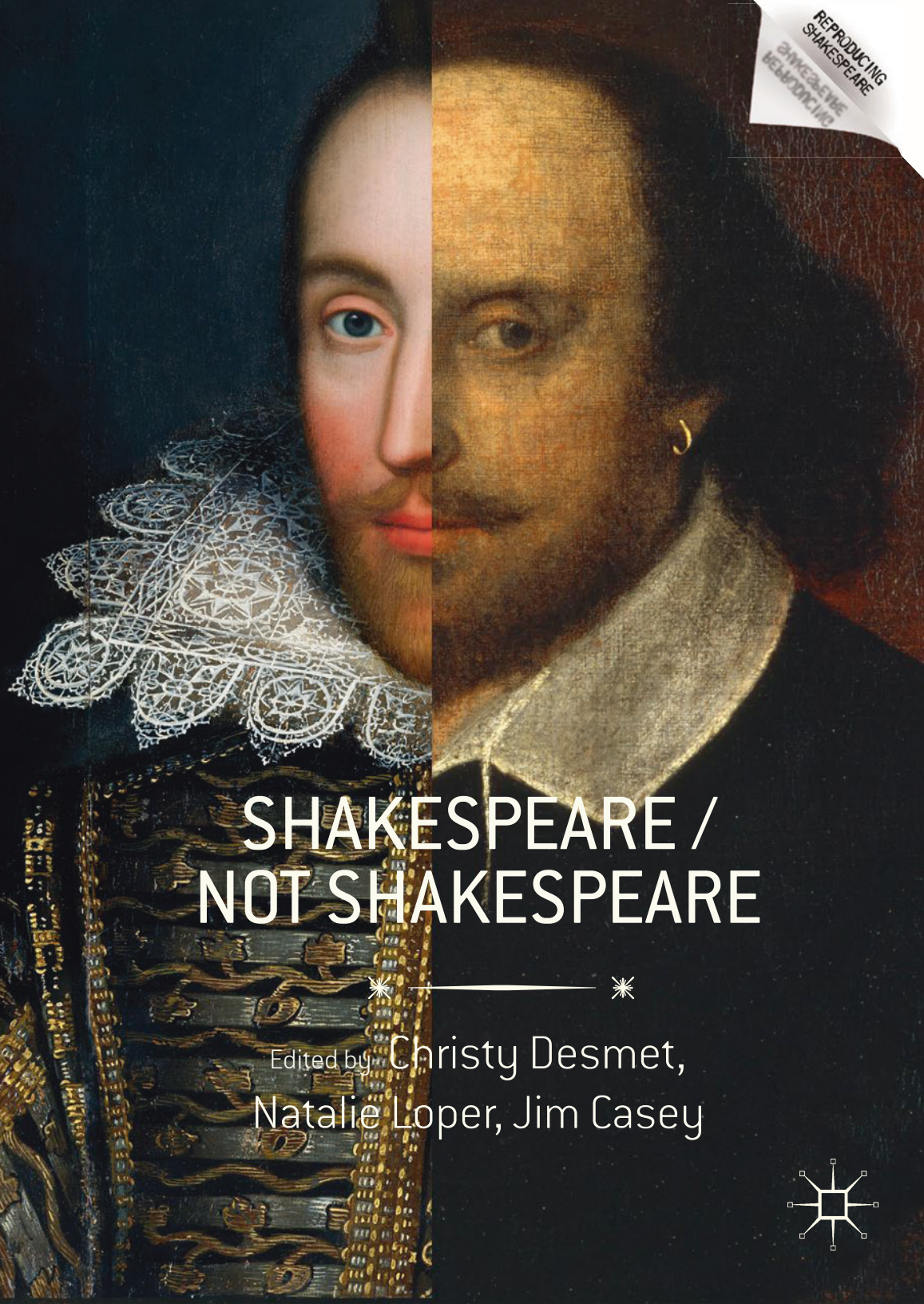


SHAKESPEARE / NOT SHAKESPEARE

Edited by Christy Desmet, Natalie Loper, Jim Casey

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Dedicated to the memory of

Kevin Scott Crawford
(April 25, 1970–December 2, 2013)

… and when I shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish sun.
Romeo and Juliet (3.2.21–25)

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Christy Desmet, Natalie Loper, and Jim Casey

In April and May of 2010, the Royal Shakespeare Company and Mudlark Productions presented a version of *Romeo and Juliet*, entitled *Such Tweet Sorrow*, as a series of improvised, real-time tweets on Twitter that relied on the actors' own words rather than Shakespeare's. Of the three supposedly representative comments on the story posted on the BBC's website, only Lara from Bournemouth praised the idea, claiming the Tweetspeare performance "breaks down this negative stereotype" of Shakespeare as "elitist" when "he was of the people and writing for the people"; Elizabeth from Chicago, in contrast, called the experiment "unacceptable" and a "travesty to the English language," while Nic from Manchester dismissed the performance as "ridiculous" and "the biggest load of rubbish ever," arguing that "This will make people who have never seen the play completely miss the actual excitement

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and beauty this play presents […] Shakespeare must be spinning in his grave."[1] Such a negative reaction to this radical new-media adaptation of "Shakespeare" reveals that, despite some critics' claims that we are in a "putative post-fidelity moment" (Lanier 27) in which the Shakespearean text is no longer considered sacred and no one obsesses over what is "really Shakespeare," many potential consumers of the Bard still reject "low" art adaptations or performances that dramatically alter or abandon Shakespeare's original. Richard Burt argues that issues of fidelity or questions of orismology rarely concern today's critics of Shakespeare and adaptation:

> Now the distinction between authentic and inauthentic Shakespeares is not even made consistently, much less policed. Few academic critics want to ask anymore how Shakespearean a given adaptation of a given play is because we all know there is no authentic Shakespeare, no "masterpiece" against which the adaptation might be evaluated and interpreted. (17)

Outside academia, however, the distinction between authentic and inauthentic Shakespeares is made and policed on a daily basis, with readers and viewers continually claiming that a performance or adaptation is or is not "really" Shakespeare. But how are such judgments made? What is the scale? And where is the line? Adaptations such as *Such Tweet Sorrow* are declared travesties, while Justin Kurzel's 2015 film version of *Macbeth* is praised by the *Telegraph*'s Robbie Collin as possibly "as good as Shakespeare on film gets," with "cosmically powerful performances from Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard." Yet, as the *Guardian*'s Peter Bradshaw notes, Kurtzel's version of the film itself indulges in a number of "interpretative flourish[es]" while freely "tinkering with the text." Thus, the film is lauded as an excellent version of "Shakespeare" even as it is acknowledged to be "not quite" Shakespeare.

This essay collection addresses the paradox that something—a play, a film, an object, a story—may not merely resemble its corollary in the Shakespeare canon, but perhaps more puzzling, at once "be" and "not be" Shakespeare. This phenomenon can be a matter of perception rather than authorial intention (audiences may detect Shakespeare where the author disclaims him or may have difficulty finding him where he is named); it may equally be a product of intertextual and intermedial relations, processes that work on the level of semiotics and material substrate, apart from more overt processes of influence and reception.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of artistic relations as rhizomes, a spreading, growing network that sprawls horizontally to defy hierarchies of origin and influence, is fundamental to this exploration, and many of the essays in the collection address the concept in exploring different examples from both high art and popular culture. Some essays examine the notion of artistic legitimacy by considering Shakespearean afterlives as acts of either creativity or what Michel de Certeau calls textual "poaching" (xii). Others discuss perceptions of Shakespeare in terms of cognitive gestalts, Shakespearean rabbit-ducks that fade in and out of recognition. Several essays explore the theoretical implications of Shakespearean adaptation, translation, and appropriation.

Finally, some focus on Shakespearean ontology as an interplay between accidental and substantive variations in textual criticism.

What is at stake in confronting the binary opposition between what is and what is "not" Shakespeare? In *Tales from Shakespeare*, Graham Holderness reminisces that "when I first read Shakespeare at school, the plays were firmly located within a set of contingent discourses marking out what was Shakespeare from what was not" (ix). These discourses were scholarly and historical ones. How Shakespeare was used in popular culture—from popular songs to advertisements for beer—was a whole different world, and the space between them seemed incapable of being bridged. Such is no longer the case if Holderness is correct that all of "the basic activities constituting Shakespeare studies—scholarly editing; historical contexualization and analysis; critical and theoretical interpretation; creative adaptation—exist in a continuum, and when compared, prove to be remarkably similar to one another" (xi). One thrust of this volume is to see the realignment of Shakespearean binaries along a continuum as a robust project of multiplication and amplification: imagined through the spreading roots of a rhizome or network, the replication of memes and thickening of intertexts, fecund but unruly processes of spreading out through space. A second recognition prompted by the essays collected here is a renewed appreciation for the operations of chance and accident. In *Tales from Shakespeare*, Holderness favors the metaphor of the Large Hadron Collider of particle physics, which breaks down atoms into smaller constituent units to release creative energy—and often, through that energy, produces new particles. The LHC creates in the act of destroying; accidental identifications of Shakespeare in artifacts previously accepted as "not Shakespeare" can be equally energizing. Writing about the concept of an "accident" in the early modern

period, Michael Witmore proposes that "accidents are some of the most luminous and enigmatic events" (1), recognized by no less an authority than Aristotle's *Poetics* as "particularly qualified to provoke wonder" (2). Creative energy, surprise, wonder—these are the effects of appropriation as collision between what is and is not Shakespeare. In this case, examining (and enjoying) the line between what is and what is not Shakespeare becomes a crucial aspect of Shakespeare studies in general.

Adaptation, Appropriation, and Theory

As Christy Desmet and Sujata Iyengar's "Appropriation, Adaptation, or What You Will" argues, the theoretical premises that undergird our terminology are significant. Perhaps the most prominent current theory of Shakespearean adaptation is Douglas Lanier's Shakespearean rhizomatics, which co-opts Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual rhizomes and allows for multiple, non-hierarchical nodes of meaning and interpretation (rather than one centralized, hierarchical system of base and branches). In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari propose the rhizome as an alternative to binary logic (associated with the hierarchical image of a tree and its roots) and circular, cyclic, or unified understanding (5–6). The authors' examples of rhizomes include bulbs and tubers, crabgrass, potatoes, rats, burrows, ants, and even Amsterdam; all of these are constantly moving and evolving, creating and breaking connections, allowing for multiplicity and possibility rather than static understanding.

Deleuze and Guattari provide six principles that characterize the rhizome. According to the "principles of connection and heterogeneity," a rhizome can connect to other things at any point; it "ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles" (7). The Shakespeare rhizome, then, can move across texts (intertexts), histories, and peoples, connecting his corpus to virtually anything. According to the "principle of multiplicity," a rhizome multiplies as it grows and contains "no points or positions […] such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only lines" (8). Deleuze and Guattari describe rhizomes as planes, which "are flat, in the sense that they fill or occupy all of their dimensions: we will therefore speak *of a plane of consistency* of multiplicities, even though the dimensions of this 'plane' increase with the number

of connections that are made on it" (9). In this sense, Shakespeare is not a singular Author; rather, his plays, works, and biography exist on a plane with all of the stories and histories he adapts and all works that do and will adapt, appropriate, or refer to him. The works discussed in this volume occupy the *plane of consistency* called Shakespeare, as do digital and web editions of the plays, websites, blogs, and tweets, along with their hyperlinked and hashtagged notes, images, and connections.

This leads to Deleuze and Guattari's next point, the "principle of cartography and decalcomania" in which the authors explain the rhizome as a map:

> The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation. Perhaps one of the most important characteristics of the rhizome is that it always has multiple entryways. (12)

The Shakespeare rhizome, then, contains infinite possibilities. The opposite of this is a tracing, which seeks to reproduce or reinterpret something. Deleuze and Guattari disparage tracings, but Shakespeare is both a rhizome and a tracing: many people treat him as a map, using his works to create new lines of flight; others, however, seek to reproduce him and to discover and maintain what is "really" Shakespeare. He can never truly be a rhizome in the way that Deleuze and Guattari describe it, because people will always return to the Shakespeare tree, the author trunk of the quartos and folios that we preserve in climate-controlled library vaults. Deleuze and Guattari assert that "Unlike the tree, the rhizome is not the object of reproduction: neither external reproduction as image-tree nor internal reproduction as tree-structure [...] The rhizome operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots" (21). Shakespeare expands through both types of processes, but this collection seeks to explore and understand the latter.

For Shakespearean adaptation studies, approaching Shakespeare as a rhizome removes the Shakespearean text from its position of centralized privilege and situates both it and other rhizomatic adaptations as equally important nodes within the larger structure. Lanier suggests that

this method also liberates the scholar from questions of textual fidelity or authenticity and instead focuses the critical impulse on the ever-changing cultural processes that make up "Shakespeare":

> By emphasizing difference as essential to the cultural afterlife of "Shakespeare," and by refusing to treat the Shakespearean text as a regulative standard or mystified icon of value, a rhizomatic approach seeks to demonstrate how "Shakespeare" becomes ever-other-than-itself precisely through the varied particularities of its manifestations, which proliferate according to no preordained teleology. (31)

Rather than simply dismissing the works discussed in this collection as outside the boundaries of Shakespeare, these essays examine the liminality of the category "Shakespeare" itself, with works and performances and ideas constantly phasing in and out of the Shakespeare-plane—now Shakespeare, now "not Shakespeare," now "really Shakespeare" once again. This "ever-other-than-itself" nature of (Not) Shakespeare is perhaps the most troubling and liberating attribute of the Shakespeare rhizome. It is troubling for bardolaters who want to control, delimit, regulate, and memorialize Shakespeare, but for bardoclasts and bardocreators who want to celebrate Shakespeare's boundlessness, multiplicity, and unlimited potential, it is liberating.

Shakespeare/Not Shakespeare's discussion of these exponentially expanding Shakespeares brings to the foreground the relationship between medium and message. The volume discusses examples in mediated genres ranging from the novel to film, television, comics, manga, immersive theatre, and social media. Many of the essays examine appropriation across media, whether in the form of fictional drama within a novel, cross-media appropriations, or adaptations from one genre into another. They highlight the "medium rather than the source" (Fischlin 10) in order to make Shakespearean remediation an explicit topic of consideration. "Shakespeare" as a signifier emerges from these intermedial encounters, but as Daniel Fischlin writes, intermedial adaptation or appropriation "is not solely a function of technologies." Rather, it "reminds us that the genealogy of adaptations is often nebulous and spectrally intertextual, a web of meaning waiting to be made out of convergences and unthought relations that continue to be created and identified across multiple spaces and times" (25). In other words, we get to Shakespeare through "not Shakespeare." Concomitantly, the metaphors

through which the Shakespeare/Not Shakespeare paradox is formulated migrate from one realm of experience and knowledge to another. The meme moves from genetics to the Internet and then back to the medium of television. Accidents, once the subject of philosophy and natural science, are discovered in prose fiction and film. Textual metaphors from Gérard Genette help to explain the highly visual nature of comic art. Conceptually speaking, *Shakespeare/Not Shakespeare* itself proceeds rhizomatically.

Infinite Romeos and Juliets

Just under half of the essays in this collection directly engage with some adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, so it may be worthwhile to examine the way the "Romeo and Juliet" rhizome holograms the Shakespearean rhizome (although each is propagated under different circumstances, by different means, and for different purposes) as a *plane of consistency* that is always-already constituted in the culture while simultaneously materializing in myriad new, hyperreal iterations. Well before they ever encounter the lovers on stage in Shakespeare's play (if they ever do), most people have heard of "Romeo" and "Juliet" through countless pop culture references and parodies. In recent years, for example, songs featuring one or both of the lovers' names in the title have been recorded by such varied artists as Hanson, LMNT, Corey Smith, Pat McGee, Emilie Autumn, Nick Tangorra, Sublime, Ronnie Dunn, The Killers, and Matt Nathanson (covering The Killers's song) and have been alluded to in such different songs as Push Play's "Midnight Romeo," We The Kings's "Check Yes, Juliet," Taylor Swift's "Love Story," Pop Evil's "Another Romeo and Juliet," Scary Kids Scaring Kids's "Star Crossed," and Bob Schneider's "40 Dogs (Like Romeo and Juliet)." Television shows such as *Raising Hope*, *Perception*, *Psych*, and *Fresh Off the Boat* have developed Romeo and Juliet-themed episodes and the CW network even produced a short-lived SF romantic drama in 2014 called *Star-Crossed* that referenced the play in the show's title, episode titles, and overall situation, while ABC's single-season of *Still Star-Crossed* (2016–17) explored the aftermath of the lovers' deaths. Postmodern comic adaptations, such as Stan Lee's *Romeo and Juliet: The War* (2011) or Anthony Del Col and Conor McCreery's *Kill Shakespeare* (begun in 2010) have radically refashioned the lovers and their story. And recent film adaptations have included such varied refigurings as the all-male

Private Romeo (2011), the animated *Gnomeo and Juliet* (2011), the Bollywood *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela* (2013), the zombie romance *Romeo & Juliet vs. The Living Dead* (2009), the other zombie romance *Warm Bodies* (2013, based on Isaac Marion's 2010 novel), and the Tamil romantic comedy *Romeo Juliet* (2015).

Of course, this is nothing new. The name "Romeo" probably marked a lover or sweetheart in the cultural consciousness well before Shakespeare was even born. In John Phillip's *The Commodye of Pacient & Meeke Grissill* (c1566), for example, a character sings, "A Romeo I will rest to thee, / In whome the fruites of Faith appeare" (E1^{v}). Shakespeare's "original" is actually an adaptation/translation, having been preceded by Arthur Brooke's poem *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*, which itself is a translation of Pierre Boaistuau's French cautionary tale (*Histoire* […] *de deux amans dont l'un mourut de venin, l'autre de tristesse*), which is translated from Matteo Bandello's Italian novella *Giuletta e Romeo*, which borrows from Luigi da Porto's *Historia novellamente ritrovata di due nobili amanti* (the first work to use the names Romeo and Giulietta), which adapts Masuccio Salernitano's *Mariotto and Ganozza*, which probably owes debts to earlier stories of tragic love, such as Ovid's account of Pyramus and Thisbe in *The Metamorphoses*.

During his own lifetime, Shakespeare's version of the tale was incredibly popular; as Gary Taylor notes, "Shakespeare's most popular plays, in descending order, were apparently *1 Henry IV*, *Richard III*, *Pericles*, *Hamlet*, *Richard II*, and *Romeo and Juliet*" (18). Henry Porter's *Two Angry Women of Abingdon* (1598) and Thomas Dekker's *Blurt, Master Constable* (1607) both parodied *Romeo and Juliet* while Shakespeare still lived (Bly 52), and following his death, the lovers became even more popular. As Jill Levenson observes, "*Romeo and Juliet* has had a remarkable career on the stage since the Restoration […] During the late eighteenth century *Romeo and Juliet* outran *Hamlet*; during the twentieth century only *Hamlet* has outrun *Romeo and Juliet*" (69–70). All this highlights the power of *Romeo and Juliet* to inspire new versions of the tale while admitting to the hyperreal nature of these newly star-crossed lovers. Douglas Brode claims that "*Romeo and Juliet* has been filmed more often than any other play, Shakespearean or otherwise" (42), but the most recent "straight" version of *Romeo & Juliet* (2013), which dramatically altered the language, posts only a 22 percent freshness rating on *RottenTomatoes.com*, lower than any of the more radical adaptations listed above. It may be that fans and critics react more negatively to

adaptations that align themselves more closely with the early modern text than they do to those that present themselves as engaged in a more playful "epistemic dialogue" with *Romeo and Juliet*.[2]

Categorizing Shakespeare/Not Shakespeare

The essays in *Shakespeare/Not Shakespeare* are organized into paired categories—not to re-establish binary opposition as a dominant mode of thinking, but in order to consider these Shakespearean appropriations in terms of what James O. Young, following Wittgenstein, calls "family resemblances" (15). Games, for example, come in all kinds of material and logical configurations. Some are played with a ball on a field, some on a computer. There is no essential characteristic that defines a game, and no game will exhibit all the qualities associated with the noun "game": "Something is a game if it possesses a sufficient number of a certain range of properties" (15). At the point when those qualities fail to cohere as a recognizable *gestalt*, however—when the game-as-rabbit instead comes into focus as a duck—then the activity may be recognized as "not game" rather than "game." In breaking these essays into categories, we are not trying to establish rigid taxonomies or inflexible divisions. Rather, we are putting concepts or metaphors from different theories and realms of experience into dialogue with one another.

Networks and Pastiches

The essays in this volume defy easy categorization, and many of them overlap, weaving in and out of methodologies and modes of considering what is and what is not Shakespeare. These intertwined associative networks mirror what Lanier describes as the "vast web of adaptations, allusions, and (re)productions that comprises the ever-changing cultural phenomenon we call 'Shakespeare'" (30). But Shakespearean networks extend well beyond the realm of adaptation/appropriation and even beyond the world of the Shakespeare scholar; today, several putatively non-Shakespearean human networks are themselves examining "Shakespearean" networks in novel and interesting ways. For example, Martin Grandjean, a researcher in contemporary history at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland, has developed network visualizations of character interactions in Shakespeare's tragedies; Seth Chandler, a Professor of Law at the University of Houston Law Center, has designed computer-generated character networks of several of Shakespeare's plays; Stephan

Thiel of Berlin's Studio NAND collective has created visualizations of linguistic and dramatic structures in Shakespeare's work by applying computational tools to data-sets from the WordHoard project at Northwestern University; and Eric Nalisnick, a Computer Science PhD candidate at the University of California, Irvine, and Henry Baird, a retired Professor of Computer Science and Engineering at Lehigh University, have modeled character-based "sentiment networks" of several of Shakespeare's plays.[3] Fredric Jameson believes that emerging cultural rhizomes have created Babel-like divisions in the world, with each separate group speaking "a curious private language of its own, each profession developing its private code or ideolect, and finally each individual coming to be a kind of linguistic island, separated from everyone else" (114). In the case of Shakespeare, however, the opposite seems to occur, with various disparate groups wanting to learn the *lingua Shakespeare* and join in the conversation.

Within the Shakespearean rhizome, these networked conversations often intersect in texts that Jameson would describe as *pastiches*. The term "pastiche" is itself derived first from a mixed pasta dish and then from the musical *pasticcio*, which is an opera or other musical piece comprising works of different composers who may or may not have worked together to create the arrangement; as an unauthorized (some would say inauthentic) adaptation/localization of an existing work, the pastiche is described by Jameson as a "blank parody" (114) of the original. The essays that begin our collection engage with various networks and pastiches in order to illuminate the sometimes simultaneous presence and absence of "Shakespeare" within their respective texts: the first combines literary analysis with creative writing and will probably be described by some as "not-criticism"; the second discusses the re-appearance of hauntological ghosts and examines the specter of the "not quite" Shakespeare; and the third explores the limits of the rhizomatic model and traces the genealogy of (not) Shakespeare through the anti-pastiche of *Romeo x Juliet*. Together, these three essays present an opening conversation that talks to (and sometimes against) Jameson's claim that we are now "condemned to seek the historical past through our own pop images and stereotypes about that past, which itself remains forever out of reach" (118). For Jameson, the pastiche is the only access-point left to unattainable pasts such as Shakespeare; he suggests that "in a world in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum" (115). But these opening chapters show that we can

still speak with the dead, creatively and critically, through more than just lifeless imitation.

In "This Is Not Shakespeare!" (Chap. 2), Graham Holderness follows up on the argument made in *Tales from Shakespeare: Creative Collisions* (2014), arguing for the legitimacy of fiction as a form of Shakespearean interpretation. Through the examples of Anthony Burgess's historical novel *Nothing Like the Sun*, his unrealized Hollywood film of Shakespeare's life, and *Shakespeare*, his imaginary biography, Holderness argues that Burgess uses fiction to search out the inner truth of experience that lies hidden within the documentary facts of Shakespeare's life. The second half of the essay models this argument through an abbreviated version of Holderness's short story, "The Seeds of Time," which examines the presence of Shakespeare in the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the 2012 London Olympics via a fantasy of time travel. In a "mashup" of H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine* with the *Back to the Future* films, two time travelers go in search of Shakespeare but find only a history of reproductions: "The story is an exercise in mingling creativity with criticism, and in forcing interactions between Shakespeare and 'not Shakespeare.'"

Maurizio Calbi's "Chasing Shakespeare: The Impurity of the 'Not Quite' in Norry Niven's *From Above* (2013) and Abbas Kiarostami's *Where Is My Romeo* (2007)" (Chap. 3) situates the "not Shakespeare" of this volume within the theoretical problematics of the "post-textual." It re-elaborates the "post-textual" as the uncanny *re*-appearance of Shakespeare in the form of heterogeneous fragments that are made to cohabit with various textual and media environments. These media products include a "Shakespeare" that is not *quite* Shakespeare, an "entity" that becomes the site of unceasing transactions (for instance, between an "outside" and an "inside," between visibility and invisibility, between the "original" and its iteration) and multiple contaminations (through media, characters, and plays).

In "HypeRomeo & Juliet: Postmodern Adaptation and Shakespeare" (Chap. 4), Jim Casey combines Lanier's Shakespearean rhizomatics with Jean Baudrillard's hyperreality in order to explore more effectively the theoretical boundaries of "Shakespeare" and provide a new paradigm for understanding the Shakespearean landscape. Pairing the neutrally evaluative tool of rhizomatics with the theoretical concept of hyperreality in order to present a much more accurate relational map, Casey examines Fumitoshi Oizaki's anime *Romeo x Juliet* as a perfect example of both the iterative process of translation and the multiple voices of a "Shakespeare" that has become increasingly hyperreal.

Memes and Echoes

The 2015 essay collection *Shakespearean Echoes*, edited by Adam Hansen and Kevin J. Wetmore Jr., examines echoes of Shakespeare in film, television, novels, music, and other texts. In the book's introduction, the editors consider the literary history of echoes, including the Echo scene in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, in which Antonio seeks solace following his wife's murder. In this play, echoes "convey morbid, unsettling criticism of both creators and listeners, ruining the integrity of words and the identities depending on them. Echoes give and take away; they enhance and diminish; they prolong and distort. Echoes validate and protect their originating sources but also negate and unsettle those sources. So acute is this unsettling and negation that they become a form of displacement" (7–8). This leads to larger questions about the relationship between literary echoes and their sources: "Does the echo succeed and overdub the source? Who *is* the source, then, and who the echo?" (8). As in the present collection, many of the book's essays engage with *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*, whose ideas and characters reverberate across centuries, cultures, and genres. Some of these echoes are obvious, revealing themselves through the names of characters or quotations from Shakespeare's plays; at other times, "the challenge is in bringing faint echoes into a clearer contrast. Some texts do not wear their Shakespeare on their sleeve, but carry him in inner pockets, if we may mix the metaphor […] Subtle Shakespearean presence can be difficult to detect, and one is forced to ask: Is it an echo of Shakespeare if no one hears it?" (Hansen and Wetmore 17). Hansen and Wetmore's collection, like ours, suggests that the answer is yes.

A growing body of evidence helps secure the space of Shakespeare in contemporary texts. The more often people detect echoes of Shakespeare in particular works, the more definitively these works become part of the Shakespeare canon, whether or not they are "really" Shakespeare. They may take us back to Shakespeare while also moving us further ahead, further away from the plays and poems—an echo. Or they can repeat themselves in different iterations—the Shakespearean meme. Like Internet memes, in which users take a stock image (such as Gene Wilder's Willy Wonka or the Grumpy Cat) and customize it with their own text, creators customize Shakespeare to suit their own purposes: inserting a storyline of star-crossed lovers or a hero with father issues, for instance. These memes and echoes are distinct from Shakespeare, but they also become part of "Shakespeare" as audiences identify them as such.

In "'I'll always consider myself Mechanical': Cyborg Juliette and the Shakespeare Apocalypse in Hugh Howey's *Silo Saga*" (Chap. 5), Charles Conaway explores the relationship between apocalypse, trauma, and memory, invoking Shakespeare by referring to a play-within-the-novel—*The Tragic Historye of Romeus and Juliett*—whose title suggests that in this post-apocalyptic world, "Shakespeare" has somehow become "(not) Shakespeare." In the fictional world of the novel, such a transformation results from the systematic loss and gradual recovery of cultural memory that occurs in the wake of traumatic events. At the same time, the novel dramatizes the coming of age of Juliette Nichols, who becomes "(not) Juliet(te)"—that is, neither Shakespeare's Juliet nor *The Tragic Historye*'s Juliette—when she responds to her own personal tragedies and traumatic events by attempting to fix things and prevent future catastrophes. She revises the script that previously defined her, becoming "(not) Juliet(te)"—a tool-wielding cyborg who selects her own profession and rewrites her own identity.

In "Guest Starring *Hamlet*: The Proliferation of the Shakespeare Meme on American Television" (Chap. 6), Kristin Denslow examines *Hamlet* memes in several popular American television shows—*Gossip Girl*, *Arrested Development*, and *Sons of Anarchy*—in order to demonstrate how the play *Hamlet* can move memetically, or in small, discrete, and sometimes difficult-to-identify units. The concept of the meme, invoked from its biological roots to its contemporary Internet usage, demonstrates that the meme, an agent of encoded repetition-with-a-difference, provides a metaphor for how adaptation sometimes works not as a conscious process but as an embedded element within the cultural (un)conscious. Shakespeare's "stickiness," argues Denslow, can be attributed to his worth in the cultural meme-pool, meaning that even texts that may appear initially to devalue the Bard's work may contribute to his ongoing relevance and continued citation.

Kirk Hendershott-Kraetzer's "Romeo Unbound" (Chap. 7) suggests that an understanding of a Shakespearean character is bound by one's knowledge of the facts of the text, so there may be little surprise afforded by Romeo's behaviors in performances of the playtext. Further, understandings of the character are bound by iconic beliefs about how textual facts are activated in performance: audiences already "know" Romeo. However, through the processes of poaching and recycling, one-hour scripted TV dramas can destabilize these assumptions. These TV Romeos echo the character we know but also offer less familiar conceptions of the

character: unwilling and unaware or inept and inarticulate lover, S/M fetishist, foolhardy romantic, a Romeo who lives past the end of his narrative arc, an unheroic Romeo, a monstrous Romeo. Through the application of the character traits that the TV Romeos display, constructions of the Shakespearean character might be freed from iconic, constricting assumptions and thereby reinvigorate a character at risk of seeming stale.

Texts and Paratexts

Shakespeare's work has always been shaped and defined not only by its own conflicted, contaminated, and often collaboratively produced texts, but also by non-Shakespearean texts, intertexts, and paratexts. Robert Greene's first mention of Shakespeare as an upstart crow is placed within the context of theatrical creative practice and in opposition to the co-texts of other successful playwrights of the period. And while Shakespeare's earliest plays and poems do not include his own name on the title pages, they often do feature prolix descriptive titles (some extending to sixty words long), elaborate woodcut designs and images, and additional extra-textual information on the playing company, the printer, and the place where the material artifact of the play might be purchased. Inside the text, the front matter sometimes includes dedicatory poems, advertisements, addresses to the reader, panegyrics of the author, and other supplemental material. These "paratextual" elements—the things in a published work that accompany the text but are not the text itself, such as the cover (and cover art), the author's name, the front matter (dedication, table of contents, preface, foreword), the back matter (endnotes, appendices, index, colophon), the page numbers or signature marks, the footnotes and glossaries, the illustrations, and the various other components—shape the readers' experience of the text. Genette defines the paratext as a "*threshold*" or "'vestibule' that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back"; he calls it "an 'undefined zone' between the inside and the outside, a zone without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or the outward side (turned toward the world's discourse about the text), an edge, or, as Philippe Lejeune put it, 'a fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one's whole reading of the text'" (2).[4] The essays in this section engage with these liminal objects of intertext,

paratext, and absent text in order to clarify the processes through which the supra-textual "not Shakespeare" speaks to and with the hypotextual remnant of "Shakespeare."

Barbara Correll, in "Chaste Thinking, Cultural Reiterations: Shakespeare's *Lucrece* and *The Letter*" (Chap. 8), addresses the current boundaries of Shakespeare adaptation study through an intertextual reading of texts whose castigating exemplarity links sexual violation, female chastity, and political formations: Shakespeare's narrative poem, *The Rape of Lucrece* (1593–1594), and the William Wyler film *The Letter* (1940), based on W. Somerset Maugham's short story "The Letter" (1923) and stage play (1925). These particular literary and cinematic adaptations form a transhistorical conversation, whose shared thematics of chastity and politics is echoed in adaptation criticism as well. The essay suggests a dialogical relationship between a famous Shakespeare text, itself both a faithful and unfaithful adaptation of its sources, and a cinematic reiteration of the Lucretia myth that works through inversion and wildly unfaithful gestures.

In "Paratextual Shakespearings: Comics' Shakespearean Frame" (Chap. 9), Brandon Christopher examines the ways in which a range of comic books are "elevated" to Shakespearean status through various paratextual apparatuses. Drawing on Genette's formulation of the paratext, Christopher focuses on the cover images, jacket blurbs, and forewords of two distinct groups of comic books: comics whose connection to Shakespeare are explicit (*Kill Shakespeare*); and others without an obvious connection to Shakespeare (*Batman*, *Animal Man*, *Swamp Thing*, *Y: The Last Man*). Arguing that paratextual apparatuses aid in the construction of "author fictions," Christopher identifies a persistent pattern of literary and cultural credibility being established through a paratextual relationship with Shakespeare, so that some comics are eventually refigured as Shakespearean texts in their own right.

In "'Thou hast it now': One-on-Ones and the Online Community of Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More*" (Chap. 10), Caitlin McHugh uses both academic and popular responses to *Sleep No More* to argue that while the production is not substantively Shakespeare, it uses one-on-one experiences to prompt participants to reach back to the Shakespearean text, to analyze their experiences, to consider what makes them Shakespearean, and to ponder Shakespeare's status in their own lives.

Celebrities and Afterlives

Another version of "not Shakespeare" is the celebrity that we identify with Shakespeare. From Richard Burbage and Will Kemp to Laurence Olivier and Kenneth Branagh, some actors are typically associated with Shakespeare even if the majority of their roles are in non-Shakespearean plays or films. When we see them on screen, we cannot help but think about their personal lives and also all of the other roles they have been in. Richard Dyer, who theorizes about stars as media texts, argues that a star's "image is a *complex totality*" with "a *chronological dimension*" (63). A star's image consists of the totality of what audiences and fans know about the person: not only what we see on the stage or screen but also the complex network of the star's personal life, public appearances, media presence, and the like. Some stars, especially in the days before the 24/7 paparazzi cycle, were able to craft their image carefully, or their image was structured for them by a studio or publicist. Their image may have grown and evolved over time, but it remained largely stable. Other stars may "negotiate, reconcile, or mask the difference between the elements [of a star's image], or else simply hold them in tension" (Dyer 64).

Celebrities in Shakespeare films operate on multiple levels. They play characters that most audiences already know from reading Shakespeare's plays or seeing other performances, and so the performance is measured against or alongside these other experiences. Celebrities also bring their own celebrity status: their other roles and the complex totality of their image. This performance then becomes part of the celebrity's repertoire, so that traces of the Shakespearean presence may show up in other films or performances down the road. Because of this, a celebrity who has played "Shakespeare" may prompt audiences to remember or imagine Shakespeare in a film that is certainly "not Shakespeare." Furthermore, these associations can prompt audiences to imagine another role as an extension of the celebrity's Shakespearean character(s), thus creating afterlives for his characters, plays, or poems.

Scott Hollifield's "Dirty Rats, Dead for a Ducat: Shakespearean Echoes (and an Accident) in Some Films of James Cagney" (Chap. 11) discovers Shakespearean "commonplaces," "echoes," and "accidents" in the gangster and social-realist genre films of golden-age Hollywood (*Scarface*, *The Roaring Twenties*, *White Heat*, *Taxi!*), which, in spite of their non-Shakespearean natures, provide cinematic intertexts that occasionally resonate with a "Shakespearean presence." Uncannily prominent

in the filmography of James Cagney, the most compelling manifestions of these phenomena coincide with representations of death, as dealt by or visited upon Cagney's indelible characters. Through juxtapositions of cinematic actualities and Shakespearean textual parallels, Hollifield's essay illuminates how a work that is not essentially Shakespeare becomes Shakespearean in the act of becoming itself.

Jennifer Holl's "*YouShakespeare*: Shakespearean Celebrity 2.0" (Chap. 12) theorizes and historicizes Shakespeare's enduring celebrity, defined as an embodied cultural narrative and a site upon which the public negotiates present tensions and fixations. Through the centuries, Shakespearean celebrities such as David Garrick and Laurence Olivier have self-consciously intertwined their own celebrity narratives with those of Shakespeare in a reciprocal exchange of relevance and star power; more recently, the diverse platforms available for self-promotion in online media have fundamentally redefined celebrity as a whole and, thus, dispersed Shakespeare's enduring celebrity from the singular Shakespearean star to a fluidly evolving multitude of participants.

In "Finding Shakespeare in Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby*" (Chap. 13), Natalie Loper argues that Luhrmann's films *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996) and *The Great Gatsby* (2013) bring the two classic texts together through visual and thematic parallels, particularly in scenes that feature Leonardo DiCaprio, who plays the titular protagonist of both films. The latter film imagines an alternate ending for Shakespeare's young lovers, as DiCaprio's Gatsby becomes a grown up Romeo who lost his Juliet and is desperate to get her back. It is difficult to untangle the complex relationships between Luhrmann and DiCaprio, Fitzgerald, and Shakespeare, but an attempt to do so can help unearth another iteration of "Shakespeare" in contemporary culture.

Accidents and Intertexts

Shakespeare is an accident waiting to happen. As Lanier's excursus into Shakespearean rhizomatics notes, the endpoint of such an analysis may be a confession that Shakespeare is nowhere to be found. He demonstrates this point with the 1945 film noir *Strange Illusion*, which never cites *Hamlet* but is tied to that Shakespearean text through an indirect web of narratives. While the rhizome is a metaphor that relies on an underlying acceptance of natural processes of growth, however ad hoc and variable, an accident is, by definition, something on the continuum

that includes an unexpected "occurrence, incident, or event" (*OED* definition 1), a mishap (also *OED* definition 1), and a logical differentiation between essence and something not essential to the entity under consideration (*OED* definition 6a). Despite the tension between events and objects in the definition of an accident, the common feature is something out of the ordinary—something that disrupts interpretive and taxonomic norms. An accident takes us into *terra incognita*. Intertexuality also involves an event: according to Graham Allen, "meaning becomes something that exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations" (1). The intertext is therefore more like a rhizome or network. The first category for this section thus emphasizes collision, to use Holderness's term, and the second spreading and multiplication—a trajectory more like that of the rhizome.

In "Surfing with Juliet: The Shakespearean Dialectics of Disney's *Teen Beach Movie*" (Chap. 14), Melissa Croteau examines the intertextual relationships between *Teen Beach Movie* and the 1960s *Beach Party* movies, *West Side Story*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and other films and plays. Shakespeare, Croteau argues, operates as a consistent intertext in order to elevate *Teen Beach Movie*'s cultural status; to mark the superior intelligence and enlightened sophistication of its young protagonist; and to mark the ironic cluelessness of the male teens who are unaware that they are citing him. Despite pervasive and clever uses of intertextuality and self-reflexivity, Croteau demonstrates how *Teen Beach Movie* reifies conservative cultural gender norms, even as it ostensibly and openly questions them. In this way, the rhizome invites its own dissolution.

Allison Machlis Meyer's essay "'Accidental' Erasure: Relocating Shakespeare's Royal Women in Philippa Gregory's *The Cousins' War* Series" (Chap. 15) examines the gendered investments that participate in determining a work's status as either "Shakespeare" or "not Shakespeare." Using Gregory's *The Cousins' War* novel series and *The White Queen* television adaptation of her books, which are constructed by its author and her critics as "not Shakespeare," Meyer argues that these texts nevertheless function as "Shakespeare" by recalling Shakespeare's history plays and their sources. The Shakespeare in Gregory's series of novels appears by accident.

Christy Desmet, in "Dramas of Recognition: *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Warm Bodie*s as Accidental Shakespeare" (Chap. 16), uses Guillermo del Toro's film *Pan's Labyrinth* and Isaac Marion's debut novel *Warm Bodies* and the film made from it (an admittedly disjunctive pair) as test cases

of what constitutes accidental Shakespeare—Shakespeare as an excrescence, something extra rather than the essence of an artwork, but also Shakespeare as something that happens outside or in addition to authorial intention. The similarities between the plot of *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Hamlet* depend on a loose structural homology between them that solidifies into identity based on the thinnest of evidence: the heroine's name, Ofelia. A similar dialectic governs the novel and film *Warm Bodies*, a zombie drama that also has no obvious relation to Shakespeare until the late appearance of a balcony reunion between the zombie-hero R and his human love Julie. Here, the identification between novel and Shakespeare source depends on visual evidence from the film and the novel's critical paratext in the blogosphere. *Warm Bodies* does not become Shakespeare until the fans recognize and acknowledge it as such. Thus, these two test cases exemplify, in del Toro's case, Shakespearean identification as an accident, and in Marion's, the profusion of paratexts that solidify the tenuous parallel between Shakespeare and zombies.

Finally, in a surprise move, Douglas Lanier's Afterword argues for a renewed attention to the concept of "fidelity," long dismissed by adaptation critics as privileging a genetic model for source and appropriation. Lanier introduces the concept of "selective essentialization" for explicating the way in which adaptations lay claim to a resemblance with their sources. Specifically, he recommends attention to what he calls "unmarked adaptations."

