

Shakespeare Seminar

William Shakespeare



Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft

Ausgabe 15 (2017)

Shakespeare Reformed –
Shakespearean Reformations

Shakespeare Seminar 15 (2017)

EDITORS

The *Shakespeare Seminar* is published under the auspices of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, Weimar, and edited by:

Lukas Lammers, Freie Universität Berlin, Institut für Englische Philologie, Habelschwerdter Allee 45, 14195 Berlin (l.lammers@fu-berlin.de)

Kirsten Sandrock, Georg-August Universität Göttingen, Seminar für Englische Philologie, Käte-Hamburger Weg 3, D-37073 Göttingen (ksandro@uni-goettingen.de)

PUBLICATION FREQUENCY

Shakespeare Seminar is a free annual online journal. It documents papers presented at the Shakespeare Seminar panel of the spring conferences of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft. It is intended as a publication platform especially for the younger generation of scholars. You can find the current Call for Papers on our website.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD SERIAL NUMBER

ISSN1612-8362

CONTENTS

Introduction	
Lukas Lammers and Kirsten Sandrock	1
‘But wherefore could I not pronounce Amen?’: Witchcraft, Calvin, and <i>Macbeth</i> ’s Theology	
Stephanie Collins	3
‘Mock not Flesh and Blood’: Reformed Kingship in <i>Richard II</i>	
Harvey Wiltshire	14
Reformation and Transformation: On Religion, Politics, and Economics in <i>King John</i>	
Eike Kronshage	27
Reforming Elizabeth: Shakespeare’s <i>King Henry VIII</i> as Heritage Work	
Jennifer Kraemer	43
“Holy Palmers’ Kiss”: Affective Iconography in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	
Jonas Kellermann	53
“Reformed altogether”? – Reformations of Mimesis in William Shakespeare’s and Thomas Ostermeier’s <i>Hamlet</i>	
Elisa Leroy	66
Call for Statements	
Shakespeare Seminar der Shakespeare-Tage 2018	86

INTRODUCTION

LUKAS LAMMERS AND KIRSTEN SANDROCK

Shakespeare Reformed – Shakespearean Reformations

2017 marked the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's "Ninety-Five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences." The Shakespeare Seminar 2017 used the occasion to revisit the impact of the 1517 Reformation on Shakespeare's works and early modern culture. Taking their cue, among other things, from Hal's famous announcement in the *Henriad* of his personal reformation ("My reformation, glittering o'er my fault, / Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes / Than that which hath no foil to set it off" (1 *Henry IV* 1.2.208-10)) and from Hamlet's famous comment on performance (his charge to the players to "reform it altogether" (*Hamlet* 3.2.36)), the seminar participants explored the great range of resonances of the term reformation in an early modern context, discussing personal, political, cultural, or literary reforms in Shakespeare's plays. The following essays thus present a multifaceted view on the Reformation and the numerous reformations that went hand in hand with it.

In her article on "Witchcraft, Calvin, and *Macbeth*'s Theology," Stephanie Collins takes up Maurice Hunt's argument that *Macbeth* presents a melding of Protestant and Catholic elements to suggest that "Shakespeare stages Calvinism as a cause of melancholy." Harvey Wiltshire looks at "Reformed Kingship in *Richard II*" and shows how the play can be seen to enter into a dialogue with the *Book of Common Prayer* with a focus on the concept of 'sacred blood' and its relation to divine right. According to Wiltshire, the refusal of Richard's subjects to revere the king's anointed body echoes the ways in which the Anglican liturgy responded to debates concerning adoration of the consecrated elements of the Eucharist.

Eike Kronshage considers "Religion and Economics in *King John*," thus adding another dimension to the debate by throwing into relief the close relationship between religion, power, capital, and kingship. The article reads *King John* "as an attempt to explore the profound effects primitive accumulation had on Tudor England," and illustrates "how the Reformation was complicit in the commodification of faith and religion." Focusing on *Henry VIII*, Jennifer Kraemer draws parallels between this Jacobean history play and heritage films. Just like the latter, she argues, Shakespeare's play adopts an overtly nostalgic, nationalist, and celebratory perspective, which casts Queen Elizabeth "as both the religious heir and the embodiment of the English Reformation."

With Jonas Kellermann's article we move from history to tragedy. Drawing on recent studies in affect theory, the article explores the connection between religion and affect in Shakespeare's passionate story of ill-fated love, *Romeo and Juliet*. Kellermann shows how the sonnet the two lovers compose together upon their first meeting is central to what he calls the play's "affective iconography." Love is rendered "a quasi-religious experience" in this powerful moment. Ultimately, Kellermann argues, it is "the metaphorical blending of sexual love and Catholic iconography" which allows the play

“to put the protagonists’ feelings on full display.” Finally, Elisa Leroy’s article considers Thomas Ostermeier’s *Hamlet* (2008) in the light of changing notions of *mimesis* to suggest that the recent stage production renews Hamlet’s call for a drastic reform of theatrical practice. In this view, “Hamlet’s reformatory ambition is adapted to fit a contemporary German debate around theatre aesthetics at the turn of the twenty-first century, which centred around the wish to transcend the Aristotelean poetics and its preference for the dramatic text.”

Works Cited

- Shakespeare, William. *1 Henry IV. Part 1*. Ed. David Scott Kastan. The Arden Shakespeare. Third Series. London: Methuen, 2002.
- . *Hamlet*. Ed. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor. The Arden Shakespeare. Third Series. London: Methuen, 2006.

‘BUT WHEREFORE COULD I NOT PRONOUNCE AMEN?’: WITCHCRAFT, CALVIN, AND *MACBETH*’S THEOLOGY

BY

STEPHANIE COLLINS

Macbeth (ca. 1606) is a religious play. John D. Cox believes that it is ‘the most explicitly religious of all Shakespeare’s tragedies;’ an epithet it fully deserves (225). However, literary and dramatic scholarship has tended to overlook the importance of *Protestant* religion to the play. Instead, most attempts to read *Macbeth* in a religious light tend to come back to the question of whether Shakespeare was a Catholic: Ken Colston, for example, reads the play as an example of Shakespeare’s commitment to the Roman religion (70). Studies which go beyond this Bard-centric reading of *Macbeth* as a Roman Catholic play have suggested that it is a ‘subtle melding of a multitude of Protestant and Catholic motifs’ (Hunt 393). Outside of Shakespeare’s own possible religious affiliations, much fruitful research on *Macbeth* involves the phenomenon of witchcraft, and the cosmic power represented by Shakespeare’s hags. Levin, for example, has read *Macbeth* as a discussion of witchcraft and hysteria; and Hunt suggests that Shakespeare’s witches are the ultimate equivocators, who deliberately mislead and destroy Macbeth (Hunt 381). Colston identifies in the witches a parody of the Holy Trinity: a dark influence which sways Macbeth towards sin, though his decision to do so is, in line with Colston’s Catholic interests, ultimately free (Colston 63, 71). I do not wish to deny that Shakespeare may have been a recusant Catholic, nor do I wish to ignore the problematic spiritual world presented by the witches. It is true that *Macbeth*, written for a king whose mother died, at least partially, for the Catholic cause and who tolerated crypto-Catholicism at his court, uses imagery which projects a potentially Catholic message (Croft). However, there is an aspect of *Macbeth*’s theology which has been critically overlooked: the influence of Jean Calvin, and the connection which Shakespeare makes between Protestant religion and mental breakdown. This paper argues for a reading midway between Maurice Hunt’s description of a blend of theological positions and Joanna Levin’s comments on hysteria as an important facet of witchcraft, in its argument that Shakespeare uses witchcraft to comment on the religious tensions caused by the extent of reforms being pushed by Puritans and Calvinists. Through Macbeth’s gradual mental deterioration and eventual suicidal death, Shakespeare promotes a theoretically counter-Reformation message. In this paper, I develop Hunt’s argument that *Macbeth* presents a melding of Protestant and Catholic elements by suggesting that Shakespeare stages Calvinism as a cause of melancholy.¹

¹ Melancholy, or black bile, as one of the four “humours” of the body according to Galenic medical theory, was a cold and dry humour causing a sad, solitary, and suspicious disposition. Melancholy was commonly associated with intellectual genius, but it could also be an overwhelmingly destructive and unhealthy force.

Son of God?: *Macbeth's* Pseudo-Confession

Although *Macbeth* is a religious play, its theology is not overt. There is no big show of religion: no friars, churches, or even a graveyard – perhaps the most obvious omission, given the high body count. *Macbeth*, unlike so many of his predecessors, has no holy friar to confess to: he carries his sin alone. Given the chronology of the plays setting, this is perhaps understandable: the Franciscan order, for instance, was not established until the early 13th century, compared to *Macbeth's* 11th century setting. In Shakespeare's earlier play *Romeo and Juliet* (ca. 1599), Romeo's connection is very much to the Roman Catholic Church, and Friar Lawrence is obviously a physical manifestation of this religion.² In John Ford's later play *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (ca. 1629-1633), again, the links to Roman Catholicism are explicit. These two plays, which frame *Macbeth* chronologically, serve as evidence that if Shakespeare had wanted to make *Macbeth* a Catholic anti-hero, he knew that it can work as a dramatic trope. Shakespeare deliberately chooses *not* to have *Macbeth* living in an ostensibly Catholic environment. *Romeo and Juliet* is set in the predominantly Roman Catholic Renaissance Italy, whereas *Macbeth* claims eleventh-century Scotland as its apparent setting, and this must be taken into consideration. Likewise, the historical *Macbeth* was *Macbeth-ad*, the 'son of god', or 'righteous man,' a pagan, pre-Christian figure (Aitchison 38). However, Shakespeare does encourage his audience to think along other lines through repeated contemporary allusions: for instance, the Porter's "Come in, Equivocator" is one of several clear references to Henry Garnet, and to the Gunpowder Plot (Bloom 41).

In the society presented in *Macbeth*, sacramental penance cannot exist: it is either too far in the Christian future, in a Protestant world where confession is between an individual and God alone, or it is too far back in the past of pre-Reformation Catholicism. Unlike Romeo and Giovanni, *Macbeth* lacks the comforting associate to whom he can confess: he has only Lady *Macbeth*. Given Lady *Macbeth's* association with those other powerful forces of femininity, the witches, and her own dubious moral code, confession made to her cannot lead to salvation. *Macbeth* seems to want to confess in Act 2, Scene 2, after committing the murder which sends him on a downward spiral to despair – Lady *Macbeth*, however, is the only character he can talk to. This is no sacrament of penance. His wife berates him for a lack of courage: she shames to 'wear a heart so white' (*Macbeth* 2.2.66). Instead of offering absolution, Lady *Macbeth* encourages *Macbeth* further down the path of sin: she instructs him to 'wash this filthy witness from your hand,' then, after realising that he has brought the daggers with him, she instructs him to 'Go, carry them, and smear / The sleepy grooms with blood' (2.2.48, 50-1). Lady *Macbeth* is depicted as the opposite from the helpful confessor by encouraging her husband further towards damnation: although advice from friars typically does *not* work out for the best in Shakespearean tragedy, *à la* Friar Lawrence in *Romeo and Juliet*, it is at least usually an attempt to turn towards saving grace. In *Romeo and Juliet* Friar Lawrence's advice has the soul-saving intention of uniting two young, tempestuous lovers in a state of honourable marriage, and, through this sacrament, to bring two warring, violent families to peace. Friar Lawrence initially

² See Pearce, *Shakespeare on Love: Seeing the Catholic Presence in 'Romeo and Juliet'*.

chides Romeo for wavering in his love but then realises that ‘this alliance may so happy prove / To turn your households’ rancour to pure love’ (*Romeo and Juliet* 2.3.87-88). Lady Macbeth has no such grand illusions. Macbeth’s confession is therefore only a pseudo-confession and holds no possibility for forgiveness.

Parallels have been drawn between Lady Macbeth and the three witches (Levin 39). Although Lady Macbeth certainly would have been thought guilty of witchcraft given her invocation to the spirits, I believe that her husband is also connected to this diabolical practice. Shakespeare connects Macbeth to witchcraft through his mental deterioration, which has significant links to debates about the reality of witchcraft over its status as a symptom of melancholia, which would cause women to *believe* that they were creating tempests and other magical abilities, when in fact, they were merely suffering from hallucinations and delusions, allegedly caused by the devil. Johann Weyer, whom I will discuss in more detail later in this essay, and Reginald Scot identify witches as suffering from melancholy. Scot believes that, although true witchcraft may exist, in many cases, the ‘melancholie abounding in their head, and occupieng their braine, hath deprived or rather depraved their judgments’ (64). Macbeth is no witch, he has no supernatural ability, but his belief in witchcraft may stem from his melancholia. The witches and their prophecies may be a hallucination caused by the devil, who is drawn to Macbeth’s melancholy.

In Act II Scene 2, Lady Macbeth highlights an important element of spiritual distress in her husband’s ‘melancholy abounding.’ Macbeth’s descent into madness is associated most strongly in this moment with his fixation on sin, beginning with his mournful question: ‘But wherefore could I not pronounce Amen?’ (2.2.32). He explains to his wife that the servants awoke, making him fear discovery: the stewards merely addressed themselves to their prayers, however, with one crying ‘God bless us,’ and the other ‘Amen’ (2.2.27). The servants returned to their sleep immediately after, but the threat, for Macbeth, does not diminish; instead of discovery, it is now damnation that he fears. Macbeth had attempted to say ‘amen’ along with the servant, but was unable to say the word ‘amen,’ and his inability to verbalize this basic part of the liturgy haunts him in this scene, starting his inward realization of damnation. The word is repeated four times in only seven lines. I would argue that his desperate need for an answer as to why he could not ‘pronounce amen’ shows the way his thoughts tend: towards the witches who set him on this path (2.2.32). Early modern Protestant theology linked the inability to pronounce the words of grace to witchcraft. Richard Galis, for example, in 1579 had little evidence to believe in the guilt of four witches, other than their ‘negligence’ of the Lord’s Prayer and Ten Commandments (6).

Demonology

The decades prior to *Macbeth*’s first performance saw an intensification in witch-hunting. James VI & I was famously interested in demonology. He engaged heavily in the debates around witchcraft, even penning his own tract *Dæmonologie in Forme of a Dialogue* (1597), and falling on the side that witchcraft was not ‘*an imagination and Melancholicque humour*’ (James I 27). This was published in the same year as Richard Galis’s *Brief Treatise*, in which he wrote that ‘for the lack of the grace of God, the *loue*

of his holy word and commaundements: ye must needs serve the Deuil your Lord and Maister' (6, my italics). It was held by many in this period, Galis included, that if one could not speak the words of the liturgy, like Mother Rockingham and her fellow "witches," it meant that the devil was in control of your body and was therefore a clear proof that you served the devil. Macdonald has persuasively argued, in his discussion of the Mary Glover case, that the reason for this inability to pronounce the words of the liturgy was most likely caused by a lack of education, particularly among poor women (MacDonald xvii). Galis's four witches argued that the reason they had neglected their study of the bible was because 'since they were borne they were neuer taught them' (6). However true this assumption of illiteracy may be for a majority of those accused of practising witchcraft, it cannot hold true in every case.

The case of Agnes Waterhouse, for example, the first woman to be executed for witchcraft in England in 1566, took a more unusual direction. In her examination, she was 'demanded' whether she went to church or not (Phillips 10). She replied that she did indeed regularly attend church and always said her Ave Maria *and* her Lord's Prayer. Waterhouse, clearly, had no such inability to speak the words of the liturgy. There was only one caveat: she could only say them in Latin. She said that 'Sathan wolde at no tyme suffer her to say it in englyshe, but at all times in laten' (Phillips 24). This use of liturgical Latin in a post-Reformation society potentially links Waterhouse's witchcraft to Roman Catholicism. Saying the Lord's Prayer in Latin, as Waterhouse's Protestant examiners knew, would not allow her to gain the blessings of a Protestant Christian God, blessings which she so desperately needed to be in a state of grace rather than reprobation. Therefore, although Waterhouse was *technically* able to pronounce the words of grace, reformed Religion would not accept the use of Latin in prayer as holding any possibility for true grace. Macbeth has an oddly similar predicament. He can, technically, pronounce the words of grace. He proves in Act 2, Scene 2 that he can say 'Amen,' repeating it several times to reiterate its significance: 'but wherefore could I not pronounce amen?' (2.2.32). Ironically in confirming that he couldn't finish the servant's prayer, he does so. It is only offstage that Macbeth is unable to say the comforting words of the Lord's Prayer, when he is in the act of committing a mortal sin, much like Waterhouse can only say them in Roman Catholic liturgical Latin. Shakespeare seems to suggest that there is a connection between believing in witchcraft and physically practicing it. Macbeth's body recoils from the usage of 'amen' not consistently but only during the crucial moment. It is, therefore, a spiritual inability, rather than a physical one, which causes Macbeth so much distress in this scene, and this spiritual inability is linked in a very significant way to witchcraft.

Fear and Grace: Macbeth's initial deterioration

Grace was a charged question in this period, especially for Protestants. The influence of Catholicism was still prevalent and held sway in the hearts of some of England's outwardly Protestant population. The Catholic influence suggested that grace could be achieved by anyone who had not committed a mortal sin. Presuming they had not, all they had to do was listen to Mass, attend confession, and continue behaving as upstanding Catholics. As we have seen, however, Macbeth is denied the sacrament of

confession. It is interesting that Shakespeare chooses to link witchcraft with the Reformed religious mentality, rather than Catholicism, whose traditions were commonly touted as superstitious sorcery by Protestants: in 1601, for example, William Perkins called the Eucharist, alongside other Catholic miracles, ‘Satanicall illusions’ (121). However, England was an outwardly Protestant country, and since the Reformation many Protestant reformers, including figures such as Calvin, had struggled to define what grace was and how one obtained it. Calvin does note that ‘while grace governs the will, it never falls; but when grace abandons it, it falls forthwith’ – it is therefore perhaps unsurprising that Macbeth takes his inability to speak the correct words as proof that God has renounced him (see Fig.1) (Calvin, 197). Macbeth says that ‘To know my deed, ’twere best not know myself’ (2.2.74). This is perhaps a reference to the introspective searching practised by many Protestants. Nehemiah Wallington, a seventeenth-century diarist who engaged frequently in this introspective searching, documented no less than ten suicide attempts, many due to a belief in his own reprobation. He believed the only way of knowing whether one is elect or reprobate was to conduct a ‘diligent search what sin there is in [the] heart’ (Wallington, 304). Calvin himself deemed it ‘disgraceful to be ignorant’ of oneself and called on his readers to view their ‘miserable condition’ and ‘blush for shame’ to make themselves ‘truly humble’ (158). Macbeth initially fears to make this search, preferring to not know himself. This is because he fears God: not the same as being God-fearing, which is encouraged, but he is genuinely afraid. As Luther notes: ‘The fear of God is a fruit of love, but being afraid of him is the seed of hatred’ (Luther 509). This is the cause of Macbeth’s distress: he has come to the realisation that he is no longer in God’s grace.



Fig.1. Stamford Shakespeare Company ‘Macbeth’ (2015). Macbeth’s (James Rushton) distress in this scene is clearly linked to his realization that he now lacks God’s grace. His wife (Gemma Larke) worries for his mental health.³

³ My many thanks go to: David Fensom of the Stamford Shakespeare Company, who kindly allowed me to use these pictures; Paul Moth and Larry Wilkes, who took them; and finally, to James Rushton and Gemma Larke, for performing so inspiringly every night.

I mentioned above that in 2.2, Lady Macbeth links her husband's spiritual distress to a mental disorder. She suggests that it does not become his masculinity to think 'So brainsickly of things' (2.2.47). Lady Macbeth foreshadows the break-down in Macbeth's mental health. Macbeth, in this scene, begins his transition from the 'brave Macbeth' of Act I to tyrant, and to mentally disturbed (1.2.16). The connection to melancholy serves to underline even further the connection between Macbeth's distress and witchcraft. On the opposite side of the witchcraft debate to James I were scholars such as Weyer and Scot. Weyer believed that witches were merely melancholic, and that the devil, taking advantage of their melancholy, gave them delusions of power and strength: 'they confess,' according to Weyer, 'to crimes which are purely imaginary on their part, and which truly proceed from Satan' (147). Macbeth's belief in the witches' predictions could likewise be considered delusions, brought on by the melancholy identified by Lady Macbeth in 2.2. Macbeth's immediate and uncompromising belief in the ambiguous predictions given by the Apparitions in 4.1 could be the mark of the melancholically deluded. Johann Weyer in *De Praestigiis Daemonum* (1563) suggests that witches are 'deluded by the Devil because of [their] feeble-mindedness and corrupted imagination' (49). If Macbeth's actions throughout the play identify him as having believed in witchcraft and taken advantage of the practices of witchcraft (through ascending to the throne following the prophecy), then in the view of Weyer and several of his contemporaries he can be considered as suffering from madness, of which the devil takes advantage. This reading is reinforced by the visitation of the ghost of Banquo: a ghost which is only seen by Macbeth. Lady Macbeth excuses her husband's sudden change in behaviour by calling it a 'fit' and a 'passion' which has plagued him 'from his youth' (3.4.52, 54, 51). A few decades before Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* Lewes Lavater noted that 'many men doo falsly persuade themselues that they see or heare ghostes' when this really 'proceedeth eyther of melancholie, madnesse, weaknesse of the senses, feare, or of some other perturbation' (9). This is a diagnosis with which Lady Macbeth and the Lords clearly seem to agree in 3.4 of *Macbeth*, since Ross immediately suggests 'his highness is not well' and Lady Macbeth accuses him of succumbing to 'the very painting of [his] fear,' an imaginary dagger and an invisible spirit (3.4.49, 58). Contrastingly, in *Hamlet*, the ghost of Old Hamlet begins the play visible to several characters, including the sceptical, rational Horatio (*Hamlet* 1.1). It is only after Hamlet has begun his mental deterioration that he is visible only to his son: in 3.3, Gertrude cannot see her deceased husband. We do not, despite Gertrude's inability to see the ghost, doubt his existence: we have already had proof of its veracity in Act 1. Banquo's ghost, however, appears only to Macbeth, and as such is very much in doubt. If played without a ghost physically present on stage, as in Kemble's famous 1794 production, then Macbeth is further linked to melancholic delusions (McLuskie, 256-7). Macbeth himself acknowledges that his mental state is not what it could be: when contemplating killing Banquo and Fleance, he complains 'full of scorpions is my mind' (3.2.37) (Fig.2). This visceral, physical imagery highlights the torment that Macbeth feels throughout the play; it is not just the thought of Fleance becoming king which Macbeth fears, but his fear is very specifically connected with melancholia. It is also reminiscent of the 'gnawing of conscience' identified as 'not unlike' that suffered by the insane (Calvin 33). Shakespeare takes every opportunity, therefore, to link

Macbeth with fear, melancholy, and general ‘brainsickness,’ and through brainsickness, to despair over sin.



Fig. 2. Stamford Shakespeare Company ‘Macbeth’ (2015). Rushton here encapsulates the mental anguish, and physical pain, which Macbeth feels from the ‘scorpions’ of his melancholy.

Predestination: A self-fulfilling cycle?

The fear that Macbeth has is linked to his belief in predestination. We know that Macbeth believes in predestination, as from the moment that he hears the witches make their initial predictions, he muses that ‘if chance will have me king, why chance may crown me / Without my stir’ (1.3.146-147). This is something that Macbeth has already dreamt about; his fantasy is fully realised in the witches’ predictions – perhaps this is why the witches have so profound an effect on him compared to Banquo. Although in this apparently pre-Christian setting he refers to predestination as ‘chance’ or fate, it seems to be a predestinate theology which Macbeth follows. Although Macbeth decides to hurry ‘chance’ along, and ‘stir’ himself to kill Duncan, this is mostly the work of Lady Macbeth, who seems to believe less in waiting for chance and more in doing the deed oneself. He seems to believe that what is decided is decided. Although he wishes at the end of 2.2 that the knocking could wake Duncan, he knows that he is already damned for the sin of murder: he invokes the image of a bloody hand which cannot be washed clean but will rather ‘The multitudinous seas incarnadine’ (2.2.63). Since he cannot ‘wash clean’ the sin from his soul, he believes that he is damned according to predestination theology. It is the realisation of this in 2.2 which causes Macbeth’s mental deterioration.

As was pointed out in many treatises of the period, including Timothy Bright’s *Treatise on Melancholy* (1586), mental derangement, and despair could have an adverse effect on those who did not interpret it correctly. Bright notes that: ‘the doctrine of predestination being preposterously conceived may through the fault of the conceiver procure hurt’ (Bright, 195). Bright means that those who consider themselves damned

inflict emotional harm on themselves, as they fall into religious melancholy, and then despair. Macbeth takes his actions as evidence of his damnation, and despairs, going mad with the knowledge that he is condemned, and resolving himself that, since he is already damned, he can continue to sin: the 'hurt' acquired is inflicted upon himself. This despair is what links Macbeth's abhorrent moral behaviour with his mental degeneration. Lady Macbeth is the one who points out this connection to the audience, telling Macbeth that he must stop thinking in 'so brainsickly' a manner. 'It will make us mad' if they think of themselves as sinful. For Lady Macbeth, madness is linked deeply with a belief in reprobation, and therefore she chooses *not* to think about it. To think about election and reprobation wrongly can cause madness. Lady Macbeth chooses to ignore the inner conscience, unlike her husband, who appears to conduct the 'search which divine truth enjoins' (Calvin 159). However, she does end her role in the play in a way that must remind the audience of how Macbeth began it: by attempting to 'wash clean' her soul, via the same allusion of the bloody hand – 'What, will these hands ne'er be clean?' she asks herself (5.1.43). She takes a similar, if longer, projection through the downward spiral. At first, she ignores all calls to delve into her soul and sound out her sins: instead she 'shame[s]' to be as cowardly as her husband (2.2.65). By Act 3, she realises that 'Naught's had, all's spent, / Where our desire is got without content,' proving that she feels the first stings of conscience (3.2.5-6). Eventually this sting of conscience manifests itself in a physical representation – the spot – which she cannot escape.

By making use of Calvin's theology in this way, Shakespeare creates a connection between the reformed way of thinking, which involved inwardly searching yourself for sin, and the madness of despair. This connection was upheld by Calvinists themselves, but Shakespeare seems to use it to make a comment on the futility of such a doctrine, by pointing out through the Macbeths the inevitability of their fate once they begin to despair. Calvin himself acknowledges that his doctrines can be seen as inducing despair. He warns specifically against this: it does not follow that, if we believe we are reprobate, we should 'immediately [...] give up all hope and rush headlong into despair' (Calvin, 229). This, as Calvin explains, is the effect of condemnation upon the reprobate and not the truly elect: the true children of God feel the effect of condemnation differently, by clinging to God's 'mercy, rely upon it, and cover themselves up entirely with it' (Calvin 229). By rushing to believe in his own damnation, Macbeth proves his status as a reprobate, setting himself on a downward course towards madness. By showing Macbeth in this fashion, deprived of any rational ability and rushing towards damnation, Shakespeare shows the terrible effect of sin according to Calvinism: Macbeth is stripped of righteousness, 'that is, integrity and purity' through murder, and then 'sound intelligence' through his despair and madness, and he becomes 'sick at heart' as he tells Seyton, whose name may be a nod back to the diabolical contract inherent in Macbeth's witchcraft (Calvin, 188; 5.3.19).

