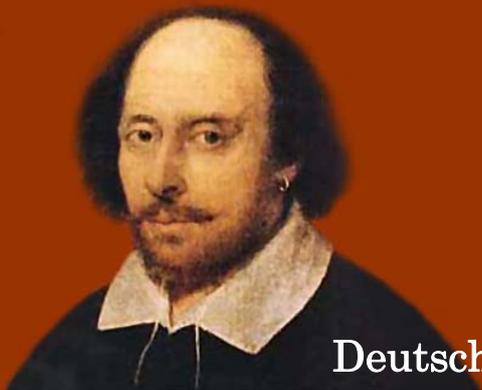


# Wissenschaftliches Seminar Online

*William Shakespeare*



Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft

Ausgabe 5 (2007)

Shakespearean Soundscapes:  
Music – Voices – Noises – Silence

*Wissenschaftliches Seminar Online 5* (2007)

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# INTRODUCTION

BY

TOBIAS DÖRING AND SUSANNE RUPP

The contributions in this issue all explore Shakespearean soundscapes, which can be found in many of the plays. In one of his most memorable lines, for instance, Caliban speaks of the “noises”, “sounds and sweet airs” which haunt the magic island and, with “twangling instruments” or “voices”, wake its dreamers while also putting them again to sleep. Caliban is acting as a local guide, giving comfort to the foreign visitors who respond with terror to the sounds they hear when Ariel plays the tabor and the pipe. In fact, these very instruments belong to the established repertoire of stage fools. So, with the staging of their powerful effects, *The Tempest* here self-consciously presents the soundscapes of the theatre and explores what impact they have on the actual audience in the playhouse. In many ways, the ear may have been more important for early modern play-goers than the eye, because it used to be auditory rather than visual experience that defined the pleasures – just as the perils – of the stage. When old King Hamlet dies from poison poured into his ears, the tragedy points to the dangers of these organs that open our bodies to the world. Acoustic elements, like singing, howling, groaning, crying, are not regularly scripted; as elements of physical performance, they relate to a space beyond – or perhaps before – the symbolic code of language, a space from which transgressive acts like Lear’s or like Ophelia’s madness gain their noisy energies. By the same token, the acts of silence performed by Cordelia or inflicted upon raped Lavinia disrupt the rules of social discourse and suggest the relevance of hearing. What, then, can music, voices, noises, silence do and how are they used on the stage? What soundscapes are presented in Shakespearean productions, in early modern or in our times, in film or audio versions of the plays? What function does stage music have here and for whom? And what about the sounds of language in a foreign tongue, like the Welsh spoken in *Henry VI*? Questions such as these and others, related issues, are treated in the following papers.



# INVADING THE BODY: SOUND AND (NON-)SENSE IN *KING LEAR*

BY

CAROLIN RODER

## I. Introduction

In the beginning was – not just the word, but, in the case of King Lear, a binary opposition between words and silence which is fashioned as an opposition between sense and non-sense and established in the first scene of the play as central to the processes of signification. The opening scene of the play does not only put Lear's division of his kingdom on display, but also maps out the taxonomies of meaning to come: It is primarily the voluble words of Goneril and Regan, uttered in response to Lear's demand for filial love, which provoke and set off Cordelia's famous 'silence'. Lear, after the disagreement and banishment of Cordelia, significantly divides his kingdom into two rather than three parts, the map of the newly organized kingdom thus illustrating the binary substructure which is supposed to ensure signification.

In the case of Goneril, Regan and Cordelia, the said opposition between words and silence is also one of truth and falsehood, encoded in the parameters of an economy of speech which is governed by the patriarchal word. The opposition of words and silence can also be said to structure the relationship of Gloucester and his two sons Edmund and Edgar, as all of Edmund's intrigue rests upon an alleged authenticity of his brother's voice which is supposed to vouchsafe for the truth and hence, villainy of what Edgar says when Gloucester is made to overhear a dialogue between his two sons.

In this essay, I want to pursue the different processes of signification and especially look into the part that voice, sound and silence play in these processes. I am going to show how the opposition of words and silence as the basis of signification is destabilized in the course of the play and gradually replaced by another binary opposition, namely the opposition of speech and sound that is also established as a difference of sense and non-sense. In the end however, as I want to argue, meaning is established not by either of these oppositions and their respective parts alone, but by the re-configuration of sound and non-sense in the particular soundscape that is early modern theatre.

## II. "Love, and be silent": Words versus Silence

In the beginning of the play, Lear, then still sovereign king, declares himself ready to divide his kingdom into three, and his own words establish the rules of the process of his abdication. To gain their share of their father's kingdom and power, his daughters Goneril, Regan and Cordelia have to confirm their love for their father and thus subscribe to the laws of filial duties and patriarchal authority. Goneril's statement implicitly points to the inherently paradoxical relationship between words and silence that

governs the first scene of the play: In order to prove herself as a loving daughter, she asserts her love as being truly beyond words and thus actually unspeakable: “Sir, I do love you more than word can wield the matter/ [...] a love that makes breath poor and speech unable.”<sup>1</sup> Goneril’s assertion of love exposes a contradiction in terms: While the economy of speech established by Lear requires elaborate statements of affection, statements such as those made by Goneril point to a realm beyond words, to a love that is described by the silent Cordelia as “more ponderous than my tongue.” (1.1.78).

And yet, filial love must be told, as the patriarchal order of meaning to which Goneril subscribes with this statement rests upon a (gendered) opposition between words and silence: Lear’s particular “law of the father” has it that words and wordy speeches are taken as a guarantee for truth while silence is rated as refusal and subversion of this code. Both Goneril’s and Regan’s excessive speeches cause Cordelia to ‘remain silent’ since she is unwilling to subscribe to such an economy of speech governed by the patriarchal word.

Cordelia’s refusal also points to a complex relationship between words and silence that is considerably complicated by its ‘reverse’ gendering: Cordelia actually does conform perfectly to a certain kind of early modern signifying systems – remaining silent shows her to be an ideal woman who is supposed to be both obedient to her husband’s or her father’s words and, in light of the early modern association of the tongue with a woman’s sexual organs, who also shows herself to be sexually chaste.<sup>2</sup> Lear, however, demands something else of her, namely a persuasive account of her filial love which, in turn, is supposed to prove her as an obedient daughter. Her refusal to do so is marked by Lear as unnatural and she herself is described as “a wretch whom nature is ashamed / almost t’acknowledge hers.” (1.1.213–214).

Silence, in this case, is not only unnatural but also, more importantly, devoid of meaning – neither Lear nor Burgundy, one of Cordelia’s suitors, can make sense of her remaining silent and refusing to articulate her love for Lear. Silence is non-sense – and Cordelia’s refusal to comply with the requirements of Lear’s taxonomy of love is seen as a void, a kind of semantic emptiness which, at first glance, severely challenges male authority. However, a reading that attempts to do justice to the play’s complexity has to take into account that this semantic emptiness is ascribed to Cordelia only within the parameters of a patriarchal economy of speech that governs the scene. In fact, Cordelia does not really remain silent – on the contrary: she eloquently defends her refusal, at times also justifying what and why she does not speak, namely her love for Lear which exceeds words. Cordelia’s elaborate responses clearly expose the ‘matrix of meaning’ set up by Lear’s abdication which equates silence and a refusal to subject one’s own speech to the rules of decent (female) speech:

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<sup>1</sup> William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. by R. A. Foakes. The Arden Shakespeare Third Series (London: Thomson, 1997), 1.1.55 and 1.1.61. Further references to the text are given in brackets in the text.

<sup>2</sup> On this paradoxical gendering of silence and speech, see, for example, Ina Habermann, *Staging Slander and Gender in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003) and, for the case of *King Lear*, Sabine Schülting, „Good Girls – Bad Girls? King Lear und seine Töchter“, in *König Lear*, transl. Frank Günther (München: dtv, 1997), p. 354–375.

If for I want that glib and oily art  
 to speak and purpose not [...]
 that you make known  
 It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,  
 No unchaste action or dishonoured step,  
 That hath deprived me of your grace and favour. (1.1.226–231)

Cordelia's words do not make sense in the context of Lear's binarily structured economy of speech – and neither does 'non-speaking', which means that the lack of adequate words is interpreted in just the same way as silence is or would have been: as non-sense.

The opposition of words and silence, of sense and non-sense is stabilized by yet another opposition which is tacitly assumed in Lear's evaluation of his daughters' speeches: While Goneril's and Regan's wordy affirmations are considered to be the true expression of their affections, Cordelia's lack of an appropriate speech is interpreted as manifestation of falsehood by Lear. Speech, in the system of signification displayed on Lear's map, seems not only to confer authority to the speaker but also performatively brings into existence the 'truth' of his or her statements. Edmund makes ample use of this assumption, as his plot to assure his father of Edgar's villainy and his desire to murder him is largely based on Gloucester 'overhearing' Edgar admitting to this plan in a conversation with his brother Edmund. Gloucester at first cannot believe Edgar to be so villainous; it is only when Edmund promises him proof of Edgar's intention by overhearing him himself that Gloucester changes his opinion. Edmund thus relies on what he calls "auricular assurance" (1.2.92), i.e. the persuasive force of words and voice, in order to convince his father of the 'truth' – something that uncannily mirrors Lear's preoccupation with his daughters' affirmations.

Once more, then, the audience witness a double-bind of authenticity and theatricality which centres on the voice and the (in)ability of a character to speak. And just as Gloucester relies on an authenticity of the voice that – in the case of Edgar – has never been because it has been staged, he is also misled by Kent. As far as Kent is concerned, the voice ceases to be guarantee of a character's identity. Bruce R. Smith, in his study on early modern soundscapes, puts special emphasis on the part that voice plays in the constitution of early modern subjectivities: "It is the sound of the subject's own voice that centers the subject's 'I' in the world."<sup>3</sup> Smith goes on to describe the different speech communities with their various social and gendered rules and rituals of communication which constitute a subject's voice. This is made use of in detail by Kent after he has been banished by Lear. Kent disguises himself as a servant, and the disguise works precisely because he does not only change his appearance but also his manner of speaking and his voice, in order to fully convince Lear of his different social existence: "If but as well I other accents borrow/ that can my speech diffuse" (1.4.1–2).

Here again, the first act shows a system of signification in crisis. Just as the notion of idealized femininity does no longer coincide with proper silence, so truth does no

<sup>3</sup> Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 246.

longer coincide with the authority of the spoken word. When Lear, completely taken aback by Cordelia's refusal to speak, asks her to "mend [her] speech a little/ lest [she] may mar [her] fortunes" (1.1.93–94), he already implicitly admits the possibility of equivocation and manipulation of words and speeches. Edmund's almost theatrically staged conversation with his brother Edgar, designed specifically to convince his father, is another instant in which the opposition of speech and silence crumbles and consequently ceases to be the fundament of meaning. It is thus already in the first act that the world of Lear is plunged into chaos – and not primarily because Cordelia refuses to comply with his notions of filial duty and gratitude, but rather because the central parameters of a signifying system based mainly on speech and silence are shifting so considerably that they, literally, do no longer make sense.

## II. Lear's Chattering: Sound and Speech

As the opposition of words and silence is gradually broken up and thus challenges traditional signifying systems, another binary opposition comes to the fore, most explicitly with the characters of Edgar as Poor Tom and Lear himself in the storm. When, in act 3, Lear exposes himself to the storm raging outside, he is shown deprived of his subjectivity as a king, his naked body demonstrating the split of the fusion of body politic and body natural that his abdication has called for. He evokes a second flood to (metaphorically) purge the earth of a signifying system that, as Lear has noticed with respect to the familial bonds between him and his daughters, is rapidly dissolving and thus threatening to annihilate his own subject position:

Blow winds and crack your cheeks! Rage, blow!  
 You cataracts and hurricanes, spout  
 Till you have drenched our steeples, drowned the cocks!  
 You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,  
 Vaunt couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,  
 Singe my white head! And thou, all shaking thunder,  
 Strike flat the thick rotundity o' the world,  
 Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once  
 That make ingrateful man. (3.2.1–9)

Lear's violent outburst of rage is marked as madness by most of the other characters and his words are strangely torn between a highly metaphorical speech charged with an abundance of symbolical meanings on the one hand, and a speech that uncannily emphasizes the material quality of language and focuses on the power of sound on the other hand.

What is struck flat in this speech is not only the "rotundity of the world", but meaning itself which here is structured by way of binary oppositions such as round and flat, high and low, mould and surface, here and there, man and animal. In contrast to this, Lear's speech can be seen as an uneasy in-between of rhetorical and metaphorical decorum on the one hand, and the 'immediate' power of the 'soundscape' it evokes on the other. The soliloquy is full of fricatives that manage to stage the force of the tempest both without and within, the frequent repetition of words such as "spit" and "spout" produces hissing noises that seem to overwhelm the audience just as much as

Lear is overwhelmed by the storm itself. Lear does in fact, as he himself acknowledges in 4.6., “chatter” – a term which, significantly, does not only mean “to shiver with cold” but also “to talk nonsense” (4.6.101). In the scene quoted above, Lear’s speech points forward to an erosion of conventional signification, not only in its semantic deconstruction of binary oppositions but also in its particular display of sound effects.

When Edgar, disguised as Poor Tom, enters the scene, the chattering continues: he ‘sings’ “Do de Do de Do” (3.4.57) and recites nonsense verse such as “Pillicock sat on Pillicock hill, / Alow, alow, loo, loo!” (3.4. 75–76). Edgar himself, in his performance of madness, seems to have lost his human subjectivity when his language is disintegrating into pure sound – which shows him as “no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal” and makes Lear wonder whether “man [is] no more than this?” (3.4.101 and 3.4.105–106).

Both Lear and Poor Tom are described as mad: while Lear himself is really plunging into madness, Edgar feigns madness in his impersonation of Poor Tom of Bedlam. Whether feigned or perceived as real, madness in *King Lear* seems inextricably linked to noise, the uncontrolled raging and babbling and the disintegration of speech into pure sound.<sup>4</sup> Madness is shown as invading not only the mind, but also the body, and it affects the body just as much as it is caused by bodily materiality.<sup>5</sup> At this point, the text points as it were to a blind spot of (linguistic) representation: Sound and noise continually emphasise the material quality of sense perception and do, in contrast to traditional models of visual perception, not permit a complete distancing from the body. The voice can thus be seen as always other than its textual representation, as challenging the possibilities of language rather than asserting its power.<sup>6</sup>

This paradox is ‘voiced’ again at the end of the play, when Lear rages about the monstrous female body, and all he finally manages to say is: “Fie, fie, fie! Pah, pah!” (4.6.125). It is then that Lear does actually ‘chatter’ – picturing the loathed female body in his mind finally leads him to enact just such a bodily materiality in his own language he wished to separate himself from. Before he chatters, he evokes a gloomy

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<sup>4</sup> Something similar can be seen in *The Duchess of Malfi*, where it is especially the continuous singing, clanking, roaring and murmuring of the madmen that affects the Duchess in her experience of madness and solitude.

<sup>5</sup> For a similar argument concerning hysteria and the early modern ‘malady’ of *hysterica passio*, see Kaara L. Peterson, “Historica Passio: Early Modern Medicine, *King Lear* and Editorial Practice”, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 57:1 (2006), 1–22 and Richard Halpern, “Historica Passio: King Lear’s Fall into Feudalism”, in Richard Halpern, *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991), p. 215–270.

