (London, 1576). Courtesy of the Wellcome Collection.

As will be considered, Marina and Helen employ their healing powers, their "artificial feat" (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, V.i.65), as well as their knowledge of nature's occult sympathies

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[5]   I have discussed elsewhere Paulina's role as Leontes's "physician" (Shakespeare 2010, II.iii.53) in *The Winter's Tale*. See Zamparo 2022.

[6]   In his prolegomena to *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, Elias Ashmole announces that his readers will "learne the *Language* in which they [our *Hermetique Philosophers*] woo'd and courted *Dame Nature*" (Ashmole 1652, sig. B4v).

and antipathies[7], in the service of a "kingly patient" (64): Pericles and the King of France. The *topos* of the healing of the king is a common trope in Renaissance alchemical literature, where the 'king' (or *rex chymicus*) represents gold *in potentia* and, therefore, the raw matter that has to be purified and transmuted by Lady Alchymya (Abraham 1998, 110-13). In alchemical writing, the so-called *rex chymicus* epitomises the condition of perfection that every element aspires to reach, i.e. the 'royal', perfect state of gold. The English alchemist Thomas Norton writes in his *Ordinall of Alchimy* that "Evermore one Element desireth to be Kinge" (Ashmole 1652, 67). Thus, in curing their royal patients, the two Shakespearean healers also perfect and 'mend' nature. The alchemical pattern of the curing of an ailing king, whose restoration helps to ensure the play's final reconciliations, recurs also in *The Winter's Tale*, a work roughly contemporary with *Pericles*. The Sicilian King Leontes is the rusty metal that has to undergo transmutation. When he acknowledges his faults and decides to repent in Act III, he compares himself to a base metal that has to submit to purification. Speaking of Lord Camillo, the king comments thus:

> LEONTES
> […] How he glisters
> Through my *rust*! And how his piety
> Does my deeds make the blacker!
> (Shakespeare 2010, III.ii.167-69, emphasis mine).

In the alchemical language, the term "rust" signifies "the 'infection' or imperfection of the base metal before purification, before the transforming medicine or philosopher's stone has been applied to it" (Abraham 1998, 175). According to Paracelsian theory, in particular, alchemy is a method of perfection: "For [nature] brings nothing to light that is complete as it stands. Rather, the human being must perfect [its substances]. This completion is called *alchimia*" (Paracelsus 2008, 211). Employing the celebrated words of King Polixenes in Act IV of *The Winter's Tale*, it can certainly be argued that alchemy "is an art / Which does mend Nature – change

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7   On Renaissance notions of sympathies and antipathies in nature, see Floyd-Wilson 2013, 1-27.

it rather – but / The art itself is Nature" (Shakespeare 2010, IV.iv.95-97).

The role of female practitioners in the healthcare system of Elizabethan and Jacobean England has emerged to the foreground and has been a subject of considerable interest to critics: historians have demonstrated that women healers were highly respected as caregivers, nurses, housewives, and also alchemists[8]. More particularly, alchemical writings demonstrate that a close connection existed between chymical practices and the chores women daily performed in their households:

> Doe wee not see that women and ordinary Cookes haue attained this knowledge of Fermentation: and thereby prouide for sicke persons, Iellyes made of flesh of foules, and such like, to restore and strengthen them in the time of their weakenesse? (Duchesne 1605, "The Conclusion of this Treatise")[9]

Several emblems in Michael Maier's renowned collection *Atalanta fugiens* (1617) portray women intent upon performing different alchemical tasks (see Figure 2)[10].

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[8]   See, among others, Archer 2010; Fissell 2008; Harkness 2002; Harkness 2008; Healy 2013; Hunter and Hutton 1997; Ray 2015.

[9]   Where there are reliable signature marks or page numbers in early modern sources, I will use them; otherwise, I will refer to chapter titles or chapter numbers. As Wear explains, "[k]nowledge of medicines was […] both a medical and household matter, which meant that medicine became associated with female household skills, and women, the kitchen and the garden were linked to medicine" (Wear 2000, 55).

[10] Maier invites the alchemical adept to do "women's work": "When you have obtained the white lead, then do women's work, that is to say: COOK" (Maier 1969, 176). On women in alchemical imagery and on the relationship between alchemical and female skills, see Warlick 1998.
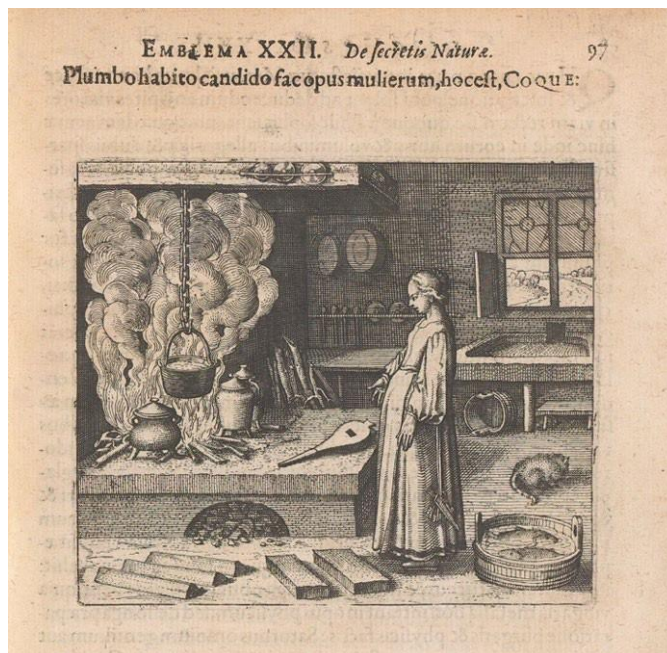
Fig. 2. Emblem 22. From Michael Maier, *Atalanta fugiens* (Oppenheim, 1617). Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, Zurich, https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-7300.

Given their status as "both occult objects and instruments of occult knowledge" (Floyd-Wilson 2013, 15), women had a privileged access to nature's secret workings and could perform wondrous cures. Paracelsus and his followers ascribed to female healers a sort of arcane knowledge of nature that could be traced back to the Egyptians and therefore prompted physicians to learn their art from cunning women:

> [A] Physitian ought not to rest only in that bare knowledge which their Schools teach, but to learn of old Women, Egyptians, and such-like persons; for they have greater experience in such things, than all Academians. (Paracelsus 1655, 88)

At the time when *All's Well That Ends Well* (1605-6), *Pericles* (1607-8), and *The Winter's Tale* (1609-10) appeared on the London stages,

Paracelsian medical theories were thriving in the country[11]. The Paracelsian enthusiasts Richard Bostocke (1585) and John Hester (1583), in particular, contributed much to the diffusion of iatrochemistry in England[12]. It is worth recalling here that Paracelsians promoted homeopathic healing, i.e. curing by similitude, or *similia similibus curantur*: "therefore it must needes be that all health must consist only in vnitie. And in and by this vnitie health is to be sought, and not in contrarietie, as the *Ethnikes* doe" (Bostocke 1585, Chapter second). In doing so, chemical doctors objected to Galenic, humoral, allopathic therapeutics, which relied upon the assumption that every disease is expelled by its opposite: *contraria contrariis curantur*. In the words of Galen, "euery thing perisheth or is ouercome of his contrary" (Galen 1586, 47)[13]. University-trained and licensed physicians, whose academic education was rooted in the Galenic and Hippocratic tradition, prescribed those remedies that had opposite effects to those produced by the distempered humours. According to the Paracelsians, on the contrary, "[e]very like knoweth its like" (Paracelsus 1657, 37) and thus illnesses should be purged with medicines that resemble the illnesses themselves. Bostocke makes it clear that "lyke are to be ioyned with ther like, & like are cured with their lyke: and that all health consisteth in vnitie and agreement" (Bostocke 1585, Chapter fifth). Each sphere of the universe (Paracelsus explains) is in sympathy with all other parts as well as with the human body (Hunt 1989, 77). It follows that "[t]he medicine must be adjusted to the disease, both must be united to form a harmonious whole" (Paracelsus 1979, 74). Thanks to a close perusal of nature, the chymist could harness these unseen sympathies and thus manipulate nature and heal the human body. In the words of Paracelsus, one "becomes a physician only when he knows that which is unnamed, invisible, and immaterial, yet efficacious" (64).

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[11]   On the reception of Paracelsianism in England, see, among others, Kocher 1947, Debus 1965, Webster 1979, and Wear 2000, 39-40.

[12]   Several Paracelsian treatises were translated into English by John Hester and were published in London in the late sixteenth century. See Kassell 2011, A1-A38.

[13]   On Galenic, allopathic medicine, see Wear 2000, 37-40.

Interestingly enough, Shakespeare's familiarity with chemical medicine also came through Doctor John Hall. The latter was a celebrated physician in Stratford-upon-Avon and married Shakespeare's daughter Susanna in 1607, the same year in which *Pericles* was written. This is the reason why the character of the physician Cerimon in *Pericles* has been read as a wedding gift to John Hall, who reflected the increasing interest in chemical pharmacy that was displayed by a number of licensed doctors at the turn of the century[14]. A perusal of John Hall's medical casebook actually reveals that he relied on both Galenic therapies and on Paracelsus's unorthodox, and yet thriving, theories. In several of the cases recorded in his diary, "Paracelsus laudanum" and "Paracelsus's laudanum pills" figure among the remedies he prescribed to his patients[15]. As it has been pointed out, Hall was neither a Galenist dogmatist nor a Paracelsian, but, rather, a "Chymiatrist" (Wells and Edmondson 2020, 15), drawing on both according to need and "integrating the two competing medical philosophies with little difficulty" (Iyengar 2014, 5).

The very Susanna Hall played a paramount role as a healer in her household as well as in her community. As stated in the epitaph on her gravestone in Stratford-upon-Avon, Susanna dispensed "comforts cordial" and was "[w]itty above her sex": "but that's not all", so the epitaph reads, "[w]ise to salvation was good Mistress Hall" (Wells and Edmondson 2020, 17). In other words, she was both "the famous local poet's daughter, and the physician's wife" (18). It is thus reasonable to wonder whether the figure of Susanna Hall inspired her father in the creation of such powerful characters as Helen, Marina, and Paulina, and whether this might be one of the reasons behind the salvific role of women in the plays Shakespeare wrote or co-wrote at the end of his career. I contend that Marina and Helen, in particular, contribute towards establishing harmony and concord within both the human and the natural spheres and thus reinforce the alchemical imagery of reunion and reconciliation that is at the core of the two plays. As

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[14] See Wilson 1993, 176-77. Gossett likewise highlights the parallels between Shakespeare's son-in-law and Cerimon (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, 293n).

[15] See Wells and Edmondson 2020, 144 (case 73), 194 (case 123), 202 (case 131), 269 (case 172).

the English lawyer Richard Bostocke explains, Galenic physic is based upon "dualitie, discord and contrarietie" and "maketh warre and not peace in mans bodie" (Bostocke 1585, sig. B1v). Instead, Paracelsian homeopathic and alchemical ideology properly teaches how everything in nature strives toward "unity, concord and agreement" and shows how God "hast ordeyned all thinges in vnitie peace and concorde" (sig. A6v and A7r).

"Thy sacred physic": Marina's Homeopathic Healing of Pericles

Critics have variously noted the influence of Paracelsian, alchemical, and Hermetic philosophy on the character of Lord Cerimon of Ephesus[16]. He first appears in Act III of the play, where he is presented as a chymist, engaged in the distillation of herbal and chemical compounds, and entirely devoted to searching the secrets of nature as well as studying the "disturbances" she works and her "cures" (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, III.ii.37-38): a practice that gives him "more content and cause of true delight / Than to be thirsty after tottering honour" (39-40). As Iyengar observes, "it is certainly possible to detect in Shakespeare's aristocratic physician in *Pericles*, Cerimon, the type of the 'good' Paracelsian physician who refines chemical medicines from nature" (Iyengar 2014, 5). Recalling the Hermetic concept of man as a "mortal god", Cerimon famously declares that "[v]irtue and cunning were endowments greater / Than nobleness and riches" (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, III.ii.28-29). "Careless heirs", he says, "May the two latter darken and expend, / But immortality attends the former, / Making a man a god" (29-32). The idea of the human being as a god on earth is clearly developed in the eighteen treatises that compose the *Corpus Hermeticum*, traditionally attributed to the 'thrice great' Hermes:

> [T]he human rises up to heaven and takes its measure and knows what is in its heights and its depths, and he understands all else exactly and […] he comes to be on high without leaving earth behind, so enormous

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[16] If Healy defines Cerimon as "a charitable Paracelsian-type physician" (Healy 2011, 197), Iyengar highlights how the Shakespearean healer "enjoys almost supernatural Paracelsian powers" (Iyengar 2014, 255).

is his range. Therefore, we must dare to say that the human on earth is a mortal god but that god in heaven is an immortal human. (Copenhaver 1992, 36)

In the light of this renewed faith in human potential stemming from the Hermetic tradition, Paracelsus reinforced the belief according which the physician is a helper of God: "the Scriptures say that God created the physician and endowed him with his mercy that he might help his fellow men" (Paracelsus 1979, 69)[17]. Calling for some viol music and, therefore, evoking those Egyptian rituals of statue animation described in the Hermetic treatise *Asclepius*[18], Cerimon eventually manages to "awake Nature" and revive Pericles's wife, Queen Thaisa, who supposedly died in a sea storm: "Gentlemen, this queen will live. Nature awakes; / A warmth breathes out of her!" (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, III.ii.91-92)[19]. However, it seems to have been overlooked by scholars that Shakespeare displays a precise knowledge of Paracelsian medical pharmacy also through the character of Marina, Pericles's daughter. I argue that Marina relies upon her knowledge of Paracelsian, homeopathic medicine in order to heal her father.

In the final act of the play, the action shifts to the coast of Mytilene, on the island of Lesbos, where Pericles has arrived on a

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[17] The Paracelsians (just like the Helmontians after them) placed emphasis upon divine enlightenment and Christian charity and believed "to be directly illuminated by God with medical knowledge" (Wear 2000, 354).

[18] Hermes Trismegistus explains to his disciple Asclepius how ancient Egyptian priests infused life into the statues of their gods by means of "hymns, praises and sweet sounds in tune with heaven's harmony" (Copenhaver 1992, 90), a passage that is considered to be one of the sources for the statue scene in *The Winter's Tale*. In order to reanimate Thaisa, Shakespeare's Cerimon asks for a viol to play: "The rough and woeful music that we have, / Cause it to sound, beseech you. [*Viol music sounds and stops*] / The viol once more. How thou stirr'st, thou block! / The music there!" (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, III.ii.87-90). The Greek *Corpus Hermeticum* comprises seventeen tracts of Neoplatonic and Gnostic origin dating from the second and third centuries AD, to which is added the *Asclepius*. The latter was purportedly translated into Latin by Apuleius and its original version is not extant.

[19] A few lines above, Cerimon alludes to Egyptian magical rituals: "Death may usurp on nature many hours / And yet the fire of life kindle again / The o'erpressed spirits. I heard of an Egyptian / That had nine hours lain dead, who was / By good appliance recovered" (III.ii.81-85).

ship after "thwarting the wayward seas" (IV.iv.10) and where he would be reunited with his daughter. Marina was actually left in Tarsus with her nurse Lychorida fifteen years before, when her mother Thaisa supposedly died in a sea storm, and has been growing as "the heart and place / Of general wonder" (IV.Chorus.10-11) in the care of Cleon and his wife Dionyza. The latter, prompted by an "envy rare" (37) and unable to tolerate that Marina's excellent qualities overshadow the "graceful marks" (36) of her own daughter Philoten, commands her servant Leonine to have the foster child murdered. In spite of Dyoniza's hopes that "her daughter / Might stand peerless by this slaughter" (39-40), the murderous plan is thwarted by the entry of some "roguing thieves" serving "the great pirate Valdes" (IV.i.92). Marina, the 'girl from the sea', is thus abducted and carried to Mytilene, where she is sold as a prostitute in a brothel. Just like Perdita in *The Winter's Tale*, Marina is key to the regenerative pattern of the play. Jonathan Bate associates *Pericles*'s heroine with Ovid's Proserpina and reads her story as a vegetation myth: like her mythological prototype, the Shakespearean maid finally emerges from the "sexual underworld" and evokes images of fertility and rebirth (Bate 1993, 221). While in the brothel, a place where "[d]iseases have been sold dearer than physic" (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, IV.v.102), Marina displays her healing virtues and, speaking "holy words" to the governor of the city Lysimachus (138), she amends her customer's "corrupted mind" and manages to be released: "Had I brought hither a corrupted mind", the man claims addressing the honourable lady, "Thy speech had altered it" (108-9). After leaving that "unhallowed place" (104), the girl is hosted in "an honest house" (V.Chorus.2), where "[d]eep clerks she dumbs and with her nee'le composes / Nature's own shape of bud, bird, branch or berry" (5-6). Meanwhile, the King of Tyre Pericles sails towards Tarsus in order to be reconciled with his daughter, "all his life's delight" (IV.iv.12)[20]. Once arrived, however, he is shown Marina's tomb and, "in sorrow all devoured" (25), embarks again, swearing

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[20] As Gossett explains, "Pericles's title and status waver throughout the play" (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, 168). He is referred to as both "Prince" (possibly as a synonym of 'ruler') and as "King" of Tyre.