Calvin maintained a link between confirmation of God's grace in the elect, and a willingness to obey Him. He words this strongly: 'For it is most certain, that where the grace of God reigns, there is also this readiness to obey' (196). The absence of obedience is an indicator of reprobation. It is this obedience which Macbeth was unable to maintain before 2.2, through his inability to finish the prayer, neglecting the spiritual example set

out for him in the liturgy. Macbeth's obedience is not to the king, and through the king to the God by whose Divine Right Duncan rules, the theory of which came to the fore in England under James I & VI, but to his own desires; shown most starkly in the dagger scene. The dagger, a hallucination caused by Macbeth's disordered mind, 'marshall'st' him the way to go (2.1.42). Following the dagger, Macbeth follows the path towards sin. By following this vision, Macbeth follows the devilish influences in his life, rather than those which would draw him away from sinful experience. Macbeth, therefore, by 2.1, is damned already.

The interweaving of these disparate parts – witchcraft, Protestantism, Calvinism, and declining mental health – make *Macbeth* one of Shakespeare's most powerfully moving religious tragedies. By connecting these elements, we can see Shakespeare's underlying concern: that preoccupation with predestination can cause a deterioration into psychic calamity. Macbeth's melancholia leads him to his trust in witchcraft, this witchcraft leads him to sin, which leads him to further despair. In this self-fulfilling cycle, Macbeth is predestined to realize his quasi-suicidal destiny: to 'die with harness on [his] back' (5.5.51).

Works Cited

Primary Literature

- Bright, Timothy. *A Treatise of Melancholy*. John Windet, 1586. *EEBO* <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy3.lib.le.ac.uk>>.
- Calvin, Jean. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Augsburg: Jazzybee Verlag, 2015.
- Galis, Richard. *A Brief Treatise Containing the Most Strange and Horrible Cruelty of Elizabeth Stile alias Rockingham and her Confederates*. J. Alde, 1579. *EEBO* <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy3.lib.le.ac.uk>>.
- James I. *Daemonologie in the form of a dialogue*. Ed. G. B. Harrison. Montana: The Bodley Head, 1924.
- Lavater, Lewes. *Of Ghostes and Spirites walking by Nyght*. Ed. J. Dover Wilson and Mary Yardley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929.
- Luther, Martin. "The Fear of God Is Not Fright." *What Luther Says: A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian*. Ed. Edward Plass. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986.
- Perkins, William. *A Warning Against the Idolatrie of the Last Times*. John Legat, 1601. *EEBO* <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy3.lib.le.ac.uk/home>>.
- Scot, Reginald. *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*. Ed. Hugh Ross Williamson. New York: Centaur Press Ltd, 1964.
- Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Ed. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014.
- *Macbeth*. Ed. Sandra Clark and Pamela Mason. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015.
- *Romeo and Juliet*. Ed. T.J.B Spencer. London: Penguin Group, 2005.

- Wallington, Nehemiah. *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington 1618-1654*. Ed. David Booy. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2007.
- Weyer, Johann. *De Praestigiis Daemonum. On Witchcraft*. Ed. Benjamin G. Kohl and H.C. Erik Midelfort. Transl. John Shea. Cambridge: Pegasus Press, 1998.

Secondary Literature

- Aitchison, Nicholas Boyter. *Macbeth: Man and Myth*. Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2002.
- Bloom, Harold. *Macbeth: Shakespeare Through the Ages*. New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2008.
- Colston, Ken. "Macbeth and the Tragedy of Sin." *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 13.4 (2010): 60-95. *ProjectMUSE* <<http://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxy3.lib.le.ac.uk>>.
- Cox, John D. "Religion and Suffering in *Macbeth*." *Christianity and Literature* 6.2 (2013): 225-240. *SageJournals* <<http://journals.sagepub.com>>.
- Croft, J. Pauline. *King James*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Haigh, Christopher. "The Taming of Reformation: Preachers, Pastors and Parishioners in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England." *The Journal of the Historical Association: History* 85.280 (2000): 572-588. *JSTOR* <www.jstor.org>.
- Herman, Peter C. "'A deed without a name': Macbeth, the Gunpowder Plot, and terrorism." *Journal for Cultural Research* 18.2(2014): 114-131. *Taylor & Francis online* <<http://www.tandfonline.com>>.
- Hunt, Maurice. "Reformation/Counter-Reformation *Macbeth*." *English Studies* 86.5(2005): 379-398. *Taylor & Francis online* <<http://www.tandfonline.com>>.
- Levin, Joanna. "Lady Macbeth and the Daemonologie of Hysteria." *ELH* 69.1(2002): 21-55. *JSTOR* <www.jstor.org>.
- MacDonald, Michael, ed. *Witchcraft and Hysteria in Elizabethan London: Edward Jorden and the Mary Glover Case*. Oxford: Routledge, 1991.
- McLuskie, Kathleen. *Shakespeare Goes Slumming: Harlem '37 and Birmingham '97. A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*. Ed. Barbara Hodgdon and W. B. Worthen. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Limited, 2005.
- Joseph Pearce, *Shakespeare on Love: Seeing the Catholic Presence in 'Romeo and Juliet'*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2013
- Phillips, John. *The Examination and Confession of certaine Wytches*. 1566. *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing*. Ed Marion Gibson. Oxford: Routledge, 2000.

Zusammenfassung

Die spirituelle Welt in *Macbeth* ist äußerst vielschichtig: Elemente aus dem Katholizismus, dem calvinistischen Protestantismus und aus der Hexerei konkurrieren um die Deutungshoheit in einer Umgebung, die weder eindeutig heidnisch noch christlich ist. Macbeths pseudo-Beichte (sein Eingeständnis, dass er das Vaterunser nicht zu Ende bringen kann) markiert den Beginn seines Abstiegs in den Wahn – ein Wahn, in welchem eine spezifisch calvinistische Symbolik in den Vordergrund tritt. Der vorliegende Artikel untersucht Shakespeares Verwendung von Hexerei und Zauberei in *Macbeth* um den Fall seines Titelhelden zu thematisieren. Indem Shakespeare Elemente von Zauberei,

Melancholie sowie calvinistischer Verzweiflung verknüpft, modelliert er das Stück als einen explizit religiös-sozialen Kommentar.

‘MOCK NOT FLESH AND BLOOD’: REFORMED KINGSHIP IN *RICHARD II*

BY

HARVEY WILTSHIRE

At the dramatic midpoint of Shakespeare’s *Richard II* – Act 3, Scene 2 – the discredited and declining king, recently returned from his military campaign in Ireland, reluctantly acknowledges the unpropitious situation at hand: his Welsh allies have dispersed; his uncle, the Duke of York, has capitulated to the rebel forces; and his loyal servants, Bushy and Green, have been summarily executed by Bolingbroke. Facing a kingdom in open rebellion and with his kingship in dire straits, Richard is forced to recognise his humanity for the first time, admitting what he has in common with his subjects, rather than what differentiates him from them:

RICHARD. Cover your heads and mock not flesh and blood
With solemn reverence. Throw away respect,
Tradition, form and ceremonious duty.
For you have but mistook me all this while,
I live with bread like you, feel want,
Taste grief, need friends. Subjected thus,
How can you say to me I am a king? ¹ (3.2.171-177)

By admitting his common needs and emotions – “bread”, “friends”, “want” and “grief” – Richard unpicks the fictions of sacral kingship. Here, Richard’s speech “subject[s]” him, both in the sense that he recognises that his authority has been subjugated by political circumstance and that by acknowledging his humanity he has renounced his sovereignty and become a subject; “the Monarch descends to be Man, and so to be Nothing” (Bullough 379). Moreover, the apposition of “flesh and blood” with the “bread” of humanity – echoing Deuteronomy 8:2-3 and Matthew 4:4 – evokes the sacrament of the Eucharist, figuratively staging an inversion of the Catholic Mass, during which Richard’s corporeal body is drained of its divine significance. As will become clear, in this scene and the one that follows, we witness the first faltering of Richard’s conviction in his divine ordination, which culminates in a profound re-evaluation of his kingship, the effects of which prove to be as much somatic as ontological. Indeed, throughout these pivotal scenes, Shakespeare depicts Richard contemplating the nature and substance of his natural body – his “flesh and blood” – in a way that not only characterises his tragic downfall but, in many ways, condenses the failure of divine right and the transition from the twin body of kingship – both human

¹ All citations from *Richard II* are taken from *The Norton Shakespeare*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (London and New York: Norton, 1997), and are cited in the text by act, scene, and line.

and divine – to the singular body of a subject: from “sacred blood” to simply “blood” (1.1.119; 3.2.166).

Amongst Shakespeare’s dramatic works, *Richard II* is the play that most explicitly examines the crisis of divine right, as the concurrently natural and sacred composition of the king’s body is dramatically unravelled. More specifically, the crisis of kingship depicted in the play is concentrated in repeated examinations of Richard’s blood and, as such, *Richard II* is distinctively and determinedly preoccupied with the meaning and significance of “sacred blood” (1.1.119). By interrogating the sacred and sanguineous substance of kingship, Shakespeare unsettles the seemingly inextricable link between Richard’s “sacred blood” and his right to rule. To adapt J.A. Bryant’s suggestion that “the leading question of the play is not simply ‘What is true kingship?’ but ‘What is the true king?’” (Bryant 427), the play anatomises the corporeal substance of Richard’s sanguineous body to demystify the idea of divine right and to gauge the desacralisation of his deified, kingly flesh.

Consequently, as the play insists that we recognise Richard’s sacred status to be contingent upon his bloody body, Richard’s realisation that his “flesh and blood” are no more deserving of “solemn reverence” (3.2.172) than that of his subjects, resonates with controversial Reformation revisions to the Catholic Mass and Protestant Communion that contested the doctrine of real presence. Both *Richard II* and *The Book of Common Prayer* are replete with the complexities of governing overdetermined images. In *Richard II*, Shakespeare presents a king struggling to sustain his grip on an image of sovereignty sanctioned by God and mandated by divine right and *The Book of Common Prayer* represents a state-sanctioned attempt to eliminate, re-transcribe, and control the vestiges of Catholic symbolism. Accordingly, this paper suggests that a connection can be drawn between Richard’s rejection of his “sacred blood” and his subject’s refusal to revere his “anointed body” (2.1.98), and the ways in which the Anglican liturgy responded to debates concerning adoration of the consecrated elements of the Eucharist.

In this brief study, I will begin by examining the bloody imagery of *Richard II*, in order to suggest that Shakespeare’s references to biblical bloodshed primes us to interpret the significance of blood in the play, and the wider Lancastrian history cycle, in terms of Christ’s sacrifice and the sacrament of his body and blood. Indeed, as J.A. Bryant contends, in *Richard II*, Shakespeare offers an image of Richard as “*microchristus*” (Bryant 425). As will become clear, the connection that Shakespeare establishes between Richard and Christ draws on the particular idea of kingship that is at stake in the play, and the notion that the two “bodies” of the king – natural and politic – are consonant with the belief that Christ is simultaneously man and God. The essay will then turn towards examining some of the ways in which the *Book of Common Prayer*, specifically the Black Rubric, sought to govern the residual traces of Catholic symbolism present in the Anglican Communion, by controlling the bodies of churchgoers. After which, the Black Rubric will be brought into direct dialogue with Shakespeare’s interrogation of Richard’s “sacred blood” and the Earl of Northumberland’s refusal to acknowledge his king’s essential divinity.

However, whilst *Richard II* will be brought into conversation with features of liturgical reform, it is important to stress that this essay is not an attempt to determine Shakespeare’s confessional position, but rather it seeks to emphasise Shakespeare’s

ability to distil the poetic and dramatic potentiality of Eucharistic controversy and liturgical reform. Attempts to fix Shakespeare's works to specific theological or doctrinal assertions, risk grossly misunderstanding the nature of Reformation debate. To paint a broad-brush stroke, English Reform is characterised by heated polemic receding to workable consensus, and unfeasible doctrinal specificity giving way to practical ambiguity. As Anthony B. Dawson puts it, "whilst Christianity was in early modern England, certainly 'authoritative' it was hardly a monologic discourse" (Dawson 242). Indeed, as the principal architect of the first Anglican liturgy, Thomas Cranmer encouraged diversity by surrounding himself with a coterie of divergent reforming voices, which reflected the complex and shifting spectrum of Reformation theology. Furthermore, revisions to the Anglican liturgy never simply represented a wholesale overhaul; amendments to the *Book of Common Prayer* could be substitutions or translations of existing liturgical material, and sometimes these revisions were retracted only to reappear in subsequent editions. Bringing Shakespeare's work into dialogue with the Reformation can feel like building on unstable or shifting ground; perceived liturgical echoes in Shakespeare's plays can be quickly drowned out by the rich diversity of reforming voices and complicated by the unstable liturgical landscape in which they were written. Ultimately, whilst Shakespeare's dramatic works disclose an attentiveness to biblical and theological correspondences, his plays routinely "subordinate religious matter to the particular aesthetic demands of the work in hand" (Shell 3). Accordingly, even as Shakespeare draws on the relative immanence of religious discourse in early modern England, his plays and protagonists are not reducible to it.

"Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries"

Shakespeare's first tetralogy is remarkably bloody: beginning with the Duke of Exeter's incendiary "we mourn in black, why mourn we not in blood?" (1.1.17) at the opening of *Henry VI, Part I*, Shakespeare orchestrates a bloody crescendo that concludes with *Richard III*, which includes over sixty references to blood and bleeding, only three less than *King John*, which is the bloodiest of all Shakespeare's plays.² Thus, when Shakespeare wrote *Richard II*, returning to "the beginning of the long sequence of events culminating in the tyranny of *Richard III*," (355) as Bullough puts it, blood must surely have been on his mind. Indeed, in the first part of *Henry VI*, we find Shakespeare's only other explicit reference to Cain and Abel: the Bishop of Winchester inciting his brother Gloucester to "be cursed Cain, | To slay thy brother Abel" (*1 Henry VI* 1.3.40-1). Whilst Shakespeare undoubtedly made use of Holinshed's and Hall's respective chronicles when writing *Richard II*, neither text frames the murder of Richard's uncle in biblical terms or bloody language. Indeed, of all Shakespeare's purported source texts, only Samuel Daniel's *The Civil Warre* and the anonymous *Thomas of Woodstock* come close to the volume of blood found in *Richard II* and in both cases the blood is demonstrably

² Maveety observes that "Blood occurs 44 times in *King John*, 38 in *Richard II*. If one includes such related words as *bloody*, *bleeding*, *bleed*, *bleeds*, *bleedest*, *bleedeth*, *Richard II* ranks third (*King John*, 66; *Richard III*, 63; *Richard II*, 47), still ahead of such bloody plays as *Macbeth*, 42; *Hamlet*, 28; *Lear*, 25; and *Julius Caesar*, 31" (Maveety 181-2).

unbiblical. Accordingly, it seems that Shakespeare's frequent use of blood, specifically his allusions to biblical blood, in *Richard II* is very much his own vision.

In the opening scene of *Richard II*, Henry Bolingbroke's allusion to the spilt blood of Abel introduces a rich network of scriptural allusions and initiates a profusion of bloody and biblical imagery. At the centre of this opening scene, Bolingbroke accuses Thomas Mowbray of the murder of the Duke of Gloucester:

BOLINGBROKE. [...] he did plot the Duke of Gloucester's death,
Suggest his soon-believing adversaries,
And consequently, like a traitor coward,
Sluiced out his innocent soul through streams of blood,
Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries,
Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth,
To me for justice and rough chastisement; (1.1.100-106)

Much more than simply indicting Mowbray, Bolingbroke's accusation establishes an analogous relationship between Man's first murder and Gloucester's death. Here, in Bolingbroke's evocation of Gloucester's blood, which "cries | Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth | To me for justice," we hear the clear echo of Genesis 4:10, in which Abel's blood "cryeth unto me from the ground." As Scott Schofield suggests, "by comparing the death of Gloucester to that of the Old Testament Abel, Bolingbroke forces us to read this particular medieval encounter in Biblical terms" (40).

However, as both Schofield and Stanley R. Maveety acknowledge, the Cain and Abel analogue is, at best, an imperfect fit; the murder of Abel is a crime of familial blood and Thomas Mowbray is not a blood relative of Gloucester (Schofield 41; Maveety 179). Furthermore, Bolingbroke's claim, that Gloucester's blood "cries [...] to me", misconstrues his role in the necessary execution of justice. In Genesis, Abel's blood cries out to God and so in the case of the Gloucester murder, his blood should cry out to Richard, who is God's "deputy anointed" (1.2.38) and, therefore, the sole arbiter of earthly justice. Ultimately, Bolingbroke's impeachment of Mowbray is only a thinly veiled accusation of Richard; as Gaunt later clarifies, Richard was responsible for his uncle's murder: "for God's substitute [...] hath caused his death" (1.2.37-39). With some irony, Bolingbroke's "to me" foreshadows his eventual rise to kingship and his role in bringing Richard to justice. Imperfect though the fit may be, however, Shakespeare's placement of the Cain and Abel narrative in the opening scene of the play urges us to read *Richard II* alongside and through the tale of Man's first murder. Moreover, the evocation of Abel's blood embroils Richard and the two appellants in a narrative of biblical bloodshed, drawing clear and implied correspondences between Shakespeare's protagonists and those from scripture. First, Richard is paired with God, adjudicating over the murder of Gloucester with divine authority; then with Cain, as his involvement in Gloucester's death is brought to light; and finally, with Christ, as Richard reframes his allies' disloyalty, his deposition, and his death, in terms of Christ's betrayal at the hands of Judas, his trial under Pilate, and death on the cross. Seen in this way, part of understanding Richard's passage through the play is grasping why Shakespeare places such emphasis on the parallels between the play's protagonists and scriptural analogues.

As Adrian Streete observes, "Christ has always offered Western thinkers a way of conceptualising the relationship between, amongst other things, sign and signified,

matter and spirit, the subject and the divine [...] central to this is the construction of Christ as simultaneously human and divine” (Streete 12). With this in mind, the association of Richard with Christ plays an important role in illuminating Richard’s conception of kingship, specifically the belief that the monarch’s authority was not only sanctioned by God, but was dependent on the king’s own intrinsic divinity. The initial image of kingship, presented in the opening scenes of *Richard II*, is thus one of humanity and divinity combined. However, throughout this play and the wider Lancastrian history cycle, Shakespeare depicts the attempts of successive royal protagonists to assert control over the faltering image of kingship and the transition from a model of royal authority legitimised by divine right, to one obtained by political strategy and maintained by public approval. For Richard, establishing his analogous relationship with Christ works to maintain his control over the image of kingship; references to his own body and blood become, therefore, a means by which he can affirm this relationship, authenticate his divine ordination, and sustain the fictions of his kingship.

Like all aetiological narratives, the story of Cain and Abel relates a beginning, a point of departure: the spilt blood of Abel sets humanity on a course of sin that is partially reconciled in Noah’s covenant with God and finally overcome in Christ’s crucifixion. Analogously, the “sluicing” of Gloucester’s blood is the myth of origin in Shakespeare’s dramatic chronicle; Gloucester’s blood violently courses into *Richard II* and, as Bolingbroke declares, not only cries out to be heard but also demands to be answered. Likewise, the broad narrative connection between Abel’s blood and the blood of the crucifixion presages the spilling of Richard’s blood, as the inevitable consequence of his involvement in Gloucester’s death. It is, therefore, clear in *Richard II* that Shakespeare was not only influenced by the blood of the Cain and Abel narrative, but that he was willing to make use of the structural similarities between the Genesis narrative and the period of history covered by this play.

In the deposition scene, Richard rebukes his former supporters for betraying him as “Judas did to Christ” (4.1.171), which reiterates his earlier reference to Bushy, Bagot, and Green as “Three Judases, each thrice worse than Judas” (3.2.132). Richard goes on to accuse those who have passively allowed Bolingbroke to claim the throne, associating their treason with Pontius Pilate:

RICHARD. Though some of you with Pilate wash your hands
Showing an outward pity; yet you Pilates
Have here deliver’d me to my sour cross,
And water cannot wash away your sin. (4.1.239-242)

As Richard is forced to relinquish his crown, each of these allusions solidifies the Richard-Christ analogue, repeatedly asserting his claim to divine right, whilst prefiguring his inexorable death. At the heart of the deposition scene, the Bishop of Carlisle even forewarns that England shall be called “the field of Golgotha” (4.1.144) if Bolingbroke becomes king, figuring Richard’s death as a Christ-like execution in the land of “dead men’s skulls” (4.1.144). When Queen Isabel later recalls Richard’s final journey to London, the image of his former subjects throwing “dust and rubbish” (5.2.6) on his head evokes Christ’s arrival in Jerusalem. Finally, Pierce of Exton’s too-late

realisation that Richard was “as full of valour as of royal blood” (5.5.113), recalls Matthew 27:54, in which the Roman centurion, overseeing Christ’s crucifixion, remorsefully acknowledges that “truly this man was the son of God.” Whilst Richard’s Christological journey does not absolutely resemble the events leading up to Christ’s crucifixion, the features of Richard’s demise – his final journey into London, his betrayal, the deposition/trail scene, his death, and final ascent into heaven – are instantly recognisable.

At the conclusion of the play, the Cain and Abel, and Christ analogues come full circle. With his dying breath, Richard rebukes his murderer for “stain[ing] the king’s own land” with his royal blood (5.5.110), as his soul mounts to heaven and his “gross flesh sinks downward” (5.5.112). Here, Richard’s staining blood completes the play’s web of references to Abel’s spilt blood, whilst also evoking Christ’s ascension. Indeed, in the final speech of the play, Shakespeare again reiterates these biblical associations, when he has Bolingbroke – now Henry IV – liken Exton to Cain, commanding him to “wander through shades of night” (5.6.43).³ In this final biblical reference, Richard is ironically figured as Abel, murdered by Exton/Cain, which further draws on the longstanding identification of Abel with Christ.

Richard II is not Shakespeare’s most violent play, but it is certainly steeped in blood. Repeated references to Richard’s blood compel us to understand his conception of kingship in terms of the relationship between his supposed divinity and the materiality and humortality of his body; following Bolingbroke’s allusion to the blood of Abel, subsequent references to Christ establish blood sacrifice as a central motif of the play. As Richard likens himself to Christ, the inevitability of his death is foreshadowed, but it also brings the relationship between “matter and spirit, the subject and divine” (Streete 12), which sits at both the heart of sixteenth century Eucharistic controversy and the play’s depiction of Richard’s faltering kingship, into focus. Having examined the way in which Shakespeare’s depiction of Richard’s blood sits at the heart of the play’s scriptural and Christological allusions, this essay will now explore the ways in which Shakespeare’s depiction of the breakdown of Richard’s sacral kingship evokes period anxieties and debates surrounding the sacramental elements of the Mass, and the nascent Anglican confession’s attempts to articulate and assert its own distinct doctrine.

“Fearful Bending” and “Reverent Kneeling”

When in *Richard II*, the Earl of Northumberland fails to kneel before his king, his blatant irreverence is clearly intended to make a statement about the perceived nature of Richard’s kingship. Indeed, the play has primed both readers and audiences to understand Richard’s conception of kingship as sacramental, founded on the belief that a real, divine presence resides within his “anointed body” and “sacred blood” (2.1.98; 1.1.119). In light of this, Northumberland’s contempt escalates from simply being disrespectful to representing a public rejection of Richard’s sacramental kingship. Whilst it has been recognised that “kneeling is a wide Shakespearean preoccupation” (Seymour 41), the instances of kneeling that can be found in *Richard II* have received

³ In Genesis 4:13, God banishes Cain to wander the earth as a “fugitive and a vagabond”.

scant attention. However, when Northumberland's refusal to kneel is read as a part of the play's wider consideration of Richard's sacred body, this seemingly innocuous gesture begins to resonate with period debates concerning the sacred nature of the Eucharistic elements, and the efforts of the Anglican church to limit and transcribe the vestiges of Catholic symbolism and doctrine.

Standing before Henry Percy, the Earl of Northumberland, Richard reproaches his subject's brazen irreverence:

RICHARD. We are amazed, and thus long have we stood
To watch the fearful bending of thy knee,
Because we thought ourself thy lawful king.
And if we be, how dare thy joints forget
To pay their awful duty to our presence?
If we be not, show us the hand of God
That hath dismissed us from our stewardship,
For well we know no hand of blood and bone
Can grip the sacred handle of our sceptre
Unless he do profane, steal or usurp. (3.3.71-80)

Here, Northumberland's disregard for the relationship between "fearful bending" and "awful duty" prompts Richard to construe this discourtesy as an affront to his 'lawful' kingship. Indeed, as Richard's rhetorical interrogation reveals, Northumberland's insolence strikes directly at the sacred composition of the king and calls his divinely sanctioned authority into question. Accordingly, this refusal to kneel provokes Richard to remind those gathered that "no hand of blood and bone" can lawfully lay claim to his throne; to Richard, it would seem, the dutiful kneeling of his subjects represents an affirmation of his divine substance. Not only does Richard remind the negligent Northumberland of his duty as a subject, but he insists upon his sacral kingship to make clear that any attempt to question his authority is as much profanity as treason. Whilst several studies have investigated the significance of early modern kneeling and bodily posture through theories of embodied cognition, by examining the power of posture to stimulate feelings of submission and devotion in the minds of laypeople and playgoers, I would like to suggest that the liturgical significance of kneeling provides a new context through which we can encounter Shakespeare's examination of Richard's kingship.

During the sixteenth century, the creation of a single *Book of Common Prayer* attempted to unify the practices and theology of the nascent Anglican confession. By reducing the number of texts that were needed to complete the rites and ceremonies of the Church, the *Book of Common Prayer* provided a single order of public worship that could be followed consistently and uniformly in all churches throughout England. Yet much more than simply representing a state-sanctioned effort to orchestrate and control the rites, ceremonies and symbolisms of the church, the *Book of Common Prayer* – as Alan Jacobs suggests – "came into being as an instrument of social and political control" (7). Furthermore, as Judith Maltby stresses, it is important to remember that "the *Prayer Book* is first and foremost a 'liturgy'; that is 'work', intended [...] to be used, performed, experienced" (3). In a number of ways, however, it is more helpful to understand the *Book of Common Prayer* as a "work in progress" that is constantly altered and revised. Indeed, the revisions made to the *Book of Common Prayer* between 1549 and 1662 bear

witness to the contentious and divisive nature of Reformation theology, particularly the imagery and meaning of the sacrament of the Eucharist. Whilst the *Book* standardised the language and words of the Eucharist, the real difficulty lay in not being able to control the interpretation of the Word and, most significantly, the symbolism of the Sacrament.

In response to an Order of Convocation that required congregants to receive the Sacrament “under both kinds”, *The Order of the Communion* was published in 1548. For centuries, it had been common practice for the laity to receive Communion both infrequently and only in the form of bread, so the instruction to receive both the bread and the wine was new territory for the majority and, as Alan Jacobs explains, required “an English liturgy that would explain to laypersons what precisely they were and were not doing when they consumed the elements” (17). In the mind of Archbishop Cranmer, who was instrumental to the genesis of both the *Order* and the *Book of Common Prayer*, what the laity certainly were not doing during the Eucharist was consuming a transubstantiated host. Consequently, as neither a simple translation of the Catholic Mass nor a replacement of it, but rather a series of “necessary interpolations” (Brook 23) into the structure of the Mass, the *Order* sought to reinterpret and rearticulate an existing Catholic liturgy in line with Protestant doctrine. One way in which the *Order* attempted to achieve this was by choreographing the movements and gestures of the Priest and his congregation in order to guarantee, at least in outward show, the primacy of Reformed doctrine. For example, two rubrics in the *Order* stipulate that the Sacrament should be consecrated “without any levation or lifting up”, and that the congregation should receive the Communion “reverently kneeling.” In contrast to this new, Reformed service, an important feature of the Catholic Mass had been the elevation of the Host at the point of transubstantiation, in order that those gathered could witness the real presence of Christ, even if they did not consume his body. As Protestants rejected the doctrine of real presence during the Eucharist, there was no need to elevate the bread. Accordingly, the *Order* of 1548 undertook to eradicate the doctrinal corruptions and distractions of Catholicism. In many ways, this combining of Reformed doctrine, church ceremony, and the individual bodies of worshippers sets the tone of the English liturgy for the next hundred years.