Conclusion: Something Rich and Strange

In *The Tempest*, Ariel sings to Ferdinand about his father's supposed metamorphosis through death into a natural artifact of coral and pearl, a sea change that turns him into something "rich and strange" (*Temp.* 4.2.179). This reference valorizes stasis, calm, and permanence as desirable states of being. *Shakespeare/Not Shakespeare*, by contrast, celebrates change, collision, surprise. In the first chapter of *Tales from Shakespeare*, Holderness concludes that "we need to destroy 'Shakespeare' in order to understand what 'Shakespeare' really is. I believe that we need to see objects colliding with objects that are not Shakespeare where both are driven by forces that can appear to be random but in their mutual impact generate an observable and meaningful pattern" (18). As Shakespeare's sonnets testify, "nothing is constant in nature but change" (19). The rhizome, as well, remains in a state of becoming—never finished, always morphing, persistently spreading itself out in space by fits and starts, ruptures and new beginnings. This kind of malleability, we hope, governs as well the shape of this

book, as the categories under which essays are grouped remain contingent, tentative, and open to question and investigation.

As we bring this collection to print, the latest news in Shakespeare criticism is Christopher Marlowe's contributions to Shakespeare's *Henry VI* plays, as big data research has indicated and as the *New Oxford Shakespeare* acknowledges.[5] The effort to attribute Shakespeare's plays to Christopher Marlowe was a project initiated in the nineteenth century and is carried on today, if only indirectly, by the annual Hoffman Prize, which originally honored an essay written on the subject of Marlowe's authorship but now is dedicated generally to Marlowe criticism. As it turns out, Christopher Marlowe *did* write some part of Shakespeare's plays, but he is only one node of the rhizome. Finally, a visitor who returns to the *Such Tweet Sorrow* site after 2016 will find it a monument in ruins, with much of the material having vanished. Sometimes, as Holderness reminds us, collisions can be destructive, but they are also creative, as the *Such Tweet Sorrow* experience continues on in narrative afterlife. In other words, a Shakespearean accident waiting to happen can be a good thing; it may be a rhizome on the move, just on the brink of being recognized as Shakespeare.

Notes

1. As the Mudlark Project page notes, the production eschewed the playtext and presented the lovers as real members of the YouTube generation: "*Such Tweet Sorrow* grabbed media attention and attracted thousands of followers. Several hated seeing Shakespeare perverted, others loved the way the story rolled out across the internet. Romeo could be found playing COD on Xbox Live well before he opened his Twitter account. Mercutio attracted a tram of diehard fans who campaigned on Facebook to keep their hero alive" (from http://wearemudlark.com/projects/such-tweet-sorrow, but no longer available on the website). For more information, see the BBC News story, "Modern take for Shakespeare play *Romeo and Juliet*" at http://news.bbc.co.uk. Calbi analyzes the production in the chapter "'He Speaks … Or Rather … He Tweets': The Specter of the 'Original,' Media, and 'Media Crossed' Love in *Such Tweet Sorrow*" (137–62) in his *Spectral Shakespeares*.
2. David Cowart argues that texts exist in a relationship of "literary symbiosis" when the later text invites or provokes an artistic or "epistemic" dialogue with the original, renewing and transforming the original in such a way that the meaning of the earlier work is affected by its invocation, adaptation, or continuation in the later text (1–26).

3. For Grandjean, see http://www.martingrandjean.ch/network-visualization-shakespeare/; for Chandler, see http://demonstrations.wolfram.com/ShakespeareanNetworks; for Thiel, see www.understanding-shakespeare.com; and for Nalisnick and Baird, see Eric T. Nalisnick and Henry S. Baird, "Character-to-Character Sentiment Analysis in Shakespeare's Plays," and Eric T. Nalisnick and Henry S. Baird, "Extracting Sentiment Networks from Shakespeare's Plays."
4. Here, Genette is quoting Phillipe Lejeune's *Le Pacte Autobiographique*, 45.
5. Christopher D. Shea, "New Oxford Shakespeare Edition Credits Christopher Marlowe as a Co-author."

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PART I

Networks and Pastiches

CHAPTER 2

"This is not Shakespeare!"

Graham Holderness

This is not Shakespeare!
—Bendor Grosvenor, *Art History News*, Apr 1 2016

In 1964, as his contribution to the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, Anthony Burgess published his novel *Nothing Like the Sun,* a fictional biography of Shakespeare. Its plot derives from the known historical facts about Shakespeare's life and work: his Stratford social and family context; his parentage, marriage, and children; his success as a poet and playwright; his connection with the Earl of Southampton; his participation in the business side of the London theatres; his death in Stratford in 1616. *Nothing Like the Sun* is also nothing like Shakespeare, or rather, it is more "not Shakespeare" than it is "Shakespeare." Although the novel is, by definition, clearly fiction, Burgess insisted it was underpinned by extensive scholarly knowledge of Shakespeare's life and works. In an essay on biography, he wrote: "I had been reading pretty widely, ever since my student days, in books about Shakespeare, in Elizabethan

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documents, in scholarly background history. I had taken a lot of notes feverishly, making a chronological table which related the known facts of Shakespearean biography to the wider events of the time" ("Genesis and Headache," 31). But a novel cannot be made merely out of a set of facts. So Burgess used invention, speculation, imagination, fantasy, and a highly speculative biographical interpretation of Shakespeare's own works to fill out a fictional life for him. He did this partly by providing answers to some of the questions thrown up by the facts. Why are there two names in the records of Shakespeare's marriage? Why did a seventeenth-century anecdote claim that Shakespeare had been "a schoolmaster in the country"? How did Shakespeare find his way from Stratford-upon-Avon to London, and enter the theatre as a professional writer? Burgess weaves stories to account for the problems in the documentary record, in much the same way as Shakespeare's biographers do; the facts do not make sense, or at least hold very little interest, unless they are elaborated and embroidered.

The main source for the story of Shakespeare's life in *Nothing Like the Sun* is, however, Shakespeare's own writing—his plays and poems, especially the Sonnets, which do of course appear to tell a story about the poet's love affairs, first with the "fair friend," then with the "dark lady." In the novel, Shakespeare has a full-blown affair with the Earl of Southampton and is infected with syphilis by the "Dark Lady," who is a black woman from Malaya, named Fatimah. Shakespeare encounters her first in a Bristol brothel, and then later as a London lady. On a visit home to Stratford, Shakespeare finds that his wife is having an affair with his brother. In this scenario, much of Shakespeare's work becomes autobiographical: the "fair friend" and "dark lady" of the Sonnets are identified; all the emotions in the Sonnets—lust and love, both heterosexual and homosexual, sexual disgust, jealousy—are explained; and even the story of sexual betrayal in *Hamlet* becomes Shakespeare's own story (as it is in James Joyce's *Ulysses*). Of course, there is no real historical or biographical evidence for any of this. But it makes good fiction, although it clearly stands accused of being "not Shakespeare."

Burgess is doing two things here. He is writing a historical novel about Shakespeare's life, though it is one that is full of invention, speculation, and imagination, as well as historical fact. In other words, it is a historical novel. He is also writing a Shakespeare biography, but from the inside out: searching out the inner truth of experience that can attempt to explain the documentary facts.

In 1970, Burgess published an illustrated biography, *Shakespeare*, that simply inverted the novel, working from the outside in, foregrounding documentary and historical records and pushing interpretation into the same fictional territory as that explored in the novel. In one sense, Burgess's literary biography and his novel mirror one another, since in *Shakespeare* the life illustrates the plays and poems, while in *Nothing Like the Sun* the plays and poems illuminate the life. Burgess distinguished between the two texts by calling the novel "deliberate invention," by contrast with the "painfully amassed factuality" of the biography. In my view, there is little difference. But then, "deliberate invention" has always been the business of Shakespeare biography, though its practitioners often deny it, and claim the authority of historical record. By starting with factual fiction, and moving on to fictionalized fact, Burgess offered a serious challenge to the Shakespeare biography enterprise, though it has remained largely ignored or dismissed, at least until recently. The book has now been reprinted by The Folio Society, with a Preface by Stanley Wells, who describes it as the product of the "creative interaction between the imagination of a major novelist and the life and work of the greatest poetic dramatist," an interaction that makes Burgess's book "one of the finest Shakespeare biographies."[1]

Between the novel and the biography there lies another work, this time one that was never published or performed. In early 1968, Burgess flew to Hollywood to discuss what he hoped would be a film script for his first major motion picture. *Nothing Like the Sun* had been noticed in Hollywood, and the new project was to be a life of Shakespeare that would also be a film musical. From its inception, the work had two titles, *Will!,* the title Burgess preferred, and the title preferred by Hollywood, *The Bawdy Bard*: "1960s Hollywood was riding a wave of very successful British musicals, such as *My Fair Lady* and *Camelot,* and historical blockbusters like *A Lion in Winter* and *A Man for All Seasons.* Warner Brothers Seven Arts was eager to create a similar success with Burgess's Shakespeare film," which was to be a major studio project involving investment of millions of dollars (Smith 34). Burgess wrote some twenty songs (both music and lyrics) that were recorded with full orchestration by Warner Brothers.

The film was to be directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, who had directed the classic *All about Eve*, *Julius Caesar* with Marlon Brando, as well as the brilliant film version of *Guys and Dolls.* Mankiewicz needed a big, successful movie after the flop of *Cleopatra*. He had "already made

some casting decisions—Maggie Smith as Anne, her husband Robert Stephens as Will, James Mason as Philip Henslowe, Peter Ustinov as Ben Jonson, Jessica Tandy as Queen Elizabeth. No decision was made about the Dark Lady, although Burgess somewhat facetiously suggested Diana Ross" (*You've Had Your Time*, 157, 144, cited by Smith, 38).

Burgess's doubts about the screenplay and the project in general were reinforced by a growing sense he had that the film would never be made. "Desperately trying to finish the script, I yet knew that it was not going to reach the screen" (*You've Had Your Time*, 190). His premonition proved correct: Warner Brothers was being sold, and even though studio executives supported the project, "all existing enterprises were scrapped when the new regime started," as Burgess explained in an interview (*Conversations*, 54). In 1969, Burgess contracted to write the "brief biography of Shakespeare which should be sumptuously illustrated" so that he would not waste the research he had done for the film (*You've Had Your Time*, 190). This is his "coffee table" biography, *Shakespeare*, published in 1970.

Would *Will!* have been as successful as *Shakespeare in Love* if it had been made? Who knows. In any case, the screenplay eventually found a home in Burgess's final Enderby novel, *Enderby's Dark Lady, or No End to Enderby.* This is a hilarious satire in which Mr. Enderby, who has published a short story about Shakespeare, the Gunpowder Plot, and the King James Bible—the story appears at the beginning of the novel—is traveling to Indiana to produce a stage musical on the life of Shakespeare. Burgess recycles the whole process of his involvement in the unmade film. The lyrics and the plot of the musical that Enderby creates in Indiana are all straight from *Will!,* and the story of the stage production satirizes Burgess's own experience in Hollywood and with Americans. But there is also a love story for Enderby as he falls for April Elgar, a black singer rather like Diana Ross, who is to play the Dark Lady in the stage production.

In the space of four years, starting in the commemorative anniversary year of 1964, Burgess revolutionized Shakespeare biography, bringing together fact and fiction as no one else had ever done. He made a significant contribution to the historical novel, opening the way for that double perspective, simultaneously ancient and modern, that characterizes the form today. And he wrote a musical version of Shakespeare's life, unluckily never produced, that was a precursor of the hugely successful and influential *Shakespeare in Love*. In those four years Burgess, more than any other writer, pioneered and practiced all those different ways of

creatively mingling Shakespeare with "not Shakespeare": mixing history and biography with fantasy and invention; and incorporating Shakespeare into new literary and theatrical forms.

Enderby's Dark Lady concludes with another, loosely related, short story called "The Muse." The mode of this tale is science fiction. It is set in the twenty-third century, where people can travel round in time and space, navigating by the use of musical instruments. But Time is "plastic" and "curved" and "warped," there are innumerable parallel universes, and you cannot be sure where you're going to end up. A literary historian called Paley is trying to get to Shakespeare's time, taking a copy of the First Folio with him. He finds Shakespeare writing, laboriously and painfully, plays we've never heard of, in terrible verse. Paley is then arrested as a madman, and Shakespeare left with the book, which he starts to copy out:

> *The Merchant of Venice. A Comedy*
> Then on he went, not blotting a line.

Apparently all Shakespeare's good plays have been smuggled from the future in the same way. So here Burgess uses sci-fi fantasy to explore the intricate and complex ways in which we reach out to history and to the writing of the past. How do we engage with the past without taking our own baggage with us? What happens when we find that the past does not answer to our needs and desires? Isn't the past, and our collective memory of the past, something (to use Wordsworth's terms) we "half-create" as well as "half perceive"? All this is explored by the simple expedient of grafting the Shakespearean text, and some of the apparatus of Shakespearean criticism, onto an alien form, science fiction—thus forcing Shakespeare to collide with "not Shakespeare."

I have invoked Anthony Burgess's sci-fi story of time-traveling back to the Elizabethan age as a precursor and justification for the piece of fiction that follows below, "The Seeds of Time," which addresses the presence of Shakespeare in the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the 2012 London Olympics via a fantasy of time travel.[2] As I have shown in the brief discussion above, Burgess was notoriously indiscriminate in the way he applied his knowledge of Shakespeare to a wide range of critical and creative activities. As a consummate fiction-maker (about his own life, as his biographer Roger Lewis has shown, as well as about life in general), and an academic manqué, who thought of himself as cleverer than the

academic gatekeepers of literary criticism, he refused to corral specialist knowledge and imaginative reinvention into separate fields. His critical and biographical initiatives are more boldly speculative and risk-taking than conventional exercises in these disciplines; and his fictional explorations of cultural material are enlivened and energized as much by intellectual curiosity as they are by unfettered imagination. I have found in Burgess's work a model of how to harness Shakespeare together with "not Shakespeare" in order to generate new ideas and new perception in our continuous experience of exploring Shakespeare's works.

"The Seeds of Time" is a pastiche of H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, with more than a few echoes of the *Back to the Future* films. Wells's Time Traveler, scientist, and inventor, accompanied by a young Shakespeare enthusiast, embarks on a new journey, hoping to stand in the yard of the Globe Theatre for the premiere of *Hamlet*, and to speak with Shakespeare. To cut a long story short, they never make it. Things go wrong, and they find themselves instead visiting the Great Exhibition, the Festival of Britain, and the London Olympics. They discover no original source for Shakespeare, only a history of reproductions. Leaving the South Bank in 1951, they plan to advance in time to 2051, only to find themselves stranded in 2012 at the site of the London Olympics. A final attempt to revisit the past in search of Shakespeare, predictably, fails. The story is an exercise in mingling creativity with criticism, and in forcing interactions between Shakespeare and "not Shakespeare."

The Seeds of Time

The gray eyes of the Time Traveler shone and twinkled, and his usually pale face was flushed and animated as he expounded his new theory. We sat in the garden of his house on Richmond Hill, under a huge clustering wisteria, whose purple flowers dangled luxuriantly all around, sharing with us their brief moment of temporary perfection. The sun was setting over the tranquil Thames Valley, and its dying rays touched with color the bubbles that flashed and passed in our glasses. Cattle grazed contentedly in the broad meadow; the white sail of a yacht dipped and slewed along the shining river; and the bright air seemed hushed and suspended, as if time were standing still.

"Yes," he said, in conclusion. "As I have explained, the machine I have designed is capable of carrying me to any point I choose, in space or in time."

The three other guests had been introduced to me simply as the Artist, the Scientist, and the Newspaper Man. The Time Traveler had lost none of his predilection for both stereotyping and anonymity.

"So using this machine," said the Artist, "You can now go anywhere, anytime."

"Theoretically, yes."

"Then to where—and to when—do you plan to go?"

"That is exactly my purpose in inviting you gentlemen here this evening. My machine is not quite ready for its next expedition. I look to you to furnish me with suggestions as to whither I might travel. What should I attempt to see? To whom should I attempt to speak? Which time, and what place?"

"The Renaissance!" cried the Artist immediately. "I would wish to see Michelangelo painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel."

"Or to speak with Leonardo about his inventions," put in the Scientist. "Find out how his mind really worked."

"I would love to discover the true identity of the Mona Lisa!" said the Journalist. "It would make my career."

"All in good time," the Traveler laughed. "For my first expedition I had not thought of traveling quite so far in space as Florence and Rome. Have you no interest in the history of your own country? Something a little closer, perhaps."

"Then I would wish to witness Holbein painting the portrait of Henry VIII."

"I would dearly love to speak to Sir Walter Raleigh, and learn the secrets of the School of Night."

While the Journalist was still thinking of something to say, I could not forbear interrupting. "I would wish to stand in the yard of the Globe Theatre on the first night of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*."

"Shakespeare!" said the Time Traveler, as if the idea had never occurred to him. "Why that would be interesting. I could ask him directly if he wrote his own plays! Do you think he would tell me?" The others laughed. "But the age of Elizabeth was a remarkable period. And its history lies buried not more than a few miles from here."

[…]

"I see you are anxious to find the solution to our controversy," he said. "We certainly have enough questions to pursue. Was Shakespeare an Ancient, or a Modern? A conservative, or a radical? Did he write to bring back an old world, or to usher in a new? Did he write for the people, or the court? Did he stand for Art, or for Science?"

I confessed that I could wish for nothing more than to have the answers to such questions.

"Then," said the Time Traveler, quickly. "Come with me."

"With you?" I exclaimed. "But …"

"The machine can carry two. I constructed a pillion, as I thought I might need an assistant. Are you afraid?"

Of course I was, but I denied it. "Now? Tonight?"

"Yes," he said, impatiently. "We can return to this very moment, and afterwards you can go home and sleep in your own bed. But first, do you not want to meet Shakespeare?"

My resistance melted under his exhortations, and I resolved to travel with him. Immediately he bestrode the machine, and began to make adjustments to his dials.

"*Hamlet*, I think you said? That would be around 1600."

"1603 was the year *Hamlet* was first published."

"Very well. Observe how I can target our destination exactly, using my positioning system. The Globe Theatre. The southerly bank of the Thames, close to what is now the Iron Bridge. We are ready. Hop on!"

Wasting no more time, I slung a leg over the machine and sat behind him. He touched a lever, and we were off.

Ω

We came to rest in the darkness, under a canopy of trees. Through their black branches I could glimpse moonlight, and not far off the yellow lights of a high-road.

"Where are we?" I asked, dismounting the machine. "And when?"

"1851," he replied. "Where, I'm not sure. We were traveling slightly off course and I had to stop to correct the deviation. I think we are in Hyde Park."

He was bent over the machine trying to see his instruments, but by this time I had turned around, and was astonished at what I saw.

"Are you sure?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, "No doubt. See, there is the Round Pond. And yonder is Kensington Palace."

"No. About the date, I mean. If this is Hyde Park, what on earth is that?"

In the direction of the road, where I expected to see the spire of the Albert Memorial, I beheld a vast structure, surmounted by a great curved roof, apparently composed entirely of glass. It was larger than any building I had ever seen: well over a hundred feet in height and easily a

third of a mile long. The bright moonlight reflected brilliantly from millions of panes of glass. I thought it must be one of those buildings of the future of which the Time Traveler had spoken, and I feared he had taken me forward to the time of the Eloi and the Morlocks.

"Why that," he exclaimed "is a miracle of modern engineering. How could I have missed the significance? 1851! It is the Crystal Palace!"

"The Crystal Palace! Then we are in Sydenham?"

"No, no. The Crystal Palace was erected in Hyde Park for the Great Exhibition of 1851, and relocated later to Kent."

"Can we take a closer look at it?"

"We can do more than that. We are only a few years back in time, in the age of our own parents. We will not excite attention: our clothes will seem little different from those of an ordinary working man. Before we resume our journey, we will be the first men to return from the future, and visit the Great Exhibition."

[…]

"You know he was a gardener, Paxton, designer of the Palace? A landscaper at Chatsworth. But he made use of new techniques in construction, combining wood, plate glass, and cast iron, to design the great conservatory there. Have you seen the Chatsworth Lily House? Erected to house the *Amazonica*. A building with roof and walls of light. He used cast plate glass with a curtain wall system, so vertical bays of glass could be hung from cantilevered beams. That was his invention, and the basis for the construction of the Crystal Palace. Paxton said that the ribbed floating leaves of the giant Amazonian lily were his inspiration for this design. What a perfect marriage of art and nature! Of science and imagination!"

"Of architecture and engineering," I added, marveling at the airy lightness of the huge building, and the delicacy of its crystalline structure.

"Yes. It must have been Brunel who saw its promise. You know he was on the selection committee that picked the design? In any event, he imitated the method when he redesigned Paddington Station, and used the same construction company. Brunel now: he was a true visionary. A man of immense imagination, with the practical knowledge to realize his dreams."

At the entrance the clerk looked curiously at our modern shillings, but allowed us in without comment. I believe he thought we were foreigners.

"I think I see what I was looking for," said the Time Traveler, and threaded his way through the crowd that was gradually filling up the immense pavilion. He led me to a beautiful wrought-iron canopy

standing right beneath the central dome of the Palace, which sheltered beneath its elaborate artistry a white plaster effigy of Shakespeare, copied from the statue in Westminster Abbey. The dome was a kind of cupola, fashioned from delicate traceries of wrought iron, exquisitely curved into an inverted flower-like shape. Slim iron columns supported the dome, each one surmounted by a perching eagle. At the apex a cylindrical chimney tapered into a kind of spire, topped by a weather-vane and a figure of Eros. Somehow the heavy iron structure managed to assume an effect of lightness, the iron seeming as fragile as lace, and easily mistaken for a garden trellis threaded with clambering flowers.

"The dome is from Coalbrookdale," said the Time Traveler. "You know the scientific history, of course: how Abraham Darby made advances in the smelting of iron, using coke as fuel. How his company built the first iron bridge. This work of theirs takes pride of place here: a perfect synthesis of beauty and industry, of art and manufacture."

"Here, at any rate, is one image of Shakespeare for you, at the very center of the exhibition your hero William Morris refused to enter! Does he not look entirely at home?"

I owned that he did, and that here in this miraculous glass palace, modeled on the leaves of a lily; constructed by means of the most advanced engineering technology; at the heart of a Great Exhibition that gave equal emphasis to art and industry—the figure of Shakespeare seemed in no way out of place.

A colorful and cosmopolitan throng skirted the frontal base of the statue. We walked around the back, and were there confronted by a very different scene. Here a large group of common people stood and sat around, completely at their leisure beneath the Bard's avuncular gaze. A red-faced woman, basket at her feet, held out a glass to be filled with wine by an equally rubicund man. Two soldiers in shakos flirted loudly with a couple of pretty country girls. There were children everywhere: a small boy with his father's hand-me-down hat slipping over his ears; a little girl holding wool for her busily knitting mother; and at the center of the pedestal, a nursing mother suckled her baby at her breast, her own mother looking indulgently on.

"All human life is here," said the Time Traveler, "gathered together under Shakespeare's masterful shadow."

"'One touch of nature,'" I quoted, "'makes the whole world kin.'"

"Indeed. And there is the answer to one of our questions, at least for this time and for this place. There is no separation here between

Shakespeare and the common people. Moreover, they themselves are enfolded within a cosmopolitan gathering of all nations, the focal point of which is the image of Shakespeare. Your quotation is very apt. But do you know what Prince Albert said was the ultimate purpose of the Great Exhibition? To bring closer 'that great end, to which all history points—the realization of the unity of mankind.'"

[…]

"Why don't we go further forward, and see if Shakespeare figures as largely in the second anniversary of the Great Exhibition?" he said. "Have a look at Shakespeare 2051?"

I agreed with alacrity, and he set his dials for that date. I had another idea. "Suppose we shift our physical location, and visit Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon, in 2051? It will be interesting to see what has happened to the old town."

No sooner said than done. The Traveler used a kind of keyboard fitted to his map to enter the place-name "Stratford," and once again we committed ourselves to a journey through time and space. After a brief period of motion, involving some little relocation, the machine seemed to slow itself down, as if reluctant to proceed any further. The dials showed that we were past the second millennium, but there seemed to be some obstacle inhibiting us from voyaging any further than 2012. The machine stopped in that year, in a clump of trees by a river. The Traveler sat staring at his instruments, and scratching his head.

"I don't understand," he said. "Something is preventing us from proceeding further. The continuum seems to end here. We seem to be locked inside a paradigm, and have reached its outer limit. It is almost as if we are caught in a temporal narrative that is only being written at this time, and has no perspective on the future."

"But we have been traveling into the future," I said.

"Our tomorrow," he retorted, "but someone else's yesterday. The machine cannot see beyond 2012, and so we are held here, like characters imprisoned in an author's past."

"An author? But who is writing the story?"

"I don't know. I've never believed in God. And where are we? The map shows we've traveled only a few miles north-east. I don't think we're in Stratford-upon-Avon."

That much was obvious, as we peered out from our hiding place. We were in an enormous park, full of huge buildings, seemingly constructed for sporting events. Prominent among them was an immense stadium, tall and circular, engineered with outstanding ingenuity, and exquisitely

designed. Gradually, as darkness began to fall, innumerable colored lights, set into intricate patterns, began to illuminate the structure, forming varying patterns and shapes, so what had been a large building turned into a fantasy palace of glowing vermilion. We had never seen so much power, generated presumably from electricity, and applied to such subtle and aesthetically thrilling purposes.

We hid the machine, and walked towards the stadium. After a few brief observations, the Time Traveler said: "I know where we are. We should have given the machine more precise instruction. This is Stratford in London's East End!"

As we seated ourselves, we heard the announcement that told us where we were: the venue of the 30th Olympic Games. We had known only two Olympiads, of course, in Athens in 1896 and Paris in 1900. Evidently, the custom had been continued every four years ever since. This was the opening ceremony. An old omnibus drawn by two shire horses entered the arena, and deposited a group of men who wore the top hats and frock coats of Victorian capitalists. One of them, who seemed to be *primus inter pares,* strode ahead of the group, carrying a book. We realized immediately that this actor was representing none other than Isambard Kingdom Brunel himself. But to our surprise, he stood on the mound, and in a ringing declamatory voice spoke Caliban's lines from *The Tempest*: "Be not afeared; the isle is full of noises."

There followed an extraordinary performed history of the Industrial Revolution. The green grass of rural England disappeared, replaced by a brownfield industrial site full of machinery: a water wheel, beam engines, looms. And then came the most incredible theatrical manifestation I had ever seen. At the center of the display I had noticed a large circular trough, linked by a long channel to a crucible that put me in mind of steel production. Now before our very eyes that same smelting process seemed to begin, with what looked like a sparking river of molten steel pouring into the channel, and slowly making its way towards the central trough. Steelworkers busily hammered and sieved the glowing ore. In truth the display was manufactured by a combination of light effects and fireworks; but no more convincing simulation of smelting has, I am sure, ever before or since been done on a stage. Running around the trough, the molten steel appeared to form a perfect ring. Above our heads, we noticed, four identical rings of light were hovering suspended in the air, slowly converging towards one another. The ring that had shaped itself in the center

also rose and moved towards the others. In a dazzling technological *coup d'oeil*, these five rings, which seemed to have the mass and density of metal, yet hovered ethereally in the air, effortlessly combined together to form an image, which then seemed to burst into flame and cascade showers of brilliant sparks down into the space of the auditorium.

"The symbol of the Olympics," said the Time Traveler, gazing up with something like awe at the interlacing rings. "Pierre de Coubertin showed me his design. Derived from an ancient Greek hieroglyph. All the nations of the world, linked together in peaceful competition. It is wonderful."

"Man has a bright future, then, at least for a hundred years or so."

"And one in which our own time is remembered and revered. The hero of this show is none other than Brunel!"

"Yet the only words he spoke were from Shakespeare."

"Yes. What do you make of that?"

A pretty young girl in a seat next to the Time Traveler overheard his question and said helpfully, "It's from *The Tempest*. We did it at school."

Like many other members of the audience, the girl held in her hand a small oblong machine that clearly interested the Time Traveler. I had observed her entering writing onto a screen, as if sending messages. Now, however, she pressed her fingers onto the device and conjured up for us on the screen a tiny image of the actor playing Brunel, speaking Shakespeare's lines.

"May I?" asked the Time Traveler, and took the device from her hand. "Lumière would be interested to see this," he said thoughtfully.

"You can keep it," said the girl. "It's only a Pay-as-you-go. I've got a contract phone."

"I'm sure you have," he said, concealing his incomprehension. But I saw him slide the device quickly into his pocket, before she changed her mind. I noticed two ushers pointing at us, and talking to one another. We both felt it was time for us to move on, though the show was continuing. We slipped out the way we had come in, and returned to the spot where we had left the Time Machine.

"Why do you think they used those lines of Shakespeare?" My companion asked as we walked. "From Caliban to Brunel? Brunel was no dreamer, and certainly no primitive man."

"I've been reflecting on it," I replied, "and think I have the answer. We have just witnessed the same creative conjunction of Shakespeare

with industry and engineering that we saw in the Great Exhibition, and in the Festival of Britain. Caliban lived in a wondrous isle, surrounded by the shapes of his imagination. He was an instinctive artist, a poet, and a dreamer. He heard random noise as exquisite music, and when he looked at the sky, he saw the clouds open onto infinite possibility.

"Brunel too lived in an isle of wonders, and heard the same music. He listened to the random babbling of nature, and interpreted it into a common language. He dreamed the same dreams: dreams of space and time. And what he dreamed, he invented; his mind and hand went together. His imagination reached out across distance, abbreviated time and annihilated space, crossed rivers and linked towns, burrowed deep into the earth, and rode the pitching waves of the high seas. And from those visions, he conjured machines that made dreams into reality: bridges, ships, railways.

"This we knew already. But what we have seen here tonight, takes Brunel's machinery, and renders it back into dream again. The technology of 2012 far surpasses that of our own day, and is capable not only of construction, but of creation. Engineering has entered the realm of poetry. Art and science have become one, as they were in the Renaissance. And so Shakespeare and Brunel no longer stand opposed, as the dreamer and the artisan, or the poet and the engineer. They have become one voice, one hand, one mind. And by the combination of their powers of vision and practice, they have kept Britain great, or perhaps made it great again."

Ω

We retrieved the machine, and prepared to bid farewell to the future, and return to the past. I thought we would be going straight home, but the Time Traveler was thoughtful, studying the device the girl had given him.

"Let's have one more try at finding Shakespeare," he said quickly. "I'd like to show him this. So he can see how his words will live on in the future."

The Traveler had obviously perfected his directional instruments, and steered the machine confidently back to Southwark, this time to the less perilous date of 1599, and a time around late morning. We hid the machine, and asked at the door of the theatre if there was to be a play that day. The answer was unfortunately negative, so we inquired into

the whereabouts of Master William Shakespeare. We would find him, we were told, later in the day, along the river at the George and Dragon Inn.

So we walked along to the old high street, our clothes courting curious glances, but no interference, as the district was a favourite haunt of foreigners. We found the old inn easily enough—it remains there still—and entered its gray cobbled yard. Inside we were able to purchase food and drink with a small silver coin I happened to find in my pocket. A few rough-looking characters eyed us, but gave us no trouble. We waited, and as the hours passed, people came and went, workers, servants, apprentices, gentlemen, soldiers, players, prostitutes, taking a drink and going about their business. We sat watching in fascination the colorful pageant of Shakespeare's London. Before our very eyes appeared the contemporary originals of Shakespeare's dramatic characters: that angry young man had a touch of Hotspur; the lean and slippered pantaloon resembled Justice Shallow; there was Doll Tearsheet, and around her a whole crowd of fat, red-faced, and boisterous Falstaffs.

But Shakespeare himself never appeared. The little communications device the Traveler had brought back from the future seemed to stop working, its display showing a warning of "no signal." We had lost our link to the future, and no one was expecting us in the past. As the light began to fail we gave up, and returned to the Time Machine. Silently, not without a tinge of disappointment, we recovered the machine, reboarded, and returned to our own time.

Ω

Everything was as we had left it. The laboratory remained silent and undisturbed. The clock on the wall told us that no time at all had elapsed since we embarked on that incredible journey.

"If you hurry, you'll still catch the last train," he said to me in a strangely matter-of-fact way. "But come tomorrow night, won't you, to help me convince the others that I'm neither mad, nor an inveterate liar!"

As I walked towards the station, down the hill into the little town, quotidian reality encroached and pressed upon me, claiming me for this time, and this place. The hissing of gas lamps along the street; low laughter of lovers in the nearby park; the distant sigh of a train from over the hill, making its way to Kingston. Yet in my mind, all this was fractured and transected by an unavoidable awareness of other times, and

other places; of lives long gone, yet still inexplicably present; of ages still unknown, yet into which, against all laws of nature, I had already traveled. All our yesterdays remaining to be revisited; tomorrow as easily accessible as today. Was I here, or there, or elsewhere? Did those street-lamps illuminate a flare-path to the future? Was that whispering I could hear from over the low wall, a lover and his lass, an echo from the past? Would my train really take me only a few miles away in space, back to a humdrum, imprisoning present?

Be not afeard, I said to myself. The isle is full of noises. Everything is still there, if our dreams are true enough: all that is past, and passing, and to come. I had no idea whether I was still dreaming, or had wakened from a long sleep. Or perhaps there was little difference between the two. In any event, as I walked briskly through Richmond, Caliban's rich imagination and inconsolable longing burned within me; and though I was far from unhappy, I cried to dream again.

Notes

1. Anthony Burgess, *Shakespeare* (2015). See also Graham Holderness, *Nine Lives of William Shakespeare*.
2. A historical and critical account of this same material, including a study of Shakespeare in the Festival of Britain 1951, is contained in Graham Holderness, "Remembrance of Things Past: Shakespeare 1851, 1951, 2012." The story was published as "The Seeds of Time," *Critical Survey* 25.3 (2013): 88–113, and is reprinted here in abridged form by kind permission of the editors and publisher.

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CHAPTER 3

Chasing Shakespeare: The Impurity of the "Not Quite" in Norry Niven's *From Above* and Abbas Kiarostami's *Where Is My Romeo*

Maurizio Calbi

In Norry Niven's 2013 film *From Above*, just after the opening credits, and as the piano music shifts to a more dramatic tone, an African American character called William Ward (Danny Glover) reads the following lines from *Romeo and Juliet* to his wife, a Native American woman called Venus Redhawk (Tantoo Cardinal), who is lying in bed and about to die:

> But I can give thee more,
> For I will raise her statue in pure gold;
> That whiles Verona by that name is known,
> There shall no figure at such rate be set
> As that of true and faithful Juliet. (5.3.297–301)

Venus gently closes the book from which William is reading, and replies by whispering the last lines of the play: "For never was a story

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of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo" (308–309). Niven's film centers on the love story of these two characters, and continually moves from present-day Arkansas, where we find William struggling to come to terms with Venus' death after she refuses treatment, to the past and back. It repeatedly incorporates lines from Shakespeare's plays. In fact, William's first flashback after the death of his beloved transports us to Arkansas in 1972, where we are shown a young Venus (Chelsea Ricketts) auditioning for the role of Juliet in an amateur production of Shakespeare's play. She recites lines from the balcony scene (from "O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?" to "Take all myself," 2.1.75–91) in such an impeccable and moving way that the director is stunned: "That was quite … something." Even the other girls auditioning for the role—the same girls who had been sneering at her "dark" appearance and ethnicity as a would-be Juliet—are impressed. Venus does not get the part—a clearly embarrassed director tells her that the "community is not ready" for a Native American Juliet. Yet the fact that she fails to play Juliet on stage does not mean that Juliet disappears as a role within the film. In other words, *Romeo and Juliet* takes on the features of a much reduced, "spectral" script that inhabits and haunts the "real life" of Venus and William as film characters. It does so without being *properly* itself. An example of this is the initial scene of the film with which I began, a scene in which William and Venus appropriate lines respectively uttered by Romeo's father and the Prince to reposition themselves as Romeo and Juliet. The audition scene is itself a significant turning point in this process of metamorphosis, especially as it concerns young William, who is there simply to help with menial tasks. In the scene he is literally and metaphorically located on a threshold, simultaneously part of the extemporaneous audience witnessing Venus's performance *and* an isolated, deeply moved Romeo-like figure who attentively listens to Venus cum Juliet's words but does not "speak at this" (2.1.37). More hesitant than the original Romeo, he is also unable to speak when Venus walks past him after the audition; he then runs after her, but it is too late. While in the back of an old truck driven by Mountain (Graham Greene), her guardian from the "lightning clan," Venus, who senses that she has found her Romeo, shouts at him to "run faster" next time. This is what he does after the second audition—he is, in a sense, no longer "bescreen'd in night" (2.1.52). We are out in the open, outside the theater, but we cannot fail to hear in Venus's "run faster" a spectral echo, an idiosyncratic revision of Juliet's "Gallop apace" (3.2.1). This is

a revision that the film reiterates and develops in multifarious ways, both visually and verbally, making it into one of its leitmotifs: for instance, it is by "running faster" on horses—indeed, by "gallop[ing] apace" on "fiery-footed steeds" (3.2.1)—that Venus and William seal their love; it is by (literally and metaphorically) "running faster" that an elderly William crosses the boundaries between life and death, finally accomplishing his desire of joining Venus in the afterworld.

In "Recent Shakespeare Adaptation and the Mutations of Cultural Capital," Douglas Lanier points out that the so-called Shakespeare-on-film boom of the 1990s has produced various "recalibrations" of the Bard; in particular, by bringing an updated Shakespeare (especially in terms of setting and time period) into closer proximity with late twentieth-century visual culture and the "concerns and screen styles of youth culture" ("Recent" 107), this phenomenon has radically problematized "the equivalence between Shakespeare and text," and "the notion that Shakespeare's essence is to be found in the particularities of his language" ("Recent" 106). In fact, according to Lanier, the "Shakespeare" that emerges from these "recalibrations" is a "Shakespeare" that is "definitively post-textual" ("Recent" 106). In what is in many ways a follow-up essay, Lanier insists that the Shakespearean text is only one of the elements—and by no means an essential or central element—within a fluctuating *ensemble* with no definite beginning or predetermined end that he chooses to call "Shakespearean rhizomatics," or "the vast web of adaptations, allusions and (re)productions that comprises the ever-changing cultural phenomenon we call 'Shakespeare'" ("Rhizomatics" 30). He thus re-emphasizes the "post-textual" status of the Bard *and* re-reads "Shakespeare" as the name of a network; an ongoing, multilayered and multimodal process whereby the "original" is transformed, displaced, and perhaps even (retrospectively) *constituted* in the form of textual remains.[1] Taking my cue from Lanier's groundbreaking work, I want to situate the "not Shakespeare" that gives the title to this volume—if by "not Shakespeare" one means what is not *properly* Shakespeare—within the problematics of the "post-textual." Yet, I also want to argue that "post-textual" is not so much the *reduced* presence of the Shakespearean text as the *uncanny* presence of the "original," its disquieting appearance as *re*-appearance in the form of heterogeneous fragments that are inserted in, or forced to cohabit with, other textual and media environments, and "energized" by this contact.[2] That they never appear *as such*—that they *re*-appear, like specters, and that they *re*-appear as

"mixed" with other textual and media matter—means that their status is not ontological but, rather, to use a Derridean term, "hauntological" (*Specters* 40). For instance, what emerges from Niven's film is a fragmentary Shakespeare whose status is that of an ontological vacillation, a Shakespeare that is not *quite* Shakespeare, a Shakespeare that may be graphically represented as "Shakespeare" in scare quotes, simultaneously visible *and* invisible, highlighted *and* masked, an authoritative presence *and* a site of displacement.[3] In this essay, I want to continue my analysis of Niven's film, and combine it with an exploration of a short experimental film that also references *Romeo and Juliet*, Abbas Kiarostami's *Where Is My Romeo* (2007). Both films present "Shakespeare" as an indefinable some*thing*, some indeterminate spectral "Thing" (to recall Derrida's understanding of the "Thing 'Shakespeare'" in *Specters of Marx* 18–22), an uncanny "entity" that crosses and re-marks boundaries of various kinds. They both prompt questions that are relevant to the specific focus of this volume on "not Shakespeare," in particular questions about the effectiveness and pertinence, from an ethical and political point of view, of the dividing line between the realm of "straight" or "proper" Shakespeare and the vast domain of its "other"—what Douglas Lanier calls, in another essay, the "netherworld of 'Shakespeareana,' that dark space reserved for the illegitimate, fake, scandalous, or unfaithful versions of the Shakespearean script" ("Virtues" 132).