"[n]ever to wash his face nor cut his hairs" (28). Pericles and his counsellor Helicanus eventually land on the island of Mytilene during the city's annual festivities devoted to the god Neptune. Displeased at the sight of "the king's sorrow" (V.i.55), Lysimachus sends for the "gallant lady" Marina (59), in the firm belief that her 'art' will cure the grief-stricken king. If Thaisa is magically recreated thanks to Cerimon's "secret art" (III.ii.32) and resolves to live as a votaress of Diana in Ephesus, Pericles is ultimately healed by his daughter's "sacred physic" (V.i.67). At the end of the play, the king celebrates Cerimon's ability to equal the power of the divine: "The gods can have no mortal office / More like a god than you" (V.iii.63-64). Likewise, Marina's "artificial feat" is a "sacred physic", i.e. it is approved by the gods, as Lysimachus observes:

> LYSIMACHUS
> Fair one, all goodness that consists in bounty
> Expect even here, where is a kingly patient.
> If that thy prosperous and *artificial feat*
> Can draw him but to answer thee in aught,
> Thy *sacred physic* shall receive such pay
> As thy desires can wish.
> (V.i.63-68, emphasis mine)

The syntagma "artificial feat" applies to the musical talents of Marina, who "sings like one immortal" and "dances / As goddess-like to her admired lays" (V.Chorus.3-4). However, given the presence of medicine-related language, 'artificial' might have been understood in a medical context, referring to the girl's healing art and to her "utmost skill" in curing the "kingly patient" Pericles. At Lysimachus's request, Marina replies that she will employ her "utmost skill" in the king's "recovery":

> MARINA
>   Sir, I will use
> My utmost skill in his recovery, provided
> That none but I and my companion maid
> Be suffered to come near him.
> (V.i.68-71)

The Latin term *ars* may actually mean a physician's cunning and thus the English 'artist' may be a medical practitioner[21]. Considering that the *topos* of the healing of the king is typical of Renaissance alchemical allegories, *ars* might as well indicate the alchemists' art, most frequently defined as *ars sacra*. The Paracelsian Richard Bostocke writes that "[t]he true and auncient phisicke which consisteth in the searching out of the secrets of Nature" has been traditionally referred to as "*Ars sacra*, or *magna*, & *sacra scientia*, or *Chymia*, or *Chemeia*, or *Alchimia*, & *mystica*, & by some of late, *Spagirica ars*" (Bostocke 1585, Chapter first).

What is noticeable about Marina's healing of Pericles is that her treatment rests upon Paracelsian tenets and specifically upon the theory that like cures like. George Puttenham illustrates this principle very clearly in his *Arte of English Poesie*, when he discusses the response a literary complaint should elicit in the reader:

> Lamenting is altogether contrary to reioising, euery man saith so, and yet is it a peece of ioy to be able to lament with ease, and freely to poure forth a mans inward sorrowes and the greefs wherewith his minde is surcharged. This was a very necessary deuise of the Poet and a fine, besides his poetrie to play also the Phisitian, and not onely by applying a medicine to the ordinary sicknes of mankind, but by making the very greef it selfe (in part) cure of the disease […] not with any medicament of a contrary temper, as the *Galenistes* vse to cure [*contraria contrarijs*] but as the *Paracelsians*, who cure [*similia similibus*] making one dolour to expell another, and in this case, one short sorrowing the remedie of a long and grieuous sorrow. (Puttenham 1589, 37-39)

Paracelsian sympathetic therapy, unlike Galen's allopathic medicine, works by "making one dolour to expell another" and "by making the very greef it selfe (in part) cure of the disease" so that to "poure forth a mans inward sorrowes and the greefs wherewith his minde is surcharged"[22]. Edgar's lines in Shakespeare's *King Lear* echo Puttenham's words and draw upon the same homeopathic

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[21] See Gossett's critical commentary in her edition of *Pericles* (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, 375n).

[22] On Puttenham's idea of grief as a therapy for the self and for others, see Pigman 1985, 44-45. On the significance of Paracelsian homeopathy for poets, dramatists, and literary critics in early modern England, see Grudin 1979.

rationale: "When we our betters see bearing our woes, / We scarcely think our miseries our foes" (Shakespeare 1997, III.vi.99-100). In *The Winter's Tale*, Paulina treats her patient homeopathically, requiring Leontes to cure his melancholic state with sufferance and lamentation, with "nothing but despair" (Shakespeare 2010, III.ii.207). Hunt rightly observes that homeopathy offered the dramatist a way of comprehending the influence of the spiritual world upon mankind (Hunt 1988, 56)[23]. In *Pericles*, the King of Tyre is not recovered by means of Marina's "sweet harmony" (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, V.i.37), as Lysimachus expects[24], but, rather, thanks to the girl's holy, medicinal, and 'sympathetic' words. Far from being merely metaphorical, such entrenched beliefs in hidden resemblances and attractions, which were especially exploited on the early modern stage, were part of a wider alchemical and Neoplatonic worldview according to which man and nature constitute one great body in which "all the members doe agree"[25]. As one reads in one of the most renowned alchemical treatises of the English Renaissance, pseudo-Roger Bacon's *The Mirror of Alchimy*: "Every like rejoiceth in his like: for likeness is saide to be the cause of friendship" (Bacon 1992, 14)[26].

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[23] Hunt explores the presence of matters related to Paracelsian homeopathy in *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, but he does not mention *Pericles*.

[24] "She questionless, with her sweet harmony / And other choice attractions, would allure / And make a battery through his deafened ports / Which now are midway stopped. / She is all happy as the fairest of all, / And with her fellow maid is now upon / The leafy shelter that abuts against / The island's side. Go, fetch her hither" (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, V.i.37-44).

[25] "[T]he more witty and learned sort of Philosophers, holde & affirme, that this world, which comprehendeth in the circumference and compasse therof the fowre Elements, & the first beginnings of nature, is a certaine great bodie, whose partes are so knitte together among themselues, (euen as in one bodie of a liuing Creature, all the members doe agree) that there is no one part of the parties, of that great body, which is not inlyned, quickened, and susteined, by the benefite of that vniuersall soule, which they haue called the soule of the world" (Duchesne 1605, sig. B3v/B4r).

[26] *Speculum alchemiae* was first printed in the alchemical compendium *De Alchemia* (1541) and it was later translated into English as *The Mirror of Alchimy* and published in London in 1597. The treatise, traditionally attributed to Roger Bacon, was very likely written by an anonymous in later times. On this work's

Marina's sacred medicine, which heals "the king's sorrow" (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, V.i.55), works in a Paracelsian way, i.e. by making one grief to drive out another, or, in Puttenham's words, "one short sorrowing the remedie of a long and grieuous sorrow". In hearing his daughter's story of loss and woe, Pericles is at last able to expel, deliver his long suffering. Addressing her royal patient, "A man who for this three months hath not spoken / To anyone, nor taken sustenance / But to prorogue his grief" (20-22), Marina carefully applies her homeopathic treatment and says that she will first disclose the reasons behind her state of affliction, a condition which 'equals' the king's misery:

> MARINA
> […] She speaks
> My lord, that may be hath endured a grief
> Might *equal* yours, if both were justly weighed.
> (77-79, emphasis mine)

This certainly resonates with the description of Susanna Hall as one "that wept with all / That wept" and "yet set herself to cheer / Them up with comforts cordial" (Wells and Edmondson 2020, 17). Further highlighting the affinity that binds them, Marina declares to be of 'equivalent' derivation with mighty kings: "My derivation was from ancestors / Who stood *equivalent* with mighty kings" (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, V.i.81-82, emphasis mine). In noticing the girl's similitude to his deceased wife, Pericles suddenly resumes talking: "My fortunes – parentage – good parentage – / To *equal* mine. Was it not thus? What say you?" (88-89, emphasis mine). Impressed by her 'sameness', the king invites the maiden to reveal her origins to him: "Pray you, turn your eyes upon me. / You're like something that – what countrywoman?" (92-93). "No, nor of any shores", the young lady replies, "Yet I was mortally brought forth and am / No other than I appear" (94-96). Given that, in Paracelsian terms, grief can cure itself, the king ultimately unburdens himself of the agony that previously oppressed him, Marina fulfilling the function of a midwife: "I am great with woe,

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authorship, see Linden's introduction to his edition of *The Mirror of Alchemy* (Bacon 1992).

and shall deliver weeping" (97)[27]. Acknowledging Marina's resemblance to her mother and the affection, or sympathy, that unites them, Pericles is enticed by her 'relation', i.e. her story as well as their being connected by blood[28]:

> PERICLES
> Prithee speak.
> […]
> […] I will believe thee
> And make my senses credit thy *relation*
> To points that seem impossible. For thou look'st
> Like one I loved indeed.
> (110, 113-16, emphasis mine)

Marina's homeopathic remedy clearly works a positive change upon her father. As Benvolio says to Romeo, in the attempt to relieve his friend's torments of love: "One pain is lessened by another's anguish" (Shakespeare 2012, I.ii.45). Pericles, who recognises that his "dearest wife was like this maid" (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, V.i.98), urges Marina to report her background and unfold her misfortunes, which 'equal' his own pains:

> PERICLES
> Report thy parentage. I think thou saidst
> Thou hadst been tossed from wrong to injury,
> And that thou thought'st thy griefs might *equal* mine
> If both were opened.
> (120-23, emphasis mine)

Homeopathic therapeutics implied the existence of certain secret similitudes, and even visual resemblances, between specific remedies and those parts of the human body that were affected by illness: by manipulating these signatures, the physician could

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[27] Birth imagery recurs in the play and is primarily associated with Marina, who symbolically restores her father to life. As Pericles exclaims: "Thou hast been godlike perfect, the heir of kingdoms, / And another life to Pericles thy father" (V.i.196-97).

[28] As Gossett stresses, "OED does not record *relation* meaning 'kinship' before 1660, but as 'a person related to one by blood or marriage' *relation* was already current" (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, 381n).

ascertain which cures best agreed with a certain affliction (Floyd-Wilson 2013, 4). What I argue is that Marina's 'likeness', the visual resemblance to her mother that immediately strikes Pericles, as well as the hidden 'sympathy' coursing through father and daughter, can be understood in a medical, alchemical, and Paracelsian context: "Every like knoweth its like" (Paracelsus 1657, 37).

"Thy resolved patient": The Paracelsian Context of Helen's Cure

It is a well-known fact that Shakespeare dramatises the controversy between the Galenists and the Paracelsians in the comedy *All's Well That Ends Well*, where Paracelsus is mentioned by name along with Galen. The reference to the two rival medical schools is made explicit by Paroles in a dialogue with Bertram and Lord Lafeu where we are told that the "learned and authentic fellows" have relinquished the possibility of healing the King, declaring his malady to be incurable:

> PAROLES
> Why, 'tis the rarest argument of wonder that hath shot out in our latter times.
> […]
> LAFEU
> To be relinquished of the artists –
> PAROLES
> So I say, both of Galen and Paracelsus.
> LAFEU
> Of all the learned and authentic fellows –
> (Shakespeare 2019, II.iii.7-12)[29]

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[29] Stensgaard points out that Lafeu's utterance "Of all the learned and authentic fellows" is spoken contradictorily and is not intended to support Paroles's intrusive remark, "[s]ince only the Galenists […] enjoyed the august reputation glanced at in Lafew's directly rejoined 'of all the learned and authentic Fellows'" (Stensgaard 1972, 180). And indeed, as the scene unfolds, it becomes clear that Lafeu is trying to speak to Bertram, but he is continuously interrupted by Paroles, a situation that creates a comic effect (see Shakespeare 2019, 195n). It should be highlighted that "[t]o an English audience", as Gossett and Wilcox stress in their edition of the play, "these ['the learned and authentic fellows'] would be the *fellows* or members of the Royal College of Physicians"

Jones-Davies has noted that "[a]lchemy doesn't work miracles in Shakespeare, but does create wonder" (Jones-Davies 2017, 115)[30]. It will be my argument that Helen's wondrous treatment of the King hints at alchemical and Paracelsian tenets that were well known to Jacobean audiences. Significantly, the play's subject matter is once again the curing of "the King's disease" (Shakespeare 2019, I.i.224) and the subsequent "recovery of the King" (II.iii.37), or, in alchemical terms, the perfecting of matter through the salvific intervention of a woman. Just like Pericles is Marina's "kingly patient", so the King of France resolves to be Helen's patient: "Sit, my preserver, by thy patient's side" (Shakespeare 2019, II.iii.48). It is reasonable to surmise that the alchemical *topos* of the cured king and the explicit mention of Paracelsus would have prompted the onlookers to wonder whether the young healer performs an alchemical cure.

Shakespeare immediately places the drama within the coeval medical debate. The unlicensed practice of the "poor unlearned virgin" Helen is contrasted with the erudition of the "schools":

COUNTESS
[…] He and his physicians
Are of a mind: he that they cannot help him,
They that they cannot help. How shall they credit
A poor unlearned virgin, when the schools,
Embowelled of their doctrine, have left off

(Shakespeare 2019, 195n). The latter "saw the propagation of Galenic learned medicine as its mission" (Wear 2000, 36). The theme of the inability of "the beste renowned Phisitions" (Painter 1575, 88) to cure the king derives from the main literary source of *All's Well That Ends Well*: Boccaccio's novella "Giletta of Narbona", included in William Painter's translation *The Palace of Pleasure* (1575). Shakespeare reworked the original material and took the opportunity to place emphasis upon coeval medical issues by juxtaposing Galen and Paracelsus and therefore prompting the audience to reflect upon the renowned debate.

[30] The pun on the words "admiration", "wonder", and "wondering" foreshadows the astonishing and marvellous nature of Helen's cure. King of France: "Now, good Lafeu, / Bring in the *admiration*, that we with thee / May spend our *wonder* too, or take off thine / By *wondering* how thou took'st it" (Shakespeare 2019, II.i.85-88, emphasis mine). See also Gossett and Wilcox's critical commentary in their edition of *All's Well That Ends Well* (Shakespeare 2019, 180n).

The danger to itself?
(Shakespeare 2019, I.iii.234-39)

Somewhat surprisingly, the "simple maid" Helen (II.iii.66), a "poor physician's daughter" (115)[31], succeeds in "cur[ing] the desperate languishings whereof / The King is rendered lost" (I.iii.226-27) and enables her royal patient to recover his "corporal soundness" (I.ii.24). Conversely, the "learned and authentic fellows" (II.iii.12) fail to treat the sovereign's "malignant cause" (II.i.109). The image of a king "near death" (129) who is miraculously recovered calls to mind those alchemical illustrations that depict the restoration to life and health of the *rex chymicus* (see Figure 3). As one reads in the celebrated alchemical treatise *Pretiosa margarita novella* (1546), the Great Work consists in the restoration, or transmutation, of the chemical king: "In the eleventh mansion the servants pray God to restore their king. Henceforth the whole work is concerned with his restoration" (Bonus of Ferrara 1894, 44).

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[31] The girl's social status in the play is not clear, as it has been pointed out by Gossett and Wilcox. She is referred to as a "gentlewoman" (Shakespeare 2019, I.i.16) by the Countess, a definition which indicates that Helen is either a "woman of good birth or breeding" or a "female attendant […] upon a lady of rank" (Shakespeare 2019, 127n).

Fig. 3. "The Resurrection of the King". From Petrus Bonus of Ferrara, *Pretiosa margarita novella* (Venice, 1546). Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, Zurich, https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-7472.

The inefficacy of traditional, established medicine is made clear at the outset of the comedy. As Lafeu observes addressing the Countess: "He [the King] hath abandoned his physicians, madam, under whose *practices* he hath persecuted time with hope" (Shakespeare 2019, I.i.12-14, emphasis mine). Gossett and Wilcox point out that the term "practices" also "carries overtones of *OED n. 3b*, 'an established procedure or system. Usually with negative connotations in early use'" (Shakespeare 2019, 126n). This remark anticipates the King's explicit reference to the Royal College of Physicians, the renowned institution founded in 1518 on the model of Italian city colleges of physicians (Wear 2000, 25). By refusing to hand over his "past-cure malady / To empirics" (Shakespeare 2019, II.i.119-20), the French sovereign opposes Helen's medical expertise to the art of the "most learned doctors" and of the "congregated college", i.e. the 'authentic' fellows:

KING
                              We thank you, maiden,
But may not be so credulous of cure,
When our most learned doctors leave us, and
The congregated college have concluded
That labouring art can never ransom nature
Form her inaidable estate. I say we must not
So stain our judgement, or corrupt our hope,
To prostitute our past-cure malady
To empirics.
(112-20)

Helen is thus presented as an empiric who has learned her art from her deceased father, the much-famed physician Gérard de Narbonne[32]. She could well have been one of those two hundred and fifty unlicensed practitioners working in London, several of whom were women (Wear 2000, 23-24). The very term "empiric", as noted by Pettigrew, "is ideologically weighted, and was routinely used by learned medical authorities to denounce those practitioners who wrongly thought (so *they* thought) that experience alone could stand in place of rigorous education" (Pettigrew 2007, 35)[33]. Rather surprisingly, this is the only case where Shakespeare uses the word "empiric" "to describe a practitioner" (35), which invests the term with a peculiar significance and highlights the relevance of the contemporary debate on medicine. Initially sceptical about the healing abilities of the young maid, the King of France eventually accepts the girl's treatment: "Sweet practiser, thy physic I will try" (Shakespeare 2019, II.i.183). Scholars have long debated about the nature of Helen's physic. Floyd-Wilson comments thus:

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[32] Helen immediately introduces herself as the daughter of Gérard de Narbonne: "Ay, my good lord. / Gérard de Narbonne was my father, / In what he did profess, well found" (Shakespeare 2019, II.i.98-100).

[33] See the definition of "empirics" in Iyengar 2014, 118-19. Empirics were often women and "Paracelsians and alchemists were also invariably and pejoratively called empirics" (Iyengar 2014, 118-19). On the hostility between licensed doctors and female healers, see also Wear 2000, 47-48.