<sup>6</sup> It is particularly in the work of Jacques Derrida that a profound critique of what he calls “phonocentrism” in Western culture has been formulated (see, most prominently, Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, transl. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1998] and Jacques Derrida, *Die Stimme und das Phänomen: Einführung in das Problem des Zeichens in der Phänomenologie Husserls*, transl. by Hans-Dieter Gondek [Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2003]). However, to claim that voice and, more importantly, sound and noise do challenge modes of textual representation and at times also exceed their possibilities is not to re-assert consciousness and immediacy of subjectivity that Derrida has exposed as illusions. For further discussion of Derrida in relation to sound and the voice, see Smith (1999).

picture of women and of a world that focuses its gaze on women: “But to the girdle do the gods inherit, beneath is all the fiend’s: there’s hell, there’s darkness, there is the sulphurous pit, burning, scalding, stench, consumption.” (4.6.122–125). Eventually, all the similes and metaphors come to an end, and the only thing Lear is still able to say is “Fie, fie, fie” – something that might still be recognizable as language, but is no longer intelligible as speech and thus has come to be just like the (imagined) material body Lear turns away from in horror.

His loathing for bodily materiality is most obviously exemplified by his desire to anatomize Regan, an attempt that is also designed to restore the workings of a system of signification which rests upon (gendered) binary oppositions.<sup>7</sup> Significantly, Lear’s wish to anatomize Regan is declared after Edgar, still in his disguise as Poor Tom, has sung one of his nonsense-songs: “Then let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds about her heart.” (3.6.73–74). Lear voices his desire to restore language just as well as bodily materiality to their proper place: not only would an anatomization of his daughter Regan enable him to clearly label and analyse parts of her body, it would also restore the meaningful link between body and mind, between a deformed or degenerated body and an equally degenerated psychic disposition.

However, this wish is spoken in vain, and all that remains for Lear – most prominently exemplified in his howling at the end of the play – is not language, but sound. The central opposition that is supposed to separate meaning from chaos, sense from non-sense is, at the point of Lear’s madness in the storm, no longer the one between words and silence, but has shifted to an opposition between meaningful speech and senseless sound. As Kaja Silverman has argued, “the sounds the voice makes always exceed signification to some degree, both before the entry into language and after. The voice is never completely standardized, forever retaining an individual flavour or texture.”<sup>8</sup> This argument, as I have shown before, refers not only to the particular quality of individual speech, but also the realm of sounds which are no longer coded in words and which challenge the ‘matrix of meaning’ established at the beginning of the play precisely because of the said excess.

### III. The Early Modern Theatre as Soundscape

Striving to keep up this last opposition, the play shows the complete and utter destruction of meaning in the final scene, when Lear can do no more but cry “Howl, howl, howl, howl.” (5.3.255) in the face of Cordelia’s death. It becomes clear then that the two basic oppositions which I have outlined above and which shape the signifying system in question – silence / speech and speech / sound – do no longer hold: The eternal silence enforced by Cordelia’s death seems to be the only true proof of her honesty and

<sup>7</sup> For early modern processes of abjection and their relationship to an exclusively male “Renaissance self-fashioning”, see Ina Schabert, “Wombscapes: Abjektion in *King Lear* und *Paradise Lost*”, in Ina Schabert, Michaela Boenke, eds., *Imaginationen des Anderen im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), p. 141–158.

<sup>8</sup> Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988), p. 44.

loyalty to her father, while Lear's inarticulate howls only emphasize the impossibility of adequate speech and show mere sound as the only possible reaction to Lear's grief.

King Lear, then, offers a gloomy perspective concerning meaning and chaos – and yet, I would argue, meaning is not destroyed or negated as such, but only insofar as those structures of meaning that are coded in binary oppositions are eroded and replaced by a different signifying system, namely a signifying system that is based on an interweaving of sound and speech.

Bruce R. Smith has drawn our attention to the particular mode of subjectivity that was engendered for audiences of early modern theatres and he has shown that this became possible because of the particular soundscape constituted by the theatre. The notion of 'soundscape' has been coined by R. Murray Schafer who emphasizes the fact that a space constituted by sounds and hearing situates the subject at the centre of such a space, surrounded by and unable to shut out sounds and noises that fill the soundscape.<sup>9</sup> Sound thus does bear on the bodies of the listeners and makes it impossible to escape its more or less immediate power.

Hearing is, as Bruce Smith emphasizes in this context, a centripetal activity that pulls human subjects into the world and does not, as is the case with seeing, distance them from the world. The early modern stage and its particular design made such a soundscape possible and created an acoustic space in which words did not only signify by way of oppositions but also by the material quality of sounds they exhibited. Such a conceptualization of the early modern stage leaves much more room for ambiguities and intersections as it bridges the gap between the subject and object of perception and, in the case of the theatre, between the actors onstage and the audience.

Venturing forth from this, I would argue that the "Wooden O" of Elizabethan theatre mirrors the scene in which Lear exposes himself to the storm and describes this storm to the fool as "invad[ing] us to the skin" (3.4.7). In this statement, Lear refers to the force of the raging storm that does not leave anything intact – neither his body which is exposed to wind, rain and thunder nor his mind which is torn between his metaphorically charged imaginations of a second flood and the deprivation of his royal privileges and familial powers. But just as, to quote Lear again, "the rotundity of the world is struck flat", the storm can be read as metaphorically destroying the conventional signifying systems and turning them upside down. Such a metaphorical reading does not only refer to Lear's patriarchal taxonomies, but can also be related to the theatre as means of signification.

It is especially through the performance of speech as inarticulate sound that the body of the audience is affected and that, to quote Bruce Smith, "the listener becomes a subject with the speaker",<sup>10</sup> when, for example, Lear rages in the storm and his voice doubles the roaring of the wind and the cracking Lear refers to.

Of course, just as in the performance of madness brought on stage by Edgar in the disguise of Poor Tom, one has to take into account that seemingly pure sound or inarticulate speech themselves are framed on the Elizabethan stage by the codes of theatri-

<sup>9</sup> For this aspect, see R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester: Destiny, 1977).

<sup>10</sup> Smith (1999), p. 279.

cality and representation and thus thrown into meaningful relief. In contrast to what Schafer called 'soundscape', there is no such thing as immediate sound on the stage and in the theatre – which, however, does not mean that sound effects such as Lear's speech in the storm do not affect the audience's body.

Meaning is thus created not simply through a stable binary opposition of silence or words, of sound or speech, but rather through a dynamic movement, a continuous oscillating between both of them *and* the audience. Just as I have shown in my reading of Lear's raging speech in the storm, there is constant shifting between highly stylized rhetoric and a kind of sound-effects that do not only emanate from the actor's body. Despite the audience's awareness of the mediating process of acting and staging, these sound-effects also bear upon their bodies. This effect can, as I would argue, be characterized as a "textual 'overflow'" from page to stage, and from stage into the audience.<sup>11</sup>

### **Zusammenfassung**

Dieser Beitrag fragt in einem ersten Schritt nach der Opposition von Worten und Stille bzw. von Sprechen und Schweigen in *King Lear*, die den Text – zumindest auf der Oberfläche – entscheidend strukturiert. Die Lektüre arbeitet, ausgehend von diesem Oberflächenphänomen, in einem zweiten Schritt den Zusammenhang zwischen Parametern der Sinnstiftung und der Entwicklung nicht nur der genannten Opposition, sondern auch der sich daraus entwickelnden Opposition von Rede und Geräusch heraus. Schließlich, so stellt der Beitrag heraus, ist es die Betrachtung der frühmodernen Theatersituation und deren anderer Konfiguration der genannten Oppositionen, die einen andere Sinnstiftungsdimension eröffnet, als die Textoberfläche suggerierte.

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<sup>11</sup> Leslie C. Dunn, "Ophelia's songs in *Hamlet*: Music, Madness and the feminine", Leslie C. Dunn and Nancy A. Jones, eds., *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 50–64, p. 64.

# THE DECOMPOSITION OF SOUND IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *THE TEMPEST*

BY

KATRIN TRÜSTEDT

There is a wide variety of musical forms and uses in *The Tempest*, a “diversity of sound” (5.1.234),<sup>1</sup> in the words of the Boatswain. This might be due to the opportunities for new and diverse soundscapes offered by the Blackfriars theatre, or, in the case of some of the musical pieces at least, it might be due to the influence of performing plays at court.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the historical circumstances and technical conditions, however, the particular soundscapes of *The Tempest* have interesting implications for the play’s meaning and its position within Shakespeare’s oeuvre. They can be heard, variously, as moments of composition and decomposition, as variations and improvisations on earlier sound-themes in Shakespeare’s work, or, literally in the words of Stephen Greenblatt: as an “echo chamber”.<sup>3</sup> These echo-sounds constitute a key element of the play. Indeed, sound and music play an important role in each one of *The Tempest*’s decisive moments. And yet the functions of music and sound in the play are far from homogeneous, but instead, complex and ambivalent, reflecting an ambivalence of the status of music itself in Shakespeare’s time. On the one hand, music was widely seen, following a tradition of “neo-platonic idealization”, as the imitation of divine order, whose purpose was to harmonise, and “charm” wild nature. On the other hand, and in a quite contradictory sense, music was feared and banned as a seductive “source of riot and disorder”.<sup>4</sup> Both of these views find their expression within *The Tempest*. Moreover, these two contradictory functions both at times bear Prospero’s signature. As not only the director, but also the ostensible composer and conductor of the play, Prospero aims to mark the soundtrack as his own, and uses all the possible functions of sound to this end. Composition, in this sense, also means the degree of construction and control in a piece. At times, however, the sound of *The Tempest* also exceeds and escapes Prospero’s control, in an act not so much of composition but rather of dis- or decomposing.

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<sup>1</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by Stephen Orgel, The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Stephen Orgel, “Introduction”, in William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by Stephen Orgel, The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Bruce Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, “The Tempest”, in *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: Norton, 1997), p. 3047.

<sup>4</sup> David Lindley, “Introduction”, William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by David Lindley, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 20.

## I. A "Source of Riot and Disorder"

The opening tempest that gives the play its title is first of all a sound-effect, echoing other Shakespearean tempests such as the prominent storm in *King Lear*. "A tempestuous noise of Thunder and Lightning heard" reads the stage direction before the first line of the play. As in *Lear*, the storm marks a state of emergency, or exception. Suspending social hierarchies, it exposes every living being on the boat – and in the audience – to a looming violence and the sounds that announce it. Thus through sound-effect alone, the very beginning of the play portends a kind of destabilization.

Usually ascribed to natural causes, the tempest in this case is revealed in the following scene to have been an intended and staged violence, carefully composed by the initially hidden director Prospero, deliberately causing "riot and disorder". The distinction between 'nature' and 'culture' becomes blurred, as the noise, seeming to be a natural sound – unintentional and therefore meaningless – turns out to be a composition: artificial, created, intended. Even the listening experience of those directly affected by the sound eventually takes this shape. Retrospectively, the composer of the putatively natural violence gets reinscribed into the 'sound of exception' by the king, Alonso:

Methought the billows spoke and told me of it,  
The winds did sing it to me; and the thunder,  
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounced  
The name of Prosper: it did bass my trespass. (3.3.96–99)

While the storm is occurring, however, nothing of this sort is uttered, neither by the king nor by anyone else. It is only the deferred mechanism of inscription that renders impossible the distinction between natural and created sound.

This 'composed noise' of the opening tempest makes up the underlying soundtrack of the play, and together with certain other sounds form a kind of dissolving medium. Ariel, as an "airy spirit" disseminates – in an echo of *Macbeth*'s Weird Sisters – a sound of confusion, bewilderment, and anxiety throughout the island. These sounds have an unclear, and in some sense an undecidable status, in that they hover between quasi-natural process and purposeful 'instrument'. As we will see, they too often seem at first to come from nowhere, and are only belatedly and from certain perspectives revealed to be clearly produced and purposively employed in an intentional and powerful project. Everybody in *The Tempest* is under the spell of these sounds, even Prospero himself.

The function of sound as a medium of power, as a tool of the sovereign for creating and influencing a certain state of exception, is further evident in the role that sound plays in Caliban's torture: "sometime am I / All wound with adders, who with cloven tongues / Do hiss me into madness – " (2.2.14). This is also part of Prospero's project, as he himself is setting the spirits on to roar at Caliban ("Fury, Fury! Hark, hark!", 4.1.251), and Ariel confirms: "Hark, they roar!" (4.1.261). Thus the dissolving and disjoining sound, echoing *Lear*'s storm and *Macbeth*'s sound of violence, is itself part of Prospero's careful composition. As a source of destructive potential, however, it is always at the risk of excess and therefore cannot be kept totally under control.

## II. Harmony: Comfort and Composition

On the other end of the aural spectrum, some of the sounds in *The Tempest* are of a ‘charming’ quality. For most of the characters affected by this type of sound, it is initially heard as something beyond power, before or outside the attempt to ‘terrorise’ which could be attributed to Prospero and his imperialistic and modernist projects. Thus, unlike *Macbeth*’s rather monotone sound of fury, the finely-tuned sound management of *The Tempest* can also create a feeling of comfort in opposition to the anxiety it itself produces: as a “metamorphic music [...] the very sound of it kills care”<sup>5</sup>. The diverting and seemingly comforting quality of this type of sound, however, turns out to be – like the tempest itself – in fact not outside, but just as much part of Prospero’s project, as he himself states:

A solemn air, and the best comforter  
To an unsettled fancy, cure thy brains,  
Now useless, boiled within thy skull. (5.1.58–60)

What creates the stabilising effect of such sounds is the solemnity which bears a ceremonial and thus highly composed character, unlike the terrorising noise of the tempest. Just like it, however, even the harmonising and comforting sound can be a part of the state of exception. What seems to be beyond power or law is here included within it as being excluded, a compensatory function.

But it is not only Prospero’s enemies, and not only Caliban – in addition to being roared and hissed into madness – who are softened by soothing sounds; Caliban’s counterpart Ferdinand is just as seduced. Ariel’s song of sea-change is a good case in point in this respect, for it shows the simultaneous proximity of threatening and comforting sound. The song begins with echo – effects coming from the wings (probably also from beneath the stage): “(*Burden, dispersedly*) ‘Bow wow’ (1.2.381, 83). The bird-song of Ariel’s song seems to be diverting and seductive, but the subsequent “Hark, hark!” (1.2.384) anticipates the spirit-dogs that later chase Caliban and his companions. Ferdinand is accordingly confused, distracted from his melancholic state and led into a new, but unspecified, direction: “Where should this music be? I’th’air, or th’earth?” (1.2.388). This sound is not received as natural, but neither is it thought to be human; indeed, it seems to have no clear source whatsoever: “This is no mortal business, nor no sound / That the earth owes. I hear it now above me” (1.2.407–8). Regulating his state of mind, the comforting sound switches on – and off, allowing for Ferdinand’s mourning intermittently to manifest itself again:

It sounds no more ... Sitting on a bank,  
Weeping again the king my father’s wrack,  
This music crept by me upon the waters,  
Allaying both their fury and my passion  
With its sweet air. Thence I have followed it –  
Or it has drawn me rather. (1.2.389–95)

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 267.