Following some amendments, the *Order* was incorporated into the first *Book of Common Prayer*, published in 1549. However, many committed Reformers felt that the *Book* retained too many vestiges of Catholicism. Consequently, revisions began almost immediately and by 1552 an amended *Book* was introduced. One significant addition, now known as the Black Rubric, was interpolated into the 1552 *Book* to eliminate the possibility of interpreting the consecration of the bread and wine as transubstantiation. To the most ardent evangelicals, kneeling to receive the bread and wine represented an unacceptable level of reverence and adoration – unacceptable because it wrongly acknowledged and promoted belief in real presence following the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into Christ’s body and blood. To less radically Protestant minds such kneeling simply signified an entirely appropriate level of humility and respect. After much dissension and debate on this issue, a compromise was reached – kneeling would be allowed, but only with certain qualifications. Accordingly, the Black Rubric prescribed the necessary caveats:

Whereas it is ordeyned in the booke of common prayer, in the administracion of the lords supper, that the communicants knelying shoulde receyve the holye communion, whiche thyng beyng well mente, for the sygnificacion of the humble and gratefull acknowledgyng of the benefits of Christ, given unto the worthy receyver, and to avoyde the prophanacion and disordre, whiche about the holy communion might be thought or taken otherwyse, we dooe declare that it is not ment thereby, that any adoracion is donne, or oughte to bee doone, eyther unto the sacramental bread or wyne there bodily receyved, or unto anye reall and essencial presence there beeyng of christs natural fleshe and bloude. For as concernynge the sacramentall bread and wyne, they remaine styll in theyr very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored, for that were idolatrye to be abhorred of all faythfull Christians. (Cranmer 102)

What the Black Rubric shows is that the task of eradicating the doctrine of real presence from the Eucharist relied as much upon changes to the enactment and performance of the liturgy as it did upon reforming Catholic doctrine. Such clarifications fundamentally changed the nature of the ceremony by eliminating any residual traces of transubstantiation. If congregants chose to kneel whilst receiving the Communion, there was to be no doubt that they were kneeling with the appropriate Protestant intention and not, as John Knox put it, the “develyshe sophistrie” of Catholicism (Knox 27).

Early additions to the *Book of Common Prayer* attempted to exert control over the physical bodies of ordinary churchgoers. Any symbolism that remained had to be, and was, strictly controlled. Indeed, whilst the Black Rubric was removed from the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer*, the Puritan preoccupation with the control of bodies rears its head repeatedly alongside and through subsequent revisions to the English liturgy. Whilst the reign of Elizabeth I saw the removal of the Black Rubric from the *Book of Common Prayer* and a return to the less Reformed language of the 1549 *Book*, evangelical detractors were never completely silenced.

In 1603, for example, a faction of Puritan ministers petitioned James I, demanding further radical reforms to *The Book of Common Prayer*. Included within their catalogue of popish offences to be removed, amended or qualified, Puritan leaders called for the prohibition of bowing whenever Jesus’ name was uttered: “[o]ur humble suit then unto Your Majesty is, that [...] no ministers [be] charged to teach their people to bow at the name of Jesus” (Fuller X.22). Whilst the puritan lobbyists were unable to secure this specific demand, their petition culminated in the Hampton Court Conference of 1604. Whilst the *Book of Common Prayer* experienced a period of relative stability during the reign of Charles I, in 1645 Parliament abolished the *Book of Common Prayer* entirely and replaced it with the *Directory for the Publique Worship of God*, the greater proportion of which is dedicated to instructing ministers in what to say, the manner in which doctrine is to be expressed, how to support doctrine, and how congregants should act during services, including guidelines for when not to kneel. However, as Henry Hammond observes in his *View of the New Directory*, published in 1646, the *Directory* “purposely avoyded [...] the ceremonies of kneeling in the communion” (10). Nevertheless, that the *Directory* specifically prohibits kneeling during the funeral rites highlights the consistently controversial nature of kneeling during the performance of the Reformed liturgy.

Following the interregnum, the use of the *Book of Common Prayer* was officially restored in 1660. However, at the Savoy Conference of 1661, an unsuccessful attempt to close gaping rifts within the church concluded with the revision of the *Book* being delegated to Convocation. The resultant *Book* received Royal Assent on 19th May 1662 and came into use several months later. Whilst certainly not the most significant revision of the *Book of Common Prayer*, amongst a number of additions and amendments made by the Convocation of 1661, was the return of the – albeit slightly modified – Black Rubric.

Since its inception and throughout numerous revisions, the *Book of Common Prayer* has always represented an effort to control the symbolism of the Eucharist, by standardising the language of the liturgy and by exerting control over the bodies of churchgoers. Indeed, whilst the guidelines that sought to govern the “decent ministracion” of common worship were variously interpolated, removed, revised and reintroduced, the *Book of Common Prayer* can, amongst other things, be defined as an attempt to assert authority over the contested symbolism of the Eucharist by asserting authority over the movement and posture of those receiving it.

As Laura Seymour explains, during the 1590s “debates among clergy were becoming particularly heated over whether kneeling could produce submissive thoughts in worshipper’s and subject’s minds [...] the official Elizabethan line being that it could – and did” (Seymour 42). For example, Gervase Babington, the Bishop of Llandaff and later Bishop of Worcester, asserts that “outward gesture dooth helpe our inward heart, and stir us up rather unto reverence as changing of garments, kneeling & bowing” (159). Moreover, in *The Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine at Large*, Lancelot Andrewes – the Anglican, but puritan-leaning, Bishop of Winchester – discusses kneeling in relation to the ‘nature and dignity’ of the Sacraments. Andrewes reasons that “kneeling and humble adoration is most fit, and that such a gesture, as doth signifie our humble reverence” (217). These discussions and debates illustrate that even when the authorised liturgy of the Anglican church made no direct comment on the significance of kneeling during the Eucharist, it nevertheless continued to occupy the minds of leading Anglican prelates. Throughout these debates, the significance of kneeling is always and inherently bound to the sacramental, divine substance of the bread and wine during the Communion – in simple terms, an individual’s stance on the significance of kneeling reveals their attitude towards the doctrine of real presence. Consequently, the ability of the established Anglican church to manoeuvre and control the bodies of participants in worship was not only a matter of image-governance and their ability to successfully control residual Catholic symbolism, but it was crucial to asserting their own Reformed theology.

If, as Amy Cook argues, the positioning and posturing of bodies – especially kneeling – has the power to produce submissive feelings, kneeling certainly had the power not only to represent but also affirm early modern hierarchies (Cook 135). However, kneeling – and importantly refusals to kneel – also represented the potential for power and control to be subverted and troubled. For example, during the late 1590s, the Lincolnshire Vicar William Hieron “refused to minister the Communion to such as kneele untill he hath lifted them up with his hands & then delivered them the sacrament” (qtd. in Maltby 48). The difference between kneeling or not kneeling whilst receiving

the Eucharist might seem trivial, but what lay behind these gestures were significant issues of doctrine.

When, in *Richard II*, Northumberland refuses to kneel before his king, the juxtaposition of his failure to show due reverence and Richard's attempt to defend divine authority, cannot have gone unnoticed by early modern audiences. In the central, pivotal scenes of the play, when Richard first acknowledges his unsanctified, human "flesh and blood" and then attempts to reassert the authority of his sacred "blood," Shakespeare couches Richard's downfall in language that emphasises, and ultimately undermines, the sacred and Eucharistic dimensions of his kingship. Set amongst a rich network of biblical and Christological allusions, which simultaneously sustain and subvert Richard's conception of sacral kingship, Richard's instruction to his supporters to "mock not flesh and blood" and his declaration that "no hand of blood and bone | Can grip the sacred handle of our sceptre" indicate a trans-substantive shift in the perceived divinity of his earthly body. At the same time, Shakespeare's depiction of Richard and the collapse of his reign resonates with doctrinal and liturgical reforms concerning the process of administering the Eucharist in the Anglican church and the efforts of Protestant reformers to assert and enforce their doctrinal convictions.

Works Cited

Primary Literature

- Andrewes, Lancelot. "Of Outward Reverence in God's Worship." *The Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine at Large*. London: Roger Norton, 1650.
- Anon. *A Directory for Publique Worship of God Throughout the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland together With an Ordinance of Parliament for the Taking Away of the Book of Common-Prayer*. Oxford: G.M. and I.F., 1645.
- Anon. *Thomas of Woodstock*, ed. George Parfitt and Simon Shepherd. Nottingham: Nottingham Drama Texts, 1977.
- Cranmer, Thomas. *The Boke of Common Praier, and Administracion of the Sacramentes, and Other Rites and Ceremonies in the Church of Englande*. London: Richard Grafton, 1552.
- Fuller, Thomas. *The Church-History of Britain from the Birth of Jesus Christ Until the Year M.DC.XLVIII*. London: John Williams, 1655.
- Gervase Babington. *Certaine Plaine, Briefe, and Comfortable Notes*. London: Thomas Charde, 1592.
- Hammond, Henry. *A View of the New Directorie and a Vindication of the Ancient Liturgie of the Church of England*. Oxford: Henry Hall, 1646.
- Knox, John. *A Faythfull Admonition Made by John Knox, Unto the Professours of Gods Truthe in England Whereby Thou Mayest Learne Howe God Wyll Haue His Church Exercised With Troubles, and How He Hefendeth it in the Same*. Emden: Egidius van der Erve, 1554.

Shakespeare, William. *Richard II*. *Norton Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus. London and New York: Norton, 1997.

Secondary Literature

- Brook, Stella. *The Language of the Book of Common Prayer*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1965.
- Bryant, J.A. "The Linked Analogies of *Richard II*." *The Sewanee Review* 65.3 (1957): 420-433.
- Bullough, Geoffrey. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. 3. London: Routledge, 1960.
- Dawson, Anthony B. "The Secular Theatre." *Shakespeare and Religious Change*. Ed. Kenneth J.E. Graham and Philip D. Collington. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 238-60.
- Egan, Michael. *The Tragedy of Richard II: A Newly Authenticated Play by William Shakespeare*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006.
- Jacobs, Alan. *The Book of Common Prayer: A Biography*. Princeton, NJ. and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2013.
- Maltby, Judith. *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 1998.
- Maveety, Stanley R. "A Second Fall of Cursed Man: The Bold Metaphor in *Richard II*." *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 72.2 (1973): 175-193.
- Ribner, Irving. *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1957.
- Seymour, Laura. "Doth Not Brutus Bootless Kneel': Kneeling, Cognition and Destructive Plasticity in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*'." *Theatre, Performance and Cognition: Languages, Bodies and Ecologies*. Ed. Rhonda Blair and Amy Cook. London: Bloomsbury, 2016. 40-53
- Schofield, Scott. "Cain's Crime of Secrecy and the Unknowable Book of Life: The Complexities of Biblical Referencing in *Richard II*." *Shakespeare, the Bible, and the Form of the Book: Contested Scriptures*. Ed. Travis DeCook and Alan Galey. Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2012. 40-56.
- Schuler, Robert M. "Holy Dying in *Richard II*." *Renaissance and Reformation* 30.3 (2006-7): 51-88.
- Shell, Alison. *Shakespeare and Religion*. London: Methuen, 2010.
- Streete, Adrian. *Protestantism and Drama in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009.

Zusammenfassung

Shakespeares *Richard II* widmet sich zentral der Bedeutung und Bedeutsamkeit von "heiligem Blut" (1.1.119). Tatsächlich scheint das Stück die Zuschauer dazu anzuhalten, Richards leibliche Existenz als Grundlage für seine göttlich sanktionierte Herrschaft anzuerkennen. Der Artikel argumentiert daher, dass Richards Blut ein Schlüssel ist um zu verstehen, wie in diesem Stück königliche Autorität hinterfragt und unterminiert wird. Die Einsicht Richards im Laufe des Stücks, dass sein "Leib und Blut"

ebenso wenig verdient, als göttlich verehrt zu werden, wie der Leib und das Blut seiner Untertanen, kann als Teil frühneuzeitlicher Kontroversen über die Reformierung der katholischen Messe und des protestantischen Abendmahls gelesen werden, die das Konzept der Transsubstantiation und der Realpräsenz Christi in der Eucharistie in Zweifel ziehen. Neben Shakespeares Verhandlung biblischer Analogien diskutiert der Artikel außerdem die Weigerung des Earl of Northumberland, vor König Richard niederzuknien (Akt 3, Szene 3). Die Tatsache, dass diese zentrale Zurückweisung göttlich sanktionierter königlicher Herrschaft im Stück in den Kontext der Debatten um ‚geweihtes Blut‘ gestellt wird, legt nahe, dass Shakespeares *Richard II* als Kommentar auf Prozesse der Revision des *Book of Common Prayer* und Bestrebungen der erstarkenden Anglikanischen Kirche gelesen werden kann, die Körper der Gläubigen zu kontrollieren.

REFORMATION AND TRANSFORMATION: ON RELIGION, POLITICS, AND ECONOMICS IN *KING JOHN*

BY

EIKE KRONSHAGE

Strong Possessions?

At the opening of Shakespeare's *King John*, a French ambassador arrives at the English court and requests the king to abdicate. John refuses, sends off the ambassador, and prepares for war against the French. When John's mother, Queen Eleanor, asks her son, how he will "manage" this conflict, he simply replies: "Our strong possession and our right for us" (1.1.37-39). Knowing well that John's lineal right is all but impeccable, his mother immediately replies: "Your strong possession much more than your right / Or else it must go wrong with you and me" (1.1.40-41), after which John begins to realize that if, as his mother claims, the fortunes of war depend on his possessions, the royal coffers better be full. Therefore, he declares after a short consideration that "*Our* abbeys and *our* priories shall pay / This expedition's charge" (1.1.48-49; my italics). In having John use the same possessive pronoun that he used to talk about "*our* strong possession," Shakespeare brings together the three central issues of the play: the political (John's contested right to the throne), the religious (large-scale expropriation of abbeys, priories, and monasteries as a kind of proto-reformist action), and the economic (insufficient public coffers and consequent commodification).

The characters in the play each represent one of the three issues respectively: Arthur (the king's older brother's son and pretender to the throne) the political conflict; Rome's legate, Pandulph, the religious one; and the Bastard with his remarkable soliloquy on commodity in 2.1 the economic conflict. I argue in this paper that *King John* is not solely a religious, a political, or an economic play, but a play that investigates the relationship between these three discourses. That Shakespeare does not treat them separately shows that he must have seen the interrelationship between the religious turmoil of post-Reformation England, the political fragility of the Tudor monarchy with an heirless Queen Elizabeth on the throne, repeatedly at war with Continental powers (most prominently with Catholic Spain), and the development of a new economic system that brought in its wake a radical transformation of everyday life.¹

¹ For a concise overview of the impact of the social, religious, and political changes on everyday life, see the invaluable book by Keith Wrightson on *English Society, 1580-1680*, particularly the second part, "The Course of Social Change" (91-185), which contains subchapters on all three aspects of change discussed in this article: "Economic change" (99-107), "Religion and Magic" (160-165), and "Central Government and County Justices" (117-121).

Shakespeare's play is a palimpsest that aligns two different temporal layers: that of its historical plot about a medieval king who reigned from 1199 to 1216, and that of its historical origin as a play written and performed in early modern England (cf. Lammers 2012). What facilitates Shakespeare's palimpsestuous alignment is the shared history of reformist endeavors in both epochs. Large parts of Shakespeare's play focus on John's renunciation of Rome's authority, while the play leaves out, for instance, the 1215 signing of the Magna Charta, which was arguably the achievement John's reign is primarily remembered for today. Thus, John appears as a reformist *avant la lettre* and a direct precursor of the Protestant Tudor kings Henry VIII, Edward VI, and the Tudor queen Elizabeth I. Shakespeare appears to use the historical material to explore the impact of the Reformation on contemporary political and economic life.

The same kind of temporal superimposition occurs in Karl Marx's historical analysis of early modern England in *Capital*. With characteristic acuity, Marx locates the birth of capital and capitalist production in Shakespeare's time, outlining capitalism and its effects on social life as he witnessed it in mid-nineteenth century England.² As he explains in his chapter on "The So-Called Primitive Accumulation" (MECW 35: 704-751),³ he believed that "in England alone" the formation of a capitalist class had "the classic form" (35: 707). I am not suggesting that Shakespeare was a Marxist *avant la lettre*. Yet, I contend that they both apprehended the connection between religion, politics, and economy in early modern England. For Marx, the formation of a society always happened at the expense of another society, and Shakespeare's *King John*, I argue, illustrates exactly the violent forces that Marx identified as the midwife of capitalist society (35: 739). From this perspective, the play can be read as one of (attempted) transformation: religious (from Catholicism to Protestantism), political (from royal to bourgeois power), and economic (from feudal to capitalist economy).

A Marxian reading of *King John* is facilitated by the fact that Marx knew the play quite well and occasionally quoted from it in his own work (cf. Smith 3). Furthermore, Marx admired the playwright, and in *Capital* quotes from many of his other plays: *Timon of Athens*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *1 Henry IV*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

² In a recent essay, Wolfgang Streeck briefly and succinctly describes Marx's project in the historical chapters of *Capital* as follows: "Wer den Kapitalismus verstehen will, so Marx, muss historisch-empirisch die Auflösung der ihm vorausgegangenen Gesellschaftsformation, also des europäischen agrarischen Feudalismus, verstanden haben und begrifflich-theoretisch in der Lage sein, gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse als Produktionsverhältnisse zu erkennen – das ist, was Marx als 'historischen Materialismus' der idealistischen Jungferzeugung von Gesellschaften in retro-fingierten Gründungsmythen entgegensetzt" ("According to Marx, whoever wants to understand capitalism, must historically and empirically have understood the disintegration of the previous social formations, i.e. European agrarian feudalism; also, they must be able to conceptionally and theoretically understand social relations as relations of production – that is the 'Historical Materialism' that Marx offers in reply to the idealized parthenogenesis of societies as declared in retroactive, fictitious origin myths." Streeck 114; my translation).

³ All quotations from *Capital* in English are from Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling's translation in *Marx-Engels Collected Works* (MECW). Whenever I found it necessary, for the sake of clarity, to quote from the German original, I used the *Marx-Engels Werke* (MEW) edition.

Marx also mentions the curious case of an anonymously published 1581 book that had been ascribed, for a long time, to Shakespeare due to the fact that the author's initials on the title page were "W.S.". The book develops its argument in form of a dialogue: *A Compendious or briefe examination of certayne ordinary complaints, of diuers of our country men in these our dayes*. It deals largely with "the influence of the depreciation of money in the 16th century, on the different classes of society" (MECW 35: 732), but also with those questions that I will return to later: of enclosure and its relation to dearth ("these Inclosiers doe undoe us all"), the increase in sheep pastures ("all is taken up for Pasture [...] and where threescore persons or upwarde had their livings, now one man with his Cattell hath all"), and the concomitant decay of towns ("Cities which were heretofore well Inhabited and Wealthy, [...] are nowe for lacke of Occupiers fallen to great poverty and desolation") (Anon. Fol. 4). Even though the book was not written by Shakespeare, the attribution shows that generations of readers gave the Bard sufficient credit for his economic expertise. As S. S. Praver has convincingly demonstrated, Marx's admiration reached the level of a "Shakespeare-cult" (395), and he alluded to Shakespeare's "literary works to suggest the complex relationships and interconnections which he sees between the different activities of men" (72) – in this case, I argue, between religious, political, and economic activities. As one of Shakespeare's earlier plays, *King John* bespeaks the playwright's longstanding endeavor to explore the changes which were fermenting in the religiously agitated climate of his time. We see how he repeatedly returned to the topic in his later plays, especially in late tragedies like *Timon of Athens* (cf. Kronshage 2017). Clearly, the question of social transformation (including all three aspects discussed in this paper) must have been of the utmost importance to the playwright, as it occupied him throughout his career. Thirdly, it is not completely surprising that both Marx and Shakespeare in their works explore the interrelation of the same three aspects governing English life, since they both based their texts on the same historical sources. For his histories, Shakespeare most likely used the 1587 edition of Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, prefixed to which was William Harrison's *Description of Elizabethan England*. In *Capital*, Marx quotes a longer passage from the *Description*,⁴ in which Harrison delineates both the process of enclosure and the creation of pasturage, "townes pulled downe for sheepe-walks" (Harrison 205), the "Transformation of arable land into sheepwalks" (MECW 35: 709). Moreover, Harrison's full title shows that he endows commodities with some agency in the course of English history.⁵ Sheep's wool was such a commodity, as it fetched high prices and was prized by Flemish cloth manufacturers (cf. Streeck 117; Tawney 82-84). This was also the main reason for the enclosure of common land and

⁴ To my knowledge, Marx quotes Harrison only indirectly from Frederick Morton Eden's *The State of the Poor* of 1797 (vol. 1, p. 118), which, however, does not change the fact of his familiarity with large parts of Harrison's text.

⁵ *An Historicall description of the Iland of Britaine, with a briefe rehearsall of the nature and qualities of the people of England and such commodities as are to be found in the same. Comprehended in three bookes, and written by W. H.*

the concomitant creation of pasturage.⁶ If Shakespeare based his play on Holinshed (6: 157-196), then it seems reasonable to assume that he read in Harrison's *Description* in the first volume of the same book about the dynamics of the transition toward a capitalist society, about the privatization of public property, the "wholesale expropriation of the agricultural population from the soil," as Marx calls it (35: 718). It is not unlikely that Shakespeare would have drawn conclusions from Harrison's *Descriptions* similar to those Marx would draw three centuries later. If Shakespeare realized from history books or real-life experience the forcible redistribution (or expropriation) of wealth – and I profoundly believe he did –, he would have used his plays to investigate this historical transformation and its impact on Elizabethan society. I therefore want to suggest that in *King John*, Shakespeare explores the expropriation of the people as a process that, in Marx's phrasing, received a "new and frightful impulse" from the Reformation (35: 711).

Primitive Accumulation

In *Capital*, Marx explains that capital is produced through the production of a surplus value, and that, to produce such surplus value (as a necessary condition to produce capital), one needs capital. In other words, to produce capital one needs capital: "capitalistic production presupposes the pre-existence of considerable masses of capital" (35: 704). Therefore, so Marx's argument continues, we need to assume a primitive accumulation ("ursprüngliche Akkumulation" [MEW 23: 741]) of capital, "preceding capitalistic accumulation; an accumulation not the result of the capitalist mode of production, but its starting point" (MECW 35: 704).⁷ He attacks the idea of an idyllic transformative process from feudal to capitalist society that he finds in the works of political economists like Adam Smith and his disciples, who only account for labor efficiency and thus mistakenly paint a rosy picture of the beginnings of capitalism, the process that Streeck described as "idealistische[...] Jungfernzeugung von Gesellschaften in retro-fingierten Gründungsmythen" ("idealized parthenogenesis of societies as declared in retroactive, fictitious origin myths"; see Streeck 114; my English translation). Rather, Marx places great emphasis on the violence and brutality that accompanied (and, in some cases, enabled) the transition, "a series of forcible methods, of which we have passed in review only those that have been epoch-making as methods of the primitive accumulation of capital" (35: 749). The first of the series of forcible methods ("Reihe gewaltsamer Methoden" [MEW 23: 790]) which Marx mentions is the ransacking of churches in the course of Henry VIII's reformist activities:

⁶ Possibly, the imprisoned Arthur's speech to his prison guard, Hubert, alludes to the great value of sheep in sixteenth-century England: "By my christendom, / So I were out of prison and kept sheep, / I should be as merry as the day is long" (4.1.16-18). There might even be a subtle irony in the fact that the imprisoned Arthur, *enclosed* by his prison walls, dreams of sheep pastures, which were the result of the *enclosure* of the common land.

⁷ Moore and Aveling translate "ursprüngliche Akkumulation" as "primitive accumulation," to avoid confusion with Adam Smith's concept of the "previous accumulation," which Marx in his chapter criticizes for not seeing the force behind the transition from feudal to capitalist society.

The spoliation of the church's property, the fraudulent alienation of the State domains, the robbery of the common lands, the usurpation of feudal and clan property, and its transformation into modern private property under circumstances of reckless terrorism, were just so many idyllic methods of primitive accumulation. (MECW 35: 723)

By thus placing it at the very beginning of his enumeration, Marx attaches importance to the Reformation as a way of expropriating the people.

The end of monasticism provided the crown with immense capital, which “turned Henry VIII into a great patron who could shower his supporters among the nobility with gifts of land or bargain purchases” (Eire 327). Similarly, we see John in 2.1 lavishing an excessive dowry on his niece, Blanche, although, as I have shown above, in 1.1 his “strong possession” was still rather weak. Interestingly, the Bastard himself cannot have been sent to ransack the churches yet, as he accompanies the king to Angiers, and it is mentioned by Chatillon that John moves with great speed (2.1.60). This could mean two things: either John gives the dowry in expectation of future capital through the spoliation of church property (thus knowingly risking the newly established peace with Philip who certainly will not tolerate such offenses against the church); or John has tasked someone else with the expropriation of “Our abbeys and our priories” (1.1.48), before he left England (in which case he knows that King Philip is likely to soon find out and break the peace). Either way, John's bargain has clay feet; the only somewhat advantageous outcome of it will be the end of Philip's support for Arthur's claim: “John, to stop Arthur's title in the whole, / Hath willingly departed with a part,” as the Bastard remarks later in this scene (2.1.562-563). It solves the problem raised by Chatillon's speech at the very beginning of the play (1.1.4), but it will quickly lead to a number of other problems: the conflict with Cardinal Pandulph (beginning in 3.1.135), the breakup of the recently formed alliance with France (3.1.262), the ensuing war (3.2), the king's order to Hubert to kill Arthur (3.3), which, although Hubert eventually disobeys, generates tensions between the king and the lords (4.2 and 4.3), the French invasion (5.1), John's declining health (5.3), his allegedly being poisoned by a monk (5.6), and his death (5.7). In view of these rising religious conflicts, the arranged marriage must seem like a very rash action. It shows John as an impulsive if not irrational king. Ransacking monasteries during (or: just before/shortly after) a costly peace settlement with a devout Catholic king, is certainly not John's brightest political and economic moment in the play.