> She has been identified as a cunning woman associated with fairy
> magic, a Paracelsian, a domestic medical practitioner, and a student of
> her father's medicine. […] To some degree, all of these critics are
> correct. (Floyd-Wilson 2013, 28)

I argue that the young lady embodies the type of female knowledge
of nature's occult operations and hidden sympathies that was
praised by the alchemists and the Paracelsians. Moreover, as we
shall see, she displays some specific themes related to chemical
medicine. John Hester's definition of the art of alchemy is
illuminating in order to understand the alchemical context of the
King's healing in Shakespeare's play:

> *Alchymie* […] serueth not to transmute Mettalles, but it serueth to helpe
> those diseased bothe inwardly and outwardly: who of the common
> Chyrurgions are counted vncurable, and also giuen ouer of the
> Phisitions. (Paracelsus 1580, "To the Reader")

In the same way as Paulina commits herself to the "great errand"
(Shakespeare 2010, II.ii.45) of curing King Leontes from his "unsafe
lunes" (29) and convincingly remarks that "[t]he office / Becomes a
woman best" (30-31), so Helen announces her 'curative project' at
the outset of the comedy: "The King's disease – my project may
deceive me, / But my intents are fixed and will not leave me"
(Shakespeare 2019, I.i.224-25). As Gossett and Wilcox put it, "Helen
dominates the play" (Shakespeare 2019, 37). It may also be argued
that, by transcending the orthodox medical paradigm, she is the
symbol of that syncretic approach to medicine that was supported
by several doctors in early seventeenth-century England. Recent
studies have shown that, "by the Stuart century, many established
doctors in Britain tempered their Galenism with new theories about
specific cures for specific diseases" (Furdell 2009, 48)[34]. Two leading

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[34] See also Boyle 2018, 216; Healy 2001, 6-7; Harris 2004, 16; Wear 2000, 4-7. As a
case in point, the Paracelsian Joseph Duchesne invites his contemporaries not to
reject Galen and Hippocrates altogether, but, rather, to integrate their theories
with the Paracelsian ones: "If *Hypocrates* or *Galen* himselfe, were now againe
aliue, they would exceedingly reioyce to see art so inlarged & augmented by so
great and noble addition […]. […] And albeit, it may be said, that it is an easie

figures epitomised "this eclectic approach to healing" (48): Doctor John Hall and the Huguenot physician Sir Theodore Turquet de Mayerne. The latter was one of the leading Paracelsians in Europe and arrived at the Jacobean court from France in 1611, when he was appointed court physician to the Stuart family. Importantly, the first London *pharmacopoeia* integrating Paracelsian remedies into the traditional Galenic system appeared in 1618, during the reign of the Stuart monarch James I, who was also the first British sovereign to appoint Paracelsian doctors at court (Trevor-Roper 2006, 212). Far from being a criticism of "the dubious art of the alchemists" (Jones-Davies 2017, 104), as it has been claimed, Helen's art embodies the innovative approach to medicine that was promoted by a considerable number of chemical doctors, one according to which "lyke are to be ioyned with ther like" (Bostocke 1585, Chapter fifth) and one that offered a paramount role to female agency.

The Paracelsian context of Helen's cure is highlighted in the very first act of the play, when the girl describes her father's medical practice, grounded on both "reading" and "manifest experience":

> HELEN
> You know my father left me some prescriptions
> Of rare and proved effects, such as *his reading*
> *And manifest experience* had collected
> For general sovereignty.
> (Shakespeare 2019, I.iii.218-21, emphasis mine)

This passage is usually regarded as a further evidence of Helen's empiricism given her focus on "manifest experience" and on the "proved effects" of her father's prescriptions. In the words of Floyd-Wilson, "Helena's triumph over the Galenists and Paracelsians in particular valorises experiential knowledge over theoretical frameworks" (Floyd-Wilson 2013, 36). As I posit, more complex issues seem to be investigated here. By pairing "experience" with "reading", the young healer makes it clear that

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matter to adde to that which is inuented, yet both the Inuentors, and also the augmentors, are to be thankfully imbraced" (Duchesne 1605, sig. B2v-B3r).

her father's medical expertise derived from 'learning' *as well as* from 'experience', thus rejecting the derogative definition of "empiric" attributed to her by the King. As the English surgeon Thomas Gale puts it, "an Empericke" is he who "hath not reason annexed and ioyned to his experience" (Gale 1563, f. 11v). However, Paracelsus himself advocates that "[t]heory and practice should together form one, and should remain undivided" (Paracelsus 1979, 51)[35]. Helen's words echo a passage from the almost contemporary play *Pericles*, where the physician Cerimon illustrates his own idea of physic, his "secret art":

> CERIMON
> […] 'Tis known I ever
> Have studied physic, through which secret art,
> *By turning o'er authorities*, I have,
> *Together with my practice*, made familiar
> To me and to my aid the blest infusions
> That dwells in vegetives, in metals, stones,
> And I can speak of the disturbances
> That nature works and of her cures, which doth give me
> A more content and cause of true delight
> Than to be thirsty after tottering honour.
> (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, III.ii.31-40, emphasis mine)

The Ephesian doctor explains that he has acquired his knowledge thanks to both "authorities" and "practice", thus comparing and perusing multiple texts rather than merely depending upon old models[36]. It is certainly true that, as Gossett highlights, "Cerimon reflects the growing importance of experimentation in seventeenth-century medicine, exemplified in the career of John Hall" (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, 293n). The very title of Hall's casebook, whose notes are dated between 1611 and 1635, is particularly relevant: *A Little Book of Cures, Described in Case*

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[35] The Swiss doctor stresses this concept in several passages: "There should be nothing in medicine except what results from both word and deed […]. Therefore study and learn that words and deed are but one thing; if you fail to understand this, you are not a physician" (Paracelsus 1979, 71).

[36] See Gossett's critical commentary in her edition of *Pericles* (Shakespeare and Wilkins 2004, 293n).

Histories and Empirically Proven, Tried and Tested in Specified Places and on Identified People[37]. Likewise, Helen clarifies that her father's treatment has been "approved" and "set down" (Shakespeare 2019, I.iii.225), i.e. 'tested'. Since nature's signatures were occult to men in general, the chemical physician was required to privilege direct experience over a blind reliance upon the authorities of the past. Importantly, as Wells and Edmondson attest in their edition of Hall's medical casebook, the Stratfordian doctor also "wanted to demonstrate that he was a learned physician who was conversant with the best minds of his time" (Wells and Edmondson 2020, 5). As a matter of fact, Hall's notebook is composed of a high number of unattributed borrowings from both Latin and English sources, which highlights his outstanding medical training and his willingness to prove that he was a cultivated doctor. Likewise, both Helen's father and Cerimon are learned physicians, perfectly acquainted with the most eminent medical authors, but simultaneously relying on the careful perusal of nature and on "manifest experience". The two Shakespearean physicians can thus be seen to represent the new type of doctor that emerged at the turn of the century on the wave of a growing interest in the chemical medicine related to Paracelsus[38].

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[37] See Wells and Edmondson 2020. This is the first authoritative English edition of Hall's original manuscript since 1683. John Hall's casebook was written in Latin and later translated into English by the surgeon James Cook (Hall 1657). Cook's version was later revised and augmented in 1679 and 1683.

[38] As one reads in Bernard Georges Penot's preface to Hester's collection of Paracelsian cures, "so must the speculation and practise, reason and the worke concurre and ioyne together, because iudgement without practise is barren" (Hester 1583, sig. B3r). The explicit association of theory and practice, or "reason" and "worke", was still regarded as an innovation in the medical paradigm of the period. The German alchemist and court physician Martin Ruland the Elder, one of John Hall's reference authors and a disciple of Paracelsus, was among the first to underscore the necessity to conjoin rational teaching with practice and manage them by method: "I call those cures empiric, not because they are based on experience only as the empiric sect declares, but those which combine simultaneously rational teaching with practice, and are managed by method" (Ruland 1628, sig. A3v, quoted in Wells and Edmondson 2020, 11). The title of John Hall's medical casebook in in fact based on Ruland's *Curationum empyricarum et historicarum, in certis locis et notis personis optime expertarum, et rite probatarum* (see Wells and Edmondson 2020, 11).

It is also of note that a Jacobean theatre-goer would have easily associated Helen's father, so "excellent" (Shakespeare 2019, I.i.26) and "famous […] in his profession" (24), with the French Joseph Duchesne, also known as Quercetanus, "the most famous Paracelsian and Hermetic physician of the time"[39] and court doctor of King Henri IV of France from 1593 (Bayer 2010, 168). Selected passages from two important works by Duchesne were translated into English by Thomas Tymme and published in London in 1605 (Duchesne 1605). Gérard de Narbonne does in fact have the features of the typical Paracelsian physician: honor, charity, and such a great art that would cure all diseases. The Countess observes that his "skill was almost as great as his honesty. Had it stretched so far, would have made nature immortal, and death should have play for lack of work" (Shakespeare 2019, I.i.17-20). Interestingly enough, Bayer has documented "[t]he actuality of women alchemists in the circle around Joseph du Chesne" (Bayer 2010, 166). Beside highlighting how female alchemists often acted as the counterparts to licensed doctors, the scholar draws attention to the existence of Quercitan's daughter as a historical person with an actual interest and heightened expertise in alchemy. The annotation "Mr de Chenis Quercitan's daughter" appears on a manuscript of English verses from the renowned alchemical text *Rosarium philosophorum* (1550), now preserved in the Oxford Bodleian Library[40]. As Bayer points out: "It seems that in a few instances alchemical 'masters' taught or included in their circle women who took on the mantle of a special sort of 'daughter'" (171). Considering the alchemical-Paracelsian context of the play, Helen can certainly be regarded as just such a "philosopher's daughter", who received the secrets of medicine from her father/teacher as part of a revealed knowledge[41]. Female expertise was particularly valued in the alchemical

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[39] See "Mayerne, Sir Theodore de" (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* 2004, 37:578).

[40] "This suggests that the daughter of Joseph du Chesne either translated the two verses of the *Rosarium Philosophorum* in this manuscript, as indicated by William Black, Ashmole manuscript cataloguer, or that she transcribed or owned it" (Bayer 2010, 176n49).

[41] Bayer also remarks that "[t]hese manuscripts suggest a father/teacher-daughter/student relationship for the passing on of alchemical secrets that has affinity with that of the traditional alchemist master-son" (Bayer 2010, 165).

entourage of Joseph Duchesne and Theodore de Mayerne. A female alchemist known by the pseudonym of Neptis ("female descendant" or "grand-daughter") appears in the Mayerne papers in relation to a secret alchemical circle which involved Duchesne (172-73). It is especially worth noting that the status of "Philosopher's daughter", or "Daughter of Philosophy" (171) in a few instances, has a certain affinity with the alchemical symbolism of the philosopher's stone, also known as *filius philosophorum*. The latter was "also sometimes personified as a female child representing sophia or wisdom" (see Abraham 1998, 149; Bayer 2010, 172). Thus, Helen's reference to "the dearest issue" (Shakespeare 2019, II.i.104) of her father's medical practice becomes even more significant: since "issue" also means "children", the term refers both to the receipt and to Helen, the 'philosopher's daughter' and also the philosophical child who perfects nature and cures the sick king:

> HELEN
> […] On's bed of death
> Many receipts he gave me, chiefly one
> Which as *the dearest issue of his practice*,
> And of his old experience th'only darling,
> He bade me store up as a triple eye.
> (102-6, emphasis mine)[42]

In refusing to rely upon Helen's "senseless help" (122), the King of France remarks that "[t]he congregated college have concluded / That labouring art can never ransom nature / From her inaidable estate" (115-17). The fact that the term "inaidable" is very likely a Shakespearean coinage, being the only recorded citation for the term in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is certainly noteworthy. The learned and authentic fellows of the College of Physicians have decreed "the impotence of hard-working *art* to overcome an incurable natural disease" (Shakespeare 2019, 182n). According to the Paracelsians, however, there is no such 'inaidable' state in nature:

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[42] On the significance of the term "issue" in Helen's lines, see Gossett and Wilcox's critical commentary to *All's Well That Ends Well* (Shakespeare 2019, 181n).

> [T]here is no disease that is inevitably mortal. All diseases can be cured, without exception. Only because we do not know how to deal with them properly, because we are unable to understand life and death in their essence, can we not defend ourselves against them. (Paracelsus 1979, 73)

With the meaning of "that cannot be aided or assisted"[43], the adjective "inaidable" hints at one of the most discussed topics in alchemical writing: the issue of nature versus art (Abraham 1998, 11-12). According to alchemical philosophers, art always assists nature in attaining its highest degree of completion and excellence. The Elizabethan alchemist Edward Kelley describes the alchemical work as a process "in which Art assists Nature and Nature assists Art" (Kelley 1893, 127). In showing that Helen succeeds in curing the seeming desperate malady that affects the King, Shakespeare calls into question the presumed inefficacy of art before nature and the belief that women are not 'authentic' practitioners. In her reply to the King, Helen dismisses both ideas:

> HELEN
> I am not an *impostor* that proclaim
> Myself against the level of mine aim,
> But know I think, and think I know most sure,
> My *art* is not past power, nor you past *cure*.
> (Shakespeare 2019, II.i.153-56, emphasis mine)

The girl clarifies that she is not an impostor and presents herself as an 'authentic' practitioner, thus defying all prejudices against female healing. Emphasising that the King is not beyond hope of "cure", the maid focuses on the positive results her healing will effect on her patient. This is, in Paracelsus's view, what truly defines a physician: "It is therefore to be concluded that healing is what defines a physician and that results are what define the master and the doctor. Not the emperor, not the pope, not the faculty, not *privilegia*, nor any university whatsoever" (Paracelsus 2008, 87). Echoing Paracelsus's theories, Helen suggests that her "cure" will

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43   See "inaidable", *adj.* (*Oxford English Dictionary* 1989, 7:771).

prove the legitimacy and efficacy of her "art". The very term "art" was employed by licensed doctors to debase women abilities and to highlight, instead, the 'authenticity' of their medicine (Pettigrew 2007, 42-43). In Thomas Gale's English translation of Galen's *Methodus Medendi*, the reader is offered a description of some of "the foolish and mischiuous abuses, & misuses" (Galen 1586, f. 32r) that have corrupted the art of medicine and surgery and that have been carried out especially by women:

> All these were brought to this mischiefe, by witches, by women, by counterfait iauills, that tooke vpon them to vse the Art, not onely robbing them [their patients] of their money, but of their limmes, and perpetuall health. (f. 32v)

Margaret Healy discusses how early modern descriptions of female medical practice were underpinned by "perceptions about the inability of women – aligned with unruly nature – to undertake intellectual and professional activities that required art" (Healy 2013, 76). However, as Shakespeare shows us, Helen is neither 'unlearned' nor 'unskilled'. Moreover, the connection between the art of medicine and feminity in the play is made explicit by the expression "Doctor She" (Shakespeare 2019, II.i.77), which "juxtapos[es] […] the learned with the female" (Pettigrew 2007, 42) and therefore legitimises Helen's art.

As we have seen, in alchemical literature women are presented as being particulary suited to acting as healers in view of their connection with nature's secrets. The writings of the alchemists and the Paracelsians, in particular, "offer[ed] a positive rendition of female-gendered nature" (Healy 2013, 76), as documented by the following excerpt:

> Who is a better teacher in this than nature itself? Nature has knowledge of such things and nature provides for a palpable understanding of all things. From the palpable understanding, the physician is instructed. Insofar as nature alone knows these things, it must be nature that composes the prescriptions. […] From nature proceeds the art and not from the physician. (Paracelsus 2008, 111)

Helen herself is associated with the natural dimension by the King of France: "She is young, wise, fair; / In these to Nature she's immediate heir" (Shakespeare 2019, II.iii.131-32). Just like Paulina invokes "good goddess Nature" in *The Winter's Tale* (Shakespeare 2010, II.iii.102), so Helen trusts nature's 'power' "to unite sympathetic entities" (Floyd-Wilson 2013, 35):

> HELEN
> What power is it which mounts my love so high,
> That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?
> The mightiest space in fortune nature brings
> To join like likes, and kiss like native things.
> […]
> The King's disease – my project may deceive me,
> But my intents are fixed and will not leave me.
> (Shakespeare 2019, I.i.216-19, 224-25)

It follows that the healing of the King is instrumental to fostering nature's tendency to promote "sympathy and mutual agreement" (Lemnius 1658, 198; Floyd-Wilson 2013, 7-8) between naturally related entities. Richard Bostocke explains that "the Phisition knoweth what things haue affinity together, and ought to be coupled and ioyned together in vnitie […] to defend nature" (Bostocke 1585, Chapter fifth). These hidden affinities are, in Paracelsus's view, the "microcosmic forces" that "the common people regard as magical, witchcraft-related, [or] diabolical. All things of this kind are only *natural*" (Paracelsus 2008, 849, emphasis mine). It is very likely to ward off the possible charge that she is assisted by devilish powers that Helen clarifies that she is simply a maid: "I am a simple maid, and therein wealthiest / That I protest I simply am a maid" (Shakespeare 2019, II.iii.66-67). More particularly, the King's cure becomes part of a wider design that will allow her to attain a husband, thus joining 'like with like'. The girl is aware that, when "nature recognizes two people as similar, *likes*, the gap in fortune can be overcome so they can unite" (Shakespeare 2019, 145n). Helen thus entrusts herself to nature,

assisting the latter in the project of overcoming the distance between her, a 'baser star'[44], and Bertram, "a bright particular star":

> HELEN
> […] 'Twere all one
> That I should love a bright particular star
> And think to wed it, he is so above me.
> In his bright radiance and collateral light
> Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.
> (I.i.85-89)

However, a few lines below the maid argues that "[t]he fated sky / Gives us free scope" (213-14) and, in the role of a *ministra naturae*, she uses her art to foster nature's ability to unite like with like. The Shakespearean healer seems to act in the light of the Paracelsian tenet that "natural loue is the cause of perfection" (Bostocke 1585, Chapter fifth). As the Countess suggests, Helen's love for Bertram is "nature's", it "rightly belong[s]" to it, being the "seal of nature's truth"[45]. Furthermore, by relating "the King's disease" with her 'natural' attraction for Bertram and describing her love in astronomical terms, Helen reminds us of Paracelsus's definition of the art of medicine. The Swiss chymist writes that healing is a matter of "contemplating the stars together with medicine: warm to warm, cold against cold […]: for each man his woman, for each woman her man" (Paracelsus 2008, 197).

Helen's intimacy with nature's occult workings is highlighted also from a linguistic point of view. Gossett has noted that after the King of France claims that she is "without knowledge or *art*"[46], the girl's "language becomes incantatory" (Shakespeare 2019, 183n),

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[44] Helen: "That wishing well had not a body in't / Which might be felt, that we the poorer born, / Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes, / Might with effects of them follow our friends / And show what we alone must think, which never / Returns us thanks" (Shakespeare 2019, I.i.178-83).

[45] Countess: "If ever we are *nature's*, these are ours: this thorn / Doth to our rose of youth *rightly belong*. / […] It is the show and seal of *nature's truth*" (Shakespeare 2019, I.iii.126-27, 129, emphasis mine). See Gossett and Wilcox's introduction to their edition of *All's Well That Ends Well* (Shakespeare 2019, 40).