The power of this sound is not merely comforting (“allaying”), but also manipulative, as Ferdinand’s claim that the music has “drawn” him attests. The sound ‘plays’ with its subjects, making hope and comfort appear and disappear: “but ‘tis gone. No, it begins again” (1.2.395–6). What the sound interrupts is Ferdinand’s efforts to deal with the supposed death of his father: “The ditty does remember my drowned father” (1.2.406). This, here, is an echo of *Hamlet* and its ghost – another sound effect, since he calls from beneath the stage – demanding of his son exactly what Ferdinand is trying to do in his own situation: to “remember” him. The alternative to Hamlet’s fate, offered by the song, is the sea-change:

Full fathom five thy father lies,  
Of his bones are coral made;  
Those are pearls that were his eyes;  
Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something riche and strange.  
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell.

(*Burden*) Ding dong.

Hark, now I hear them, ding dong bell. (1.2.437–405)

Embedded within the confusing echoes of a sound of fury, a comic solution to the melancholic dead-end is offered with this song. This unspecified sea-change is presented as one that is, just like its surrounding threatening medium, associated with sound and music. Water is reinforced as the element or medium of change, as the sea-change song, like the opening sounds of the tempest, also comes from the water: “This music crept by me upon the waters” (1.2.392), Ferdinand states. What appears through the words of the song-as-water could just as easily be thought of as sound itself: that is, the change that is reported to happen, happens not – as reported – at sea (where Ferdinand’s father is not), but rather *here, in and through* music.

There are also sounds in which the sudden turn from one tone to another is more directly audible. These are moments which expose a certain decomposition, in one sense not unlike the aforementioned ‘dissolving’ sounds, yet at the same time opening up a potential for something quite different from the logic of Prospero’s sounds. Such a shift from one key to another is most audible in the moment of Prospero’s disruption of the banquet in 4.1, when Caliban, always a latent threat to Prospero, becomes manifest and thus disturbs the festive concert. The “*soft music*” (4.1.58) that is part of what Ferdinand calls “*Harmonious charmingly*” (4.1.118) and that can be understood as Prospero’s version of a harmonizing, comforting sound, suddenly shifts to “*a strange hollow and confused noise*” (4.1.142). Here Prospero does not just replace one sound with another. On the contrary, in the moment of disruption – and it is important to note that Caliban is inscribed in this moment – Prospero is no longer the master of the sound, but is instead subjected to it. This moment of disruption takes the form of a decomposition of sound and thus marks the *techné* of sound as part not so much of Prospero’s but rather of Shakespeare’s play. This decomposition or disruption of a harmony which remains fatally tied to the threatening sounds for which it is supposed to com-

pensate is the prerequisite for yet another, different sense of sound: a sound that escapes control entirely, not only in that it cannot be intentionally produced or composed, but in that it will even be heard differently in every performance.

### III. Decomposition as Fantasy

In terms of Caliban's role in the play and his relation to the soundscapes of the island, such decomposition leads precisely into something "riche and strange". Especially in the soundscape of Act 3, the centre of the play, something emerges that can be said to be in a process of overcoming the intentionally produced state of exception, out of the reach of Prospero's compositional power, be it maddening or soothing.

In the play's comic subplot, the only one that takes place without falling under Prospero's controlling notice, Stephano and Trinculo sing for Caliban: "Flout 'em, and cout 'em / And scout 'em, and flout 'em. Thought is free" (3.2.114–116). Both *flout* and *scout* (and thus, also *cout*) imply ridicule.<sup>6</sup> The effect of these lines, however, is not simply mocking. Rather, the effect is of an anonymous, objectless medium of repetition and transition. First, both verbs are transitive without a specific object (only "em"); secondly, a particular emphasis is placed on repetition: among other things, *flout* means "to quote or recite with sarcastic purpose".<sup>7</sup> Repetition is, furthermore, constitutive for the song, since it is in itself repetitive, that is, a catch: a musical composition in which several voices repeatedly sing exactly the same melody, beginning at different times. Thus the structure of the song creates an effect similar to that of the double plot of act 3: the lines overlap. The seemingly unconnected addition "Thought is free" would not, in a production of the play, be heard independently, that is, on its own. An audience member, hearing this line sung simultaneously with the line "flout 'em and scout 'em" might receive the impression that it is this sentence – "Thought is free" – that is to be flouted and scouted. When one listens to the song still longer, freedom of thought appears potentially no longer as the object of ridicule, but rather as the *outcome* of the process of flouting and scouting. Freedom, then, would be quite another thing than what the phrase "thought is free" evokes on its own. Out of context, the word evokes a kind of freedom that frees itself from the biblical injunction: "Wish the king no evil in thy thought".<sup>8</sup> Here, the song effects a freedom produced precisely in its form as round or catch: a kind of emptiness of thought, and at the same time, a creative surplus from musical overlap.

Ariel notices the threatening potential of this process and attempts to take control of the tune. In doing so, however, he in fact amplifies the sound: "*Stephano*: What is this same? *Trinculo*: This is the tune of our catch, played by the picture of Nobody" (3.2.118–120). The tune is being 'freed' not only of thought, but also of any affiliation with a specific character. It is not only not Prospero (or Ariel) that directs this tune, and

<sup>6</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by Stephen Orgel, The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), fn. 3.2.114–5.

<sup>7</sup> Entry "flout", in *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> Ecclesiastes 10.20, quoted in William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by David Lindley, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), fn. 3.2.116.

not even someone called Nobody, but just an echo of Nobody: in this instance, the tune plays itself. The sounds spoken of in Caliban's famous lines from in the middle act of the play are also lacking any provenance, and seem rather to be off-centre:

[...] the isle is full of noises,  
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.  
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments  
Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices,  
That if I then had waked after long sleep,  
Will make me sleep again, and then in dreaming  
The clouds methought would open and show riches  
Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked  
I cried to dream again. (3.2.137–45)

The clouds produced or fostered by the sweet sounds and airs in Caliban's dreams open up riches very different from the riches of power alluded to throughout the play, as well as something very different from what the clouds of the tempest produce (i.e., the 'sound of exception'). Caliban's particular soundscape could be described, in the words of Julia Lupton, as the sphere of the Creature. Lupton outlines the traces of the Creature – epitomized here in Caliban – in Christian mythology, and she explicates the role of wonder implied therein: "Wonder, [...] an imaginative arch thrown across the destructive breach of *The Tempest*".<sup>9</sup> The ability to wonder is what links the Creature, always in the process of being created, to itself creating: "Caliban's poetry thus indicates, [...] the creative potentials of the creature himself: the *creat-ura* is a created thing who is himself on the verge of creating". This creativity remains – just like the creature itself – always in the process of being created, never 'finished', always potential: "It is still, however, only an incipient creativity (the emergence or potential marked by the *-ura*)".

Such a process seems to be close to what Benjamin describes as fantasy.<sup>10</sup> Caliban's world is defaced by the clouds that emerge out of the soundscape of his sleep and is at the same time opened up by them – it is „entstaltet“ in Benjamin's terminology. In Benjamin's fragments on fantasy, „Entstaltung“ corresponds to the 'depositing' („Entsetzung“) of „Gestalt“, or 'form', in its different aspects. Fantasy is a process or play, dissolving form: „ein auflösendes Spiel“. <sup>11</sup> It is, furthermore, without intend, or „zwanglos“. <sup>12</sup> Caliban's breaking clouds are disruptive, but unlike the intentional sounds of Prospero's storm, they have no purpose. Moreover, „Entstaltung“ does not lead to death, but rather to an endless sea-change: „[Sie] verewigt den Untergang, den sie heraufführt in einer unendlichen Folge von Übergängen“. <sup>13</sup> Benjamin describes the

<sup>9</sup> Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 171.

<sup>10</sup> Walter Benjamin, „Phantasie“ in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften 6*, ed. by R. Tiedemann, H. Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1985), p. 114–117.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

process of „Entstaltung“ – which I am translating here as ‘decomposition’ – in acoustic terms, with the example of the night, ‘de-exponentiating’ sounds into one great humming: „wie die Nacht die Geräusche zu einem einzigen großen Summen depotenziert“.<sup>14</sup>

Poetic language for Benjamin is similarly capable of „Entstaltung“, and the Shakespeare of the comedies its incomparable master: „Shakespeare ist – in seinen Komödien – ihr unvergleichlicher Gewalthaber“.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the notion of a sea-change, as it is found in Ariel’s song, is the key element for Benjamin’s conception of fantasy: „Phantasie kennt nur stetig wechselnden Übergang“.<sup>16</sup> As in Ariel’s’ song, water is also the proper element of the riches produced in Caliban’s soundscape, and it is this motif which links Caliban’s song to the sea-change that leads to something “riche and strange”. Not, that is, to security, but rather to a phase of transformation in which everything is kept open, in its potentiality, even if only for a fleeting moment (before being reawakened).

The sound of the abovementioned scene seems to be of a quite different potentiality, however, than Caliban’s outright freedom-song, addressed to Prospero himself: “Ban, ban, Ca-caliban / Has a new master – get a new man” (2.2.179–80). The words of this song refer to Caliban’s subjection to Prospero, who is overthrown, but only to be replaced with another master. Nevertheless, the unusual rhythm of the song, as well as the line “Ban, ban, Ca-caliban”, where both words and Caliban’s own name seem to be in a state of „Entstaltung“, also point to a certain process of decomposition.

Finally, there is Ariel’s own song of freedom, which leads out of the play and into the future. In this sense, it serves as a closing or concluding acoustic answer to the opening sound of the tempest. Prospero is preparing for the future, while at the same time echoing his own past in order to create his re-presentation in the present: “I will discase me, and myself present / As I was sometime Milan.”(5.1.85–6). Simultaneously, Ariel sings his own song. It is his first song not directed in any way by Prospero. Yet it also runs parallel to Prospero’s action, in that the words of song speak of the future; Ariel sings, “Merrily, merrily, shall I live now” (5.1.93). The contrast between the respective futures of Prospero and Ariel is striking, however. While Prospero ‘arms’ himself for a renewed representation of political power, Ariel hides away in a *green world*, evoking a pastoral scenery and the forest of *A Midsummer Nights Dream*: “In a cowslip’s bell I lie” (5.1.89). Again, the images of Ariel’s words (a cowslip’s bell) could just as well be the song itself: Ariel lives in the music that escapes Prospero’s reach. The present tense of the song – also in “There I couch when owls do cry” (5.1.90) – and the use of the word “now”, in connection with “Shall I live”, opens up the possibility of a future that is already present, even if latent: “Merrily, merrily, shall I live now, / Under the blossom that hangs on the bough” (5.1.93–4). The sound of this song thus promises a future for Ariel that is already there in its becoming. Just as the sound of the tempest at the beginning of the play contained the decomposed echoes of

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

earlier tempests, the song Ariel sings at the play's conclusion echoes into the future: it is a sound to come.

### **Zusammenfassung**

Der titelgebende Sturm lässt Shakespeares *The Tempest* mit einer bedrohlichen Geräuschkulisse einsetzen, in der auch Stürme früherer Tragödien widerhallen. Diese Sorte von ‚zersetzendem Sound‘ macht die eine Seite von Prosperos machtpolitischer Geräuschregulierung aus; die andere besteht aus besänftigenden bzw. ablenkenden Harmonien. Sowohl in dem, was Caliban hört, als auch in Ariels Abschiedslied klingt aber jenseits von solcher Indienstnahme ein Potential von Klängen und Formen an, das Walter Benjamin unter dem Begriff der „Entstaltung“ gefasst hat und das konstitutiv ist für seine Auffassung von „Phantasie“, die in Shakespeares Romanzen eine entscheidende Rolle spielt.

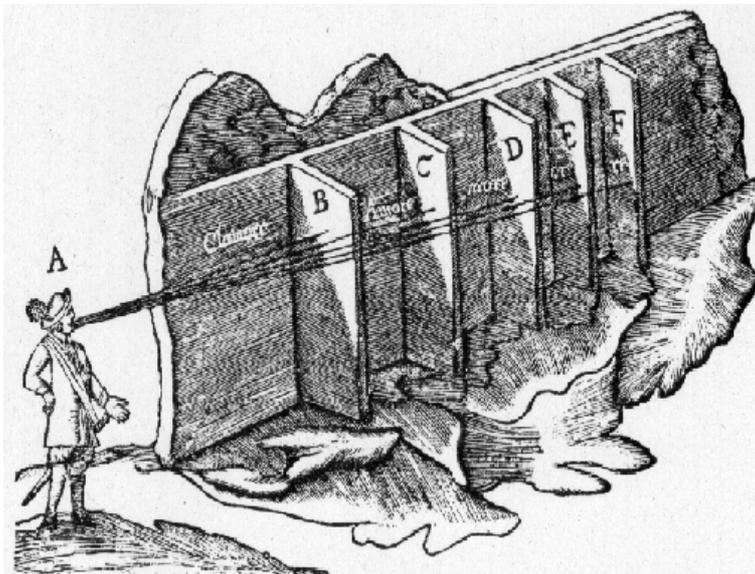
# SONIC YOUTH – ECHO AND IDENTITY IN *VENUS AND ADONIS*

BY

JUDITH LUIG

Echo – the disembodied voice answering to human utterances – has fascinated early modern thinkers. The seventeenth century encyclopaedist of sound, Marin Mersenne, projected a whole discipline dedicated especially to it. “Echometry”, he declares in *Harmonie Universelle* (1636), should explore such intriguing problems as echoes that could respond up to twenty times, with the final repetition louder than the initial ones, or echoes that would store the sound and reflect only at certain times of day or night. His colleague Athanasius Kircher, investigated in *Phonurgia Nova* (1673) an artificial echo which has the walls so placed that the shouted Italian expression *clamore* became re-echoed as the Italian words for “costumes”, “love”, “hours” and finally “king”. And a slightly disturbing epigram by Ausonius was frequently quoted by contemporaries, where a personified echo declares itself to be “a voice without a mind / I only with another’s language sport”.

As these examples suggest, echo was much more than a child’s game in a tunnel in early modern times. Echo is often represented as a powerful mocker, an invisible presence that deconstructs the words of a speaker.<sup>1</sup> Echoes in lonely places, commented Lucretius, cause imagined nymphs and satyrs to come into being.



Athanasius Kircher, *Phonurgia Nova*, 1673

<sup>1</sup> See for example Joseph Loewenstein, *Responsive Readings, Versions of Echo in Pastoral, Epic and the Jonsonian Masque*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1984; and John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

In *Venus and Adonis*, Shakespeare's contribution to the genre of the erotic Epyllion, echo appears at a crucial moment, right when the poem turns from a tale of wooing to a tale of woe. After eight hundred lines of Venus incessantly talking Adonis into loving her, the lusty goddess is forced to take a break in her pursuit, because the "merciless ... night", did seclude from her the object of her desire. Venus sits down, deluded. No longer able to visualize the scene, the poem's narrator focuses on titillating another sense: hearing.

## I

And now she beats her heart, whereat it groans,  
That all the neighbour caves, as seeming troubled,  
Make verbal repetition of her moans;  
Passion on passion deeply is redoubled:  
'Ay me,' she cries, and twenty times, 'Woe, woe',  
And twenty echoes twenty times cry so. (ll. 829–834)<sup>2</sup>

When Shakespeare wrote *Venus and Adonis*, the rhetorical device of Echo was highly popular. Echo's power is often that of being able to reveal something implicit in the original statement, something the speaker had pretended to be unaware of. But at first glance it seems that the author of *Venus and Adonis* does not use the echo device as satiric fragmentation. Instead of mocking her, the echoes faithfully repeat the groans of Venus' body. They reflect them back at their source, as underlined by the exact number in the motif "twenty times". This reflection of sounds attracted me to the idea of reading this moment in *Venus and Adonis* as a mirror-stage, or rather "an echo-stage", since it is not a visual image that is reflected here, but a sonic one. I coined this term "echo stage", rather obviously so, in reference to Lacan from where I take my theoretical background.