John's interest in the churches is obvious, for, as Marx reminds us, “The Catholic church was, at the time of the Reformation, feudal proprietor of a great part of the English land” (MECW 35: 711). This casts considerable doubt on the medieval King John's “strong possession” (1.1.39). “Lackland” was John's sobriquet after all. The historical Reformation, available as a foil to the audience of *King John*, but not to King John himself, made that church property available to the Crown who could then command over it at its convenience.⁸ In the Elizabethan play, John's aim is,

⁸ Marx continues to reconstruct that moment of 16th-century English history by pointing out that “The estates of the church were to a large extent given away to rapacious royal favourites, or sold at a nominal price to speculating farmers and citizens” (MECW 35: 711; see also Tawney 87-88). Shakespeare would later return to this topic of conspicuous consumption in his Jacobean tragedy *Timon of Athens*, as I elaborate elsewhere (see Kronshage 2017).

unsurprisingly, to take possession of their strong possessions, to primitively accumulate capital that he then could use for whatever purpose he deemed best – although, as argued before, his excessive investments are rarely far-seeing and yield little to reinvest. In Shakespeare’s play, he may be presented as, what we today would call, the first capitalist, but not necessarily as a clever one. Already on bad terms with Rome, he creates further tensions by refusing the Pope’s chosen Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton (term 1207-1228), thus forcing Pope Innocent III (papacy 1198-1216) to send to England his legate Pandulph. The conflict escalates in 3.3, when John charges Philip Falconbridge, “The Bastard,” an illegitimate son of King Richard I, with the plundering and pillaging of the abbeys. As said before, John’s move against monasticism anticipates Henry VIII’s Reformation and its far-reaching consequences, among them the general expropriation of the people:

The process of forcible expropriation of the people received in the 16th century a new and frightful impulse from the Reformation, and from the consequent colossal spoliation of the church property. The Catholic church was, at the time of the Reformation, feudal proprietor of a great part of the English land. The suppression of the monasteries, &c, hurled their inmates into the proletariat. (MECW 35: 711)

Unlike Shakespeare’s later tragedies *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Timon of Athens*, or *Coriolanus*, *King John* does not depict a seething populace, which, arguably, suffered most from the transformations. The newly created proletariat remains unseen in the play.⁹ For obvious reasons, Shakespeare could not easily show an impoverished clergy on stage. Although *King John* is still relatively mild in its treatment of Catholicism, given that its likely predecessor, the anonymous¹⁰ *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England*,¹¹ used radical anti-Catholic propaganda. Still, Shakespeare avoids showing impoverished clergymen and vagrant nuns (just as much as he omits felonious deeds by insidious monks). The immense success in the second half of the sixteenth century of John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments*, which was commonly known as *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*, proved right Tertullian’s dictum from his *Apologeticus* (c.197 CE) that “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church” (cf. Eire 335). Creating Catholic martyrs in the same way Foxe created Protestant ones, by showing their suffering and the others’ ruthlessness, would have been a hazardous enterprise.

⁹ One might want to read the (alleged) poisoning of King John (5.6.23) as the deed of a former monk taking revenge for being hurled into the proletariat. The scene, however, is dramatically underdeveloped (be it by accident or design), so that any attempt to identify the poisoner and his motivation must remain mere speculation.

¹⁰ The late Charles R. Forker who recently published a scholarly edition of *The Troublesome Reign*, credits George Peele with the play’s authorship.

¹¹ Dating the two plays is notoriously difficult. *King John* was first published in the Folio, and there exist no Quartos. Some critics argue that *The Troublesome Reign* predates Shakespeare’s *King John* by some years, and that Shakespeare must have known the play when he started working on his own tragedy. As always, other critics object to this chronology and place Shakespeare first, as “the only begetter of *King John* directly from the chronicles and that it was written before *The Troublesome Reign*” (Beaurline 1). I find this second chronology less plausible and would therefore place *King John* in the very early 1590s.

Inverting the victim-offender relationship, however, would have been plain propaganda, which Shakespeare carefully avoids. Moreover, the socially more panoramic view which includes the victims of John's policy and their fate as proletarians would have reduced the dramatic effect of the play. After all, *King John* is a historical tragedy in the *de casibus* tradition, centering around the life and eventual fall of the eponymous king, and its central themes are closely linked to the protagonist's policy making.

Together with the enclosure of common land and the clearing of estates, the expropriation of church property in the wake of the Reformation hurled feudal bondsmen as "free and 'unattached' ["vogelfrei" (MEW 23: 744)] proletarians on the labour market" (MECW 35: 707).¹² Capital and wage laborer are the result of this process of primitive accumulation, that transforms medieval feudalism (with its feudal landowners and bondsmen) into early modern capitalism. Socage becomes wage labor, and superficially that appears as social progress. Yet, Marx pours scorn on this narrative of the "idyllic methods of primitive accumulation" (35: 723), for the newly created proletariat, and among them the former "inmates" of the monasteries, as Marx writes, "were turned *en masse* into beggars, robbers, vagabonds" (35: 723), which led directly to the Henrician Poor Laws. Marx gives a detailed description of the history of these laws, which would remain in effect for centuries to come, in his subchapter on the "Bloody Legislation Against the Expropriated from the End of the 15th Century" (723-731). The Reformation led to the dissolution of the monasteries and abbeys, and Marx argues the "property of the church formed the religious bulwark of the traditional conditions of landed property. With its fall these were no longer tenable" (MECW 35: 713). In the wake of the Reformation, i.e. with "the breaking up of the bands of feudal retainers," the reorganization of society turned, as I have mentioned before, ordinary men

en masse into beggars, robbers, vagabonds, partly from inclination, in most cases from stress of circumstances. Hence at the end of the 15th and during the whole of the 16th century, throughout Western Europe a bloody legislation against vagabondage. The fathers of the present working class were chastised for their enforced transformation into vagabonds and paupers. (MECW 35: 723)

While those outlawed proletarians do not enter the stage in Shakespeare's *King John*, they are nevertheless mentioned in a central soliloquy, the Bastard's commodity speech. In this speech, he rails four times against beggary, and complains about the

¹² In Shakespeare's play, the Bastard recommends John and Philip to strip the citizens of Angiers of their walls (i.e. in the figurative sense, of their civil rights) and to "Leave them as naked as the vulgar air" (2.1.387). Reading *King John*, Marx might have found the image an appropriate description of what he terms, seven times in the chapter on primitive accumulation, "vogelfreies Proletariat" (MEW 23: 744, 746, 752, 761, 770). The image resurfaces when Marx continues to describe the fate of those who are now "expropriated and cast adrift ["an die Luft gesetzt" (MEW 23: 773)], [and] must buy their value in the form of wages, from his new master, the industrial capitalist" (MECW 35: 734). The reason for Marx's insistence on this image is his critique of liberal economists like Adam Smith who thought of the beginning of capitalism (and the end of feudalism) as a moment of peaceful liberation, and who used the term "frei" where "vogelfrei" (and the Bastard's phrase of being "naked as the vulgar air") would have been more to the point.

fact that commodity “wins of all, / Of kings, of beggars” (2.1.569-570), and that the “poor beggar railleth on the rich” while the rich claim that “there is no vice but beggary” (2.1.592, 596).

It is no coincidence that Shakespeare’s Bastard, whose dominant function in the first half of the play is a choric one, brings matters of religion (breaking faith) in contact with matters of economics (commodification), and politics (what Marx describes as “bloody legislation against vagabondage”). Especially in the second half of the play, the Bastard becomes complicit in the actions he complains about – as he readily admits: “And why rail I on this Commodity? / But for because he hath not wooed me yet” (2.1.587-588). In all its moral ambivalence, Shakespeare shows the Bastard’s unscrupulous execution of his king’s orders – that “Our abbeyes and our priories shall pay / This expedition’s charge” (1.1.48-49). From the battlefields in France, John sends the Bastard back to England:

Cousin, away for England, haste before,
And ere our coming see thou shake the bags
Of hoarding abbots; imprisoned angels
Set a liberty. The fat ribs of peace
Must by the hungry now be fed upon.
Use our commission in his utmost force. (3.3.6-11)

John’s order contains one of the typical Reformation prejudices against lavish, lazy, and feasting clergymen, who are hoarding the treasures of the commonwealth solely for their own good.¹³ These prejudices enable him to present the spoliation of their “hoards” as an act of liberation, allegedly in the name of the common people, “the hungry,” as he says.

Here, historical and theatrical time overlap, for hunger was one of the most pressing issues of the time in which Shakespeare wrote *King John*, not least because of economic reasons: “The average prices of foodstuffs in southern England,” Wrightson notes, “which had remained fairly stable throughout the later fifteenth century, had trebled by the 1570s, and by the early decades of the seventeenth century they had risen sixfold.” This, Wrightson goes on to explain, “produced, in the first half of our period, both unprecedented opportunities for profit to those who supplied the market and at the same time the gradual impoverishment of those who depended for their living upon wages or fixed income” (95). Marx, unlike Wrightson, connects these developments both directly and indirectly to the Reformation (“the pauperisation of the mass of the people by the Reformation” [MECW 35: 713]). Tellingly, King John’s propagandist speech about fat monks and the starving common people (and his order to the Bastard) ends with the word “force” (3.3.11), and the Bastard darts off in fulfillment of his tasks, saying:

¹³ Carlos M. N. Eire gives a striking example of how this kind of anti-Catholic propaganda used economic promises to win over the population: “The dissolution of the smaller monasteries went hand in hand with a publicity campaign set in motion by Thomas Cromwell in which itinerant preachers went through the realm, visiting local churches; railing against the monks as hypocrites, sorcerers, sexual deviants, and idle drones who made the land unprofitable; and promising that *once the monasteries were gone, the king would never need to collect taxes again*” (Eire 326; my italics).

Bell, book, and candle shall not drive me back,
When gold and silver beckons me to come on. (3.3.12-13)

When he returns from his mission in 4.2, he boasts to King John about his success:

How I have sped among the clergymen
The sums I have collected shall express [...] (4.2.141-142)

And indeed, as we learn from the Pope's legate, Cardinal Pandulph, in the following scene,

The bastard Falconbridge
Is now in England ransacking the church,
Offending charity. (3.4.171-173)

Pandulph turns John's argument against him, claiming that the spoliation of church property interferes with the church's efforts for poor relief, on which, in fact, many people in medieval England depended (cf. Eire 705-711). The Bastard thus becomes the enforcer of the "colossal spoliation of the church property", as Marx puts it. He is the connecting link between John's proto-reformist attempts and the "so-called previous accumulation of capital," in other words, between Reformation and economics, i.e. the incipient formation of a capitalist society.

Commodity

The Bastard is also relevant to the play's negotiation of another concept that would later become central to Marx's theory of capitalist production: commodity. In *King John*, the word "commodity" occurs six times, more often than in any other Shakespeare play. Scholarly editions commonly gloss it as "convenience, self-interest, profit" (Smallwood, in *Penguin Shakespeare* 20), as "Self-interest at the expense of honour and the general welfare" (Beaurline, in *New Cambridge Shakespeare* 98), and "advantage, self-interest, gain" (Braunmuller, in *Oxford Shakespeare* 168).¹⁴ This meaning of "commodity" seems indeed to have been the dominant one in the early 16th century, and as such it often implied the binary opposition between self-interest and an interest for community welfare (what later became to be known as commonwealth; see Wrightson 23).

David Hawkes, however, explains that "Shakespeare's usages of 'commodity' allow us to observe the word settling into its modern meaning" (99), by which he means a tradable good, or, in more Marxian terms, exchange-value. Christian A. Smith similarly argues that Shakespeare's use of "commodity" goes beyond the idea of "self-interest": "the Bastard is using the word primarily in an economic sense," meaning

¹⁴ To this list, David Hawkes adds the connotation of "'advantage' in the pejorative sense that makes us think it morally wrong to 'take advantage'" (101). While this interpretation is largely in line with the general glossing as "self-interest," Hawkes gives it a more economic spin when he adds that "taking advantage" originally meant "taking interest on a loan" and that the Bastard "argues persuasively that everybody 'uses it' [...] in the broader sense that they generally seek their own advantage in economic transactions" (101).

“not commodity as expediency but commodity as exchange-value” (Smith 4-5). Unlike Hawkes, whose observation is based on textual evidence from the plays, Smith takes his cue from an 1857 newspaper article, in which Marx quotes a passage from the commodity speech in *King John* (Smith 3). If we take Shakespeare’s use of the word to be in line with Marx’s, then *King John* indeed becomes legible as exposing “the genesis of capitalism in the machinations of the Plantagenets and their foes” (Smith 11).

This is even more the case as the Bastard is the play’s central character, who has most of the lines in the play (20% in total, which is 3% more than the play’s eponymous protagonist). The Bastard also has the most scenes on stage (11, compared to the 9 of the King).¹⁵ I propose to understand his repeated use of the word “commodity” as consecutively meaning accommodation, expediency, and exchange-value. Etymologically, “commodity” and “accommodation” both derive from Latin *commoditas*, which means a convenience, a comfort, an amenity, and thus point to a homely environment. When the Bastard rails against this sense of commodity, it is because in the play’s first scene, he abandoned all claim to his land (“Brother, take you my land, I’ll take my chance.” [1.1.151]). Commodity for him, who appears “Like a poor beggar” (2.1.592), i.e. a vagrant and homeless person, no longer refers to homely accommodation. Consequently, his use of the word “commodity” shifts toward the meaning of “expediency” and “self-interest,” for which the *OED* cites the rhyming couplet from the Bastard’s soliloquy (*OED Online* “commodity, n.”). As mentioned above, this is the standard interpretation of “commodity” in Shakespeare’s play, the idea that his speech is “a repudiation of all allegiance except to himself” (Womersley 508). This interpretation as self-interest is correct, but clearly goes not far enough, as it ignores the idea of commodification, i.e. the fact that anything can be turned into a commodity. Therefore, – and this is the third meaning of “commodity” implied in his speech – when he says “commodity,” he also means “an article of commerce, an object of trade” (*OED Online* “commodity, n.”), i.e. the exchange-value of a commodity in the Marxian sense. It takes the shape of John’s overgenerous dowry to Blanche and Lewis’s marriage. It also takes the shape of the “fair angels” (2.1.590), i.e. the “gold coins having St Michael and the dragon stamped on one side” (Beaurline 99), an economic image with a clear theological reference. The Bastard’s comparison of commodity to a “broker” (2.1.582), makes clear that profit is what the commodity is expected to yield, for, as Hawkes explains, “broker” was a word that “came up frequently in germinal discussions of economics, where it generally designated a pawnbroker, but could also refer to usurers in general” (101). Undoubtedly, the usurer and the pawnbroker are self-interested in their own way, because for them a commodity primarily possesses exchange-value; theirs is not a subsistence economy, but one based on profit. The Bastard arrives at this understanding by closely observing his king; he then decides to follow his example, when he explains that “gain” be his lord. Earlier in the play, the Bastard set out to observe and imitate his superiors: “For

¹⁵ Numbers from the RSC Shakespeare edition of *King John*, edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen. While earlier critics saw him mainly as a kind of choric figure, more recent criticism largely agrees that he is a pivotal figure for the plot (cf. Womersley 502).

he is but a bastard to the time / That doth not smack of observation” (1.1.207-208). He proves a quick learner, for, already in the immediately following scene, he appears to have grasped the way John deals with the world: by commodifying it. The king repeatedly seeks to “buy” everyone else, as E. A. J. Honigmann correctly points out:

The Bastard is bought with a knighthood (I. i. 162), France with five provinces (II. i. 527 ff.), Hubert with promises (III. ii. 30-42), Arthur is promised lands (II. i. 55 I), the nobles are promised Arthur (IV. ii. 67), John tries to buy them off a second time (IV. ii. 168), buys off the pope with a nominal submission (v. i. I), in order to buy off Lewis (v. i. 64) (Honigmann, in *Arden Shakespeare* lxviii).

Anything may become a commodity in capitalist society, and so the Bastard decides to worship the divineline power of profit-making: “Gain, be my lord, for I will worship thee.” (2.1.598). It is not surprising to see how aggressively the Bastard pursues this strategy, which, according to Joseph Schumpeter, was a rather common behavior for the non-bourgeois class in a ruling position: “Zweifelloos trachtete sie danach, die von der merkantilistischen Politik eröffneten Gewinnmöglichkeiten voll auszuschöpfen und nahm dadurch selbst etwas von dem herrschenden Geist der Aggression an” (143).¹⁶

By shifting, in his soliloquy, the meaning of the word “commodity,” the Bastard uses a rhetorical figure of repetition, the antanaclasis, a rhetorical device that Shakespeare was particularly fond of. The antanaclasis, as a distinct form of the diaphora, means the “repeating of a word in a different or even contrary sense” (Lausberg 95). So, unlike Smith, who attempts to establish the modern meaning of “commodity” as the dominant one in Shakespeare, I claim that the Bastard’s speech contains all three meanings of the word, and that he uses a figure of speech in which the meaning of a word is transformed, to also develop a historical argument about religious, political, and economic transformation. In other words, through the use of the antanaclasis his speech performs the transformative power of commodity.

The same holds true for the grammar he uses. In his opening sentence, the Bastard mentions “mad kings” (plural form), and then, in the second sentence, begins with the word “John,” describing how the king, “to stop Arthur’s title in the whole, / Hath willingly departed with a part” (2.1.562-563). Since he opened his speech with the observation that “mad kings” live in this “mad world,” the audience might expect the Bastard to comment on the second king as well, and indeed, his next line opens with the word “France” (meaning the King of France). However, the audience never learns what Philip of France has actively done to be called a “mad king,” for at this point, the Bastard appears to have lost his thread: he identifies France as one

whose armour conscience buckled on,
Whom zeal and charity brought to the field
As God’s own soldier [...]

and then continues to note that France

¹⁶ “Undoubtedly, it [the non-bourgeois class in a ruling position] sought to exploit the profit opportunities presented by mercantilist policies, thus adopting itself something of the dominant spirit of aggression” (my translation).

[...] rounded in the ear
 With that same purpose-changer, that sly devil,
 That broker that still breaks the pate of faith,
 That daily break-vow, he that wins of all [...].

Obviously, the “he” of that sentence cannot be France any longer. What the Bastard is talking about here is called by its name four lines later: “That smooth-faced gentleman, tickling Commodity.” So, he talks about the King of France first, then about Commodity, and then returns to the French king 20 lines later:

[...] this Commodity,
 This bawd, this broker, this all-changing word,
 Clapped on the outward eye of fickle France,
 Hath drawn him from his own-determined aid,
 From a resolved and honourable war,
 To a most base and vile-concluded peace. (2.1.581-586)

The change from France to commodity in the course of the Bastard’s long sentence not only betrays his emotional state, his “railing” as he himself calls it, that inhibits the use of correct grammar, it also *performs* what the Bastard *attributes* to commodity: it has the power to change everything, even the grammatical subject of the Bastard’s sentence. Commodity is, as the Bastard emphasizes three times in his speech, a general “purpose-changer,” which takes “head from all indifferency, / From all direction, purpose, course, intent,” in short, it is an “all-changing word” (ibid.). Indeed, the ensuing ransacking of abbeys and churches in England for the primitive accumulation of capital will change everything: it marks both the beginning of a religious crisis in England, and the transition from feudal England to a capitalist society.¹⁷

Crisis

This transition is never completed in Shakespeare’s play, although it is in Shakespeare’s time. *King John* ends with a political, economic, and religious backlash but the play has shown a moment of crisis. The *OED* defines *crisis* as “a state of affairs in which a decisive change for better or worse is imminent” and it adds that the term is “now applied esp. to times of difficulty, insecurity, and suspense in politics or commerce” (*OED Online* “crisis, n.”). Watching *King John* performed, an Elizabethan audience must have realized that its own “times of difficulty, insecurity, and suspense in politics or commerce” were being represented before their eyes. For them, however, it was not clear whether the change was for better or for worse, only that the change toward a capitalist society that came in the wake of the Reformation was a radical one.

¹⁷ In his seminal book of 1926, Tawney already connects both crises. He writes: “The religious revolution of the age came upon a world heaving with the vastest economic crisis that Europe had experienced since the fall of Rome” (76) Tawney sees that religion and economics both underwent serious revolutions: a little later, when he compares the “financial capitalism” (84) of the sixteenth century to the industrial capitalism of the nineteenth, he writes that the former “economic revolution [was] not less profound than that of three centuries later” (79). Yet, he simultaneously acknowledges that these religious, economic, and political revolutions at their time all led to severe crises.

In other words, Shakespeare's play about the medieval King John reflects on the socio-political transformation that its Elizabethan audience was subjected to, and which, as David Hawkes suggests, presented itself as "a source of unease" (101).

Cardinal Pandulph, together with King Philip John's greatest adversary in the play, tells Lewis, the King of France's son, "with a prophetic spirit" (3.4.126) that for all of John's subjects there will exist

No *natural* exhalation in the sky,
 No scope of *nature*, no distempered day,
 No common wind, no customary event,
 But they will pluck away his *natural* cause
 And call them meteors, prodigies, and signs,
 Abortives, presages, and tongues of heaven,
 Plainly denouncing vengeance upon John. (3.4.153-159; my italics)

By having turned away from nature and toward the unnatural world of commodities (both material and immaterial), Pandulph argues, John has forfeited his natural (i.e. divine) right to rule, as his subjects will soon come to realize. This speech again skillfully ties the religious discourse to political expediency and economic transformation. Commodity, as the Bastard explains earlier in the play, has replaced religious faith, "Since kings break faith upon commodity" (2.1.597). So unsettling seem John's actions (of primitive accumulation) to the Cardinal that he believes – or in a different reading, considers the people to believe – nature to be unhinged to a degree where divine intervention, "the tongues of heaven, / Plainly denouncing vengeance upon John," appears inevitable; these acts of God will find expression in natural events. The distinction between nature and commodity could hardly be more drastic as in this expression of Pandulph's "prophetic spirit." It adds to the play's moral ambivalence that Shakespeare gives the (economically and politically) most critical voice to a Catholic priest. Arguably, this can be understood as a way of exploring the more questionable social consequences of the Reformation.¹⁸

Economics, politics, and religion once more appear deeply interwoven, when, in 3.4, Pandulph talks to Lewis, the Dauphin, who earlier, in 2.1, was betrothed to Blanche to seal France and England's peace settlement, "a most base and vile-concluded peace," as the Bastard mockingly remarks (2.1.586). Obviously, Lewis and Blanche are commodities to be traded for peace. Directly after this arrangement, all characters leave the stage except the Bastard, who remains for his commodity soliloquy of 38 lines. That speech is replete with the imagery of an unhinged, mad world, a "world, who of itself is peised well, / Made to run even upon even ground" (2.1.575-576). This imagery connects the Bastard's soliloquy to Pandulph's

¹⁸ How desired the Reformation truly was in late-Tudor England, is still a serious bone of contention. Eire argues that historians are divided into two camps, traditionalists and revisionists: "The traditionalists prefer to see the English Reformation as a positive change – largely welcomed by the people – and as a positive cleansing of a corrupt church and its hollow, unsatisfying piety. This traditional view, which has been in place for centuries, has been challenged by many revisionists, who offer evidence that the Reformation imposed from above was resisted by the English people, and that it deprived them of a piety they found lively and satisfying" (Eire 319-320).

“prophecy” about natural disorder which will ultimately provoke divine intervention. Commodity or faith: the action of the play does not resolve this conflict. While John eventually gives way under the increasing pressure and bows down to the See of Rome to “welcome home again discarded faith” (5.4.12), the Bastard dedicates his life to commodity; he proclaims, as Allan Lewis has shown, “a new religion to replace the old, a religion based on Gold as God” (374).

Conclusion

In *Capital*, Marx draws attention to the fact that the Reformation served as midwife for the birth of capitalist society in early modern England, and that the transition from feudal to bourgeois society involved acts of brutal violence, of exploitation and of expropriation: “Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power” (MECW 35: 739). Thus, the Reformation enabled and facilitated the primitive accumulation that marked the end of feudalism and the beginning of capitalism.

Shakespeare’s *King John* is a play about transition. While the political, economic, and religious backlash at the end of the play make it look like a transition manqué that would have to wait another three hundred years for its forceful (and forcible) realization under Henry VIII (cf. Tawney 87-88), the Bastard’s commodity speech in 2.1 projects parts of capitalism’s transformative power to the High Middle Ages. He marvels at the process of unlimited commodification which changes everything: the meaning of the word “commodity,” the grammar of his own sentence, and the faith of kings. Thus, his speech skillfully plays with the temporal double structure of *King John*: the fact that he is a medieval king in a crisis-ridden realm and that his actions eventually lead to a political, economic and religious backlash; and that the audience’s Tudor England is equally crisis-ridden in terms of politics (for Elizabeth did not produce a male heir), economics (because of the severe increase in poverty), and religion (because of Queen Mary’s attempt to reinstate Catholicism being only one generation past, and because Queen Elizabeth’s excommunication by Pope Pius V in 1570 was certainly still remembered by many¹⁹). Wrightson writes about the Elizabethans: “Of change they were undoubtedly aware, though they found it difficult, in the midst of the process of change and lacking the statistical information to inform their analyses, to explore in any depth either the course or the causes of the developments which forced themselves upon their attention” (92). If we see literature to have a part in this process, Shakespeare’s *King John* should be understood as an attempt to explore the profound effects primitive accumulation had on Tudor England, and how the Reformation was complicit in the commodification of faith and religion.

¹⁹ *Regnans in Excelsis*, the papal bull, reverberates in Pandulph’s excommunication of John in 3.1.173. Beaurline remarks that “A contemporary audience would see a reference to the papal bull of 1570 by which Pius V excommunicated Queen Elizabeth, declared her a heretic, released her subjects from allegiance, and called for her deposition” (107n).

Works Cited

- Anon. *A Compendious or briefe examination of certayne ordinary complaints, of diuers of our country men in these our dayes: which although they are in some part uniust & friuolous, yet are they all by vway of dialogues thoroughly debated & discussed, by W.S., Gentleman*. London, 1581. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 22 Sept 2017. <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgthumbs.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99852978>.
- Calderwood, James L. "Commodity and Honour in *King John*." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 29.3 (1960): 341-56.
- Eire, Carlos M. N. *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450-1650*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2016.
- Harrison, William. *Description of England*. 2nd ed. 1587. Web. *The Holinshed Project*. 23 Oct 2017. <<http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/toc.php>>.
- Hawkes, David. *Shakespeare and Economic Theory*. London: Bloomsbury, 2015.
- Holinshed, Raphael. *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. 1587. Web. *The Holinshed Project*. Ed. Paulina Kewes, Ian Archer, Felicity Heal, and Henry Summerson. 23 Oct 2017. <http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1587_0001>.
- Kronshage, Eike. "Conspicuous Consumption, Croyance, and the Problem of the Two Timons: Shakespeare and Middleton's *Timon of Athens*." *Critical Horizons: A Journal of Philosophy and Social Theory* 18.3 (2017): 262-274.
- Lammers, Lukas. "King John as Performed Palimpsest." *Shakespeare Seminar Online* 10 (2012): 3-16. Web. <http://shakespeare-gesellschaft.de/fileadmin/media/WSO/SSO_10_2012_Lukas_Lammers.pdf>.
- Lausberg, Heinrich. *Elemente der literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Einführung für Studierende der klassischen, romanischen, englischen und deutschen Philologie*. 10th ed. Ismaning: Max Hueber, 1990.
- Lewis, Allan. "Shakespeare and the Morality of Money." *Social Research* 36.3 (1969): 373-388.
- Marx, Karl. *Marx/Engels Collected Works (MECW)*. Vol. 35: *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. Transl. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1996.
- . *Marx-Engels Werkausgabe (MEW)*. Vol. 23: *Das Kapital: Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*. 1867. (Ost-)Berlin: Dietz, 1962.
- Prawer, S. S. *Karl Marx and World Literature*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1978.
- Schumpeter, Joseph A. *Schriften zur Ökonomie und Soziologie*. Ed. Lisa Herzog and Axel Honneth. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2016.
- Shakespeare, William. *The New Cambridge Shakespeare King John*. Ed. L. A. Beaurline. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.
- . *The RSC Shakespeare King John and Henry VIII*. Ed. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012.
- . *The Arden Shakespeare King John*. Ed. E. A. J. Honigmann. London: Methuen, 1951.
- . *King John*. Ed. R. L. Smallwood. London: Penguin, 1974.