[46] King: "But what at full I know, thou knowst no part; / I knowing all my peril, thou no art" (II.i.130-31).

almost prophetic. Imitating the King's use of couplets, she reminds her reluctant patient that "great floods have flown / From simple sources, and great seas have dried / When miracles have by the greatest been denied" (II.i.137-39). It has been suggested that "early modern drama often foregrounds the woman healer as socially marginalised yet possessing an oracular nature and heightened spiritual and curative powers" (Healy 2017, 96-97). In her analysis of *Quercitan's Daughters Letters* and other documents attributed to female practitioners, Bayer observes that the woman alchemist, either as a real author or as a symbol of alchemical wisdom, is usually invested with the qualities of a prophetess (Bayer 2010, 173). A passage from Chiara Crisciani's seminal study on the connections between alchemy and prophecy is most pertinent to understand Helen's role as both prophetess and healer in Shakespeare's play:

> [I]f prophecy is knowledge, interpretation and annunciation of the future, but also and above all insight into the *occulta*, these features belong to the knowledge of the alchemists too. They must reach the deepest and most secret principles of nature. (Crisciani 2008, 22)

As we have seen, Paracelsian doctors, just like Hermetic, alchemical, and Neoplatonic philosophers, believed in the existence of hidden correspondences, or sympathies, between the microcosm and the macrocosm[47]. These *occultae qualitates*, otherwise known as signatures, would have been embedded in all things by God and could be accessed by the physician[48]. Therefore the alchemists considered that it was the heavens that determined which herbal, mineral, or metallic substances were in sympathy with a certain disease. Helen makes it clear that her healing treatment, handed down to her by her father, is in accord with the heavens:

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[47] "[S]eeing that all thinges doe hang together in one chayne […] & man is partell of that chaine, and *Mycrocosmus* hauing in it the properties of the great world spiritually, therefore there is in the greate worlde, that which is agreeable to the nature of man" (Bostocke 1585, Chapter fifth).

[48] "The mysteries of the firmament are revealed by the physician; to him the mysteries of nature are manifest" (Paracelsus 1979, 63).

HELEN
[…] his good receipt
Shall for my legacy be sanctified
By th' luckiest stars in heaven.
(Shakespeare 2019, I.iii.241-43)

Paracelsus actually teaches that "medicine lies in the will of the stars and is led and guided by the stars. […] The heavens must direct it for you. […] If you want to have them in the way you intend, you need favorable heavens" (Paracelsus 2008, 217). Helen clearly underlines the relation between her medicine and the *astra*. The so-called *astrum* "is the art of the wisdom of the heavens, this is what the physician should be" (173-75). Thus, the girl invites the King to trust the heavens: "Of heaven, not me, make an experiment" (Shakespeare 2019, II.i.152). In asserting that the luckiest stars will bless her remedy, the young healer is also foreshadowing that everything will indeed end *well*, having "well" both the meaning of "a state of good fortune" and of "sound in health; free or recovered from sickness of infirmity"[49]. Not surprisingly, the 'sacredness' of her art is repeatedly emphasised in the play. Just like Marina's physic is "sacred", so Helen is referred to as the "[v]ery hand of heaven" (Shakespeare 2019, II.iii.31) and her healing is described as a "showing of a heavenly effect in an earthly actor" (21). She actually defines herself as a humble minister of God, the great "finisher": "He that of greatest works is finisher / Oft does them by the weakest minister" (134-35)[50]. Moreover, by promising a treatment by a specified day and hour, Helen further highlights the correspondence between her cure and the macrocosmic forces of nature:

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[49]   See "well", *adj.*, definitions 1 and 5.a. (*Oxford English Dictionary* 1989, 20:112-13).

[50] Acting as a helper of God and healing the King by "[i]nspired merit" (Shakespeare 2019, II.i.146), Helen epitomises the definition of alchemy given by   Thomas Tymme in his dedication to Sir Charles Blunt: "This Phylosophy […] is not of that kind which tendeth to vanity and deceit, but rather to profit and to edification, inducing first the knowledge of God, & secondly the way to find out true medicine in his creatures" (Duchesne 1605, "To the right honorable, Sir Charles Blunt").

HELEN
[…] I'd venture
The well-lost life of mine on his grace's cure
By such a day, an hour.
(I.iii.244-46)

This echoes once again the Paracelsian claim that "God has created remedies against the diseases […] but He holds them back until the hour predestined for the patient. Only when the time has been fulfilled, and not before, does the course of nature and art set in" (Paracelsus 1979, 81-82).

A few lines pronounced by Helen are worth quoting in order to shed further light upon the role of iatrochemical medicine in the play and upon Shakespeare's familiarity with it:

HELEN
What is *infirm* from your *sound* parts shall fly,
Health shall live free, and *sickness* freely die.
(Shakespeare 2019, II.i.165-66, emphasis mine)

By pairing "infirm" with "sound", "health" with "sickness", the young lady suggests a process of chemical refinement, based on separating the pure from the impure: "There where diseases arise, there also can one find the roots of health. For health must grow from the same root as disease, and whither health goes, thither also disease must go" (Paracelsus 1979, 78)[51]. In a longer passage, the Swiss doctor discusses how health and disease struggle within the human body:

> *Contraria à contrariis curantur*: […] this is untrue, and it has never been the case in medicine. Instead [it is the case] that *arcanum* and disease are the *contraria*. [For] the *arcanum* is health and the disease is counter to health. These two things expel one another, each the other. They are the opposites that dispel one another, each of them the other, *with death* […]. The [true] art of expulsion requires that what is expelled should never return. (Paracelsus 2008, 157, emphasis mine).

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[51]   As Iyengar explains, "[c]hemical refinement could separate the germs of disease from the curative element within the material" (Iyengar 2014, 5).

Certainly, Helen's claim that "[h]ealth shall live free, and sickness freely *die*" (Shakespeare 2019, II.i.166, emphasis mine) acquires a specific significance if viewed from within a Paracelsian context. The very King of France laments that health (i.e. physical strength) and disease are battling in his body: "Nature and sickness / Debate it at their leisure" (I.ii.74-75)[52]. By allowing "the death of the King's disease" (I.i.21-22) and "his majesty's amendment" (11), Helen also demonstrates that there is no 'inaidable' state in nature and that medical art can lead nature to greater perfection[53]. More particularly, when she argues that "[w]hat is infirm from your sound parts *shall fly*" (II.i.165, emphasis mine), the Shakespearean heroine draws upon one of the central tenets of Paracelsian therapeutics, i.e. the idea that sickness is caused by external contagion rather than by an inner state of imbalance, as the Galenists claimed. According to iatrochemical physicians, disease was produced by *semina*, or "seeds", invading the human body from the outside:

> He is the verie Physitian that with his owne hande purgeth his medicines from their venim, and being so prepared with sharpe iudgement doeth applie them to their proper diseases, that *the seede of the disease* may bee pulled vp by the rootes. (Hester 1583, 9, emphasis mine)

Styling herself as an expert chymist[54], then, Helen highlights the exogenous origin of the King's disease. Paracelsus stresses that

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[52] Paracelsus writes that, "when a disease is in the body, all the healthy organs of the body have to fight against it. […] For a disease is the death of them all. Nature is aware of this; and for this reason it sets itself against the disease with all the force it can muster" (Paracelsus 2008, 443).

[53] Speaking of the late Gérard de Narbonne, Lafeu remarks that "He was skilful enough to have lived still, if knowledge could be set up against mortality" (Shakespeare 2019, I.i.27-29), thus introducing the topic of nature versus art. See Gossett and Wilcox's critical commentary in their edition of *All's Well That Ends Well* (Shakespeare 2019, 127n).

[54] Helen's cure presents all the typical elements of Paracelsian therapeutics: "Astronomy (knowledge of the macrocosm), virtue (the moral character of the healer and the power or strength of the purest form of a substance), alchemy (the chemical refinement of pure substances from nature), and natural

"there is no sickness against which some remedy has not been created and established, *to drive it out* and cure it" (Paracelsus 1979, 77, emphasis mine). Likewise, the King of France suggests that his malady is of an exogenous nature and that illness has 'besieged' his body:

> KING
> […] and yet my heart
> Will not confess he owes *the malady*
> *That doth my life besiege.*
> (Shakespeare 2019, II.i.8-10, emphasis mine)

Harris explains that for the Paracelsians "disease […] is not endogenous; it is an entity in its own right, whose origins lie outside the body in a foreign invader" (Harris 1998, 23). Arguably, the fact that the King of France and his lords discuss "warlike principles" (Shakespeare 2019, II.i.1) suggests a parallel between military activity and the King's condition, thus placing further emphasis upon the idea of disease as an enemy to be driven out[55]. Most significantly, the above-quoted lines pronounced by the King of France in Act II of the comedy recall a passage from King James's *Counterblaste to Tobacco* (1604). Espousing the Paracelsian tenet that disease is exogenous, the monarch stresses that sickness makes its "assault" upon such parts of the body that are weaker or less able to resist:

> For euen as a strong enemie, that inuades a towne or fortresse, although in his siege thereof, he doe belaie and compasse it round about, yet he makes his breach and entrie, at some one or few speciall parts thereof, which hee hath tried and found to bee weakest and least able to resist; so sickenesse doth make her particular assault, vpon such part or parts

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philosophy (experimental investigation of cures) provided the foundation for all Paracelsian cures" (Iyengar 2014, 267).

[55] Lord G. is hopeful that upon their return from the Florentine wars as "well-entered soldiers", the King will be healed: "'Tis our hope, sir, / After well-entered soldiers, to return / And find your grace in health" (Shakespeare 2019, II.i.5-7).

of our bodie, as are weakest and easiest to be ouercome by that sort of
disease. (James I 1604, sig. C2r/v)[56]

If considering that, as Gossett and Wilcox attest, *All's Well That Ends
Well* was composed early in James's reign, most probably between
late 1605 and early 1606 (Shakespeare 2019, 23), one can certainly
wonder to what extent the king's treatise, published in London in
1604, influenced Shakespeare's comedy. It should also be pointed
out that the exact nature of the King's malady in *All's Well That Ends
Well* is never revealed and that the healing is set off-stage, thus
highlighting the scene's 'occult' implications (Floyd-Wilson 2013,
37). Some scholars have assumed that the "fistula" (Shakespeare
2019, I.i.32) that affects the sovereign would have reminded
Jacobean audiences of plague diseases[57]. In early modern England,
a fistula was "an abscess or sore not unlike that caused by plague"
and "the Paracelsian writers had made fistula of noteworthy
importance as one of a group of disorders […] which like plague
were thought to be especially susceptible to chemical treatment"
(Stensgaard 1972, 174). Lafeu actually highlights the notoriety of the
disease in a dialogue with Bertram: "I would it were not notorious"
(Shakespeare 2019, I.i.34)[58].

Further evidence for an alchemical reading of the King's cure is
offered by Lord Lafeu. The latter describes Helen as the "medicine"
that is able to restore life and focuses on the death-resurrection
motif that is central in alchemy:

> Lafeu
> […] I have seen a medicine
> That's able to *breathe life into a stone*,
> Quicken a rock and make you dance canary
> With sprightly fire and motion; whose simple touch

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[56] For a study of the presence of Paracelsian issues in King James's treatise against
tobacco, see Zamparo 2022.

[57] On the medical concept of 'fistula', see Gossett and Wilcox's critical commentary
to *All's Well That Ends Well* (Shakespeare 2019, 128n) and Iyengar 2014, 137-39.

[58] The Paracelsian context of the play is further reinforced if taking into account
that the outbursts of epidemic diseases such as syphilis and the bubonic plague
(which hit London in 1603) undermined the general faith in Galenism, which
could not account for the transmission of infectious illnesses (Harris 2004, 15).

Is powerful to araise King Pépin […].
(II.i.70-74, emphasis mine)

It will be remembered that in alchemical writing the term "stone" is synonymous with "king". Lafeu's lines therefore allude to the stage of 'fixation'. In the alchemical language, the tincture (or elixir) is produced out of a process, known as *fixatio*, which presupposes the reintegration of the volatile spirit within the purified body (Abraham 1998, 78). According to the alchemists, the spirit of life flies from the body during the stage of *nigredo* and descends again at the end of the alchemical process. Only then life is restored and the chemical king is healed. This is the divine breath and universal spirit that vivifies all bodies:

> [Nature] is not visible, though it operates visibly; for it is simply a volatile spirit, fulfilling its office in bodies, and animated by the universal spirit – the divine breath, the central and universal fire, which vivifies all things that exist. (Paracelsus 1894, 1:289)

Helen's alchemical and Paracelsian art, "able to breathe life into a stone", brings about the complete restoration of the King. As the French sovereign remarks, "she has *raised* me from my sickly bed" (Shakespeare 2019, II.iii.111, emphasis mine), thus reiterating those images of resurrection that recur in the play and attributing to Helen the qualities of the *filius philosophorum* who transforms and perfects matter[59]. The verb "to raise" actually appears in alchemical literature to indicate the process through which matter "is raised to a higher degree of purity and potency" (Abraham 1998, 72) and thus becomes the resurrected body of the philosopher's stone. In his poem "Resurrection, Imperfect", John Donne describes the crucifixion of Christ in alchemical terms, using the verb "to raise" in order to indicate the ascent towards the final stage of the *opus alchymicum*, the so-called *rubedo*, which is regarded as a rebirth, or resurrection, of matter: "He was all gold when he lay down, but *rose*

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[59] On the play's images of resurrection, see Gossett and Wilcox's critical commentary to *All's Well That Ends Well* (Shakespeare 2019, 178n). In alchemy, the term "stone" refers both to the elixir that cures all diseases and to the 'king' or perfected matter (Abraham 1998, 110 and 145-48).

/ All tincture" (Donne 1986, 328, lines 13-14, emphasis mine). In Shakespeare's comedy, the King of France is 'raised', exalted, purified, and transmuted, in the same way as Helen is 'raised' in status. In asking his "preserver" (Shakespeare 2019, II.iii.48) to sit by his side, the King highlights Helen's 'ennoblement': "Onstage this arrangement creates a strong visual confirmation of Helen's advance in rank" since "normally only a queen sat by a king" (Shakespeare 2019, 198n). The girl has been "ennobled" from her "base" state, as Bertram observes expressing his dissent:

> BERTRAM
> […] I find that she, which late
> Was in my *nobler* thoughts most *base*, is now
> The praised of the King who, so *ennobled*,
> Is as 'twere born so.
> (II.iii.171-74, emphasis mine)

Just like in alchemy the transformation of base matter always corresponds to the adept's symbolical metamorphosis, so the healing of the King allows Helen to raise to a higher state of perfection, culminating in the marriage with Bertram and in the accomplishment of her homeopathic vision of reality and of nature, i.e. "[t]o join like likes, and kiss like native things" (I.i.219)[60]. "In administering medicine" – Paracelsus writes – "we must always set entity against entity, so that each becomes in a sense the wife or husband of the other" (Paracelsus 1979, 96). Furthermore, Helen's claim that "[o]ur remedies oft in ourselves do lie" (Shakespeare 2019, I.i.212) resonates with the alchemical idea that nature always strives to achieve its highest degree of perfection and that "by art

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[60]   As it has been noted, "[w]hile the first half of the play is decidedly medical, the second half is decidedly social, driven as it is by Bertram's refusal of Helena on the basis of social class. And indeed, poor female medical practitioners were treated in a way wholly different from their aristocratic counterparts" (Pettigrew 2007, 48). Importantly, both halves of the play (which are tied together by the King's healing) are part of Helen's project to bring about the marriage with Bertram and to accomplish her 'metamorphosis' into a wife (see Shakespeare 2019, 109). She actually leaves Roussillon and stages the 'bed-trick' scene with the aim to (as she says) "*perfect* mine intents" (IV.iv.4, emphasis mine).

one affords assistance to nature" (Trismosin 2019, 146)[61]. It is not a matter of chance that almost at the end of the play the King of France addresses "Plutus himself / That knows the tinct and multiplying medicine" (Shakespeare 2019, V.iii.101-2). Given that the alchemical term "tincture" also has the meaning of "spiritual 'signature'" (Iyengar 2014, 337), it can be argued that the kind of therapeutic magic that restores the King to health rests upon Paracelsian and alchemical tenets according to which the cosmos was made of hidden harmonies that the female healer could grasp in view of her connection with nature. Helen, just like Marina and Paulina, cooperates "[w]ith great creating Nature" (Shakespeare 2010, IV.iv.88) and shows how "health consisteth in vnitie and agreement" (Bostocke 1585, Chapter fifth).

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[61] Aware of the fact that her attraction for Bertram stems from a natural affinity, Helen knows that she has the power to overcome the social distance between them through her own agency and 'art', thus 'completing' nature's work. At the core of Paracelsian thought is the idea that "the human being is involved in the act of completing nature" and that the individual plays the "alchemical role of perfecting and unfolding creation" (Moran 2022). Moran remarks that this also worked in a social way for Paracelsus, who extended his gigantic program not only to the material but also to the social world: "overall there is a definite sense of being with people in order to reform or change the situation of their lives as well as the material world around them" (Moran 2022). It is apparent that Shakespeare's version of Boccaccio's novella acquired a new relevance with the advent of Paracelsianism in early modern England.

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REVIEWS

A Bibliographical Review of the Italian Academic Production on Shakespeare's History Plays (2000-2022): A Data-Based Approach

Remo Appolloni

1. Introduction

It is well-known how problematic and crucial it is to trace an extensive and definite profile of all the scientific publications related to authors, subjects and disciplines (Boote and Beile 2005). In the past years, most of the existing bibliographical reviews were written thanks to meticulous research activities in libraries or via the scrutiny of references reported in monographs, research papers, etc. However, literature and bibliographic reviews have increasingly required the support of digital and online resources in order to maximize efficiency (O'Brien and Mc Guckin 2016), especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Close and attentive reading still remains a crucial approach in producing a comprehensive bibliographic profile of the academic production in a specific discipline. The critical evaluation of references is an additional practice for scholars, precisely when the aim of the analysis is to advance new perspectives in the examined area (Boote and Beile 2005) or to fill an existing gap in the literature. This is particularly true for authors like Shakespeare, who elicit continuous interest and thus require constant updating and revision of the relevant academic production.