Norry Niven's *From Above* shows awareness of the extent to which the distinction between "proper" Shakespeare and its "other" is a politically motivated distinction, the historically contingent effect of *dispositifs* of power that inform processes of cultural production and reception. The audition scene is again a case in point. One of the white girls auditioning for the role of Juliet passes less-than-veiled racist comments about the inappropriateness of Venus's presence there in the theater ("What are you doing here?"), sneering at her name ("Redhawk?"),[4] and her upbringing ("a reservation"). She also feels authorized to tell Venus that "they didn't have […] Indians in England" in Shakespeare's day, and confidently asserts: "Juliet has to be white" for girls—presumably white girls—to identify with her. From this (prejudiced) perspective, "proper" Shakespeare can only be white and English. Venus's replies are all sharp and to the point, an effective way of "talking back" to unquestioned, stereotypical assumptions of various kinds (for instance, she points out that "Indians are from India"). One of her replies is particularly relevant to

the question of "proper" Shakespeare, in that it astutely touches upon the "otherness" of the "star-crossed lovers": it may be the case that "they didn't have Indians in England," Venus retorts, but "they didn't have Romeo and Juliet in England either. They were in Italy." If the "origin" of Shakespeare's couple is double and divided, then *Romeo and Juliet* may be embodied and re-enacted differently. (This is perhaps what Venus half-jokingly calls a "dark approach" to the play later on). Indeed, Venus's words allow the film to shift into a self-reflexive mode: the film seems to be saying, through Venus, that this "migration" paves the way for, and even authorizes, a variety of "migrations"/interpretations such as the one the film presents. However, as is often the case with contemporary, Shakespeare-related media products, especially in an age when Shakespeare's reach is increasingly global, the critical insight into the *difference* of Shakespeare—the fact that "Shakespeare" does *not* (properly) belong—is somehow reabsorbed into the reassuringly conservative notion of "Shakespeare" as the bearer of universal values. When William first visits Venus's room after the audition, he is so struck by the overwhelming presence of Shakespeare in the form of books and posters ("You have more Shakespeare than Shakespeare") that he asks her about "this weird obsession," an "obsession" that, we soon learn, she shares with her (dead) father. Perhaps predictably, Venus explains this "obsession" in the following terms: "Shakespeare spoke the truth. There is no way to understand the true human condition than through stories and sonnets." Yet the "Shakespeare" as repository of the truth of human condition that Venus presents here is itself somehow refashioned soon afterwards, in a scene that takes place (like many other simulacra of the balcony scene scattered across the film) on a threshold, as William and Venus stand in the doorway of her room. When he touches her cheek, thus establishing what is in fact their first moment of intimacy, a visible bolt of lightning streaks between them while thunder is heard rumbling in the background. The scene is a loose, mostly visual revision of some of the signifiers of the balcony scene—the cheek, the lightning, the many references to night and darkness—as well as a re-marking of *Romeo and Juliet* as an "improper" spectral script that affects the film characters ("When you did your little Juliet thing, I was brought to tears"); but it is also, at one and the same time, a scene that inserts William and Venus in another narrative, the story of the profound love between the "first man" and the "first woman," a story that is part of the folklore of the lightning clan to which Venus belongs (the story is invented by Native

American Ojibwe scriptwriter James Bird but is a mélange of elements from Native American folklore). This story is narrated by the ageless, wise man Mountain to William and a sleepy Venus. It is about how "man became man" (as distinct from non-human animals); how "the first man" was struck by lightning and acquired the power of speech; how this gift led to loneliness and suicidal thoughts; how a woman about to tend his wounds was shocked by the electricity emanating from his body, and began to speak too; how they developed an incredibly strong bond, returned to their people, and began to touch everybody, spreading electricity as well as language.

There are no obvious direct parallels between *Romeo and Juliet*—perhaps the most famous love story in the West—and this (fictional) non-Western myth that binds together language, love, and the "natural" flow of energy. Yet, the fact that the film makes these two narratives interact with each other, in this and other scenes, inaugurates a number of (spectral) transactions and forms of displacement. The overall effect of these transactions, on the Shakespearean side of things, is that the fragments of *Romeo and Juliet* included in the film become part of a "story of […] woe" *without* its tragic ending (or, at least, whose tragic ending is infinitely deferred). This is a story about death *and* survival; it is also a story that irremediably mixes life and death—Venus's veiled form of suicide is also an affirmation of life, and so is William's willingness to die to reach his beloved ("I am going home"). Additionally, through these transactions, this not-quite-so Shakespearean "story of […] woe" meta-dramatically begins to speak of itself *as* survival, as something to be handed down, inherited, and repeated over and over again. In this respect, it is worth underlining that the compulsion to transmit informs Mountain's story on many different levels ("It is our job to pass it on"), and that one of its "external borders" also suggests a lack of closure: when Venus asks William about Mountain's story—she has heard it so many times, but she always falls asleep—William replies by emphasizing its "formal," self-reflexive properties: the beauty of the story is that "there is no end."[5]

That "there is no end" to the story, as far as the Shakespeare-related material of the film is concerned, is also suggested by the original title of Niven's film, *Chasing Shakespeare*.[6] This title seems to be saying that Shakespeare is not only "print Shakespeare," the collection of volumes Venus inherits from her father, and knows by heart; it is also a "Shakespeare" one is (repeatedly) *after*, an elusive entity one hunts down

and strives to bring into being through performance. In this latter sense, the original title of the film encapsulates Venus's (recurrently) frustrated attempt to become a Shakespearean actress, to pursue her "broken dream" (as William calls it). Symbolically "banished" from Arkansas, she moves to New York, but she encounters the same obstacles as in her home town: she fails to land a role as Miranda in a Broadway production of *The Tempest* because, according to the director, she does not have "the right look" for the part. Indeed, despite being "almost blown away" by her style of delivery, the director thinks that it would be ludicrous to have "an Indian Shakespearean thespian" in his play—just as ludicrous as to "cast a black Ferdinand."[7] Yet Venus's second unsuccessful attempt to play Shakespeare *on stage* does not prevent her from enacting roles from Shakespeare's play *off stage*. For instance, while in the auditorium, appalled by the way the director reads Prospero's lines, she takes over and starts interacting with Molly, the actress auditioning for the role of Miranda, and succeeds in eliciting a more convincing performance from her. In another scene, while still in the auditorium, she more explicitly takes command: she interrupts the director to give instructions to the actors playing Ferdinand and Miranda on how to interpret the dialogue following Prospero's lines: "Poor worm thou are infected! / This visitation shows it" (3.1.31–32). That she intervenes at this particular point as a would-be director, and chooses to comment on this specific dialogue, is relevant to an understanding of the further (spectral) transactions in which the "Shakespeare" of the film is involved. Through Venus's passionate glosses on the dialogue between Ferdinand and Miranda, the part is synecdochically made to stand for the whole; we are encouraged to experience *The Tempest* anew as a play that is essentially a love story, a story predominantly concerned with the fervent, exclusive attachment between two young people who exchange vows unbeknownst to others, going against the Law of the Father or assuming that they are doing so ("O my father / I have broke your hest to say so," 3.1.36–37). In short, through Venus's passionate—and partial—interpretation, *The Tempest* is drawn into the gravitational orbit of *Romeo and Juliet*, a play that has already been repositioned onto the unstable boundary between "Shakespeare" and "not Shakespeare," and forced to interact with non-Shakespearean and non-Western narratives.

As the film progresses, still moving back and forth between the past (New York) and the present (Arkansas), the "infection" and "visitation" of Prospero's speech are also explored, albeit in an oblique way.

For instance, the "infection" of love that moves the "worm" / Miranda becomes the literal "infection" that affects Venus's body. We have already seen Venus coughing blood during rehearsals, but it is only after she ends her passionate defense of *The Tempest* as a love story that her mysterious condition suddenly deteriorates: she faints outside the theater and is rushed to hospital, where the doctor tells her fellow actress Molly that "her immune system [is] very weak and in rapid decline." As one of the very few reviewers of the film reminds us, the reference to the weakness of her immune system evokes the traumatic ghosts of the colonial encounter, the "very real plagues that devastated Native communities throughout the Americas with the arrival of Europeans centuries ago" (DeSanti 3–4).[8] This reference may be anachronistic, as the reviewer suggests. But what matters is that the film insists that Venus's repeated ostracization has a material correlative; that this ostracization does not fail to inscribe itself on her body. It is also worth stressing in this context that within the (admittedly somehow confusing and confused) logic of the film, "Shakespeare" functions as some kind of Derridean *pharmakon*. On the one hand, "Shakespeare"—and in particular the "legitimate," "proper Shakespeare" embodied in the theatrical establishment as represented in the film—can be assimilated to the "infection." In the guise of a mechanism of inclusion/exclusion, it is an entity that actively and irresistibly *chases* (and chases away), a haunting presence that affects those "outsiders" such as Venus who come into contact with it—the original title of the film, *Chasing Shakespeare*, can be said to cover this meaning, too: "Shakespeare" as the active "subject" doing the chasing, and doing the chasing while being itself pursued. On the other hand, "Shakespeare" can be seen as the icon of "high" Western literature that crosses over to the "other side," an entity that is mobilized to act as a remedy to the "poisonous" colonial encounter that repeats itself in a displaced form in both Arkansas and New York.

The last phases of Venus's experience in New York bear witness to the appearance of this "remedial Shakespeare." After lying all night in hospital hovering between life and death (which is arguably a simulacrum of Juliet's fake death in Shakespeare's play), Venus implores Molly to help her return to the theater, as if her life depended on it. But she is too weak to get there. She feels that she is running "out of time," and is disappointed that her Romeo has failed to join her in New York ("William never came").[9] She thus decides to stage *The Tempest* in the streets of Broadway, just outside the theater from which she has been "banished."

This impromptu performance of fragments of the play, in which Venus is joined by fellow actors as well as a puzzled theater director, attracts a huge number of passers-by, brings the traffic to a halt, and makes the news. The news commentator calls it "the performance of a life time," and reports that "it could be the most brilliant version of *The Tempest* ever performed on Broadway." A viewer of the film may disagree with this assessment. Nonetheless, through this scene, the film makes the point that the "Shakespeare" one chases comes into its own not only through performance, but more specifically through a performance that blurs and displaces the boundaries between a theatrical "outside" and a theatrical "inside." Put differently, one could argue that Venus counteracts her life-threatening "infection" as well as the "infection" that goes under the name of "Shakespeare"—the detrimental "Shakespeare" that the film repeatedly associates with a biased theatrical establishment—by "spreading" Shakespeare through the streets of Broadway, and in such a way that it changes its connotation from negative to positive: this Shakespeare "touches," and is beneficial for, her fellow actors, the director, the extemporaneous audience as well as herself.[10] (In this sense, "Shakespeare" is assimilable to the gift of language and electricity that we have encountered in Mountain's story about the ancestors of the lightning clan, a poisoned gift that finally shifts its connotation.) As far as Venus is concerned, this shift also involves the transformation of "infection" *back* to its metaphorical meaning as the "infection" of love that binds two young people together. This occurs as the impromptu performance reaches its climax on the roof of the theater. After replying to Prospero (played by the director) with Ariel's lines: "Thy thoughts I cleave to. What's thy pleasure?" (4.1.165), Venus faints—her energetic rendition of disparate roles from the play seems to have taken its toll on her already debilitated body. She is about to fall off the roof when William, dressed in Elizabethan costume as Ferdinand, providentially appears and saves her while uttering the words: "Venus, I never stopped running." We thus have a glimpse of a "black Ferdinand," which is what the theater director had previously sneered at as a preposterous concept. Moreover, since William turns up precisely at the moment in the play when we expect Prospero's rejoinder: "We must prepare to meet with Caliban" (166), it could be argued that the Ferdinand we meet is also a simulacrum of a Caliban who has magically shed his "monstrous" accouterments to take on the features of a prince. And, of course,

William is also a black Romeo who does not stop "running" in order *not* to miss his encounter with his beloved Native American Juliet.

The "Shakespeare" that comes into being in the streets of New York is thus a hardly recognizable Shakespeare, the site of unceasing (spectral) transactions—for instance, between the openness of an "outside" and the claustrophobia of an "inside," between poison and cure. It is also the site where plays, genres, and characters affect and contaminate each other. It is even more "impure" if one considers that it never ceases to interact with the Native American folklore that the film partially invents. A further example of this is the lightning storm taking place as *The Tempest* is being performed in Broadway, a "visitation" from above that implies the approval of the ancestors and puts its seal on the "electric" atmosphere of romance down below. Nonetheless, it is precisely *because* of its liminal status—its status as "almost-but-not-quite," to recall Homi Bhabha's understanding of postcolonial mimicry as ambivalence (85–92)—that this "Shakespeare" interrogates versions of the dominant, racially inflected politics of the "proper," including the politics of "proper Shakespeare." The liminality of this "Shakespeare" is also an "in-betweenness" in terms of temporality, an uncanny mix of "before" and "after," "front" and "back" that is equally critical of notions of the "proper": as mentioned earlier, the "Shakespeare" of the film is, at one and the same time, what one chases *and* what one is chased by, what one follows *and* what one is haunted by, the convoluted mark—and matter—of iteration, displacement, and chance.[11]

Playing himself in Ken McMullen's *Ghost Dance* (1983), Jacques Derrida suggests that cinema is "the art of ghosts […] the art of allowing ghosts to come back." For Derrida, ghosts are, by definition, *revenants*: their "second time" is inextricably intertwined with their "first time," their appearance a *re*-appearance (*Specters* 10). In their comings and goings, they trace—and embody—the principle of iterability. Speaking of *Romeo and Juliet*, but in a way that can be made to resonate with the status of other Shakespearean works, Derrida points out that the singularity of the play is "worked, *in fact constituted*, by the possibility of its own repetition (readings, indefinite number of productions, references, be they reproductive, citational, or transformative)" ("Strange" 69, emphasis added). In short, the Shakespearean work—a work that cannot be clearly separated from its afterlife—"comes about as impurity—and impurity here is chance" (69). I now want to focus on another example of a "Shakespeare" that is not *quite* "Shakespeare,"

another instance of "impurity," Abbas Kiarostami's oddly titled *Where Is My Romeo* (with no question mark). Presented at Cannes film festival as part of *Chacun son cinéma*, a compilation of thirty-three short films by leading directors/*auteurs* of so-called "world cinema," *Where Is My Romeo* is a short film that allows the ghost of "Shakespeare" to come back as always-already reiterated and mediatized, in the form of fragments of Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968). As with the Shakespearean fragments included in Niven's film, the "Shakespeare" that Kiarostami borrows from Zeffirelli does not appear *as such*. This is literally so: this three-minute film is entirely made of a succession of close-up shots of the faces of women (who are themselves professional actresses) watching, and emotionally reacting to, the last few minutes of Zeffirelli's film.[12] Because these last few minutes remain unscreened, Zeffirelli's film does not so much appear as *re*-appear. It *re*-appears as a series of "spectral," disembodied voices that have cut themselves loose from the "visual track." We only hear the voices—and sounds—that the audience on screen presumably hears, from Olivia Hussey's voice speaking Juliet's lines as she wakes up in the Capulet tomb ("I do remember well where I should be, / And there I am. Where is my Romeo?" [5.3.149–150]) to Laurence Olivier's voice delivering the last lines of the play as a disembodied chorus ("A glooming peace this morning with it brings. / The sun for sorrow will not show his head. / [...] For never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo" [5.3.304–305, 308–309]). However, we do not have unmediated access to these voices; from the point of view of the "real" audience off screen, they are inescapably mixed with, and filtered through, the facial expressions of the women on screen. Indeed, these faces are themselves the sites of a simulacral, supplementary inscription of the absent screen that spectrally re-presents itself differently each time—some kind of pictures in (e)motion or (e)motion pictures, passionately reacting to words that are already shot through with affect. Thus, *Where Is My Romeo* articulates a complex disassembling and reassembling of the constituent elements of the cinema, or the cinematic event, and implicates "Shakespeare" in this process. In particular, it brings inside its cinematic frame what is usually excluded from it—a spectating audience—but continues to exclude what should be its integral "objective correlative"—the screen. According to Richard Burt and Julian Yates, the film interrogates "the ontology of the film medium" (64). In fact, it could be argued that it turns this "ontology" into "hauntology" (Derrida, *Specters* 10), raising questions about

ocularcentrism and re-inscribing cinema into the register of spectrality and affect. One must add that, because of the absence of the screen, *Where Is My Romeo* also differentiates itself from other films that metacinematically include scenes in which film characters double as an emotionally responsive audience in a movie theater, a paradigmatic example of which is probably Jean-Luc Godard's *Vivre sa vie* (1962), with Nana shedding tears as she watches Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928).[13] In this sense, if Kiarostami's film stages a metacinematic moment, this moment is fundamentally impure. If it is a "cin-off," to adopt Burt and Yates's term (63), it is a "cin-off" but not quite.[14] It *does* screen the audience back to itself, but it also simultaneously insists on an invisible point outside the cinematic frame that cannot be fully grasped by *any* viewing subject. This also applies to the viewing subject on screen, dispersed as it is across a series of close-ups that introduces the principle of iterability and displacement even as it sustains the illusion of wholeness and a narrative continuity.[15] At one and the same time, this invisible point divides itself to cross over to the "other side"—it re-presents itself in the form of bodiless voices that affect—*and* remains irreducible.[16] It does not constitute another visible, in the sense of something visible that has not yet come into view or has disappeared from view.[17] This is an invisibility that can be associated with spectrality; a spectrality, according to Derrida (here appropriately speaking of spectrality in/as media technologies), that "regularly exceeds all the oppositions between visible and invisible, sensible and insensible" (Derrida and Stiegler 117). More specifically, it can be connected with the spectrality of the "Thing 'Shakespeare,'" a "Thing" that "inhabits without [properly] residing" (Derrida, *Specters* 18), simultaneously "inside" this short film (as disembodied words, muffled sounds, faces inscribing affect, and so on) and "outside." That this "Thing" does not *properly* reside—that it is heterogeneous to the visible—also means that if the last few minutes of Zeffirelli's film were to appear, they would *not* be Zeffirelli's but, rather, a familiar and yet strange version of Zeffirelli's version of *Romeo and Juliet*, an iteration of an iteration, a repetition that confers identity upon *and* displaces what it repeats. If we were to compare these last few minutes with what does (not) appear, we would realize, for instance, that the Friar's words following Juliet's "Where is my Romeo?" have been excluded along with other lines by Juliet; that the noises in the background have almost been eliminated; that the sequence including the funeral procession and the Prince's speech over the bodies

of Romeo and Juliet has been considerably shortened—a sequence, one must observe in passing, that contains many close-ups of characters emotionally reacting to the tragic fate of the two star-crossed lovers. Also, we would notice, perhaps most interestingly, that the reiteration of "Where is my Romeo?"—Olivia Hussey as Juliet asks this question three times in Zeffirelli's version—has itself been cut. If there is a reduction of Zeffirelli's version in what does (not) appear, this type of reduction paradoxically makes the latter approximate the "original": of course, Juliet's "Where is my Romeo?" occurs only once in Shakespeare's play. And yet the improperly formulated question in Kiarostami's title—*Where Is My Romeo*, without a question mark—may be said to re-establish the distance from the "original" by misquoting it, whether intentionally or not, almost as if it was an ironic reminder and a graphic emblem of the "impure," solecistic domain of the "not quite."

Where Is My Romeo enacts an undecidable, "impure" dialectic of visibility and invisibility, and thus aligns itself with the not-quite-so-Shakespearean fragments discussed in connection with Norry Niven's *From Above*. Both films articulate, albeit in different ways, a multiple crossing of boundaries that problematizes the notion of "proper Shakespeare." They are margins that mark the interior of the (supposedly) "body proper" of "Shakespeare," making it *other* than it is, structuring and de-structuring it. They bear witness to the survival of "Shakespeare" as an indeterminate, asynchronous "Thing" that proliferates impurity, a fluctuating assemblage of media, temporalities, places, and languages within which forms of afterlife situate themselves as variables that cannot be *properly* separated from one another. Within contemporary media culture, a "Shakespeare" that is not *quite* "Shakespeare" is perhaps the only Shakespeare there is.

Notes

1. For the (retrospective) production of the Shakespearean "original" as a spectral effect of processes of adaptation, see Calbi, esp. 1–21.
2. For an exemplary discussion of how adaptation as cultural process reinserts Shakespearean texts within ever new citational environments, see Cartelli and Rowe 29–34.
3. For a thought-provoking discussion of the uncanny, ghostly functioning of the "scare quote" as form of de/familiarization, simultaneously acknowledging and distancing, see Harries, esp. 1–7.

4. Of course, Venus's "What's in a name?" can also be seen as an implicit reply to this girl's racist comments on the name "Redhawk."
5. What is also interesting is that Mountain's story replaces the story Venus wants to tell, which is the story of *Othello*. Implicitly, the relationship between Venus and William is *not* an interracial relationship that ends tragically.
6. The title was changed as the director attempted to gain general release for the film, which makes one cautious about the role of Shakespeare as an icon of high culture that serves to legitimize products of popular culture. This is from the Q&A with director Norry Niven at the opening of the African Diaspora International Festival, November 29, 2013 in New York City.
7. He is so impressed that he advises her to audition for a more "appropriate" role in another play, *Wild Bill's Wild America*.
8. Venus's little sister also suffers from a mysterious illness, and this is the reason why her family decides to go away, leaving Venus alone to pursue her dreams.
9. We see William looking for her in New York and missing her twice. The heightened sense of urgency and the missed encounter are also elements that are vaguely reminiscent of *Romeo and Juliet*.
10. As Douglas Lanier argues, many samples of Shakespop articulate "the fantasy of a once-again popular Shakespeare, freed from the shackles of highbrows and professionals and returned to the 'people'" (*Shakespeare* 18).
11. "There is no end" to the story, as William observes in connection with Mountain's story. After the death of Venus, he becomes some kind of "desperate pilot" (*Rom*. 5.3.117) who lacks poison but nonetheless strives to join his Juliet in the afterworld, to put a stop to the spectral script in which they are both involved, to end *their* play. But William is also the character who, in the last phases of the film, builds a sound-proof room for his musician son, adorning it with Shakespearean citations, and diligently prepares the room for his yet-to-be-born granddaughter Juliet. Thus, "Shakespeare" is also the mark of a future toward which one never stops "running."
12. This short reading of Kiarostami's film is indebted to Richard Burt and Julian Yates's splendid interpretation of the film as a partial "wreckage" of that "living-dead machine" that goes under the name of *Romeo and Juliet* (Burt and Yates 50). My argument about the film's resistance to visibility (or to invisibility as its polar opposite)—my emphasis on spectrality—is also an attempt to understand the (lethal) functioning of what Burt and Yates call the "*Romeo and Juliet thing*" (51).
13. And, of course, she sheds tears as she watches a close-up of Joan (Maria Falconetti) shedding tears.

14. They define it as "a single sequence in a narrative film in which characters watch a single sequence of a film in a movie theater" (63).
15. For Burt and Yates, the "multiplicity and heterogeneity [of the reaction shots] prevent one from totalizing *Where Is My Romeo* either as a random series or as a narrative film" (66).
16. This invisibility multiplies if one considers that the inclusion of fragments from Zeffirelli's film was an afterthought: the actresses playing the audience were reacting to three fixed dots positioned just above the camera, and the Zeffirelli "voice-track" was added after the shooting was over. In a sense, *Where Is My Romeo* is very much an experiment that Kiarostami will pursue in his subsequent film *Shirin*, a 90-minute film that features close-ups of the faces of 113 actresses (including Juliette Binoche) watching an adaptation of Nezami Ganjavi's twelfth-century Persian romance *Kosrow and Shirin* that only appears as a soundtrack, and that was also added afterwards (Khodaei 1; see also Brody). It is worth pointing out that there are many similarities between *Romeo and Juliet* and this poem. For instance, at the end of the story, after the death of Khosrow, "Shirin entered the vault, locked the door, and went to Khosrow's side. She covered him with kisses and, with a dagger she had hidden in her robes, fatally stabbed herself in the same place where Khosrow had been stabbed. Now it is said by some that when her blood flowed over Khosrow's body, he awakened for a moment and the lovers kissed" (Chelkowski 45).
17. These reflections on (in)visibility have been guided by Derrida, *Memoirs* 52.

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CHAPTER 4

HypeRomeo & Juliet: Postmodern Adaptation and Shakespeare

Jim Casey

Gonzo Studio's anime *Romeo x Juliet*, written by Reiko Yoshida and directed by Fumitoshi Oizaki, is a "low art" animated cartoon adaptation that abandons not only the text of Shakespeare's play, but also his plot, his minor characters, and even his language. As a Japanese-language anime, the twenty-four episode series represents the most extreme kind of adaptation, with the similar title and random Shakespearean names seeming to be the only elements that tie the series to the early modern text. Yet the anime abounds with quotations, allusions, visual references, and analogues (it even has a playwright named Willy) and provides us with an excellent test-case for what qualifies a work as (not) Shakespeare or (not) *Romeo and Juliet*. For many fans and critics, adaptations are evaluated subjectively and unsystematically; they identify works as "Shakespearean" in the same manner that US Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart recognized hard-core pornography in 1964—they know it when they see it. Thus, works of performance or adaptation exist in a kind of quantum state as Shakespeare's cat: at once Shakespeare and Not-Shakespeare, and yet neither until observed and judged. This

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essay will offer a model for conceptualizing allusive yet elusive adaptations such as *Romeo x Juliet* by combining the existing model of Shakespearean rhizomatics with the postmodern theory of hyperreality in order to form a more specific and precise understanding of the relationship between the adaptation and its hypotext.

As discussed in the Introduction to this collection, Douglas Lanier's Shakespearean rhizomatics is the most prominent current theory regarding Shakespearean adaptation. But while rhizomatics is particularly valuable in dismantling hierarchical and evaluative paradigms of relationships, it simultaneously obfuscates lines of influence and appropriation. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari suggest that "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other" (7) and quote the words of Rémy Chauvin to explain how rhizomes comprise "the *aparallel evolution* of two beings that have absolutely nothing to do with each other" (10). Lanier emphasizes this point and insists that these "elements in relation remain distinct—[Deleuze and Guattari] reject the notion of a synthesis or symbiosis—yet through their relationship they move independently in the direction of each other" ("Rhizomatics" 27–28).

The problem with this formulation in cases such as *Romeo x Juliet* is that it erases specific trajectories of creative generation and denies the linear relationship that the replicated or allusive title itself declares. As a neutrally evaluative tool, rhizomatics is particularly useful, but as a relational map, especially in connection to intentionally descended adaptations, rhizomatics confuses the territory. *Romeo x Juliet* and the Shakespearean play from which it derives its name do not have "absolutely nothing to do with each other"; the anime clearly comes from the play in some way. But this situation is complicated by the echoic yet independent quality of the Japanese series, which, at first glance, seems to conform to a rhizomatic description. Deleuze and Guattari assert that the rhizome is "a map and not a tracing," engaging with the territory in an active, creative manner: "What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real" (12). But while adaptations such as *Romeo x Juliet* do experiment with form, narrative, and other elements, they do not engage with the real. Instead, they engage with what Jean Baudrillard calls the *hyperreal*, mapping a territory that itself is only an *idea* of a territory.

To explain hyperreality, Baudrillard uses Jorge Luis Borges's 1:1 map from "On Exactitude in Science" ("*Del rigor en la ciencia*") in order to demonstrate the process through which simulacra (likenesses

or imitations of the real) come to supplant reality itself, so the map becomes more "real" than the territory itself: "Henceforth, it is the map that precedes the territory—*precession of simulacra*—it is the map that engenders the territory" (169).[1] Thus, rather than mapping the exploration of new territory, such adaptations claim to map existing territory while only marking the preceding *idea* of the territory. In the case of *Romeo x Juliet*, the anime has not been created and subsequently navigated using a map of the real play *Romeo and Juliet*, but rather from the idea of "Romeo and Juliet." In this way, it seems to represent a perfect example of rhizomatics. But the idea of "Romeo and Juliet" at this particular historical moment comes predominantly from the specific node of Shakespeare's play and that specific *Romeo and Juliet* is what is alluded to when a text references "Romeo and Juliet," even when the latter has very little to do with the former. Thus, by combining rhizomatics with an awareness of the precessional, hyperreal quality of "Romeo and Juliet," we can negotiate the rhizomatic-yet-still-derivative relationship a bit more precisely.[2]

Most viewers, I expect, would classify the anime as a postmodern "pastiche" of *Romeo and Juliet*, based on Fredric Jameson's use of the term, which he defines as the "neutral practice" of stylistic mimicry "without the satirical impulse, without laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists something normal compared to which what is being imitated is rather comic. Pastiche is blank parody, parody that has lost its sense of humor" (114). Important to Jameson's conceptualization of pastiche is the notion that the original referents have been lost, so history and nostalgia are experienced "*metonymically*," as when the 1977 film *Star Wars* resurrected the "long extinct" Buck Rogers-esque serial without direct reference or allusion (116). Yet in *Romeo x Juliet* the inverse seems to occur: the metonymic experience of history and nostalgia *depends* on direct reference and allusion—almost in a kind of anti-pastiche (the title demands a recognition of the original referent). At the same time, those direct allusions are generally so far separated from the specific original that they have become unrecognizable.

Nonetheless, the *idea* of Shakespeare in general or *Romeo and Juliet* in particular is always-already specified in the public consciousness. That this image of Shakespeare (or this image of the play) is disconnected from any original reality is irrelevant. Like Umberto Eco's "Absolute Fake" (35), this other-Shakespeare has supplanted the "real" Shakespeare and is more real than the real. If we return to Baudrillard's ideas of

simulacra, simulation, and the hyperreal, then the nature of this supposed Fakespeare may be made clearer. Baudrillard describes the successive phases of the image as moving through four orders:

1 It is the reflection of a basic reality.
2 It masks and perverts a basic reality.
3 It masks the absence of a basic reality.
4 It bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum. (173)

For the Shakespearean, Baudrillard's stages of simulation may mirror the search for an "authentic Shakespeare" (although not in the sense that anti-Stratfordians would attest). The first stage represents the belief that there is a recoverable text/entity/*qualia* of "Shakespeare" that can be faithfully reproduced. The second stage admits a quintessence somewhere, but denies the legitimacy of the present representation (bad quarto, un-Shakespearean production, radical adaptation). The third posits the absence of a transcendental Shakespeare entirely (through a consideration of source materials, collaboration, textual transmission, theatrical praxis). And the fourth stage seems to be where we are today, with "Shakespeare" as its own pure simulacrum. Similarly, the imaginary idea of *Romeo and Juliet* has become more present for most people than the play itself. *Romeo x Juliet* participates in this hyper*Romeo-and-Juliet*, intersecting much more with the cultural construction of the star-crossed lovers than with the early modern play.

The anime series manifests this cultural construction in a variety of ways, yet it simultaneously discards not only Shakespeare's words but his very language. As a translation, the series replaces the original Shakespearean *substance*—the essence and identity manifested in the words of the play—with something entirely new. Using the analogue of textual criticism, we might say that the anime (and indeed all non-English adaptations) differs *substantively* from Shakespeare's original play and represents Baudrillard's second stage of perversion, what Cleanth Brooks called the "heresy of paraphrase," through which the soul of the piece is lost in translation (199). Of course, this complaint is nothing new. When the French first translated Dante, Italians responded with the now-common saying, "*traduttore, traditore*" (translator, traitor). But if we believe Lanier, then *Romeo and Juliet* becomes merely an *accidence* (in textual terms) of the greater tale, existing not as the essential, central source but rather as simply

one of myriad nodes in the larger rhizomatic structure. Furthermore, not only is Shakespeare not central to the Romeo and Juliet story, but the language of Shakespeare itself is not central to what we call "Shakespeare." According to Lanier, late twentieth-century filmic versions of Shakespeare have challenged "the notion that Shakespeare's essence is to be found in the particularities of his language" and therefore these adaptations have shifted the conceptualization of what constitutes Shakespeare's *substance* from the verbal to the visual: "One of the main achievements of the nineties was to bring Shakespeare in line with late twentieth-century visual culture and in the process loosen the equivalence between Shakespeare and text. Through film of this period Shakespeare became definitively post-textual" ("Recent" 105–106). In fact, some critics claim that the finest versions of Shakespeare occur in non-English Shakespearean films, such as those of Kurosawa or Kozintsev. Judith Buchanan, for instance, contends that translated versions of Shakespeare, by their very nature, allow for greater independent artistry and originality because non-anglophone interpreters

> experience both the luxury, and the deprivation, of coming fresh and without prejudice to the specific language of a play. A translation is inevitably defined in part by the nature and extent of its deviations from its original. In comparison with that more stable given, a text in translation will, therefore, always seem relatively susceptible to adjustment and variation since it begins life itself as just that, an adjusted variant. As a result, interpreters working from a translation are less likely to feel clouded by the presence of something sacrosanct in ways that might hamper creativity. (71)

For *Romeo x Juliet*, little has been held sacrosanct, and creativity abounds. At first glance, this might be because the anime merely partakes of the image of "Shakespeare" that occupies Baudrillard's third stage, which masks an absence of reality. Shakespeare is not the "father" of *Romeo and Juliet*, and his egalitarian place in the rhizomatic structure emphasizes the non-hierarchical nature of the tale; as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, "The rhizome is an anti-genealogy" (11). Yet even if Shakespeare's paternity of *Romeo and Juliet* is in doubt, there is nonetheless some kind of ancestry in the provenance of *Romeo x Juliet* that suggests that the anime is a clear descendant of "Shakespeare" and his play. Rather than a third-stage simulacrum, then, the entire rhizome of "Shakespeare" (and that of *Romeo and Juliet*) depends from a

fourth-stage hyperreal version that has become more real than the real, more Shakespeare than Shakespeare.

As a hyperreal adaptation, the anime represents "its own pure simulacrum" of *Romeo and Juliet*, where only the series's title and the ubiquitous Shakespearean character names bind the series to the early modern text (and even these associations are tenuous). Juliet Fiammatta Erss DiCapulet is the last surviving member of the Capulet family, which has been slaughtered by the current ruler of Neo Verona, Leontes Van DiMontague, father to Romeo Candore DiMontague. Juliet is served by her best friend, maid, and confidante, Cordelia, and raised by the paternal priest Conrad and his young grandson Antonio. She is protected by the powerful warriors Curio and Francisco and aided by the mysterious Tybalt Volumnia DiCapulet, bastard son of Lord Montague. The Capulet house is supported by the noblewoman Ariel DiFarnese and her son, Willy, a "third-rate writer" (7) whose plays are described by Juliet as "too complicated" (1).[3] Instead of being infatuated with a woman named Rosaline, Romeo is engaged to Hermione DiBorromeo, and instead of being kinsman to the Prince and friend to Romeo, the character of Mercutio is depicted as a scheming, political, and eventually mad Machiavel whose father, Titus DiMarchesi, is a famous drunkard. The vitality of the land depends on the Great Tree Escalus, which is maintained by the fey gardener, Ophelia.

In all, over three dozen Shakespearean "characters" appear, but none of them appear to reflect their early modern counterparts.[4] In fact, many seem almost the opposite of their playhouse analogues. For example, Curio, Francisco, Conrad, and the Doctor—all relatively minor Shakespearean characters—become great heroes and protectors in the anime, along with the mysterious Tybalt. Tybalt and Conrad become more noble, while Mercutio, Titus, Camillo, and the Priest all become more wicked. Petruchio and Regan turn into children, while Portia and Ariel become mothers. Benvolio and Cordelia are the main characters' closest friends at the beginning of the play and there are no doppelgängers for the Nurse or Friar Laurence. Ophelia goes mad caring for the sacred tree Escalus and Hermione goes mad in romantic pursuit of Romeo (such a stock would-be lover is called a *yandere* in Japanese *moe* fandom). Moreover, the Montagues have wiped out all the Capulets except for Juliet—at the beginning of the series, there is only one great family, with the lone survivor of the slaughtered Capulets in hiding and dressed as a boy.

Like the play, the anime begins with a Prologue, but this material seems quite removed from both the content and the quality of Shakespeare's sonnet-shaped induction:

> The Distant Past
> This is a land that has been long forgotten.
> The Aerial Continent
> Neo Verona
> This great power floating in the sky brings the breath of life and prosperity to the people
> But ever there are times when the folly of earthly desires is present.
> About to be told here is the tale of a love at the mercy of fate, innocent, yet
> heartrending, forged in the fires of war … (1)[5]

Despite the obvious divergence from Shakespeare's text, the subtitles nonetheless seem to reflect both Shakespeare's Prologue and the moralistic introductory Arguments of Boaistuau and Brooke.[6] Shakespeare's text may itself be forgotten in the distant past, and we hear only echoes of that heartrending tale in vague allusions to the fearful passage of Romeo and Juliet's death-marked love or the idea of two warring foes engendering love from their fatal loins (in both the senses of deadly and fated), yet the concept of the "star-crossed lovers" is omnipresent, not only in the plot of the series but also in the anime's very name.

Romeo x Juliet is usually pronounced "Romeo *and* Juliet" by Japanese fans, but the x in the title represents a western typographical symbol inserted into the Kanji title (a fairly common occurrence in anime) and carries specific cultural meaning for Japanese audiences. The *batsu* (a cross or X) indicates that something is wrong, incorrect, or deserving punishment. In school settings, *batsu* is paired with *maru* (a circle) in grading to mark incorrect "x" and correct "○" answers. Some Japanese will also cross arms to form an X as an informal negative response to a question or event and will make a circle with arms overhead (somewhat like a ballet dancer) or with the thumb and the forefinger (rather than a thumbs-up) to indicate something is okay. Moreover, *batsu-ichi* refers to a person who has been divorced, since the divorced spouse's name used to be crossed out on the official family register. Finally, Japanese equivalents to western TV shows such as *Wipeout* or *Fear Factor* are called *Batsu Games*. Thus, the X in the title does not mean "Romeo times

Juliet" or "Romeo multiplied by Juliet," but rather "Romeo *cross* Juliet." The lovers are literally crossed in the title itself, with all that implies. And while crosses often indicate kisses and sincerity, they also symbolize death in a variety of texted messages, "faces," and in the "dead Chibi smiley" that is so popular in Japan. Throughout the series, this conflation of love/fate/death and crossing recurs in the dozens of statues of the winged Goddess, shown either with crossed arms or, less often, with her hands pressed together palm to palm in holy palmers' kiss.

This crossing theme also intersects with other Shakespearean plays. When Juliet pretends to be the boy Odin or the Red Whirlwind (a Scarlet Pimpernel-like character), for example, various cross-dressing scenes from other plays come to mind. Furthermore, as the "Red Whirlwind," Juliet defends a girl accused of being a Capulet survivor with words reminiscent of *Othello*: "Sheathe your bright swords, ruffians / Or the evening dew will rust them!" (1). Here, she clearly echoes Othello's "Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them" (1.2.59).[7] In fact, the entire first episode features numerous allusions to *Othello*, including posters for a performance of *Otello* and a song from the opera (1). Later, after acid has damaged one of Romeo's shirts, Cordelia convinces Juliet to sew him a handkerchief rather than a new shirt (5); she gives him the embroidered handkerchief (with an iris and the letter R instead of strawberries) as an "apology" for burning his shirt (8). Near the end of the series, when she knows she may be destined to die, Juliet has Cordelia brush her hair in a scene that loosely parallels Desdemona's willow song scene (21).

Other plays seem to be referenced as well, but only vaguely and out of context. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for instance, might appear in the Midsummer Flower Festival (7), and *The Tempest* surfaces repeatedly in the pervasive storm and sea imagery. The War of the Roses in the *Henry VI* plays also has a clear analogue in the warring houses in the series, but instead of roses for both, the white iris of the Capulets is paired with the red rose of the Montagues.[8] Similarly, the unsexing of Lady Macbeth has a corresponding moment in the anime when Juliet wants to cut off her long hair after being unable to kill an attacker: "I want to cut it away … The weak part of me … I must be strong" (9). Other subtle links might include the death of Benvolio's father, Titus, who pulls down an arras, reminiscent of Polonius's death in *Hamlet* (17), the potentially homoerotic overtones in Francisco's observation that Curio is lucky to have such a "pretty boy" as Benvolio staying

with him (8), or the confrontation between Tybalt and his father, Lord Montague, which recalls the moment of familial-but-bastard recognition between Edgar and Edmund in *King Lear* (22).

Quotations of the plays are likewise nebulous and decontextualized. At one point, for example, Willy seems to be writing *As You Like It*, in which "A girl named Rosalind disguises herself as a boy. And she goes back to being a girl for the one she loves"; when asked if commoners and nobles can love, Willy replies, "All the world's a stage! And all the men and women merely players! Within stories one's position in society is irrelevant when it comes to love" (2). In another episode, as Juliet is departing the city after the failed first Capulet uprising, she offers romantic advice to Benvolio regarding her friend Cordelia: "Nothing can come of nothing. Speak to her!" (14, dub). Even Lord Montague's "You, too, Romeo?" (10) may be a nod to *Julius Caesar*, especially since Romeo is leaving his father for the company of his cloistered mother, Portia Clemenza d'Aimee, who has the same first name as the wife of Shakespeare's Brutus. But perhaps the best example comes when Willy's mother, Ariel DiFarnese, who later dismisses his plays as "frivolous" (17), quotes one of the playwright's lines—"So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin"—but at the same time admits, "I have forgotten what the story was about" (3).

Throughout *Romeo x Juliet*, Shakespeare's play has been mostly forgotten. Even the anime's balcony scene provides a stark contrast to Shakespeare's famous encounter. Predictably, the series drastically reduces the 160 lines of verse from the play, but the situation itself is quite different as well. Romeo and Juliet have been in love for nine episodes already and have spent several private moments together. In fact, rather than preceding the "wherefore art thou" speech with Romeo spying the east breaking through yonder window, the anime simply has him step outside into the brightly lit day, commenting on the "lovely weather," and then walking down the external staircase from Juliet's balcony. Earlier, while studying an iris in episode 4, Juliet has asked, "Why / Why is he Montague's son? Even if this flower had no name, it would smell as sweet"; later in the episode, when Romeo confesses, "I don't like the name that comes after 'Romeo,'" Juliet asks him, "Then, could you refuse that long name?" (4). Obviously, these lines echo Juliet's famous lines, "O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo? / Deny thy father and refuse thy name" (2.1.75–76), but the echo is far off and distorted, like the anime's relationship to the play itself.