- . *The Oxford Shakespeare King John*. Ed. A. R. Braunmuller. Oxford: Clarendon, 1989.
- Smith, Christian A. "‘That Smooth-Faced Gentleman ... Commodity’: Shakespeare’s Critique of Exchange-Value in *King John*." *Shakespeare* 13.1 (2017): 1-14.
- Streeck, Wolfgang. "Niemand wird freiwillig Arbeiter." *RE: Das Kapital: Politische Ökonomie im 21. Jahrhundert*. Ed. Mathias Greffrath. 2nd ed. München: Verlag Antje Kunstmann, 2017: 111-128.
- Tawney, R. H. *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study*. 1926. London, New York: Verso, 2015.
- Womersley, David. "The Politics of Shakespeare’s *King John*." *The Review of English Studies* 40.160 (1989): 497-515.
- Wrightson, Keith. *English Society, 1580-1680*. London: Routledge, 1990.

Zusammenfassung

In *King John* untersucht Shakespeare den historischen Moment der ursprünglichen Akkumulation, den Beginn dessen, was wir heute Kapitalismus nennen. Besonderes Augenmerk legt die Tragödie dabei auf die Verbindung von ökonomischer Transformation und politischer und religiöser Veränderung im Zuge der Reformation. Der mittelalterliche König John, der sich seinerzeit vorübergehend von der Autorität Roms löste, galt dem elisabethanischen Theaterpublikum als Vorläufer des Tudor-Königs Heinrichs VIII, was es Shakespeare ermöglichte, die Zeiten von Dramenhandlung und Dramenentstehung in Deckung zu bringen. Der vorliegende Beitrag untersucht durch die Linse von Marx’ historischer Analyse in *Das Kapital* das Shakespeare’sche Drama als eines das (Proto-)Reformation und ökonomische Transformation zusammendenkt. Dabei spielt insbesondere die Figur des Bastards eine wichtige Rolle, der in seiner sog. „commodity speech“ über die Ware und die Warenförmigkeit der Welt reflektiert. Diese Rede bringt die Ebenen des politischen, religiösen und ökonomischen performativ zur Überlagerung und macht das Stück als Erforschung historischer Transformationsprozesse lesbar.

REFORMING ELIZABETH: SHAKESPEARE'S *KING HENRY VIII* AS HERITAGE WORK

BY

JENNIFER KRAEMER

Henry VIII as Heritage Work: Applying Film Study Methodologies to Shakespeare

Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, included in the 1623 First Folio and performed in 1613, dramatizes the events surrounding the king's divorce of Katherine of Aragon, his marriage to Anne Boleyn, the birth of Elizabeth I, and the vindication from heresy charges of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. Though it was not actually performed during the nuptial celebrations, the play was created for the marriage festivities of James VI and I's daughter Princess Elizabeth Stuart to Frederick V, Elector Palatine (Kernan xix-xx). At first consideration, a play about divorce and remarriage may not seem the most diplomatic topic for a royal wedding. However, Shakespeare's choice to focus on this particular period of Henry's reign, roughly 1520-1533, speaks not only to a willingness to grapple with the king's divorce but also to a desire to explore the genesis of the English Reformation. *Henry VIII* may be considered an "Elect Nation" play, a genre of history plays that emerged during the reign of James VI and I and that promoted the message that "God had called the English people to a redemptive role in universal history and that Elizabeth was to be both symbol and instrument of England's mission of deliverance" (Spikes 119). By emphasizing the Virgin Queen in a play ostensibly about her father, Shakespeare sets Henry VIII's divorce in the Elect Nation framework and, in creating this play for the marriage festivities of James VI and I's daughter Elizabeth Stuart to a Protestant German prince, the playwright argues that the Stuart rulers will not only follow Elizabeth's example of wise leadership but also continue the work of the Reformation, established and nurtured by her father and brother but solidified by the queen. The playwright's intentions become even clearer when one compares his play to its source texts: Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577 and 1587) and John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1570, 1576, and 1580). Shakespeare's adaptation choices in *Henry VIII* make the play a heritage work and paint Elizabeth as both the religious heir and the embodiment of the English Reformation.

In his Elect Nation play *Henry VIII*, Shakespeare creates a work that employs some of the same techniques filmmakers commonly apply to costume dramas. Heritage works, according to film scholar Ginette Vincendeau, feature "a nostalgic turn to the past (twinned with a denial of history)" (xvi). By emphasizing elements of history that create a positive national narrative, early modern Elect Nation plays thus function much like twenty and twenty-first century heritage works. *Henry VIII* presents a nostalgic and idealized version of England's past – in this case, the genesis of the

English Reformation. Shakespeare nostalgically depicts the complexity of the king's divorce, second marriage, and the birth of Elizabeth as grand nationalistic moments that tie English political and religious history together. He uses both allusion and pastiche, drawing on Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. By downplaying the legal and moral ambiguity of the king's divorce and ignoring completely his later treatment of Anne Boleyn, Shakespeare presents a vision of the recent English past that is both nostalgic and inspiring. His adaptation choices argue that this period of Henry VIII's life laid the foundation not only for Elizabeth's glorious rule but also the fulfilment and extension of the English Reformation.

Borrowing the heritage work paradigm from film studies methodology also proves effective because the audiences and conditions of production for early modern theatre and present-day cinema share similarities. Theatre audiences in the seventeenth century, just like twenty-first century film audiences, were economically and socially diverse. The cost of attending a play at the Globe and a present-day film are roughly analogous, and, like cinema, early modern playhouses competed with other cheap entertainments and had to offer their patrons a "constant supply of novelty" (Gurr 143). Adaptations of literature, history, and current events generated audience interest by capitalizing on the public's familiarity with a new play's subject matter. In the same way, films such as *Jane Eyre* (2011), *Darkest Hour* (2017), and *United 93* (2006) adapt works of literature, history, and current events in order to attract audiences.

The King's Divorce in Contemporaneous Histories

Shakespeare's treatment of Henry, Katherine, Anne, and Elizabeth indicates he is using them as symbols of the English Reformation itself. In substituting historical figures for philosophical or historical movements, the playwright anticipates a technique employed by costume drama films in which "characters stand in for causes" (Grindon 6). Shakespeare embodies England's break with Catholicism and embrace of Protestantism through the three central female characters of Katherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, and Elizabeth, laying the groundwork for his main contention in the play: that Elizabeth, who brought England "a thousand blessings, / Which time shall bring to ripeness" (5.4.19-20), is the Reformation itself. The context of the play's creation – the wedding of Princess Elizabeth Stuart – furthers this Reformation connection by implying that James VI and I will assume this role as Reformation stand-in and continue Elizabeth's religious legacy.

Shakespeare links the divorce of Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon to popular histories that, although not Elect Nation plays, also operate as heritage works. The *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, compiled by Raphael Holinshed, serve as inspiration for all the playwright's English history plays, and Shakespeare sometimes draws dialogue almost verbatim from Holinshed's works. These volumes targeted a middle-class audience, articulating "an expression of citizen consciousness" (Patterson xiii). In the seventeenth century, when they were still widely read, the *Chronicles* served as scholarly reference material (Patterson 266). Simultaneously populist in sympathy and academic in subject matter and scope, Holinshed's *Chronicles* lend Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* their popularity as well as their authority,

bolstering the play's status by association. The *Third Volume of the Chronicles* conflates the royal divorce with Henry's spiritual awakening to the Reformation faith, but Shakespeare will extend this conflation to present Elizabeth I as continuing her father's religious revolution.

In Holinshed's *Chronicles*, the author stresses Henry's crisis of conscience instead of his desire for Anne Boleyn as the motivating factor in the dissolution of the first marriage, an approach Shakespeare will also take. When his union with Katherine produces no male heir, Henry begins to wonder if God is punishing him for marrying his brother's widow and if the "sudden deaths of his male children had been a divine judgment upon his marriage" (Bernard 3). French officials, the Bishop of London, and others also express misgivings, and Holinshed reports that "the king was not onelie brought into doubt, whether it was a lawfull marriage or no; but also determined to haue the case examined, cleered, and adiudged by the learning, law, and sufficient authoritie" (736). Holinshed's Henry thus comes to believe that divorcing Katharine would be an act of spiritual obedience, one that will place himself and the nation he rules back in God's favour. Shakespeare promotes a similar reading of Henry's reasons for divorce, with the king framing his determination to divorce as a "tenderness / Scruple, and a prick" (2.4.167-168). If, as Grindon puts it, characters in historical works represent causes, then Henry's struggle of conscience over divorcing Katherine as depicted in Shakespeare's play stands in for England's acceptance of Reformation doctrine.

John Foxe's influential work *Acts and Monvments*, contemporaneous with Holinshed, also serves as a source for *Henry VIII*, but it emphasizes the public's approval of the king's divorce, a choice Shakespeare appropriates in his adaptation to strengthen the king's moral position. *Acts and Monvments*, like the *Chronicles*, characterizes the king's divorce in religious terms, but Foxe goes further than Holinshed by championing the legitimacy of his marriage to Anne Boleyn. In addition, Foxe argues that Henry's decision was not only morally right but also that it benefitted England. Foxe expressly invites the reader to examine the justness of the king's actions, arguing that

many things are to be understood of the reader, who so is disposed to behold and consider the state & proceeding of publike affaires, as well to the church appertaining as to the common wealth. First, how the king cleareth himself both iustly and reasonably for his divorce made with the Lady Katherine the Emperors aunt. Secondly, how he proveth and defendeth his marriage with Queene Anne, to be iust and lawfull, both by the authority of Gods word, and the comprobaton of the best and most famous learned men and universities, and also by the assent of the whole realme. (Foxe 981)

Under this characterization, Henry's divorce of Katherine is both reasonable and right, and his union with Anne is likewise appropriate and lawful, satisfying both divine and earthly principles. The divorce was fully legitimized in accordance with "Gods word," the considered opinion of the "most famous learned men," and "also by the assent of the whole realme." Foxe hints at what Holinshed had explicitly stated in his *Chronicles*: that Henry did his due legal diligence in dissolving the marriage. In contrast to Holinshed, Foxe does not go into greater detail about the scriptural or legal justifications of the king's divorce because he is more interested in noting religious

persecution. He moves, in fact, directly from the statement quoted above to an account of William Tyndale's life and death. However, Foxe does take pains to inform his readers that scripture, the law, *and* public opinion fully endorse Henry's radical move to extricate himself from an unwanted marriage. Foxe's careful defence of Queen Anne as a legitimate wife will colour Shakespeare's characterization of public opinion surrounding the king's divorce.

Adapting the King's Divorce as Troubled Religious Conversion Experience

Shakespeare's adaptation of Henry and Katherine's divorce domesticates the nation's embrace of Protestantism, employing the heritage work's technique of substituting characters for causes. The religious struggle for the soul of a nation is personified in the contest between Katherine of Aragon, standing in for Roman Catholicism, and the "spleeny Lutheran" (3.2.100) Anne Boleyn, as Protestantism's embodiment. Though they represent opposing religious stances, *Henry VIII* treats both women sympathetically. The king praises Katherine as possessing "rare qualities, sweet gentleness" (2.4.134) and as being the "queen of all earthly queens" (2.4.138). Shakespeare draws some of his characterization from Abraham Fleming, the contributor of the portion of Holinshed's *Chronicles* concerning the king's divorce. Fleming's depiction of Katherine "dramatizes female defiance" while humanizing the discarded queen (Patterson 223). Echoing Holinshed's overall approach to history, Shakespeare encourages his audience to form its own independent judgment of complicated Reformation events (Patterson 15) though he does ultimately approve the king's decision to divorce Katherine of Aragon. Catholicism, like Henry's first queen, has its praiseworthy qualities, but the Reformation, as represented by Anne Boleyn, is ultimately more desirable.

Shakespeare combines Holinshed's balanced methodology of presenting multiple political and religious viewpoints with Foxe's insistence that Henry VIII enjoyed spiritual and popular support to create a heritage work of the English Reformation that alludes to the controversy surrounding the divorce but does not disapprove of it. The king leaves his admirable first wife reluctantly, but he leaves her nonetheless. This proves to be the right decision for England. Though Shakespeare does not directly address most of the reasons why the marriage could have been annulled, which was detailed explicitly in Holinshed, characters do refer to it obtusely. Representing the larger public's concern about this issue, the "Second Gentleman," a minor character, tactfully mentions the existence of a "scruple / That will undo her" (2.2.158-159). The Second Gentleman refers here to the contention that Henry's brother Prince Arthur had consummated his marriage to Katherine. While the king's soul searching appears to be more of a theological exercise in Holinshed and even to some extent in Foxe, Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* must weigh the obvious worth of his Catholic queen against the evidence he sees of God's displeasure. England's abandonment of Catholicism, by extension, was not acrimonious, not an impassioned or hasty decision based on visceral emotions but the painful leave-taking of a cherished faith. Deep personal conviction motivates the embrace of a new religion, a conviction, *Henry VIII* argues, both prompted by God and assented to by the populace. Roman Catholicism becomes

not so much the enemy in Shakespeare's play but a beloved yet deleterious domestic partner.

In *Henry VIII*, Shakespeare emphasizes the king's crisis of conscience, but his depiction of the Reformation follows the *Chronicles* more than *Acts and Monuments* in its more nuanced and ambivalent characterization of the king's divorce. For example, the play does not present Henry's reasons for divorce straightforwardly, and the playwright charges secondary characters with the task of articulating why, spiritual doubts notwithstanding, the king sets aside Katherine of Aragon. Suffolk responds to the Lord Chamberlain's comment that "It seems the marriage with his brother's wife / Has crept too near his conscience" with "No, his conscience / Has crept too near another lady" (2.2.15-17). This description of Henry's attraction to Anne argues that not only was the Reformation attractive to the king but that it required a woman to effect it. Another courtier, Norfolk, blames Cardinal Wolsey for the divorce suit because of his desire to strengthen ties with France via a marriage between Henry and the French king's sister. Both personal and political motivations cloud the spiritual and dynastic reasons behind Henry and Katherine's divorce as Shakespeare presents it.

Anne Boleyn: Saintly Martyr or Saint's Mother?

One may observe the distinction between a heritage work like *Henry VIII* and more traditional historical works by examining the source texts' treatments of Anne Boleyn. These histories differ from Shakespeare's play not only because of their genres but also because the three works have different purposes. The *Chronicles* accentuates Anne's political activity and *Acts and Monuments* her religious importance while *Henry VIII* emphasizes her relationship to Elizabeth. Holinshed's Anne Boleyn, unlike Shakespeare's, haunts the divorce accounts from a distance, and the chronicler presents her not so much as a trigger for the Reformation itself as political rival to the over-reaching Cardinal Wolsey. This rendition is largely free from any hints of untoward behaviour on the king's part because to bring Anne Boleyn into the story too early would mean complicating Henry's motives for both divorce and Reformation. Anne first enters Holinshed's account as an enemy of Cardinal Wolsey while Shakespeare introduces her as a beautiful guest at Wolsey's masque. Holinshed relates that the king's affection "was a great grieve vnto the cardinall, as he that perceiued aforehand that the king would marie the said gentlewoman if the diuorce took place. Wherefore he began with all diligence to disappoint that match" (Holinshed 740). In other words, the king's attraction to Lady Anne thwarts Wolsey's plans to make a new alliance with France. Anne operates as a political opponent more than a religious reformer or even as the other woman in a domestic drama. Her importance in the *Chronicles* stems from the opportunity she provides Henry to demonstrate his independence from corrupt Catholic officials.

Foxe's work provides a more direct pattern for Shakespeare's conflation of Anne Boleyn with the Reformation, but Foxe depicts Anne as not only a Reformation catalyst but also a Protestant martyr. Admiring this "worthy and Christian lady" (Foxe 987) for her virtue and faith, Foxe boldly declares that "there hath not many such Queenes before her borne the crowne of England" (988). Shakespeare shares this

estimation of Anne's character with Foxe but he equally lauds her good looks. In the play, the Lord Chamberlain notes that "Beauty and honour in her are so mingled / That they have caught the king" (2.3.76-77). These lines implicitly argue that Anne's allure and virtues work providentially together to catch the king's notice because the Protestant faith itself is attractive. Shakespeare and Foxe also differ in their narrative focus, with *Henry VIII* depicting Anne's life from the king's initial interest to the baptism of her daughter. *Acts and Monuments*, by contrast, focuses mainly on Anne Boleyn's last days. Foxe chronicles her death alongside such Protestant figures as Tyndale and Cranmer. Delicately mentioning the fact that someone (unnamed) had a quarrel with her, *Acts and Monuments* sympathizes with Anne Boleyn's plight and rejects her conviction of treason as unjust. Henry VIII deserves some credit, according to Foxe, for setting the English Reformation in motion, but it is the queen whose faith ranks with those of other Protestant martyrs and whose life fits the template of other biographies in "The Book of Martyrs."

Though *Henry VIII* ends before her execution, Shakespeare retains the connection Foxe makes between Anne Boleyn and the English Reformation, but the playwright tacitly argues that her importance to the Protestant movement lies more in her motherhood than her faith. In the play, the Lord Chamberlain predicts the good Anne Boleyn will work for the country through her offspring, prophetically wondering aloud, "Who knows yet / But from this lady may proceed a gem / To lighten all this isle" (2.3.77-79). Through the infant Elizabeth, Henry and Anne together can extend the work of the Reformation. Shakespeare not only taps into Foxe's portrayal of her goodness in his characterization of Anne Boleyn, but he also activates his audience's cultural memory to justify his portrayal. Because this play's staging follows Elizabeth's death by only a decade, the memory of her reign would have still been fresh in most audience members' minds. In *Henry VIII*, Anne Boleyn contributes to the English Reformation by ensuring its endurance through her daughter Elizabeth.

Adapting Elizabeth as Reformation Champion

Though *Henry VIII*, like the *Chronicles* and *Acts and Monuments*, generates a Reformation heritage work, its focus is on Elizabeth as the product and maintainer of Protestantism in England. Shakespeare evokes English heritage primarily by linking the future queen with one of the English Reformation's major figures, Thomas Cranmer—Archbishop of Canterbury and future Protestant martyr. Shakespeare allots Cranmer the clearest articulation of Elizabeth's political and religious benefit to England. The Archbishop prophesies that

This royal infant – heaven still move about her –
Though in her cradle, yet now promises
Upon this land a thousand blessings,
Which time shall bring to ripeness. She shall be [...]
A pattern to all princes living with her,
And all that shall succeed. (5.4.17-23)

According to Cranmer, Elizabeth's reign will bring England prosperity, and the queen will provide such a shining example of goodness that she will become a "pattern for all

princes.” By dramatizing the conversations surrounding Elizabeth’s baptism (a clear invention on Shakespeare’s part), the playwright underlines the link between Elizabeth and Protestantism in England, one which Foxe attributed to Anne Boleyn by painting her as a martyr. Though others, including the unnamed “Old Lady” and the Lord Chamberlain, have also argued for Elizabeth’s future value to the country, the playwright gives Cranmer these lines because, by doing so, he can tie the future queen with a major figure in the English Reformation, the martyred author of *The Book of Common Prayer*. This speech operates within the heritage work paradigm to interpret the play’s troubling and destabilizing events of political and marital upheaval as painful but necessary steps in completing the work of the Reformation in England.

By employing the Elect Nation paradigm, Shakespeare’s adaptation choices in *Henry VIII* not only evoke England’s political and religious history but also create nostalgia, a powerful draw for audiences. Film theorist Sue Harper argues that historical imagination, such as this play displays, is “crucial to survival; the recognition of the past aids a sense of national as well as personal identity” (1). Shakespeare’s desire to arouse nostalgia for Elizabeth’s reign determines his editing of his subject matter for *Henry VIII*. The turbulence of Edward VI’s and Mary’s short reigns are not foretold. Likewise, disturbing events like Anne Boleyn’s adultery charge and beheading and the king’s hasty marriage to Jane Seymour have no place in this play. By downplaying these historical details and embellishing others, the playwright can focus on the good coming from Henry’s divorce from Katherine: Elizabeth’s reign and the strengthening of Reformed religion. Cranmer’s prophecy, moreover, argues that Elizabeth’s Reformation will continue through her successor James:

The bird of wonder dies – the maiden phoenix –
Her ashes new create another heir
As great in admiration as herself. (5.4.40-42)

Elizabeth, the embodiment of England’s Protestant heritage, will be reborn through James VI and I, and he not only possesses the dead queen’s political legitimacy but likewise ensures the continuation of the Protestant faith.

***Henry VIII* as Reformation Heritage Work**

In *Henry VIII*, Elizabeth’s birth and baptism and Archbishop Cranmer’s involvement and interest in her frame the infant princess as the symbol for the next generation of the Reformation. Shakespeare’s use of a future Protestant martyr, Cranmer, as the prophetic mouthpiece further underscores Elizabeth’s importance to Protestantism in England. Though expressed in the future tense, Cranmer’s prophecies about Elizabeth’s rule create nostalgia for the monarch. According to Archbishop Cranmer, Elizabeth

Shall be to the happiness of England
An aged Princess. Many days shall see her,
And yet no day without a deed to crown it
Would I have known no more. But she must die
She must, the saints must have her – yet a virgin.

A most unspotted lily shall she pass
 To th'ground, and all the world shall mourn her. (5.4.56-62)

This passage demonstrates Shakespeare's employment of Elizabeth as an emblem of the Reformation itself. Though the playwright does not equate her mother Anne Boleyn with other martyrs as Foxe does, he does canonize the daughter through this prophecy. Cranmer's oracle and Henry's response ignore the legal and moral intricacies surrounding the king's divorce and elevate Elizabeth to the status of Protestant saint. Shakespeare taps into and reinforces the Virgin Queen trope, one Elizabeth herself often promoted, with his description of her as an "unspotted lily."

Shakespeare further argues that the future queen's value lies not just in her celibate status but also in the fruitful legacy she leaves behind: the Reformation itself. Upon hearing the prophecy, King Henry replies,

O Lord Archbishop,
 Thou hast made me now a man. Never before
 This happy child did I get anything.
 This oracle of comfort has so pleased me
 That when I am in heaven I shall desire
 To see what this child does, and praise my maker. (5.4.63-68)

Cranmer's words inform both the king and the audience that Elizabeth is the good fruit of a morally right but emotionally hard decision to end one marriage and form another. By extension, England's embrace of Protestantism is shown to be pleasing to God, who blesses the land through his representative Elizabeth. The king's anguished wrestling with his conscience earlier in the play has dissipated at the end, thanks to Cranmer's "oracle of comfort" about "this happy child" that Henry now considers to be the chief accomplishment of his life. His daughter's rule will secure the continuance of the Protestant faith.

Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* activates nostalgia in connecting itself with works esteemed both for their popularity and their scholarship and ignores certain aspects of the history that would cloud the positive depictions of the king, Anne Boleyn, Cranmer, and the Reformation itself. The playwright effectively adds on a chapter to both Holinshed and Foxe by extending the glories of England's Reformation through Elizabeth's reign. Divorce in the play creates order and stability and opens the door for the Protestant faith to take root in England, and Elizabeth's reign is crucial for the success of the Reformation. According to Jean-Christophe Mayer, Shakespeare considered the Reformation not as a finite stage of history, but as a continuously renewable phenomenon (202). As such, the Reformation itself needed a new figurehead in each generation. Shakespeare's elevation of Elizabeth in *Henry VIII*, a play planned for the wedding of James's daughter and her Protestant German bridegroom, has the effect of establishing the Stuarts as the next defenders of the English Reformation. Perhaps James's devoutly Protestant son Prince Henry's death in November, 1612, necessitated a reassertion of James's Reformed credentials. By linking James with Elizabeth in Cranmer's prophecy, *Henry VIII* asserts that the present king will not backslide toward Catholicism. Nostalgia and national history thus contribute to the formation of contemporaneous political and cultural identity.

Shakespeare concentrates on the events and figures most crucial to painting Elizabeth's birth as legitimate and good. Thus, he conflates national interests with the theological and the personal, presenting the marriage of Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII as the necessary step to secure England's political peace and religious identity because that marriage produced an heir that would continue her parents' separation from Roman Catholicism. Elizabeth becomes much more than a political ruler in the play. In Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, she is the prophesied agent of the true Reformation and the means by which God blesses England.

Works Cited

Primary Literature

- Foxe, John. *The Second Volume of the Ecclesiasticall Historie, Conteyning the Acts and Monvments of Martyrs with a Genrall Discourse of these Latter Persecutions, Horrible Troubles and Turnvites, Stirred vp by Romish Prelates in the Church, with Diverse Other Things Incident, Especially to this Realme of England and Scotland, as Partly Also to All Other Forreine Nations, Appertaining, from the Time of King Henry the VIII to Queene Elizabeth Our Gracious Ladie Now Raigning*. London: 1597. *Early English Books Online*. November 12, 2016. Web.
- Holinshed, Raphael. *The Third Volume of Chronicles, Beginning at Duke William Called the Conqueror and Descending by Degrees of Yeeres to All the Kings and Queens of England in Their Orderlie Successions*. 1586. Reprint of 1808 edition. New York: AMS Press, 1976.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eighth, or All Is True*. Ed. Jay L. Halio. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Secondary Literature

- Bernard, G. W. *The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005.
- Grindon, Leger. *Shadows on the Past: Studies in the Historical Fiction Film*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.
- Gurr, Andrew. *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Harper, Sue. *Picturing the Past: The Rise and Fall of the British Costume Film*. London: British Film Institute, 1994.
- Kernan, Alvin. *Shakespeare, the King's Playwright: Theater in the Stuart Court 1603-1613*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Mayer, Jean-Christophe. "Revisiting the Reformation – Shakespeare and Fletcher's *King Henry VIII*." *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 5.2 (2003): 188-203. *EBSCOHost*. 29 November 2016. Web.
- Patterson, Anne. *Reading Holinshed's Chronicles*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Spikes, Judith Doolin. "The Jacobean History Play and the Myth of the Elect Nation." *Renaissance Drama* 8 (1977): 117-149. *JSTOR*. 28 February 2018.

Vincendeau, Ginette. Introduction. *Film/Literature/Heritage: A Sight and Sound Reader*. Ed. Ginette Vincendeau. London: British Film Institute, 2001. xi-xxxi.

Zusammenfassung

In *Henry VIII* stellt Shakespeare die Scheidung des Königs von Katharina von Aragon sowie seine Heirat mit Anne Boleyn und die Geburt von Elisabeth als Teil der Reformation dar und deutet an, dass James VI und I nicht nur der politische sondern auch der religiöse Nachfolger der verstorbenen Königin, Elisabeth I, sei. Shakespeares Stück fungiert somit als „heritage work“, ein Begriff der sonst Filme bezeichnet, die ein romantisierendes Bild der Vergangenheit zeichnen. Das frühneuzeitliche Theater hat vieles gemein mit dem heutigen Kino, insbesondere den Rückgriff auf bekannte Stoffe als Vorlagen für Adaptionen. Im Vergleich mit seinen historischen Quellen wird der zentrale Punkt von Shakespeares Stück deutlicher: Elisabeth erscheint als Schlüsselfigur der englischen Reformation. Sowohl Holinsheds *Chronicles* als auch Foxes *Acts and Monvments* behandeln die in *Henry VIII* dargestellte Zeit; allein Shakespeare jedoch besteht auf die zentrale Rolle Elisabeths für die fortwährende Reformation.