Against this backdrop, it may be almost impossible to outline an exhaustive review – which is here intended as a "systematic literature review" (Booth, Sutton and Papaioannou 2016) of the necessary evidence – of all the academic publications related to Shakespeare (both Italian and international). Furthermore, most of the results obtained from a meticulous online search could turn out to be only marginally related to a specific field, in this case Italian academic publications regarding Shakespeare's history plays. Additionally, the entire production of Shakespeare is largely referred to in many academic papers in the broader fields of linguistics, literature and cultural studies. However, and more interestingly, scholars have also focused on history plays utilizing new, non-literary approaches, as for example in business studies, with Olivier's work on the leadership of Henry V (translated into Italian in 2005); or in political studies, Krippendorff's work on the political Shakespeare in the history plays (translated into Italian in 2005)[1]. This broad focus on Shakespeare may create considerable problems in distinguishing between academic productions specifically devoted to his works and those which merely use Shakespeare as a reference to focus on different topics.

The main attempt of this paper is thus to provide the reader with an extensive, though far from definite, overview of Italian academic publications on Shakespeare's history plays and of their new translations (or new editions of translations) that have appeared in Italy in the last twenty years: the reference period here considered goes from 2000 to 2022. Firstly, this review does not aim to critically evaluate or offer a broad perspective on one or all of the history plays, nor does it attempt to critically evaluate the academic publications themselves. The article focuses instead on a critical presentation of the results collected from the examination of the relevant bibliographical resources available online. Secondly, this is an attempt to offer a possible, systematic digital approach to a bibliographical review both from quantitative and qualitative perspectives. This focus on a preliminary search via web-based tools does not aim to replace traditional academic approaches, but

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[1]   See section 3.2 for the entire references.

has been developed as a way to review the new trends of web-based research, statistical analysis and pattern recognition.

2. Methods and Materials

All the collected results will regard the following histories (Shakespeare 2017, ix-x): *The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster (2 Henry VI)*, 1590-1591; *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York and the Good King Henry VI (3 Henry VI)*, 1591; *The First Part of Henry VI*, 1592; *The Tragedy of King Richard III*, 1592-1593; *The Reign of King Edward III*, 1592-1593; *The Tragedy of King Richard II*, 1595; *The Life and Death of King John*, 1596; *The History of Henry IV (The First Part)*, 1596-1597; *The Second Part of Henry IV*, 1597-1598; *The Life of Henry V*, 1598-1599; *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, 1603-1604; *All Is True (Henry VIII)*, 1613.

This bibliographical profile was compiled thanks to a combination of databases available online and reference sources in the field. In the last few years, in fact, research articles and monographs have benefitted from a wider visibility in the scientific community worldwide thanks to the Internet, especially when compared to the examinations conducted via direct reading of specialized journals (Hyland and Zhou 2022; Hsin, Cheng and Tsai 2016); consequently, scholars have experienced a higher and more efficient searchability of the data they require. Titles have proved to be crucial in terms of the key information provided when scanning a dataset and collecting pertinent results (Hsin, Cheng and Tsai 2016; Hyland and Zhou 2022). A list of works has been collected thanks to this preliminary search, which aims to be as unbiased and representative as possible of the Italian scientific debate in the period under scrutiny.

Following these preliminary assumptions, two major categories of resources were adopted: searchable databases and specialized publications in the field. Four popular resources for scholars were finally chosen: as for searchable databases, Google Scholar and the OPAC SBN; as for specialized publications, *Memoria di Shakespeare. A Journal of Shakespearean Studies* and Marenco's *Drammi storici* (Shakespeare 2017). All the resources were available online, which

helped enormously in the attempt to answer the two research questions formulated above.

Expected results were hypothesized, and inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to improve the examination of the massive set of results received from the online-based search of the datasets. As regards the type of texts, research articles and papers, volume contributions and chapters, and PhD dissertations were included in the results, in that they are research-oriented primary sources; on the other hand, conference abstracts[2], reviews, manuals and BA or MA theses were excluded, since they are not sufficiently data-oriented to be here considered as primary sources. With regard to the content of the publications, specialized works on Shakespeare's histories were obviously included; whereas contributions offering mere references to Shakespeare's histories were excluded from the results analysed in this review, since non-specific works were considered irrelevant to a comprehensive profile of the Italian academic debate in this field. In particular, several results on other Shakespeare plays appeared among the outcomes produced by the web-based examination conducted via Google Scholar, though focused on the history plays: those results were excluded as non-relevant. With particular reference to academic databases available online, titles, abstracts, and meta-descriptions had to be consistent with the keywords selected for the purpose of the specific search. If not, they were excluded (e.g. meta-descriptions highlighting only "Shakespeare" as a keyword, and hence not displaying the specific reference to the play searched, are not presumed to be a specialized contribution).

In the first phase, research was conducted via the Google Scholar[3] search engine which is commonly adopted to survey the existing literature in a scientific field by means of selected and searchable keywords. Investigating online databases containing titles and citations of scientific publications to retrieve prospective relevant results is a well-established academic practice (Hyland

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[2] It is here necessary to mention the papers presented during the Shakespeare Permanent Seminar at Sapienza University of Rome in 2021 on the language and performance of Shakespeare's history plays. See further details of the seminar at https://web.uniroma1.it/spss/en/home.

[3] Last access 15 November 2022.

and Zhou 2022). In compliance with the research questions here formulated, a number of filters were applied to narrow the dataset returned by Google Scholar: the period, which was established from 2000 to 2022; the language of the pages to be returned was set as "Italian", so that only academic publications published in Italy were returned, regardless of the language of publication; and citations were included in the dataset[4]. This increased the opportunity to examine papers which were not immediately available online but were cited in online-based works. Following this, the search engine bar was interrogated based on a selection of keywords[5] which had to be distinguished into two specific categories: general/comprehensive and specific/play-oriented, displayed in Table 1:

Table 1: Keywords selection (Google Scholar-based preliminary examination).

Categories	Selected keywords
GENERAL/ COMPREHENSIVE	"Shakespeare" AND "histories"
	"Shakespeare" AND "history plays"
	"Shakespeare" AND "history drama"
	"Shakespeare" AND "drammi storici"
SPECIFIC/ PLAY-ORIENTED	"Shakespeare" AND "Henry VI"
	"Shakespeare" AND "Richard III"
	"Shakespeare" AND "Edward III"
	"Shakespeare" AND "Richard II"
	"Shakespeare" AND "King John"
	"Shakespeare" AND "Henry IV"
	"Shakespeare" AND "Henry V"
	"Shakespeare" AND "Sir Thomas More"
	"Shakespeare" AND "Henry VIII"

The preliminary search was conducted selecting some general keywords in order to obtain a comprehensive dataset of results related to history plays, and then to outline an initial picture of the relevant works available online; secondly, specific plays were searched to confirm or add further results to the list. In both cases,

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[4] Patents were excluded from the dataset, for they are not of interest for the purposes of this review.

[5] Keywords were provided in inverted commas to obtain results with the specific words being matched both in titles and in meta-descriptions; and the Boolean operator "AND" was used to obtain as many results having both the keywords as possible.

the results were examined based on the correspondence between the title of the paper and the consistency with the research questions here to be answered. With particular reference to the specific/play-oriented category, it was not necessary to replicate the process with the Italian equivalent of names, for the search engine automatically returns related or equivalent samples in Italian. When the meta-description of the reference provided by Google Scholar did not include at least one of the keywords chosen for the search, the result was not opened for further investigation; additionally, if the meta-description displayed the content of the publication related to a more general background than the specific critical focus required, the result was ignored. All the meta-descriptions following the titles which appeared as possibly relevant were evaluated to establish pertinence with the research questions.

The second phase consisted in the exploration of *Memoria di Shakespeare*[6], an open access Italian journal devoted to Shakespearean studies[7]. Part of the results published in the journal were collected through the investigation carried out via Google Scholar (e.g. those published in the years 2009 and 2014, both available online). However, the majority of results (approximately 67% of the titles retrieved from the journal's publications) were obtained via the online search engine DiscoverySapienza[8] providing both internal and external resources which can be retrieved through keywords on the library system of Sapienza University of Rome as well as journals, datasets, and PhD theses[9]. All the pertinent results were reached through a combination of the keyword-based approach and a close reading of the abstracts and/or introductions of the related works.

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[6]   Last access 28 May 2022.

[7]   The journal was published in print until 2012, then as a digital journal available online at https://rosa.uniroma1.it/rosa03/memoria_di_shakespeare. The catalogue related to the printed versions published up to 2012 is still available via the electronic resources provided by Sapienza University of Rome.

[8]   Last access 28 May 2022.

[9]   The catalogue is available online at the following website: https://eds.s.ebscohost.com/eds/search/basic?vid=0&sid=4f87c794-2b94-46ca-bb9c-f4669d9b94f2%40redis.

This third phase involved consulting academic monographs, in order to perfect the collection of data conducted via web-based sources. One useful reference text, the most recent and updated critical collection of Shakespeare's history plays translated into Italian, is Marenco's *Drammi storici* (Shakespeare 2017). This publication presents each history play in three major sections: a parallel corpus of history plays (both the Italian translation and the source text are provided), an introductory note on each play (with salient information on the text, original publication, transmission, reception, main sources, and a critical overview), and key references (which include the Italian translation and new translations of the same play). The volume thus offered valuable bibliographical suggestions in the introductions and several notes which accompany the Italian translation of each history play[10]. These additional references regarded critical literature on Shakespeare's history plays and new translations published in the period 2000-2017, and were thus included in the dataset.

The list of Italian translations of Shakespeare's histories was expanded thanks to an online search of the OPAC SBN[11]. The "advanced search" settings available in the online version of the catalogue were adjusted in order to search the database according to specific criteria: in this particular case, both keywords and object, and also filters, e.g. years of publication (setting the exact time frame), as well as the language and the country where the work was published.

Lastly, all the pertinent titles extracted from the different sources were reported in an Excel[12] file sheet in order to properly manage the available data, aggregating quantitative data and preparing qualitative data.

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[10] See Shakespeare 2017, l-lv, 23-25, 305-7, 567-69, 804-5, 1138-39, 1359-61, 1595-97, 1810-11, 2059-61, 2329-31, 2589-91, 2839-41.

[11] The Online Public Access Catalogue of the National Library System (https://opac.sbn.it). Last access 15 November 2022.

[12] Version 2210, build 157226.20174.

3. Data

3.1. Quantitative Data

This first section attempts to provisionally answer the second research question, that is to prove how adequate digital and online resources may be to evaluate the reference scenario here studied.

In order to offer a general picture of the quantitative data collected through the bibliographic examination of the area of interest, four major categories were taken into consideration: the reference period and the related dissemination of the academic publications on Shakespeare's histories here investigated; the main sources from which the results were obtained (as described in *2. Methods and Materials*) to critically evaluate major contributions beyond the mere figures reported; the typology of texts produced in the last twenty years, aiming to disseminate critical perspectives in the Italian academic scenario as well as to translate or retranslate Shakespeare's history plays; and the distribution of the single history plays over all of the publications retrieved in this examination. This approach in particular allowed an analysis of which history play received most attention in the Italian academic context.
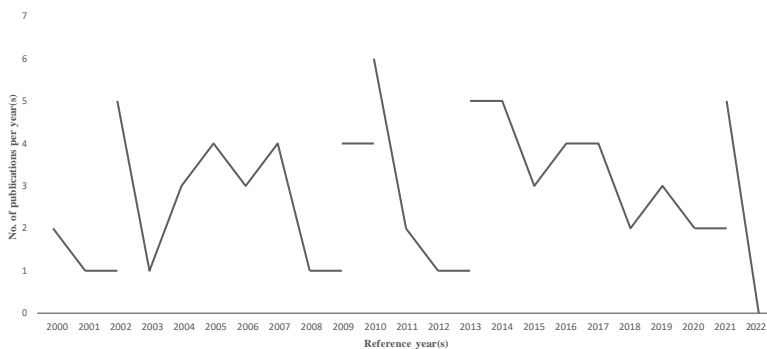

 Fig. 1: The Italian academic production on Shakespeare's histories between 2000-2022.

The line graph (Fig. 1) illustrates the number of the Italian academic publications regarding Shakespeare's histories which are dispersed in the defined period between the years 2000 and 2022. A first glance at the diagram reveals four major peaks equally reached in both decades; however, four troughs were immediately experienced, accordingly. This is to say that a generally balanced trend is observable, since continuous fluctuations are constantly visible throughout the period. According to the findings, the most productive years were those between 2008 and early 2014, when approximately 35% of the academic works were published: the number of publications soared dramatically in the first couple of years (11 academic works were produced), but then plummeted drastically in the following years up to 2012, when they started growing steadily before stabilizing between 2013 and 2014 (10 works published). Unexpectedly, the peak year which can here be observed is not 2016: the four hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's death witnessed an enormous contribution of international academic publications (Holland 2017). However, as the graph shows, from 2021 onwards the trend has presumably suffered from a new decrease in the number of publications (or they may have simply not yet appeared online). To sum up, research activity on Shakespeare's histories in Italy has been regularly conducted in the last two decades; and although the first decade appears as generally negative, this may depend on the fact that academic works published in the first years of the millennium have yet to be digitalized: it is important to consider the lower level of searchability of resources in that period.
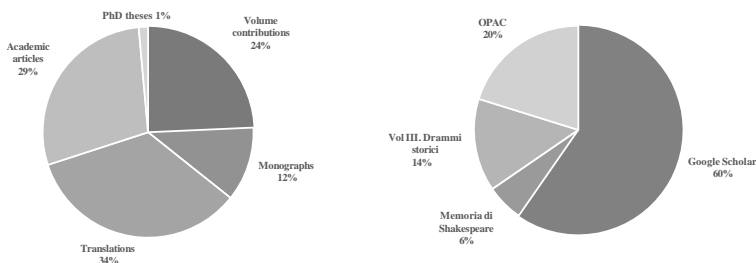

Fig. 2: Text-types and sources of the Italian academic production on Shakespeare's histories between 2000-2022.

The two pie charts (Fig. 2) display the number of sources which mostly contributed to the retrieval of the academic titles published in Italy in the reference period, and the typology of texts researchers mainly opted for. Two types of data are here presented: quantitative data in the form of percentages and qualitative data in the form of selected categories. From a general perspective, it is evident that Google Scholar provided most of the data collected in this analysis: almost two third of the titles were retrieved via this online-based scrutiny (i.e. 60%); and most of the Italian academic activity appears to be devoted to the translation of Shakespeare's history plays (i.e. just over 30%). Nevertheless, it is arguable that the discrete data related to translations may not be representative of a general trend reflecting overall academic research activity. All the other data have to be aggregated in order to display a more realistic picture of the size of the research activity conducted in Italy on Shakespeare's histories: in reality, nearly 70% of the titles collected are from text-types devoted to academic writing rather than translation (although a small portion of scholars appeared to work both on translations and on related academic works[13]). To summarize, online sources were of paramount importance in the collection of a preliminary dataset, but further investigation, i.e. a close-reading approach, is generally required to establish the significance of the data collected.

Table 2: Number of publications specifically devoted to a play or combination of plays.

History play(s)	Academic work(s)	Translation(s)	TOT.
King John	4	2	6
Edward III	0	1	1
Richard II	12	4	16
Henry IV	9	4	13
Henry V	8	7	15
Henry VI	3	0	3
Richard III	4	4	8
Henry VIII	4	0	4
Thomas More	2	1	3
Selected historical plays	5	0	5
All the historical plays	1	0	1

[13] For example, Borgogni worked on the critical note and on the translation of *Henry VI* (Shakespeare 2017, 5-25) and published a paper on the trilogy of *Henry VI* in 2021 (see section 3.2 for the entire reference).

This last paragraph will be focused on a few specific figures of the history plays which received major attention in the Italian academic scenario devoted to Shakespeare (Table 2). Analyzing the dissemination of the individual plays here is problematic, for some of them do not appear singularly in the academic paper or monograph under review: *Henry IV* and *Henry V* were occasionally studied together[14] as well as *Henry V* and *Richard II*[15]. On the whole, *Richard II*, *Henry IV* and *Henry V* received most of the attention of scholars in the last two decades (i.e. 22%, 19% and 17% of the research activities published in proper academic text-types, respectively); however, the situation is similar in the translations of the same plays, though not totally equivalent (i.e. 17%, 17% and 30% of the selected translations, respectively). This may lead us to formulate the hypothesis that, despite the intersections between academic writing and translation, scholars may differ in the focus devoted to the history plays.

In conclusion, from this preliminary attempt to attribute conceptual significance to the amount of figures calculated from the occurrences collected, it is clear that the period between 2000 and 2010 requires a more detailed scrutiny by hand. The overall picture may not be representative when relying only on the many citations and bibliographical references available via online databases.

3.2. Qualitative Data

This section will present the titles collected during the online examination; they are here presented in the form of qualitative data. The results are here presented in different sub-sections according to text typology: intersections among different plays in the same academic works made it expedient to adopt the following division.

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[14] For example, Melchiori 2000; Arnett Melchiori 2016; Manca 2018 (see section 3.2 for the entire references).