Further complicating this discussion of *Romeo x Juliet*'s words is the fact that the English dub (from "doubles" or "doubling") of the anime provides yet another text (another "bad" quarto). Unlike the subtitles, which are more literal in their translation of the show's Japanese, the dubs recover some of Shakespeare's original language, but, as noted above, these quotations are often out of context.[9] In the balcony scene, the more prosaic "Why are you Romeo?" of the subtitles becomes something more vaguely poetic, but the "Shakespearean" text is not maintained:

Subtitled Version
Juliet
Tell me, Romeo.
Why are you Romeo?
I am Capulet's daughter.
You are Montague's son.
Why did we have to meet?
Why … did we have to fall in love?
Romeo
You have regrets?
Juliet
No, but right now, we are standing so close to one another,
and yet, there is a wall between us,
higher and more treacherous than any mountain.
Romeo [leaping upwards, to Juliet's surprise]
Watch me! I will climb over any wall!
Juliet, as long as I have you, whether it is into a raging storm,
or a dark forest where not even the sun's light shines through, or into roaring flames!
I will leap!
For you, I will renounce the name of Montague.
I am Romeo. I need no other name. (10)

Dubbed Version
Juliet
O Romeo. Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
I am the last daughter of House Capulet
And you the only son of Lord Montague.
Why did fate demand our paths to be crossed?
And why … did we have to love each other?
Romeo
Are you having regrets?
Juliet
No, not at the moment.
I can't feel any regret while you stand so near to me
And yet, there's an insurmountable wall between us that we cannot deny.
Romeo [leaping up]
I will not bow beneath it!
Juliet, for you no storm can foul my compass;
Through the darkest twilight forest I will walk true,
And across a battle's fiery tempest I gladly leap.
For you, I deny Montague and refuse my name.
I am Romeo. Only Romeo. (10, dub)

Viewed textually, these variations represent such substantive changes that an entirely new edition has been created. *Romeo x Juliet* begins to

splinter into at least three different texts—more if we consider additional non-English translations. But this polyphonic multilingualism is already foregrounded in each episode by the disjunctive title pages, each with varying (and often contradictory) titles in English, Italian, and Japanese Kanji. Episode 7 ("Act 7"), for example, is called either "Warmth" or "Just For Now" or "*Il Tocco delle tue Mani*" [The Touch of Your Hands] or "Warm Feeling ~ Only for Now" [in Kanji]. Sometimes these multiple titles work together and sometimes not: Act 8 is titled "Naivety" or "What Justice Is" or "*La* via *piu' facile*" [The easier way] or "Lack of Self-Reliance ~ What is Justice" [in Kanji]; Act 14 is either "Solemn Responsibilities" or "In the Circle of These Arms" or "*La sfida*" [The challenge] or "Heavy Responsibility ~ In my Arms" [in Kanji]; and Act 21 may be "The Covenant" or "The Goddess's Embrace" or "*Da Morire*" [To die for] or "A Rule ~ Embrace of Goddess" [in Kanji].[10]

The heteroglossia that these multiplicities reveal provides a nice parallel to the process of adaptation at play in *Romeo x Juliet*. Mikhail Bakhtin suggests that at any moment, language is stratified into linguistic dialects and socio-ideological languages. For Bakhtin, even "literary language itself is only one of these heteroglot languages—and in turn is also stratified into languages (generic, period-bound, and others)"; in Bakhtin's view, "this stratification and heteroglossia" is what ensures a language's dynamics: "Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work, alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward" (272). This push-pull of linguistic dynamism mirrors the hyper-rhizomatic adaptation: while the larger Shakespearean rhizomatic structure produces nodes that are multiple but connected, the hyperreal pulls at those tenuous connections, and once centering and decentering—pulling towards "Shakespeare" with overt identification and subtle allusion and pulling away from "Shakespeare" with the individual disconnected manifestations. The linguistic disunities within and across *Romeo x Juliet* demonstrate both the stratification and decentralization of Shakespearean language and the process of adaptation/translation itself. For a generation of young Japanese fans, *Romeo x Juliet* is the only "Shakespeare" they will know. Thus, the variation becomes authorized within the Shakespeare rhizome so that the essential nature of the text becomes multiply substantive and individuated. The diversity of authoritative "editions" reveals the fact that even

such a monologically powerful entity as "Shakespeare" is subject to Bakhtin's processes of decentralization and disunification (in language, in criticism, in social/ideological fields). And this vibrant dialectic simultaneously expands and reifies the boundaries of Shakespeare.

This ever widening gyre is hologrammed by the various iterations of the series's opening theme song, "You Raise Me Up," which was originally composed by Rolf Løvland of the duo Secret Garden.[11] Initially, Løvland crafted the song as an instrumental piece entitled "Silent Story," which was itself "a slow air with fragments" of the traditional Irish melody called the "Londonderry Air"—best known today as the tune to Frederic Weatherly's 1910 song "Danny Boy." Løvland eventually approached Irish novelist Brendan Graham to add lyrics to the melody he had created, and in 2003, Secret Garden and their guest lead singer, Brian Kennedy, released the song to minor success in the UK. Since then, the song has been covered by more than a hundred and twenty-five artists, most famously in the US by Josh Groban, in the UK by the Irish band Westlife, and in the Netherlands by *Popstars* winner Wesley Klein. The song has become a favorite choice for talent competitions such as *Popstars*, *The X Factor*, *America's Got Talent*, *Britain's Got Talent*, *Das Supertalent* (Germany's Got Talent), *Operación Triunfo*, *Australian Idol*, *Last Choir Standing*, and *Op zoek naar Joseph* (the Dutch version of the BBC's *Any Dream Will Do*); it has been translated into multiple languages, including Spanish, French, Dutch, German, Japanese, Cantonese, Korean, Swedish, Finnish, Croatian, Welsh, Tahitian, Catalan, and Filipino (Tagalog). For *Romeo x Juliet*, the song was covered in both Japanese and English by Korean-American singer Lena Park.

Below, I have reproduced both the Japanese and the English subtitles that accompany the song (somewhat bizarrely, Funimation provides Japanese rather than English subtitles for approximately half of the episodes in the series). The song is still titled "You raise me up," but the chorus with those words has been lost in Park's translation, although certain elements (stormy seas, passing beyond the limits of time) have been retained. Multilingual Japanese fans familiar with the original lyrics would note this alteration, especially in episodes 7 and 24, when Park sings an English version of the song and maintains Graham's original lyrics:

Park's Version in Japanese and English

Urunda hitomi no oku ni
Kawaranu kimi no sugata
"Doko made sekai wa tsuzuku no"
Todaeta hibi no kotoba

[Chorus]
Kogoeru arashi no yoru mo
Mada minu kimi e tsuzuku
Oshiete umi wataru kaze
Inori wa toki o koeru

Deep in those eyes filled with tears
Is an image of you unchanged
"How far does the world extend?"
Words from days that are no longer

[Chorus]
Even freezing stormy nights
Lead to you, whom I have yet to see
Tell me, wind, you have crossed the oceans
That prayer transcends time

Graham's Original

When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary;
When troubles come and my heart burdened be;
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence,
Until you come and sit awhile with me.

[Chorus]
You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains;
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas;
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders;
You raise me up … to more than I can be.

There is no life—no life without its hunger;
Each restless heart beats so imperfectly;
But when you come and I am filled with wonder,
Sometimes, I think I glimpse eternity.

[Chorus]
You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains;
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas;
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders;
You raise me up … to more than I can be.

Moving from a traditional melody to an instrumental to a ballad with lyrics in English to a ballad with lyrics in Japanese and back to a ballad with lyrics in English, the song corresponds to the experience of adaptation/translation in the way that the content and context shifts and re-shifts with each iteration. Lanier suggests that rhizomatics participates in Shakespeare-as-process "by being responsible finally not to text(s) but to a principle of 'Shakespeare's' ongoing becoming, or, to give it its proper name, radical creativity" ("Rhizomatics" 36). What *Romeo x Juliet* reveals is that the "ongoing becoming" or "radical creativity" of *Romeo and Juliet* has been transferred in this particular cultural moment to a constantly shifting, hyperreal image of great lovers who would die for their love.

This intertwined relationship between love and martyrdom plays out at the end of the anime when "You Raise Me Up" is sung in English over the sacrificial deaths of the lovers and the resultant rejuvenation of the land. But this correlation between love and sacrifice has already been established

in the series when Willy tells Juliet, "Love is something you would unstintingly risk your life for" and Benvolio advises Romeo that love is "an emotion so passionate" that "With that person, you wouldn't mind dying" (1). Thus, the hyperreal *idea* of love-as-sacrifice precedes both the loving and the self-sacrifice well before Juliet submits to the Gardener Ophelia's admonition: "For the sake of harmony upon this land, give thyself as an offering. Bring to life the seed of Escalus, planted within thee, and as a plant cutting, save the world" (21). Similarly, a kind of hypeRomeo-and-Juliet precedes the series itself and ensures the perpetuation of the rhizome through a seed of Shakespeare, which is planted within the anime and, as a plant cutting, gives new life to the play even as it prunes the older hypotext. This rhizomatic image of "Romeo and Juliet" emphasizes the organically evolving nature of the growing and withering larger structure; at the same time, however, the grafting on of new adaptations emphasizes the artificial composition of this particular love story.

In *Romeo x Juliet*, the written constructedness of the tale is underlined by the playwright Willy, who begins crafting "The greatest pure love story of a lifetime" (18). He has already expressed his desire to fashion something remarkable: "Not comedies where men and women switch places and romp about! And not depressing historical dramas or anything like that! But a pure tale of love!" (17). When he witnesses the budding romance between Romeo and Juliet, he tells her, "Watching you as you are now, I feel as though I may be able to write the love story that has eluded me so far. Juliet, give me a love story to write, which will be told through the ages and for all eternity" (9). Unfortunately, Willy's play ultimately provides only an inferior version of the "real" love story, which Juliet ends up writing and re-writing herself—on stage and in life. After she improvises a new scene in Willy's play in order to inspire the people and rally them to her cause, one of the other characters tells the playwright, "Today's play was better than the story you'd written, Willy"; he chuckles and responds, "Reality goes on to transcend the story. Even so, people need stories. In order to survive reality. That's why I'll keep on writing" (19). On the surface, the invocation of a "Shakespearean" playwright seems to reinforce Shakespeare's authority and the early modern text's centrality, but Willy is often a bit ridiculous (even his name diminishes the legendary figure of "the Bard") and his importance is undermined when his narrative is utterly ignored. Juliet asks him, "Tell me, Willy … If … If there were a story where the person had to sacrifice herself to save the world, what would she do?" and he replies, "If it were me, I wouldn't write a story like that" (21). Yet that

story is exactly the narrative of the anime. What is more, in the epilogue-like final monologue, Willy philosophically observes, "Strife, hatred, sorrow, pain. Something that can bring all of those things to an end. That is … love. The joy of loving someone. That is what you [the lovers] taught us" (24). In this line, Willy relinquishes authority to the lovers and tacitly acknowledges that *they* are the true authors of the tragedy (and anime). Perhaps this erasure of the Bard is why some fans and critics feel the need to dismiss the anime series. As Baudrillard observes, the iconoclasts' "rage to destroy images rose precisely because they sensed this omnipotence of simulacra, this facility they have of erasing God from the consciousnesses of people, and the overwhelming, destructive truth which they suggest: that ultimately there has never been any God; that only simulacra exist; indeed that God himself has only ever been his own simulacrum" (172). Perhaps radical adaptations such as *Romeo x Juliet* must be destroyed because bardolaters fear the destructive truth that they represent: that ultimately there has never been any Shakespeare; that only simulacra exist; indeed, that Shakespeare himself has only ever been his own simulacrum.

Notes

1. Borges's flash fiction story features an incredibly detailed, albeit cumbersome, map that is drawn exactly to the same scale as the world itself, matching the terrain "point for point" (141).
2. For more on this "*precession of simulacra*" in connection to *Romeo and Juliet*, please see the Introduction to this volume (Chap. 1).
3. All quotations of *Romeo x Juliet* are from the subtitles unless otherwise noted; parenthetical citations reference the episode or "Act" number. Ellipses have been removed from subtitles except in cases where a distinct pause is indicated; a forward-slash marks those moments where the visual breaks in subtitles from screen to screen would make the text ungrammatical.
4. Except for Titus (and Romeo and Juliet, of course), no eponymous characters from Shakespeare appear in the anime. There are also no characters from the history plays. Of the handful of non-Shakespearean names, "Odin," Juliet's male alias, seems most out of place, connected to neither Shakespeare nor the Italian setting. The dragonhorse Cielo might be a nod to Celia from *As You Like It*, but the other names—with the random exception of Vittorio DiFrescobaldi, Benvolio's father—all appear in connection to the Gradisca Mines: Chief Paolo and the miners Giovanni and Pietro (although these names might be associated with Shakespeare's Italian source material).

5. Likewise, there is no sonnet-like exchange at the lovers' first meeting; in fact, both their first encounter at the Rose Ball (1) and their second in the ruins' iris field (2) are marked by blushing and exaggerated stammering.
6. As in "the folly of earthly desires"; see the Introduction for more information on Brooke, Boaistuau, and other *Romeo and Juliet* predecessors.
7. All quotations of Shakespeare are from *The Norton Shakespeare*, 3rd edition, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: Norton, 2016).
8. In *Hanakotoba* (the language of flowers), the *benibara* (red rose) represents love; the *bara* (white rose) symbolizes innocence, silence, devotion; and the *ayame* (iris) marks good news/glad tidings or loyalty. The iris is also believed to purify the body, protect a household from disease or evil, and shield a warrior in battle. Moreover, the iris has been linked to love and longing in Japan ever since the tenth-century *Tales of Ise*.
9. In her advance review for *activeAnime.com* on 9 Aug 2009, Holly Ellingwood observes, "The dubbed version of the anime does take much more of a divergence in English language from the original Japanese," and notes that it "has worked in more Shakespearean style speaking and even mixed in many Shakespearean quotes throughout."
10. Special thanks to Yuko Sugiura for her assistance in translating the Japanese Kanji.
11. Lena Park's version of "You Raise Me Up" serves as the opening theme for every episode, with her English version sung over the closing credits of the final episode; "Cyclone" by 12012 is the ending theme for the first fourteen episodes, while "Good Bye, Yesterday" by Mizrock ends episodes 15 to 23.

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PART II

Memes and Echoes

CHAPTER 5

"I'll Always Consider Myself Mechanical": Cyborg Juliette and the Shakespeare Apocalypse in Hugh Howey's *Silo Saga*

Charles Conaway

Hugh Howey's science fiction trilogy, the *Silo Saga*, is a post-apocalyptic thriller in which the last members of the human race live underground in huge silos that are nearly 150 stories deep. Shortly after we first meet the trilogy's heroine, Juliette Nichols, in *Wool*, the first novel of the trilogy, we learn that when she was five years old, her parents took her to see a production of *The Tragic Historye of Romeus and Juliette* on one of the distant floors in the silo. Juliette's parents had seen a production of the play years earlier, when they first met, and they named their daughter after the lead female character in the play. Her childhood journey through the silo is a cause for considerable excitement: there are no elevators in the silos, and given that it takes a little over two hours to descend twenty floors on the circular stairwell at the center of the silo, lengthy trips through it are not frequent events (*Wool* 55). While the journey itself is thrilling for the young girl, the performance of the play fails to hold her attention. When the lights dim, and the play begins,

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Juliette soon loses interest and falls asleep. She wakes when the play is over, and her parents take her to the foot of the stage, where she meets the actress who played *The Tragic Historye*'s Juliette. Her father asks the actress for an autograph, and the actress, having learned Juliette's name, signs her annotated rehearsal script and presents it to her. Although Juliette recognizes the fact that her own name appears often in the document—"it was at the beginning of so many sentences," the five-year-old notes (*Wool* 214)—she is unable to read many other words. Nevertheless, she seems to understand the significance of the actress's gesture and her own relation to the play: looking at the script, she realizes "this was her. She looked up at the [actress], understanding at once why her parents had brought her there, why they had walked so far and for so long" through the silo (*Wool* 214). Despite this momentary insight, however, *The Tragic Historye of Romeus and Juliette* does not appear to play a formative role in the development of her character. Howey's novels never articulate anything more specific about the knowledge Juliette might have gained about herself from the script.

Just as puzzling, repeated references to the play-within-the-novel appear in various peripheral inscriptions throughout a twenty-two-chapter section of *Wool*, entitled "The Unraveling." Each chapter is headed by an epigraph: the first, in which Juliette's childhood journey through the silo is recounted, by the title of the fictional play, and the subsequent chapters by one- to three- or four-line quotations from *Romeo and Juliet*. The epigraphs include no references to act, scene, or line numbers, nor do they provide any speech tags or indicate that they can be traced to Shakespeare's play. Rather, they are presented as though they are excerpts from the play-within-the-novel; or, at least, the first epigraph implies as much, as does the fact that "The Unraveling" concludes with an eight-line epilogue that is specifically identified as an excerpt from the fictional play:

> *The world is not thy friend nor the world's law.*
> *Villain and he be many miles asunder.*
> *And all these woes shall serve*
> *for sweet discourses in our time to come.*
> *He that is strucken blind cannot forget*
> *the precious treasure of his eyesight lost.*

One fire burns out another's burning.
one pain is lessen'd by another's anguish.
—*The Tragic Historye of Romeus and Juliette* (*Wool* 325)

Curiously, these eight lines that form the epilogue are plucked from five different parts of Shakespeare's play. They are stitched together and presented as though they are a single, coherent unit, despite the fact that they fail to express any unified, logical sentiment. Furthermore, there seem to be no significant thematic connections between the twenty-two epigraphs and the events in the chapters they precede. Likewise, the play-within-the-novel either misreports or misspells Romeo's name—as it could be said to do with Juliet's.

What purpose, then, is served by these allusions to Shakespeare's text? Why have lines from the play been rearranged? How has Romeo become Romeus, and why has Juliet become Juliette? Perhaps the play-within-the-novel conflates Shakespeare's text with Arthur Brooke's 1562 poem, *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet*. Perhaps not: apart from the fact that the performance Juliette attended began "with a rousing sword fight" and included "a lot of strange words and a man and woman looking at each other the way [Juliette's] parents did," we learn nothing more about the play-within-the-novel (*Wool* 212). We can assume it is in some way related to Shakespeare's play, but we have no specific sense of what it is about or if Shakespeare's meanings have been altered. The only thing we know for certain is that in Howey's post-apocalyptic world, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has become something else—something "(not) Shakespeare." Such a transformation, I will argue, can be explained by examining the trilogy's exploration of the psychological fallout resulting from an apocalyptic event, including the loss and gradual recovery of memory that occurs in its traumatic wake. The trilogy's interest in apocalypse, trauma, and memory also provides the context that helps to reveal how Juliette Nichols becomes "(not) Juliet(te)"—that is, neither Shakespeare's Juliet nor *The Tragic Historye*'s Juliette—but it does not explain how "Shakespeare" becomes "(not) Shakespeare" and vice versa in our own actual world. To explore that process, I will argue, we need to turn our attention from these meditations on apocalypse, trauma, and memory to recent theories of adaptation.

The Shakespeare Apocalypse: "(not) Shakespeare" and the Death of the Author-(Function)

Howey does not directly address the manner by which *Romeo and Juliet* becomes *The Tragic Historye of Romeus and Juliette* in the fictional world of the novels, but the play-within-the-novel is implicitly presented as the collateral damage of a conspiracy to keep the inhabitants of the silos ignorant of pre-silo history. *Shift*, the second novel of the *Silo Saga* trilogy, is set centuries before Juliette makes her entrance in *Wool*. In *Shift*'s prefatory matter, Howey writes briefly about the science that inspired his fiction:

> *In 2007, the Center for Automation in Nanobiotech (CAN) outlined the hardware and software platforms that would one day allow robots smaller than human cells to make medical diagnoses, conduct repairs, and even self-propagate.*
>
> *That same year, CBS re-aired a program about the effects of propranolol on sufferers of extreme trauma. A simple pill, it had been discovered, could wipe out the memory of any traumatic event.*
>
> *At almost the same moment in humanity's broad history, mankind had discovered the means to bring about its utter downfall. And the ability to forget it ever happened.* (*Shift* 1)

Howey assumes that if nanobiotech robots can be programmed to make medical diagnoses and conduct repairs, they can also be weaponized—designed to inflict disease rather than cure it.

In *Shift*, a number of twenty-first century Washington politicians share this assumption, fearing that America's enemies will soon design and develop nanobiotech robots that will be released into the atmosphere where they will target, infect, and exterminate Americans. In an effort to preempt such a catastrophe, the politicians secure the funds necessary to construct fifty-one silos, purportedly in order to contain spent nuclear fuel, but secretly designed to house those who will be chosen to perpetuate the human race after these same politicians initiate a nuclear apocalypse that will wipe out America's enemies, the weaponized, nanobiotech robots they have not yet created, and everyone else on the surface of the planet who will not be fortunate enough to be ushered into one of the silos at the very moment the nuclear apocalypse begins.

Whereas Howey, in the prefatory matter to *Shift*, expresses concerns about the potential effects of propranolol, the Washington politicians in his novel see its ability to make people forget about traumatic events as an opportunity. They are convinced that the survivors and their descendants will not be able to cope with the knowledge that life in the silos is not a natural state but the result of a deliberate nuclear apocalypse. In order to make sure the silo inhabitants do not suffer such psychological trauma, the conspirators dope the silos' water supply with a propranolol-like substance that wipes out the memories of traumatic events and most everything else that precedes them.

Despite these efforts, however, the architects of the apocalypse are unable to eradicate such memories completely. Over the course of centuries, various silo inhabitants occasionally remember fragments of pre-silo history, and they begin to believe—not entirely accurately—that the atmosphere on the surface of the planet might not be as toxic as they have been told. From time to time, these memories inspire uprisings, but the Washington conspirators, who had anticipated as much, ruthlessly smash them, occasionally resorting to the utter destruction of a silo in which an uprising occurs. When Juliette learns the truth about the conspiracy, however, she becomes convinced that life outside the silos might be possible if she can lead a party far enough away from them to escape the toxic environment, which, as she correctly deduces, does not envelop the planet, but is localized around, and in fact produced by, the silos themselves. In *Dust*, the third novel of the trilogy, she successfully leads such an exodus.

In the meantime, however, the propranolol-like substance in the silos' drinking water erases memories of pre-silo *culture* as well as pre-silo *history*, and just as various inhabitants of the silos remember fragments of history, some people remember bits and pieces of pre-silo culture, including, it would seem, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The stitched-together nature of the epilogue from *The Tragic Historye of Romeus and Juliette* and the decontextualized and seemingly free-floating quotes that serve as epigraphs for the twenty-two chapters of "The Unraveling" attest to the fragmented ways in which pre-silo culture is recalled despite the doping efforts of the conspirators. The play-within-the-novel thus appears to be stitched together from random bits of memory, like a post-apocalyptic bad quarto. In the fictional world of Howey's *Silo Saga*, "(not) Shakespeare" emerges from an unsuccessful effort to erase historical and cultural memory.

Howey's concerns about a nanobiotech apocalypse and propranolol's effect on memory, as well as his fictional characters' worries about memories of a nuclear apocalypse, share with James Berger assumptions about a connection between psychological trauma and a post-apocalyptic existence. In *After the End: Representations of Post-Apocalypse*, Berger argues that apocalyptic texts discuss not only the end of days, but what happens after the end: "the end," he writes, "is never the end" (5). "Something is left over, and that world after the world, the *post-apocalypse*, is usually the true object of the apocalyptic writer's concern" (Berger 6). This interest in post-apocalyptic times, Berger contends, can be read as a symptom of the fact that some sort of actual apocalypse has already occurred, and the writers of fictional apocalyptic texts, we should imagine, are trying to work through the trauma such an actual apocalypse has wrought: "Post-apocalyptic representations are simultaneously symptoms of historical traumas and attempts to work through them" (19). Berger reads postmodern theory, literature, writings about the Holocaust, and late twentieth-century Reaganist rhetoric in light of such a claim. If we attempt to read Howey's novels from a Bergerian perspective, we might conclude that his trilogy is symptomatic of the psychological trauma resulting from, say, the 9/11 terrorist attacks: the buried silos can be read as inverted symbols of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, and the doping efforts of the conspirators might be a Reaganist-like effort to deny the existence of the attacks or the possibility that something like them could ever happen again.[1] The fact that pre-silo history cannot be eradicated completely in the novels would signify the return of the repressed and demonstrate our own inability to deny our vulnerability to attack on American soil. Likewise, Juliette's ability to survive with knowledge of pre-silo history intact and her successful escape from the silos might signify Howey's hope that we will be able to work through the trauma of something like the terrorist attacks and put them behind us.

Furthermore, we might read the appearance of the play-within-the-novel and the fact that "Shakespeare" becomes something that is "(not) Shakespeare" as a symptom of another kind of apocalypse—a literary apocalypse involving the loss of a stable text and its ability to reveal or convey a single, coherent meaning. In "The Death of the Author," Roland Barthes encourages us to reconsider the Romantic notion of authorship, wherein the author is "conceived of as the past of his own book" (222). He argues that "a text is not a line of words releasing a

single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (223). The production of meaning, he contends, lies not in writers, but in readers who bring the multiplicity of writings in a text to coherence: "a text's unity," he writes, "lies not in its origin but in its destination" (224). Barthes wants to empower the reader, and he argues that "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (224). For Barthes, then, the death of the author and the loss of a single theological meaning are no cause for alarm, but Berger notes that many other scholars, including Jean Baudrillard, Fredric Jameson, and Jean-François Lyotard, express concerns related to similar postmodern observations about narrative and representation.[2] Howey's trilogy might share such concerns: the silo inhabitants' loss of memory, followed by the gradual and piecemeal recovery of it, as well as the cobbled-together nature of seemingly unrelated quotes to create a text that is "(not) Shakespeare" might represent our everyday processes of adaptation, appropriation, allusion, parody, and pastiche, and they might signify lingering anxieties about the birth of the reader and the death of the writer's authority in fixing meaning. They suggest a fear that we are in the midst of a Shakespeare apocalypse in which the text and the writer as we thought we knew them no longer exist.

Whereas it is possible to read Juliette's successful uprising and escape from the silos as a symbolic process of working through the trauma of 9/11, however, there is no effort to work through such a Shakespeare apocalypse in Howey's novels. None of the characters actively investigates how *Romeo and Juliet* became *The Tragic Historye of Romeus and Juliette*, nor does anyone consider the fact that someone must have written the play-within-the-novel. The Shakespeare apocalypse in the *Silo Saga*, then, might not only represent anxieties about the Death of the Author, it might also dramatize the death of the Author-Function. No one attempts to apply to the play-within-the-novel any name that performs the sort of "classificatory function" that Michel Foucault describes where we "group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from, and contrast them to others" (147). For Foucault, the Author-Function problematically privatizes narrative discourse: the author is "a certain functional principle," he writes, "by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition,

decomposition, and recomposition of fiction" (159). Foucault might therefore celebrate the death of the Author-Function, and to some extent, Howey might join him. He is, after all, engaging playfully with the idea of the death of the author, cutting up Shakespeare's text and rearranging it in occasionally incomprehensible form. The fact that neither Shakespeare's name nor anyone else's is associated with the play-within-the-novel might indicate a seemingly playful engagement with the death of the Author-Function. Then again, it might not. Howey's preface to *Shift* indicates concern about a pharmaceutically induced loss of memory, and the Shakespeare apocalypse in his novels is presented as an unintended consequence of a conspiracy to provoke such memory loss. Furthermore, Howey is a vociferous champion of self-publishing, and is critical of the economics of the book publishing world. If the depiction of *The Tragic Historye of Romeus and Juliette* in the *Silo Saga* is symptomatic of postmodern anxieties about the death of the author and the loss of a stable, coherent text, then the failure to work through the Shakespeare apocalypse and the apparent death of the Author-Function might very well be symptomatic of Howey's concerns about the inability of writers to make a living when working with agents and the major publishing houses.

The Revelation of Juliet(te)

Just as "Shakespeare" becomes "(not) Shakespeare" in Howey's novels, his main character, Juliette Nichols, becomes "(not) Juliet(te)" when she deliberately attempts to work through a number of traumatic experiences. *Wool* opens with the presentation of a number of characters who deal with trauma and the repression and return of memories, not only from pre-silo history, but also from various personal tragedies. The first character we meet, for example, is Holston, the sheriff of Silo 18, who is haunted by the death of his wife, Allison. Three years before *Wool* begins, Allison was conducting research into an uprising from Silo 18's history. During her investigation, she came to believe the environment outside the silo was not toxic. She became obsessed with the idea and ran to the silo's airlock, crying "I want to go out" (*Wool* 23), words that result in immediate expulsion from the silo. She was promptly banished and sent out into the poisoned atmosphere surrounding the silo, where she died. Three years later, when *Wool* begins, Holston remains traumatized by his

wife's death and declares his own desire to leave the silo. He, too, is sent above ground, where he meets the same fate as his wife.

After the death of Holston, Silo 18's Mayor Jahns is forced to find a new sheriff. Juliette, who once helped Holston during an investigation, emerges as one of the leading candidates for the job. Jahns therefore embarks on a two-day journey down the silo stairwell to its lowest floors in order to interview Juliette, who works in the depths of the silo as a mechanic. During her trek, we learn that Mayor Jahns has also lost a spouse. She does not reach the depths of Holston's despair, but her sadness at the sheriff's demise and the recollection of her husband's death lead her to think that it is "better to join a ghost than to be haunted by them. Better no life than an empty one—" (*Wool* 106). As she descends into the depths of the silo, she dismally concludes that the meaning is simply and only "for the people to keep the machines running" and not "the other way around" (*Wool* 105).

Jahns does not take her own life, but she is inadvertently poisoned, and Juliette then emerges as the main character of *Wool*. Like Jahns and Holston, Juliette has also been traumatized by the loss of a loved one. The case she had helped Sheriff Holston investigate concerned the death of her lover, George. Juliette admits to a painful "hollowness left by her lover's death" (*Wool* 127), and after she accepts the offer to become Silo 18's sheriff, she likens herself to Holston, noting that "she had loved a man once and knew what [losing someone] felt like" (*Wool* 133). She imagines that if she had been in Holston's shoes, she too might have been driven to follow her loved one out of the airlock. Such sentiments, along with the serial presentation of characters who are in mourning, invite us to read Juliette as someone who is very much like Holston and Jahns, and given that she and George "had loved in secret" (*Wool* 133), not informing anyone else about their relationship, she might also be said to resemble Shakespeare's Juliet. But Howey's Juliette also differs significantly from these three characters. She finds no "happy dagger" (*Rom.* 5.3.168) with which she can end her own life, nor does she fall into a Jahns-like doldrums or sink, like Holston, into the depths of despair. Juliette certainly feels the loss of her loved one and sympathizes with Holston and Jahns, but she does not attempt to "leap […] / From off the battlements of any tower" (*Rom.* 4.1.77–78)—or from any stairwell within the silo—nor does she search for a "friendly drop [of poison] / To help [her] after" (*Rom.* 5.3.163–64).[3]

Rather, Juliette finds a new purpose in life. When she recalls her efforts to help Holston investigate the death of George, for example, she likens the experience to her job as a mechanic: "the process had been similar to fixing a machine on extra shifts. There was pain in her body from the effort and exhaustion, offset slightly by the knowledge that a rattle had been wrenched away" (*Wool* 127). She seems to have been, not traumatized to the point of despair, but actively and therapeutically engaged in an endeavor to solve a problem. In fact, this desire to solve and fix problems stems from Juliette's response to another profoundly traumatic loss that occurred some twenty years before the death of George. When Juliette was thirteen, her younger brother was born prematurely. He was placed in an incubator but died when the incubator failed to work properly. Juliette's mother, stricken with grief, "killed herself a week later" (*Wool* 60). Juliette's attention soon fixed on "the incubator that had failed" (*Wool* 60), and at that moment she decided she would no longer become a nurse, like her mother, but would instead "move down to Mechanical" (*Wool* 60). There, she could devote herself to reparative and preventative maintenance.

Whereas Shakespeare's Juliet takes up a dagger and thrusts it, presumably, into her heart, reducing her body to the dagger's "sheath" in which it might "rust" and grow idle (*Rom.* 5.3.169), Howey's Juliette forges an altogether different relationship between her body and the technology she uses when she becomes a mechanic. She fixes the silo's generator, repairs an air compressor, descends eight flooded floors to start a silo's sump pumps, and operates an enormous excavator to tunnel from the base of one silo to another when she leads a party out of them. In fact, our introduction to her occurs when Mayor Jahns is led to the lowest level of the silo, where Juliette is repairing its massive generator:

> The power and energy in the room were palpable. As they reached the end of the second machine, Jahns finally saw a solitary figure working beside it. A young-looking woman in overalls, a hard hat on, brown braided hair hanging out the back, was leaning into a wrench nearly as long as she was tall. Her presence gave the machines a terrifying sense of scale, but she didn't seem to fear them. She threw herself into her wrench, her body frightfully close to the roaring unit, reminding Jahns of an old children's tale where a mouse pulled a barb out of an imaginary beast called an elephant. The idea of a woman this size fixing a machine of such ferocity seemed absurd. (*Wool* 85)

If the figurative expressions—where Jahns notes that Juliette was "leaning into a wrench nearly as long as she was tall" and that she "threw herself into her wrench"—are read literally, they suggest that Juliette's body is incorporated into the tools she uses. So, too, does Juliette's claim that, even though she has accepted the offer to become sheriff, "I'll always consider myself Mechanical, and I'll be doing this partly because I see what happens when problems are ignored. My big push down here has been preventive maintenance" (*Wool* 102). Here, Juliette vows that her agenda as sheriff will be similar to her methodology as a mechanic: she will try to prevent problems from occurring. But her expression—that she considers herself "mechanical," as compared to, say, "mechanically inclined"—like the moment where she is described as throwing herself into her wrench, collapses the distinction between flesh and machine.

Juliette's use of tools—her relationship with technology—presents her in a fashion that invokes Donna Haraway's notion of the feminist cyborg. Haraway argues that even though we are not cyborgs in the conventional sense of beings with both organic and bionic parts, we should think of ourselves as cyborgs because the distinction between ourselves and technology is not as clear as we might imagine. Ever since we have taken up tools, it has been possible to think of technology as an extension of our bodies: "we are given mobility by airplanes and automobiles, as well as legs; we communicate through telephones and TVs as well as mouths; we extend the speed of our thinking with computers and our capacity for storing knowledge in libraries, hard discs, and the Internet," as well as in our heads (Richter 1928). Juliette clearly functions as a being whose corporeal limits are extended by and through technology. Furthermore, Haraway claims that the cyborg challenges the distinction, not only between flesh and machine, but also between masculine and feminine. The female body traditionally serves as the grounds for the subjugation of women, but Haraway's notion of the cyborg, which retools the locus of identity by noting the ways in which the body is augmented by technology, troubles masculinist efforts to subjugate women. When Mayor Jahns is surprised to find Juliette attempting to fix the silo's generator, she claims it is "absurd" (*Wool* 85), confessing, among other things, that Juliette's cyborg status troubles her own assumption that gender, especially a mouse-like femininity, is supposed to be grounded in the body.

Juliette's status as a cyborg is most profoundly demonstrated when she takes up the pen. Near the conclusion of her essay, Haraway argues

that literacy might be the most important technology for women to employ, noting that it is through writing that women are disempowered, and she encourages women to "seiz[e] the tools to mark the world that marked them as other" (2215). In Howey's trilogy, we learn that years after attending the production of the play-within-the-novel—well after she had become a mechanic, but sometime before *Wool* begins—Juliette repurposed the document that had been autographed and given to her as a child. She used the script's blank back pages to write a "Main Generator Control Room Operation Manual" (*Wool* 233), thus rewriting the text that so often reprinted her name and led her to the conclusion, when it was first presented to her, that "this was her" (*Wool* 214), as though her life and meaning were contained in its pages. Howey's Juliette is a cyborg who chooses her own path, selects her own profession, and rewrites her own prescribed identity.

Finally, his heroine is not only capable of such self-improvements, but she also leads a handful of others out of the silos to begin a new life. Berger notes that apocalyptic narratives frequently harbor "a radical but frustrated humanism" that is evidenced in their hope for a post-apocalyptic revelation that will lead to the creation of one sort of New Jerusalem or another (9), and he likens such revelations to the psychological process of working through trauma. In Howey's novel, the revelation of Juliette—her effort to work through trauma—is apparent in her decision to revise her identity, become a mechanic, and help others by leading an exodus from the silos to a New Jerusalem, and in the process, she clearly demonstrates that she is "(not) Juliet(te)"—that is, neither Shakespeare's Juliet nor *The Tragic Historye*'s Juliette.

Shakespeare Is Dead: Long Live Shakespeare

The efforts of the Washington conspirators to erase historical and cultural memory might adequately explain how "Shakespeare" becomes "(not) Shakespeare" in the fictional world of the *Silo Saga*, and they might symbolically represent lingering anxieties about the death of the author and the loss of a stable and coherent "Shakespeare," but the relationship between apocalypse, psychological trauma, and memory does not explain how "Shakespeare" becomes "(not) Shakespeare" in our own actual time and place. That process can be better explained by considering the dual nature of texts. For readers of Howey's trilogy, for example, *The Tragic Historye of Romeus and Juliette* is both "Shakespeare"

and "(not) Shakespeare." Readers recognize that the title of the play-within-the-novel and the names of the lead characters are not quite right—not quite Shakespeare. But they are close enough to invite comparison, and even if the Author-Function is dead in Howey's fictional world, it is not in ours. The characters' names, the epigraphs, the epilogue, the not-quite-right title, and Howey's failure to identify the fictional author of the play-within-the-novel fuel the cultural compulsion to apply the Foucauldian "classificatory function" to *The Tragic Historye*. The reader's comparison has already supplied the name, and so "(Not) Shakespeare" is taken for "Shakespeare" despite the fact that we know it is not quite right. The play-within-the-novel thus possesses a dual nature, or multi-identity, which, as recent theories about adaptation reveal, is shared with all other texts that adapt or are adapted.

Following the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Douglas Lanier describes the relationship between Shakespeare and mass culture as rhizomatic. Lanier purposefully avoids close readings of individual adaptations and urges us to attend to how "Shakespeare is constituted as a specific collection of qualities, intensities, and tendencies in flux at any moment in history" (113). "By thinking of Shakespeare as a collectively created, adaptational rhizome rather than a body of texts appropriated by single adaptors," he continues, we might be "better able to chart the ever-nomadic paths of Shakespearean cultural capital" (113). Lanier argues that adaptations are part of an aggregate—a network—that continually reshapes our understanding of Shakespeare. One of the benefits of such an approach to the study of Shakespeare and adaptation is that it decentralizes Shakespeare, in effect limiting his literary authority even as it tracks the spread of his cultural capital. But there are other approaches to the study of Shakespeare and adaptation, including a focus on what Christy Desmet has termed "small-time Shakespeare": "individual acts of 're-vision'" (2) that emerge from "local, more pointed responses to the bard, [and satisfy] motives ranging from play, to political commitment, to agonistic gamesmanship" (3). If we focus our attention exclusively on a collectively created, adaptational rhizome, distinctions between individual texts and the pointed responses they might make to Shakespeare and culture go unnoticed. Furthermore, the adaptational rhizome tends to regard "Shakespeare" and "(not) Shakespeare," not as distinct entities that might be mistaken for each other, but as mutually constituting parts of an aggregate in which each becomes decreasingly like itself and increasingly like the other.

Other models of adaptation, however, attempt to account for the distinctions between individual texts even as they recognize their participation in the formation of an aggregate that collectively constitutes our understanding of Shakespeare. Focusing primarily on printed editions of texts, for example, Joseph Grigely argues that we tend to privilege editions that "emphasize authorial involvement, either in the process of composing a work (whereby drafts, fair copies, transcripts, and proofs are considered as having relative authority), or in the process of revising published texts" in scholarly editions that attempt to recover the author's original intention (31). Nevertheless, Grigely reminds us, these privileged texts "do not encompass the entire textual history of the work and the vicissitudes of their relation to the reading public across a time span of decades or centuries" (31). Grigely therefore draws a distinction between the idea of an individual text and the "work"—a network or "assemblage of texts" that includes drafts, the "original" text, second editions, and so on (99). The work, Grigely argues, is an aggregate produced by a series of texts.

Other scholars have expanded on Grigely's ideas by adding theatrical performances, adaptations, and even fan fiction to our understanding of the work. Whereas Grigely claims that theatrical performances are derivative of scripted texts and therefore not worthy of our consideration as part of the work, Margaret Jane Kidnie argues that "performance and [the scripted] text are both, in their different ways, instances of the work" (28). But Kidnie then wants to draw distinctions between authentic productions of Shakespeare, on the one hand, and adaptations on the other. She argues that the classification of a performance as either authentic "Shakespeare" or inauthentic and "(not) Shakespeare" can help us see how people attempt to "regulate a work's identity and [define] what will count as adaptation" (161). The boundary between "Shakespeare" and "(not) Shakespeare" might shift over time, she claims, but the identity categories themselves remain distinct: adaptations are not authentic Shakespeare.