“HOLY PALMERS’ KISS”: AFFECTIVE ICONOGRAPHY IN *ROMEO AND JULIET*

BY

JONAS KELLERMANN

“Can a play show us the very truth and nature of love?” (Madden 59:12-23 min) According to director John Madden’s 1998 film *Shakespeare in Love*, the answer to this startling question would indeed be, ‘Yes, *Romeo and Juliet* is the play that can’. The young and struggling playwright Will Shakespeare falls head over heels in love with the beautiful noble lady (and part-time actress) Viola de Lesseps and is thereby inspired to write his romantic masterpiece *Romeo and Juliet*, a work so affectively powerful – the film would have its audience believe – that even Judi Dench’s steely Elizabeth I deems it a worthy representation of true love at the film’s climax. The close connection that *Shakespeare in Love*, scripted by Marc Norman and playwright Tom Stoppard, draws between Shakespeare’s tragedy and the dramatization of love is symptomatic of the place that *Romeo and Juliet* has come to hold in the Shakespearean canon as “the absolute embodiment, the tragic paradigm, of romantic love” (McMullan xvi). One of the artistic means through which “the most famous story of doomed young love ever written” (Weis 3) manages to put the protagonists’ feelings on full display is the metaphorical blending of sexual love and Catholic iconography. Most notably in the sonnet that the lovers spontaneously compose in the exchange during their first encounter in Act 1 Scene 5, Juliet becomes the saint at whose bodily temple the lips of the devout pilgrim Romeo come to pray. The passage’s imagery is unequivocally pre-Reformation:

ROMEO If I profane with my unworthing hand
 This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this:
 My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
 To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.
JULIET. Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
 Which mannerly devotion shows in this,
 For saints have hands that pilgrims’ hands do touch,
 And palm to palm is holy palmers’ kiss.
ROMEO Have not saints lips and holy palmers too?
JULIET. Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.
ROMEO. O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do –
 They pray; grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.
JULIET. Saints do not move, though grant for prayers’ sake.
ROMEO. Then move not, while my prayer’s effect I take.
 [Kisses her.]

Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin is purged. (1.5.92-106)¹

Critics have read this blending of sacred and profane imagery as a fleeting, but nonetheless powerful and consequential moment of affective transcendence against the social constraints of Shakespeare's Verona. Dismayed by their social surroundings and familial obligations, Romeo and Juliet escape into a world of their own affective inwardness in a meeting of hands and lips. This moment has therefore been justly described, not only as the quintessential moment of love at first sight, but also as "love at first *touch*" (Karim-Cooper 178). Physicality and its role in producing affective experiences has been one of the focal points of the so-called "affective turn" (Clough 1-33) – a continuous movement across manifold disciplines as varied as neurobiology and musicology united by a renewed interest in notions of affect and emotion as forms of embodied cognition. This paper therefore re-engages with some of the readings that have been influential to the understanding of the sonnet and its use of Catholic iconography, taking its cues from this revived scholarly attention to affect and emotion. How does the use of religious imagery as a rhetorical device inform the poetic construction of felt experience not only in the sonnet in 1.5, but in the dramaturgy of the play as a whole? How does religious imagery contribute to the construction of the lovers' seemingly deep affective inwardness? This paper will therefore ask to what extent this new-found interest in felt experience may be helpful to rethink our approaches towards Shakespeare's dramatic depictions of intense feelings as quasi-religious experiences in *Romeo and Juliet* and the broader implications we may thus draw regarding the connection between affect theory and theatre as well as literary studies in general. In that regard, the use of Catholic imagery in the Pilgrim sonnet can be read as an episode of metaphoric, tactile, and affective reciprocity – the three dimensions that, together, lay the groundwork for the iconic amorous connection of the two characters.

Religious Imagery in the Pilgrim Sonnet

The repeated references to religious imagery in the play overall, but particularly in the sonnet in 1.5, have been extensively noted by critics. A common theme that has come up repeatedly in readings of the sonnet is its quality as a 'transcendent' moment for the lovers. For example, Rudolf Stamm has ascribed the imagery of saint and pilgrim to the "Petrarchan tradition with its tendency to express love in religious terms" and has called the sonnet encounter a "moment of transcendent passion" (2). François Laroque reads the play as deeply infused by pre-Reformation culture so that "profane love is understood as deeply intertwined with the sacred" and that the sonnet functions as a rite of prayer *and* of love at the same time (23-25). In a succinct analysis of the iconography in *Romeo and Juliet*, Julia Staykova identifies in the play a "sacro-sexual aesthetic" that marks the sonnet as a "transcendent moment of unity between spirit and flesh" (173, 176) in which the overt metaphoric allusions to Catholicism are neither fully embraced nor fully degraded:

¹ Unless noted otherwise, all further Shakespeare references are to William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. by René Weis. The Arden Shakespeare. Third Series (London: Bloomsbury, 2012).

Catholic rites are metaphorically transposed onto a different plane of signification, but the “affective stimulation” in the scene derives precisely from the fact that they are represented with their original meaning firmly in sight. Shakespeare’s manner of dramatizing Catholic devotion draws upon but does not fully conform to representational methods inherited from the Protestant theatrical tradition forged during the Henrician Reformation and Edward VI’s reign. (Staykova 173)

The theatrical traditions that Staykova refers to here have been described by Paul Whitfield White as the propagandist tactic in Tudor theatre to “present those revered [Catholic] images before the spectators only to discredit them by depriving them of their original sacred context, and substituting a profane or diabolical one instead” (qtd. in Staykova 173). The emphasis on Romeo’s and Juliet’s hands as the hands of pilgrims makes an interesting case in that regard. As Farah Karim-Cooper has noted, “[a]fter the Reformation in England, the focus upon saints’ hands in medieval worship and iconography transferred to that of the mistress’s hand in poetry and treatises on beauty” (176). The use of hands in the sonnet thus marks a converging of the Pre-Reformation Catholic symbolism of saintly hands and the more secularized post-Reformation connotation of hands as objects of poetic adulation. In striking opposition to the traditions identified by White, however, this dramatic re-inscription of the saint-figure does not exhibit the usual mockery and derogation that often came with such appropriations of Catholic imagery in contemporary writings, including Shakespeare’s own romantic comedies, as Karim-Cooper observes (177). The act of poetic emoting as it had been established by the end of the 16th century in England through the legacy of Petrarch and the success of Spenserian and Shakespearean sonnets is rendered a quasi-religious experience by employing a “single extended metaphor” (Perrine, qtd. in Karim-Cooper 176) that is firmly rooted in the tradition of Catholic iconography. It is in this non-derogatory blending of sacred and secularized connotations through the appropriation of the saint-figure in the character of Juliet in which the transcendent quality of the sonnet can be identified. Shakespeare’s use of religious imagery in the first encounter of the lovers raises the affective states of the characters towards a quasi-religious experience. The protagonists’ amorous connection becomes a religion in its own right, fully embedded neither in Catholicism nor in Protestantism, but rather in a “borderland of meaning,” to use Clayton MacKenzie’s phrasing (23), that allows for a “merger of religious and erotic affect” (Staykova 173). Significantly, both agents in this re-appropriation of imagery – pilgrim and saint – get to participate vocally in the construction of the sonnet, transforming that very poetic form from a male-only monologue of speaking about one’s beloved into a male-female duologue of “speaking *with* one’s beloved” (Schalkwyk 67). The sonnet in 1.5 is therefore neither a monological display of reformed Catholicism nor of re-reformed Protestantism, but rather, as Paul Siegel has argued, a ‘duological’ expression of the religion of love, a Medieval concept denoting that “a cosmic love, permeating the universe and finding expression in sexual love, works against the chaos which would otherwise prevail” (371).

Re-Grounding Felt Experience in Language

This notion of shared sonneteering as a shared reaching for transcendence also echoes through two seminal essays on the play, Catherine Belsey's "The Name of the Rose in *Romeo in Juliet*" (1993) and Gayle Whittier's "The Sonnet's Body and the Body Sonnetized in *Romeo and Juliet*" (1989). These two articles can be grouped together as they both explore discourses of poetic language as crucial elements in the dramaturgy of *Romeo and Juliet*. Rather than a means of expressive liberation, the signifying capacity of language becomes an insurmountable impediment that not only drives the "lexical" feud between the two families, but also denies the lovers the fulfilment of their romantic desires.² Belsey discusses Shakespeare's depiction of said desire, arguing not only that it undoes the Cartesian distinction between body and mind, but that it altogether "imagines a metaphysical body that cannot be realized, [...] as pure sensation, sightless, speechless organisms in conjunction, flesh on flesh, independent of the signifier" (127, 131). The titular name of the rose becomes a tragic and ultimately fatal breaking point for Romeo and Juliet as theirs is a love that imagines itself beyond any names and semiotic inscription, "an unspeakable residue, boundless and unlimited [...] which constitutes desire" (Belsey 138-139). The transcendence that the lovers seek through linguistic means remains unattainable because of the very nature of language. This discourse on language particularly concerning its expressive capacities and limitations in *Romeo and Juliet* reflects wider discourses on language and its tragic conceptualization in a number of Early Modern English texts, as Jill Levenson has argued:

[R]hetoric, vigorous and accomplished, comes up against barriers of its own making, rigidities inherent in language. Its processes expose the sources of intractableness: the inability of words, even large numbers of words, to express for their speakers the real conditions of their lives; the potential for amplification to grow out of control. (55)

Romeo and Juliet fits into this framework in that it not only "tests the flexibility and compass of sonnet conventions," but that it also "explores the capacity of rhetoric to rationalize human conduct in moving terms" (Levenson 55). This moving quality results from the very fact that the creative potential of poetry as well as its expressive restrictions are innately connected in the dramaturgy of the play. Only by stretching the poetic flexibility of language to the utmost degree do the lovers discover that there is in fact a limitation to that flexibility and that "the rose that exists beyond its name" (Belsey 141) simply cannot be conceived of without the name designating it as such. In a similar vein, Whittier reads *Romeo and Juliet* as physical manifestations of Petrarchan imagery and tracks their tragic descent from the "lyric freedom" and non-

² The feud can be called "lexical" in that it is mainly dictated by the respective family names and not by any major cultural distinctions between the two families in Shakespeare's characterization of them: "[T]he point of Shakespeare's feud is that Montagues and Capulets dress alike, think alike, talk alike (though with some subtle difference of intonation – 1.5.54), agree on everything; their dispute is lexical, not cultural. They are enemies because the attribute noble (as they understand it) cannot display itself in a condition of peace. A culture predicated on dispute will, sooner rather than later, find a dispute to generate the culture" (Albright 37).

referential nature of Petrarchan exuberance to the “tragic fact” of signification that is inescapably inscribed onto their bodies (27). They aspire towards the “transcendent metaphor” of Petrarchism, yet they must do so “not in a world of poetic transcendence, but in a world of finite things” (Whittier 33, 39). Whittier sees the sonnet in 1.5 as the only moment in the play when these struggling forces are temporarily reconciled: “Flesh and voice *reciprocate*, both through the bodies of the lovers and the body of the poem they speak” (35).³ One may extend this point to Belsey’s line of thought: the opposing ends of the object of poetic construction (affective inwardness) and the means of that construction (language) perhaps come closest in the sonnet. The sonnet thus functions not only as a speech act *about* love, but also an act *of* love in itself, or in Barbara Estrin’s words, “the melting of art into life” (34).

Bringing together Belsey’s and Whittier’s elaborations on Shakespeare’s tragic conceptualization of language with his inclusion of Catholic iconography in the sonnet, one can see that this use of religious imagery has a greater dramaturgical significance than merely being a stylistic remnant of Petrarchism. The Catholic iconography appropriated encapsulates one of the profound desires at the heart of the play, a desire for an affectively transcendent experience which, while eventually and tragically not granted to the lovers, they at least get to approximate poetically in shared moments such as the sonnet. Through the elaborate use of religious imagery, Shakespeare is able to construct a linguistic impression that the lovers in their first meeting – when they are not yet aware of the other’s name and identity – experience an affectively transcendent moment *beyond* language. Through the kind of mutual speech acts that Laurie Maguire has described as acts of “linguistic reciprocity” (67), Romeo and Juliet poetically enact the reciprocal ideal of the religion of love and revise Petrarchism from “a system of metaphor and rhetoric organized around a male gaze” (Jones 4) into a system governed by two gazes, one male and the other female. The lovers’ religious doctrine in that moment is entirely their own, governed only by their affects for one another. As Paul Kottman observes:

[T]hey express a remarkable, if still mystified, awareness that the love relation, the struggle for human freedom, is not wholly determined by the hard truth that one will outlive the other. The development of a love affair has an instituting power all its own, correspondent to the poetic invention depicting it. (18-19)

This instituting power and its poetic depiction become verbally manifest in what Matthew Spellberg has described as the language of dreams. He argues that Romeo and Juliet have not only “managed to regroup the metaphysics of religion in the physics that pre-dates it” (72), but have also found the means to poeticize this re-grounding in the reformed dual sonnet and thus overcome the increasing gap between language and felt experience that otherwise defines the play through poetic and tactile reciprocity: “The tactile closeness of shared words in Romeo and Juliet’s sonnet strikes out on its own, defying the reader and the world to look for a precedent to this depiction of language coming from and returning to felt experience” (Spellberg 76).

Spellberg’s use of the word “re-ground” in the previous quotation, whether intentionally or not, suggests a certain hierarchical structure between what he

³ Emphasis is my own.

addresses as the metaphysical and the physical. This implicit structure seems to suggest that religion, as the sphere of the metaphysical, is at the upper end of that hierarchy, whereas the secularized sphere of worldly existence is at its lower end. This hierarchy opens up a question regarding Shakespeare's use of Catholic iconography. Is the sonnet in 1.5 an example of sacred imagery being secularized or is it rather an example of secularized imagery being 'sacralized'? Similar questions may be asked concerning the juxtaposition of poetry and theatre in *Romeo and Juliet*. Is the sonnet an example of the sonnet form being theatricalized or is it rather an example of theatre becoming 'sonnetized'? The pilgrim sonnet thus also marks a moment of generic equivocality that cannot simply be dissolved in one way or another. As the elaborations on Shakespeare's hand imagery above have illustrated, the sonnet is not a case of sacred imagery being secularized and thus vulgarized or vice versa, but rather of the two spheres finding a momentary common ground in the middle. Similarly, regarding the conflict of theatre and poetry one may very well state that "the language of the sonnet – and in particular the language of courtly love as renegotiated for the sonnet form – is made material for the theatre" (McMullan xii). At the same time, one may also read *Romeo and Juliet* as Shakespeare's attempt of opening up the form of dramatic theatre towards non-dramatic poetry in order to allow for the language of such poetry to gain a new medium on the playhouse stages. Considering the heavy emphasis that Shakespeare places on the intense inward experiences of the protagonists and the apparent inexpressibility thereof, it seems futile to force *Romeo and Juliet* into any one of these generic categorizations. It seems more rewarding to consider the play's dramatic as well as generic ambivalences as the very source of its novelty and uniqueness.

To Affect and Be Affected: Amorous Reciprocity

The preceding discussion has illustrated the significance of Catholic imagery concerning the exploration of felt experience and its theatrical construction in *Romeo and Juliet*, as initiated by the likes of Belsey and Whittier. It is this juncture – the intersection of felt experience and its performative construction in drama – at which the recent surge of scholarly interest in affective phenomena may come into play in order to further comprehend the dramaturgy of Shakespeare's play as a "tragedy of love" (Bates 195-202). Gail Kern Paster has already pointed out the similarities between Early Modern conceptualizations of the passions and Gilles Deleuze's notions of the human body and affect, which would in turn influence later important affect theorists such as Brian Massumi. While 16th-century notions of the passions and 21st-century notions of affect are far from identical, both challenge the Cartesian distinction between body and mind, positioning affectivity at the intersection of the two:

Deleuzian deconstruction of such Western binaries as reason and passion, body and spirit, male and female, human and animal cohabits nicely with what I see as the dominant early modern understanding of the material body as phenomenologically indistinguishable from its passions, indeed as constituted by its passions and governed with great difficulty by the rational soul. (Paster 22)

In light of Belsey's aforementioned reading of desire in *Romeo and Juliet* as decidedly non-Cartesian, the play thus emphasizes the visceral nature of affect as a force that threatens to shatter the self and its senses – of outside and inside – and suspends the dichotomy of body and mind, both in its positive and negative manifestations. This visceral quality marks the quintessence of the relationship between Romeo and Juliet as well as its fleetingness. "[E]motion refuses to be pinned down, closed off, categorized: its power derives from its propensity to spill over, to be excessive, [...] its protean ability to evade analysis inexhaustibly" (Hillman 140). It is hardly surprising then that in spite of the surging interest in affect, a single universally accepted definition of the term has yet to emerge. As Nigel Thrift, whose *Non-Representational Theory* marks one of the key texts in the field, concludes, "the problem must be faced straightaway that there is no stable definition of affect" (175). Juliet's reaction to Romeo's banishment from Verona thus seems almost prophetic in claiming that her pain exceeds the expressive capacity of language: "There is no end, no limit, measure, bound, / In that word's death; no words can that woe sound" (3.2.125-126). These reservations notwithstanding (or rather because of them), an understanding of the affective discourses *within* the plays themselves and how these affects are negotiated through the art form of theatre may help fully recognizing the affective grip that Shakespeare's tragedies continue to have on audiences. If Juliet finds herself unable to fully express the depth of her feelings in words, why is it that we as audience members still get an impression of that depth in the theatre? As Deleuze noted in his reading of Spinoza, one of the defining qualities of the human body is its capacity to affect and be affected, an idea that was taken up later by affect theorists and opened up discourses on emotion towards the pre-cognitive and pre-linguistic as "visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion (Gregg /Seigworth 1).⁴ An approach towards Shakespearean drama from a perspective of affect theory may thus contribute to dissecting how plays like *Romeo and Juliet* create impressions of the 'unspeakable woes' of fictional characters, articulating not only a "poetics of the unthought, a well-structured pre-reflective world, which, just because it lacks explicit articulation, is therefore not without grip" (Thrift 16), but more precisely a poetics of the unthought that can be applied to the representation of affect on page and stage.

The scope of the present paper is, of course, fairly limited considering the enormity of the endeavor. Yet, a focus on the sonnet in 1.5 might allow us to explore in some detail affect's potential for dramatization and poetic construction. We may begin by noting that one of the essential features of affect, regardless of how one defines the term, is its inherent in-between-ness as well as the simultaneity of affecting and being affected (Gregg and Seigworth 1-25). The affective dimension of the encounter between Romeo and Juliet in the sonnet scene, therefore, should not be explained with reference to a single category. It arises from a multitude of borderlands, in

⁴ See for example chapter six, "Spinoza and us", in Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, translated by Robert Hurley (City Light Books: San Francisco, 1988). For an overview of the development of affect theory from Spinoza to the 21st century, see the introduction "An Inventory of Shimmers" by Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth to *The Affect Theory Reader*, referenced in full below.

MacKenzie's words again, which are brought together when the characters reach out to one another, both poetically and physically: the borderland between physical gesture and verbal language; the borderland between love as feeling and love as poetic art; and lastly, the borderland of the characters themselves between sexual lovers and religious icons. It is these borderlands and their evasiveness of fixed categorizations (such as family names and their corresponding societal obligations) that allow Romeo and Juliet to construct a verbal articulation of how deeply they affect and are affected by one another. The appropriation of the twofold image of pilgrim and saint thus encapsulates in language the inherent duality of affect by showcasing two characters affecting and being affected by one another amorously. Emphasizing the affective dimension of the pilgrim-saint metaphor also supports Paul Kottman's claim that *Romeo and Juliet* is *not* just the passive story of a doomed young love thwarted by outside forces, but of two individuals who find freedom and agency in their amorous relationship:

Contesting the notion that the "tragic" core of our modern subjectivity is rooted in a conflict between individual desires and the reigning demands of family, civic, and social norms shaping those desires, I contend that Shakespeare's play shows how Romeo and Juliet are formed as subjects through acts of mutual self-recognition that mute such conflicts. Such acts constitute a love affair. [...] [I]t is the story of two individuals *who actively claim* their separate individuality, their own freedom, in the only way they can – through one another. (5-6)

I would agree with Kottman that one may read *Romeo and Juliet* not only as a story of passionate love tragically destroyed by its social environment, but also as the story of a 'Liebestod' – love-death – of the protagonist's *own* making and choosing, at the heart of which lies the overpowering and all-encompassing affective force of a reciprocal love "as boundless as the sea" (2.2.133). The sonnet in 1.5 arguably performs a crucial function in the process of mutual self-recognition that Kottman describes. It is not only the first moment in the play that the lovers come face to face and share words with one another, it is also a decisive first instance of the lovers finding their own individual poetic voice through the voice of their respective interlocutor. Not only do they rely on each other's rhyme schemes in the structural composition of the sonnet, they also establish a metaphorical connection between themselves that relies on the duality between the worshiper and the worshipped. Romeo becomes a pilgrim because he has a saint (Juliet) to worship. Juliet becomes the saint because she is worshipped as such by the pilgrim (Romeo) to whom she eventually grants the fulfillment of his prayer, the kiss. The respective individualities of the two lovers are thus constructed through their poetic and religious reciprocity. In that way, the relationship between Romeo and Juliet not only differs from Romeo's previous infatuation for the off-stage Rosalind; it also deviates from the tradition in Petrarchan and Shakespearean sonnets in which the female beloved usually remains absent and silent:

The lover seeks recognition as a lover "in life" from the only other capable of bestowing this nontransferable prestige: the beloved. This means that the beloved appears neither as an external object of sexual desire (as Rosalind had previously appeared to Romeo). On the contrary, because Romeo cannot possess or conquer Juliet she has become as essential to him as he is to her. [...] The beloved is a living subject on whose reciprocal recognition the lover depends in order to be, or become, a lover. (Kottman 19)

Shakespeare creates this moment of amorous mutual self-recognition through a twofold strategy: by transforming the traditionally monological form of the sonnet into a dialogue and by connecting the two speakers through the Catholic metaphor of saint and pilgrim. The use of Catholic iconography is therefore essential in establishing the act of sonneteering as an act of mutual self-recognition that follows solely from couple's "religion of love," and not their family names.

Affective Practices and Emotive Speech Acts

This notion of affective expression may be clarified further if one thinks of it along the lines of Margaret Wetherell's concept of "affective practice." Even though her monograph *Affect and Emotion: A New Social Science Understanding* is concerned neither with literary nor theatre studies, her framework still offers insights for the discussion of affect in the world-within-the-play of Shakespeare's text:

[A]ffective practice marks out a domain that analysts or participants interpret as to do with the emotional and the psychological. The divisions between these kinds of practices and other social practices will not be clear-cut. The domains of affective practice are often those [...] where the body has been more intrusive than it ordinarily is. These are domains, too, [...] where there is notable talk occurring about emotion and feelings, and domains where something personally significant seems to have occurred that someone wants to mark. (Wetherell 96-97)

Arguably, a sociological concept concerned especially with everyday practices in the 'real world' of the 21st century cannot simply be applied to a highly stylized and formalized dramatic text from the 16th century. Yet, if we consider Wetherell's ideas in a more abstract way, then this might help us read affectivity in *Romeo and Juliet* not as a Romanticist externalization of inner affective *states*, but rather as a *process* that is consistently renegotiated and modulated in the act of verbalization. In fact, the sonnet in 1.5 certainly marks a notable example of – quite literally – *talk* about emotion and feeling between Romeo and Juliet which will have significant personal consequences for both characters in the later course of the drama. In addition to affective practice as a category of *talking* about emotions, Wetherell's concept also acknowledges that, as Juliet exclaims in 3.2, there is a decidedly pre-verbal dimension towards affective experiences that cannot simply be put into words:

[A]ffective practice, like other forms of practice, rests on a large unarticulated hinterland of possible semiotic connections and meaning trajectories (built around the discursive, the visual, the tactile, etc). What we do is non-conscious in the general sense that these possible meanings and significances exceed and proliferate what can be grasped and articulated in any particular moment. [...] The affective hinterland always escapes entire articulation. It exceeds any particular connected act of affective meaning-making. (Wetherell 129)

Describing the practice of sonneteering in *Romeo and Juliet* as a performative construction of reciprocal affect, rather than an outward expression of an emotional state has the advantage of avoiding a simple one-to-one translation and signification of consciously pre-conceived feelings as fixed semiotic units into words. Affective experiences in this case should not be understood as a "type of containment and localisation of affect within the body," but instead as intensities that thrive at the

intersection of mental consciousness and corporeal pre-consciousness, suspending the “division between inner and outer states” (Atkinson / Duffy, 94-95). By moving away from its traditionally Romanticist connotation, a revision of the very term “expression” may help to denote the bringing the ‘affective hinterland’ to the forefront of consciousness in a *performative*, rather than constative, manner, an idea that William Reddy – in clear reference to J. L. Austin’s theory of performative speech acts – has summarized under the term “emotive speech act”:

Emotives are influenced directly by, and alter, what they “refer” to. Thus, emotives are similar to performatives (and differ from constatives) in that emotives do things to the world. Emotives are themselves instruments directly changing, building, hiding, intensifying emotions, instruments that may be more or less successful. (Reddy 105)

Even though the lines in the sonnet do not fully meet Reddy’s technical requirements of being “first-person singular present tense emotion claims” (104), they nevertheless exhibit what one might – in line with Austin’s idea of an illocutionary force – call an ‘emotive force’ that is clearly successful in establishing and quickly intensifying the connection between the two speakers.⁵ It seems difficult to imagine the first encounter of Shakespeare’s star-crossed lovers to exude that same force without the Catholic iconography through which it is channeled – iconography that is rendered equally affective through its Petrarchan appropriation. Hinting at a transcendent realm beyond earthly construction, religious imagery adds to the dramatic impression of the ‘affective hinterland’ of Shakespeare’s protagonists, a hinterland that both evades and drives their exploration of poetic language to articulate that hinterland. In searching for and trying to escape into that hinterland through verbal expression, Shakespeare’s two lovers function as much as active agents in the progress of the drama as their oft-proclaimed “star-crossed” fate.

In conclusion, this paper has shown the significance of Catholic iconography in suggesting the transcendent, quasi-religious dimension of affect in the first meeting of *Romeo and Juliet*. More than just continuing the Petrarchan trope of the passionate lover and the distant lady, Shakespeare’s imagery in the sonnet strongly informs the tragic dramaturgy of the play as well as its discourses on language and transcendence. The references to Catholic iconography emphasize the lovers’ desire for transcendence and escapism, which they seek to accomplish through their shared elaboration on poetic expressivity. The use of the dual metaphor to introduce the protagonists to one another thus establishes their amorous relationship as founded upon linguistic reciprocity – an aspect which their subsequent encounters in the balcony scene and aubade will expand upon. Reading the play through a lens inspired by affect theory, this paper has also suggested that the two dimensions of affect theory and the construction of affect in ‘the arts’ may not in fact be as far apart as one might be led to

⁵ Similarly, as Austin discovered in the later lectures of *How to do things with words*, not every speech act needs to be classified technically as a performative in order to exhibit a certain illocutionary force in the moment of its utterance: “[W]hen I say anything (except perhaps a mere exclamation like ‘damn’ or ‘ouch’) I shall be performing both locutionary and illocutionary acts, and these two kinds of acts seem to be the very things which we tried to use, under the names of ‘doing’ and ‘saying’, as a means of distinguishing performatives from constatives” (Austin 133).

think at first glance. After all, “being moved takes many forms, some of which do not involve conceptual formulations of any kind” (Altieri 3), which makes fiction and its dimension of “what if” surprisingly well-suited to explore the multiplicity and ambivalence of being moved. In addition to scholarly approaches towards the arts, an interdisciplinary approach between affect studies and, for example, literary studies might also reflect back on affect theory itself and some of the terminology developed in its context. Massumi, one of the figureheads of the affective turn, has famously insisted that the very essence of affect lies in its autonomy and the stark distinction between what he calls the “virtual” and the “actual”. Affect, he claims, is innately tied to the virtual and can only enter the realm of the actual as semiotically fixed emotion (Massumi 83-109). However, Shakespeare’s rendering of affective experience in *Romeo and Juliet* seems to suggest that the power of affect does not lie in the opposition of these different spheres, but rather in their confluence: the virtual meeting the actual, the meta-physical meeting the physical, and the non-verbal meeting the verbal, just as lover and beloved begin to recognize themselves in the other.