[15] For example, Simonetta 2009 and 2014; Elam 2019 (see section 3.2 for the entire references).

i(a). Translations of the history plays:
G. Baldini, ed. and trans., *Enrico IV (Parte I-II)*, Rizzoli 2002; G. Baldini, ed. and trans., *Riccardo II*, Rizzoli 2002; A. Lombardo, ed. and trans., *Re Giovanni*, Newton Compton 2004; A. Cozza, ed. and trans., *Riccardo II*, Garzanti 2005; M. D'Amico, ed. and trans., *Re Enrico IV e Amleto*, Dalai Editore 2005; A. Cozza, ed. and trans., *Enrico V*, Garzanti 2006; A. Cozza, ed. and trans., *Enrico VIII*, Garzanti 2010; M. Bacigalupo, ed. and trans., *Enrico IV. Prima parte*, Garzanti 2010; M. Bacigalupo, ed. and trans., *Enrico IV. Parte seconda*, Garzanti 2010; P. Bertinetti, ed. and trans., *Riccardo III*, Einaudi 2011; M. D'Amico, ed. and trans., *Re Enrico IV e Amleto*, Dalai Editore 2013, reprint; E. Rialti, ed. and trans., *Tommaso Moro*, Lindau 2014; S. Payne, ed., and A. Serpieri, trans., *Riccardo II*, Marsilio 2014; V. Gabrieli, ed. and trans., *Riccardo III*, Garzanti 2015; M. Luzi, ed. and trans., *Riccardo II*, SE 2019; S. Quasimodo, ed. and trans., *Riccardo III*, Mondadori 2019; S. Sabbadini, ed. and trans., *Re Giovanni*, Garzanti 2020; D. Angeli, ed. and trans., *La tragedia di Re Riccardo II*, Saga Egmont 2021; C. Pagetti, ed. and trans., *Enrico VI. Parte prima*, Garzanti 2021; C. Pagetti, ed. and trans., *Enrico IV. Parte seconda*, Garzanti 2021; C. Pagetti, ed. and trans., *Enrico IV. Parte terza*, Garzanti 2021.

i(b). Translations of works on the history plays:
E. Krippendorff, *Shakespeare politico. Drammi storici, drammi romani, tragedie*, trans. R. Benatti and F. Materzanini, Fazi Editore 2005; R. Olivier, *Enrico V: Lezioni di leadership. Gli insegnamenti del più grande leader shakespeariano*, trans. F. Saulini, Fazi Editore 2005; W. H. Auden, *Lezioni su Shakespeare*, trans. G. Luciani, Adelphi 2006.

ii. Monographs:
A. Serpieri, *Polifonia shakespeariana*, Bulzoni 2002; M. D'Amico, *Scena e parola in Shakespeare*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura 2007; P. Virgili, *Riccardo III. Un ritratto*, ed. R. Ruggeri, QuattroVenti 2007; S. Simonetta, *Un regno per palcoscenico. La messa in scena della regalità medievale nel teatro di Shakespeare*, CUEM 2009; L. Innocenti, *La scena trasformata. Adattamenti neoclassici di Shakespeare*, Pacini 2010; S. Simonetta, *Lo scettro in scena. Rappresentazione e morte dell'idea di monarchia per diritto divino nei "drammi sulla regalità" di Shakespeare*,

Unicopli 2014; M. Tempera, ed., *Riccardo II dal testo alla scena*, Emil di Odoya 2015.

iii. Volume contributions:

P. Bertinetti, "Introduzione", in *Riccardo III*, Einaudi 2002; M. Mosca, "Note al testo", in *Riccardo III*, Einaudi 2002; J. Roe, "Shakespeare's *Henry V*: The Prince and Cruelty", in *Una civile conversazione. Lo scambio letterario e culturale anglo-italiano nel Rinascimento*, ed. K. Elam and F. Cioni, CLUEB 2003; A. Vescovi, "A Journeyman to Grief. L'idea di viaggio in *Enrico IV* ed *Enrico V*", in *To Go or Not to Go? Catching the Moving Shakespeare*, ed. Luisa Camaiora, ISU Università Cattolica 2004; D. Montini, "Tradurre Shakespeare per gli inglesi. *Henry V* di Aaron Hill", in *Aula VI. A lezione da Agostino Lombardo*, ed. Biancamaria Pisapia, Bulzoni 2006; A. Lombardo, "Riscoperta di Re Giovanni", in *Cronache e critiche teatrali, 1971-1977*, ed. G. Melchiori and F. Luppi, Bulzoni 2007; C. Dente, "Da Shakespeare a lezione di lingua", in *Threads in the Complex Fabric of Language*, ed. M. Bertuccelli, A. Bertacca and S. Bruti, Felici 2008; A. Leonardi, "Fiere in corpi umani. Shakespeare nella giungla dei Plantageneti", in *Raccontare la storia. Realtà e finzione nella letteratura europea dal Rinascimento all'età contemporanea*, ed. S. Bronzini, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura 2009; A. Anzi, "Simboli, allegorie e *immaginatio* medioevale in *Re Giovanni* di William Shakespeare", in *Studi sul teatro in Europa in onore di Mariangela Mazzocchi Doglio*, ed. P. Bosisio, Bulzoni 2010; M. Spicci, "Retorica del corpo in *Re Giovanni* di William Shakespeare", in *Studi sul teatro in Europa in onore di Mariangela Mazzocchi Doglio*, ed.
P. Bosisio, Bulzoni 2010; A. Tauro, "Quando il personale si incrocia col politico. La figura del favorito regio in *Edward II* e *Richard II*", in *Commedia e dintorni*, ed. A. Accardi and S. Pezzini, Felici 2013; P. Caponi, "Shakespeare al buio. *Riccardo II* ai microfoni della radio italiana", in *Riccardo II dal testo alla scena*, ed. M. Tempera, Emil di Odoya 2015; B. Arnett Melchiori, "Mistress Quickly", in *Shakespeariana*, ed. C. De Petris and F. Luppi, Bulzoni 2016; G. Restivo, "Paradigmi costituzionali, nazione e legge nell'*Enriade* di Shakespeare. Nuove prospettive storiche", in *Diritto e letterature a confronto. Paradigmi, processi, transizioni*, ed. M. C. Foi, Edizioni Università di Trieste 2016; R. Ciocca, "Nota introduttiva,

traduzione e note", in *I drammi storici*, vol. 3 of *Tutte le opere*, ed. F. Marenco, Bompiani 2017[16]; D. Borgogni, "Metadiscorsi shakespeariani. La storia nella trilogia di Enrico VI", in *23 aprile 1616. Cervantes e Shakespeare diventano immortali*, ed. F Marenco and A. Ruffinatto, Il Mulino 2017; D. Borgogni, "'The Greatest Miracle That E'er Ye Wrought'. Creatività e 'artigianalità' nella trilogia di *Enrico VI* e in *Cimbelino*", in *William Shakespeare artigiano e artista. In margine a un'edizione di tutte le opere*, ed. F. Marenco, Il Mulino 2021.

iv. Academic articles:

G. Melchiori, "Hal's Unrestrained Loose Companions", *Memoria di Shakespeare* 1 (2000); K. Elam, "'Fat Falstaff Hath a Great Scene'. Concerto grosso per voce, corpo e coro", *Memoria di Shakespeare* 1 (2000); D. Montini, "*Henry VIII* e la scena della memoria", *Memoria di Shakespeare* 2 (2001); S. Simonetta, "I due corpi di Sir John Falstaff. La metafora stato/corpo umano nei drammi politici di Shakespeare", in *Dianoia. Annali di storia della filosofia* 12 (2007); G. Giardina, "Il problema testuale in Shakespeare *King Henry V* 2, 3, 18", in *Vichiana. Rassegna di studi filologici e storici del mondo classico* 11 (2009); G. Pascucci, "Authorship e strumenti informatici. Il caso di *All Is True*", *Memoria di Shakespeare* 7 (2009); D. Provenzano, "'Sometimes Am I a King'. *Riccardo II*: Un viaggio da re ad uomo", *Lingue e Linguaggi* 5 (2011); P. Pepe, "Dalla terra desolata al paradiso riconquistato. Riflessione e rivelazione in *Richard II*", *Testi e linguaggi* 6 (2012); N. Caputo, "Figli e… padri 'prodighi' in William Shakespeare", *Studium* 109 (2013); C. Catà, "Raccontando 'tristi storie della morte dei re'. Testo, contesto e rappresentazioni del *Riccardo II* di Shakespeare", *Testi e linguaggi* 7 (2013); M. Del Canuto, "Shakespeare or not Shakespeare. Il caso del manoscritto di *Sir Thomas More* all'alba del Novecento", *Rivista di letterature moderne e comparate* 66 (2013); A. Fassò, "I favoriti della Luna: Enrico V cavaliere", *Quaderni di filologia romanza* 22 (2014); E. Ferrario, "Tempo e sovranità. Note a *Richard II*", *Memoria di Shakespeare. A Journal of Shakespearean Studies* 1 (2014); R. Camerlingo, "Machiavelli a Oxford. Guerra e teatro da Gentili a Shakespeare",

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[16] This contribution on *King John* is here reported for appearing among the results obtained from the investigation conducted via Google Scholar.

in *Rinascimento* 56 (2016); C. Gallo, "La storia al tempo della politica. Le produzioni teatrali di *Tutto è vero (Enrico VIII)* nel Novecento", *Iperstoria* 8 (2016); V. Del Gaudio, "Sulle tracce di Riccardo. L'immaginario teatrale del male tra teatro del sangue e teatro della malattia", *Im@go: A Journal of the Social Imaginary* 9 (2017); C. Calvo, "Shakespeare and the Edwardian Turn of Mind: Textual Poaching and Mis-citation", *Textus* 3 (2018); E. Manca, "Eteroglossia e prospettiva nella ricostruzione degli eventi storici. Le strategie degli *Historical Plays* di Shakespeare e della stampa odierna", *Lingue e Linguaggi* 27 (2018); K. Elam, "Falstaff as *Vanitas*", *Memoria di Shakespeare. A Journal of Shakespearean Studies* 6 (2019); M. Sabbatino, "*Enrico IV* o l'apologo della follia", *Rivista di letteratura teatrale* 13 (2020).

v. PhD dissertations:
P. V. Colombo, "Giulio Cesare, 'specchio' della crisi? Sulla fortuna del *Julius Caesar* di Shakespeare nel teatro italiano dal 1949 a oggi", Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore 2015, https://tesionline.unicatt.it/handle/10280/6168 2015.

As previously claimed, the massive academic production on Shakespeare required criteria to be properly selected in the specific area of this review. Although excluded from the dataset, a few titles demanded a brief mention in this review. This was particularly true for the several occurrences appeared in the online-based examination of the titles made via Google Scholar.

vi. Manuals:
P. Bertinetti, ed., *Dalle origini al Settecento*, vol. 1 of *Storia della letteratura inglese*, Einaudi 2000; K. Elam and M. Crisafulli, eds., *Manuale di letteratura e cultura inglese*, Bononia University Press 2009; F. Marcucci, *Shakespeare*, vol. 2 of *Storia della letteratura inglese*, LED 2021.

vii. Graduation theses:
C. Latella, "Comunicare Shakespeare. Gli adattamenti cinematografici del *Richard III*", University of Naples L'Orientale 2002/2003; D. Matitieri, "*Henry V* dal testo di Shakespeare alla

trascrizione filmica. Laurence Olivier e Kenneth Branagh", University of Rome Tor Vergata 2003/2004; M. Erinni, "The Analysis of the Filmic Adaptations of Shakespeare History Dramas", University of Ca' Foscari, Venice, 2011/2012; G. Coviello, "L'impronta di Shakespeare in *Edward III*. Il potere della malinconia nell'episodio della contessa", University of Naples Federico II 2012/2013; G. Nobili, "Un caso di adattamento delle *histories* shakespeareane. *The History of Richard the Second* by Nahum Tate", Sapienza University of Rome 2012/2013; E. Mazzoni, "Le dinamiche del complotto in alcuni drammi storici di Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, *Richard II* e *Henry IV*", University of Pisa 2014/2015.

4. Conclusion

The data collected reveals that in the past twenty years the period spanning 2008-2014 was the most productive in Italy in terms of academic publications on Shakespeare's history plays, although the international contribution to the academic production on Shakespeare peaked in 2016. The Italian academic publications were mainly devoted to academic writing rather than translating (or retranslating) Shakespeare's histories and reserved most attention to the following plays: *Richard II*, *Henry IV* and *Henry V*.

The level of searchability of the resources examined has shown that a more extensive investigation by hand may yield interesting additional results: this is particularly true for the first decade examined, since most of the publications may not have been digitalized yet (approximately four fifths of the results were in fact collected online). In this sense, a digital approach to scholarly literature may be useful in terms of efficiency, but more detailed scrutiny by hand is necessary to reach a systematic literature review in the field of Shakespearean studies.

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Selected Publications in Shakespeare Studies

Cohen, Paula Marantz, *Of Human Kindness: What Shakespeare Teaches Us about Empathy*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2021, 159 pp.

Cohen's *Of Human Kindness*: *What Shakespeare Teaches Us about Empathy* is not an easy book to assess. One could say that its strong points are in some way also its more questionable ones. A scholar and a university professor, Cohen admits to having reached Shakespeare only later in her teaching career and bases many of her observations on the varying reactions of her students, and indeed her own, through an approach to the texts which is limited to a close reading of the plays without considering traditional or recent critical methodologies. It rather stresses what we may term personal opinions; opinions always founded on and substantiated by a careful analysis of what is being read.

The main contention is that reading Shakespeare's plays today helps us to come to a deeper understanding about how we feel for the Other and promotes a sense of empathy in us – "empathy" being the key word in this book – directed at issues such as race, gender, class and age. In other words, it makes us 'better people', it unlocks our sense of compassion as, the author claims, has happened to her. The justification for drawing attention to empathy is provided in the introduction in which Cohen maintains that catharsis, the term used by Aristotle to denote the outpouring of emotion which the audience should feel at the end of a great tragedy, is an "emotional release [which] can be isolating and self-indulgent, a way of avoiding responsibility for others' sufferings" (p. 3). Empathetic emotion, instead, can make us more complacent of who we are, more able to function smoothly and efficiently in the world; it is

disruptive, humanizing and a potentially instrumental variation on catharsis because it involves feelings beyond the Self, feelings for the Other. This is the path undertaken by the author who sees *The Merchant of Venice* as the real turning point of Shakespeare's awareness of empathetic emotion, a play, in her view, from which all his monumental figures derive.

We are taken through several plays, in chronological order, including the most well-known – *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra* – and shown how there is a growing sense of arousing empathy even in those characters who, apparently, behave in reprehensible ways – Shylock, Iago, Edmund, to mention just a few. The approach, I repeat, is pure close reading which to the author is the only method for 'truly understanding' the plays; she actually claims that seeing them performed on stage may distort their 'true meaning'. There is no doubt, as other reviewers have remarked, that the book is invitingly readable and provides a refreshing – if a little naive – approach, unloaded with complex critical theories which at times divert from the text, and brings us back to a straightforward reading of the words on the page. There are no critical references and footnotes, except in passing, which makes for an easy and pleasurable read. It is also useful, since at times one forgets that reading a Shakespearean text with students and attempting to relate it to their everyday lives is a productive way to lead younger students towards an understanding which we could call more genuine, and that highbrow critical theory may, at times, hinder and distract from the text itself. It is nevertheless true that it must be clear to students that an early modern audience would respond differently to how students of the twenty-first century may react, and that to assume authorial intention, especially in the case of Shakespeare, is always dangerous.

That Antonio, in *The Merchant of Venice*, is marginalized because of his latent homosexuality must take cultural and historical elements into consideration, as must the assumption that Shylock induces the audience to feel empathy simply because he is mistreated. That Shakespeare meant us to see it this way must be established in a larger context of the antisemitic atmosphere of the age. The book proposes a progression in Shakespeare's concern with empathy and sees earlier simpler characters develop into more

complex ones in the later plays; this is well documented by Cohen, but again it is only a possible, if plausible, assumption. Is Falstaff truly a precursor of Lear, as the author claims, simply because he is old? There is no mention of sources, textual problems, but rather a leading thread which concentrates on what seems to be a preconceived idea – an idea which is fascinating and holds, but that modern scholarship may object to.

However, Cohen's hypotheses manage to trace the growth of characters. She claims, for instance, that there could not have been an Othello if there hadn't been a Shylock before him, a view which has been expressed before but is here put forward simply as a result, as the author states, of the impact a fresh reading of Shakespearean texts has had on her and her students. The emphasis, which is an interesting one from a pedagogical point of view, is on the different reactions students have had in the last twenty years as colleges have become more multicultural and multiracial. I believe the book reflects teaching methods which are popular in the United States – and a little less in countries such as Italy – where students are asked to give their "gut reaction" to classics of all kinds rather than being "lumbered" with endless critical material which they may feel too distant from the text they are studying and from themselves. This is a system that has its advantages and that we may have something to learn from, but which, in my view, cannot stand alone. A class of beginners in Shakespeare studies may benefit from an approach such as this but would eventually have to enlarge their perspectives with support material including the study of the cultural-historical context in which the plays were written, the sources of the plays, the issues of collaboration, textual problems and so on.

Having said this, even Shakespearean scholars will enjoy the journey Cohen takes us through. The presumed moral development of Shakespeare's imagination and his ability to generate empathy for the 'villains' – though this last point had received much critical attention even before this book, even if the word empathy may not have been used – is exposed consistently and attractively. It is in this sense that the strength of this study – readability, coherence, preciseness, a leading thread – contains its limitations – a certain naiveté, the lack of critical references, no mention of previous scholars or schools of thought. In Cohen's view, the empathic

approach to the Other is Shakespeare's major lesson today. Through this kind of reading, we learn "to recognize our own divided nature and embrace the human condition in which we all share" (p. 5).

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Long Live the Past: Italian Guides to Shakespeare's Masterpieces
Coronato, Rocco, *Shakespeare: Guida ad Amleto*, **Rome, Carocci, 2021, 132 pp.**
Tosi, Laura, *Shakespeare: Guida a Macbeth*, **Rome, Carocci, 2021, 128 pp.**
Coronato, Rocco, *Shakespeare: Guida alla Tempesta*, **Rome, Carocci, 2022, 132 pp.**
Petrina, Alessandra, *Shakespeare: Guida ad Otello*, **Rome, Carocci, 2022, 124 pp.**

Against the long-lasting tradition of British guides to Shakespeare's plays for beginners the new Italian series "William Shakespeare: I capolavori", edited by Rocco Coronato, stands out as a distinctively Italian contribution to the field of Shakespeare primers. Unlike its British counterparts, the series, which at the time of writing includes four volumes published by Carocci over the last two years, is not specifically meant for students. Rather, it more generally addresses "Italian readers willing to appreciate the best of Shakespeare with the help of some critical tools": an uncompromising presentation which leaves one clueless as to the underlying assumptions of the whole enterprise and its unspoken notion of masterpiece. The present review also sets out to trace at least some of these unstated premises.

A consummate and prolific early modern and Shakespearean scholar, Rocco Coronato, whose *Leggere Shakespeare* (Carocci, 2017) works as a prequel to the series, has put his own skills to the service of this enterprise by authoring two volumes (*Hamlet*, 2021, and *The Tempest*, 2022) and trusting such distinguished colleagues as Laura Tosi and Alessandra Petrina with the task of writing respectively on *Macbeth* (2021) and *Othello* (2022). Indeed, a hardly contentious selection of "masterpieces" with tragedies playing the lion's part, as in established rankings of Shakespeare's plays.