According to Lacan the mirror stage is an important step in the formation of an "I". When the child recognizes its own image in the mirror it explores in a play of gestures the relation between "this virtual complex and the reality it reduplicates – the child's own body, and the persons and things, around him."<sup>3</sup> Contrary to the turbulent movements that the subjects experience, the spectral image is perceived as something complete, a totality. Lacan proposes to understand the mirror stage not as a mere reflection, but rather as a process of identification, a "transformation that takes place in the subject" since the child up until this point has experienced its "self" as something radically different from what he sees in the mirror. This image of a spectre "I" is what the child will assume from now on. Thus the *Gestalt*, the total form of his body in the mirror, has, as Lacan explains, "formative effects in the organism"<sup>4</sup>. "The mirror stage",

<sup>2</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Poems*, ed. by John Roe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.121.

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Lacan, "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience", *Écrits, A Selection*, ed. by Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock Publications, 1977), p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Lacan, *Écrits*, p.3.

Lacan declares, “is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation.” Its aim is “the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity.”<sup>5</sup>

Up until the verses quoted above, where the lustful goddess is forced to interrupt her hunt, Shakespeare’s Venus has experienced herself as thoroughly insufficient in her role as a wooer. It is not surprising that *Venus and Adonis* was regarded as a lover’s manual by its contemporaries: Venus knows all the tricks in the book – from male force to female weakness and back. She woos like a bold-faced suitor, she applies elaborate tropes, flattery, neo-platonic logic and Ovidian bawdy talk, but nothing can stir Adonis’ fire.

But when she starts beating her breast and venting her frustration merely with an acoustic element, for the first time in the poem she gets some lasting satisfaction. The neighbouring caves seem to pity her, the narrator tells us, and make “verbal repetition of her moans” – which is to say they translate it into text. This is the moment that I identify as the echo-stage. The phase in which Lacan’s child sees his body and explores the relation between self and image, appears in *Venus and Adonis* as an acoustic mirroring. Venus starts to experiment with her sonic presence, when the repetitions of her laments are thrown back at her. Platonic Tradition has it that the particular pitch of any sound causes a movement in the air around us which, on our hearing it, generates a similar movement within us. The narrator of *Venus and Adonis* takes up this idea when he tells us that Venus is moved inwardly by hearing her own sounds. “Passion on Passion deeply is redoubled.” This is comparable to the formation that according to Lacan takes place in the “I” during the mirror stage.

Where at first only Venus’ body had produced groans, now she begins to lament with her voice, “Ay me” and “Woe, woe” exclamations, that mark the liminal stage between mere acoustic sounds and those that are semantically charged. “In acoustic terms”, Dennis Fry states, “there are two versions of my speech: the ‘private’ speech I hear inside my body and the ‘public’ speech that others hear outside.”<sup>6</sup> Due to the effect of the echo, Venus hears her own words not only as private, but also as public speech. More so: if one does the maths, the echoes that fill the air augment to a bombastic soundscape of 21 “ay me”s, and 420 “woe”s.<sup>7</sup> These multiplied voices can be read as more than just lamentations. In the exclamation “Ay me” we also have a self, an “I” that is imitated, claimed by other’s voices. The woe is no longer an authentic experience of the speaker, it is no longer original. So it is not really Venus’ own text that is thrown back at her but rather a multivocal choir that necessarily disturbs the original sounds, reveals the medium and gives back a distorted vocal image that will now re-enter Venus’ body through her ear.

Whether hearing or seeing is more important in the sensorium is a point intensely debated in western philosophy. *Venus and Adonis* seems to add yet another twist to this

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Dennis Fry, *Homo Loquens: Man as Talking Animal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 94.

<sup>7</sup> This is at least how I read the mathematical exercise. One might of course also interpret, that each of the echoes only echoes once, and not twenty times. Still the effect would be quite impressive I think.

discussion. Whereas Elizabethan culture generally favoured the eyes as a stronger enticement for falling in love, in *Venus and Adonis* hearing seems to have an equally direct connection to the emotions. In one of the most beautiful passages of the poem, Venus elaborates on the strong ties of love and perception: “Had I no eyes, but ears, my ears would love that inward beauty and invisible” she professes and, further on: “Though neither eyes nor ears, to hear nor see, yet should I be in love with touching thee.” (ll. 433–8).

The inward beauty she alludes to is, according to the neo-platonic concept, Adonis’ voice. After speaking only two lines of the poem’s first 400 verses, Adonis suddenly breaks his passive silence and opens up with “three stanzas of high-pressured arguments against love.”<sup>8</sup> “What, canst thou talk?” (l. 427), is Venus astonished reply and then she, unwilling to listen to the content, uses his cue only to strengthen her argument:

## II

‘What, canst thou talk?’ quoth she, ‘hast thou a tongue?  
O would thou hadst not, or I had no hearing.  
Thy mermaid’s voice hath done me double wrong;  
I had my load before, now pressed with bearing;  
    Melodious discord, heavenly tune harsh sounding,  
    Ears deep sweet music, and heart’s deep sore wounding. (ll. 427–32)

The ear, early modern thinkers have suggested, is closely connected to the passions situated in the liver and heart. “Setting a lower portion of the soul in motion, sound could consume the auditor with joy, fear, and anger, evoke an exalted state of divine furor”<sup>9</sup> The ear connected the senses and the intellect. And one of the most powerful agents to penetrate it and animate the soul was music. The sonoric vibrations of music incurred motions on the body owing to their mathematically structured consonances. When Venus ascribes “melodious discord” and “heavenly tune harsh sounding” to Adonis, she alludes to the fact that Adonis unmathematical voice does not lead her to the concordant unity, but rather disturbs her lower passions. Yet, according to a concept by Pierre de Ronsard, if the passion responsible for appetite and sensuality is stirred, this will entice the soul to poetic furor.<sup>10</sup>

The relation of voice and music makes reference to yet another mythological tale. While in the *Metamorphoses* the talkative Echo is associated with the self-absorbed youth Narcissus, a later tradition gives a different aetiology of the nymph’s fragmentation of speech, one that became equally popular in Renaissance poetry. In his third-

<sup>8</sup> Coppélia Kahn, “Self and Eros in *Venus and Adonis* (1976)”, in, C. Philip Kolin, ed., *Venus and Adonis, Critical Essays* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1997), 181–202, p.193. I do not agree with Kahn, that Venus answers in mock surprise.

<sup>9</sup> Kate van Orden, “An Erotic Metaphysics of Hearing in Early Modern France”, *The Musical Quarterly*, p. 690.

<sup>10</sup> Pierre de Ronsard, “Des vertus intellectuelles et morales”, in Édouard Fremy, *L’academie des derniers Valois: Académie de poésie et de musique, 1570–1576* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1887).

century romance *Daphnis and Chloe* the poet Longus depicts Echo as a wood-nymph, adverse to sexual advances and punished by Pan for not giving herself to one man by being given to all men. I will read to you from the seventeenth century translation by George Thornley:

Pan sees [her love of virginity], and takes occasion to be angry at the maid, and to envy her music because he could not come at her beauty. Therefore he sends a madness among the shepherds . . . and they tore her all to pieces and flung about them all over the earth her yet singing limbs. The Earth ... buried them all, preserving them still their musical property, and they by an everlasting sentence ... breath out a voice. And they imitate all things now as the maid did before, the Gods, men, organs, beasts. Pan himself they imitate too ... which when he hears he bounces out ... to know what clandestine imitator that is that he has got.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately the short amount of time I have forces me to leave unconsidered a number of questions that this alternative myth of Echo poses for the reading of *Venus and Adonis*. For my present purpose it shall suffice to draw your attention to Echo as an imitator of music. In this tradition, connected with Pan, the nymph is allegorized as celestial harmony. This context turns Echo into a credential voice. Where Narciss' Echo is satiric, Pan's echo is lyric. When Venus accuses Adonis of a "heavenly tune harsh sounding", she makes reference to this nymph that Adonis is and is not at the same time, just like Echo is an ill-fitting identity for Venus.

Francis Bacon elaborates on this idea of the relation between the voice, the word and the world when he merges the myths of Echo and Syrinx:

such is the nymph Echo, a thing not substantial but only a voice, or if it be more of the exact and delicate kind, Syringa, - when the words and voices are regulated and modulated by numbers, whether poetical or oratorical.... For that is the true philosophy which echoes most faithfully the voices of the world itself, and is written as it were at the world's own dictation.<sup>12</sup>

Considering this, Echo is transformed yet another time, from a disembodied voice to the personification of discourse. Echo, both in the Ovidian and in the Longian tradition is, after all, text. The examples I cited at the beginning of my paper have already hinted at this, the experiments with artificially created echoes play with the possibility of an orally transmitted text that can be recorded and reproduced but that at the same time has a life of its own.

Bearing these considerations in mind, I want to come to my last point. Let us return once more to the echo-stage we have left Venus in. From a gender perspective it is rather telling, that at the moment, when all her active male wooing strategies have been defeated, that Venus should find consolation from the mythological archetype of scorned female wooers, the nymph Echo. Yet I want to venture further in my interpretation of Shakespeare's use of Echo's myth. Using Lacan I have proposed reading Venus' perception of her own voice's echoes as a step in the formation of a self. But what kind of image of herself does she perceive in the reflection of the echoes? At first Venus is shown to be trapped into repeating sentiments she cannot escape, a process that

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<sup>11</sup> Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, transl. by George Thornley (London, 1652).

<sup>12</sup> Francis Bacon, *De dignitate et augmentis scientiarum*, II, xiii, trans. by Ellis and Spedding.

is itself replicated when the echoes mime the words.<sup>13</sup> Repetition is a fundamental praxis of Petrarchan poetry and if we assume that Venus has only rehearsed contemporary love strategies before, one could suggest that she now tries to take upon her the role of a Petrarchan lover. More so, the multiplied repetition of the woes reveal, how unauthentic the expression of the experience of love and loss is. This interpretation is enforced by the next verses. Marking the echoes, that have already distorted her text, the narrator expands on how Venus begins a “woeful ditty” (l.836). The Queen of Love, up until this point depicted as a victim of her own laws (l.251), does not continue in the Petrarchan pose, but now strives to gain an Olympic position over the trifles of lovers by singing: “How love makes young men thrall and old men dote” (ll. 837–8). Just one stanza after the impressive soundscapes of woes and laments that had filled the air with pathos, the poem now takes an ironic twist. Both narrator and reader are well aware of the fact that Venus, the personified love, has not taken any young man captive. Quite the contrary.

Shakespeare wrote his narrative poem at a moment when Ovidian erotic verses had just started to become popular. The genre had originated some years earlier in the highly competitive grounds of the early modern Inns of Court, where gentlemen’s sons were educated to be transformed from clueless youths into valuable members of London’s society. It is therefore not surprising that the subject of the Epyllia is change – the metamorphoses of young men. Yet while most critics focus on the transformation of the more obviously coded male protagonists of the narrative poems, I want to suggest that in *Venus and Adonis* it is not only Adonis but also Venus that experiences a metamorphosis. As I propose in this paper, *Venus and Adonis* can be read as dramatizing the formation of a poetic self.

Mirroring, imitating and miming – both of images and of voices is an important motif in *Venus and Adonis*. And Venus’ echo-stage in the end proves to be just as narcissistic as the self-love she accuses Adonis of. Due to his model Ovid, the master of mingling satire and pathos, the narrator compares Venus’ new-found poetic voice to the babbling of a drunkard in a pub who believes he is fascinating his audience while he is actually just paying them for their applause.

### III

For who hath she to spend the night withal,  
But idles sounds resembling parasites;  
Like shrill-tongued tapsters answering every call  
Soothing the humour of fantastic wits?  
She says ‘Tis so’; they answer all ‘Tis so;  
And would say after her, if she said ‘No’. (ll. 847–52)

Shakespeare’s narrative poem about Venus and Adonis, this “first heir” to his “invention”, as the dedication has us know, bears all the marks of a highly competitive young author. Whoever put the motto on the frontispiece was well aware of this: “Let the vulgar throng admire worthless things;” it says there, quoting Ovid’s *Amores*, “but to

<sup>13</sup> See Heather Dubrow, *Echoes of Desire* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 1–3.

me may the golden-haired Apollo supply cups filled at the Castalian stream.” The vulgar throng seems to find their equivalent in these “shrill-tongued tapsters”. Echo is now transformed once again from text to audience.

As I have suggested in this paper, the discussion of sounds and echoes in *Venus and Adonis* can be interpreted as the dramatization of an individual searching for a poetic voice. While the motto, the self-confident voice of the narrator and the repeated humiliations of Venus appear to be an author’s attempt to fashion himself as a genius, the use of the myth of Echo undermines all self-confident poses. Hearing and interpreting is depicted as problematic in *Venus and Adonis*, Adonis closes his ear Venus’ entreaties, “to love’s alarms [my heart] will not ope the gate” (l. 424), Venus is deluded by empty sounds she takes to be Adonis’ voice, and text that is uttered is multiplied and changed by the echoes in the air. An author, *Venus and Adonis* seems to suggest, might flatter himself into thinking that he has agency over his text, but in fact it will be the echo, the transmission of the text, and the audience that determines the perception.

### **Zusammenfassung**

Identität – das suggeriert meine Leseweise von *Venus and Adonis* – wird jenseits des symbolischen Codes der Sprache gebildet. In Shakespeares erotischem Versgedicht liefern Klänge und Stimmen die Folie für die Konstruktion eines Selbst. Die im Gedicht beschriebene akustische Verwandlung der Liebesgöttin Venus nenne ich in Anlehnung an Lacans Konzept des Spiegelstadiums ‚Echostadium‘.



# “TO HEAR THE REST UNTOLD.” SHAKESPEARE’S ARBITRATION OF THE “RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT”

BY

FELIX SPRANG

According to Hamlet and Christian thought, silence is the human default condition when leaving this world and preparing for the next.<sup>1</sup> This idea of silence as a pivotal state between life, death and life eternal reflects the ambivalence towards silence that prevails in Western thought. In the process of re-evaluating classical paradigms, the early modern period was particularly prone to reconcile the Ciceronian (rhetorical) view of silence as a mark of decorum with the Augustinian (theological) notion of *silere* and *tacere* as the foundation of Christian virtues.<sup>2</sup> Hamlet’s utterance “The rest is silence” certainly evokes this multi-layered process of reconciliation. It is underpinned by the contrast between his declared silence at the end and his playful verbosity throughout the play. As such Hamlet’s muteness echoes the ambiguous status of silence in early modern culture as defined by Christina Luckyj:

The widespread valorising of speech in the early modern period led to two divergent constructions of silence in mainstream (that is, masculinist) thought. On the one hand silence was frequently denounced or rejected as antisocial, barbarous or foolish; on the other silence was appropriated as a superior form of speech, or its necessary complement.<sup>3</sup>

The type of silent speech act that I will address in the following, the defendant’s decision to remain silent when faced with an accusation, is situated between the “two divergent constructions of silence” that Luckyj has identified. Principally regarded as foolish or rebellious behaviour, the connotations of silence grew increasingly positive in the Tudor and early Stuart years. This development is arguably a result of the increasingly vile practices employed by interrogators during the Reformation and the subsequent suppression of religious and political dissenters.<sup>4</sup> At a time when interrogators, particularly the members of the Privy Council with its notorious Star Chamber, regularly resorted to torture and physical punishment in order to obtain confessions,

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<sup>1</sup> For the eschatological interpretation of “the rest is silence” cf. Maurice J. Quinlan, “Shakespeare and the Catholic Burial Services”, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 5 (1954), 303–6.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Peter Prestel, *Die Rezeption der ciceronischen Rhetorik durch Augustinus in “De doctrina Christiana”* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Christina Luckyj, *‘A moving Rhetorick’ Gender and silence in early modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> For the practices of persecution cf. the papers by David Loewenstein, Carrie Euler, Christopher Marsh and Peter Lake in David Loewenstein and John Marshall, eds., *Heresy, Literature and Politics in Early Modern English Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

the accused who remained silent during the interrogation were prone to become martyrs. Thus silence gradually evolved from an apparent mark of guilt to a culturally encoded sign of honesty and righteousness. When we look at the plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries, there are indeed many scenes that mirror this slow revolution. However, the negotiations of silence are not always confined to the court room and have thus escaped the eyes of legal historians with an interest in Shakespeare.