However, "adaptation" is a term, as Linda Hutcheon reminds us, which describes both a product and a process (8–9 and 18–22). Thomas Cartelli and Katherine Rowe follow this logic when they argue that "every copy, edition, display, publication, exhibit, recording, or performance of an artwork is fundamentally an *adaptation*, in that it reframes prior versions of that work in new environments, periods, and material, and for new purposes" (28). Adaptation, they conclude, "is the very

mechanism by which culture transmits its classic works: unmaking and remaking them, renegotiating their meaning in specific reception contexts" (28). In such a light, we can say that all of the texts in the series of texts that comprise a work are adaptations, and we arrive at a model of the work that is not limited by any notion of authenticity but is constituted in adaptation. We might therefore expand our definition of the work so that it includes not only drafts, the "original" text, second editions, and so on, but also theatrical performances, adaptations, and the appropriations, allusions, parodies, and pastiches that haunt some postmodern theorists. Peter S. Donaldson expands even further such a model of the work when he argues that for fans of *Star Wars*, the "film is but one element in a larger imaginative work" (465): "merchandise, toys, novels made from films, websites and the spectrum of fan reworkings" (465) are all part of the imaginative work, *Star Wars*.[4]

Such a notion of the aggregate work that constitutes Shakespeare accounts for the ways in which a text might be thought of as both "Shakespeare" and "(not) Shakespeare." On the one hand, Brooke's poem, Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, other films such as *Gnomeo and Juliet*, and even the *Curtain Call at Bedrock* episode of the *Flintstones*, in which Fred, Wilma, Barney, and Betty stage the play, *Romeo Rock and Juliet Stone*, are texts that remain distinct from each other. Each is an individual act of revision, motivated by local interests, and attributable to a different author. As such, they are clearly "(not) Shakespeare" texts. On the other hand, however, they can also be thought of as texts in a series of texts that comprise the work, *Romeo and Juliet*—a work whose title begs for the application of that Foucauldian classificatory function that delimits and privatizes intellectual property in the name of "Shakespeare."

Although Howey's fictional play-within-the-novel possesses such a dual nature, we know next to nothing about it. We have no way to assess any small-time contribution it might make to our understanding of Shakespeare, Romeo, Juliet, or even the cultural politics of its own fictional time and place. We know considerably more about Juliette Nichols, who possesses a similarly dual nature. She is a character in a text that helps constitute the work, *Romeo and Juliet*, and in that sense, she can be marked as "Shakespeare." But she is also a character in Howey's trilogy rather than Shakespeare's play—a mechanic who lives underground in a post-apocalyptic world rather than a star-crossed lover from Verona—so she can just as easily be considered "(not) Shakespeare," and

having repurposed the script of the play-within-the-novel, she is likewise distinct from its Juliette, even though she was named after her. Juliette Nichols is thus both "Juliet(te)" and "(not) Juliet(te)." Howey's small-time, pointed response to Shakespeare refashions and expands upon our sense of Shakespeare's character—or should I say, the character in the work *Romeo and Juliet*—presenting a feminist cyborg who takes up the tools that are available to her and tries to work through the trauma of personal tragedy rather than yield to any sort of despair.

Notes

1. For Berger's take on Reaganist rhetoric, see Chap. 5: "'Achieved Utopias': The Reaganist Post-Apocalypse," in *After the End*, 133–168.
2. See Berger's Chap. 2: "Trauma and the End of the World," in *After the End*, 19–56.
3. All quotations of Shakespeare are from *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: Norton, 2008).
4. For a lengthier discussion of the relationship between text and work from Grigely to Donaldson, as well as the ways in which the aggregate work itself provides material for adaptation, see Conaway, "'The … Monster which doth mock / The meat it feeds on': R.E.M.'s *Monst(e)r*ous *Othello*."

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CHAPTER 6

Guest Starring *Hamlet*: The Proliferation of the Shakespeare Meme on American Television

Kristin N. Denslow

Memes are easily identifiable by those who can recognize them, and they often work as a form of cultural shorthand. So, on the Internet, characters like "Ermahgerd Girl" or "Overly Attached Girlfriend" immediately suggest an interpretive framework for the viewer. But the content—that is to say the written text—must change in each transmutation. The juxtaposition of familiar image with unfamiliar text, compounded by the potential for virality, is precisely what makes a meme a meme. This dynamic relationship between repetition and revision serves as an apt metaphor for the work of literary adaptation. The concept of the meme, a term associated with Internet culture but coined by Richard Dawkins to describe a unit of cultural transmission, describes how versions of Shakespeare's texts, narratives, and themes replicate and proliferate in popular culture, in important respects decoupled from the text of the play and its standing in the artistic and critical canon. In other words, as a meme, a play such as *Hamlet* can circulate continuously and

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unconsciously, not always bound to the Bard's reputation and his oeuvre, and other cultural artifacts can pick it up unintentionally.

In this essay, I focus on what I refer to as the ghost meme in *Hamlet*, which I define as a narrative device of the haunting of a son by the ghost of his deceased father, an action that produces some form of inaction or indecision in the son. I am using the word "meme" to indicate an identifiable narrative unit that can be isolated within the text and considered across many texts. Like the *Romeo and Juliet* meme that Daniel Fischlin identifies, the ghost meme is recognizable, but, unlike his example taken from *The Hunger Games*, the examples that I cite here of the ghost meme are subtle, (mostly) unacknowledged narrative devices that resemble *Hamlet*. Several twenty-first century television series—including *Lost*, *Six Feet Under*, *Sons of Anarchy*, *Gossip Girl*, and *Arrested Development*—deploy a *Hamlet*-like narrative arc, yet none of them, with the exception of *Sons of Anarchy*, acknowledges a direct relationship to *Hamlet* as a source text. Thus, the appearance of a ghost meme becomes doubly haunted and uncanny in a way that relates to the concept of the meme more broadly. That is to say, the reading of this particular meme in its unacknowledged form reinforces an understanding of memes in general and the lines of what makes a text Shakespeare or not Shakespeare. The presence (or absence) of the meme at any given moment in these television series can have an uncanny effect on a privileged viewer—privileged meaning, here, the heightened state of awareness about a Shakespearean presence. One must acknowledge a certain forcing of the critical reading of these television series, a desire to make them count as Shakespeare. At every turn, "Shakespeare" feels just out of reach, only to return forcefully with another moment, another scene in which the Shakespearean character is present. This reading does not seek to elevate these texts by their association with Shakespeare. Rather, the forced reading is performed in order to bring to light that something might be missing precisely because the series' creators did not—for whatever reason—make explicit (or perhaps recognize at all) the associations with *Hamlet* that my argument will demonstrate to be relevant and productive new readings of the series.

These television series offer particularly interesting adjustments of the *Hamlet* narrative, even as they refrain, nearly studiously, from citing the play itself. These series, though typically defined by their intertextual engagement with other cultural artifacts, thus register the ghost meme retroactively as presumably accidental citations of Shakespeare. Since the

series' narrative arcs are never openly grounded in the text of *Hamlet*, referring to them as adaptations, references, spin-offs, or citations would be inaccurate. In each, a Hamlet analogue is able to contend with the ghost of his father, particularly because these ghostly fathers are symbolically or procedurally alive in the series. In series such as *Lost*, *Six Feet Under*, and *Sons of Anarchy*, the father figures are deceased, but the hallucinations of the Hamlet characters bring the fathers back to life. In these three series, closure can occur only by the death of the Hamlet character. In other series, characters such as Chuck Bass in *Gossip Girl* and the Bluth sons in *Arrested Development* deal with a metaphorical ghost in the form of an absentee father. By re-scripting the *Hamlet* narrative, the two series are able to avoid an ending in which Hamlet—and the rest of the Danish court—must die. Considering these television series as examples of Shakespearean memes helps us to delineate between "Shakespeare" and "Not Shakespeare" by demonstrating that Shakespeare's cultural "stickiness" is a product of the dual instinct for repetition and revision.

Appropriating memetic terminology supports an understanding of the often-uncanny, artificial divide that exists between "Shakespeare" and "Not Shakespeare." More specifically, like a meme, which can move both consciously and unconsciously, Shakespeare appears in odd, unexpected places. The meme, as I will define it below, connotes constant, compulsive circulation combined with both purposeful and accidental repackaging. This is not to say that human agency is altogether removed from the equation. Rather, humans sometimes play a crucial if largely passive role in the distribution of a meme. As products of cultural circulation, memes are bound to be taken up without intent.

Richard Dawkins coined the term meme in his book *The Selfish Gene* and defined it as a unit of cultural transmission roughly analogous to the gene. This single chapter in a longer text concerned with genetics proposes the term—shortened from "mimeme" and capitalizing on the relationship to both "memory" and the French word *même*—to "[convey] the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation" (192). A meme that "sticks" has three qualities: copying-fidelity, fecundity, and longevity. That is to say, a successful meme will have some amount of fidelity in copying its source, and it will copy that source frequently and over a long period of time. Rather than being a perfectly mimetic replication, the meme always involves some degree of change and adaptation to a new symbolic environment. As Bortolotti and Hutcheon clarify in the context of narrative adaptation, "copying actually means changing with

each replication—most often, changing medium" but "recognition of the narrative [their equivalent for meme] has to be possible: some copying-fidelity is needed, precisely because of the changes across media and contexts" (447). This copy-with-a-difference can be described in terms of mutation; a meme's mutation will help the source to survive, albeit in slightly different, more resilient forms. Long-term survival requires a certain amount of "stickiness"; that is, successful memes become deeply embedded in cultural consciousness.

It is in this vein that memes are most applicable to adaptation studies, given the recent rapid proliferation of what Susan Blackmore calls "meme-copying machinery," an evolution that began with print but continues in television, film, and the Internet. The increasing fidelity and fecundity of memes due to the spread and power of these replication machineries result in an increased influence of memes on individuals and cultural forms. At the same time, however, technology leaves a memetic footprint, allowing one to trace the trajectory (or heredity) of individual memes in a way that was not available in the past. Thus, even though most studies of memes are conducted primarily in the social and behavioral sciences, the study of memes and their replication may help us understand the way that literary texts move and evolve in culture. The tropology of heredity is in fact another memetic structure that has overlaid the study of adaptation and appropriation, since each generation (or new adaptation) provides a variation with a difference.

The slightly different but related concept of the Internet meme sheds additional light on the subject of the line between Shakespeare and not Shakespeare. Internet memes rely on the repackaging of images or videos which then turn "viral" and spread quickly on the Internet. In this highly participatory genre, each meme contributes to a larger collection of texts, causes, events, and ideas. Many can immediately call to mind an example of a viral Internet sensation, from Beyoncé's 2008 hit music video "Single Ladies" to "The Evolution of Dance." These viral videos become memes when users begin to modify and repackage them. So, for example, the original "Evolution of Dance" video—in which comedian Judson Laipply danced to thirty-two songs in six minutes—was parodied by others and inspired such appropriations as Jimmy Fallon and Michelle Obama's "The Evolution of Mom Dancing." Applying this principle to Shakespeare suggests that the plays written by Shakespeare not only include his own repackaging of various memes, but also that his plays spread in the manner of Internet memes. They are continually

repackaged and spread throughout culture in a variety of contexts—historical, national, medial, etc. This reworking and revision takes place in all adaptive scenarios, from theatrical performance to spin-off. Yet, a Shakespearean meme can demonstrate a more radical form of adaptation in that any unit can be fragmented from the Shakespearean corpus and reintegrated into a new medial environment. Sometimes these references are not announced as such for reasons as diverse as political suppression, psychological repression, or sheer coincidence, yet they continue to repeat and to circulate, sometimes without intent or acknowledgment.

The ghost meme is one meme among many in the *Hamlet* "memeplex" (a network of related memes), but unlike the image of Hamlet holding Yorick's skull—which registers as primarily visual—or the verbal meme of "To be or not to be […]," the ghost meme relies on recognizing a narrative consisting of a son stuck in a state of inaction and ennui as a result of being visited by the father's ghost. The ghost meme reduces and oversimplifies the plot and criticism of *Hamlet*, resulting in very broad, limited readings of Hamlet's haunting, revenge, and inaction, rather than other themes, lines, or critically-justifiable readings of the play. Typically, the ghost meme involves such thematic issues as vengeance, guilt, and psychological trauma, as well as some sort of narrative story-telling element (again, in contrast to a Shakespeare meme that signifies primarily linguistically or visually, like the hoisting of Yorick's skull). Most importantly, the (potentially accidental) presentation of the ghost meme in popular television relies on a psychoanalytically-inflected cultural shorthand that substitutes *Hamlet* for a character's imprecisely-defined "daddy issues." The presence of the father's ghost is precisely what produces the son's sense of duty and failure. Interestingly, each of the series presented here centers on a white, straight, privileged young man who is haunted by his father's ghost. There is a lack of diversity in the types of characters who experience this type of psychological drama.

Ghostly visitations appear in a variety of literary contexts, and it is important to recognize that what I am terming the ghost meme here may not always register as Shakespearean to all viewers. The narratives in question do not require knowledge of Shakespeare—or even a connection *to* Shakespeare—in order to comprehend them. Instead, the ghost meme has a life of its own independent from a suturing to Shakespeare's oeuvre. Yet, calling attention to the striking similarities between these series and connecting them to Shakespeare's plays—whose own use of the ghost meme is not necessarily original—offers a greater sense of the

way that texts move in culture. Like an Internet meme that has gone viral, narrative units can be adapted in generation after generation, possibly without awareness of a debt to a source, which may or may not be ghostly itself.

Series such as *Lost*, *Six Feet Under*, and *Sons of Anarchy* include storylines in which the main character, over the course of the entire series, must deal with the ghostly return of a deceased father. In each of these examples, the ghost meme follows a fairly faithful, albeit usually unacknowledged, form, in which the Hamlet character is drawn into a space of isolation and melancholy following the appearance of the ghost and can only fully move past that space by dying. In the ABC series *Lost*, for example, Jack Shephard, who is arguably the series's protagonist, is marooned on a seemingly deserted island along with the other passengers from his trans-oceanic flight. Though the series in many ways contains echoes of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Jack's story arc also has some resonance with *Hamlet*. Jack boarded the flight from Australia to Los Angeles in order to bring the body of his father—Christian Shephard—back to the United States for his funeral. After the plane crashes, Jack is immediately thrown into the role of group leader; as a medical doctor, he is able to heal the wounded, yet he also finds himself playing the roles of sheriff, judge, and commanding officer. All of his heroism, however, comes to a halt when he begins to see what appears to be the ghost of his father appear randomly on the island ("White Rabbit"). He chases this ghost deeper and deeper into the jungle. Jack has no Horatio to attempt to reign him in:

> What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
> Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
> That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
> And there assume some other horrible form
> Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,
> And draw you into madness? (1.4.69–74)

Instead, Jack follows the ghost past all point of reason, tumbling over cliffs in the process. In what might be one more uncanny coincidence, the first appearances of Jack's father are in season one, episodes four and five, thus mirroring the first appearance of the ghost to Hamlet in act 1, scenes 4 and 5.

Jack's mental state in the "White Rabbit" episode is revealed not only through his panicked chasing after his father's ghost, but also through flashbacks that reveal the intricacies of the father/son relationship. Here, we have a son who attempts to live up to his father's legacy—he is a surgeon in a hospital where his father is the chief of medicine—but who ultimately betrays that father by reporting to a medical board that a patient's death was the result of his father's drinking. Jack thus plays the role of both Hamlet and Claudius; he is the son living in his father's shadow and also the one who betrays the father, ultimately causing his death, albeit indirectly. Once Christian is stripped of his medical license, he flees to Australia, where he drinks himself to death. Jack's own trip to Australia was to bring his father's body back, but, when Jack boards that fated flight, the airline attempts to block the transportation of a dead body. Jack insists, "I need it to be done. I need it to be over. I just … I need to bury my father" ("White Rabbit").

It is often repeated that the island in *Lost* exists to help its inhabitants find their best selves. Jack's character, initially defined by his agency and heroism in the face of extreme circumstances, is hindered from being the man he believes he can be because of his conflicted issues with his father. He struggles with guilt over betraying his father, as well as a fear of failure. Early flashbacks in the series show his father's coldness toward Jack, as well as Jack's repeated attempts to gain his father's respect. Once on the island, the presence of his father's ghost and the memories of his overbearing and judgmental father serve to paralyze Jack's mental and emotional states. Unlike the ghost in *Hamlet*, this one does not necessarily seek revenge—in fact, later seasons suggest it is another of the island's illusions. But, like Hamlet, Jack goes through a process of self-discovery and inner conflict as a result of the dead father's appearance. In the final episode of the series, Jack ultimately gives in to what he believes is his fate; he dies trying to accomplish what is right.

On the HBO series *Six Feet Under*, Nate Fisher, like Jack, must deal with the sudden death of his father, a father that Nate has spent much of his life avoiding. Nate's father, Nathaniel, dies in an auto accident in the show's pilot when a bus strikes the hearse he is driving. Nate moves home to help run the family's funeral home, a job for which his brother, David, is clearly more qualified. Over the course of the series, Nathaniel's ghost repeatedly visits Nate, prompting thoughtful father/son conversations. Nate's "daddy issues" in the show are not like those of Jack; while

Jack struggles with guilt over his betrayal of Christian, Nate struggles with guilt over not spending more time with Nathaniel. In one early episode, "The Room," Nate discovers that his father has kept a room for years as a space in which to get away from the family. Nate imagines his father in the space, and interrogates the ghost about what he was doing here. His father finally responds, "Why couldn't you ask me when I was still alive?!" This father-son tension comes up in another episode, "The Foot," in which Nate is deliberating about whether or not to stay and run the funeral home or sell it to a corporation. His father, exasperated by his son, finally erupts, "You could make a difference. Fine, go back to peddling soy milk and nailing waitresses. What do I care? I'm dead." The ghostly visitations allow Nate to imagine a sense of closure by giving him an opportunity to connect after death. Like Jack, Nate dies suddenly at the end of the series, and it is only through this death that he is able to find any peace.

In many ways, the FX series *Sons of Anarchy* is an outlier in terms of the ghost meme because its creators consciously and vocally attempted to recreate the story of *Hamlet* as the drama of a violence-prone motorcycle club. Jax Teller, the series' protagonist and Hamlet equivalent, has grown up as the chosen son of the gang. Jax's father was tragically killed in a motorcycle accident when Jax was a baby, and his mother, Gemma, quickly remarries. The show is obsessed with fathers and sons. Not only does the audience witness Jax's conflicted sense of paternal loyalty, but we also see Jax as a father. His son, Abel, is born in the first season of the series. Early in the series, Jax comes across his father's journals, and this discovery prompts his journey to find himself, to find his father, and to right the wrongs of the motorcycle club. Unlike the other series that I study here, *Sons of Anarchy* does not include the ghost of Jax's father visiting him. Instead, we see his father speaking to him through the journals he kept before his death. These journals fundamentally change Jax's relationship with the rest of the motorcycle club; they take him out of his comfort zone and launch him into a destructive search for the truth. As with the Hamlet analogues above, the series ends with Jax's death; he willingly sacrifices himself in order to right the wrongs of the previous generation.

In each of these examples, the series ends with the death of the Hamlet figure, which is the only way to escape the demands of and psychological reality of the dead father's ghost. In this way, the story arcs present a *Hamlet*-like narrative. There is neither duel nor poison in the

closing episodes, but there are plenty of ready comparisons between the play's characters, settings, and themes and those presented by the television series.

The series *Gossip Girl*, in contrast to the examples cited earlier, rewrites the ending of *Hamlet*, giving the Hamlet character a way to work through the emotional stunting that the father's return causes. This teen soap from the CW network might initially appear to be a strange place to stalk a Shakespeare meme, yet, in addition to a steady stream of Shakespeare references, the show often resonates with *Hamlet* thematically by way of its representations of surveillance culture. *Gossip Girl* follows the lives and loves of elite Manhattan teenagers and their parents. Their stories (and their gossip) are uploaded to a website—"Gossip Girl"—via anonymous tips. In other words, as these teens go about their lives, they are being watched, photographed, and recorded by their peers, and these comings and goings are reported online via the Gossip Girl website. *Gossip Girl* is one of a series of CW (formerly the WB network) shows obsessed with intertextual and popular culture references. Shows such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel*, *Veronica Mars*, *Dawson's Creek*, and *Gilmore Girls* all feature high school and college-age protagonists who speak in inflated prose about a network of film, literary, and pop culture references. That Shakespeare surfaces in this network is unsurprising; he and his work often figure in these universes simply due to their high school settings and teenage protagonists.

Gossip Girl invokes Shakespeare in passing one-liners and clichéd jokes and references, typically involving educational or theatrical situations; content and form unite in episodes highlighting Shakespearean performance. In particular, one episode, "The Big Sleep No More" calls up both Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More*, an interactive, immersive, site-specific performance experience staged in abandoned warehouses (turned into the early twentieth-century McKittrick Hotel) based on *Macbeth*,[1] and Howard Hawks's 1946 film of Raymond Chandler's novel *The Big Sleep*, following *Gossip Girl*'s obsession with film noir and classic Hollywood. The episode mixes performances; participants in the inset *Sleep No More* performance do not know whether to watch the actors in the play or to watch each other (watching the actors), as the Manhattan teens keep violating the rules of the performance and removing their masks. One must constantly question which is the real performance here. Additional Shakespearean material arrives through not only throwaway narratorial quips (Gossip Girl somewhat lamely ends one episode with "Shakespeare

says 'All's well that ends well.' And sometimes it just ends."), as well as a story arc about a new, young English teacher, Miss Carr, who praises Serena's paper on *King Lear* as filled with "nuanced observations" and plays the "naughty professor" who sleeps with her young male student, Dan Humphrey ("You've Got Yale!"). And, in a reference typical of teen-oriented television, a season three story arc concerning the forbidden love between Nate Archibald and Bree Buckley is referred to repeatedly (and often with tongue-firmly-planted-in-cheek) as a "Romeo and Juliet" storyline.

Gossip Girl's incorporation of the ghost meme frequently works thematically through references to (potential) incest, theater and performance, the rise and fall of Manhattan's kings, confusion of uncles for fathers, and, most importantly for my purposes, the haunting of a primary character by his deceased father, as well as the character's corresponding crisis of masculinity. The show's Hamlet character is the wealthy, privileged Prince of New York, Chuck Bass, son of hotel mogul and Manhattan power-player Bart Bass. From the early episodes of the show, the father/son relationship is fraught with conflict. Typical interactions between Bart and Chuck involve the two engaged in a constant power play; Bart is a womanizer, Chuck drinks too much, and neither one approves of the other's behavior. Throughout the first seasons of the show, the two spar in an ongoing war that Chuck seems always destined to lose.

Unlike Hamlet, who contends with the ghost of a father "Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night" (1.5.10), Chuck Bass deals first with a spectral father, clearly projected from Chuck's unconscious, then with a father returned to life who haunts Chuck's ability to manage his own destiny. The first haunting, which follows Bart Bass's untimely death, consists of Chuck's hallucinations of the ghost of his father chastising him ("The Debarted"). Later, after Bart is shown to have faked his death, his reappearance sends Chuck into despair and depression. When Chuck and his father ultimately have a rooftop confrontation that results in Bart falling off the building to his actual death ("The Revengers"), Chuck's Hamlet can finally move on from the scripted dramatic trajectory of Shakespeare's text. Chuck's character, as befits a Hamlet analogue, is obsessed with rooftops. This trope of Hamlet-on-the-rooftop can be seen in various canonical adaptations, including those directed by Laurence Olivier, Franco Zeffirelli, and Michael Almereyda. Over the course of the series, Chuck seduces several women on rooftops, almost

jumps off the roof in a thwarted suicide attempt, and gets into several intense arguments in rooftop spaces. For this climactic scene with his father to take place on a rooftop seems logical, but it also leads to a provocative ending to the *Hamlet* storyline, suggesting an intriguing line of questioning regarding the play: What if Hamlet could have disposed of the ghost of his father early in the play? Would conquering the specter have saved the citizens at Elsinore?

The refashioning of the *Hamlet* meme is what allows Chuck to ultimately outmaneuver his dead-not-dead father, which is the only thing that allows him to be united with his lover. Prior to his father's (second, and presumably real) death, Chuck has made clear to Blair that they can only be together once his father has died. Chuck realizes that only his father's death will allow him to "be a man," which is apparently what it takes to marry on-again-off-again girlfriend Blair. Chuck's relationship with his father turns him into a wildly mercurial character. Though he is full of hubris (and often appears to be the show's villain), he also, over the course of six seasons, becomes the show's tragic character and arguably one of its heroes. The presence of the ghost meme is what fleshes out his character. It's a story we have heard before: the one-dimensional, spoiled rich prep-school student becomes the poor little rich boy trying to get out from under daddy's shadow. His father's life, death, and return are psychological blockages for Chuck; he is haunted by a father who wants him to act, but he is kept from acting because of the recurring influence of his father's ghost. Even the title of the episode in which his father dies—"The Revengers"—calls up Shakespeare's revenge tragedy. Whereas in *Lost* and *Six Feet Under* the Hamlet characters fail to come to terms with the father's ghost, *Gossip Girl* rewrites that narrative arc, allowing the Hamlet character to ultimately conquer both the uncle and the ghost of the father. Furthermore, this narrative arrives silently; in contrast to the show's heavy-handed inter- and meta-textual references, Chuck's extended narrative arc is never announced as *Hamlet*. The show deliberately calls up *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, but its primary Shakespearean intertext is *Hamlet*, through the series-long narrative of Chuck and his father.

As in *Gossip Girl*, *Hamlet* is one of a string of intertextual, citational moments in the Fox/Netflix television series *Arrested Development*. The references to Shakespeare's canon include a high school rendition of *Much Ado About Nothing*, in which the play's romantic mishaps are doubled in the episode's plot, and various one-off quotations, such as

characters citing what they take to be the seventh commandment: "Be true to thineself and to thine own self be true" ("Justice is Blind"). The pilot episode immediately launches the viewer into a family drama of succession and usurpation. In this episode, son Michael Bluth anticipates being named the "heir" to the family company, but at his father's retirement party, George Sr. surprises everyone by naming his wife Lucille as heir and is shortly thereafter arrested for tax fraud.

Various moments in the series allude gently to *Hamlet*. For example, while George Sr. is in prison, his wife reignites an affair with his twin brother, Oscar. Later, when youngest son Buster learns that Oscar is his biological father, he repeatedly refers to Oscar as "Uncle-Father Oscar," echoing Hamlet's reference to his "uncle-father and aunt-mother" (2.2.376). Buster is also the son who invites the twentieth-century Oedipal readings of the play. Repeated Freudian slips and apparently unaware, obviously erotically-charged references to his mother demonstrate both Oedipal desire and an undisguised need to remove the father-uncle and uncle-father from the picture. Buster's season four affair with a woman named Ophelia Love reinforces the *Hamlet* references related to his character.

As is already clear, the series does not lack Hamlet analogues. As I have argued elsewhere, each Bluth son embodies one facet of Hamlet's character. Though Michael initially seems to be the logical Hamlet analogue, the other brothers(-in-law) also contribute to a composite sketch of Hamlet's character.[2] As seen above, Buster's Oedipal desire contributes to a psychoanalytic reading of Hamlet. Gob (short for George Oscar Bluth and pronounced "Job") bears the name of the father, as well as the melancholic aspects of Hamlet's character. When Michael takes control of the Bluth company, Gob pouts. When Michael asks if Gob actually wants to be in charge, Gob petulantly gripes, "No … but I'd like to be asked!" ("Top Banana"). Son-in-law Tobias, on the other hand, personifies Hamlet's antic disposition and his penchant for (bad) acting.

Each of these sons is in some way stymied by the periodic disappearances and reappearances of the father. Though George Sr. never dies in the series, he is arrested and imprisoned, escapes to Mexico, fakes his own death, and is imprisoned again. Yet, in spite of these absences, he is a constant nagging presence in the sons' lives. The sons run the company in his absence, but he dictates their actions from afar. Furthermore, George Sr. manages to watch his own funeral from the attic of Michael's home. The verticality associated with the ghost in *Hamlet*

adaptations—and seen also in *Gossip Girl*—reappears here where the "ghost" of George Sr. haunts the family from the attic. George Sr.'s presence/absence reduces his sons to states of arrested development; they are trapped in a circular narrative of repetition and failure produced by a father who refuses to be present *or* absent.

The meme, as a unit of doubling, repetition, and revision, demonstrates the work of adaptation. What I identify as the ghost meme is one possible Shakespeare-related meme in the Shakespeare memeplex. While one might argue that the term "meme" repackages terminology for similar effects—possibly another variation on "icon" or "echo"—the meme's resonance with issues of mediality and mediation make it a particularly useful way to study the work of adaptation. The meme always supplements and adds to without erasing the "original," and the original itself becomes irrelevant as the meme constantly supplements an original that does not exist. The meme's original is simultaneously present and absent, and its presence is always mediated by its absence. Shakespeare's influence on and appearance in popular culture artifacts works along these same lines in that his presence can be seen in his absence, thus blurring the lines between Shakespeare and not Shakespeare. As Limor Shifman writes, all memes are works of creative repackaging that still retain the memory of the old meme. Revision doesn't erase the history; it only succeeds in producing a new spin on the old story. So, when shows like *Gossip Girl* and *Arrested Development* appropriate and extend the ghost meme (either consciously or unconsciously), they take part in this process of repetition and doubling. When adaptations repackage the ghost meme, they, through this replication, extend the longevity and fecundity of the ghost meme, though with varying degrees of copying-fidelity. The extended longevity and fecundity leads to the meme being taken up by other artifacts and other genres, ensuring that the Shakespearean narrative will continue to appear "accidentally" in the future.

Notes

1. See Caitlin McHugh's essay "'Thou hast it now': One-on-Ones and the Online Community of Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More*" in Chap. 10 of this collection.
2. I analyze the ghost meme in *Arrested Development* in "*Hamlet*'s Ghost Meme: Accidental Shakespeare, Repetition Compulsion, and Roofie Circles."

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CHAPTER 7

Romeo Unbound

Kirk Hendershott-Kraetzer

This is not Romeo, he's some otherwhere.
—Romeo, *Romeo and Juliet* (1.1.196)

For years, Romeo's potential to irritate me was pretty high. Self-involved, self-pitying, and arrogant, he confused specular enchantment with love; seeking out Juliet in the Capulet garden was as much posturing as emotional or erotic interest; he was rash, violent. For all of that, over time I realized I felt badly for the kid: crushing on Rosaline is dumb but sweet-natured, and his Petrarchist attitudes are not unusual for his century (or ours), nor his confusion of Petrarchism's surface features with a deeper understanding of women and love. Romeo is engaged in a terrible tug of war with conventions for love and for lovers, for friends,

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for pupils, for sons, for husbands—and he keeps losing. That struggle has continued metaphorically long after the end of his story: Romeo keeps getting painted into one box or another, and these conventional assumptions hem him in as a character. It was not a production of *Romeo and Juliet* that led to this shift in my thinking. Rather, it was a succession of Romeos that I accidentally encountered while watching one-hour scripted television series that, in their core designs, had nothing whatsoever to do with Shakespeare. These Romeos show how the character can break the conventions that bind him, becoming a complicated, conflicted, sometimes inarticulate character assailed by sexual desire and sexual uncertainty; nervously bold; kinky, tender, misogynistic; an outsider on the outs, loving, conflicted, certain.

Thomas Cartelli and Katherine Rowe strike at the heart of my "Romeo issues": the "peculiar visionary spin the individual filmmaker brings to" *Romeo and Juliet* "privileges the filmic representation as the iconic stand-in or substitute for Shakespeare's play" (10). This dovetails with what Russell Jackson notes about the playtext, which "tells us very little about [the lovers], beyond what they say and how they behave." They "are blank canvases on which a production can paint whatever it wishes" (117). Because of this, first impressions last: Leonard Whiting in Zeffirelli's 1968 film is my "iconic" Romeo. For instance, reading "O, I am fortune's fool" (3.1.138), I hear Whiting's performance.

Sarah Olive describes a familiar situation: "nestled on your couch, you turn on the television to watch your favorite detective or superhero […] only to find that" Shakespeare is intruding on your down time (Olive). I blundered into representations of Romeo while watching TV shows that had nothing to do with my professional life or while hanging out with my wife while she watched her own escapist entertainments. In most cases, the episodes "announced" their participation in *Romeo and Juliet* by designating a character as Romeo, as a Romeo, as Juliet, or by an explicit allusion to the source text (a quotation or reference to a notable plot point). At that moment, whatever it was and whenever it happened, the episode situated itself as part of what Cartelli and Rowe, following Joseph Grigely, call the "work," a series of texts in different genres and media that "re-present or re-iterate prior texts in the series, each varying from those that come before and after it" (27). No matter how glancing its engagement with the Shakespearean source text, that episode was part of the *work* named *Romeo and Juliet*.

The Romeos I am considering come from nine different episodes of one-hour scripted dramatic TV series (see Table 7.1), all of which designate a character as being Romeo. Not "like Romeo," but Romeo.

In "Denial" (*Law & Order*, NBC, 1990–2010), Romeo appears as pre-med student Tommy Horton, who is "nuts for Christina," his high-school-aged girlfriend. The two take pains to keep their long-term affair a secret from Christina's controlling parents, but Tommy impregnates her; when she comes to term, the two squirrel themselves away in a hot-sheet hotel to have the baby, which is later found dead, buried in a cooler at a construction site. The prosecutors and arraigning judge are unimpressed by Tommy's devotion to Christina: the judge orders a 730 "Fitness to Proceed" examination to determine whether the couple are fit for trial, Executive Assistant D.A. Jack McCoy calls them "the lovebirds," and Assistant D.A. Jamie Ross calls Tommy a "Romeo of the Dairy land"—confused, dumb, desperate—but the jury cannot tell who killed the child and acquits the lovers.

Romeo returned to *Law & Order* in the form of David DiNapoli, "Love Eternal's" victim, found handcuffed inside a dog crate, chest perforated by a Samurai sword. Accused of his murder is his S/M-loving

Table 7.1 Episodes, shows, Romeo characters, and performers

Episode	*Show*	*Character*	*Performer*	*(Juliet)*[a]
"Denial"	*Law & Order*	Tommy Horton	Zach Chapman	(Christina)
"Starved"	*Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*	Dr. Mike Jergens	Dean Cain	(Cora)
"The Boy in the Shroud"	*Bones*	Dylan Crane	Michael H. Barnett	(Kelly)
"Crossing the Threshold"	*The Cleaner*	John Neville	Will Estes	(Anna)
"Sympathy for the Devil"	*Supernatural*	Sam Winchester	Jared Padalecki	(Becky)
"Love Eternal"	*Law & Order*	David DiNapoli	n/a	(Marielle)
"Upper West Side Story"	*White Collar*	Evan Leary	Graham Phillips	(Chloe)
"To Swerve and Protect"	*Necessary Roughness*	Ray Jay [Ray Santino, Jr.]	Patrick Johnson	(Olivia)
"Betrayal's Climax"	*Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*	Manny Montero	Juan Castano	(Avery)

[a]For a detailed examination of these Juliets, see Hendershott-Kraetzer, "A Hot Mess."

wife, Marielle. In response to her plea of "not possible," Executive Assistant D.A. Mike Cutter comments, "She thinks she's Juliet: no way she killed Romeo." (Her Romeo poisoned Marielle's first husband with Thallium in order to get Marielle; she was in on it.) Marielle spends most of the episode in the prosecutorial gunsights, but it turns out that one of David's friends killed him when David changed his mind and wanted out of a scheme to bilk and divorce their wives.

In "Starved," from *Law & Order*: *Special Victims Unit* (or *SVU*) (NBC, 1999–present), our Romeo is Dr. Mike Jergens, a serial rapist who uses a series of fake names tied to the email address "Romeo@forumail.com" to trawl speed-dating events for victims. Mike pursues these women while living with Cora Kinneson. Playing on Cora's pathological need to be loved, Mike convinces her to marry him, despite the fact that he is in jail awaiting trial on three counts of rape. After being convicted, in part because of Cora's testimony, he calls his new wife from jail and tells her that he is going to kill himself: in response, Cora binge-drinks herself into a "chronic vegetative state," after which Mike uses his new status as her husband to have her feeding tube removed. The episode ends with Mike, now free, talking to his lawyer about starting his appeal and collecting the large insurance settlement he will get as a result of Cora's death.

Nine years later in *SVU*'s run finds "Betrayal's Climax," where Romeo appears as Manny Montero, a Latino "from the projects" who is in a relationship with Avery: they're a "West Side Romeo and Juliet." Manny has been running with a local gang, BX 9, trying to make money to keep the gang from continuing their muggings of his frail grandmother and to pay for a gravestone for his brother. When Manny screws up collecting some Oxy, the gang seeks revenge by forcing Manny to watch while they rape Avery, who orgasms several times during the assault. Manny's initial refusal to testify against the rapists is ascribed to his humiliation and disgust with Avery's carnality; his real shame is that he knew the rape was going to happen, did nothing to stop it, cannot control his jealousy, and fears that Avery will hate him when she finds out about his complicity. After he finally testifies against the rapists, Manny is murdered in jail, his tongue cut out as a warning to others who might consider squealing.

In *Bones*' (FOX, 2005–present) "The Boy in the Shroud," the body of a boy, Dylan Crane, is found in an overturned garbage truck; clutched in his hand is a "Romeo and Juliet rose." Dylan and his girlfriend Kelly

were caught having sex in Kelly's foster mother's house, after which Dylan was forbidden entry, even though foster mother Suzanne "knew that it might force Dylan and Kelly to find other places to be together. You know, to feed into their own, uh, Romeo and Juliet fantasy." Fueled by their forbidden love and his desire to keep Kelly and her younger brother Alex from being put out on the street, Dylan planned to run away with Kelly, but Alex, misunderstanding, lashed out at Dylan, who fell to his death from the upper floor of the abandoned factory where he was squatting.

"Crossing the Threshold," of A&E's *The Cleaner* (2008–2009), centers on John Neville, an undercover narcotics cop addicted to the heroin he is supposed to interdict. John gets involved with Anna, the daughter of the drug lord he is investigating, gets Anna hooked on heroin, and the two abscond with $12 million of cocaine. As John's supervisor, Detective Baker, puts it, "Two kids, they got high and they fell in love. It's just a love story." Later, the corrupt Baker, at risk of being exposed by John's frantic attempts to extricate the lovers from their predicament, to say nothing of the attempts by William, the "cleaner" of the show's title, to intervene in John and Anna's addictions, argues that "This is much bigger than Romeo and Juliet getting sober." The episode ends with John's death and Anna beginning to get clean.

Supernatural (WB/CW, 2005–present) focuses on the exploits of the demon- and monster-hunting Winchester brothers, Sam and Dean. In "Sympathy for the Devil," Sam is the unhappy object of the erotic intentions of Becky Rosen. Sam does everything he can to divert Becky's amatory attention, to little avail and to the great amusement of Dean and their friend Bobby, who labels the reluctant and embarrassed Sam "Romeo." Subsequent episodes have Becky luring her unwilling Romeo to remote hotels, drugging him, putting a magic whammy on him, and tying him to a bed to keep him from escaping.

Necessary Roughness (USA, 2011–2013) follows the personal and professional life of sports psychologist Dr. Dani Santino. The four subplots of "To Swerve and Protect" involve mismatched, secret, or undesired love relationships. The C-plot involves the teenage Ray Jay's blooming romance with soon-to-be-high-school graduate Olivia and his efforts to circumvent his mother's restrictions on contact with Olivia after Dani caught them at it in Ray Jay's bedroom. Ray Jay marshals the specter of Romeo and Juliet's bad end as the result of the two being forbidden to see each other, but Dr. Dani could not give a hoot about Shakespeare.

She continues her ban on sex in the house, although after another blow-up in which she calls her son "that little Romeo," she admits to Ray Jay that he is "going to be 18 soon, and I won't agree with every choice you make, I can't protect you from everything, but there's one thing I can do, and that's help you protect yourself." Then she gives him condoms.

Also airing on USA is *White Collar* (2009–2014), a breezy procedural in which expert thief, art forger, and con-man Neal Caffrey serves out part of his criminal sentence working for the FBI in New York, under the supervision of Special Agent in Charge Peter Burke. In "Upper West Side Story," the criminal of the week, embezzler Andy Woods, is brought to Peter's attention by Evan, a student at the school where Woods manages the endowment. Complications ensue when it becomes clear that Evan is infatuated with Woods's daughter, Chloe, "a teenage girl obsessed with *Romeo and Juliet*." Neal and his fellow con-man Mozzie decide to aid Evan and coach him up in talking to a girl and writing love poetry. Evan is inept, so Mozzie ends up doing his wooing for him. As one might expect from its title, "Upper West Side Story" is the most allusive of the nine episodes, with multiple direct quotations from the playtext and references to various Shakespearean characters and plot points.

Each of these episodes positions at least one male character as Romeo, either by specific invocation of *Romeo and Juliet* or by naming a character Romeo or Juliet. With these Romeos, we see echoes of the Romeo we know—love-addled and rash—but also begin to see less familiar conceptions of the character: Romeo as unwilling and even unaware lover, S/M fetishist, foolhardy "romantic," or inept, inarticulate lover; we see a Romeo who lives past the end of his narrative arc, an unheroic Romeo, a monstrous Romeo. Through these accidental encounters, what Cartelli and Rowe would term my "iconic" conceptions of Romeo began to change, and through the application of the traits that they display, other iconic constructions of the character might be freed from similarly constricting assumptions.

As Douglas Lanier puts it, "identifying a work as 'Shakespearean' […] encourages us to place the work in dialogue with its Shakespearean forbear" (89). None of these episodes is Shakespeare, and though they are all part of the *work* of *Romeo and Juliet*, what *is* each of them? The episodes engage in "textual poaching," staging "impertinent raid[s] on the literary preserve," taking "only those things that are useful or pleasurable" (Jenkins 24). Following Michel de Certeau, Jenkins situates

poaching as part of "popular reading […] a series of 'advances and retreats, tactics and games played with the text' […] through which readers fragment texts and reassemble the broken shards according to their own blueprints, salvaging bits and pieces of found material in making sense of their own social experience" (26). Jenkins's definition works well indeed: the episodes all mine the playtext for what is useful or pleasurable, be that ironizing conventional notions about Romeo or "true love" or the playful in-jokiness of direct quotation and allusion. Also valuable is Cartelli and Rowe's concept of recycling, "treating a selected play as one among many intertexts that partly meet" the needs of the creators, "play[ing] around with the rise and fall of intertextual awareness as it changes from moment to moment and spectator to spectator" (37). This applies to *White Collar*, *Bones*, and *Necessary Roughness*, which feature more consistent reference to the source text, but also applies to episodes with fleeting references to the playtext. While different episodes engage with their source in different ways for different reasons, their common impertinence and their labile engagement are characteristic of recycling: the episodes I am considering poach from Shakespeare then recycle their source by a variety of means.