List of Works Cited

Primary Literature

- Shakespeare, William. *Romeo and Juliet*. Ed. René Weis. The Arden Shakespeare. Third Series. London: Bloomsbury, 2012.
- . *Romeo and Juliet*. Ed. Gordon McMullan. Norton Critical Edition. New York/London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016.
- Shakespeare in Love*. Dir. John Madden. Miramax Films, 1998.

Secondary Literature

- Albright, Daniel. *Musicking Shakespeare: A Conflict of Theatres*. Rochester: U of Rochester P, 2007.
- Altieri, Charles. *The Particulars of Rapture: An Aesthetics of the Affects*. Ithaca/New York: Cornell UP, 2003.
- Atkinson, Paul, and Michelle Duffy. “The Amplification of Affect: Tension, Intensity and Form in Modern Dance.” *Modernism and Affect*. Ed. Julie Taylor. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2015: 94-110.
- Austin, J. L. *How To Do Things With Words*. Eds. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa. Second Edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1975 [1962].
- Bates, Catherine. “Shakespeare’s Tragedies of Love.” *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*. Ed. Claire McEachern. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002: 195-217.
- Belsey, Catherine. “The Name of the Rose in *Romeo and Juliet*.” *The Yearbook of English Studies* 23 (1993): 126-142.
- Clough, Patricia T. “Introduction.” *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*. Eds. Clough, Patricia T. Clough and Jean Halley. Durham: Duke UP, 2007: 1-33.

- Deleuze, Gilles. *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*. Trans. Robert Hurley. San Francisco: City Light Books, 1988.
- Estrin, Barbara. "Romeo, Juliet and the Art of Naming Love." *Ariel* 12.2 (1981): 31-49.
- Gregg, Melissa, and Gregory Seigworth. "An Inventory of Shimmers." *The Affect Theory Reader*. Eds. Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth. Durham/London: Duke UP, 2010: 1-25.
- Hillman, David. "The Pity of It: Shakespearean Tragedy and Affect." *The Oxford Handbook to Shakespearean Tragedy*. Eds. Michael Neill and David Schalkwyk. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016: 136-150.
- Jones, Ann Rosalind. *The Currency of Eros: Women's Love Lyric in Europe, 1540-1620*. Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1990.
- Karim-Cooper, Farah. *The Hand on the Shakespearean Stage: Gesture, Touch and the Spectacle of Dismemberment*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.
- Kottman, Paul A. "Defying the Stars: Tragic Love as the Struggle for Freedom in *Romeo and Juliet*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 63.1 (2012): 1-38.
- Laroque, François. "The Cult of Saints Revisited: Shakespeare's Martyrs of Love." *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 73 (Spring 2008): 23-29.
- Levenson, Jill L. "Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*: The Places of Invention." *Shakespeare Survey* 49 (1996): 45-55.
- MacKenzie, Clayton. "Love, Sex, and Death in *Romeo and Juliet*." *English Studies* 88.1 (2007): 22-42.
- McMullan, Gordon. "Introduction." William Shakespeare. *Romeo and Juliet*. Ed. Gordon McMullan. Norton Critical Edition. New York/London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016: ix-xxiii.
- Maguire, Laurie. *Shakespeare's Names*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Massumi, Brian. "The Autonomy of Affect." *Cultural Critique* 31 (Autumn 1995): 83-109.
- Paster, Gail Kern. *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage*. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Reddy, William M. *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.
- Schalkwyk, David. *Speech and Performance in Shakespeare's Sonnets and Plays*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.
- Siegel, Paul. "Christianity and the Religion of Love in *Romeo and Juliet*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 12.4 (Autumn 1961): 371-392.
- Spellberg, Matthew. "Feeling Dreams in *Romeo and Juliet*." *English Literary Renaissance* 43.1 (2013): 62-85.
- Stamm, Rudolf. "The First Meeting of the Lovers in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*." *English Studies* 67.1 (1986): 1-13.
- Staykova, Julia D. "Adultery, Idolatry and the Theatricality of False Piety in Shakespearean Scenes of Devotion." *Shakespeare* 7.2 (2011): 170-191.
- Thrift, Nigel. *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect*. London/New York: Routledge, 2008.

- Wetherell, Margaret. *Affect and Emotion: A New Social Science Understanding*. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012.
- Weis, René. "Introduction." William Shakespeare. *Romeo and Juliet*. Ed. René Weis. The Arden Shakespeare. Third Series. London: Bloomsbury, 2012: 1-116.
- Whittier, Gayle. "The Sonnet's Body and the Body Sonnetized in *Romeo and Juliet*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40.1 (1989): 27-41.

Zusammenfassung

Der Aufsatz beschäftigt sich mit Shakespeares Verwendung katholischer Ikonographie im Sonett, welches Romeo und Julia bei ihrer ersten Begegnung in Akt 1 spontan komponieren. Die religiöse Bildsprache geht dabei weit über die von Petrarca geprägten und in der Renaissance kopierten generischen Konventionen hinaus und erfüllt eine zentrale Rolle für die tragische Dimension des Stücks. Die Verbildlichung der Liebenden als Pilger und Heilige ruft nicht nur Assoziationen quasi-religiöser Transzendenz hervor. Sie ermöglicht den Figuren auch einen Moment gegenseitiger Selbsterkennung, auf dem ihr amouröses Verhältnis aufbauen wird. *Romeo und Julia* verortet die intensiven Gefühlswelten der Hauptfiguren somit im Zwischenspiel von Körper, Geist, und Sprache, und zeigt somit die Produktivität von Ansätzen aus dem Bereich der Affekttheorie auf, um die Dramatisierung von Affekten in literarischen Werken zu diskutieren.

“REFORMED ALTOGETHER”? - REFORMATIONS OF MIMESIS IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE’S AND THOMAS OSTERMEIER’S *HAMLET*

BY

ELISA LEROY

Hamlet’s Reformed Stage

“O, reform it altogether”, a passionate Hamlet entreats his players before staging “*The Mousetrap*” (3.2.231), the theatre performance that will provide him with the necessary knowledge to finally complete his mission: avenge his father’s murder, a regicide and fratricide in one, committed by his uncle Claudius, who seized the crown after the deed. But, at this point, Hamlet does not refer to a change in political regime or the amendment of a religious institution, but to an “overdone” (3.2.24) form of theatre practice that he abhors. The term ‘reform’, meaning “To make a change for the better” or even “To put a stop or end to [...] by enforcing or introducing a better procedure or conduct; to amend a fault committed” (OED 480), is nonetheless appropriate: “*The Mousetrap*” represents a suggestion to reform theatre practice from the vantage point of the concept of *mimesis*. Reformation here concerns the status of the dramatic text for the theatre performance. While Hamlet, as director of “*The Mousetrap*”, subscribes to the Aristotelian doctrine of the priority of the dramatic text before all other elements of the theatre performance, the structure and staging of “*The Mousetrap*” itself illustrates in how far *mimesis* on stage depends on the collective effort of the actor and the spectator within the unique time and space of the theatre event. Hamlet uses a play representing the events leading to the murder of his father in order to legitimize his act of revenge. The decisive connection between the play and the world surrounding it is, however, not produced through the representation of a coherent dramatic action set down in the dramatic text, but through the active exchange between the actor’s performance and the spectator’s response to it.

In Thomas Ostermeier’s 2008 staging of *Hamlet*, Hamlet’s reformatory ambition is adapted to fit a contemporary German debate around theatre aesthetics at the turn of the twenty-first century, which centred around the wish to transcend the Aristotelean poetics and its preference for the dramatic text. The term ‘post-dramatic theatre’, coined by Hans-Thies Lehmann in his eponymous work *Postdramatisches Theater*, first published in German in 1999 and translated into English in 2006, has since become an important instrument in describing forms of theatre that do not primarily rely on a dramatic text as their basis. They often renounce the narration of a plot and the representation of characters altogether, privileging other aspects of the overall aesthetic experience of the theatre performance. Ostermeier uses the dialectical structure inherent in “*The Mousetrap*” to confront two seemingly conflicting aesthetics and to question the role of the dramatic text for *mimesis* on stage: it reveals the necessary collusion of the actor’s performance and the spectator’s interpretation and perception for the theatre

performance, using the self-reflexive elements of the early modern play to look for a middle ground between the seemingly mutually exclusive positions generated by the modern debate. Ostermeier's staging allows the spectators to experience their active participation in the theatre show beyond a hermeneutic approach to the events laid down in the dramatic text. Thereby, they realize that the link between what the dramatic text represents and their own reality rests on the collaborative effort of actor and spectator in the event of the theatre performance.

The Mirror and the *Mythos*: Conceptions of *Mimesis* in *Hamlet*

In his address to the actors before the performance of "*The Mousetrap*" in Act III, Hamlet gives some instructions that reveal him to be a thorough reader of Plato and Aristotle:¹

HAMLET [...] Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance – that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature. For anything so o'rdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to Nature to show Virtue her feature, Scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it makes the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of which one must in your allowance overweigh a whole theatre of others. [...] (3.2.19-28)

Within this short passage, Hamlet shifts between two different conceptions of *mimesis*. First, he references the Platonic concept of artistic representation, summed up in the metaphor of the mirror. In Plato's *Politeia*, *mimesis* describes the relationship of art and more particularly poetry to reality in a deliberately pejorative way. Poetry is subjected to intensive scrutiny in order to establish its useful or damaging qualities within the ideal state Plato is drafting. What is problematic about poetry, and indeed about all arts, is that they are mimetic. They represent objects, people and events outside of themselves by imitating them – however, it is in this act of imitation that art becomes guilty of creating a false illusion of actual creation. In order to justify his final verdict to ban poetry from Plato's ideal state, Socrates (one of the interlocutors in the fictional dialogue that Plato invents to expound his political theory) chooses a metaphor to explain what *mimesis* consists of, and how dangerous it is:

"I suppose the quickest way is if you care to take a mirror and carry it around with you wherever you go. That way you'll soon create the sun and the heavenly bodies, soon create the earth, soon create yourself, other living creatures, furniture, plants, and all the things we've just been talking about."

"Yes", he said, "I could create them as they appear to be. But not, I take it, as they truly are."
(Plato 596 d-e)

¹ For the purposes of this argument, I directly rely on the classical sources for the concept of *mimesis* in Greek philosophy. For a detailed account on how early modern readings of Aristotle's *Poetics* are influenced by a Platonic heritage, see the exhaustive essay "Mimesis bei Aristoteles und in den Poetikkommentaren der Renaissance: Zum Wandel des Gedankens von der Nachahmung der Natur in der frühen Neuzeit" by Aristotle translator and editor Arbogast Schmitt.

The painter and, by extension, all imitating arts are guilty of this type of fake craftsmanship. In the passage quoted above, Hamlet quotes and contradicts this conception within the same sentence. Shortly after defining the “purpose of playing” as the creation of a reflection of nature, he specifies that it is showing “the very age and body of the time his form and pressure”: it gives form to previously unshaped material. Stephen Greenblatt has commented on the decisive shift within these few words in the introduction to *Shakespearean Negotiations*:

The mirror is the emblem of instantaneous and accurate reproduction; it takes nothing from what it reflects and adds nothing except self-knowledge. [...] Yet even in Hamlet's familiar account, the word *pressure* – that is, impression, as with a seal or signet ring – should signal to us that for the Renaissance more is at stake in mirrors than an abstract and bodiless reflection. Both optics and mirror lore in the period suggested that something was actively passing back and forth in the production of mirror images, that accurate representation depended on material emanation and exchange. (Greenblatt 8)

This notion of a relationship of exchange rather than reflection between the theatre and the world surrounding it is crucial to the way in which *Hamlet* reflects on the nature of theatre performance. It is closer to another classical source for the concept of *mimesis*, Aristotle's *Poetics*. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle rehabilitates *mimesis* as an innately human activity of relating to and appropriating nature: “For it is an instinct of human beings, from childhood, to engage in mimesis [...]; and equally natural that everyone enjoys mimetic objects” (Aristotle 1448b4-b18). The arts in general and tragedy in particular have the task of relating to man and nature by *imitation*. Aristotle describes this relationship for tragedy, the poetics of which are the only part of the treatise that have been preserved, as follows: “Tragedy, then, is mimesis of an action which is elevated, complete, and of magnitude; in language embellished by distinct forms in its sections; employing the mode of enactment, not narrative [...].” (Aristotle 1449b23-26). By this definition Aristotle unburdens *mimesis* from the accusation of deceitful reproduction: bodies, objects, actions and utterances on stage work together to represent a coherent composition of actions into an overall fictional narrative or plot, the *mythos* in Aristotelian terms. In the particular fictional universe contained in each *mythos*, the poet represents not an exact copy of nature, but an exemplary illustration of the laws governing human action.²

But Aristotle strictly regulates the mimesis occurring in tragedy by establishing a different normative bias, the one between the dramatic text and the theatre performance. According to the *Poetics*, only the *mythos*, the careful combination of single human actions into a coherent whole, is decisive for the mimesis that makes tragedy a mimetic

² “‘Nachahmung’ ist gerade nicht die Kopie der Wirklichkeit, sondern der Nachvollzug des möglichen ‘Werks’ eines Charakters in einer konkreten Einzelhandlung. Paradox kann man formulieren: Die Aristotelische *Poetik* ist von Anfang an keine Nachahmungspoetik (die von der Kunst eine Reproduktion von Wirklichkeit verlangt), weil Poesie für ihn überhaupt erst durch Nachahmung (möglicher Handlungen) zur Poesie wird.” (Schmitt 1984, 209) (“Imitation is precisely not the copying of reality, but the reproduction of the possible ‘works’ of a character in a concrete individual action. Paradoxically put: Aristotelian poetics is no poetics of imitation (which demands a copying of reality by art), because for him poetry becomes poetry only through imitation (of possible actions).” (transl. E.L.)

art form. The effect of tragedy, “through pity and fear accomplishing the catharsis of such emotions” (Aristotle 1449b27-28), is reached by what is set down in the dramatic text. However, since actors produce the mimesis through their play on stage, tragedy cannot be separated from the material conditions of the theatre performance, from what Aristotle dubs *opsis*. But it is less important than all other parts of tragedy, and unnecessary for mimesis, i.e. for the relatedness of tragedy to nature: “Plot [*mythos*], then, is the first principle and, as it were, soul of tragedy, while character is secondary. [...S]pectacle [*opsis*] is emotionally potent but falls quite outside the art and is not integral to poetry: tragedy’s capacity is independent of performance and actors [...]” (Aristotle 1450a38-b18).

The opposition between the composition of the action set down in the dramatic text and the performance’s excess of spectacle has found its way into Hamlet’s instructions to the Players: “O, reform it altogether, and let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them” (3.2.36-37). There is an opposition between that which is “set down”; and that which is “more”, the clown’s speech. As the *opsis* is superfluous to the mimesis of tragedy according to Aristotle, the excess of the clown’s autonomous speech is harmful to the “necessary question of the play” (3.2.41). Hamlet’s address to the players shares an Aristotelian suspicion with regards to the effects that different styles of theatre have on the audience:

HAMLET. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you – trippingly on the tongue. But if you mouth it as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o’erdoing Termagant. It out-Herods Herod. Pray you avoid it. (3.2.1-14)

The judgement is clear: “inexplicable dumb-shows and noise”, the opposite of articulate enunciation of a dramatic dialogue, is an aesthetic form rather suited to the taste of the uneducated “groundlings” in the pit. Hamlet seems to be directly quoting Aristotle here, who at the very end of the *Poetics* compares tragedy to the purely literary art of epic composition – to the detriment of tragedy: “If the less vulgar art is superior, and if this is always the one addressed to a superior audience, evidently the art which represents everything [on stage, E.L.] is utterly vulgar” (Aristotle 1461b26-29). Just as tragedy is dragged down by its presentation on stage, the “profuse movement” (Aristotle 1461b30) of the actors will be appreciated only by a lowly audience: “People say that the [epic] is addressed to decent spectators who have no need of gestures, but tragedy to crude spectators” (Aristotle 1462a1-3).

In the passages preceding “*The Mousetrap*” itself, it appears that Hamlet subscribes to Aristotle’s esteem of the *mythos* and his devaluation of the *opsis*. But just as Hamlet reforms the Platonic notion of *mimesis* by unveiling its faculties for imprinting change onto the world, as a director of “*The Mousetrap*” he fully relies on the qualities of theatre that are fundamentally linked to the event of the performance, and thereby opens up the space for a reformed concept of *mimesis* beyond the Platonic and Aristotelian dichotomies.

“The Mousetrap”: Theatre as Collective Work

Mimesis, far from being a mere one-on-one rendition of “nature”, can also be considered a communal process of perception and construction. As Robert Weimann has stressed in his analysis of the concept of *mimesis* in Shakespeare, the audience's imagination is a key component in a transaction (or “exchange”, in Greenblatt's terminology) that produces theatrical *mimesis*:

[Die Imagination wird] mitten in das Zentrum der theatralischen Transaktion hineingestellt: freilich nicht als gefälliges Geschenk des Theaters an sein Publikum, sondern als Forderung zur Mitarbeit an einer kollektiven Unternehmung. (Weimann 147)³

The starting point of Weimann's analysis is the Prologue to Henry V. Like Hamlet's address to the Players, it presents the audience's imaginary power as key to the process of imprinting the “form and pressure” of the time into the space and time of the theatre performance:

And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
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. (quoted in Weimann, 147)

In *Hamlet*, the title character experiences the implications of this advice to the spectator to complete what happens on stage with his imagination in a passage preceding the play-within-the-play. When first encountering the actors, Hamlet asks the lead player of the troupe to recite a speech about Pyrrhus:

HAMLET I heard thee speak me a speech once – but it was never acted, or, if it was, not above once, for the play I remember pleased not the million, 'twas caviare to the general. But it was, as I received it, and others whose judgements in such matters cried in the top of mine, an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. (2.2.372-378)

In keeping with Aristotle's disdain for the theatre performance, Hamlet judges the quality of the speech independently of seeing it enacted on stage – in fact, that it has been enacted no more than once speaks to its privileged poetic value and makes it deserving of the praise of a selected group of initiated readers or hearers. Once more it appears as if Hamlet clearly draws on the *Poetics*: “For the plot should be so structured that, even without seeing it performed, the person that hears the events that occur experiences horror and pity at what comes about [...]” (Aristotle 1453b1-6).

Upon hearing the speech performed by the player, however, Hamlet himself experiences how *mimesis* entails a transaction of affect between actor and spectator, an experience that causes him to deliver a passionate monologue himself:

³ “Imagination is placed at the very centre of the theatrical transaction: this does not, mind you, constitute a pleasing gift from the theatre to its audience, but a request for cooperation in a collective enterprise.” (transl. E.L.)

Is it not monstrous that this player here,
 But in a fiction, in a dream of passion
 Could force his soul so to his own conceit
 That from her working all the visage wanned
 – Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect
 A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
 With forms to his conceit – and all for nothing –
 For Hecuba? (2.2.486-493)

In the process of representing a character, the actor does not – as Plato’s mirror metaphor suggests – copy an existing original, but actively produces an actual physical and, thereby, emotional state. From the “nothing” of the fictional reference springs a real effect, manifesting in the actor and affecting the spectator. Hamlet realizes that if the actor’s performance can “[m]ake mad the guilty and appal the free, / Confound the ignorant and amaze indeed / The very faculties of eyes and ears” (2.2.499-501), a play might well “catch the conscience of the king” (3.1.540) by confronting him with a representation of his own suspected deed on stage and provoking a spontaneous reaction. That murder has “no tongue” (3.1.528) does not prevent it from being revealed through the “most miraculous organ” (3.1.529) of the theatre performance.

The Audience in the Looking-Glass: Hamlet’s Reform of *Mimesis* in Practice

“*The Mousetrap*” consists of two seemingly redundant parts: a ‘dumb-show’ followed by a dramatic dialogue called “The Murder of Gonzago” (2.2.474). Both shows reference the same *mythos*, the same composition of single events into a coherent dramatic action: a love story between a King and Queen, interrupted by the treacherous murder of the King, and the Queen’s subsequent marriage with the murderer.

As the title indicates, the events taking place on stage are to be understood “tropically” (3.2.231): the title points to the play’s actual intent to trap Claudius, the murderer. The show will fulfil its purpose only in the moment when through their “imaginary forces” the on-stage audience – and especially Claudius – bridges the gap between the events of the plot of *Hamlet*, and the events they see on stage. The audience’s perplexity following the ‘dumb-show’ illustrates their reflex to interpret what is presented to them in the sense of a coherent narrative:

OPHELIA What means this, my Lord?

HAMLET Marry, this munching mallico! It means mischief.

OPHELIA Belike this show imports the argument of the play (3.2.129-131)

Hamlet increasingly intervenes in the performance he is watching, but is of little help in explaining “the argument” to the audience of “*The Mousetrap*”. His interjections illustrate that the performance is only the starting point of an interpretation that each spectator has to complete on their own due to the “Indeterminiertheit der theatralischen Zeichen [indeterminacy of theatrical signs; E.L.]” (Weimann 235) that compose the theatre performance as a whole. It might appear as if the absence of a dramatic text is the cause of the audience’s lack of understanding. The performance of the dramatic dialogue between Player King and Player Queen that follows, however, reveals that the

dramatic text is by no means the decisive element needed for the spectator to construct the *mimesis* presented on stage.

In between two scenes, Claudius, who might be suspecting Hamlet's intentions, tries to confirm the play's harmlessness and asks about the title of the dramatic text he is seeing performed:

KING What do you call the play?

HAMLET *The Mousetrap*. Merry, how tropically! This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna. Gonzago is the duke's name, his wife Baptista. You shall see anon 'tis a knavish piece of work, but what of that? Your majesty and we that have free souls – it touches us not. Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

Enter Lucianus.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the King.

OPHELIA You are as good as a chorus, my Lord. (3.2.230-238)

Hamlet's explanations draw attention to the interpretative activity that each spectator is involved in. In order to understand what each play is "an image of", what it re-presents, the spectator attempts to decode what role(s) each actor plays, whether and how their individual words and actions on stage relate to an overall *mythos* in the Aristotelian sense. In the decisive next step, according to Hamlet, they need to understand whether and how what is represented on stage relates to themselves: if it touches them, it will elicit a reaction, such as that of the galled jade that instinctively winces upon contact with the saddle, thus betraying its wounds. Merely listening to the dialogue of the Player King and Player Queen and understanding its content does not suffice for the full meaning of the performance to unfold, since its meaning is to "tropically" represent the events outside the performance of "*The Mousetrap*", surrounding the murder of Hamlet's father and Claudius' accession to the throne. The dramatic dialogue is not self-sufficiently revealing its meaning, as Aristotle might suggest: it requires the confrontation of the actor's performance with the spectator, in this case, Claudius, to drive home the intended message. This is why, according to Ophelia, Hamlet adopts the role as chorus, a stock element of classical tragedy that represents the audience on stage and mediates the action to them. In this case, Hamlet attempts to prompt the King and make him draw parallels between his own life and the action on stage.

In doing so, however, his own part in the theatrical *mimesis* of "*The Mousetrap*" decisively changes, as well. Through his repeated interventions and comments on the events presented on stage, Hamlet himself becomes the clown, speaking more than is set down. His lines to Claudius imply that, in contrast to the Aristotelian doctrine he shared with the actors right before the beginning of the show, it is precisely this excess that allows the spectators to actually understand the "argument of the play." What is more, this act of understanding is evident neither from the text nor the performance alone. When Ophelia seeks to understand the relationship between the 'dumb-show' and the "argument of the play", Hamlet answers by placing Ophelia in front of a mirror:

OPHELIA: Will a'[the actor] tell us what this show meant?

HAMLET: Ay, or any show that you will show him. Be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means. (3.2.136-139)

Only if the spectators show *themselves*, that is, accept the role of an active participant in the theatrical transaction, will the meaning of “any show”, of any theatre performance, become obvious.

Mimesis in Times of the Post-Dramatic: “The Mousetrap” on the Contemporary German Stage

Thomas Ostermeier’s staging of *Hamlet* utilizes the reformation of *mimesis* I have attempted to uncover in “*The Mousetrap*” to react to a contemporary debate in theatre studies, which newly reflects on the role of Aristotelian *Poetics*, its emphasis on the dramatic text and its intention to represent a fictional universe through the theatre performance. At times, it has taken an unnecessarily polemic turn, in which opposing ‘factions’ of scholars and practitioners alike pit a new aesthetic, emphasizing the presence of all elements combining in the unique time and space of the performance, against a text-based theatre, which is accused of reproducing Aristotle’s bias in favour of the representational aspect of the theatre performance. Attempting a reconciliation of both aspects, Ostermeier utilizes the twofold structure of “*The Mousetrap*”, combining ‘dumb-show’ and dramatic dialogue to comment on the debate about theatrical *mimesis* at the time of its first performance, and to suggest an alternative path. This path is similar to the one suggested by Hamlet himself in “*The Mousetrap*”: the solution to the tensions between dramatic text and theatre performance lies within the event of the theatre performance itself, and what actors and spectators make of it as a community.

Bernd Stegemann, advocate of a self-proclaimed “new realist” theatre and main dramaturg at Thomas Ostermeier’s Schaubühne until 2014, defines the aesthetics of a ‘post-dramatic theatre’ as a reformation of *mimesis*:

Die bisherige Funktion des Theaters ließ sich mit der Formulierung, dass Theater die Mimesis von Welt sei, gut beschreiben. [...] Immer waren die darstellerischen Zeichen auf eine Welt jenseits der Darstellung bezogen. (Stegemann 2)⁴

The notion of the ‘post-dramatic’, he claims, intends to reform this relation of theatre to reality: “Die Zeichen erzählen von nichts mehr außer Ihnen Liegendem. Sie verweisen nur noch auf andere Zeichen oder auf sich selbst als Zeichen” (Stegemann 3).⁵ Hans-Thies Lehmann, whom Stegemann cites as the inventor of the terminology of the ‘post-dramatic’ in the latter’s seminal monograph *Postdramatisches Theater*, begins his analysis of the aesthetics of contemporary theatre by pointing out the supremacy of the dramatic text in the history of European theatre, starting with a reading of the Aristotelian notion of *mythos* as the representation of an overall dramatic action:

Aristotle’s poetics couples imitation and action in the famous formula that tragedy is imitation of human action, ‘*mimesis praxeos*’. The word drama derives from the Greek δράν = to do. [...] Fixed onto the cognitive programme ‘Action/Imitation’, the gaze misses the texture of written drama as much as that which offers itself to the senses as presentational action, in order to assure

⁴ “The function of theatre so far had been adequately described as a *mimesis* of the world. [...] The signs of representation had always been related to a world outside of that representation.” (transl. E.L.)