Before discussing legal matters on the basis of Shakespeare’s plays it is essential to issue a caveat: with the following I will not contribute to the debate whether Shakespeare’s knowledge of the law was exceptional for a playwright who, as far as we know, had not been trained at the Inns of Court, a controversy sparked by Lord John Campbell’s *Shakespeare’s Legal Acquirements* in the year 1859.<sup>5</sup> Instead, I should like to follow Constance Jordan’s and Karen Cunningham’s ‘soft approach’ arguing that Shakespeare’s plays reflect the reciprocal process of how legal language and legal procedures contributed to the construction of social norms and realities and how these norms in turn informed legal practice.<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, legal issues connected with silence are clearly embedded in more general evaluations of muteness that involve issues of social class, gender and identity.<sup>7</sup> Two examples should suffice to point to the complex web of norms and values that consolidates early modern notions of silence: banishment as “speechless death” in *Richard II* and Isabella’s refusal and/or incapacity to acknowledge the Duke’s proposal with words in *Measure for Measure*. In order to do justice to this complex web, it is mandatory to sheer off from the stricter legal context and to cast the net a little wider. Focusing on scenes from *Coriolanus*, *Pericles* and *The Winter’s Tale*, I will address how social interaction in Shakespeare’s late plays reflects and informs the assessment of silence in the judiciary. I will demonstrate that the “right to remain silent” was forged and negotiated on stage long before it became manifest in the English Common Law during the 1640s. Finally, the investigation of legal repercussions in Shakespeare’s plays will shed a light on how creatively the early modern period combined Stoic and Augustinian notions of silence thus creatively mingling moral, legal and philosophical conceptions of “the right to remain silent”.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed discussion cf. Owen Hood Phillips, *Shakespeare and the Lawyers* (London: Methuen, 1972), 176–192, R. J. Schoeck, “Shakespeare and the Law: An Overview”, in W. R. Elton and John M. Mucciolo, eds., *Where Are We Now in Shakespearean Studies* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 219–39, B. J. Sokol and Mary Sokol, *Shakespeare’s Legal Language: A Dictionary* (London: Athlone Press, 2000) and Mark Andre Alexander, “Shakespeare’s Knowledge of Law: A Journey through the History of the Argument”, *Oxfordian: The Annual Journal of the Shakespeare Oxford Society* 4 (2001), 51–119.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Constance Jordan and Karen Cunningham, eds., *The Law in Shakespeare* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> The interdependency of silence, social class, gender and nationality can be found in Homer’s epic poems as well as in texts by the Pre-Socratics and is deeply rooted in Western culture. Cf. Silvia Montiglio, *Silence in the Land of Logos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). For a discussion of the motif in Shakespeare’s plays cf. David Schalkwyk, “‘She never told her love’: Embodiment, Textuality and Silence in Shakespeare’s Sonnets and Plays”, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45 (1994), 381–407.

Before turning to Shakespeare's late plays, I should like to circumscribe the legal context by pointing to the plot and themes discussed in *Sir Thomas More* (1596), a play that has survived in manuscript form and appears to be a collaborative endeavour mainly executed by Anthony Munday with the help of Henry Chettle and with later alterations by Shakespeare, Heywood and Dekker.<sup>8</sup> The protagonist Thomas More, marked by his wit and wisdom as well as his verbosity, is arrested "in the king's name of high treason" (4.4.158) for refusing to subscribe to the Act of Supremacy and thus accepting Henry VIII as the head of the English Church. Interestingly enough, the play omits the year that More spent in the Tower and passes over the interrogations and the final trial. Throughout the last two acts, however, More reiterates his reluctance to cooperate with the judges and mocks the accusation and apprehension as a staged play:

*Shrewsbury:* My lord, 'twere good you'd publish to the world  
Your great offence unto his majesty.  
*More:* My lord, I'll bequeath this legacy to the hangman, and do it instantly (*gives him his gown*).  
I confess his majesty hath been ever  
good to me, and my offence to his highness makes me of a state  
pleader a stage player (though I am old, and have a bad voice) to  
act this last scene of my tragedy. [...] (5.4.66–72)

Documented evidence suggests that the historical character More was convicted because the solicitor-general, Richard Rich, swore that More had openly renounced the king's authority during one of their private conversations.<sup>9</sup> According to the documents that have survived More decided to remain silent on why he refused to subscribe to the articles presented to him and explained, "if I should open and disclose the causes why, I should therewith but further exasperate his Highness, which I would in no wise do [...]."<sup>10</sup> Evidently, More chose to remain silent because he knew that his defence could be easily turned against him. Ironically, the play corroborates More's documented behaviour by omitting the trial scene and thus testifies that remaining silent was not an option for the defendant.

Shakespeare, who certainly knew the play, slightly altered the perspective when he and Fletcher wrote their account of the reign of Henry VIII. In the play *All Is True* or *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eighth* (since the 1623 Folio) the trials are an essential part of the plot and rendered as dramatic dialogues. It is remarkable, however, that while the trials involving Queen Katherine, Cardinal Wolsey and Archbishop Cranmer are all enacted on stage, Buckingham's trial is merely reported.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Anthony Munday, *Sir Thomas More*, ed. by Vittorio Gabrieli and Giorgio Melchiori, *The Revels Plays*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990). All subsequent quotations from this play are taken from this edition.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Ernest Edwin Reynolds, *The Trial of St Thomas More* (New York: P. J. Kennedy, 1964).

<sup>10</sup> Thomas More in a letter to his daughter Margaret Roper commenting on his first interrogation at Lambeth Palace on April 17, 1534. Quoted from: Gerald B. Wegemer and Stephen W. Smith, eds., *A Thomas More Sourcebook* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 313.

Buckingham’s apprehension, however, is indicative of the trial and his words foreshadow the course of the interrogation that will inevitably lead to his execution:

*Serjeant:*            Sir  
                           [*To Buckingham*] My lord the Duke of Buckingham and Earl  
                           Of Hereford, Stafford, and Northampton. I  
                           Arrest thee of high treason in the name  
                           Of our most sovereign King.  
*Buckingham:*        [*To Norfolk*] Lo you, my lord,  
                           The net has fall’n upon me. I shall perish  
                           Under device and practice.  
                           [...]  
                           It will help me nothing  
                           To plead mine innocence, for that dye is on me  
                           Which makes my whit’st part black. [...] (1.1.198–209)<sup>11</sup>

Buckingham’s assessment that “[i]t will help [him] nothing to plead [his] innocence” is reinforced by presenting Buckingham as a victim of slander:

Shakespeare emphasizes throughout that the evidence against Buckingham consists entirely of reported words: ‘words of sovereignty’, ‘the duke said’, ‘certain words / Spoke by a holy monk’, ‘says he’, ‘what he spoke / My chaplain to no living creature but / To me should utter’.<sup>12</sup>

And although the trial is not enacted, a character named First Gentleman explains in act 2, scene 1 that Buckingham was tried at Westminster with the King’s attorney presiding over the case.<sup>13</sup> Even if the text does not explicitly state the proceedings, these parameters would have sufficed to inform the audience that Buckingham was interrogated by the Star Chamber. The Star Chamber, presumably named after the painted ceiling of the room at Westminster Hall where the Privy Counsellors and common law judges heard high treason and political libel cases, was renowned in Shakespeare’s time for its pitilessness.<sup>14</sup> Installed by Henry VII in 1487, the Star Chamber became a political instrument to silence opponents under Henry VIII – and the play *All Is True*, arguably, depicts exactly this development. In Shakespeare’s play Buckingham has little faith in a fair trial and is immediately resigned to the fact that he “shall perish / Under device and practice.” The audience would have subscribed to Buckingham’s notion. They would have been aware that the Star Chamber had grown more powerful

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from Stephen Greenblatt et al., eds., *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997). All subsequent quotations from Shakespeare’s plays are from this edition.

<sup>12</sup> Barbara Kreps, “When All Is True: Law, History and Problems of Knowledge in *Henry VIII*”, *Shakespeare Survey* 52 (1999), 166–182, p. 173.

<sup>13</sup> Due to the unexpectedness of the allegations and the swiftness of the trial, legal historians have taken an interest in the circumstances. Cf. Barbara Harris, “The Trial of the Third Duke of Buckingham – A Revisionist View”, *The American Journal of Legal History* 20, 1 (1976), 15–26 and Mortimer Levine, “The Fall of Edward, Duke of Buckingham”, in Arthur J. Slavin, ed., *Tudor Men and Institutions* (Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1972).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. A. F. Pollard, “Council, Star Chamber, and Privy Council under the Tudors”, *The English Historical Review* 37, 147 (1922), 337–360; 37, 148 (1922), 516–539 and 38, 149 (1923), 42–60.

under James I. In fact, by the end of Elizabeth's reign the name had already become a synonym for the misuse and abuse of power by the Monarch and the Privy Council. As Star Chamber sessions were closed to the public, it was not known exactly how the Council conducted their interrogations.<sup>15</sup> But it was generally known that at the centre of the trials was the oath *ex officio*, an oath introduced to canon law in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Without a formal accusation, the defendant had to swear an oath that he would tell the truth in the ensuing interrogation. The refusal to swear the oath as well as the refusal to answer the questions posed by the king's attorney was taken as proof that the defendant was guilty.<sup>16</sup>

The most prominent case that highlighted the abuse of the oath *ex officio* was held in 1532 when John Lambert had to defend himself against the accusation of heresy. He was confronted with a list of 45 articles and was pressed to respond to them. Having patiently listened to the long list, he refers to the first article questioning him "whether [he] was suspect or infamed of heresy" and makes it quite clear that he refuses to reply. Instead he states boldly:

If therfore at any season suche infamy was put upon me, I am glad that I have so litle regarded the same, that nowe I have forgotten it. And though I did remember any suche, yet were I more then twyse a foole to shewe you thereof: for it is wrytten in your owne lawe, *Nemo tenetur prodere seipsum*. But this I ensure you I was never so charged with suspicion or infamy of this crime, that I was therefore ever convented and reprovved afore any iudge.<sup>17</sup>

Lambert was found guilty and executed in 1537 despite his complaint but his objections to the legal practice fell on fertile ground in the latter half of the century. The detailed account of his conduct in court, recorded in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* - printed in 1563 and one of the two main sources for Shakespeare's play - certainly elevated John Lambert as a martyr. Moreover, the account questioned the legitimacy of the prevailing legal practice. With Lambert, the notion of the *nemo tenetur*-principle, a principle that is derived from the Talmud and had no corresponding tenet

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<sup>15</sup> Arguably, Shakespeare could not have dramatized the scene even if he had wanted to because information on the court's procedures was lacking. Shakespeare presumably used Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and Holinshed's *Chronicles* as his sources. Only after Shakespeare's death several treatises appeared in print that reported on the practice of the Star Chamber: Richard Crompton, *Star-Chamber cases shewing what causes properly belong to the cognizance of that court : collected for the most part out of Mr. Crompton his booke, entituled, The jurisdiction of divers courts* (London: I.O. for Iohn Grove, 1630) and Anon., *The Star-chamber epitomized, or, A dialogue betweene Inquisition, a newes smeller, and Christopher Cob-web, a keeper of the records for the Star-Chamber, as they met at the office in Grayes-Inne* (London: [s.n.], 1641).

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth I disempowered the church tribunals by abolishing the oath *ex officio* in 1558 but reserved it for the Star Chamber, investigating charges of high treason and bound by common law, and the Court of High Commission, investigating heresy and bound by canon law. Elizabeth I. "An Act restoring to the Crown the ancient jurisdiction over the State ecclesiastical and spiritual, and abolishing all foreign power repugnant to the same." 1558

<sup>17</sup> John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments [The Book of Martyrs]* (London: John Day, 1563), III, 536.

in English common law, became increasingly popular in England.<sup>18</sup> Although neither statutory law, based on the proclamations by the Crown or Acts of Parliament, nor common law, based on custom, recognised a defendant’s “right to remain silent”, lawyers and prosecutors in the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century were increasingly prone to subscribe to the conviction that “no man has to accuse himself.” But it took yet another three generations until 1641 before the “right to remain silent” became a governing principle in the English judiciary, again as the result of a prominent case. In 1637 John Lilburne, a printer-publisher, was arrested and brought before the Star Chamber on suspicion that he had imported and circulated heretic books from the Low Countries. Without formal charges brought against him he was interrogated by the Privy Council. Resorting to a remarkable rhetoric, he denied to cooperate with the tribunal:<sup>19</sup>

And of any other matter that you have to accuse me of, I know it is warrantable by the law of God, and I think by the law of the land, that I may stand on my just defence, and not to answer your intergatorie [sic]; and that my accuser ought to be brought face to face, to justifie what they accuse me of. And this is all the answer that for the present I am willing to make: And if you aske me of any more things, I shall answer you with silence.<sup>20</sup>

I should like to argue that Shakespeare’s plays contributed significantly to the debate that finally resulted in a defendant’s right to remain silent. Let us return to the play *All Is True*: Buckingham anticipates the ordeal of being interrogated by the Star Chamber and foresees his end. Although Buckingham’s fall sheds a negative light on the legal procedures, Shakespeare was careful not to criticise the standard practice of the Star Chamber too conspicuously.<sup>21</sup> At closer inspection, however, several of his plays discuss the Star Chamber’s standard practice of forcing defendants to answer incriminating questions under oath. These arbitrations of the right to remain silent are not confined to the numerous trial scenes in Shakespeare’s plays; the issue is raised in a number of scenes that are set outside the court room. Within the scope of this statement, I should like to focus on key scenes from *Coriolanus*, *Pericles* and *The Winter’s Tale* in order to explore Shakespeare’s arbitration of the legal issue.

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<sup>18</sup> For a detailed account of the historical development cf. Leonard W. Levy, *Origins of the Fifth Amendment: The Right Against Self-Incrimination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 43–108 and 266–300.

<sup>19</sup> While in prison Lilburne wrote several pamphlets including the *Anatomy of the Lords’ Tyranny* (1646), *Regal Tyranny Discovered* (1647), *The Oppressed Man’s Opinions Declared* (1647) and *London’s Liberty in Chains Discovered* (1648).