Romeo, Unwilling and Unaware

Perhaps the most conventional notion about Romeo is that he is a lover, a notion challenged by these appropriations, whose Romeos may not be passionate and may not be loving at all. Sam Winchester of *Supernatural*'s "Sympathy for the Devil" has no idea whatever that he has been positioned as Romeo until Becky steps up and starts fondling his manly chest. Nor is Sam aware that he is a central player in Becky's sexual fantasyland, in which she has given herself the handle of "samlicker81" and is "webmistress at Morethanbrothers.net." A reluctant Romeo indeed, Sam's woes continue throughout the season and for years to come. In "The Real Ghostbusters," Becky tricks the brothers into attending the first-ever *Supernatural* fan convention. When she rushes up to Sam, purring "You been thinking about me," he is inarticulate and dumbfounded, wanting nothing more except to find a hole to hide in. Two seasons later, in "Season Seven, Time for a Wedding," Becky roofies Sam, "marries" him, and, when she runs out of magic love juice, whacks him on the head with a waffle iron, trusses him to a bed, and takes his pants. "Don't worry," she tells Sam. "I didn't do anything

weird." Throughout this "relationship," Sam grows flustered and mumbly whenever Becky comes up. This Romeo, initially clueless about Juliet's sexual agency and (once clued in) terrified into inarticulate gabble by her erotic energies, offers a charming set of potentialities: imagine the energy of a performance in which Juliet's all-in imperative—"Romeo, doff thy name, / And for thy name, which is no part of me, / Take all myself" (2.2.47–49)—is met with a gobsmacked "Uhhh," to say nothing of the comic possibilities of a depleted morning-after Romeo contending with a good-to-go Juliet in act 3, scene 5. *Supernatural*'s Sam offers the possibility of a Romeo overwhelmed and almost unmanned by the intensity of the desire he has sparked.

Romeo, Inarticulate

Overwhelmed people often find themselves at a loss for words—not a good position for a lover to be in. Shakespeare's lover overflows with words, words that are often a centerpiece of performance criticism stressing the music of his speech. However, some productions shun such musicality. Zeffirelli wanted "to free *Romeo and Juliet* from lyricism, prettiness" (Loehlin 60), resulting in "plainer, tougher, more realistic young Romeos" (Loehlin 96). My Romeos are far "plainer" than even Zeffirelli might expect. They have no Romeo language at all. Some are mute, being dead (David DiNapoli of "Love Eternal" and Dylan Crane of "The Boy in the Shroud"), while others are non-lyrical, as is the case with Evan ("Upper West Side Story") and Sam ("Sympathy for the Devil"), both of whom devolve into stutters when confronted with their Juliets, though Evan eventually does speak entire sentences to Chloe. Others are good at making themselves understood, such as Mike Jergens in "Starved," though whether his auditors want to hear what he has to say is debatable because he's an emotional sadist. The most articulate of the Romeos is the person that one would least want to listen to: his talk is so effective that he drives his new wife to drink herself into a vegetative state, to say nothing of the three women he was able to charm before raping them.

Possibly even more horrific than this are the consequences of failing to speak. As Manny of "Betrayal's Climax" tells the detectives investigating Avery's rape, he knew what "coming over to party" meant: "I could have called the cops, gotten Avery out of there, but I, I didn't, [unintelligible] I just froze." Later, in a videotaped message to Avery, he

apologizes for his failure: "I should have […] shot up every pharmacy in the neighborhood just to spare you one second of pain." His most expressive moment describes a failure of language, and in a terrible irony, after Manny does find his voice and acts to help convict Avery's rapists, he is murdered and his tongue cut out.

Romeo, Kinky and Foolish

For Romeo to be a lover, he ought at one time or another to do lovey stuff, a sentiment echoed by a variety of critics.[1] Tommy Horton of *Law & Order*'s "Denial" may do a romantic thing by lying to the cops and the court in an attempt to protect his girlfriend from a murder charge, and *Bones*' Dylan Crane, the "Boy in the Shroud," may make a romantic gesture by planning to run away with Kelly to prevent Kelly and her brother being put out on the street. But these seem conventional (albeit ill-advised) moves in the romantic behavior category. More interesting are those occasions when the Romeos' passion runs against the grain of expectation. Say, for instance, David DiNapoli of "Love Eternal" engaging in fetishistic S/M games with his Juliet, stripped down, locked in a dog cage, restrained with "cute pink handcuffs" and poked at with a sword (imagine *that* set of props getting wheeled on set for the act, scene 5, aubade). Similarly, the photography of John and Anna's five erotic scenes in "Crossing the Threshold" suggests that the two are high on heroin. And we can find a great romantic act when John boosts $12 million in coke from Anna's drug-kingpin father, then betrays Baker, the corrupt cop to whom John had planned to sell the stolen drugs in the first place, and kites the cocaine for himself in order to fund the lovers' getaway.

Such foolhardy gestures may be fervent, though none strikes me as being what people might think of as a great lover doing romantic things. According to Raymond K. Tucker, Barbara Vivian, and Matthew G. Marvin, people do not; rather, "romantic acts" includes taking walks, flowers, kissing, candlelit dinner, cuddling, hearing or saying "I love you," cards of affection or love letters, slow dancing, hugging, surprise gifts, making love, and sitting by the fireplace (652–653). There is sex going on, but it is doubtful whether what David or John are up to falls under a shared understanding of "making love." David demonstrates multiple "non-normative" (Nichols 26) romantic behaviors, at least as "romantic" is commonly understood. John and Anna's getting

high while having sex or in order to have sex is also statistically unusual (Caldeira *et al.* 79 and 90–91).

That Romeo engages in foolish behaviors is nothing new to the *Romeo and Juliet* work: he takes a chance when he plays peace-maker and talks Tybalt down (3.1.61–71). Climbing into the Capulets' precincts is imprudent, Juliet notes (2.2.63–65); the plan to hide out in Mantua (3.3.149–151) is sketchy; and running pell mell back to Verona on the skimpiest of evidence so he can poison himself (5.1.17–54), crowbarring open the Capulet tomb (5.3.44 s.d.), then killing a stranger who reprehends him for this extreme act (5.3.70–75) are nutty. However, none of these comes close to handcuffed dog-cage-and-sword sex, skanked-up sex, or stealing bales of cash and a trunkload of blow from a homicidal *narcotraficante*. These recyclings unmoor Romeo from convention and offer us instead a lover who is willing to embrace that role in untraditional ways, making us more aware of Romeo's inherent instability as a character.

Romeo, Inept

But what about Romeos who are not very good at Romeoing?[2] In this sense of Romeo as bungler, we find Ray Jay and Evan, from *Necessary Roughness* and *White Collar*. In the first act of "To Swerve and Protect," Ray Jay and Olivia are parked and making out when Olivia expresses disgust at "doing it in a car" then maneuvers him into a confrontation with his mother over her refusal to allow the lovers to have sex in her house. The good-natured but somewhat dim Ray Jay trots out the "Average age of consent in Europe," the "fact" that Romeo and Juliet came to a bad end because "their parents kept them apart," then asks where Mom would rather the kids go to have sex: the woods, a "flea bag motel" or "the safest place for us […] right here, in our own home." Mom shoots him down, and when he sneaks off with Olivia to have more sex, he is busted because Mom has installed a tracker on his phone.

Then there is Evan of *White Collar*'s "Upper West Side Story," who has no clue about how to approach Chloe, the remote object of his affections. So in a winky mash-up of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, Evan is helped toward true love by Neal and Mozzie, "helpful Friar[s] who [bring] the star-crossed lovers together" by teaching Evan how to dress, act, flirt, and use product. Posing as a literature teacher, Neal brings Evan along to a "tutoring session" at Chloe's house, and when Neal is caught nosing around in Dad's

office in some FBI-mandated snoopery, Evan takes the hit: "Chloe said you had an old map of Paris in here, and I really wanted to see it." This largesse nets Evan a couple of smiles and a "Bye," leading Neal to opine that Evan's "got momentum." It is not a lot of momentum, and Evan does nothing with it. The rest of the "romance" plays out via Mozzie, who forges a love sonnet in Evan's hand, hides the poem in Chloe's gym bag, and engineers a "grand romantic gesture," stuffing Chloe's locker with red roses, which tumble prettily around her while a confused Evan looks on. He expresses some sad feeling for Chloe, who watches as her father is arrested by the FBI for embezzlement, and though his last speech act in the whole episode is an unfinished sentence, "Well, if you ever need anyone to talk to …" it seems to do the trick despite his otherwise timid performance: Chloe takes Evan by the hand and leads him away, although Mozzie's cascade of roses might have something to do with her surging esteem as well.

Necessary Roughness and *White Collar* give us Romeos who are bad at Romeoing. Granted, Romeo's no prize when we first meet him in the Shakespearean playtext, though once he settles down to Romeoing Juliet, he's effective at it, at least to judge from her response. In contrast, when Ray Jay is "talking" with Olivia, he spends a good hunk of their interaction in a lip-lock or freaking out over his girlfriend's suggestion that Mom, too, got busy when she was his age. At least he takes action: Evan is a lump, doing little more in his "courtship" of Chloe than burble about water images and offer pallid condolences about the dissolution of her family. Evan's most Romeo-like acts are being "managed" by Neal and Mozzie (consistent with how Romeo's life subsequent to meeting Juliet is more or less planned out by Friar Laurence), and being dragged off by Chloe (consistent Juliet's dominance of Romeo in act 2, scene 2),[3] but neither of these aligns with common assumptions about Romeo's typical behavior. It might be hard to see just what advantage might accrue to the character by being presented as a doofus, but Shakespeare's Romeo does have moments when his mojo might not be working as well as he might wish, such as Juliet's dominance in the balcony scene, his ineffectual infatuation with Rosaline, and Juliet's cool reception of his initial approach (1.5.96–99). However destined he may be to win Juliet's love, the boy might benefit from some ineptitude: a Romeo who is feeling his way along, making mistakes and muffing opportunities, could be quite winning, and the emotional pay-off when he makes it work, only to see it all go to smash, would consequently be that much greater.

Romeo, Undying

One hard fact about Romeo is that he dies at the end of his story, a fact challenged by the majority of these appropriations: four Romeos die, and of those, Dylan and David perish off-screen before their episodes begin. The remaining lot survives.[4] However, this energy is somewhat different from what Martha Tuck Rozett describes as "a resounding affirmation of the power of love to resolve differences and elevate the human spirit" (153). "Denial" ends in frustration: the law has been flouted, and the killers get away with it. Mike from "Starved" is free to batten on the deceased Cora's estate and to pursue victims as the speed-dating "Romeo." Sam has to dodge Becky for two full seasons; as of this writing, he is still Becky-free, but he has helped to break open the doors of Hell, unleashing a horde of demons on earth, and helped to kick all of the angels out of Heaven. So there's that. On *Necessary Roughness*, Ray Jay is sad about getting dumped, but he lands a gig as personal assistant to the owner of a professional football team and flies off with her to Paris ("There's the Door"). Evan is never mentioned again in *White Collar*'s run, but his episode ends with love abounding for the youngsters. It is hard to describe the effect of these recyclings on the *Romeo and Juliet* work. One result may be to call into question or "contest the aesthetic or political values of the adapted text," even "supplant" *Romeo and Juliet*'s "canonical cultural authority" (Hutcheon and O'Flynn 20, 93). As Jenkins puts it, poachers poach (in part) to make "sense out of their own social experience" (26), and whatever that particular sense and experience are, the result is to cast doubt on the notion that, whatever "enmity" may exist, "poor sacrifices" to end it aren't needed or just won't work.

Romeo, Hardly Heroic

A long-standing conventional understanding of Romeo is that he's the hero or at least the story's protagonist. Few of the recycled Romeos meet that latter standard. Tommy Horton and Mike Jergens are the only two whose prominence brings them close to a protagonist's stature, a characterization subject to debate since both are really just criminals of the week. While the various Romeos may be the principals of their own narratives, in most of the episodes they are not the *main* characters in the A-plots, as in "The Boy in the Shroud" and "Love Eternal," or they are characters in B- or C-plots, as is the case with Evan ("Upper West

Side Story") and Ray Jay ("To Swerve and Protect"). Sam is a flawed hero in *Supernatural*, but his Romeo role is tertiary: Romeo is relegated to a supporting player. Put plainly, most of the Romeos don't come up to scratch, being flawed in some way, often seriously so. Evan is a good kid, and Ray Jay isn't *bad* bad; almost everybody likes Tommy Horton of *Law & Order*'s "Denial," much to the disgust of the prosecutors. Dylan, in *Bones*' "The Boy in the Shroud," is described as a "smart, happy kid," "a good kid" (twice), and "a good influence on Kelly." In "Crossing the Threshold," John's role is nominally heroic: a cop who has gone under cover to catch a drug dealer, has gotten clean from heroin, and attempts to save his girlfriend from her own addiction, dying in that attempt. The truth is messier: back on the needle, he gets Anna hooked too, and he's a betrayer and a thief. Even less heroic is Manny from "Betrayal's Climax." He may demonstrate bravery in testifying against a gang known for its viciousness, but it is hard to conceive of a Romeo who, to recompense his extended family for his failure to be an effective criminal, facilitates the gang-rape of Juliet, then blames her for being a nasty slut when she climaxes during their attack.

Shakespeare's Romeo himself is no prize, truth be told. The moments that show him at his best are found in his response to Tybalt's provocations (3.1.67–71) and his attempts to stop the fight between Tybalt and Mercutio (3.1.83–91), to comfort his dying friend, and to admit his role in the tragic turn of events (3.1.97–113). These admirable gestures are almost immediately undone when he makes it all about himself, with "my reputation stained / With Tybalt's slander" (3.1.113–114), followed by a quick turn to blaming Juliet for his problems: "Thy beauty hath made me effeminate" (3.1.116). In about a minute, Romeo has gone from "I thought all for the best" (3.1.106) to *It's all her fault*, a changeability which the Friar has warned the "young waverer" about (2.3.85).

There are definite parallels between John and Anna's unsolid plan to run away and the Friar's goofy scheme to reunite Romeo and Juliet, but the crucial differences here are that John isn't a teenage boy and Romeo isn't a drug-addled mess. In John, Romeo's impetuosity is taken to an extreme and leads to John's death, leaving someone else (William) to clean up his wreckage. And while Manny gives us an understanding of the pressures that are brought to bear on Romeo when he decides to cast his lot with Juliet rather than his friends, family, and kin, the episode also offers us a Romeo who allows his beloved to be raped. Yes, in the end he "was willing to die to protect" Avery, but had he protected her

in the first place, that point would be moot. These weak, even pathetic Romeos provide a corrective to the idealizing impulse and remind us that Shakespeare's Romeo is a flawed character.

Romeo the Monster

Darker even than the specters of a heroin-addicted Romeo flailing about in a doomed attempt to wrest some good out of his train-wreck of a life, or a weak-willed Romeo who puts Juliet in a position to be raped, is *SVU*'s villainous Mike Jergens. Romeo as predator has a precedent in the "brown-out Romeo," from Australia during World War II: "A man given to molesting females in darkened streets" (Partridge), a sense evoked by Mike, who regards all women with contempt. Misogyny is not absent from Shakespeare's play. Samson's infamous discussion with Gregory suggests their desire to rape and mutilate women (1.1.17–24), and Mercutio offers up a panoply of misogynistic slanders (1.4.68–69, 74–76, and 92–94; 2.1.37–38; 2.4.4–5, 13–14, 30, 41–42, 70–80, and 126–133). Then there is the menace posed to Juliet (and Nurse) by Juliet's father (3.5.149–196). Robert Watson and Stephen Dickey note that Veronese women are at some risk in a "cumulative culture of sexual extortion" (127), and having grown up in an environment hostile toward women and their bodies, Romeo expresses sentiments similar to those of Samson, Gregory, and Mercutio: crudely translated, "And is it not then well served into a sweet goose?" means "Isn't cum better spent inside a woman?" and "Isn't it better to have a slutty woman?" (2.4.70–80). Juliet herself may be aware of this culture of sexual violence: "The possibility that this Romeo is merely an amorous predator clearly crosses" her mind, as well as the Nurse's (Watson and Dickey 132), and Courtney Lehmann argues that Juliet is so imbricated in this culture that she "alludes to the rape of Philomel [...] the morning after her marital consummation" (73).

Edward Rocklin, Russell Jackson, and Stanley Wells all note that the play's sexual energies are displaced onto other characters, Mercutio and the Nurse especially (24, 140–143, and 161, respectively). All of the productions considered here reposition this energy back onto Romeo and Juliet, though only two demonstrate sexual violence and misogyny. Of these, just "Betrayal's Climax" contains anything like a Mercutio, in Manny's fellow gang members who view Avery as an object whereby they can teach Manny a lesson. On the other end of the spectrum is Evan in

"Upper West Side Story," who may have sexual feelings for Chloe, but actor Graham Phillips never has any lines that would indicate this, and his performance doesn't suggest it.[5] (If anything, he seems scared of Chloe.) The gang aside, only Mike Jergens is sexually malevolent. By and large, these recyclings strip *Romeo and Juliet* of much of its sexual energy, changing Romeo from a lover who "grow[s] in understanding of the relationship between love and sexuality" (Wells 166) to a sexually active lover whose understanding changes little, if he has any to begin with.

Nor is Tommy from *Law & Order*'s "Denial" a bright beacon. He and Christina dump their fetus in the trash before returning to the party to slow-dance to "Endless Love," and then they pin the blame on Christina's parents. Throughout, Tommy expresses confusion about why everyone is being mean to him: he just loves Christina and wants to be with her always. Mike relishes his predations, gloating about them to the detective who is investigating him, but Tommy may be worse because he doesn't see anything wrong with what he has done, nor with what he is doing. Mike and Tommy give us Romeo recycled as a moral cripple. And what does this gain us? A Romeo who is not a romantic sap but is more like a real boy whose hamartia leads to his and his lover's downfall, a boy who charms and revolts.

Romeo, Unbound

An understanding of Romeo is bound by one's knowledge of the facts of the text itself, so there is little surprise left for us when Romeo's eye is first caught by Juliet, little astonishment when he abandons his friends to climb that garden wall, little suspense when he approaches that tomb. But more so, an understanding of Romeo is bound by "iconic" beliefs about how these facts are activated in performance: each of us already knows Romeo the lover, the hero, the victim. The nub of my vexation with Romeo was that the character had no ability to surprise. And my response? Irritation at his rote familiarity. I held out hope for a Romeo who surprised me and approached performances of *Romeo and Juliet* after some havering because of the suspicion that Romeo was going to bug me. Intensely. This expectation often was not disappointed.

These poached and recycled Romeos, part of the *work* of *Romeo and Juliet*, jarred me out of that rut: they suggest ways to rethink Romeo's potentialities. When Romeo offers Juliet "a tender kiss" (1.5.95), *of course* she is going to respond. *Of course* her response will be to trope

Romeo's metaphor. Except she doesn't have to. Juliet could take one look at this brash, grabby boy and split, and how Romeo would respond to this provocation also could be up in the air. These Romeos, found in non-Shakespearean diversions, re-energized my interest in the character. However silly and evanescent they might be, they offer a means by which constrained, "iconic" understandings of the character can be broken, revealing a less conventional or even an unconventional Romeo, a hesitant bungler, an inarticulate mumbler, a Romeo at risk of getting shot down, a kinky Romeo, a Romeo thunderstruck by the ferocity of his Juliet's passion, a Romeo who is truly caught in an impossible bind between old and new alliances, an unpleasant, creepy teenage boy, a Romeo who surprises and invigorates rather than being conventional, staid, and stale. I should be so lucky. We all should be.

Notes

1. See Rocklin 35; Loehlin 21, 29, 59–60, 67, 68, 74 and 121; and Jackson 131, 133 and 153. My thanks to LeeAnne Wonser for the phrase "lovey stuff."
2. A "nonsense word" meaning "Conduct resembling that of a Romeo" (*OED* [1991]).
3. For more on Juliet's "taming" of Romeo, see Brown 334–335 and 337–350.
4. For different adaptations' happy endings, see Loehlin 8.
5. The primary bearer of sexual desire in the production is Chloe (see Hendershott-Kraetzer, "A Hot Mess," 18–22, 26, and 29).

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PART III

Texts and Paratexts

CHAPTER 8

Chaste Thinking, Cultural Reiterations: Shakespeare's *Lucrece* and *The Letter*

Barbara Correll

Introduction

A Roman woman sits alone late at night and writes a letter to her husband. She tries to pour out her desire to undo the sexual violence she has just suffered at the hands of her guest, a tyrant's son, but she can only imagine the letter to be incriminating. She censors herself: from personal shame? from the cultural expectation that rape shames women and that she is, from her socio-cultural perspective, always already guilty? She summons her husband. When he arrives with her father, she identifies the crime and criminal, places herself in the self-incriminating loop of chastity, and stabs herself. Her account, her suffering are subsumed by another man's response: she becomes a cultural mnemonic for a political cause. The Romans parade her body in the streets, expel the tyrants, establish the Republic. She becomes the signifier of chastity.

A British woman living on a Malaysian rubber plantation sends a letter to an ex-lover, summoning him to visit when her husband is away. The letter, expressing her desire—desperate, threatening—will prove to be incriminating when she murders him. When discovered after she has shot and killed the man, after she has claimed self-defense against sexual

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assault, the letter reveals her desire and her duplicity; it speaks for what the native plantation workers have witnessed but do not testify to in this colonial society. Held by the man's Eurasian widow, the letter is damning evidence. But her lawyer purchases it at great cost; it is never brought to light. She is juridically acquitted of the crime but exposed privately to her husband when he reads it. Later, leaving the party that celebrates her acquittal, she seeks and receives a kind of unofficial justice at the hands of the widow, who stabs her to death. Colonial law and social order, corrupt, hypocritical, and civilized, remain structurally unshaken.

Adaptation, Fidelity, Chaste Thinking

This essay addresses the "fidelity model" of film adaptation through what I'm calling, indebted to Stephanie Jed, the "chaste thinking" of Shakespeare cinematic adaptation criticism.[1] Much has been written on the topic of adaptation (or appropriation) and its place in Shakespeare studies; such work remains increasingly important.[2] My main goal, however, is to address the current boundaries of Shakespeare adaptation study through an intertextual reading of texts whose castigating exemplarity links sexual violation, female chastity, and political formations: Shakespeare's narrative poem, *The Rape of Lucrece* (1593–1594), and the William Wyler film *The Letter* (1940), its screen play written by Howard Koch and based on W. Somerset Maugham's short story "The Letter" (1923) and stage play (1925).[3] The prospect of comparing *Lucrece* and *The Letter* may not immediately seem promising; to adapt one jarring comment from the film, it might well seem as bootless as trying to find rubber growing "in a civilized climate."[4] While arguably most any text on or treatment of female chastity might be linked to the myth of Lucretia as the hypotext (Genette), while there may be other cultural reiterations of the myth, these particular literary and cinematic adaptations form a transhistorical conversation whose shared thematics of chastity and politics is echoed in adaptation criticism, as well. Suggesting a dialogical relationship between a famous Shakespeare text, itself both a faithful and unfaithful adaptation of its sources, and a cinematic reiteration of the Lucretia myth that works through inversion and wildly unfaithful gestures, throws additional critical light on the adaptation process. And while my frame is intertextuality, I would add that the current work on intermediality belongs to this discussion of a narrative poem and film and their untamed relationship to sources.

In her critique of humanism, *Chaste Thinking: The Rape of Lucretia and the Birth of Humanism*, Stephanie Jed critiques humanist ideology's connection to what she calls the political philology of chastity in the Lucretia myth, and her critique suggests much about the adaptation debate addressed here. The word "chastity"—Latin *casta, castiga*; English *chaste, castigate, chasten*—reveals lexical links between purity and punishment. These work together in the Lucretia texts to make sexual violence as prelude to or prerequisite for republican freedom in a dialectic of liberty and lust (29). Tarquin takes sexual liberties (28), Brutus serves as the liberator and castigator (15) who punishes the libidinous tyrant and forcefully remakes (adapts!) Lucretia into a unifying civil and political mnemonic. Putative republican freedom, constitutively underwritten by the violence against and self-sacrifice of a woman, has its analogy in humanist philology and textual editing practices which, not unlike the expectations of fidelity film critics, aim endlessly to purify texts of contaminations introduced by those who would take liberties and despoil the purity of tradition. For Jed, Lucretia's self-condemnation and self-slaughter make her "a model philologist who obliterates the sign of her violation; who covers up the sign of her intervention" (39–40). She reveals the constitutive contradiction of humanism: "in all philological work—every castigation is also a contamination" (34), and she reproduces the insidious castigating constellation of rape, chastity, and political liberty.

Jed does not include Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece* in the historical scope of her study, but Shakespeare's late sixteenth-century text quite actively engages with the Lucretia myth and his classical and medieval sources. The narrative poem's transformation of and its arguable resistance to the Lucretia myth are as important as its transmission of it. Even as he respects its narrative structure and conclusion, Shakespeare takes liberties with the tradition. The interiority and reflexivity that he gives Tarquin and Lucrece, especially the more than 800 lines (744–1582) given over to her thoughts in a narrative poem of 1855 lines, constitute an adaptation that repeats and innovates, a repetition with a difference.

To the extent that it would be possible to see the Lucretia myth working its way into Maugham's story/drama and the Wyler Hollywood film, we can say that their work offers an oblique kind of revival of the myth, one transplanted to another civic and historical setting: British colonial Malaysia. Perhaps more importantly, film and story foreground infidelity and contamination in the character of killer and plantation spouse

Leslie Crosbie. Here is where intertextuality comes into play. Robert Stam claims that, beyond sources, intertextuality's scope can include any points of indiscriminate (or intermedial) contact (202).

If we expand the critical parameters of Jed's study, we can see the fidelity model of film adaptation criticism as yet another humanist textual practice: more chaste thinking. Important here is attention to Shakespeare's own adaptive practices and, using Genette's term of "hypotext," to *Lucrece* as Shakespeare's hypertext and to the open, dialogical question of what hypotext, if any, subtends his adaptive work. The special critical charge that *Rape of Lucrece* offers comes in large part from the cultural palimpsest of chastity and politics in which it is situated and to which Shakespeare's narrative poem adds its own adaptive strategies. To then place *Lucrece* and *The Letter* in an adaptive relationship would horrify fidelity critics. It might qualify as what Mark Fortier (2007) calls a "wild adaptation," and we could then situate the Wyler film and Maugham's story/drama in that cultural palimpsest. Rather than letting go of the special charge that viewing *The Letter* in relationship to *Rape of Lucrece* provides, I would like to explore it.

The Iconography of Lucretia: Digression on Artemisia Gentileschi

In her work on seventeenth-century artist Artemisia Gentileschi, Mary D. Garrard sees Artemisia intervening in the Lucretia tradition (216–244). Whereas the sixteenth-century Lucretia is visually represented as unemotional or "impassive," the Baroque Lucretias of Titian and Giovanni Biliverti display an eroticized surrender (227). In contrast, Artemisia's less specular, more interrogative Lucretia, physically strong and intellectually thoughtful, is shown suspending the inevitable moment of suicide as her decision, not merely her fate (228). For Garrard, Artemisia's two Lucretia paintings interrogate the myth that fatally and repetitively inscribes them (230).

Garrard locates important parallels to Artemisia's *Lucretia* in Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece* and sees the suspension and the thoughtful pose of Lucretia—a space where the woman decides—as introducing a question of female agency in both painting and narrative text (237).[5] In posing questions of female agency, the adaptive work of poet and painter pushes against the limits of the circumscribing myth that

determines the outcome, staging a delay in which the question of female desire suspends and haunts the narrative limit. That question will resonate in *The Letter*.

Shakespeare's Supplementary Lucrece

The Rape of Lucrece rewrites Livy's and Ovid's accounts—versions of the myth, like other humanist versions that Stephanie Jed diachronically tracks, that magnify the virtue of Lucretia while affirming the action of the suicide and Brutus' reaction as he seamlessly transforms or translates it into a civic-republican moment. But in Shakespeare's text Brutus' abrupt response to Lucrece's suicide becomes a suturing moment that both calls for and calls attention to the effacement of vivid, carefully constructed passages in which the isolated Lucrece reflects on the assault and attempts, unsuccessfully, to interpellate herself into something to be hailed other-wise.[6] That is, the text stages a failure—Lucrece calls herself "the mistress of my fate" (1069) but she cannot escape the narrative fate that masters her—and calls attention to the cultural mechanisms that produce and enforce that disciplinary failure. Like Artemisia's Lucretia paintings, the text presents not only a reflective Lucrece but also an emphasis on textuality combined with the visual that foregrounds her dilemma for the reader. Lucrece's suspension in reflection at a moment of articulating something that we could locate as female desire competes or clashes with the master narrative.

Shakespeare's Lucrece is given more than 800 lines (lines 744–1582) in which she laments, curses, projects, writes, views, and reads. In her letter to Collatine, she attempts to express her anguish, only to find herself circumscribed by a sense of taintedness and illegibility. In her extended viewing of the Trojan painting Lucrece, a well-painted piece, reads a well-painted piece (1366–1582), and in her account before her husband and father, the scripted Lucrece interrogates her scripted fate: "How may this forcèd stain be wiped from me? […] / May any terms acquit me from this chance?" (1701; 1706). Collatine's incoherent response, his falling into and flailing helplessly in the pool of blood (1772–1790), suspend the text momentarily in a reading in which disorderly elements, as adaptive strategies, act upon the tradition that circumscribes Shakespeare's much dilated rewriting. Not least among these are repeated references to textuality: to writing, singing, weaving, telling,

reading signs, speaking, painting, and charactering, and to a textual legacy. Lucrece fears that "The nurse […] will tell my story" (813) and, in a massively ironic intertextual prolepsis, she worries that she will "be made a theme for disputation" (822).

Jonathan Crewe notes that Shakespeare's *Lucrece* "stakes out a field of conscious reflections against fateful repetition" by repeating with a difference and constituting a text ultimately "unassimilable to its textual predecessors" (142), invested in Lucrece's desire, however unsuccessful, to find a way out of the text of Lucretia. In its exploration, however unwitting, of female agency and desire and in its uncanny parallels to *Lucrece*, the Wyler film takes *Lucrece* further, into an interrogation of desire and agency, from the republic to the colonial, and shows the ways in which the colonial responds to chastening republican power.

The Surplus of *The Letter*

Shakespeare's *Lucrece* is positioned in a genealogized text of female chastity and self-sacrifice and in an anaclitic masculine emulatory culture of political conquest and violence. It would not be productive to judge the fidelity of *The Letter* vis-à-vis *The Rape of Lucrece*—but it is important to see Shakespeare's *Lucrece* as being situated in a genealogical chain (Livy, Ovid, Chaucer, Gower, Salutati, Machiavelli, Painter, Heywood, Lanyer, Sachs, etc.) that contributes to the myth's intertextual dispersal in twentieth-century texts, both literary and cinematic (Donaldson). In light of such intertextual activities, as well as a more generalized cultural *Übertext* of chastening precepts for women's behavior in a culture of violence against women in which rape is the woman's stigmatizing double bind that makes her victim and perpetrator, it seems possible to speak of a mediated relationship between the narrative poem and the narrative film.[7]

The Letter is framed, narratively and visually, by startling acts of violence: two killings, two executions, each revealed and concealed by moonlight, each witnessed by native onlookers and the film audience. The film's establishing sequence, a cultural panorama, visually presents a native and, importantly, an evaluative point of view. After the title and opening credits, the introduction of Max Steiner's melodramatic musical theme, the first image is a full moon. A cut to the corporate sign, "No. 4 Plant," and the site of rubber production follows: a tree scored, dripping rubber sap into a bucket, full buckets nearby, begins an extended

shot. The camera pans to a yard with a dog patrolling, the Crosbie bungalow in the background. In the foreground is a large open-thatched dormitory—the plantation workers' quarters—with musicians, card players, men in hammocks rocking and sleeping. The camera tilts up the storied layers of hammocks, then continues to track right. A very brief cut, nearly seamless, continues the sequence and shows the house fenced off from the dormitory and finally a white cockatoo, perched on the fence, sent flying when a shot is heard and the startled workers look toward the shooting. As Jeff Hammond staggers out from the bungalow, rapid cutting offers a montage of witnesses and reactions to the sight of Leslie Crosbie emptying her gun into the prostrate man. The moon is briefly concealed behind a cloud as Leslie looks thoughtfully at Hammond's body. The camera moves in for a close-up, then come shots of the agitated reactions of the native witnesses who have hastily dressed and assembled and a cut to the "Head Boy" (a role played by Tetsu Komai, a balding Japanese actor in his forties) who recognizes Hammond. He follows Leslie into the house.

In the film, as in Shakespeare's narrative poem, chastity, rape, and hegemonic political society are the stakes, but in *The Letter* the character's inverted relationship to Lucrece is clear: virtue and order are threatened by a spectacularly unchaste woman's murderous duplicity in which she falsely claims self-defense against a sexual assault from a lover who has spurned her for a woman of another race. If Leslie would initially be viewed as an inversion of the chaste Roman matron, though—Lucrece inside-out—the film presents a series of both inversions and analogies to the Lucretia myth and to Shakespeare's adaptation. Poem and film cross or mirror one another repeatedly, not only through inversions which, in effect, constitute repetitions, but through arresting parallels. Both women are linked to the "distaff function," and both have "merchandizing" husbands: Collatine is "publisher" of Lucrece's virtue (33) and becomes the "hopeless merchant of this loss" (1660); Bob Crosbie manages a plantation that exports rubber and also extols the virtues of his wife. The projected accusations that Lucrece (mis)reads in the eyes of her maid and the young messenger who is to deliver the letter to Collatine are matched by the native workers and the Head Boy who witness Leslie's crime; they are fully aware of her guilt. Lucrece summons husband and father as patriarchal authorities; Leslie summons her husband and the district officer and has Howard Joyce, her lawyer, as another patriarchal authority. In each case, the rape is embedded in

a social-political structure, in one case saved by female sacrifice, in the other first threatened, then neutralized. These events, too, end with the woman stabbed in an exemplary, punitive, and castigating manner when Leslie leaves the party and goes, willfully or somatically, to meet the widow and the Head Boy for her execution. But central to these inversions and analogies, Lucrece's anguished question, "May any terms acquit me of this chance?", a question that pushes against the proscription of female agency, seems lamentably answered in *The Letter*: Leslie's rigged acquittal works to criminalize female desire; her transgression falls prey to the logic of chaste thinking.

Thus, the texts converse through their over-arching cultural-generic relationships: narrative poetry, narrative cinema, a cultural narrative of chastity/rape and castigation in which the binary logic of chastity and impurity is exposed as occluding its violence: in the logic of the myth, there is no *un*-raped Lucrece; to be chaste is to be raped. In the case of Leslie, however, the chastity/rape dialectic opens up to become something unruly, with desire, criminality, civility and colonial relations pulling away from that center. *The Rape of Lucrece* introduces a debate on chastity and civilization which *The Letter* takes up in a twentieth-century colonial setting to produce a vexed conversation.

The Distaff Function in the Colonial Setting

Both Lucrece and Leslie are identified through their handwork. The "Argument" to *Lucrece* relates the chastity/beauty contest that contrasts Lucrece with the other wives and makes Collatine the winner, setting in motion the fateful events: "only Collatine finds his wife (though it were late in the night) spinning amongst her maids; the other ladies were all found dancing and revelling, or in several disports." Shakespeare condenses Ovid's characterization of Lucretia, which makes much of her spinning, but his abbreviated description does its work: Lucrece spins, the "other ladies" don't; they are eliminated from the contest and, we should add, they are not raped.

Leslie combines handwork and (adulterous) revelry, handwork and pleasure, and the film makes her lacework a focal point that works hand in hand with the film's complex relation to its colonial setting. It testifies to the times she is left keeping house as Bob manages rubber plantations in other locations in Malaysia; it should signify domesticity and fidelity. After the shooting, with a weeping Leslie sequestered behind

bedroom doors, the Head Boy picks up the intricate work and examines it as though pondering its connection to the violence he has witnessed. The district officer later admires the work as "something she would do," evidence of her refinement. Much later, just before departing for the Chinatown meeting, Joyce's admiring niece inquires, "It's too fine to be a tablecloth; what is it?" Leslie's reply, "It's a coverlet for our bed," points to her duplicity while encapsulating the thematic constellation. When she and Joyce prepare to depart, he asks her when she started lacework, and she responds, "Is this a legal question?" Indeed, it is. Domestic signifier, index of methodical control, symptom of displaced frustration, the lacework with its carefully worked intricate pattern is as incriminating as the letter. Both testify to Leslie's hypocrisy, yet also her simmering repressed desire. If Leslie is guilty of murder, she is also guilty of lacework, perhaps the real "letter" of the film.

Civility and Native Justice

The Letter presents a version of Western civility in a British colonial setting. From his Hollywood stage lot Wyler simulates a rubber plantation, Singapore, and the well-lubricated social rituals of English ex-patriots and those who serve them. Its colonial setting of civil–juridical order is linked to the domestic order of the home, with its rules of hospitality, friendship, and marital fidelity that parallel the setting of *Lucrece*. If the politeness and good manners of personal behavior and social relationships should flow seamlessly into the public and political–juridical arena, the film exposes and exploits disturbances. In the official scheme, the woman performing the domestic sphere's sentimental labor, respecting the public sphere that implicitly includes her by requiring her seclusion, insures the legitimacy of the private–public relationship. The cultural law broken by Leslie's transgression is manipulated when Joyce's Chinese law clerk Ong Chi Seng parlays the letter, and momentarily overturned by the Eurasian Mrs. Hammond when she effectively commands Leslie and Joyce's acquiescence, then significantly compromised when he violates professional ethics and, as he admits, suborns perjury in purchasing and suppressing the letter. But Leslie's position between men, initially analogous to Lucrece's position as the blazoned prize for Collatine, is complicated, first, by the crocheted lacework that is almost never out of Leslie's hands and that comes under the mixed scrutiny of others; and secondly, by the roles played by the Malaysians.

As Joyce tells Leslie in their prison interview, he had been expecting an all but automatic acquittal, "But," he now adds, "This letter places an entirely new complexion on the case." Joyce's grim observation echoes the words of his Chinese law clerk Ong Chi Seng, a pivotal figure not only for the plot of the film but for its interest in colonial power. Ong first appears as a very polite, even obsequious assistant, a slight bespectacled man who dresses in the white double-breasted suits worn by Joyce and who drives a comically small car that, in one scene, pops out from its parking place between the cars outside Joyce's law office when he drives off. He seems, at first, a kind of imitative cultural miniature but one who happens to know far more than his superior. It is Ong who first conveys a copy of the letter to Joyce, coyly suggesting that Leslie's account of the killing is "not in every respect accurate" and that the letter he carries "seems to put a different complexion on the case." He knows the conditions for purchasing the letter and, having looked into Bob Crosbie's personal finances, the purchase price. As mediator, he presciently prepares for Joyce's visit to the prison and, later, his meeting with Bob Crosbie at their club, smoothly rescheduling Joyce's other appointments. When he chauffeurs Joyce and Leslie to Chinatown for their meeting to purchase the letter from Mrs. Hammond, he is at the wheel of an imposing black sedan, a kind of juggernaut more fitting for his dominant role.

In the prison sequence, Joyce questions Leslie about the letter he carries in his pocket. She adamantly denies writing it but is trapped by what he reads to her: she, not Hammond, has been the sexual predator. If there is a scene of sexual violation, however, it could be found here. Joyce challenges Leslie's denials, reading the incriminating parts to her, until she faints. The next scene shows Leslie lying on an infirmary bed, the back of her head in the foreground, as Joyce looms over her with all the authority of the law. Following the scopic economy of classical cinema, the scene is shot at a slightly high angle, the lighting presenting the supine Leslie for visual consumption. It does not remain so. "Are you going to let them hang me?" she asks, slowly changing the visual dynamic and turning the gaze back to Joyce. To spare not her but his friend Crosbie the pain of losing his wife, she convinces him to violate his professional ethics and buy the letter. His punitive scrutiny continues, however, as he declares that he only needs "to know enough to *save your neck*," that he can't predict what happens between Leslie and Bob after the trial. Before leaving, Joyce reflects, "Strange how you can live with a woman for ten years and not know the first thing about her." This

remark tacitly makes the link between Leslie's desire and murder, but Joyce's evaluative authority is already undercut by his illicit decision to get the letter and to conceal it from the prosecution.

Joyce's inability to police boundaries between the civilized British colonial world and the border-crossing setting that Hammond (casino owner, husband of a Eurasian woman) inhabited before his murder suggests that the link established in this film on chastity and civilization between *Lucrece* and republican freedom, between the Republic and its civil-domestic foundation, must contend with something else. In the film, the gendered precepts of civility clash when Leslie confronts Hammond's widow.