Though inevitably diverse, and uneven in their performance, all the volumes share the conventional layout of introductions to British/American editions of Shakespeare's plays featuring a standard set of chapters on date, sources, plot, settings, characters, style and themes, in addition to a final, substantial unit which details the history of the play's criticism, lists major musical, film and TV versions, and concludes with an index of allusions to the play throughout the media. While occasionally skewed in favour of past centuries to the detriment of more recent contributions, overviews of extant criticism in each last chapter are all the more welcome given the authors' shared and mostly old historicist ground. Taken as the whole, the series presumably endeavours to dig into the pastness of Shakespeare's past, with scanty concessions to the present, and no allowance for presentist temptations. At their best, these guides actually pore over the tapestry of early modern history and untangle its classical and mythological yarns to show how Shakespeare spins his masterpieces out of such wealth of material. No longer relegated in the background, Shakespeare's historical and cultural milieu is brought to the fore and magnified as the actual nourishment of the plays he wrote: a vital sap readers are encouraged to take in from the start in order to tackle Shakespeare with a critical mind.

Predictably, the volumes' set pattern shuns in-depth readings and hinders systematic insight into texts in favour of sweeping remarks on prevailing styles and registers which leave little room to textual examples. As a result, the mobility of Shakespeare's language, i.e. its uncanny ability to foresee the ideological fault lines of times to come, remains unattended. In the same spirit, diverse critical approaches are largely ignored, except for due mentions either in the text or in end chapters. The authors have understandably enforced their own readings on highly complex plays: little space is left for arguments in defence of their own occasionally idiosyncratic statements on highly debated issues with a somewhat disquieting leave-it-or-take-it effect. Particularly in the case of *Othello*, that is regrettable. One would expect, for instance, Petrina to corroborate her own bold argument that Desdemona's vindication of Othello's innocence on her deathbed should be taken

as the mark of Christian catharsis in what most critics would see as Shakespeare's quintessentially nihilistic or sceptical play.

Ultimately, of course, the benefits of the densely instructive material set out in these guides can't be underestimated. With their striking display of erudition, Coronato' contributions on *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, for instance, offer an awe-inspiring mass of data on major and minor aspects of early modern philosophy, history and science, as well as on the vast field of Renaissance rhetoric. What they outline is a complex backdrop of knowledge against which the plays are aptly measured. The very themes Coronato singles out are traced back to their coeval meanings in the fields of philosophy, theology or medicine, a range of senses which turns out to be extraordinarily pliable to Shakespeare's innovative undertaking. Sound proofs of how far and deep early modern culture may be said to feed Shakespeare's masterly craft, and brimming with scholarly references through accounts of criticism and extensive bibliographies, Coronato's guides will appeal to discriminating scholars, while possibly discouraging larger and more naive audiences.

In what resembles a pleasurable talk about *Othello* addressed to Italian undergraduates, Alessandra Petrina treads instead rather more linear paths. In her smooth progression across the play – a bibliography-based account mostly on the model of a user-friendly discussion of each character's motivations, feelings and contradictions – Petrina apparently surrenders her learning as a language historian for the sake of popularization. At times, her commitment to simplification entails unfortunate plunges into indefiniteness, as when Othello's transition from hyperbolic style to fragmented speech is generically described as a fall from "beautiful" or "splendid" language to an "ugly" one, whatever "beautiful" or "ugly" might have meant in Shakespeare's time.

Laura Tosi's reading of *Macbeth* stands somehow apart for its balanced treatment of the play, firmly situated in the past, and yet resonating in the present through the occasional acknowledgement – and knowledgeable use – of contemporary critical approaches such as gender criticism and psychoanalysis. Tosi's sharp highlights on the interweaving of history, culture and language do nimbly away with the strictures of set chapters: they shed light onto the

power of the play's densely metaphorical language which often eludes interpretive closure. In her reluctance to issue final interpretations, let alone value judgements, Tosi takes pain to enlist alternative critical views whenever she ventures into personal suggestions, thus paving the path to a discerning, fully contextualized reading of *Macbeth*: a tragedy of power and evil nourished by its own history and yet casting a lurid light on our present.

Despite the predictable shortcomings of uneven contributions, the historicist thrust of the new series needs to be praised for breaking new ground in the field of Italian Shakespeare studies, traditionally alien to refined popularization. It does so by boldly vindicating the rewards of a rigorous inquiry into the history Shakespeare belonged to, against the current drift into actualizations, rewritings and 'presentist' approaches, including – in fact – the outlandish and extreme implications of cancel culture. No matter how appealing to general audiences, this is a mainstream trend the series firmly swims against, gripped by the legitimate fear that the oblivion of Shakespeare's past may well erase awareness of its distance from our present.

<div style="text-align: right">Alessandra Marzola, University of Bergamo</div>

Del Sapio Garbero, Maria, *Shakespeare's Ruins and Myth of Rome*, Anglo-Italian Renaissance Studies, London-New York, Routledge, 2022, 404 pp.

Del Sapio has dealt for years with Shakespeare's Roman plays, which she studied from various points of view. This book is devoted to the reappropriation of Roman ruins, central in the Renaissance, on Shakespeare's part; his meditation on the "memory of Rome" is shown by Del Sapio as fruitfully ambivalent, 'double', thriving on both its splendour as the ancient core of the Empire and the reality of its "dismembered body" (p. 17) after centuries of oblivion and in the evidence of ruin.

In the words of Renaissance authors Del Sapio has deeply studied, such as Poggio Bracciolini or Antonio Loschi (and later, among others, Flavio Biondo and Vasari), Rome is seen as "a skeletal

and fragmented 'mighty giant'" that had to be "re-written into existence" thanks to the finding of ancient texts that had been lost and then unearthed and studied together with the physical monuments of past splendours.

The Renaissance reappropriation of Rome is "Orphic" (p. 334) in its unearthing of the lost body of the Empire, a signifier of power and impermanence at the same time.

England's origins were of course linked to the myth of Rome, "which imperially encapsulated the Trojan-Greek legacy" (p. 73); on the one hand – according to Camden's *Britannia* – England was recognized as a "mixture of ethnicities and languages", from Saxon violence to the melting pot of various invasions of barbarian populations; on the other hand, the myth of its foundation by Aeneas' descendant Brutus, first reported by Geoffrey of Monmouth and surviving – though discussed – through the ages, linked England to Troy, and to the Rome which from Troy descended.

The six Shakespearean Roman works (the "Plutarchan" plays – *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra* – the early poem *The Rape of Lucrece*, and the plays later subsumed under the Roman label, *Titus Andronicus* and *Cymbeline*) are studied with the tools of archaeological analysis and reappropriation and with the heuristic probe of anatomy, a science which was widely practiced in the sixteenth-early seventeenth century. The spectrality of the idea of Rome is underscored, following Derrida and Greenblatt, together with Shakespeare's "early concern for Rome's […] parable of glory and ruin" (p. 64).

Besides, Shakespeare's interest in the memory of Rome is inscribed in his concern with English history, since the first Roman plays are contemporary with the historical plays celebrating the English monarchy and the Tudor dynasty; common solutions in the language hint at the presence of shared themes and concepts.

The first Shakespearean Roman play to be written was *Titus Andronicus*. Del Sapio underlines how Shakespeare chose to address the myth of Rome "starting not from its imperial splendour but from the […] desacralizing end of its decay" (p. 72).

Actually, no Shakespearean Roman play deals with triumphant imperial splendour. *Titus Andronicus* is already situated in a time of crisis, with its protagonist divided between the conflicting urges of

virtus and revenge of his own family, his many sons killed in battle and his daughter raped and maimed. In *Julius Caesar*, which problematizes the transformation of Republican Rome into Empire, the superhuman image of Caesar is undermined from within: deaf, prone to the falling sickness, the colossus striding the world is in fact fragile and incapable of grasping his own weaknesses. *Coriolanus* focuses on a Rome divided by the strife between patricians and plebeians, and shows how the failings of the eponymous hero prepare his downfall. *Antony and Cleopatra* highlights the moment of deep crisis due to Marc Antony's challenge to Octave and Rome. *Cymbeline* harks back to ancient Britannia, which is fighting with Rome and refusing to pay tributes. *The Rape of Lucrece*, based on the intensely private anguish of the ravished protagonist, is the only work which points at a positive political outcome, with the chasing of the Tarquins from Rome, but this theme is relegated to the prologue and the last few lines, leaving the personal nightmare of Lucrece's rape and suicide at the centre of the poem.

After a long, scholarly introduction, where the tenets of the book are explored and framed with the tools I mentioned, the chapters follow according to the chronological order of their composition, with the only exception of *Antony and Cleopatra*, which is postponed to the end of the book, after *Cymbeline*: convincingly, Del Sapio claims that the play represents Shakespeare's farewell to the triumphant memory of Rome.

The first draft of the chapter on *Titus Andronicus*, as the first footnote reminds us, dates back to the conference "Shakespeare 2016: Memoria di Roma", held in Rome to celebrate the fourth centenary of Shakespeare's death. The chapter is fruitfully linked to the introduction. A discussion of Du Bellay's sonnet on Rome, which Shakespeare probably knew, shows some of the core concepts of the paradox explored by early modern artists in Europe. Its monumental status at the centre of a huge Empire is contrasted with its "fleetingness" (in Du Bellay's words), and with the impermanence that erased its memory and wrecked its monuments, up to the time when archaeologists started excavating them more than a millennium later.

This controversial play, long dispraised by critics up to few decades ago, is shown to be central to Shakespeare's vision of Rome,

and is considered "a kind of *manifesto* of how [Shakespeare] intends to deal with inheritance and memory" (p. 122). Here, Del Sapio argues, tragedy seems to be impossible, undermined by parody and grotesque. Del Sapio defines it a *Trauerspiel*, the baroque drama as theorized by Benjamin. Its characters fail in the attempt to keep a heroic stance; madness and tragic laughter are the response to the unspeakable horror they are subjected to.

An interesting idea in the chapter is the forfeiture of Titus' quality as a storyteller in the course of the play. The loss of his hand – which could not save his sons' life, and is disturbingly linked to misunderstanding and failure – prevents him to 'act' (the Ciceronian *actio*) as the skilled orator he was: in the past, his narration was an agent of memory which linked present and past generations. In the new times, and with the frightful events performed in the play, this has become impossible.

The second chapter is devoted to *The Rape of Lucrece*. Shakespeare wrote the long poem in 1594, immediately after *Venus and Adonis*, when theatres were closed because of the plague. The focal points underlined by the essay are Lucrece's reappropriation of her own fate, with the decision to dispose of her tortured body, and the long ekphrastic meditation on Hecuba. The ruins of Troy – the "Ur-ruin" destroyed by the violence of the enemy – teach Lucrece how to mourn 'in a new way'; Del Sapio has shown elsewhere how the Trojan inheritance is fundamental in the excavation of the past, and also how the figure of Hecuba becomes the objective correlative of the ruinous history in *The Rape*, *Titus Andronicus*, and, of course, *Hamlet*.

In her essay on *Coriolanus*, Del Sapio chooses the interesting and only apparently minor point of the protagonist's failure to reward an act of kindness on the part of a Volscian soldier. Her quotation in the title, "My memory is tired", refers to the fact that Coriolanus typically cannot remember the name of the Volscian who used him kindly, and – after obtaining from his captors the promise of treating him well – cannot complete the grateful motion because he cannot identify him. The episode, absent in Shakespeare's sources (where Coriolanus' creditor is a wealthy, prominent citizen), is meaningful, Del Sapio argues, in that it indicates Coriolanus' failure in participating in the social interactions of gratitude and

reciprocation. The "war-machine" is found to be lacking in the saving graces of shared values.

In *Julius Caesar*, Cassius is discussed as the rational, anatomizing intellectual, who tries to bring back the body of Caesar to its "correct measure", against the mythologizing thrust of Marc Antony's eloquence. A key point in the essay is the relevance of Cicero's *De Oratore* in Marc Antony's speech on the body of Caesar. Skilled in dwelling on the emotions of his audience and swaying them, as a good orator is supposed to do, Marc Antony can play all the gamut of rhetoric to achieve his aims, with a surprising adherence to Cicero's theorizing.

In the complex chapter on *Cymbeline*, Del Sapio convincingly argues that the pseudo-historical attitude of the romance – which transposes the final conquest of Britain from Claudius (41-54 AD) to Augustus (27 BC-14 AD) and reverses the victory of the Roman army into a defeat – serves the purpose of a final confrontation between Rome's heritage and the new British identity. At the end of the play the Roman eagle moves eastward in a fulfilment of the *translatio imperii*, and the two kingly figures, the Roman emperor and Cymbeline, appear as sovereigns of equal standing.

Cymbeline is set within a sequence of performances of identity, from Posthumus' painful struggles with his obscure history to the affirmation of Britannia as a self-contained entity – inviolable in its geographical position, "the sceptred-isle" already mythicized by John of Gaunt in *Richard II*. Despite its romantic mood, the late play highlights the final transference of cultural authority, "fashioning [the] counter myth" (p. 269) of a Britain that manages to make peace with its Roman past.

The acceptance of the "male-ordered dynasty" (p. 277) which removes Innogen from her role of heiress to the throne, transforming her – thanks to the Soothsayer's pseudo-etymology of *mollis aer/mulier* – into the partner of a protagonist instead of a protagonist herself, is seen by Del Sapio as a possible double final: one complying with the taste of the general public, whereas 'the wiser sort' were expected to doubt the simple happiness of the ending.

The chapter on *Cymbeline* merges with the final one on *Antony and Cleopatra*, as the analysis of *Julius Caesar* continued into the one

on *Cymbeline*, linking the two plays with the mythicization of Caesar. The chapter opens with a first pregnant meditation on Innogen's sleeping chamber, where the chaste protagonist has surprisingly treasured images from the eastern world: rich tapestries (including one representing Cleopatra "and her Roman", as the villain Iachimo puts it) feeding her imagination with a longing for skies away from Britannia, for new sights and new worlds. Though Innogen's travelling is enforced, and her peregrinations only undertaken to save her own life from Posthumus' jealous wrath, before folding back on her role of faithful wife, she gives words to an anxiety of experience which reveals her to be something definitely more complex than the modest, sorrowful victim of a less careful perusal.

Pointing at some key ideas in the essay on *Antony and Cleopatra*, we can deduce what follows. The two lovers' idiolect continually expresses their anxiety to transcend limits, "overflowing the measure": the key to their stance, and therefore their language, is hyperbole and excess. On the other hand, "transgressing boundaries" is proved by Del Sapio to be typically Roman (pp. 304ff). The interesting analysis of the language of the play, based on excess, hyperbole, and chiasms, seems to point at a "blurring" of polarities (p. 293), where the two worlds mingle in a fruitful ambiguity.

The idea of Rome is not limited to its 'political' representative in the play, young Caesar, "the master of measure" (p. 328), who stands for a Rome "without portents": it encompasses and feeds on the contrast between the two Roman rivals. Octave is in tune with the movement of history; the two lovers' "belatedness", their awareness that their time is past, transforms Antony into a ruin of himself (a broken statue, a 'man of steel' melting into water), and Cleopatra into his poet, his memorializing author. Here the metatheatrical role of the poet is not assigned to the Roman lieutenant, as in Agostino Lombardo's *Ritratto di Enobarbo* (Pisa, Nistri-Lischi, 1971), but to the captive and defeated queen. In her vivid, desperately triumphant "dream-like blason" (p. 311), Cleopatra actively mythicizes her lover, transforming him into a colossus ("bestrid[ing] the ocean" as Caesar "strid[ed] the world" in Cassius' words), who attains the level of a demi-god. "Ruins are met

with rebirth [through] an explosion of poetry" (p. 332); death and glory coexist, as they have done throughout the Roman plays.

Del Sapio convincingly interprets the lovers' story as Shakespeare's last celebration of the Roman ruins, endowed with their multiple meanings – fascination, longing, and regret.

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Fusini, Nadia, *Maestre d'amore. Giulietta, Ofelia, Desdemona e le altre*, Turin, Einaudi, 2021, 207 pp.

This study merges two essential features of the author's rich body of literary critical studies: on the one hand Shakespeare, to whom she has dedicated *La passione dell'origine* (1981), *Vivere nella tempesta* (2016) and the enchanting *Di vita si muore* (2010) – perhaps her most engaging book, a journey through the theatre of passions in Shakespeare's major tragedies; on the other hand, the feminist issues she has reflected upon over the years, particularly in her numerous writings on Virginia Woolf.

As the title suggests, this is a book about Love. The author herself provides the reader with precise coordinates to follow, starting from "la donna è l'ora della verità per un uomo" (woman is the hour of truth for a man). To Love conceived as fusion and to woman as the guardian of a secret, unknown to the rest of humanity, Plato dedicated his *Symposium*, in which, through the words of Aristophanes, we understand how man longs for recognition in order to somehow restore a state of wholeness, thus completing himself. This idea, which modern psychology calls fusionality, is taken up by Fusini in her fascinating introduction to the Italian translation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, in which she evokes the powerful idea of an arithmetic of love according to which 1+1 would make 1. In this triumphant fusion of Eros, the symbiotic metamorphosis whereby each lover is, in fact, the other stands clear. In this book, Shakespeare's female protagonists are the guides of a journey through Love, whose phenomenology, dynamics and inner logic they underpin.

From this perspective, *Maestre d'amore* begins with an analysis of the union between Romeo and Juliet, which Fusini poignantly reads

as a lost opportunity, "atto mancato". The star-crossed lovers reach death through a mocking game of the Wheel of Fortune, but they do not come to him together, missing one another until the end. The same dynamics underlie the union of Desdemona and Othello, whose fusion is impossible in the flesh and instead occurs only in Iago's mind. Fusini argues that *Othello* is not a tragedy of sexual desire since Desdemona falls in love with Othello's mind, with his language, which she devours with insatiable ears; and Othello, for his part, declares that he loves her with intellectual love, despite the various hints at Desdemona's fairness, in keeping with the Greek idea of *kalokagathia*. Merging with the other as Other, on the other hand, is on the verge of being realised in *Antony and Cleopatra*. However, according to Fusini, no Shakespearean lovers act in full reciprocity. Never do the bodies of the two mature lovers – eroticised, corruptible and finite, yet moving towards each other with a dizzying leap into the sublime – manage to form a united whole, thus pointing to the play's (failed) encounter between East and West, Rome and Alexandria, Love and Power. Such love with blurred boundaries, mixing and confusing the male and the female gender, can only be consummated in the sphere of the imagination.