<sup>20</sup> John Lilburne, *The Christian mans triall: or, A true relation of the first apprehension and severall examinations of Iohn Lilburne* (London: William Larnar, 1641), p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> There is only one explicit reference to the Star Chamber in all of his plays. In the opening lines of *MW* Justice Shallow, a foolish and incompetent Justice of the Peace, complains that he has been wronged by Falstaff: “Sir Hugh, persuade me not. I will make a Star Chamber matter of it. If he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, Esquire.” (1.1.1–3). There is a word echo of Star Chamber with “Council” in lines 29, 30 and 99. The irony is heightened by the misunderstanding of Sir Hugh Evans, a Welsh parson, who believes that Shallow refers to the Church Council rather than the King’s Council. Cf. Greenblatt (1997), 1235, footnote 8.



Conversely, Iago’s stoic statement “Demand me nothing. What you know, you know. / From this time forth I never will speak a word.” (5.2.309–310) is in line with the *nemo tenetur*-principle – but Iago’s refusal to accuse himself accentuates the double-edged nature of a defendant’s right to remain silent.<sup>24</sup> Here, it is not the sympathetic and heroic character, the martyr, who claims his right to remain silent. Instead, the audience witnesses a murderer and machinator who refuses to adhere to the conventions of poetic justice and insists that Lodovico, Cassio, Graziano and Othello bring forward evidence and proof of his scheming. Iago’s silence is deeply disturbing not only because it demonstrates his indifference but foremost because it immediately spawns the ferocity and inhumanity of the law: Graziano’s reply “Torments will ope your lips” (312) as well as Lodovico’s sadistic comment “For this slave, / If there be any cunning cruelty / That can torment him much and hold him long, / It shall be his” (341–344) obliterate the differences between the Venetian noblemen and the “[m]ost heathenish and most gross [villain]” (321).

When we turn to Shakespeare’s late plays, we encounter arbitrations of the *nemo tenetur*-principle in the more conventional form, i.e. with the example of a sympathetic character. One of the most poignant variations on the theme is certainly found in *Pericles* when the protagonist, residing at the court of Antiochus, must either solve a riddle to win the king’s daughter or lose his life. The parallel with the investigations by the Star Chamber is perhaps not too obvious at first sight – but Pericles’ situation is indeed comparable with John Lambert’s dilemma. Pericles finds himself in the situation of a defendant under the oath *ex officio*. He has agreed to expound the riddle without knowing it. Failing to solve it, including the refusal to speak, will result in the death penalty. Since the riddle encodes the incestuous relationship between Antiochus and his daughter, solving it will also prove hazardous. The king Antiochus, not unlike the King’s Attorney in the Star Chamber, oversees the task and presses Pericles to solve the riddle: “Your time’s expired. / Either expound now, or receive your sentence.” (1.1.132–133). Before entering the unfair game, Pericles muses on his chances to escape unharmed:

*Pericles:* [...]

Then it is thus: the passions of the mind,  
That have their first conception by misread,  
Have after-nourishment and life by care;  
And what was first but fear what might be done,

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*First Citizen:* Once, if he do require our voices, we ought not to deny him.

*Second Citizen:* We may, sir, if we will.

*Third Citizen:* We have power in ourselves to do it, but it is a power that we have no power to do. For if he show us his wounds and tell us his deeds, we are to put our tongues into those wounds and speak for them; so if he tell us his noble deeds, we must also tell him our noble acceptance of them. (2.3.1–8)

<sup>24</sup> For an analysis of Iago’s resolve to remain silent that rests on the assumption that “Iago embodies the mystery of the evil will, an enigma which Shakespeare strove to realize, not to analyze”. Daniel Stempel, “The Silence of Iago”, *PMLA* 84, 2 (1969), 252–263, p. 252.

Grows elder now and cares it be not done.  
 And so with me: the great Antiochus,  
 'Gainst whom I am too little to contend,  
 Since he's so great can make his will his act,  
 Will think me speaking, though I swear to silence;  
 Nor boots it me to say I honour him.  
 If he suspect I may dishonour him:  
 And what may make him blush in being known,  
 He'll stop the course by which it might be known; (1.2.12–24)

Pericles' resolve to "swear to silence" certainly presents a particular aspect of the *nemo tenetur*-principle. In legal terms he refuses to give evidence of the king's incestuous relationship. As the interpreter of the riddle, however, he is in the position of the defendant facing a no-win situation: solving the riddle, not solving it and remaining silent will all lead to his execution.

*The Winter's Tale* takes us back to the stricter legal context. Hermione is accused of high treason, a charge that was dealt with exclusively by the Star Chamber.<sup>25</sup> Two charges are laid against her: first, that she has committed adultery with Polixenes, King of Bohemia; second, that she has conspired with Camillo to murder her husband, King Leontes. It can be read as a criticism of the standard legal procedures, that the officer in Shakespeare's play can only provide circumstantial evidence at the trial to support the accusation. Despite this lack of evidence, Hermione is charged with assisting Polixenes and Camillo to escape:

*Leontes:* Read the indictment.

*Officer:* Hermione, queen to the worthy Leontes, king of Sicilia, thou art here accused and arraigned of high treason, in committing adultery with Polixenes, king of Bohemia, and conspiring with Camillo to take away the life of our sovereign lord the king, thy royal husband: the pretence whereof being by circumstances partly laid open, thou, Hermione, contrary to the faith and allegiance of a true subject, didst counsel and aid them, for their better safety, to fly away by night.

*Hermione:* Since what I am to say, must be but that Which contradicts my accusation, and The testimony on my part, no other But what comes from myself, it shall scarce boot me To say 'not guilty': mine integrity Being counted falsehood, shall, as I express it, Be so received. [...] (3.2.11–27)

Although Hermione defends herself with all the rhetorical powers at her disposal in the trial scene, Shakespeare has made her the most subversive representative of the *nemo*

<sup>25</sup> For an analysis of the scene along the lines of gender studies cf. A. E. B. Coldiron, "'Tis Rigor and Not Law': Trials of Women as Trials of Patriarchy in *The Winter's Tale*", *Renaissance Papers* (2004), 29–68.

*tenetur*-principle. When Leontes simply disregards the Oracle’s verdict as “mere falsehood” and insists that the trial should proceed (and when the servant reports that Mamillius, Hermione’s son is dead) Hermione faints and, according to Paulina, dies. Hermione’s silence of the dead, reminiscent of Hamlet’s “the rest is silence”, is certainly the most poignant variation of Shakespeare’s arbitration of the right to remain silent. Hermione is vindicated by her silence. When all her words did not suffice to prove her innocence, her silence eventually achieves just that.

### **Zusammenfassung**

In der Tudor- und Stuartzeit lässt sich in Folge der inquisitorischen Praktiken der Star Chamber eine Umbewertung des Schweigens ausmachen. Ausgehend von einem eindeutigen Schuldbekenntnis wurde das Schweigen zunehmend als ein Zeichen der Aufrichtigkeit und Unbescholtenheit begriffen. Insbesondere der oath *ex officio*, der die Angeklagten in der Regel unter Folter dazu zwang, sich selbst zu belasten, führte zur Erkenntnis, dass dem Angeklagten das Recht der Aussageverweigerung zugestanden werden muss. Während dieses Recht erst um 1641 in die englische Rechtsprechung eingegangen ist, kann dieser Prozess bereits in den späten Dramen Shakespeares, insbesondere in *Coriolanus*, *Pericles* und *The Winter’s Tale* aufgezeigt werden. Shakespeares kreative Umsetzung der Thematik erlaubt es somit, diese Entwicklung in der Jurisprudenz auf ihre gesellschaftliche und kulturelle Bedingtheit zu befragen.

# “RUMOUR IS A PIPE”: RUMOUR, FAME AND SOUND IN THE SECOND PART OF *HENRY IV*

BY

KAI WIEGANDT

The second part of *Henry IV* may be considered Shakespeare’s nearest approach to heroless, plotless drama.<sup>1</sup> Rather than an active hero, the play features a prince who is hardly onstage. The most significant difference between the first and the second part of *Henry IV* is the shift in Hal’s role from active hero to an object of public speculation, a shift to a character who exists only on the level of report and sound.<sup>2</sup> In the first part, Hal’s antagonist is Hotspur and chivalric success his objective. In the second part, by contrast, Hal’s objective is the restoration of his reputation; accordingly, his official antagonist is the Lord Chief Justice<sup>3</sup> as the representative of a more powerful judge, the so-called many-headed monster of the public. The ‘wild justice’ exerted by its tongues, voicing opinions and thereby exercising informal social control,<sup>4</sup> is powerful and precarious in its dynamics. For in *2 Henry IV*, public opinion takes the form of rumour.<sup>5</sup> In the following, I will analyse its role in the play, which will include an elucidation of the way Shakespeare relates fame and sound to it.

I begin with the Induction spoken by a character called “Rumour [in a robe] painted full of tongues”:

Open your ears; for which of you will stop  
The vent of hearing when loud Rumour speaks?  
I from the orient to the drooping west,  
Making the wind my post-horse, still unfold

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Richard Abrams, “Rumor’s Reign in *2 Henry IV*: The Scope of a Personification”, *English Literary Renaissance* 16:3 (1986), 467–95, p. 469.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Abrams (1986), p. 474.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Jean Howard, “The Second Part of *Henry IV*”, in William Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York, London: Norton, 1997), 1293–1303, p. 1295.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Über Techniken der Bewältigung beschädigter Identität*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985), p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> Due to the striking allegory of rumour at the beginning of the play, rumour has been discussed in a number of critical studies. The most important ones are Frederick Kiefer, “Rumor, Fame, and Slander in *2 Henry IV*”, *Allegorica: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Literature* 20 (1999), 3–43; Harry Berger, “Sneak’s Noise or Rumor and Detextualization in *2 Henry IV*”, in Harry Berger, *Making Trifles of Terrors: Redistributing Complicities in Shakespeare*, ed. by Peter Erickson, (Stanford: Stanford UP), 1997, 126–47; Abrams (1986); Richard Knowles, “Unquiet and the Double Plot of *2 Henry IV*”, *Shakespeare Studies* 2 (1966), 133–40; and the sixth chapter of Sigurd Burckhardt, *Shakespearean Meanings*, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1968).

The acts commencèd on this ball of earth.  
 [...] who but Rumour, who but only I,  
 Make fearful musters and prepared defence  
 Whiles the big year, swoll'n with some other griefs,  
 Is thought with child by the stern tyrant war,  
 And no such matter? Rumour is a pipe  
 Blown by surmises, Jealousy's conjectures,  
 And of so easy and so plain a stop  
 That the blunt monster with uncounted heads,  
 The still-discordant wavering multitude,  
 Can play upon it. (Ind.1–20)<sup>6</sup>

Rumour's intrigue follows: Hotspur allegedly slew Hal, and Henry IV is purportedly in his death-throes.

Rumour's striking features known since antiquity are present in the Induction: the tongues Virgil speaks of in the *Aeneid*, personifications of passions reminiscent of Ovid's House of Fame and the similarity to air and wind. However, his/her/its gender remains conspicuously obscure. Harry Berger has pointed out that on the one hand, the figure painted with tongues resembles classical *Fama*. On the other hand, Rumour rides on horseback, and the parade of phallic references between lines eight and fifteen suggests that the ear-stuffing Rumour possibly fathered “some other griefs” on the big year.<sup>7</sup> The reason for the obscurity of gender will become clear only near the end of the play when rumour's dual nature is revealed.

Rumour describes himself in a way that recalls descriptions found in psychological and sociological accounts of rumour. Shakespeare's Rumour points to the fact that he is “loud” and thereby directs his listeners' attention to the sound rather than to the meaning of his utterances. Accordingly, he does not demand them to mark his words but to open their ears, as though it were sound or music coming from his lips; Rumour himself declares himself a “pipe”. Its sound is so irresistible that the ear must open itself to it, his first lines suggest. But whence comes the urge to open the ear, of rumour-mongering that suppresses checking of meaning, giving rumour the appearance of a non- or pre-verbal “pipe”? Psychoanalytically informed critics have interpreted rumour as society's dream of the Other and thereby an expression of a collective unconscious. This confirms Rumour's self-explanation in *2 Henry IV*: Desire, fear and aggression are the unconscious forces giving rise to rumours; they are what Shakespeare calls „surmises, Jealousy's conjectures”. So-called “pipe dreams” articulate wish fulfilment, “bogies” express fear, “wedge drivers” bring a person or a group into disrepute.<sup>8</sup>

In these aspects, the Induction strikes a note that resounds throughout the play. Already the first scene dramatises rumour and establishes it as the play's background

<sup>6</sup> Quotes from *2 Henry IV* are taken from William Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York, London: Norton, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Berger (1997), p. 132.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Ralph Rosnow, Gary A. Fine, *Rumor and Gossip: The Social Psychology of Hearsay*, (New York, Oxford, Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1976), p. 23.

noise. Northumberland learns from Lord Bardolph that Hal is dead (cf. 1.2.16). Then Travers brings news that Northumberland's son has been slain. He also remarks that he was overtaken by Bardolph because he was "better horsed" (1.2.35) – small wonder since rumour – *fama volat* – makes "the wind" his "post-horse" (Ind.4). Finally Morton, an eyewitness, appears. He will confirm the news that Hotspur has been slain, but before he can finish his news, Northumberland is compelled by fear and interrupts him:

Why, he is dead.  
See what a ready tongue suspicion hath!  
He that but fears the thing he would not know  
Hath by instinct knowledge from others' eyes  
That what he feared is chanced. (1.2.83–87)

While the Induction has presented the spread, or sending, of rumour, Northumberland addresses the receiving end of the phenomenon, his error being that what he calls "instinct" is the unspoken fear that his son is dead.



Rumour leading the chariot of Mars<sup>9</sup>

In the first scene of act three, King Henry claims that the enemy's army boasts 50,000 men, and Warwick doubts this, remarking that "Rumour doth double, like the voice and echo, / The numbers of the feared" (3.1.92–93). It is notable that both examples as

<sup>9</sup> Image originally from Vincenzo Cartari, *Images Deorum*, tr. Antonio Verderius (Lyons, 1582), p. 264. The image is taken from Knowles (1966), p. 134.

well as Northumberland’s swerving present fear and rumour in a triangle with war, recalling the Induction’s mentioning of “stern tyrant war” (Ind.14). Indeed, it seems true that war is a prototypical rumour situation; already the ancient Greek equivalents of rumour, *ossa* and *pheme*, were associated with it.<sup>10</sup> Renaissance mythographers often made rumour the herald of Mars’s chariot of war, running before his horses, Terror and Fear, and his attendants, Impetuosity, Fury, and Violence.<sup>11</sup> The main reason for the linkage of rumour and war may be found in the fact that fame is won on the battlefield, and that the allegory of rumour is increasingly associated with fame in the Renaissance; but it may also lie in the fact that in war, fear and noise coincide, thereby tying psychological motivation and acoustic property of rumour.

This is suggested by Warwick’s statement that rumour doubles numbers “like the voice and echo”. Tying in with rumour’s association with war, the formulation reminds modern readers of the fact that in Shakespeare’s time, the word rumour still retained some of its original Latin meaning of ‘noise’ and ‘social unrest’ and was used to describe the clamour and tumult of battle.<sup>12</sup> This acoustic dimension of rumour is not only inseparable from its psychological motivation but an effect of it: Rumour appears as sound *because* it plays on the pipe of fear and desire so recklessly, tempting ears to neglect inspection of meaning and often simply suppressing it. Rumour’s first line, if read literally, plays on this fact: “Open your ears” is a mock-imperative, for the ear is a sense that cannot shut itself off. That is, Rumour knowingly establishes a complementary relationship between rumour and ear: Where rumour *must* be heard, the ear *must* hear.