The film places the letter in the constellation of lacework, infidelity, murder, and suppression of a woman's desire. But the question of agency is further complicated by the other woman. Mrs. Hammond has the original letter and initially wants the authorities to have it. She cannot herself read it, as she knows only Chinese and Malay, but she is convinced by Ong, who is in for a generous cut, to sell it under her conditions: Leslie must personally deliver the money to her. In the crucial sequence in Chung Hi's shop, Leslie watches as Mrs. Hammond parts a tinkling beaded curtain and enters to stand above her on a riser and receive the money. Confronting the woman whose white husband she has vengefully murdered and who has just flung at her feet the one piece of evidence that would condemn her in a court of law, Leslie Crosbie bends to pick it up, rises, and says crisply, with an irony apparently intended to reinstantiate her position, "Thank you." The spectator has already encountered a kind of parody of bourgeois civility in Chung Hi, the opium–smoking shopkeeper who presides over the blackmail exchange. Asked if he speaks English, he replies, "Me? Speaking very good English. *How do you do?*" Leslie's terse "thank you" resonates with the history of civilizing efforts that train bourgeois subjects in good manners, train women like Leslie Crosbie in their domestic handwork, and leave the record of violence in writing.

The looks exchanged by the two women say more. Mrs. Hammond sees the white woman who murdered her husband, the object of her hatred, who will escape justice in white colonial society. But what does Leslie see when she looks up at Mrs. Hammond? On the one hand, despite her physically lower position, she enjoys a sense of superiority. The widow is a social outsider, and unlike Leslie who is (chastely) dressed in a white dress, her hair covered by a delicate and lacy white

shawl, she is dressed exotically in heavy brocade with gold chains, bracelets, and other jewelry, her face, according to Leslie, "like a mask." On the other hand, this is the woman who has been at the center of Hammond's personal life, the cause of his rejection of Leslie. Her silence and apparent inscrutability may signify the racial other for Leslie and Joyce, yet she demonstrates a fierce integrity that contrasts with Leslie's dishonesty in her refusal to touch the money Leslie would hand to her.

When Joyce and Leslie arrive in Chung Hi's shop to acquire the letter, Leslie is drawn to a knife with a carved jade handle. Leslie's fascination with the shop and its goods sharply contrasts all that's for sale in the shop with the uniqueness of the letter that the widow does not want to sell. The knife that attracts Leslie, an ominously exotic item, appears on the doorstep outside Leslie's guest room at the Joyce home on the night of the celebration. Leslie first recoils at the sight of it, but after her confrontation with Bob, when she passionately confesses that "with all my heart I still love the man I killed," she leaves the house and finds the widow and the Head Boy with the knife. She seeks out and submits to the law represented by Mrs. Hammond, judge and executioner.

Curiously, like Shakespeare's Lucrece, who is squeezed by a system in which she functions as provocative token (the "chastity" contest) and for the sake of which she offers hospitality to the man who has come to rape her, in both the affair and in the murder Leslie Crosbie comes between the civil–juridical and the domestic–patriarchal notions of honor and civility. Acquitted of murder, she devastates her two male defenders: Joyce turns the incriminating letter over to Bob Crosbie, emptying his life's savings and crushing his naive faith in Leslie as the loyal wife and plucky defender of her virtue, and reducing the men's friendship to a relationship of mutual shame, shamefacedly damaging Joyce's professional self-esteem and sense of rectitude. She exposes the assumption that the civil and domestic realms work seamlessly, require no sacrifice, deny no desire, and cannot be corrupted.

Leslie would be let off the hook (as she is in Maugham's short story and play) with only cultural illusions as collateral damage but for a chastening intervention: the Hollywood Code (a.k.a. the Production Code or the Hays Code),[8] which specified that "No picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it," and that "Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation." The prospect of life with a husband now aware

of her infidelity and her guilt in the murder of the man she still loves, and who is willing to forgive her, requires punishment.

Not dissimilar to *The Rape of Lucrece*, where the suicide and the political action that follows are dictated by the myth, the Hollywood Code plays a determining role in the film's narrative. But the prescribed death sentence has consequences for the film's coherence. In order to have Leslie's death make sense, Wyler foregrounds Leslie's relationship to the Eurasian woman, the chastening executioner. In its fascinated investment in this relationship, the film seems to locate another law, the one whose death sentence she accepts and even seeks. What is this law that brings together the two women of colonial society, and what is the film's position vis–à–vis the unwritten law that, like Leslie's lace–making, betrays itself as writing?

The film's concluding sequence at the place of execution seems an effort to produce a kind of poetic justice, one quickly disrupted by the police, who escort the executioners away. In this respect, if the film functions as a kind of subversive re–writing of *The Rape of Lucrece* in which an act of violence against a woman serves as the founding moment of civil society, it proves too potent and overwhelms, rather than parallels, the other text. In facing her end at the hands of an outsider and fellow female transgressor, something remains in excess of the recuperative narrative characteristic of other Wyler films.[9]

The concluding sequence of the film, in which Leslie leaves the Joyce house and finds her two executioners, nearly symmetrically, chiasmically repeats the opening sequence, but with significant differences.[10] She is filmed from the point of view of Mrs. Hammond and her accomplice, who earlier had left, then removed the dagger on the doorstep to Leslie's guest room. She weaves her way through the Joyces' tropical garden, moving toward the gate that marks the property limits as the background sound of the orchestra changes to the quiet, Asian-esque music heard in the plantation workers' quarters and in Chinatown. Outside those limits, which mark the transition from the colonial to the native space, she faces justice.

The film's complicity with the gaze of the native, and its difficult positioning of the cinematic gaze in its odd and powerful triangulation (two women and a man as the object of their desire), complicates its relationship to the position of women in the civilizing process. The thread of Leslie's aborted lace–making project ultimately unravels the text of civility. In both texts, however, the truth of the chaste Lucrece, both

inverted and withheld in *The Letter*, must be forced out and set right by the law. Both texts offer cases in which letters figure significantly, but neither text succeeds in delivering a stabilizing truth. Nor, for that matter, can either adjudicate the issue of adaptation.

Conclusion

What then can we claim for a cultural adaptation like *The Letter*? What does *The Letter* "know" about *The Rape of Lucrece*? At what point do Wyler and Shakespeare converse, and what does the film offer to Shakespearean adaptation criticism? *The Letter*'s willingness to reproduce and also pluralize the discourse on chastity/civilization is also a pluralizing cultural reiteration of the myth of Lucrece and the genealogical chain in which Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece* finds its place. This, I think, makes the film more than just a point of reference from which to scrutinize the cultural representation of chastity; rather, it suggests a cultural constellation from which the two texts draw, in which they may, as cultural artifacts of a transhistorical discourse on chastity, be seen as conversing intertextually.

Both *Lucrece* and *The Letter* partake of and reproduce a historically and geographically dispersed thematics of chaste thinking. When the myth undergoes the kind of violent inversion seen in *The Letter*, when Lucrece is turned inside-out, the fateful repetition takes a new turn. Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, while a striking example, forms part of the continuity of the myth of female chastity and civilization, and Wyler's film pulls many strands from that material. If there is no rape in the film, in its preoccupation with infidelity, in the castigating demands of the Hollywood Code, rape is written everywhere. If the film could successfully suture the spectator to identify with the representative of the law, the attorney who defends and condemns, that systemic crisis could see a restabilizing resolution, as it does rather more successfully in Maugham's story and stage play. That failure, however, marks the film's cinematic success.

What are the parameters of Shakespearean adaptation criticism? My essay may be a kind of wrenched limit case for adaptation studies but, taking seriously a historically and geographically dispersed thematics of chaste thinking, I have also tried to take the criticism of the fidelity model seriously. If we look to Genette's notions of hypertext and hypotext, Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece* is really more hypertext than hypotext, every treatment of the Lucretia myth another

hypertext of a cultural-ideological hypotext that can only be located in an earlier position of the genealogical chain of precepts of female chastity whose logic is admirably delineated by Stephanie Jed.

Jed sees the contemporary afterlife of Lucretia in humanism's ceaseless compulsion "to restore an authentic reading to contaminated texts" (35), to free the text from the taint of past editors' liberties: chaste thinking. Wyler's *The Letter* fruitfully recontaminates the Lucretia myth; although it is constrained by a castigating view of an unfaithful woman through the Hollywood Code that legislates punishment for active female desire, its colonial setting, and the unruly roles of native figures act subversively upon that framework.

As humanist philology insists upon a purity that is always already contaminated by a history of violence, so fidelity criticism insists upon fidelity to a text that is, likewise, never pure and subject to the contaminations familiar to humanist texts. At least in the fidelity model, adaptation criticism represents a later historical stage of humanist philology.[11] If Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece* reworks and refunctions its sources in an unlimited intertextual chain of both forms and topoi that reflect and reflect upon a broader cultural text of precepts for women in a patriarchal society linked to republican political forms, I think that we can say that *The Letter* is Wyler's and Hollywood's *Lucrece*.

Notes

1. The best example of the fidelity model would be Seymour Chatman (121–140), but see also Beja and Griffith. Stam (2000, 2005) lists other examples. Assumptions about fidelity to an authoritative Shakespearean text continue to influence Shakespeare criticism, as Lanier makes clear.
2. In addition to the journal *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*, see Connor, Fortier, Desmet, Lanier, Fischlin, and others still to come. On adaptation theory in general, see Leitch and Hutcheon. The issue of adaptation versus appropriation is provocatively discussed in Lanier.
3. There is a silent film, *The Letter* (1929), and there have been numerous other cinematic adaptations of Maugham's short story, as well as a radio play, a musical, and an opera.
4. In the scene at the country club in which Joyce convinces Bob Crosbie of the need to purchase the letter without disclosing its contents, the waiter who serves them several rounds of early afternoon drinks imparts the opinion, "It's a shame rubber won't grow in a civilized place."

5. This reading is indebted to Ian Donaldson's comments on the "basic indecisiveness over the story's central moral issues" (49).
6. Melissa Sanchez reads the poem as concerned with contextual questions of tyranny and political structures plagued, in Shakespeare's time, by uncertainty. Lucrece's lack of agency reflects the inability of late sixteenth-century (male) subjects to act (revolt) for political reform (95). This makes the "jump-cut" of Brutus' response to the suicide more coherent or strategic, but making Lucrece a political exemplar detracts from issues of gender and agency raised in the poem (and by me).
7. While Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece* is not likely a direct source for Maugham or Wyler, a plausible circumstantial case for contact could be located for both in their traditional British and German schooling. More important is the larger cultural source: embedded or "naturalized" discourses of chastity and civilization.
8. http://www.artsreformation.com: The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930.
9. Such films include *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946) and *Jezebel* (1938).
10. Mary Anne Doane (109) finds that the symmetry weakens the film. For her, the women's films of the 1930s and 1940s adhere to delimiting narrative conventions, in which "nonprogression," "stagnancy," and "eventlessness" take the place of suspense and action. Doane sees the film as conforming structurally to her model in its "coming full circle."
11. Note: An earlier version of this essay was presented to a Shakespeare Association of America (SAA) seminar on Shakespearean adaptation, organized by Tom Cartelli. Many thanks to Tom, Peter Donaldson, and Katherine Rowe for comments, questions, and suggestions.

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CHAPTER 9

Paratextual Shakespearings: Comics' Shakespearean Frame

Brandon Christopher

The lead story in the December 1971 issue of *Detective Comics*, written by Denny O'Neil, derives its title, "And Be a Villain!" from *Hamlet* 1.5.108. In the play, Hamlet speaks the line after being instructed by the ghost to "remember" him (1.5.91) in the scene that inaugurates the play's revenge plot. O'Neil's quotation from *Hamlet* places his story, the plot of which features as its villain a mad revenger, within the long tradition of revenge stories of which *Hamlet* is the most exalted English exemplar. In the title's placement, though, on the comic's opening splash page, the line seems to connect the comic's hero, Batman, with Hamlet (see Fig. 9.1). Depicting the superhero perched atop a water tower in Gotham City just as Laurence Olivier perches atop Elsinore in his 1948 film adaptation of *Hamlet*, the page surrounds him with text:

> It is a lonely vigil here, on the roof of the city, in a neighborhood of factories and warehouses. An odor of decay scents the air … and there is the rustle of foraging rodents. / Unmoving, stolid as stone, the watcher waits, scouring the darkness with his steady gaze … / Perhaps, in these still moments, he recalls a line of poetry … "that one may smile and smile … / … And Be A VILLAIN!" (1)

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Fig. 9.1 Denny O'Neil, Irv Novick, and Dick Giordano, "And Be a Villain!" *Detective Comics* #418 (December 1971), 1

Thus the title page, in having the comic's hero recall, either internally or, perhaps, in soliloquy, lines from *Hamlet*, makes a second association, between Shakespeare's play and the comic's backstory of parental loss, disguised identity, and vigilante justice. This conjunction is further emphasized both by the placement of the text and by its coloring. The red and yellow of the character's corporate logo in the upper, left-hand corner of the page reappear only in the opposite corner, where the yellow which served as the background for the word "Batman" now serves as the background for the first half of the quotation from *Hamlet*. Even more noteworthy are the only two uses of red on the page, first for "Batman" and then for the title/quotation. Irv Novick and Dick Giordano's art, too, links the hero to the Shakespearean hypotext, as Batman's absurdly long cape stretches diagonally from one corner toward the other, seeming almost to be reaching for the story's title. Thus, through a series of visual and textual effects, O'Neil, Novick, and Giordano work to establish continuity, or even a shared lineage, between the socially marginal, virtually disposable consumer product they have produced and one of the central artifacts of the western literary canon.

O'Neil's turn to Shakespeare on the comic's splash page can be understood within his larger project as the writer of Batman comics in the early 1970s. In the latter half of the 1960s, Batman comics had tended toward the campier storylines and brighter color palette characteristic of the then-popular, Adam-West-starring *Batman* television program.[1] O'Neil, along with artist Neal Adams, is credited with "rescu[ing] Batman from the cozy, campy cul-de-sac he had been consigned to in the 1960s" (McAvennie 141). O'Neil himself understood his work as a return to the work of Batman's original creators: "I went to the DC library and read some of the early stories. I tried to get a sense of what [Bob] Kane and [Bill] Finger were after" (Pearson and Uricchio 18). This turn to the earliest authority was an attempt, as Bradford Wright puts it, to return the character to its earlier incarnation as a "grim avenger of the night" (233). In both Michael McAvennie's institutional account and O'Neil's personal one, the character's metanarrative is understood as intrinsically connected to the question of authorial influence and vision. In order to legitimize his authorship, O'Neil associates himself with Kane and Finger, the particularities of whose vision of the character matter less than O'Neil's invocation of them as ur-author.

This interest in linking comics to their creative and publishing histories is on display in the splash page to "And Be a Villain!" In its own text box, at the bottom of the page, is a dedication to Steve Ditko, the celebrated co-creator of Spider-Man, as well as this particular story's villain, The Creeper.[2] O'Neil himself had begun his career at DC Comics writing the short-lived *Beware the Creeper* series (1968–1969), and his return to the character here works to insert both it and, by extension, him into the matrix of authorship and influence on display on the page. The comic, by making reference to both Ditko and Shakespeare on its splash page, thus puts two separate canons—the comics canon and the traditional literary canon—into conjunction with one another, with O'Neil at the nexus of the two.

This paper takes as its focus the particular way in which comics creators and publishers use citations of Shakespeare within their comics' paratexts, spaces such as covers, titles, advertisements, letter columns, forewords, and afterwords. In these liminal spaces, authors, publishers, and fans map out an archipelago of influences, some greater, some smaller, through and by which to read the work in question. As the example of "And Be a Villain!" demonstrates, the authorial context created by a comic's paratexts is not limited to authors directly related to one particular comics series or, indeed, to comics.[3] In establishing the authorial lineage of their texts, comics creators and editors frequently reach beyond the comics form, establishing connections between their work and works in other forms and media. Drawing on the work of Gérard Genette, I examine a range of paratextual engagements with Shakespeare in comics, from the contradictory interplay of desire and rejection in the *Kill Shakespeare* series to the increasingly pervasive place of Shakespeare within the paratexts of comics published and collected under the Vertigo imprint of DC Comics. In so doing, I examine the way in which Shakespeare becomes, for a particular set of comics and creators, metonymically associated first with a particular kind of literary respectability that runs contrary to common conceptions of comics and then, through repetition, with a particular type of comics authorship.

I

The way in which the splash page of O'Neil's story plays with notions of authorship and influence, bringing together characters and themes from multiple authors, is enabled, in part, by the particular nature of comics

authorship. Due to a number of interrelated factors, including the historically fraught relationship between publishers and creators regarding intellectual property and credit, not to mention compensation, and the impermanent association of creators with particular comics series—especially mainstream, mass-market comics series—authorship in comics has perhaps been a more fluid concept than it is usually understood to be in other creative fields.[4] This has given rise to an intense investment, by both fans and creators (many of whom came to the comics industry by way of fandom), in tracing the work and influence of particular writers and artists. Within the industry, creators have often crafted their work as homage (both ironic and not) to earlier comics creators and eras. This backward-looking tendency, unsurprising in an industry built in large part on reworking the same stories, themes, and characters for decades, has had the effect of establishing a canon of recognizable gestures and styles, of creating a hierarchy of influences whose signs were deployed for the benefit of a subset of readers who could be counted on to recognize and decode them.

Much of this signaling work, as Daniel Stein argues, is done within the comics' paratextual apparatus. As Genette notes in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, "text is rarely presented in an unadorned state, unreinforced and unaccompanied by a certain number of verbal or other productions, such as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations" (1). These other "productions," which Genette names the text's "paratexts," are "what [enable] a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public" (1). Citing Philippe Lejeune's *Le Pacte Autobiographique* (1975), Genette describes paratextual apparatuses as "a fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one's whole reading of the text" (2). In comics, one of the key effects of these paratextual contextualizations is the working out of questions of influence and authority. Daniel Stein argues that, within the comics' paratexts, "the notion of comic book authorship solidifies, and author fictions begin to take center stage" (162). Within these paratextual spaces, writers, artists, and publishers create for readers an authorial context within which to read a particular comic. Fighting against popular conceptions of comics as "formula stories told by anonymous insignificant authors" (Stein 161), comics' paratexts assert cultural and literary authority by repeatedly drawing attention to connections between comics and canonical literature. By bringing Shakespeare and his works into the paratextual apparatuses of their comics, creators and

publishers align their texts with Shakespeare-as-Author, framing their works (and their work) as partaking in a tradition of authorship not as corporate (in both senses), but in what is commonly referred to as the Romantic tradition and conception of authorship as an individual, "originary" act (Woodmansee and Jaszi 3).[5] Shakespeare functions in these works not so much as the creator of a particular set of texts but rather as a metonym for respectability and artistic achievement against and by which comics creators work to define themselves.

II

Likely the most well-known recent example of a comic's deliberate engagement with Shakespeare and his works is Conor McCreery, Anthony Del Col, and Andy Belanger's *Kill Shakespeare* comics series (2010–2014). As its title indicates, the relationship between *Kill Shakespeare*, as physically manifest cultural object, and Shakespeare is at times fraught. For instance, the Foreword to Volume One, written by comics creator Darwyn Cooke, establishes the readerly perspective through which to understand the series from the opening sentences: "There is no love lost between myself and the Bard. As a matter of fact, in high school if someone had yelled 'Kill Shakespeare' I'd have zealously seconded. My memories of high school Shakespeare are not unlike my memories of French language class: vague and irritating."[6] When Cooke returns to the Shakespearean hypotext of *Kill Shakespeare* later in the Foreword, he casts Shakespeare's works and characters in gendered opposition to McCreery, Del Col, Belanger, and himself. The creators of *Kill Shakespeare*, according to Cooke, have "gigantic, Vegas-sized gambler balls." Their comic, he anticipates, will "make a man out of" Hamlet, who Cooke has apparently always thought of as "a bit of an emo douche." In a particularly blatant demonstration of Genette's claim that the paratext works to control "one's whole reading of the text" (2), Cooke punctuates this assessment of Hamlet by interpellating—and thus, I would argue, coercively positioning—the reader by asking a rhetorical question to which the Foreword allows only an affirmative answer: "Am I right?"

The paratextual apparatus of *Kill Shakespeare* extends beyond the pages of the book itself. In its publicity materials online, IDW Publishing, the publishers of *Kill Shakespeare*, reproduce a series of quotations from reviews of the comic (http://www.killshakespeare.com/press.html).

In all but one case, the quotations are laudatory or neutral.[7] In addition, the quotations are reproduced in a visually striking manner, with changing font sizes, or colored text, or both. The one exception is a negative review by Kimberly Cox, which is reproduced in a monotonously laid-out, grey, single-sized typeface:

> i am shaking my head. i want to cry. i want to bitch slap whoever was involved with creating it. however, this kind of crap is nothing new. there is nothing i can do about it except hope that somewhere, someday, it inspires one person to go and discover how awesome the work of william shakespeare is and how even more awesome the history behind this iconic figure is. but the comic book is seriously so poorly done, so flawed on even the most elementary levels of story-telling, i cannot imagine it doing anything but alienating even more people.

Beyond its layout and coloring, the passage is noteworthy for two other reasons. First, it is the only review, of the sixteen reviews quoted on the site, that is written by a woman. Furthermore, it is the only review posted that is attributed to a "shakespearean scholar." All of the other reviews are attributed to news outlets, performers and/or directors, and comics creators. Cox's review, and thus her opinion, is segregated from the rest of the reviews on multiple levels simultaneously: by appearance, by profession, and by gender. The implication is similar, if not identical, to Cooke's construction of the ideal reader of *Kill Shakespeare*: Cox, as a woman and a "scholar," is tied to the "emo douche" Hamlet that *Kill Shakespeare* promises to transcend. The dull, feminine, academic texts to which youth are regularly subjected are overcome—killed, in the comic's formulation—by the vibrant, masculine, implicitly anti-intellectual comics.[8]

These paratextual elements, though, are distinctly at odds with the content of the comic, especially its initial twelve-issue narrative arc. In the story, the central characters, all of whom are drawn from Shakespeare's plays, undertake a quest to find Shakespeare himself. The imperative to find Shakespeare is driven by a desire to possess and/or destroy the source of his godlike power and authority: his quill, which Michelle Ephraim pointedly describes as "a symbolically overdetermined prop rendered in erotic tropes throughout the narrative" (Ephraim). Peter Holland, too, notes the difficult-to-miss phallic significance of the quill: "think: the pen as phallus, the penis mightier than the sword" (Holland). Locating Shakespeare's power within the phallic emblem

of his authorship, the comic invites metafictional readings of its fledgling creators' own desire for literary authority and success. Contrary to Cooke, the comic evinces a strong desire to recuperate Shakespeare; not to kill him, but to reinvest him with lost authority. The desire to destroy him that animates Cooke's Foreword is displaced in the comic itself onto its antagonists—Richard III, Lady Macbeth, and Iago, primarily. In this way, Cooke's Foreword and the comic's online publicity materials can be seen as a mitigation of the unabashedly pro-Shakespeare bent of the comic itself, reframing the comic's metafictional performance of lack as a reassuring performance of overabundant masculinity. The effect is to highlight a friction common to appropriations of Shakespeare in comics. That is, the invocation of Shakespeare underscores and derives energy from the palpable gap between Shakespeare and not-Shakespeare.

III

That these two radically different performances of authorship in *Kill Shakespeare* both work themselves out in terms of the creators' relationship with the comic's Shakespearean hypotexts gives a sense of the range of ways, from self-effacing subordination to swaggering disavowal, in which comics creators and publishers put themselves in dialogue with Shakespeare. Between these extremes, however, comics writers, artists, and publishers have engaged in extended negotiations and explorations of what exactly the relationship between Shakespeare and comics can and should be. The result is the development of what I am calling the Shakespeare-comics architext.

Though the focus of this essay is the relationship between comic books and their Shakespearean paratexts, paratextuality is only one of a number of transtextual relationships at play in these instances of citation. Primary among these is hypertextuality, "any relationship uniting a text B ([…] the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A ([…] the *hypotext*)" (Genette, *Palimpsests* 5). In isolation, the hypertextual relationship locates texts within a diachronic, necessarily asymmetrical, relationship, whose linearity is underscored by its terminological evocation of the terminal points that describe a line in Cartesian geometry. While hypertextuality presupposes a stable hierarchical relationship between texts, paratextual citations of Shakespeare invert that relationship, putting the temporal primacy of Shakespeare into tension with the ostensibly supplemental nature of paratexts. In so doing, they make the Shakespearean hypotext derivative

of its own hypertexts. Furthermore, while a number of the paratexts discussed in this essay mark out a relationship between their respective comics and a specific Shakespearean hypotext, others partake of a relationship with Shakespeare not as the author of specific works, but rather as a representative of a particular form of cultural capital in circulation in contemporary culture. As such, "Shakespeare" becomes generic in the senses both of "not specific" and of "characteristic of […] a class or type of objects, phenomena, etc." (*OED*). In this way, paratextual citations of Shakespeare recast the relationship between the plays, the comics, and Shakespeare himself into the realm of the architextual. In Genette's formulation, architextuality refers to the "entire set of general or transcendent categories—types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres—from which emerges each singular text" (*Palimpsests* 1). Generic perception, for instance, as one type of architextuality "is known to guide and determine to a considerable degree the readers' expectations, and thus their reception of the work" (*Palimpsests* 5).

Architextuality exists as a framework, as a set of relationships so diffuse as to make the questions of origin that animate hypertextuality moot. It is, as Douglas Lanier argues of the relationship between Shakespeare and mass culture more generally, "rhizomatic" (104). Arranging itself into a structure of meaning by way of coincidence rather than deliberate coordination, the Shakespeare-comics architext accumulates meaning as it imparts it. The Shakespeare-comics architext, as it manifests in comics from the 1980s to the early twenty-first century (and as it is evident in nascent form in comics like O'Neil's), is most closely associated with the Vertigo imprint of DC Comics, especially with the generation of comics creators who entered American comics following the success of comics writer Alan Moore.

Moore is likely the most celebrated writer of "literary" mainstream comics. Moore's influence over Anglo-American comics in the last three decades has been widely noted, and his style has been imitated repeatedly, to varying effects, since his foray into American comics in the early 1980s.[9] Moore's first mainstream success in American comics was with the series *Swamp Thing*, which he wrote from 1984 to 1987. In his Foreword to the collected edition of Moore's early issues of *Swamp Thing*, author Ramsey Campbell goes out of his way to note connections between Moore's hero and Hamlet: "Having passed through the vegetable consciousness, with his own skull playing Yorick to his Hamlet and getting the best lines, Swamp Thing is resurrected in an awesome

full-page panel" (6). For Campbell, the character's resurrection parallels the comic's resurrection as something that can "stand beside the finest works of contemporary horror fiction" (6), and this resurrection is effected by the author's "passing through" Shakespeare. Campbell's deployment of Shakespeare in the passage relies on both the transposability and the mutable significatory valence of Shakespeare's authority. In passing the comic through Shakespeare, in rehearsing the Shakespearean moment himself as a writer, Campbell seems to argue, Moore has transmuted himself not into a great playwright or poet, but into a great writer of "contemporary horror fiction." "Shakespeare," here as in so many deployments of the name, stands not as an historically specific author, but as a signifier of a particularly literary standard of authorial achievement.

Elsewhere, Moore himself links his work to Shakespeare's. The opening pages of Moore and David Lloyd's *V for Vendetta* (1982–1989) feature the eponymous hero, V, entering the comics while reciting lines from *Macbeth*: "The multiplying villainies of nature do swarm upon him" (11). In an article written for *Warrior* magazine, in which the initial issues of *V for Vendetta* were published, and which was subsequently republished in DC Comics/Vertigo's trade paperback, Moore recounts the process of undertaking the writing of the comic:

> Ideas start to occur almost magically as opposed to being the end result of a long and grinding intellectual process. This started to happen with V right from the first episode.
>
> There was the way in which a lengthy Shakespeare quote that was arrived at by opening a copy of The Collected Works at random seemed to fit, exactly, line for line, with the sequence of actions that I had planned for V in his first skirmish with the forces of order. (275–276)

Moore's writing, in this account, resonates so perfectly with Shakespeare's that any quotation, chosen at random, fits perfectly within the scene that Moore has envisioned. In this way, Moore uses his article, which was subsequently published in the collected edition of *V for Vendetta*, to associate his work with Shakespeare's, and thereby to assert the literary and cultural legitimacy of his comic.[10] More than this, though, the claim asserts an architextual association between the comic and Shakespeare, an implicit assertion that both exist within a common

literary paradigm. In this way, *V for Vendetta* can be seen as a formative intervention in a Shakespeare-comics architext in which the content of Shakespeare's work is less important than the association with it.

Moore's more literary style of writing comics, as noted above, has influenced a number of writers, many of whom also use allusions to Shakespeare and his works to establish their own literary authority. Many of these writers wrote comics published under the Vertigo imprint of DC Comics, a line of comics created under the editorial supervision of Karen Berger, who had been Moore's editor on *Swamp Thing*. Vertigo comics, as Annalisa Castaldo observes, are "more psychological and literary than average mainstream comics, and […] manage to attract a non-comic reading audience" (98). The most celebrated Vertigo comic is probably Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* (1989–1996), which along with showing the influence of Moore's style of writing, borrows a number of characters created or used by Moore in *Swamp Thing*. Like Moore, Gaiman turns to Shakespeare, who appears as a character in three issues of *Sandman*, two of which, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (*Sandman* #19) and "The Tempest" (*Sandman* #75), also derive their titles from Shakespeare's plays. As a number of critics have noted, Shakespeare functions for Gaiman as a sort of author-surrogate.[11] Shakespeare is credited as co-author of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" on its title page, and the "The Tempest," the final issue of the series, ends with Shakespeare writing the epilogue of the eponymous play and laying down his quill, an unmistakeable association that is reinforced paratextually by the marginal insertion, directly below the scene of Shakespeare's retirement, of the words "Neil Gaiman. October 1987 ~ January 1996," delineating Gaiman's work on the comic ("The Tempest" 38). Though Gaiman's engagement with Shakespeare within his comics has received the lion's share of attention, his is just one of a number of hypo- and paratextual engagements with Shakespeare that characterize the works of most of Gaiman's contemporaries within the so-called "British Invasion" of comics that followed Moore's success. One of these contemporaries, Grant Morrison, incorporates Shakespeare into a number of his Vertigo comics, with characters quoting from and adopting the names of characters from his plays, among other allusions.[12] Indeed, throughout the early years of the Vertigo imprint, Shakespearean allusion can reasonably said to be the norm, rather than the exception.[13]

IV

Almost a decade after Vertigo's founding in 1993, the imprint began publishing *Y: The Last Man* (2002–2008), a series written by Brian K. Vaughan and drawn by Pia Guera. Like the comics of their Vertigo predecessors, Vaughan and Guera's comic repeatedly alludes to Shakespeare and his plays. Most obviously, the title of the series refers to the comic's hero, Yorick Brown, who, along with his sister Hero, was named by his drama professor father in the hope that, in Yorick's words, "naming his kids after obscure Shakespeare characters might help him get tenure" ("Unmanned" 5). The impulse to lay claim to cultural authority through the association with Shakespeare ascribed by Yorick to his father partakes, of course, in precisely the kind of appropriation of cultural capital at play in comics' citations of Shakespeare, and it is not difficult to read into Yorick's account of his naming a thinly-veiled shot at Vaughan's culturally-aspiring predecessors in the Vertigo line. But Yorick's father, like Shakespeare's Yorick, is dead by the time we "meet" him. The central conceit of *Y: The Last Man* is that all of the male mammals on Earth, save Yorick and his helper monkey Ampersand, have been killed off by a mysterious plague. Shakespeare is thereby relegated to the realm of the dead father, an ironized representative of a bypassed cultural authority.

Shakespeare, though, is not so easily escaped for Vaughan's comic; though the irreverence expressed in the story of Yorick's naming continues, Shakespeare and his works insistently return throughout the comic's sixty-issue run, especially in a number of its covers and titles. The cover of issue sixteen, titled "Comedy & Tragedy: Act One," features Ampersand, in Elizabethan costume, performing Hamlet's iconic contemplation of Yorick's skull. As before, the citation functions ironically, with the hero present in the image only metonymically, in the form of his namesake's skull. Yorick is a remnant, a past held and staged by a monkey. In broader, metatextual terms, Vaughan's paratextual linking of his work with Shakespeare's through the conjunction of Shakespeare and a monkey marks a very precise entry point into the architextual frame of Shakespeare and comics.

The linking together of monkeys and Shakespeare recalls the adage about an infinite number of monkeys typing at an infinite number of typewriters eventually producing the works of Shakespeare. This connection between monkeys and Shakespeare by way of the typewriter

is one that had been explored previously in the text and on the covers of Grant Morrison's comic *Animal Man*, one of the founding comics of the Vertigo imprint. In Morrison's comic, the monkey stands in for the comics writer, specifically Morrison himself, who appears in place of the monkey on the cover to the third volume of the collected edition of *Animal Man*.[14] Vaughan's reuse of Morrison's Shakespearean monkey recalls and builds on Morrison's imagery, signifying in multiple ways. As in Morrison's work, the monkey is an ironic self-portrait, a comic denunciation of the high-culture aspirations of both of the writer and of the form in which he works. But the monkey's association with Shakespeare complicates this reading. The monkey, like the comic, is simultaneously Shakespeare and not-Shakespeare, Vaughan and not-Vaughan.

Vaughan's complicated relationship both with Shakespeare and with his Vertigo predecessors is exemplified by the cover image of *Y: The Last Man* #42, "1000 Typewriters" (see Fig. 9.2). While the cover of "Comedy & Tragedy: Act One," recalled Morrison's *Animal Man* by referencing the monkey/Shakespeare motif of the earlier series, the cover of "1000 Typewriters" seems to cite Morrison's comic explicitly. The cover of *Animal Man* #25, "Monkey Puzzles," features a monkey sitting at a typewriter, typing the script for the comic. Significantly, the image captures the monkey midway through typing Prospero's epilogue from *The Tempest*. Similarly, the cover of Vaughan's comic features the monkey, Ampersand, and a typewriter. Instead of being shown in a moment of creative borrowing, however, Ampersand is depicted in a moment of destruction; turned confrontationally toward the reader, he rises up and smashes the typewriter with a bone. While Morrison's appropriation of Shakespeare's text featured centrally in the cover to "Monkey Puzzles," the only text visible here is on the keytops of the broken typewriter as they fly from the battered machine. What was for *Animal Man* an image of collaborative authorship and literary inheritance is transformed here into a multifaceted performance of literary parricide.

Animal Man is not, though, the only text cited in the cover, as Ampersand's pose is virtually identical to that of the primate in the opening sequence of Stanley Kubrick's *2001*. The allusion to Kubrick's film has obvious resonances with the storyline of *Y: The Last Man*, which grapples repeatedly with questions of evolution and the scientific intervention therein. But it also engages with the question of the place of the comic (and, I would argue, of comics more generally)

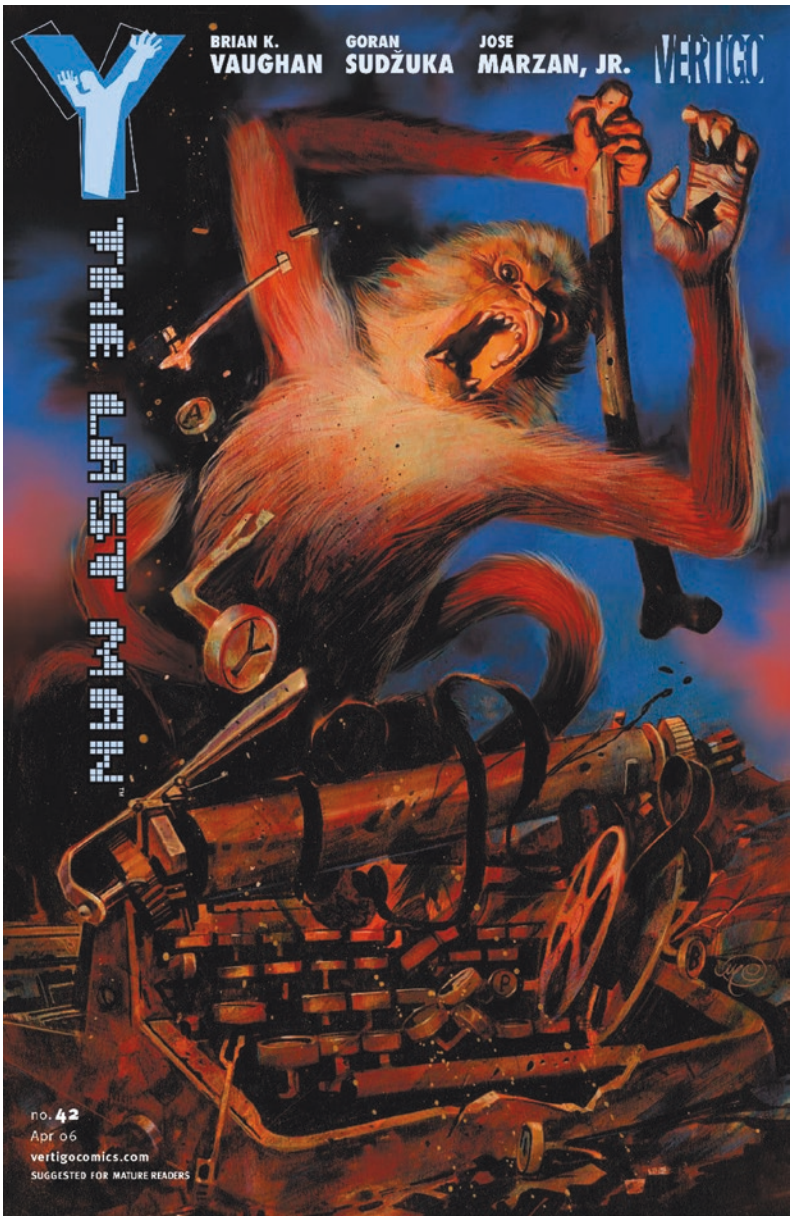


Fig. 9.2 Massimo Carnevale, cover of Brian K. Vaughan, "1000 Typewriters," *Y: The Last Man* #42 (April 2006)

within the Shakespeare-comics architext. As an avatar of evolution, the monkey seems to signal moving on, dispensing with the modes of the past. Like the skull of *Hamlet*'s Yorick on the cover of "Comedy & Tragedy: Act One," and the deceased father who named *Y: The Last Man*'s Yorick after exhumed remains in a centuries-old play, the smashed typewriter links Shakespeare to the dead, pre-evolved past. By destroying the typewriter it has inherited from Morrison's comic, the cover of "1000 Typewriters" simultaneously rejects Vaughan's predecessors within the Vertigo line of comics—Moore,[15] Gaiman, Morrison[16]—and conflates them with a Shakespearean literary lineage that the comic has already invoked, if only to keep it at an ironic distance. It is an assertion of individuality against the invisible collective of text-producing monkeys implied by the issue's title. In effect, the smashing of the typewriter enacts a declaration of heroic individual authorship, as opposed to Daniel Stein's characterization of corporate comics as "formula stories told by anonymous insignificant authors" (161), precisely the kind of assertion previously effected through paratextual citations of Shakespeare.

However, the extent to which the Vertigo comic architext is inextricably intertwined with conflations of Shakespeare and authorship is demonstrated by the fact that Vaughan returns repeatedly, even after the spectacular rejection enacted on the cover of "1000 Typewriters," to Shakespeare. In addition to the obliquely Shakespearean "1000 Typewriters," each of the last six issues of *Y: The Last Man* bears a Shakespeare-related title: issues #55 through #59 share the title "Whys and Wherefores" and the final issue of the series is titled simply "Alas."[17] A reflection of the centrality of citations of Shakespeare to the construction of authorship in Vertigo comics, *Y: The Last Man*'s monkey/Shakespeare covers effect a complete reversal of earlier manifestations of the Shakespeare/not-Shakespeare dynamic evident in comics' Shakespearean paratextual citations. Here, instead of standing in for a high culture against which comics is posited as an antithesis, Shakespeare becomes a signifier for Vertigo comics. Thus, in spite of his initial rejection of literary comics' claim to cultural authority, Vaughan validates the high-culture claims of his predecessors by transforming them metaleptically into Shakespeare. And, having cast himself as their (resistant) literary descendant, Vaughan writes himself into precisely the Shakespearean lineage that his comic claims, paratextually, to want to destroy.

Notes

1. See, for instance, Gardner Fox, "The Curious Case of the Crime-less Clues!" art by Carmine Infantino, *Detective Comics* #364 (June 1967) or Gardner Fox, "Batgirl Breaks Up the Dynamic Duo!" art by Carmine Infantino, *Detective Comics* #369 (November 1967). Indeed, the character of Batgirl was an innovation of the television series that was subsequently adopted in the comics.
2. Ditko is likely also referenced obliquely in the large sign for "S & D Pharmaceuticals" that sits on top of the building in the center of the panel.
3. Though the splash page is not, technically, part of the comic's paratextual apparatus, given that it is a part of the story proper, it functions in much the same way as a paratext. As Will Eisner argues, "it establishes a frame of reference. Properly employed it seizes the reader's attention and prepares his attitude for the events to follow. It sets a 'climate'" (64).
4. For a discussion of some of the issues surrounding comics and intellectual property, especially as they relate to multiple authorship, see Ian Gordon, "Comics, Creators, and Copyright: On the Ownership of Serial Narratives by Multiple Authors."
5. This is of course ironic, given the extent to which Shakespeare's own participation in acts of authorship was collaborative.
6. Neither McCreery, Del Col, and Belanger's *Kill Shakespeare*, nor its accompanying paratext, is paginated, so quotations here have no page numbers.
7. The neutral quotations are merely headlines of articles to which the quotations are hyperlinked.
8. For an extended discussion of the gendered relationship between comics and "high" art, see Bart Beaty, *Comics Versus Art*, especially Chap. 3: "Roy Lichtenstein's Tears: *Ressentiment* and Exclusion in the World of Pop Art." For a response to Beaty's formulation which resonates more closely with the dynamic of Cooke's Foreword, see Noah Berlatsky, "Pop Art vs. Comics: Who's on Top?"
9. See Jim Casey, "Alan Moore."
10. For a detailed account of the connections between Moore's comic and Shakespeare's play, see Jessica McCall, "V for Vendetta: A Graphic Retelling of *Macbeth*."
11. For further discussions of Gaiman's use of Shakespeare, see, for instance, Julia Round, "Transforming Shakespeare: Neil Gaiman and *The Sandman*"; John Pendergast, "Six Characters in Search of Shakespeare: Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* and Shakespearian Mythos"; Annalisa Castaldo, "'No more yielding than a dream': The Construction of Shakespeare in

The Sandman"; Kurt Lancaster, "Neil Gaiman's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream': Shakespeare Integrated into Popular Culture."