⁵ “The signs no longer tell us about something exterior to themselves. They only refer to other signs or to themselves in their quality as signs.” (transl. E.L.)

itself only of the represented, the (assumed) 'content', the signification and finally the meaning, the sense. (Lehmann 2006, 37)

This definition of *mimesis* shows a distancing from the supremacy of the dramatic text that can take, at times, polemic turns; Lehmann once dubs dramatic theatre "literarisches Erzähltheater" ("literary narrative theatre", my transl., Lehmann 1999, 44) and considers it a relic of the past. He predicts the successful completion of the aesthetic reformation in his preface to the third German edition of *Postdramatisches Theater*:

Doch die Hypothese ist ausgesprochen, dass die postdramatischen Spiel-, Darstellungs- und Aktionsformen vielleicht auf eine Entwicklung vorausweisen, in welcher das ästhetische Dispositiv des überlieferten dramatischen Theaters insgesamt zugunsten neuer Kommunikationsstrategien zurückgelassen wird. (Lehmann 2005, no pag.)⁶

A new "communicative strategy" characterized by a non-mimetic intention, is at stake here; and with it comes a new emphasis on the role of the spectator for the event of the performance. Lehmann's understanding of the 'post-dramatic', therefore, suggests an interesting reorganization of the production of *mimesis* on stage that is similar to the 'reform' illustrated in the above reading of "*The Mousetrap*". As a reading of Thomas Ostermeier's staging of *Hamlet* will show, this notion of the 'post-dramatic' equally influences theatre performances that do involve a dramatic text: "[...S]o wäre die Theatralität des dramatischen Theaters rückblickend in solcher Weise zu beschreiben, dass dessen Dramaturgien mit der Frage nach der Position des Zuschauers darin verknüpft wird" (Lehmann 2005, n. pag.).⁷ Instead of placing the dramatic text at the centre of his idea of "new realism" (Ostermeier 2002, 1), Ostermeier himself aims to bring to the fore *Hamlet*'s conception of theatrical *mimesis* as a process that can only take place through the collaboration of actor and spectator.

A New Realism: More than a Mirror Image

Ostermeier's interest in *Hamlet*'s address to the Players is programmatic for his general understanding of theatrical *mimesis*. His agenda of bringing a "new realism" to the German stage, recorded among others in his essay "Erkenntnisse über die Wirklichkeit des menschlichen Miteinanders. Plädoyer für ein realistisches Theater" in 2009 – one year after *Hamlet* premiered at the Athens Festival – takes its starting point precisely in *Hamlet*'s speech from Act III, Scene 2:

Zum einen besteht der Sinn des Schauspielers darin, "der Natur den Spiegel vorzuhalten", "dem Verächtlichen sein eignes Abbild", heißt also auch, Mächtige zu demaskieren und Machtstrukturen offenzulegen, aber auch noch viel mehr, und hier wird es interessant, "dem ganzen Zeitalter und dem Leib der Gegenwart seine Gestalt und Prägung". Das heißt für mich, dass es auch für Shakespeare um mehr ging als um ein bloßes Widerspiegeln der Gegenwart,

⁶ "But the hypothesis has now been voiced that the post-dramatic forms of play, of representation and of action might prefigure an evolution in the course of which the aesthetical apparatus of traditional dramatic theatre will be left behind in favour of new strategies of communication." (transl. E.L.)

⁷ "It would therefore be necessary to retrospectively describe the theatricality of dramatic theatre in such a way that links its dramaturgies to the question of the spectator's position in it." (transl. E.L.)

nämlich darum, dass das Wesen des menschlichen Miteinanders erfasst werden sollte. (Ostermeier 2009, 1)⁸

Ostermeier's reading of Hamlet's instruction to the Players centres around the shift described in our reading of the passage further above: in his reading, Ostermeier dismisses the image of the mirroring of reality to emphasize the metaphor of an imprint, an impression that theatre leaves in reality. He rejects the notion of an exact copy of reality in favour of the representation of the internal, essential workings of human action: "Realistisches Theater sollte sich darin schulen, Erkenntnisse über die Wirklichkeit des menschlichen Miteinanders darzustellen"⁹ (Ostermeier 2009, 2). In contrast to Aristotle, though, Ostermeier places not the mythos or the plot as scripted by the dramatic text at the centre of that project, but the actor and his live performance. His style of staging the classical text deliberately creates a persistent indeterminacy between the representation of the character and the presence of the actor's body, forcing the audience to switch between different perceptions and to actively and consciously exert its power to interpret the events as the performance unfolds. Far from submitting to the Aristotelian imperative to merely represent the mythos by presenting the dramatic text, Ostermeier uses techniques rather associated with performative and 'post-dramatic' forms of theatre, as they have been extensively analysed by Hans-Thies Lehmann and Erika Fischer-Lichte.¹⁰ His staging is thereby able to appropriate the useful theoretical instruments provided (among others) by Lehmann's and Fischer-Lichte's comprehensive analysis of contemporary theatre forms, and to show that the site of mimesis on stage is neither the dramatic text nor on the unique event of each performance alone, but that it is the result of a dynamic exchange between stage and audience.

Thomas Ostermeier's theory of his work with the actor presents striking parallels with Erika Fischer-Lichte's terminology, unfolded in her seminal work *The Transformative Power of Performance* that attempts to formulate a coherent aesthetics for a theatre inspired by the evolution of performance art since the 1960's. Theatre forms that she calls performative emphasise the event of the theatre performance as the production of a present reality by the performance, rather than the representation of an absent, fictional reality scripted in the shape of a dramatic text. According to Fischer-Lichte, they do so by introducing a radically new approach to embodiment, that is, to the process by which an actor's body represents on stage. In this perspective, the Aristotelian insistence on

⁸ "On the one hand, the actor's task is to 'hold the mirror up to Nature', 'to show scorn her own image' – that also means unmasking the powerful and unveiling power structures. But it reaches much further, and this is where it gets interesting: 'and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure'. To me, that means that Shakespeare, too, was invested in something more than a mere reflection of the present, and that is to grasp the essence of human interaction." (transl. EL)

⁹ "Realist theatre should train itself to represent insights into the reality of human interaction." (transl. E.L.)

¹⁰ The following discussion is largely based on Lehmann's *Postdramatisches Theater* and Fischer-Lichte's *The Transformative Power of Performance. A new aesthetics*. Since the turn of the 21st century, their approach has been further developed and differentiated by themselves and others. For the purpose of this article, their eminent influence in the field and their fundamental nature makes them a valid methodical starting point.

the dramatic text entails a particular idea of the way in which the actor embodies the character, which aims to foreground the “semiotic body” by eliminating as much as possible the individual features of the actor’s “phenomenal body”. “Only a ‘purely’ semiotic body could communicate the text’s meanings ‘truthfully’ and perceptibly to the audience. Embodiment thus presupposes disembodiment” (Fischer-Lichte 79). Performance in Fischer-Lichte’s sense, on the other hand, “mark[s] corporeality as fundamental to the process of embodiment, regardless of whether they simultaneously bring forth a fictive character [...] or not” (Fischer-Lichte 90). This is why an aesthetics of the performative is often based on strategies that “emphatically direct the audience’s attention to the specific and individual qualities of the actor’s ‘phenomenal body’” (Fischer-Lichte 88). Hans-Thies Lehmann concisely sums up how these different aspects of the actor’s body relate to the opposition between dramatic and ‘post-dramatic’ theatre: “[T]his phrase [contains] the essential opposition of dramatic and postdramatic theatre: appearance instead of plot action, performance instead of representation” (Lehmann 2006, 58).

The confrontation between those two aspects of the actor’s body on stage places the spectators in a liminal state between two types of perception. The one perceives the actors’ ‘phenomenal body’ (“the perceptual order of presence”, Fischer-Lichte 149). The other, rather hermeneutic approach, reads the bodies on stage as representations of characters and actions composing a coherent *mythos* in the Aristotelian sense (“the perceptual order of representation”, Fischer-Lichte 150). This latter perception is especially triggered by a style of acting associated with the predominance of the dramatic text:

German theatre witnessed some significant developments in the second half of the eighteenth century: first, the emergence of literary theatre; second, the development of a new – realistic and psychological – art of acting. The two are closely connected. A number of bourgeois intellectuals attempted to weaken the actor’s predominance in the theatre in order to elevate the dramatic text to a level of overarching authority. The actors were no longer to be guided by their whims and fancies, their talent of improvisation, sense of humor, genius, or vanity. Rather, their function would be limited to communicating to the audience the meanings expressed by the poets in their texts. (Fischer-Lichte 77)

This style of acting – whose great influence throughout the history of European dramatic theatre Fischer-Lichte and Lehmann both illustrate – constitutes a foil against which Ostermeier is attempting to construct his brand of realist theatre. At the same time, *Hamlet* precedes this evolution: it therefore constitutes an interesting starting point to call into question the dominance of the dramatic text and a hermeneutic approach of actor and spectator to it.

Ostermeier’s style of directing the actor, I argue, attempts to find a middle ground between the type of embodiment which Fischer-Lichte dubs “psychological” and an embodiment which exclusively emphasises the ‘phenomenal body’ and its perception. Drawing attention to those two possible orders of perception affects the spectator as follows:

The transitional moment [between the two perceptual orders] is accompanied by a profound sense of destabilization. The perceiving subjects remain suspended between two orders of perception, caught in a state of “betwixt and between”. The perceiving subjects find themselves on the

threshold which constitutes the transition from one order to another; they experience a liminal state. (Fischer-Lichte 148)

Placing the spectators in this liminal state will *in extremis* direct their attention towards their own process of perception, and towards their contribution (or refusal to contribute) to the construction of the *mimesis* on stage. Ostermeier brings out the dialectic between both perceptual orders by using “*The Mousetrap*” to create a complex *mise-en-abîme* of the two aspects of the actor’s body. The oscillation between both planes requires the spectators of Ostermeier’s *Hamlet* to constantly readjust their interpretation of the events on stage.

‘Performance Art’ vs. ‘Literary Theatre’: “*The Mousetrap*” as Clash of Aesthetics

Hamlet, interpreted by Lars Eidinger, is himself an actor in the play-within-the-play.¹¹ Instead of being a spectator who becomes increasingly involved in the performance, he switches between the status of director, spectator and actor. This is complemented by the liberties taken by Lars Eidinger, who, throughout the staging, accentuates his presence as an actor by addressing the audience and commenting on the apparatus and the event of the performance itself. Ostermeier preserves the two components of “*The Mousetrap*” and stages an unscripted pantomime first, then the dramatic dialogue. He contrasts the clichés of two styles of acting with each other, thereby continuing Hamlet’s reflection on the dominant acting style and its potential reformation. Ostermeier establishes Hamlet as the young director who stages a contemporary theatre performance, using procedures typically emphasising the physicality of the actors and the liveness of their actions. They are, however, contradicted by artistic choices that invite the audience to apply a hermeneutic approach.

From an introductory exchange between the two, it becomes clear that Sebastian Schwarz (Horatio) is playing the part of the “Player King” in “The Murder of Gonzago.” While Sebastian Schwarz stays on stage, wielding a long sword, Lars Eidinger disappears to make an emphatic entrance with accessories that duplicate the costume elements that Judith Rosmair (Ophelia, Gertrude) wears when playing Gertrude. It is the first moment of the show in which Eidinger takes off the fat suit that had been disguising his figure (cf. Fig.1) to reveal his actual body. Wearing an exact replica of the wig that is part of Gertrude’s attire, the same sunglasses and otherwise only black lace panties and black stay-up stockings (cf. Fig.2), there is no room for doubt as to who Hamlet is impersonating. Sebastian Schwarz is wearing a fake beard resembling Urs Jucker’s (Claudius) actual beard as well as a crown.

¹¹ The following analysis references the ARTE recording of the 2008 performances of *Hamlet* at the Festival d’Avignon by the original cast.



Fig.1 Lars Eidinger (Hamlet), Stephan Stern (gravedigger) in the silent prologue to Ostermeier's *Hamlet*, Old Hamlet's funeral



Fig.2 Lars Eidinger (Hamlet/Player Queen), Sebastian Schwarz (Horatio/Player King) in the 'dumb-show'

The staging thus foregrounds Hamlet's intent to discover whether the "Murder of Gonzago" tells the actual story of his father's murder. Like Hamlet did in his speech to the actors, Ostermeier might be alluding to the metaphor of theatre as a mirror image of reality, exaggerating the Platonic idea of art as a – defective – copy of reality. The 'illusion' is deconstructed by the obvious amateurism of its execution (the fake beard regularly falls off, etc.). Hamlet, the director, makes use of procedures such as described by Lehmann:

In postdramatic theatre, breath, rhythm and the present actuality of the body's visceral presence take precedence over the logos. An opening and dispersal of the logos develop in such a way that it is no longer necessarily the case that a meaning is communicated from A (stage) to B (spectator) but instead a specifically theatrical, 'magical' transmission and connection happen by means of language. (Lehmann 2006, 145)

Similar artistic procedures for the ostentatious display of the actors' bodies in their own materiality abound in the 'dumb-show' of Ostermeier's "*Mousetrap*": Schwarz's and Eidinger's near-nudity and eroticized physical interaction draws attention to both actors' 'phenomenal bodies'. The pantomime appears to quote techniques first used by iconic

performance artists:¹² fake blood dripples down from Eidinger's nipples, he wraps Sebastian Schwarz with an over-sized roll of kitchen foil before pouring milk and blood down his body, while Schwarz reacts with unintelligible noises and moans expressing alternately ecstasy and suffering. Given this emphasis on the presence of the actors' bodies, it seems rather unlikely that any spectator's attention will be on interpreting the actors' presence with regards to their roles in a coherent *mythos*, tracing the content of the pantomime back to the plot of "The Murder of Gonzago."

The performance of the dramatic dialogue that follows is no less of a cliché. It references an exaggeratedly declamatory form of theatre combining the hardly intelligible rhetoric of a dramatic text with grand gestures that plainly illustrate it. This is also a reaction to the on-stage audience's need for an overly explicit articulation of the "argument of the show" (3.2.131), intended to draw the attention to the spectators' role in the process of the theatre performance.



Fig.3 Sebastian Schwarz (Horatio), Lars Eidinger (Hamlet) and Jenny König (Gertrude, 3rd cast), projected onto the gold chain curtain.

Its set-up in the theatre space is strategic:¹³ the remainder of the troupe, consisting of Judith Rosmair (Gertrude), Urs Jucker (Claudius), Stephan Stern (Rosencrantz) and

¹² For example, Marina Abramovic's performance *Lips of Thomas*, cf. Fischer-Lichte 11-12.

¹³ In Schaubühne's neutral black box, for which the production has been rehearsed and created, Jan Pappelbaum's set is standing directly on the floor, with no frame or wings to create a closed stage space. Instead, the set consists of a large, elevated square surface, covered in dark earth. A mobile podium, that takes up almost the entire width of the stage, but is narrow in depth, can move back and forth on two metal tracks, thus expanding or limiting the part of the earthy platform that will be

Robert Beyer (Polonius), take their seats on the brim of the mobile podium, directly facing the off-stage audience, so as to be clearly visible for the latter while at the same time mirroring them. The performance of "*The Mousetrap*" takes place in the stage space between both audiences (cf. Fig.5). In addition, Lars Eidinger asks Robert Beyer (Polonius) to take the camera that projects a live video onto the chain curtain (cf. Fig.3). During the show, Robert Beyer will point the camera alternately at the on-stage and the off-stage audience. This allows for two processes of reflection to take place: the off-stage audience observes the reaction of the on-stage audience, mainly Urs Jucker (Claudius) and Judith Rosmair (Gertrude), and are given the possibility to recognize themselves, as spectators, in their position. Their reaction is the ultimate aim of the play-within-the-play. At the same time, the off-stage audience is confronted with a mirror image of their own faces projected onto the chain curtain, as if to place them under a magnifying glass for thorough introspection. The on-stage audience and the off-stage audience mirror each other, while their desire to correctly interpret what they see is systematically frustrated. Through Shakespeare's text, Ostermeier therefore achieves an effect that Fischer-Lichte attributes to the aesthetics of the performative:

The more frequent the perceptual shift between the arbitrary order of presence and the purposeful order of representation, the more unpredictable the entire process and the more focused the subject becomes on perception itself. In the process, the spectators become increasingly aware that meaning is not transmitted to but brought forth by them. They realize that the creation of meaning depends on and changes with the timing and frequency of the shifts. (Fischer-Lichte 150)

In the final paragraph of this reading, I would like to turn to the way in which "*The Mousetrap*" makes the necessity of this contribution of the audience visible. Ostermeier's staging of "*The Mousetrap*" illustrates the oscillation between two types of actors: "The actor of postdramatic theatre is often no longer the actor of a role but a performer offering his/her presence on stage for contemplation." (Lehmann 2006, 135). The staging, however, does not present both as mutually exclusive, but makes their simultaneous presence during the process of the theatre performance visible in a series of costume changes that occur – not accidentally – as Hamlet increasingly turns into a "chorus".

available for performance. Numerous slim gold chains hang from a metal frame that can also move up- and down-stage, independently from the podium. Densely hung, the chains do, at the same time, constitute a surface on which video can be projected; and which separates the upper from the lower stage. They can easily be passed through by the performers and only insufficiently hide anyone standing behind them. With a "stage-upon-the-stage" and a theatre curtain half-way between opacity and transparency (according to the lighting), the floor is open to a reflection on theatre as a technique of visibility and invisibility, hiding and revealing. The materiality of the earth in which the body of the King has been buried, as opposed to the glistening surface of the gold chains as well as the all-white mobile podium, furnished by a long table ready for an official banquet – or other uses – throughout the entire play establishes, as a backdrop to the deconstructive agenda of the production, an opposition between a natural material and a civilized space. The perception of this space potentially brings to mind a multitude of associations, of which the production will particularly emphasize the simultaneity of the grave, the circus arena and the boxing ring.

Character Construction and Audience Perception

Just like in the basic structure observed in Shakespeare's "*Mousetrap*", Hamlet's commentary adds a further layer of complexity to a theatre performance that already challenges the spectators' desire to settle for a coherent interpretation of the argument of the play. The configuration is exacerbated by the fact that in this staging, Eidinger simultaneously functions as director, actor and commentator in the play-within-the-play, repeatedly framing and explaining the alleged meaning of the action for the on-stage audience.



Ostermeier makes use of the commentary to draw the audience's attention to the transaction between actor's performance and audience's response that produces *mimesis*. Lars Eidinger takes the advantage of the break created when Schwarz, in his role as Gonzago, 'takes a nap', to change and put on the costume of Lucianus, further drawing out the period of indeterminacy by accompanying the change of costume with the conversation between him and his mother, asking for Gertrude's opinion of the play. Removing Gertrude's wig, he openly puts on his fat suit. After that, Eidinger's Hamlet transforms into Lucianus in front of both on- and off-stage audience. He dresses in a sober ensemble of shirt and pants, a short cape – resembling a children's carnival costume – and a fake beard visibly attached to Eidinger's ears with a string. (cf. Fig.4)

Fig.4 Lars Eidinger (Hamlet/Lucianus).

These few actions induce, I would like to argue, precisely the oscillation between the different orders of perception that Fischer-Lichte speaks of: from the perspective of the off-stage audience, the actor, Lars Eidinger, who was playing Hamlet playing his mother in the play-within-the-play, retransforms into Hamlet by putting on the fat suit. The illusion of Hamlet's bodily shape has thereby been ruined. Hamlet's overweight body is being exposed as a doubling of Eidinger's body, that always already contains a gap, the one between the performer's 'phenomenal body' and his 'semiotic body'. That gap is metaphorically represented on stage by layering the actor's body with a costume that mimics another body.

This visible transformation of one actor into several characters draws the audience's attention to the process of interpretation that it brings to the construction of the role, and to the construction of the *mimesis* on stage more generally. It allows the audience to witness how the individuality of the actor's 'phenomenal body' is attired with several

layers of costume, bringing forth a semiotic body, but without ever completely obliterating the individual characteristics of the actor's body in the process. This moment affords the audience the opportunity to glimpse the oscillation of the orders of perception that the diverse staging procedures trigger.

This decidedly 'post-dramatic' procedure leads back to one of the characteristics of the Shakespearean interpretation of *mimesis* as it unfolds in *Hamlet*, and which finds its echo in the theory of the 'post-dramatic'. As a modern variant of the 'imaginary puissance' Weimann highlights in the prologue of *Henry Vth*, Lehmann evokes the image of two fragments that have to complement each other for theatre to occur: "If we wanted to cite the ancient image for the symbol – a shard of pottery is broken in two and later the edge of the fracture on the one half identifies its bearer as 'authentic' when it joins the other edge – the theatre likewise manifests itself only as the one half and awaits the presence and gesture of the unknown spectators who realize the edge of the fracture through their intuition, their way of understanding, and their imagination" (Lehmann 2006, 61).

Conclusion: "*The Mousetrap*", Beyond Shakespeare

"*The Mousetrap*", as I hope to have shown, is a reflection on diverse concepts of *mimesis*. It uses the staging of a play-within-the-play, as well as the instructions preceding and the commentary accompanying it, as an opportunity to discuss the relationship between text and performance in the theatre; and it leads the way towards a conception of *mimesis* on stage as a collective enterprise combining the actors' bodies with an activity on the side of the spectator. Whether they choose to approach the performance from a hermeneutic or a performative standpoint in Fischer-Lichte's sense



Fig.5 Lars Eidinger (Hamlet), still in costume, joyful after the success of "*The Mousetrap*".

depends much less on the emphasis placed on the dramatic text than on the choices governing the performance itself. As theatre director and reformer, Hamlet thus provides an instrument for directors and actors to reflect upon their own conception of *mimesis* on stage today.

Works Cited

- Aristotle. "Poetics." *Aristotle "Poetics", Longinus "On the sublime", Demetrius "On Style"*. Ed. and transl. Stephen Halliwell. Cambridge, MA/ London: Harvard UP, 1995. 28-141.
- Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *The Transformative Power of Performance. A New Aesthetics*. Transl. by Saskya Iris Jain. London/New York: Routledge 2008.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations. The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988.
- Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramatisches Theater*. Frankfurt a.M.: Verlag der Autoren, 1999.
- . „Vorwort zur 3. Auflage“. *Postdramatisches Theater*. 3rd ed. Frankfurt a.M.: Verlag der Autoren, 2005.
- . *Postdramatic Theatre*. Translated and with an Introduction by Karen Jürs-Munby. London/New York: Routledge, 2006. 27. Febr. 2019 <https://monoskop.org/images/2/2d/Lehmann_Hans-Thies_Postdramatic_Theatre.pdf>
- Ostermeier, Thomas. "Das Theater im Zeitalter seiner Beschleunigung". *40 Jahre Schaubühne Berlin*. Eds. Harald Müller and Jürgen Schitthelm. Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2002. 10 Sept. 2017 <<http://www.schaubuehne.de/de/seiten/theorie-2.html>>.
- . (director). *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare. Trans. Marius v. Mayenburg. Perf. Robert Beyer, Lars Eidinger, Urs Jucker, Judith Rosmair, Sebastian Schwarz, Stephan Stern. Prod. Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, Berlin, Festival d'Avignon and Athens Festival. Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, Berlin. 17.9.2008.
- . "Erkenntnisse über die Wirklichkeit des menschlichen Miteinanders. Plädoyer für ein realistisches Theater." *Kräfte Messen. Das Körper-Studio Junge Regie*. Eds. Kai-Michael Hartig and Ellen Coenders. Hamburg: Körper-Stiftung, 2009. 10 Sept. 2017 <<http://www.schaubuehne.de/de/seiten/theorie-2.html>>.
- Plato. *The Republic*. Transl. by Tom Griffith. Ed. G.R.F. Ferrari. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.
- Schmitt, Arbogast. "Kommentar". *Aristoteles: Werke in deutscher Übersetzung*. Vol.5. Ed. Helmut Flashar. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1984. S.195-743.
- . "Mimesis bei Aristoteles und in den Poetikkommentaren der Renaissance: Zum Wandel des Gedankens von der Nachahmung der Natur in der frühen Neuzeit". *Mimesis und Simulation*. Ed. Andreas Kablitz and Gerhard Neumann. Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach 1998. 17-54.

- Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Ed. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006.
- Stegemann, Bernd. "Nach der Postdramatik". *Theater heute* 10 (2008). 10 Sept. 2017 <<http://www.schaubuehne.de/de/seiten/theorie-2.html>>.
- Weimann, Robert. *Shakespeare und die Macht der Mimesis*. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1988.

Zusammenfassung

Vor der Inszenierung des Spiels-im-Spiel "Die Mausefalle" aus William Shakespeares *Hamlet* fordert der Titelheld die radikale Reformation der Theaterpraxis im Sinne einer aristotelischen Poetik, die den dramatischen Text vor den übrigen Aspekten der Theateraufführung privilegiert. Die Inszenierung selbst jedoch, eine Mischung aus Pantomime und Drama, durchbricht die Regeln der Aristotelischen Poetik und verweist auf den konstitutiven Austausch, der zwischen Schauspieler und Zuschauer im Ereignis der Theateraufführung stattfinden muss, um die theatrale *mimesis* gelingen zu lassen. Dass Shakespeares Auseinandersetzung mit dem Konzept der Mimesis zeitgenössischer Theatertheorie und -praxis zu einer Reflexion aktueller ästhetischer Debatten verhelfen kann, soll die Analyse von Thomas Ostermeiers Inszenierung der "Mausefalle" in seiner *Hamlet*-Inszenierung aus dem Jahr 2008 zeigen. In der "Mausefalle" reflektiert er mit Hilfe der in Shakespeares *Hamlet* enthaltenen Dialektik die Bewegung postdramatischer und performativer Ästhetiken, wie sie von Hans-Thies Lehmann und Erika Fischer-Lichte zusammengefasst worden sind, welche die Rolle des dramatischen Textes in zeitgenössischen Theaterformen zu Gunsten neuer Formen der Verkörperung und Zuschaueraktivierung kritisch in Frage stellen. Indem Lars Eidingers Hamlet als Schauspieler in der "Mausefalle" aktiv wird und so die Mechanismen der Entstehung von *mimesis* auf der Bühne offen legt, weist Ostermeiers Inszenierung die 'post-dramatischen' Tendenzen von Shakespeares *Hamlet* auf, und stellt so die polemische Gegenüberstellung von 'dramatischer' und 'postdramatischer' Theaterästhetik in Frage.

CALL FOR STATEMENTS – SHAKESPEARE SEMINAR 2018

Shakespeare's Migrants and Exiles – Shakespeare Across Borders

In Shakespeare's works characters are frequently banished from court, from the city or their country. Some move voluntary and many make their first appearance with a history of migration. Some yearn for their home, some are glad to escape persecution. Some bemoan the loss of their identity, some embrace a new identity abroad. People are exiled for various reasons, banished from another's present, from a place, or from memory. Exile may mean a new chance or certain death. Migrants are greeted with hope, with fear, with fierce rejection. In a more abstract sense, Shakespeare's plays and poems themselves became migrant texts as they were performed by travelling players or otherwise transmitted across time and space. The Shakespeare Seminar 2018 is interested in various notions of migration and exile in Shakespeare's work as well as of Shakespeare's works. Among other things, it asks what narrative structures, socio-cultural concerns, historiographical influences, and dramatic effects underlie the concepts of migration and exile, and what connects them with Shakespeare's world and ours. What forces move Shakespeare's migrants and exiles? How may Shakespeare's texts move migrants, exiles, hosts, and helpers? Topics may include, but are not restricted to

- Shakespearean exiles/migrants
- Exile and 'home' in Shakespeare's work
- Shakespeare and (in)hospitality
- Theoretical approaches to migration/exile
- Reading Shakespeare in exile
- Shakespeare and (colonial) history
- *Sir Thomas More* and anti-alien riots
- Religion, migration, exile
- Shakespeare and his contemporaries: perspectives on migration/exile
- Gender roles and migration/exile
- Migrating texts: intertextuality, translation, dissemination, comparative approaches

The Shakespeare-Seminar is part of the annual conference of the German Shakespeare Association, which will take place on 20-22 April 2018 in Weimar, Germany. As critical input for the discussion and provocation for debate, we invite papers of no more than 15 minutes that present concrete case studies, concise examples and strong views on the topic. The seminar provides a forum for established as well as young scholars to discuss texts and contexts. Please send your proposals (abstracts of 300 words) by **30 November 2017** to the seminar convenors

Lukas Lammers, Free University Berlin: l.lammers@fu-berlin.de

Kirsten Sandrock, University of Göttingen: ksandrock@phil.uni-goettingen.de