Since Shakespeare explicitly links noise to rumour, however, he goes beyond the concept of ‘sound’ and specifies what kind of noise suits rumour particularly well; and what kind could be more manipulative to the ear than music? The play’s many references to music suggest that each group of people has its own music like a fanfare announcing it. For each of them, the fanfare prematurely vents the accomplishment of its respectively pursued project, whether that be eternal carnival, successful rebellion, inheritance of the crown or peace of mind. That is, Shakespeare presents pipe dreams as different kinds of music. The disturbed king desires “sweetest melody” (3.1.14), even a “whisper” of drowsy “music” (4.3.135), and finally hears the singing of the summer bird of peace (cf. 4.3.91–93). Falstaff’s carnival-loving companions prefer “Sneak’s noise” (2.4.9) and the coarse hallooing and singing of anthems. The rebels are associated with trumpets and drums, the new king with ceremonial music and “merry bells” (4.3.239).

While this account testifies to the presence of rumour’s noise and music throughout the play, it is important to identify the characters primarily associated with it. While allegory disappears after the Induction, personification of rumour shifts to a character already heavy with personification of well-known types such as the *miles gloriosus*,

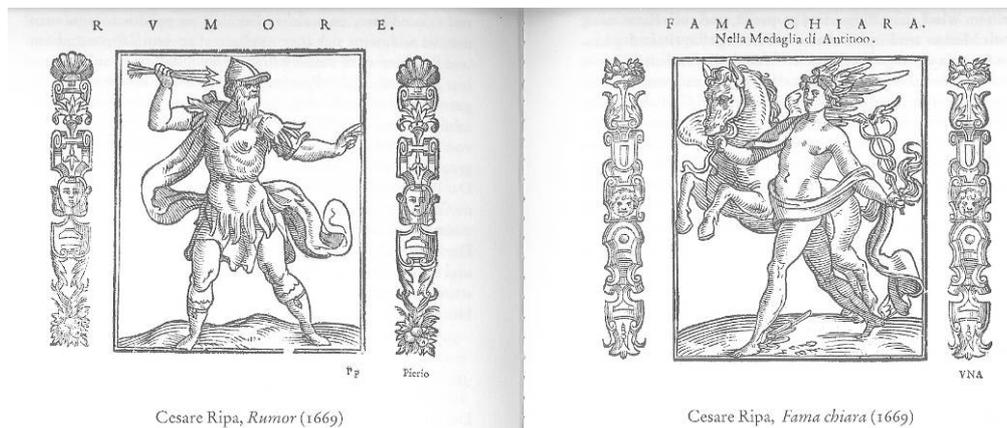
<sup>10</sup> Cf. Hans-Joachim Neubauer, *Fama: Eine Geschichte des Gerüchts*, (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 1998), p. 29.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Knowles (1966), p. 133.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Knowles (1966), p. 133 and Abrams (1986), p. 468.

the fool and the vice: Falstaff. In an aside creating the same intimacy between himself and the audience as the one Rumour created in the Induction, Falstaff declares: “I have a whole school of tongues in this belly of mine, and not a tongue of them all speaks any other word but my name.” (4.2.16–18) On the one hand, the tongues refer to Falstaff’s gluttony, on the other hand to “Rumour [in a robe] painted full of tongues” from the Induction.

Associating Falstaff with rumour enables Shakespeare to dramatise a further dimension of rumour that is of high structural relevance to the play: its double nature in regard to reputation. Especially act two is full of scenes dealing with the latter. The Latin *fama* included both rumour and fame.<sup>13</sup> The only differentiation available was the one between *fama mala* and *fama bona*, often signified by a light and melodious and, respectively, a dark and harsh trumpet blown by *Fama*. Only after 1600, rumour and fame are separated from each other.<sup>14</sup> In this process, each of them is related to a gender: In contrast to the stereotypical correlation of gossip and femininity, the feminine now represents fame while noxious rumour is regarded male. Cesare Ripa’s illustration (1669) demonstrates this:



Rumor and Fama Chiara<sup>15</sup>

Shakespeare has combined traits of both allegories: the tongues traditionally attributed to *Fama*, and the male sex and obvious aggression of *Rumor*, the new allegory.

Now the conspicuous indeterminacy of Rumour’s gender in the Induction makes sense. It is crucial since it prefigures a dialectic of rumour and fame structuring 2 *Henry IV*. Falstaff is the main figure in a fight of fame and rumour over Hal. Though he has earned fame illegally, he embraces both principles. In 1 *Henry IV*, Falstaff has snatched fame from Hal by claiming to have killed Hotspur. In act four, scene two of the second part, where Falstaff says he has “a whole school of tongues in this belly of mine, and not a tongue of them all speaks any other word but my name” (4.2.16–18), Falstaff leaves no doubts about his pretensions: He tells Prince John he wants to be “in

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Kiefer (1999), p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Neubauer (1998), pp. 78–80.

<sup>15</sup> Images originally from Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, 3 vols. (Venice, 1669). The images are taken from Neubauer (1998), p. 96 and p. 97.

the clear sky of fame” (4.2.45). Hal’s fear is not only that the rumours told about his merrymaking with Falstaff might damage his reputation but also that Falstaff’s name might surpass his own, that is, that rumour and fame are distributed in wrong order like in the first part of *Henry IV*.

The end of the play stages an expulsion of rumour dissolving the intermingling of fame and rumour endangering Hal’s rebirth as impeccable Henry V. This is a strained process, and only here does the fusion of the two concepts show its true strength. In the crucial third scene of act four, Henry IV is laboriously freed from the rumours about his son’s rotten nature. Hal is shown in the light of rumour only to appear in the light of fame the next moment, and only after much swerving between both poles does the old king forgive his son and allow him to take his crown and place.

This “settlement of parricidal succession”<sup>16</sup> between Hal and his father is designed to make Henry IV take ‘wildness’ into the grave, that is both his own sin of snatching the crown from Richard II and Hal’s bad reputation due to his criminal past. What could be more plausible than the assumption that rumour follows Henry IV into the grave, too? Hal, now calling himself Henry V,<sup>17</sup> suggests this after his father’s death (cf. 5.2.124–28). The clearest expression of his will to expel rumour is, of course, his rejection of Falstaff.

But just as personification is not discontinued in the play, rumour is not banished from it. Success at resolving the dissonance of rumour and fame remains partial. Anticipating the nationalist propaganda of *Henry V*, Prince John’s words conclude the last act with a reference to the conquering of France – mocking Henry IV’s invocation of peace – and to the music of fame; but they do not manage to drown out the noise of rumour:

I will lay odds that, ere this year expire,  
We bear our civil swords and native fire  
As far as France. I heard a bird so sing,  
Whose music, to my thinking, pleased the King. (5.5.99–102)

### **Zusammenfassung**

Anders als im ersten Teil von *Henry IV* tritt Hal im zweiten nicht als aktiver Held, sondern als Objekt von Gerüchten in Erscheinung. Bereits im Prolog des Rumor fasst Shakespeare das Gerücht als „Pfeife“, die durch unmittelbares Ansprechen von Wünschen oder Ängsten einer Prüfung der Wortbedeutung zuvorkommt und das Ausgesagte als nicht- bzw. vorsprachlich, nämlich akustisch erscheinen lässt. Das Gerücht kann angenehm oder unangenehm klingen. Entsprechend entfaltet das Stück eine bis zuletzt unaufgelöste Dialektik von üblem Gerücht und Ruhm, die Hal in den je zugehörigen *soundscape*s präsentiert.

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Crewe, “Reforming Prince Hal: The Sovereign Inheritor in 2 Henry IV”, *Renaissance Drama* 21 (1990), 225–42, p. 238.

<sup>17</sup> Goffman explains that a change of name is a common and effective means of dissociating oneself from one’s former (criminal, dishonourable) self. This suggests that although everybody knows that Henry V is the former Hal, the change of name supports a change in public opinion. It signifies a discontinuity in identity. (Cf. Goffman (1985), p. 117)

# SHAKESPEAREAN VENTRILOQUISMS: SOUND, SIGHT, AND SPECTACULAR EXOTICISM IN *MAKIBEFO*

BY

PHILIPP HINZ

*Makibefo*, the feature film debut by Alexander Abela,<sup>1</sup> documents the collaborative effort of an English filmmaker and a group of tribal fisher(men) from the southern coast of Madagascar, the Antandroy, as they set about interpreting Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Previous to this project the actors of this film had little knowledge of the medium and had never heard of the play before. Sound in *Makibefo* takes up a central role in that it is used both to characterize the culture in which it plays as well as to provide the structure of the entire narrative. The film thus includes a number of songs in its soundtrack which show features reminiscent of oral traditions, highlighting the social function music and singing has within this 'tribal' society. Moreover, the film's aural scenery constructs its protagonists and their bodies quite independently of the actual visual images – and on a number of occasions, actions which appear not to be representable visually will be included in the soundtrack instead. Through such aural scenery, *Makibefo* seems to be defying the common cinematic practice according to which film sound works to reassert the audience that the world is the same as it looks, thereby masking the heterogeneity of the cinematic spectacle and covering up, as Rick Altman has emphasized, "sound film's fundamental lie: the implication that the sound is produced by the image when in fact it remains independent from it."<sup>2</sup> Lip-sync language participates here in the construction of the ostensible subjectivity of an on-screen character, on the presumption that "speech which *belongs* to the individual, defines and expresses his or her individuality, and distinguishes the individual from the world."<sup>3</sup> However, when such a link is severed, the silenced body is in imminent danger of losing its identity. Although *Makibefo* displays such an obvious interest in its soundscape, the film's aurally constructed figures remain conspicuously silent. In-

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<sup>1</sup> *Makibefo* (Great Britain 2000, Malagasy and English, 73 minutes, black & white, 35 mm 1:1.66). Director, producer, script and cinematography: Alexander Abela. Production company: Blue Eye Films. Sound: Jeppe Jungerson. Original music: Bien Rasoanan Tenaina. Editing: Douglas Bryson. Cast: Martin [Zia] (Makibefo), Noeliny [Dety] (Valy Makibefo), Gilbert Laumord (The narrator), Randina Arthur (Bakoua), Jean-Félix (Danikany), Boniface (Kidoure), Jean-Noël (Makidofy), Bien Rasoanan Tenaina (Malikomy), Victor [Raobelina] (The witch doctor).

<sup>2</sup> Rick Altman, "Introduction", *Yale French Studies* 60, Cinema/Sound (1980), 3–15, p. 6. See also Rick Altman, "Moving Lips: Cinema as Ventriloquism", *Yale French Studies* 60, Cinema/Sound (1980), 67–79.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Anne Doane, "Ideology and the Practice of Sound Editing and Mixing", in Theresa de Lauretis, Stephen Heath, eds., *The Cinematic Apparatus* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1980), 47–60, p. 52.

stead, the film's spectators are guided through the movie by a narrator figure who through his repeated interventions occupies his protagonists' every line. Speaking in place of the characters of the film, this ventriloquist projects his (and the audiences') expectations onto the quieted images of the Malagasy actors. Such impressions are moreover emphasized by the film's coarse-grained black-and-white images, reminiscent of documentary and early ethnographic film. Here the sight of the film's aestheticized bodies are on the brink of becoming a site of exotic speculations, denying its objects a voice and a history of their own and locking them – and potentially the actors themselves too – in a far distant past.

### Sound

Right from the opening sequence of the film in which we first encounter Makibefo (Macbeth) a vivid juxtaposition between a series of blurred images and an evocative sound is created. Thus, before we actually see any clear pictures, let alone one of the film's main protagonist, the spectators in the cinema already hear the sound of a deep breath being exhaled out of the darkness of the blank screen. Against such indefinite images, the amplified rhythmic breathing becomes our centre of focus, guiding us towards the man we finally can identify as the 'source' of the sound we have been listening to. As the sequence unfolds, the audience hears Makibefo dig his spear into the sandy ground before he forces it into the body of his first victim, Kidoure (Cawdor). We then hear his victim exhale a last gasp of breath. In each instance sound clearly precedes the visual. Apart from the final image of the moribund Makibefo, the spectators generally are detained from witnessing such violent acts and the film's dying bodies are concealed from our view and remain off-screen. As an audience we consequently have to rely on sound to imagine the action instead. One of the most captivating sequences of the entire film is the murder of Bakoua (Banquo), an elaborate parallel montage, documenting how a zebu ox is sacrificed and slaughtered to celebrate Makibefo's accession to the power. While the ox is selected from a small herd and led out of the enclosure, the film cuts to another scene where we see Bakoua wandering along the beach on his own. Meanwhile, returning to the previous scene, the animal is forced to the ground, laid on its back and bound. Finally, after much manoeuvring, a knife is produced and the animal's throat cut and slit open: Blood spurts forth and is collected in a metal bowl. Throughout we hear the animal breathing heavily. Bakoua has to endure a similar treatment. After being intercepted and seized by Makibefo's henchmen, his murder is shown in almost the same terms as the slaughtering of the zebu ox. He, likewise, is forced to the ground, bleeding after being hit by a slingshot. He is then wrenched onto his knees. Finally, Bakoua is stabbed repeatedly with a spear and killed. Unlike the bloody slaughtering of the animal, where we see the lethal cut of the throat, the audience does not get to see the human body being lacerated. Instead, the audience has to rely on the sound mimetically representing the action. In this sequence, the sound is separated from its (original) body as the soundtrack transgresses the boundary of its respective image, both becoming almost indistinguishable and forming one single unit. And when we see Bakoua lying on his belly, snorting into the sand, the sound we hear, it seems, is that of the bovine. Similarly, when the

long shot of Bakoua lying in the distance at the feet of his assassins fades into black, thus ending this spectacle, the last the audience hears is the sound of the dying ox. The film's opening sequence, likewise, merges the breathing of the two men, Cawdor and Makibefo, to form a symbolic link between the villain and his victims. Thus the film fashions Makibefo through its aural motifs of life, and of sudden violent death, qualities that then are amalgamated in the body we then see on the screen. Such an aural motif is subsequently transformed into the aspirated beat of the film's musical theme. As the film progresses, these re-emerge at points of crisis, which in turn are marked as instances of violence inflicted by Makibefo. And most notably, these motifs will announce not just the death of each of his victims, but also the tyrant's own end.

Sound not only constructs the film's bodies and announces their presence, but is also presented as being the more reliable source of information. When Makibefo and Bakoua meet the witch doctor – the film's rendering of the Shakespearean weird sisters – for the first time, he appears suddenly, as if out of thin air. The noise of the stormy wind and the surging billows grows and suddenly vanishes, leaving behind only the ticking sound of burning wood. After the witch doctor has made his prophecy, he is attacked by Bakoua, only to transform magically into a snake speeding away. When Makibefo later decides to meet the soothsayer for a second time, this event will be echoed. Here Makibefo approaches the man sitting on the ground rather belligerently. The witch doctor interrupts Makibefo and holds up his hand towards him. The sound which we then hear, and connect to the witch doctor, is the sound of a hissing snake, revealing his other nature. Sound highlights the bodilessness of the witch doctor, thus placing him outside of rational logic. If sound is normally connected to a body, then this 'body' proves not merely to be uncertain, but actually a rather fragile 'materialisation' and literally an 'imagination' of the mind. Secondly, the example suggests that in the world of the film eyes may well be fooled, whereas sound may not so easily be diverted from 'the' truth.