Love in tragedy is, as might be expected, different from Love in comedy, to which the second part of *Maestre d'amore* is devoted. It begins with Love mingling first with dream and then with metamorphosis, in a clever game of reworking classical and folkloric sources; Fusini invites us to reflect on the notion of source and on Shakespeare's ingenuity, who cannot help 'undoing' what he is constructing through the source. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, we witness a visionary love that transforms vulgar incidents into sublime ecstasies. In this play, the lovers find their true love, in a movement that resembles a dance.

Particularly noteworthy is Fusini's reference to the subtle and intricate theme of marriage – which is somehow supposed to lead the lover's wanderings to a happy ending. In *All's Well That Ends Well* – whose title tautologically promises the end of the plot – the focus is on a marriage that is, however, not based on prevarication but on reciprocity. Helena is endowed with a self-will that characterises her wanderings throughout the story, to the point of true obstinacy in the face of a constant struggle to obtain what she

wants for herself whatever it takes. It is she who leads the dance of passions. Marriage, the "nuptial catastrophe", is also at the heart of *Measure for Measure*, which tragically resolves the tangled story of Angelo's contamination against the backdrop of a two-faced Vienna which mirrors London, as cities always do in Shakespeare's plays.

And yet *Maestre d'amore*, like *Di vita si muore*, is something other than Love and Life and the magic that underlies Love and Life. A distinguished scholar of Shakespeare and early modern English culture, Fusini makes a case for a decidedly modern Shakespeare, also with regard to the female characters he created. In line with this argument she also highlights a number of relevant cultural issues about boy actors, cross-dressing and, above all, the fruitful relationship between theatre and life.

Finally, in the book's "Valediction", the author explains that if *Di vita si muore* was about dying of life, in *Maestre d'amore* Eros triumphs over Thanatos.

Maestre d'amore is a demanding book, which entails more than one reading; but readers acquainted with Nadia Fusini's sophisticated critical language are surely prepared for the challenge.

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Lovascio, Domenico, ed., *Antony and Cleopatra: A Critical Reader*, The Arden Shakespeare, London, Bloomsbury, 2020, 306 pp.

This welcome addition to the "Arden Early Modern Drama Guides" series, edited by Domenico Lovascio, and re-issued in paperback in 2021, once again takes up Shakespeare's Roman theme, which the editor has fruitfully followed in other explorations of early modern drama, from *Un nome, mille volti. Giulio Cesare nel teatro della prima età moderna* (Carocci, 2015) to the edited collection *Roman Women in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (De Gruyter, 2020), and his latest effort, *John Fletcher's Rome: Questioning the Classics* (Manchester University Press, 2022).

Drawing on his enduring engagement with the persistence and significance of Rome – the city, the culture, the myth – in the early modern English world, Lovascio sets out to take a fresh look at *Antony and Cleopatra* by partially giving in to "the temptation to

view *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607-07) as a sequel to *Julius Caesar* (1599)" (p. 1). Since other parts of the book are devoted to the necessary critical survey that this kind of guide is designed to provide, Lovascio shifts his attention to take an anamorphic view of the play, from the vantage point of the absence/presence of Julius Caesar, a constant comparison and source of influence anxiety for Antony. The result is a lively introduction in which Caesar is a relentless, ghostly presence, evoked by different characters in the play as a paragon of Romanness, but also of manliness, and, of course, we would add today, of the very idea of masculinity; leaving Antony with no other part than to portray simple, frail humanness. Lovascio only hints at the fact that the true heir of Roman values in this play is in fact Cleopatra ("Antony is never as great as Caesar – and, possibly, as Cleopatra", p. 6), a point often emphasized, and also persuasively argued in a 2017 issue of *Memoria di Shakespeare* entirely devoted to the play, edited by Rosy Colombo, which I would encourage any reader interested in *Antony and Cleopatra* to access (https://rosa.uniroma1.it/rosa03/memoria_di_shakespeare/issue/view/1230). Yet, by acknowledging the presence of the phantom of Caesar in the couple's dynamic (p. 9), these introductory pages set the stage for further explorations that the contributors to the volume pick up from different angles.

As is customary for the Arden Early Modern Drama Guides, after the introduction the volume sets out to reconstruct different aspects of the play's reception in sections named "The Critical Backstory", "Performance History", and "The State of the Art". Daniel Cadman's survey of critical responses to *Antony and Cleopatra* looks at early reflection on the play from the seventeenth century to the Victorian era, and then moves on to more in-depth discussion of twentieth-century criticism (divided in two stages, 1900-79, 1980-99). This choice makes the reader aware of a significant increase "in both the volume and range of readings of *Antony and Cleopatra*" (p. 40) in the last two decades of the past millennium, when considerations of gender and race began to be explored with illuminating results, culminating in Janet Adelman and Coppélia Kahn's seminal work on the play. The post-2000 critical survey is later carried on by Lovascio in the section devoted to the state of the art, but, before that, readers are treated to Maddalena Pennacchia's

fascinating interpretation of the performance history of the play as a sort of early coming-to-terms with "celebrity bio-drama". Shakespeare's treatment of Plutarch is read in terms of adaptation, and a parallel is drawn with today's celebrity culture, which enjoys "see[ing] celebrities in their 'undress', […] go[ing] beyond their public personae and peep[ing] into their private lives in search of 'unpublished' details" (p. 57). Thus framed, the stage history of the play is recounted, from the lack of evidence of stagings before the Restoration, to Dryden's experiment in domestication, to Garrick's revival of the play to the twentieth-century 'Neo-Elizabethan Revolution' and, finally, Shakespeare's Globe. Drawing on her expertise on intermediality, Pennacchia closes with a section on screen adaptations and twenty-first-century intermedial performances, allowing us to gauge the enduring presence of the play in the years closest to us. In chronological continuity, Lovascio then picks up the critical survey left at the year 1999, delving into critical contributions from 2000 to 2016. Rather than simply following a timeline, Lovascio interestingly groups his discussions around some defining concepts (Sources; Death; Passions; *Antony and Cleopatra* and its predecessors; Race, empire, and commerce; Politics; Ethics, gender, hermeneutics and genre; Messengers; Food; Apocalypse). The choice is perhaps slightly heterogenous for a compact chapter, but it does offer a broad, inclusive, and highly knowledgeable account of the issues current critical practice has most focused upon. Taken together, these first three chapters are an essential read for anyone wishing to approach the play with a sense of its historical depth and afterlife.

The 'New Directions' section comprises four chapters which investigate different critical problems, in an effort to carry the discussion further. In "After Decorum: Self-Performance and Political Liminality in *Antony and Cleopatra*", Curtis Perry tackles the "problem of consistent self-performance in a time of political transition" (p. 113). The insight that "the Rome of *Antony and Cleopatra* seems more like an idea than a place" (p. 121) helps us re-read the "conditions of Roman performativity" (p. 130) that inform the entire play and especially its final movement. In "Determined Things: The Historical Reconstruction of Character in *Antony and Cleopatra*", John E. Curran Jr. shows how Shakespeare's play puts a

particular twist on the idea that character and fate are intertwined, arguing that the characters' commitment to their performance of self "boils performance down" to action and reaction (p. 135). The reading allows Cleopatra to be reassessed as "a consistent opponent of Fortune" (p. 150), the only character to effectively determine her fate "in accordance with her own choice" (p. 154). Julia Griffin returns to a markedly textual focus, showing how certain of the most powerful of Shakespeare's scenes based on North's Plutarch were actually misleading translations or inventions. Her chapter ("Creative Misreadings and Memorial Constructions: The North Face of Alexandria") is refreshing in its attention to what happens to language in translation and to the linguistic construction of dramatic moments. Finally, Sarah Olive ("The Passion of Cleopatra: Her Sexuality, Suffering and Resurrections in *The Mummy* and *Ramses the Damned*") turns to the issue of rewriting, looking at two novels by Anne Rice (1989) and Rice and her son Christopher (2017), which explore Cleopatra narratives by blending "notions from literary criticism and scholarship […] to tackle pejorative representations of Cleopatra" (p. 198). The volume closes with a pedagogical chapter, "Resources for Teaching and Studying *Antony and Cleopatra*", by Paul Innes, in which critical responses are assessed as resources for students approaching the play. Some of the online sources are reviewed in a cursory fashion (for example the journal articles section, YouTube, etc.), but the chapter is intended more as a map than as a comprehensive survey, which would have taken up far too much space.

It is no accident that the recent, monumental effort of one of the scholars who has most contributed to the study of Shakespeare and Rome, Maria Del Sapio Garbero, ends its meditation on Shakespeare's use of the ruins and the myth of Rome – a book also reviewed in the present issue of *Memoria di Shakespeare* – with this play, in which Cleopatra, queen of desire, is entrusted with the task "of helping [Shakespeare] take his leave from Rome" (*Shakespeare's Ruins and Myth of Rome*, London-New York, Routledge, 2022, p. 334), a leave-taking that is itself nurtured with desire, and longing. Mixing themes of 'memory and desire' as they do, the essays in Lovascio's fine collection make for informative and pleasurable reading, which, as we know, is itself a fundamental classical value;

together, they provide a multi-faceted picture which begins to explain our enduring fascination with *Antony and Cleopatra*.

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Abstracts

The Revenger's Tragedy: *Date, Title, Theatre, Text*

ROGER HOLDSWORTH

As well as fixing a precise date for the play, this study of *The Revenger's Tragedy* offers new evidence for identifying it as the supposedly lost *The Viper and Her Brood*. The reattribution implies that its traditional title is spurious, and the belief that it was written for the King's Men and performed at the Globe is mistaken. It was a Blackfriars play, and commissioned by Robert Keysar, manager of the Blackfriars Children. The essay also examines current editorial responses to the play's text, noting places where commentary is needed but absent, or offered but erroneous.

Keywords: Thomas Middleton, Authorship, Revenge tragedy, Private theatre, Lost plays

Shakespeare, *Marlowe, and Traces of Authorship*

RORY LOUGHNANE

This essay analyses the documentary evidence identifying Shakespeare and Marlowe as co-authors of the *Henry VI* plays and the alternative versions of parts *2* and *3*. Drawing together studies in attribution, anonymity, biography, and the book trade, the essay

offers a chronological analysis of various forms of evidence. In doing so, it seeks to situate and contextualise the early anonymous publication of the alternative versions, while providing external documentary support for the internal attribution evidence linking Shakespeare and Marlowe to these plays.

Keywords: Marlowe, Nashe, Attribution studies, Authorship, Anonymity, Book history, Biography, Publication, Textual studies

Craftsman Meets Historian: Shakespeare and Material Culture

FRANCO MARENCO

First presented at the 2021 online edition of the "Seminario Permanente di Studi Shakespeariani", this paper takes its cue from Gary Taylor's 2017 essay "Artiginality: Authorship after Postmodernism" and explores the coexistence and integration of the concepts of 'craftsmanship' and 'originality' within the Shakespearean macrotext. Considering the history plays to be the *locus classicus* for such conflation of the artisanal and the original, the paper specifically examines *Henry V*, *Richard III* (which is contrasted with *Macbeth*), and *Pericles*. At the same time, it also traces a movement from craftsmanship to art.

Keywords: Craftmanship, Originality, Material culture, *Henry V*, *Richard III*, *Pericles*

Textual Editing and Diversity: Shakespeare's Richard III *as a Case Study*

SONIA MASSAI, ANDREA PEGHINELLI

This conversation explores the big questions that are re-defining how scholars approach the editing of Shakespeare's works in our historical moment, from who gets to edit Shakespeare to how they

choose to represent the Shakespearean text to their readers. Shakespeare has traditionally been edited by white, male scholars trained in prestigious academic institutions in the Anglo-world. What happens when women and BIPOC scholars, or scholars whose first language is not English, get to edit Shakespeare? And what happens when editors approach the task of re-editing Shakespeare for a more diverse readership? By using examples drawn from Shakespeare's *Richard III*, this conversation shows how differently this history play can be edited and how differently it can be made to mean for new generations of readers, students, and theatre-goers.

Keywords: *Richard III*, Editing, Textual studies, Performance, Diversity

Italian Soundscape in Performance: Voices, Accents and Local Sonorities of Shakespeare's History Plays in Italy (2000-2020)

Emiliana Russo

While scholarship on the utilization of dialects and accents in stagings of Shakespeare's plays on the British stage has recently emerged (Massai 2020; Lee 2020), systematic discussions on the "theatre phonetics" (Calamai 2006, xvi, my translation) of Italian Shakespearean productions struggle to be initiated. In particular, scholarly output seems to limit itself to various references to or a mild consideration of single productions, or even to gloss over the treatment of histories. As a result, this paper engages with performances of history plays in the first two decades of the new millennium, from 2000 to 2020, with the aim of determining their phonetic garment. Through a qualitative analysis of reviews, websites, videos and information provided by theatre practitioners, I investigate whether standard Italian, accents or dialects are used in performances put on in Italian theatres in the selected time frame, showing the limited embracement of phonetic alterity. In addition, only partially drawing inspiration from the publications of the English-speaking world, I focus on critical attitudes and expectations towards the Shakespearean (translated) language and go beyond the

phonetic dimension, which reveals the existence of prefabricated ideas. From a broader perspective, my research ultimately aims to contribute to informing international aural and reception studies centred on Shakespeare as an author performed worldwide.

Keywords: Italian, Dialects, Accents, Sonorities, Histories, Performances, Italian scholarship

Shakespeare's Serial Histories?

EMMA SMITH

The order of Shakespeare's history plays in the 1623 Folio involves the most substantial editorial intervention of that volume. Renaming and ordering the plays in chronological order has cast a long shadow on interpretations. This article revives interest in the history plays as individual Quarto publications, suggesting that they had narrative independence during the period.

Keywords: Histories, Serial drama, First Folio, Publishing, Reception

"The King's English" and the Language of the King: Shakespeare and the Linguistic Strategies of James I

MARGARET TUDEAU-CLAYTON

This paper takes a fresh look at the one Shakespearean instance of the trope of "the King's English" in the Folio version of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which, it argues, is a Jacobean version that thus ironically references the language of the new king from across the linguistic as well as political border with Scotland. The irony is, however, prudently ambivalent, as is the treatment of the ideal of linguistic plainness with which the trope was associated and which James advocated both publicly and privately. Consistently critiqued in Elizabethan plays, the claim to plainness – a class-inflected ideal

associated by cultural reformers with the defining national character of the English – is advertised as a value in *King Lear* and asserted insistently by the eponymous 'mirror' for a king in the Folio version of *Henry V* which, again, I argue, is a Jacobean version. The staged humiliation (*Merry Wives*) and banishment (Henriad) of John Falstaff offered, moreover, a strategy for dealing with linguistically extravagant English courtiers for a king who sought to occupy the cultural centre of his new kingdom despite the exclusion of his language from 'the King's English'. However, the ambiguity with which the claim to plainness is treated in the Jacobean plays leaves open the interpretation of such a claim as a strategy of coercion, or a cover for malicious purposes, in particular the will to power.

Keywords: King's English, Linguistic plainness, James I, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Shelley: Ariel or Caliban?

Maria Valentini

P. B. Shelley placed Shakespeare along with Milton and Dante amongst "philosophers of the very loftiest power" for their ability to communicate the "truth of things" and particularly stated that Shakespeare's characters were "living impersonations of the truth of human passion" (*A Defence of Poetry*). We know Shelley absorbed Shakespeare from a very early age and this emerges from the numerous references we find in his poetry, prose, drama, and letters. As we shall see, *The Tempest* was a major source of inspiration: while in many instances the Romantic poet identifies himself with Ariel, in fact he has much sympathy for Caliban, a sympathy which in many ways anticipates what was to become a political interpretation of *The Tempest*, one that sees Caliban as the dispossessed native. But the borrowings or suggestions from Shakespeare's plays extend to most of the Shelleyan production and it is clearly in Shelley's most successful drama *The Cenci* that the influence becomes more tangible, with very specific references I will point to, especially on a theoretical level: a closer look at *The Cenci* will allow us to examine Shakespearean borrowings, structures, and themes and try to establish how much of its success is owed to this influence, also significant in *Queen Mab* or *Prometheus Unbound*. Therefore, the aim

of this essay is to evaluate whether these Shakespearean echoes contribute to current critical appreciation, and whether, today, Shelley's unflagging popularity is also, though clearly not only, due to his being an artist hovering, broadly speaking, between his vision of an Ariel and a Caliban.

Keywords: Shelley, *The Cenci*, *The Tempest*, Borrowings

"Thy physic I will try": Art, Nature, and Female Healing in Shakespeare

MARTINA ZAMPARO

As one reads in Aristotle's *Physics*, art both imitates and completes nature, being not only a *ministra naturae* but also a 'corrector' of nature. Through the major influence of Paracelsianism, in Shakespeare's England the art of medicine was closely associated with alchemy. The latter, as William Newman has noted, "provided a uniquely powerful focus for discussing the boundary between art and nature". By considering the characters of Marina (*Pericles; Prince of Tyre*) and Helen (*All's Well That Ends Well*), this essay investigates the two women's relation to the healing arts and to nature in the light of coeval alchemical and Paracelsian doctrines. The two Shakespearean women employ their healing powers, i.e. their "artificial feat", as well as their knowledge of nature's occult sympathies and antipathies, in the service of a "kingly patient": Pericles and the King of France. The *topos* of the healing of the king is a common trope in Renaissance alchemical literature, where the 'king' represents gold *in potentia* and, thus, the raw matter that has to be purified by Lady Alchymya. In the light of their privileged access to nature's secret workings, women could manipulate nature and heal the human body. The analysis will focus on Marina's homeopathic and, therefore, Paracelsian healing of her father Pericles and on Helen's still controversial medical practice, which seems to exceed both the Galenic and the Paracelsian paradigm.

Keywords: Alchemy, Paracelsian medicine, Galenism, Healing women, Shakespeare's last plays, *Pericles*, *All's Well That Ends Well*

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