But although the film places such prominence on its sound to establish the presence of its protagonists, these remain at the same time conspicuously silent. Instead, the film introduces a narrator figure who takes it upon himself to comment on the action and 'read out' the Shakespearean text. All this has serious consequences, for it is through the narrator's ventriloquism that the characters of the film – and similarly the Malagasy actors we may have to assume – are denied their own voice. All their lines, which might have been used to present some form of internalization, are appropriated by the narrator, revealing the characters' dependency on him. Compared to such a dominating voice then, the lines the actors speak themselves become somewhat secondary. If sound constructs the film's bodies and their imaginations, then it is the narrator's language which appears to have the power to conjure them.

The film introduces its narrator figure, sitting upon the beach, in a prologue in which he presents an oral outline of the central narrative. Only then does he pick up a rather tattered looking book from which he starts to read. One gets the impression that it could be the *First Folio* which has been washed onto the beach. But the text is heavily re-worked. One of the most notable features of *Makibefo's* textual quotations from Shakespeare's work concerns the way the film folds and conflates various voices into a single one. But due to this process it becomes impossible to distinguish individual

voices, which seem to coalesce into the voice of the narrator. Overall, *Makibefo* displays seventeen different occasions in which the narrator intervenes into the action of the film, mouthing the English Shakespearean text in place of the Malagasy actors. Mostly the audience hears the narrator's voice from the off, shortly after which his image will also intervene as he subjugates the screen visually, and we then see him reading out from the folio. The first time we hear / see the narrator reading to us in this way, it is a fragment from the scene in which Macbeth and Banquo meet the three witches for the first time:

*Third Witch:* All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!  
*Banquo:* Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear  
 Things that do sound so fair? (1.3.48–50)<sup>4</sup>

But the lines we hear being read out are not identical with those printed and edited dramatic texts we are accustomed to, with their clearly identifiable voices. What we hear instead is a seemingly single and unified voice, exclaiming and asking at the same time: “Hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter! Why do you start and seem to fear things that do sound so fair?” It becomes virtually impossible, through the diction of the narrator, who seems to refrain from voice modulations, gestures or facial expressions, to distinguish between the different dramatic voices. By conflating the lines and thereby merging the voice(s) of the witch(es) with that of Banquo, independent lines and subjectivities represented in and through them are similarly fused. At the same time the images of the film do not help in connecting a (single) body with the text of the soundtrack: No(-)body on the screen, within the diegesis of the central narrative, seems to stand out as an obvious and willing speaker of those lines. But without a body to connect the words to, the disengaged text becomes a mere comment on the images and the action of the diegesis. It thus becomes a precarious task to place an individual subjectivity upon the characters on the screen: They are bereft of an identity, having so often a foreign voice and therefore a disturbingly imperfect ‘subjectivity’ projected upon them against which they cannot defend themselves.

If the narrator may be considered to be denying his creations a voice of their own, it is important to note that he, on the contrary, profits greatly from ‘their’ words. This is not only due to the way he reveals the on-screen figures and their language to be his creation. More importantly, he even appropriates ‘their’ language to illustrate his own state of mind. After *Makibefo* has discovered the shawl of Valy Makibefo (Lady Macbeth), the chieftain is staged as mourning over his wife's death, as he walks across the beach. At the same time we can hear the voice of the narrator reciting: “Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow / Creeps in this petty pace from day to day / To the last syllable of recorded time, / And all our yesterdays have lighted fools / The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle.” (5.5.18–22). The scene then changes and the narrator appears on the screen. But this time we can hear his on-screen voice – although his lips do not move – reciting the lines which Macbeth would normally carry on with: “Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage, /

<sup>4</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katherine Eisaman Maus (New York: Norton, 1997).

And then is heard no more. It is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing.” (5.5.23–27). While previously the narrator’s off-voice comments had distanced the text decisively from the narrative’s characters, here the same technique actually enhances the connection between the narrator’s voice and his own body, as the words must be considered to be internal(ized) thoughts and not just a recitation of an external text. It thus appears as if the narrator may be the only figure in the film actually allowed a voice of his own.

### Sight

*Makibefo* highlights the physical presence of its silenced bodies. The film stages Madagascar as a barren and deserted land where no secret may be kept for very long, as a place where it is impossible to keep away from sight. For instance, secrets, throughout the film, literally have to be clothed by wrapping them in linen, thus sealing them off from public view. The human body, on the contrary, is constantly exposed to the camera and to the spectators’ view. And the camera takes full advantage in exploring the protagonists’ bodies. In extreme close-up shots the camera focuses on their hands, feet and faces. It is through such images that the history of cinema actually catches up with Alexander Abela’s film, as they strongly evoke memories of (early) ethnographic film. In her study *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle*, Fatimah Tobing Rony has demonstrated how from a historic perspective the cinematic apparatus became a place at which anthropology and cinema intersected in their common objective to re-create the temporally and spatially ‘Other’ and lay claim to their scientifically ‘objective’ representation.<sup>5</sup> As Rony emphasizes, such ethnographic projects tended to depict their ‘exotic’ objects of investigation “as people who until only too recently were categorized by science as Savages and Primitive, of an earlier evolutionary stage in the overall history of humankind: people without history, without writing, without civilization, without technology, without archives. In other words, people considered ‘*ethnographiable*’”.<sup>6</sup> Especially at the turn of the last century anthropology aimed at documenting the ‘West’s’ own past in the ‘uncivilized Other’: Early silent ethnographic film turned its focus onto the ‘exotic’ body and its movements, thereby reducing such to a mere visible spectacle. Moreover, indigenous dance (and rituals of which these dances were part of) attracted the anthropologists’ special attention, both because of the body’s constant motion and because of the ‘nonrationality’ these images were thought to epitomize.<sup>7</sup> Notably, *Makibefo* places most of its key scenes precisely around such dances and other kinds of (ritualistic) ceremonies, like the sacrifice of the zebu ox, as well as symbolically charged artefacts. Rituals are the preeminent devices which drive the film’s narrative, and they mark, produce and express change quite in the way Victor Turner has described:

<sup>5</sup> Fatimah Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

For there is undoubtable transformative capacity in a well-performed ritual, implying an ingress of power into the initial situation [...]. The experience of subjective and inter-subjective flow in ritual performance, whatever its sociobiological or personalogical concomitants may be, often convinces performers that the ritual situation *is* indeed informed with powers both transcendental and immanent.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, when the king bestows Makibefo with a small herd of zebu oxen in recognition of his services, this event is marked by a celebration outside of Makibefo's home and the film stages the congregation as singing together, while one member of the community is shown to be dancing to the tune in front of them. Duncan's own funeral becomes a similar site of ritualized obsequies. While his dead body is laid in state, the camera looks through the open door at his former subjects assembled in line in the yard. Focussing on the bodies dancing and moving to the musical beat, the camera shows feet stamping on the sandy ground and the clapping hands of the men and women in close-up shots. All along we can see and hear a group of girls singing. The 'dance' finally culminates in a ritualized wrestling contest between Banquo and one of Makibefo's men.

At the dawn of the last century Arnold van Gennep declared: "Among semicivilized peoples such acts [like birth, death or marriage] are enveloped in ceremonies, since to the semicivilized mind no act is entirely free of the sacred."<sup>9</sup> The truly civilized, on the contrary it appears may have no need for ceremonies or rituals. When *Makibefo* stages the culture within which it plays with a precise regard for the ceremonies and rites of that – we have to ask, fictional? – society, there is an imminent danger that precisely such received ideas about the backward 'Other' are dangerously reaffirmed by the film, allowing the Western spectator to watch it quietly assured of his own cultural superiority:

En dépit de ces conditions de production, le film ne dégage pas une impression de pauvreté. Au contraire, c'est une splendeur plastique, une pantomime incarnée aux dialogues restreints, où des corps noirs émaciés, mais aussi d'une dignité inouïe, s'inscrivent magiquement sur la page blanche des dunes de sable qui constituent l'habitat de ces pêcheurs d'un autre âge.<sup>10</sup>

This generally favourable review of *Makibefo* by Vincent Ostria, published in the popular French magazine *Les Inrockuptibles*, does not merely indulge in the actors' silent bodily presence, in the "physical splendour" of "graceful black bodies", which "inscribe themselves onto the white sand dunes", but rather equates the Antandroy actors' bodies with those of the film characters, while simultaneously positioning both as the historical 'Other'. Thus, the film's "fishermen from another age" are reduced to mere aestheticized bodies, whose history and whose story are of secondary importance. In addition, the quotation illustrates how such historical and cultural differences are constructed in a metaphysical terminology, when the review calls the act of in-

<sup>8</sup> Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*, (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982), p. 79–80.

<sup>9</sup> Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. by Monika B. Vizedom, Gabrielle L. Caffee (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Vincent Ostria, "Shakespeare respire", *Les Inrockuptibles* 309 (2001).

scription “magical”. Thus, a dichotomy is replicated which places the actors of *Makibefo* (characterized as ‘physical’, ‘metaphysical’ and ‘archaic’) in opposition to a ‘Western’ self-conception, regarding itself consequently as ‘modern’, ‘secular’ and ‘intellectual’. As Graham Huggan has noted, it is precisely such “exoticist rhetoric of fetishised otherness and sympathetic identification [which] masks the inequality of the power relations” inherent in the discourses of exoticism.<sup>11</sup> In Vincent Ostria’s review – as well as possibly in the film itself – we can trace two dominant modes of orientalist / exoticist perspective on the cultural ‘Other’, as they for instance have been expressed by Huggan and Edward Said. First, as Huggan writes, there is a tendency in exoticist discourse to regard the cultural ‘Other’ merely in aesthetic terms, a process in which “marginality is deprived of its subversive implications by being rerouted into safe assertions of a fetishised cultural difference.”<sup>12</sup> The film’s, as well as the reviewer’s, focus on the aestheticized bodies and the eschewal of contemporary political and social conflicts means that the film to some extent has to answer to such charges.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, the review places the film’s protagonists in a perpetually distant past, reminiscent of Said’s description of Orientalism’s tendency to fix the Orient “in time and place for the West.”<sup>14</sup> As a consequence, the history of the ‘Other’ becomes a mere venture point for ‘Western’ speculations, a process in the course of which such an object of speculation is denied its own history and development. It is exactly such kind of criticism which is expressed in a review published in the journal *Africultures*: “Jouant un *Macbeth* que l’ambition pousse à tuer, les villageois sont eux parfaitement désincarnés: ils ne sont que décor d’images répondant aux canons de l’esthétisme photographique et d’une histoire qui n’est pas la leur.”<sup>15</sup>

Notwithstanding such criticism, it is crucial to note that *Makibefo* actually quietly appropriates the ‘Western’ (hi)story reenacted in the film into its own corpus of Antandroy aural / oral traditions. For it is through sound that the film actually creates a vision of community and a history, which may exist independently of the ‘Western’ observer and which may thereby overcome the mere visual aesthetic. But the film’s soundtrack does not surrender itself wilfully, mustering considerable resistance against being transcribed and translated. Opposing the written text read out by the narrator figure the film thus presents two songs, one of which is the repeatedly re-appearing musical theme which takes up the ‘aspirating motif’ I mentioned in the initial part of my investigations. But although produced primarily for a European audience, the fact that there aren’t any subtitles for the film’s lyrics means that the songs remain obscure

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<sup>11</sup> Graham Huggan, *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 14.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>13</sup> It is worth noting that the film reminds us explicitly in its final credits about the fact that Madagascar is one of the poorest countries in the world. But although we are told that the (male) actors of the film are predominantly fishermen, the film itself remains notably silent about the livelihood on which the film’s characters depend.

<sup>14</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1991), p. 108.

<sup>15</sup> Olivier Barlet, “*Makibefo*”, *Africultures* 41 (2001), 104. My emphasis.

to its ‘Western’ spectators. These songs display a number of features typical of oral traditions and oral poetry, such as formulas, repetition, rhythmical structure and heavy pattering, retelling the central plot and the themes of *Makibefo* / *Macbeth* in another kind of ritual. Moreover, the songs highlight their communal function in their interplay between predominantly regular chorus lines and alternating solo ‘verse’ lines, inviting their ‘audience’ to participate and join in with the refrain. Jan Vansina once characterized oral traditions as being documents of the present and embodied messages from the past at the same time, emphasizing that “traditions must always be understood as reflecting both past and present in a single breath.”<sup>16</sup> If the cinematic images appeared to deny its objects of inquiry such a history, it is through sound and oral traditions that the temporal gap may be bridged, just as the unrevealed Antandroy text itself suggests:

ah, tianao matiha eny / isika moa re petry taly io  
(If you like to follow it to the end, / We will remember that story together.)

### **Zusammenfassung**

Dieser Aufsatz untersucht den essayistischen Film *Makibefo*, der die Aneignung des *Macbeth*-Stoffs durch einen englischen Filmemacher und einer Gruppe von madagassischen Fischern dokumentiert. Obgleich der Film einen deutlichen Fokus auf die Integration dieses Mythos in die mündlich tradierte Geschichte der madagassischen Kultur setzt, gerät er zugleich in die Gefahr, dass durch seine eigenen Bilder eben jenes Projekt einer Aneignung unterlaufen wird.

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<sup>16</sup> Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, (London: James Currey, 1985), p. xii.

**CALL FOR STATEMENTS – WISSENSCHAFTLICHES SEMINAR DER  
SHAKESPEARE-TAGE WIEN 2008**

**Shakespearean Foodways: Feasting, Fasting, Playing and Digesting**

Food offers powerful ways to make and communicate cultural meanings. As social anthropologists have long established, cooking, eating, drinking and consumption define groups, explore identities, celebrate social cohesion, highlight conflicts and generally perform rites and acts of great significance. This also holds true for the early modern stage. There are many ways in which Shakespearean theatre relates to eating culture. Figures of festive excess like Falstaff or Sir Toby, on-stage scenes of banquetting and feasting as in *Timon of Athens*, *Titus Andronicus* or *The Winter's Tale*, secret arts of cooking as presented with the witches' cauldron in *Macbeth* or dietary rules as discussed in *The Merchant of Venice*: all these demonstrate the centrality of foodways and define the cultural field also for theatrical performance in Shakespearean England. Above all, body issues – such as gender, sex, desire, health and healing – can be studied in this field because the early modern concept of the humoral body sees all alimentary behaviour in moral and political categories. How, then, is Shakespearean theatre situated in the seasonal contrast between everyday and festive culture? How do changing diets in this period negotiate modes of carnivalization and normalization in society? How are fundamental questions of belief and faith, such as the Eucharist debate, involved in food rites and digestive symbolism as performed in texts like *Hamlet*? How can we trace the impact of New World encounters on domestic scenes and diets, which, in the course of the colonial project, were just beginning to bring home figures and fantasies of alterity, as in anxieties of cannibalistic eating? And how are all these issues re-considered, re-interpreted and newly re-created in specific stage or screen productions, adaptations, versions or subversions of Shakespearean plays?

The Shakespeare-Tage 2008 will take place from **24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>nd</sup> April in Vienna**. In this context, our seminar plans to address these and related questions. As critical input for the discussion and provocation for debate, panelists are invited to give short statements (of no more than 15 minutes) presenting concrete case studies, concise examples and strong views on the topic. Please send your proposals (**Abstracts of ca. 300 words**) and all further questions by **31<sup>st</sup> October 2007** to the seminar convenors:

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