12. For a discussion of Morrison's engagement with Shakespeare's texts, see Brandon Christopher, "'To dignify some old costumed claptrap': Shakespearean Allusion and the Status of Text in the DC Comics of Grant Morrison."
13. Of the six series upon which the imprint was founded—*Swamp Thing*, *Sandman*, Morrison and Chas Truog's *Animal Man* (1988–1990), Morrison and Richard Case's *Doom Patrol* (1989–1993), Peter Milligan and Chris Bachalo's *Shade, the Changing Man* (1990–1996), and Jamie Delano and John Ridgway's *Hellblazer* (1988–2013)—all six feature allusions to Shakespeare of one kind or another, and four of the six either return repeatedly to Shakespeare and his works, or engage with them explicitly, or both.
14. For more on this, see Christopher, "'To dignify some old costumed claptrap': Shakespearean Allusion and the Status of Text in the DC Comics of Grant Morrison."
15. Moore may also be evoked by way of the Kubrick reference, in that the scene referenced by the cover of the comic is famously scored, in the film, by Richard Strauss's composition *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, which was based on Friedrich Nietzsche's novel of the same name. Moore's comic *Marvelman* (originally written by Mick Anglo from 1954–1963, but revived in 1982–1994 with Moore as the initial writer; *Marvelman* was retitled *Miracleman* in 1985 for reasons of trademark), one of the seminal works of 1980s comics, opens with an epigraph from Nietzsche's novel.
16. Though *V for Vendetta*, *Swamp Thing*, *Sandman*, and *Animal Man* all began (and in some cases completed) publication before the 1993 founding of the Vertigo line, all four were retroactively adopted by the imprint and were crucial in defining what Marc Singer calls "the narrative style of the Vertigo comic" (110).
17. Even apart from *Y: The Last Man*, Vaughan demonstrates an increasing interest in Shakespearean allusion after 2002, titling a four-issue continuing story in *Ultimate X-Men* "The Tempest" (#46–49, July-September 2004) and a two-issue story in *Runaways* "Star-Crossed" (Vol. 2 #7–8, October-November 2005). His more recent series, *Saga* (March 2012-present), is repeatedly described in advertising copy as centering on the "star-crossed" lovers Marko and Alana. Though this description is problematically reductive, it is nevertheless another subtle link between Vaughan's work and Shakespeare's. Vaughan himself offers a glancing allusion to Shakespeare by naming a planet "Quietus" in *Saga* ("Chap. 6").

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CHAPTER 10

"Thou Hast It Now": One-on-Ones and the Online Community of Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More*

Caitlin McHugh

After my first visit to Punchdrunk's hit immersive theatrical experience *Sleep No More*, I left feeling intrigued, but also confused and disappointed. I had discussed the production briefly in a graduate classroom, but I chose to attend the production mostly out of curiosity upon learning that it had an open-ended run in New York. British theater company Punchdrunk's successful production is a combination of *Macbeth* and Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and *Rebecca*, with audience members free to wander anywhere and touch anything, as long as they follow certain rules. The production is located over six floors in a warehouse in Chelsea staged as a 1940s-era hotel, known to attendees as The McKittrick. Audience members are required to wear an anonymous *Eyes Wide Shut* style mask, and they are not permitted to speak or use cell phones. There is little to no dialogue; the performance is more dance meets art installation. The loose plot circles once per hour, but it would be impossible to follow all of the characters in any given evening. My initial disappointment with

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the experience stemmed from my feeling that, despite claims stating otherwise from the show's creators, there most certainly was a right way to view the show (Barrett). I felt as if I had somehow missed most of it. I was not alone in my sentiment. I had attended the production with my aunt, an actress-turned-massage-therapist who originally trained at the National Shakespeare Conservatory and has had extensive professional level training with Michael Howard of Michael Howard Studios. She thought that what we experienced was almost certainly *not* Shakespeare and that we did not really see the main content of *Sleep No More* because of the non-linear nature of its action and the absence of dialogue. In the case of my aunt, she thought that she had paid for the experience of *Macbeth* and that she most certainly did not receive that experience.[1] *SNM* is built on the desire for audiences to participate in the stories of *Macbeth*, *Vertigo*, and *Rebecca*. Our experiences with the production left me questioning how much the audience actually participated and what kind of impact that participation had on the "Shakespeareness" of our experience and of our understanding of *SNM*.

In my desire to better understand my experience, I, like so many other guests of The McKittrick Hotel, turned to the extensive online communities, crafted by members of the general public, in addition to a collection of articles written by scholars. Both groups of writings about Punchdrunk's *SNM* are nearly unanimous in their conclusion that the company's loose combination of *Macbeth* and the Hitchcock films *Rebecca* and *Vertigo* is not Shakespeare. J.D. Oxblood writes, "Perhaps the insistence that *Sleep No More* is a *Macbeth* derivation is the ultimate Macguffin, a stratagem to get an audience in the door" (3). In a statement articulating Punchdrunk's vision, the artistic director, Felix Barrett, imagines their version of the story as, in essence, filling in the gaps of the text: "So you, the audience, see what happens when Prospero leaves, what Caliban does by himself in his own time. So in terms of the detail of the design, the sensory part of it, when a character opens a drawer and takes something out, like a letter, in a traditional theatre piece, the audience can never know what's there" (Barrett and Machon). This consensus suggests that the production lacks the essential qualities of "Shakespeare."[2] Based on both scholarly and popular reactions, which I will explore below, the complaints against the production that make it non-Shakespearean include its accessibility or personal nature (the perceived notion that the production allows participants to essentially create their own story or experience) and, more importantly, the lack of

Shakespearean dialogue—an issue at the heart of every debate about what constitutes the authentic Shakespeare.[3]

Although I agree with participants who do not understand *SNM* itself as Shakespeare, it participates in several established trends for recent Shakespearean adaptation and appropriation. The main complaints against it are the loss of Shakespeare's plot in that it is combined with narratives from *Vertigo* and *Rebecca*, the loss of Shakespearean dialogue, and the new setting. Despite this consensus and Punchdrunk's stated intention to use classical texts as only a starting point for what is a physical interpretation of the "atmosphere" of classical texts, I discuss the moments which prompt audience members to understand their experiences with the production as Shakespearean (Barrett and Machon). How are those moments understood as Shakespeare? What and when is Shakespeare to these two different populations (academic vs. popular)? How, if at all, does *SNM* bring them together? While the production in and of itself is not Shakespeare, I argue that its essence is located by the audience in the one-on-one interactions, which ultimately participate in the drive to re-textualize Shakespeare and take a more traditional turn to restore some of his long-held essential qualities: his elitism and his ability to move audience emotion. Through its digital communities, the production re-creates a Shakespearean cultural capital through elitism and re-creating, re-capturing, and re-introducing the Shakespearean text.

Shakespeare as Immersive Experience

Although audiences, both popular and scholarly, do not find *SNM* to be authentically or essentially Shakespeare, the production is a logical extension of the last twenty-plus years of Shakespearean adaptation and appropriation. *SNM*, for instance, could not exist in a space without the plethora of Shakespearean films of the 1990s. Douglas Lanier's work uses Deleuze's concept of an adaptational rhizome to show the relationship between Shakespeare and his cultural capital, demonstrating that his "value accrues from a process of reciprocal legitimation" (104). He explores the film adaptations of the 1990s as the period when Shakespeare became "post-textual" and his plays are able to be removed from their original settings and time periods (106). Similarly, Kate Rumbold has explored the effects of digital culture on the institutions that have delivered "authentic" Shakespeare to audiences in the past. As she explains, the very term "immersive," used to describe this growing

trend in theater that encompasses the *SNM* experience, "comes from a discourse of digital technology, and the Birthplace Trust enlists that technology's relevance, as well as its capacity to give the impression of an unmediated experience" (331). Her work explores the move from digital technologies allowing these institutions (the Birthplace Trust, the British Library, the Globe, etc.) to provide simple access to the Bard to provide an experience. She argues that "Shakespeare institutions thus attempt metaphorically (in the British Library's 'stories'), tangibly (in the Globe's 'Supporting Wall'), and virtually (in the RSC's Facebook and Flickr pages) to capture a cultural value that, according to current narratives, resides in visitors' experiences and creativity" (330). *SNM* exists precisely in this post-textual, experiential world, where visitors expect to get a so-called mind-blowing personal experience to link them to Shakespeare's works (and the works of Hitchcock, for that matter). Many general audience members feel that the heart of *SNM* is in the intimate space of the one-on-one encounter. They are often regarded, especially by repeat visitors, as the real experience of the production. A standard one-on-one involves the attendee being whisked away by a performer to a private room where he or she may have their mask removed, can be touched, might be fed or given something to drink, and is told a story or encounters some form of dialogue. Many reviewers and bloggers feel that without the one-on-one they have not truly experienced the production.

Without this experience, it is difficult to argue that audience members are participating in the story of *SNM* or becoming totally immersed. Though the experience rests on the premise that its immersive quality "shatters the fourth wall" and is "mind-blowing," those who try to interact with the performers outside the prescribed rules of the production are ejected from the show (Gordon 1).[4] Doctoral student Tara Isabella Burton records just this problem in her review, "What Fourth Wall? On 'Sleep No More,' Punchdrunk theater company's reimagining of 'Macbeth.'" She describes the one-on-one experience of fan Meg, who is taken by a nurse into a private ward and tucked into bed. The nurse has a coughing fit, spitting up nails onto Meg's chest, but Meg is unable to react to help her: "There was nothing I could do but sit and watch her suffer." Academic audience members have also been skeptical about the production, especially in regard to the one-on-one experiences. Collette Gordon, for instance, reads these experiences as not in fact achieving the goal of destroying the fourth wall in a quest to achieve some "mind blowing" experience (1).[5] This conundrum, combined with

the consistency of the one-on-ones, questions the accuracy of describing Punchdrunk's production as an experience that an audience member can really take part in. Certainly, Meg, as other participants in the one-on-ones, has now become a character in the world of *SNM*, if only for a brief moment. But participants are unable to truly impart any sort of difference on the events of the evening or on the characters they meet.

Sleep No More and Active Communities of Research

If *SNM* is unable to breach the fourth wall, and audience members cannot become part of the narrative due to their inability to affect the story during a performance, *SNM* does afford them ample opportunity for immersion in the narrative through extensive digital communities.[6] The mystique behind *SNM* and the allure of extra-exclusive content, like the one-on-ones or various Easter eggs like the mysterious sixth floor, Narnia wardrobe, and various collectible artifacts, have prompted audiences to develop extensive online communities, forums, social networking sites, and wikis devoted to analyzing and collecting information about *SNM*. Some of these projects are personal creations, including tumblr accounts devoted to displaying artwork created from viewing the production and YouTube mixes of some of the music from the production (Snmsketches; Klubby). In addition to a wiki devoted to tracing character plots, timelines, relationships, and one-on-ones (*Sleep No More Wiki*), other users have created *The McKittrick Hotel Unofficial Guide*, which describes the layout of the space and gives a general guideline of significant action in certain rooms.[7]

What is most fascinating about these various creative endeavors is that they often become a space for users to re-introduce the Shakespearean text. In this case, Shakespeare is prompted by, but ultimately occurs outside of, the performance space. Although viewers do not consider themselves to be experiencing Shakespeare, their questions about *SNM* drive them to research Shakespeare's work, post relevant quotes and scenes, and discuss *SNM* and its relationship to the Bard in various online settings. Interpreted in this way, *SNM* is far more conservative and traditional than we first anticipate. W.B. Worthen has illustrated that *SNM* is more textual than we would expect, but Worthen locates this textuality in a visual representation of Shakespeare's words. I would situate the Shakespeare-ness of *SNM* not necessarily in the space of the production, but in the participation of, and responses to, the famed one-on-one

interactions. The above example of a YouTube user's mix is an attempt to recreate the music of the witches' rave or orgy. The author states that it is a "best attempt at mixing the music from the incredible scene in *Sleep No More*" (Klubby). The music plays along with production photos from *SNM*. Under the video is a description of the author's creation and, following that, is the pasted text from act 4, scene 1 of *Macbeth*, the apparition scene. The rave scene in *SNM* does not directly reference the apparition scene, but it is certainly a parallel moment with *Macbeth*, which the user Klubby recognizes, thus providing the Shakespearean context for viewers of the video. In this rave or orgy scene, the three witches perform a fast-paced dance with a strobe light and a fair amount of nudity; the male witch is completely nude and is eventually transformed, putting on a bull's head. Macbeth appears and participates in the rave as well, simulating sexual activity with the witches. The characters do parallel those in the apparition scene, and the user Klubby recognizes the connection and provides the Shakespearean (con)text for viewers, highlighting the related characters as well as the use of spectacle.

Similarly, some blogs devote themselves to analyzing the characters, particularly the one-on-one experiences. One couple, running a joint blog as thepaisleysweets, assumes the identities of Rebecca and Maximilian de Winter (though one wonders why not the second Mrs. de Winter in lieu of Rebecca, especially because a *SNM* character is based on her) and offer extended commentary on the production and the relationships within it. One example, an analysis of the Porter, argues that a story told by Hecate in her one-on-one is about the Porter as a child. The blogger claims that the Porter, in addition to some other characters, is aware that he is trapped in a cycle with the same recurring events. She develops the Porter's character by drawing several comparisons, linking the *SNM* Porter to both the physical space of The McKittrick and to Shakespeare's character:

> Like the Porter of Shakespeare's play, the Porter of *Sleep No More* is an embodiment of evolving contradictions. Whereas Shakespeare's Porter is a lecherous character whose dialogue consists of a host of antitheses that speak to the fair/foul binary of the play (provokes/deters, makes/mars, sets on/takes off, persuades/disheartens, etc.), *Sleep No More*'s Porter is torn between his responsibility to serve Hecate, his tormentor, and his need to honor his more humane moral impulses. That is why we see him do a number of things that appear to be in line with Hecate's mission, as well as a number of things that appear to be attempts to throw a wrench into the whole works. (Paisleysweets)

This blogger finds the Shakespearean quality of the Porter in *SNM* in the character's representation of oppositions, one of the central themes of *Macbeth*. Although this Porter does not have the same story or dialogue as Shakespeare's Porter, the blogger returns to Shakespeare's text in order to better understand the evolution of the character and the character's behavior in *SNM*.

In an additional instance, a blogger analyzes her experience of an intimate moment with one of actors. She describes the encounter thus:

> At one point, a lady in a green dress picked me out of the group of masked people. She stared at me for a little while and then put out her hands out [*sic*] to me. I, like a good little audience member, put my hands in hers.
>
> She pulled me *really* close to her (it's at this point that I began to feel unbearably awkward) so that our bodies were completely touching, put my hands on her ass, and then whispered, "Unsex me" (I originally thought she said "undress me" but after consulting the play I think this was definitely the line I heard). Then she moved my hands to her boobs, and then, I, um, kind of took off in the opposite direction. (Ariel)

Despite the awkwardness, it was the dialogue that ultimately inspired this audience member to ponder her encounter further:

> Here is the cool thing I later figured out about the whole touching incident when I was re-reading Macbeth afterwards—she was Lady Macbeth, and she treated me like I was one of the evil spirits she was trying to reach to imbue her with the strength necessary to help her husband kill the king. Check out the speech (I.v.40–50) if you get a chance. At least in this scene, the audience functions as these "spirits" that kind of exist in the play that fill the characters with emotion, confidence, evil, or whatever. It's kind of like you're the living manifestation of the fate(s) that the witches speak of in the first scene. Really, really fantastic. (Ariel)

This blogger's comment captures the dichotomy of academic versus popular Shakespeare. Obviously, an actor forcing an audience member to grope her body is not necessarily analogous to the meaning of the line "unsex me." The character the blogger describes is not even Lady Macbeth; she is one of the witches. While perhaps confusing for this

audience member, this reference echoes parallels that many readers of *Macbeth* find between Lady Macbeth and the witches. This is one example of the way that *SNM* operates on a variety of levels, depending upon the familiarity of the viewer with the text(s). This user was drawn into the experience, but sought meaning in her experience by teasing out the connection to Shakespeare. This example illustrates *SNM*'s ability to pull readers back to the Shakespearean playtext and re-read or re-experience Shakespeare. It was only in the return to the Shakespearean text that she was able to make sense of the production and moved from considering her experience "awkward" to "fantastic."

The coveted status of these one-on-ones is premised on the assumption that in order to receive one, the participant must somehow be extra engaged in the experience. But what does it mean to be properly engaged in *Sleep No More*? One blogger provides research on how to increase the odds of getting chosen for these selective experiences. Aside from body language and eye contact, "The most obvious thing one can do in an attempt to receive a 1:1 is show dedication to the character's story and good placement" (tomanderleyagain). This blogger claims he employed this technique of being incredibly engaged in order to achieve several one-on-ones and make it to the sixth floor.[8] Achieving these experiences is in part what drives some guests of The McKittrick to engage with Shakespeare beyond the performance. One blogger writes, "Every time I meet someone who has been to SNM, I talk to them about it. I want to know if they had a one-on-one experience […] I want to know which rooms they saw and which they didn't" (museumgeek). This writer credits the allure of *SNM* to the ability to connect with others who have seen the production and that the complexity of it requires this outside engagement—only through creative action can one unlock the mysteries of *SNM*. The writer even questions if this sort of engagement could happen in a more traditional setting, like a museum: "So can museums create this same sense of urgency to know more, to figure out or 'solve' a show or a story within the museum? Do we need to create disorienting experiences, experiences full of gaps to do so?" Granted, the blogger uses the handle museumgeek, which betrays a certain investment in these kinds of questions, but the blogger also makes the connection between immersive theater and attending a museum and concludes that the online and offline discussions after the show are the significant action prompted by the experience.

This approach suggests that audience members should have a certain level of knowledge in order to properly experience the production. Is it really true that if a participant better understands the script of *SNM*, so to speak, that the participant will get more out of the production? In the case of my friend Elena, a lack of foreknowledge did not impact her experiences. She had the privilege of viewing the set in advance of the performance, but she still did not know much about the show, nor did she know about the potential for a one-on-one. She attended *SNM* during the beginning of its run in New York, when the body of audience members was much smaller. In this environment, she was able to have many intimate experiences with the performers; these were not exclusively one-on-ones, but she was essentially left alone with them. She did have the privilege of experiencing the same one-on-one with the nurse character described above. In Elena's experience, the nurse grabbed her from the crowd and pulled her into a hospital room, locking the door behind them. The nurse tucked her into bed and proceeded to have a coughing fit. However, in this version of the experience, the nurse coughed up a key, kissed Elena on the forehead, and then gave her the key. She left, saying something to the effect of "A storm is coming." After the nurse left, Elena tried the key in all of the different drawers in the room. The key opened a drawer containing documents about Lady Macduff, who was seeking treatment in the hospital for premonitions about the deaths of her children. She had also apparently confronted the witches. The deaths of the Macduff children are not a feature of the *SNM* plot, though their absence haunts much of the imagery of *SNM*. As such, Elena's one-on-one connects her experience back to the Shakespearean text. Without this one-on-one encounter, however, an audience member is left without the Shakespearean reference. Elena's lack of knowledge about *SNM* and the one-on-ones did not hinder her from achieving the experience, but her knowledge of Shakespeare did enable her to make connections to Shakespeare after her experience with the nurse.

Shakespeare as Exclusive Experience

The question remains: if *SNM* is created out of digital trends to morph Shakespeare into a dialogue-free, plot-free visual representation of a classic text, while simultaneously re-textualizing him, why do audiences still

find the production to be, well, not Shakespeare? I would argue that part of this disconnect lies in the production's reinforcement of the Bard as exclusive, elite content. In addition to reinforcing Shakespeare as essentially textual, the one-on-ones are often regarded, especially by repeat visitors, as the real experience of the production. Many reviewers and bloggers feel that without the one-on-one, there is the sense that they have not truly experienced the production. This trope, though pretty much the same for all who experience it, has become not only textual but also the stand-in for the authoritative interpretation of *SNM*. This sentiment reinforces the exclusivity so often associated with Shakespeare as the epitome of high art. Kidnie notes that "the traditional hallmark of high art is supposedly its *in*accessibility" and points out that if a production like Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* is so accessible, the feeling is that it is not Shakespeare at all (44). Because of the precise timing of the show, few one-on-one experiences can be had on any given night. Timing, perhaps more than anything, dictates who exactly gets to see the so-called authentic production and also re-creates the feeling of the inaccessible, high art dramatic text. But the word is out now. One blogger complains about the commercialization of the experience, stating that she will no longer return to The McKittrick because of how many people are allowed to attend the performance on any given night. This rise in audience numbers affected not only the quality of the environment (with rare books being replaced with inexpensive replicas, props being nailed down, etc.), but also with her ability to participate properly in a one-on-one: "The respectful audience members of my first time who stepped out of the way to let others see were in short supply—people pushed past each other on staircases, tall people stepped in front of the short, everyone, it seemed, trying to be in the right place at the right time to get a piece of that coveted one-on-one action" (Eraslan). She laments, "What had once been a world was now just a set."

Audience members have indeed become extremely competitive in order to achieve these special encounters. In my personal quest to experience more of the *SNM* world, I returned to The McKittrick just a few months after my initial experience. After reading a collection of blogs and scholarly articles, I was hopeful that I would be able to achieve a one-on-one. The one-on-one experience with the Porter was supposed to be one of the best, particularly emotional and moving, so I spent a considerable amount of time following his storyline. A young woman in the audience clearly had similar aspirations. We both shadowed him, up

until the point where he performs a dance in the telephone booths of the hotel lobby with a character known as the boy witch. Based on my research, I knew that he would select an audience member for a one-on-one after this dance. I was following him around closely, but quickly became uncomfortable because I felt as if I was rudely encroaching on his dance performance space. I took a few steps back to provide room. The young woman next to me refused to do the same. At a crucial moment, he spun and grabbed the person who happened to be directly in front of him: my competitor. He whisked her off for the private experience, and I was left alone in the hotel lobby as the crowd dissipated.

SNM also exhibits elitism in that it is simply not an experience that everyone can afford. Some critics have noted economic concerns about the production.[9] It has become considerably more mainstream in its long run in New York, evidenced by the fact that it has been featured on television in such forms as *Gossip Girl*, a show premised on following the elite of New York, and *Law and Order: SVU*. Despite this mainstream popularity, the production, which encourages repeat experiences, especially in the quest for the one-on-one, is limited to those people who can afford a trip to New York (if they do not already reside there) in addition to the now $120 ticket in order to attempt to achieve exclusive content. Punchdrunk also recently opened a McKittrick-related restaurant, The Heath. The restaurant features the same ambiance and boasts two separate dining areas and a bar. Those who book tickets to *SNM* can now have dinner at The Heath before, and they also receive an invitation for an after-hours dance party there. The entrance to The Heath is somewhat difficult to find, and, if questioned about the location, the actors working the entrance and coat areas try to punch up this feeling of exclusivity in their directions by providing the location and noting, "Tell them Jimmy sent you." As with *SNM*, a dining experience at The Heath proves to be expensive (entrees run from $18 to $37) but provides an opportunity for a mid-dinner one-on-one ("The Restaurant: The Heath"). *SNM* also maximizes its moneymaking potential with its email list. In December 2014, I received an email advertising the various McKittrick experiences and products one can purchase for friends and family. These range from fairly inexpensive items like playing cards ($15) and the souvenir program ($20) to experiences like "A Grand Reservation for 2." This experience, which costs a steep $500, seems to provide little in return. The price purchases two people dinner from the prix fixe menu, one cocktail each, priority entry as Maximilian's Guests,

coat check, a reserved bar table, and a bottle of champagne. In essence, what the $500 price tag is really paying for is the title and privilege of being a special guest and the opportunity for a semi-private experience in Manderley Bar.

A Return to the Essential Shakespeare

The *SNM* example prompts us to consider where Shakespeare's cultural value really lies.[10] As a newer intermedial adaptation, we should question its efficacy and, especially, its reception effects.[11] Though the immersive theater experience reinforces what we have seen with Shakespeare institutions and a plethora of recent adaptations, some viewers, like my aunt, were unable to find a satisfying cultural capital within the production itself. As the Shakespearean text creeps in at the seams of *SNM*, so too do older, traditional concepts of what makes Shakespeare *Shakespeare*. Even the one-on-one experiences, the most "Shakespeare-esque" in that they include dialogue, drive audience members away from the *SNM* performance itself, to research communities and to Shakespeare's play-text. In his exploration of contemporary backstage tours and their comparison to infamous Restoration behind the scene goings-on, Robert Shaughnessy writes, "I have focused primarily on the backstage desires of audiences and visitors while also indicating that these, like their quest for truth and authenticity, can never be fully satisfied" (248). This is the experience of *SNM*. The production's success rests on the research communities prompted by the fragmented experiences within the production. Shakespeare no longer resides in the space of performance alone, but in a combination of new media techniques. Through participation in online communities and repeat visits to The McKittrick Hotel, one is able to piece together a satisfying interpretation, but one also wonders if this was not what Shakespeare was offering all along.

Notes

1. Rumbold brings up this point about Shakespeare's cultural value as part of the "experience economy," with all these institutions now selling "memorable experiences" (331–332). Similarly, Barrett has discussed Punchdrunk's goals in precisely these terms (Godbout, par. 3–4).
2. For a discussion on the fluidity of a work's ontological status and its basis on consensus, see Kidnie.

3. I use Stephen Orgel as a starting point for the problem of the "authentic" Shakespeare. He describes the issue with defining what is "Shakespeare" and the difficulty in establishing a canonical Shakespearean text—an impossible task that editors and scholars still strive for. His definition of authentic Shakespeare is thus as fluid as the texts themselves, depending upon varying evidence in and time periods. See also Brooke, Burt, Hutcheon, Kidnie, and Lanier.
4. See the description of the fourth wall problem in Gordon.
5. See also Grunfeld.
6. One of the anecdotes that Rumbold provides in her analysis of Shakespeare institutions and the language of creativity is a description of the British Library's desire to get a sense of how the users are creatively interacting with the content that they are now able to access via digital humanities. The library asked readers such questions as "How has the library helped you?" and shared stories of readers who had "created original, commercially successful products from the Library's raw materials" (327).
7. Burt also discusses the drive for outside research of adaptations. For more on fan creation and participatory culture, see Jenkins.
8. Perhaps only one person is allowed to enter the sixth floor on any given evening. This blog features a rare description of the experience. See violetpatronus.
9. Gordon refers to the one-on-ones as a commodity. See also Bartley.
10. For further discussion of intellectual or cultural capital and the interplay between popular and highbrow culture, see Bristol and Levine.
11. For a larger discussion of Shakespeare and intermediality, see Fischlin.

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PART IV

Celebrities and Afterlives

CHAPTER 11

Dirty Rats, Dead for a Ducat: Shakespearean Echoes (and an Accident) in Some Films of James Cagney

Scott Hollifield

Pyramus is dead, but he can't stop talking about it. In the Max Reinhardt/William Dieterle film adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the "hard-handed men" (5.1.72) fall victim to an elaborate series of theatrical "accidents" in addition to those narrative mishaps suggested by Ovid and repurposed by Shakespeare. Peter Quince and company misplace lines, protract the simplest actions into bumbling, non-verbal monologues, and share exits with actors they ought to be fleeing from. As the Wall segment draws to a close, Thisbe takes a tumble while exiting severally with Pyramus, losing her wig and stumbling upstage with her dress around her waist. The rude mechanicals, portrayed by the likes of genre film stalwart Frank McHugh (Peter Quince) and musical comedy favorite Joe E. Brown (Flute the Bellows-Mender), are so insecure and inept that the Pyramus and Thisbe segment would hardly register as Shakespeare if Theseus and Demetrius were not reaffirming our memory of Shakespeare with their complaints.

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The film employs less than a third of the corresponding dramatic text, yet Peter Quince's "tedious brief scene" manages to eke out every second of its early modern running time. Its arguable highlight is James Cagney's Pyramus, whose performance feasts upon the sequence's protractedness. Beyond the dictates of the dramatic text, he out-emotes the most histrionic of silent-era actors and uses Wall's "chink" like a microphone, punning on the performative restrictions imposed by early sync-sound technology. Irreverent as these bits of business might play in the goofiest Shakespearean context, each prefigures Cagney's restless post-mortem Pyramus. Also pertinent is the film's reading of Bottom's line, "to make ['Bottom's Dream'] the more gracious, I shall sing it *after* death," which deviates profoundly from the First Folio's "*at her* death" (4.1.1744–1745). Exaggerating the mutability of early modern stage deaths, Cagney validates and amplifies this alternate reading.

After wounding himself in the pap, Pyramus wipes his blade on Thisbe's bloodied mantle and ceremoniously lays both props down in front of him. Collapsing onto his back—and thus, into death—the fallen lover shoots furtive glances at the audience. When Joe E. Brown's Thisbe enters to discover Pyramus dead, he decides he isn't dead enough and flips him onto his belly. Mournfully electing to join him, Thisbe pats herself down for a sword as the panicked mechanicals rifle through backstage properties. As if realizing that she, aspiring to produce "very tragical mirth," has strayed too far from Shakespeare, Thisbe resourcefully knocks on Pyramus' breastplate in order to borrow his suicide weapon.

This gesture actually returns the scene, however briefly, to its Ovidian origins by favoring Pyramus' weapon as the means of Thisbe's demise. Pyramus loans it to her with a perturbed Cagney glare, returns to a supine position, and replays his death throes of a moment before. In spite of her accidental paean to source material, Thisbe accepts the tiring house's sword-offering, sharpens it chef-style on Pyramus' blade, then returns the latter to him. With a palpable tinge of annoyance, he tucks it back beneath his breast and reiterates his death spasm. Slapstick potential of the dramatic text aside, the film's diversion into Hollywood bawdry cannot distract from that *nonpareil* of accidents, death by misadventure.

Pyramus' extratextual cycle of deaths and rebirths is actually less absurd when considered in an early modern context. Possibly premiering the same year as the patently fantastical *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—from which an audience might reasonably expect all manner of performative non sequiturs—*Romeo and Juliet* might well have raised the freshly

deceased from the Capulet crypt to dance the post-epilogue jig. Andrew Gurr reasons that this theatrical commonplace, likely to shatter any sense of catharsis in a modern audience, "would have been much easier for early moderns to take" (129). If theatrical convention affords a potent, poetic stage death almost immediate mutability, what does a cinematic death—seemingly permanent and yet immediately unspooled and re-threaded for the next paying audience—really signify? Can such a demise, emotionally resonant and yet reversible through technology, resonate as Shakespearean?

Such eternally recurring cinematic deaths dominate early gangster and social realist melodramas such as *Scarface* (1932), *Taxi!* (1932), *The Roaring Twenties* (1939), and *White Heat* (1949). Golden-age filmmakers, in the process of positioning cinema as the ultimate populist form of narrative delivery, elevated these deaths and the genre film itself to Shakespearean altitudes. In spite of their non-Shakespearean natures, the resulting cinematic intertexts occasionally resonate with a "Shakespearean presence," a sense of *déjà vécu* that squeezes the skull when the one-liner Cody Jarrett snarls as he plugs that guy in the trunk inexplicably links him to Coriolanus. Filmmakers such as Raoul Walsh and Howard Hawks initiated, perhaps without pretense, a fortuitous discourse with early modern audience response. While the degree of perceived intertextuality depends upon audiences attuned to these resonances, its specific essence can be expressed as Shakespearean "commonplaces" and "echoes," while any number of Shakespearean "accidents" lurk down alleys and perch upon fire escapes. Uncannily prominent in the filmography of James Cagney, the most compelling manifestations of these phenomena coincide with representations of death, as dealt by or visited upon Cagney's indelible characters. Through juxtapositions of cinematic actualities and Shakespearean textual parallels in *Taxi!* and *White Heat*, this essay strives to illuminate how a work that is not essentially Shakespeare becomes Shakespearean in the act of becoming itself.

While in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Cagney appears fully immersed in the complexities of being Bottom, the actor complicated that perception in his 1976 autobiography. Downplaying any sense of artistic privilege or elevated intent in playing Shakespeare, the actor demurred, "As Bottom, I simply had another job to do, and I did it. There was no feeling at the time that we were doing anything special […] though since then I believe the picture has taken on an aura of culture" (68). While this workman-like approach might underlie the negative commentary

leveled at Cagney and the Warner's stock company in 1935, it might also be said to emulate the industry of early modern theater. Were Richard Burbage and Will Kempe out on the boards playing "the immortal Bard," or were they more likely coming off one job and already preparing for the next while doing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? In *Cagney: The Actor as Auteur*, Patrick McGilligan describes the performance in similar, practical terms:

> the key to appreciating his bombastic portrayal is that Cagney played Bottom with the exuberant vulgarity of—well—of part guttersnipe and part vaudeville clown. It was Cagney in Shakespearean mode. When he spits on his hands before reciting verse in the play within a play, it is a gesture borrowed not from the Elizabethan tradition but from the city streets. (92)

It is worth mentioning that Cagney maintained a consistent work ethic regardless of his relationship with the studio, the genre he was working in, his relative interest in the material, or the state of his career. In terms of the Warner Brothers' *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at least, this attitude synchronizes with executive producer Hal B. Wallis, co-director William Dieterle, and the film's key performers, who ultimately treated a screenplay derived from Shakespeare ("arranged for the screen" by Charles Kenyon and Mary C. McCall) like any other shooting script. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the key collaborator who did not harmonize with this irreverent approach was marquee co-director Max Reinhardt. According to Cagney, "Reinhardt was essentially a spectacle director not able to appreciate […] the minimum movement that film demands"; while regularly on set, Reinhardt "remained largely on the sideline while Bill Dieterle directed" (66).

This workman-like approach defines Cagney's Bottom and links the classical to the filmic. Whether on stage or onscreen, in tragedy or comedy, Pyramus is looking for Love and finds Death. In typical entertainments of the 1930s, the lion or Thisbe would have done him in; in Ovid/Shakespeare, however, he does it to himself while doing what he wants to do. The quest for death—and deaths of great magnitude—runs an illustrious course in Shakespeare from Adonis through Coriolanus. As nearly parallel commonplaces of cultural discourse, the downward spiral unto death of cinematic gangsters from Tony Camonte (*Scarface*) to Cody Jarrett (*White Heat*) to Vito Corleone (*The Godfather*, 1972) to Nicky Santoro (*Casino*, 1995) provides an indelible cinematic paradigm.

Having elected a lifestyle that welcomes one persistently to the jungle, one can hardly be surprised to end up in the tiger's maw. The makers of such films, among others, have cultivated the existential recesses of this relatively straightforward archetype. Francis Coppola and Martin Scorsese, acknowledged admirers of such gangster-film auteurs as Howard Hawks and Raoul Walsh, derived their notions of screen performance, visual narrative, and cinematic effect from the films of these and other golden-age directors. Scorsese is particularly open about his stylistic and ideological borrowings from other filmmakers (he favors the term "smuggling"),[1] entrusting an attuned audience to manage these cinematic *sententiae* within the context of their own subjective reading. On the performance side, few film actors played as many distinctive gangster antiheroes and vengeful victims of a monetized, criminalized society as James Cagney, whose various homicides and death throes seem an extension of Jacobean theatricality.

Unless a filmmaker explicitly admits or denies Shakespearean appropriation, a Shakespearean accident can be difficult to distinguish from authorial intent or subjective coincidence. Accidents, ultimately ruled by the same causality which determines preferred outcomes, can hardly be called accidental. A contrary, unexpected, or less-than-ideal outcome is simply a deviation from what had been to that point a predictable absolute. Setting aside the possibility that some fanciful, imagining subjectivity has made the whole thing up, a particular accident might even usurp expectation and become the expected. Since the spontaneous recurrence of unexpected outcomes remains unlikely, only deliberate recreations would suit this new paradigm. Naturally we must rule out such patterns of false "accidents," but it might be illuminating to consider some collisions of narrative, performance, and cinematic style which, while fulfilling their essential sets of expectations, establish new tropes that ring Shakespearean.

The Venn diagram of unspoken synonyms for "Shakespearean" probably finds "epic," "classical," and even "archetypal" in the overlap, anachronism notwithstanding. In the conceit of this essay, an "accident" is simply a manifestation of the unexpected. When an actor or director proposes an alternate reading or mode for playing a scene, they move into the realm of experimentation. Not that experiments have ever been an accident-free medium, but we will limit the discussion of "accidents" to outcomes neither planned for nor expected. In his philosophical study of the "accidental" during the early modern period, Michael Witmore

observes, "We ought to think of accidents as existing halfway between realms of fact and fiction […] This categorical instability allows accidents to serve as a passageway between realms of experience that are traditionally thought to exclude one another" (6–7). A perfect no-place then, between stage and audience, past and present, performance and representation, life and death.

Shakespearean accidents then, to stretch both notions even tauter, reside in individual subjectivities and expectations. The difference between "expected" and "accidental" might even hinge upon a single criterion: the perceptive presence of an attuned audience. For the individual gawker on the scene, results may vary. As the tension between dramatic text and cinematic performance in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* suggests, even a direct adaptation can ring summarily non-Shakespearean in the ears and eyes of that same audience. Of the seemingly limitless circumstances and convergences which might produce a Shakespearean accident, most lead to loaded moments and potential allusions that are neither deliberate appropriations nor inadvertent singularities. This brings us to the "echo" and the "commonplace." While certain cinematic echoes could qualify as "accidental," the most notable appear to derive from the conscious efforts of screenwriters, directors, and performers. Such notable echoes as Johnny Rico's (Edward G. Robinson) existential query "Is this the end of Caesar?" in *Little Caesar* (1931); Tom Powers's existential last gasp—"I ain't so tough"—in *The Public Enemy* (1931); the *pietà* elicited when Eddie Bartlett dies in Panama Smith's arms on the church steps in the final shot of *The Roaring Twenties* (1939); or, the unraveling and demise of *White Heat*'s Cody Jarrett explored below, appear tuned for extratextual resonance. Commonplaces, by contrast, seem more likely the products of creative cryptomnesia, that cousin-german of *déjà vu*: we recall knowledge with such intimacy that its source remains obscure. If a given image or series of cuts does not immediately signify its gist to the spectator, one must quickly invoke a more effective signifier. As the practical necessities of studio filmmaking rarely afford time to question the provenance of the image, line, or gesture most befitting a creative moment, feature films were rife with such commonplaces long before the age of conspicuous cinematic homage. Whether because they reveal shared knowledge or express the workings of the collective subconscious, what this essay dubs "commonplaces" are really a high form of intellectual shorthand. In times of need, they present themselves to storytellers in search of the

most concise and dramatically resonant option available, like a Homeric poet's epithet.

The brisk, working-class social drama—with a touch of the nascent gangster film—established in *Taxi!* seems on its surface an unlikely candidate for Shakespearean reading. The film's vigorously chauvinistic central character, Matt Nolan, portrayed by the irrepressible James Cagney,[2] attempts to unify independent taxi drivers against a vicious cab conglomerate but finds himself distracted by Sue (Loretta Young), the daughter of Consolidated Taxi's most prominent victim. Following Matt's call to arms at a driver's strategy meeting, Sue steals his fire, eloquently advocating the diplomatic high road. A subsequent admission that her father has recently died in prison, combined with soon-to-be-tropic criticism of his temper, inflames Matt enough to declare, "I wouldn't go with her if she was the last dame on earth … and I just got out of the Navy."

The enemy corporation peacefully buys out the proto-Union resistance, transforming *Taxi!* from social drama to romance and allowing Matt and Sue to reconcile for a date-night tour of New York City. Soon after, they marry in a civil ceremony. Celebrating at the (happily fictional) Cotton Pickers Club, cab company agent Buck Gerard—engineer of the incident that sent Sue's elderly father to Sing-Sing—spies the newlyweds lovebirding it up and drunkenly heckles them. Unable to tolerate the escalating disrespect, particularly from a sloppy, morally-compromised drunk, hot-tempered Matt makes his move. Gerard pulls a switchblade from his boot, Matt grabs a bottle from a nearby table, and peacemaking kid-brother Danny (Ray Cooke, till now conspicuously in the background for a blood relative) steps between the combatants as they close the gap only to take Gerard's blade in his back. After a brief beat in the surgery, a police inquiry cannot be far behind.

Making his first appearance in *Taxi!*—reinforcing the *Romeo and Juliet*-ness of the incident—a priest attends Matt's interrogation, encouraging him in familiar, "I've known you since you was a boy" tones to cooperate with the authorities. At this point *Taxi!* executes another genre-hop, this time from romance to revenge drama: Matt plays the penitent with this would-be Friar Laurence while deflecting police inquiries about Gerard, the man he now needs desperately to kill. While mentor and novice exit the interrogation room together, Father Nulty (an uncredited George MacFarlane), has served his narrative purpose and exits the film entirely. Meanwhile, Sue befriends Gerard's moll and actively campaigns to redefine Matt's nearly biblical sense of justice. At the film's

climax, Matt challenges Buck—who is hiding in a closet—to face him, brands him definitively with rat epithets, and fires multiple slugs through the closet door as the police arrive.

The presence of these "goodies," as Cagney might call them, suggests reading *Taxi!* in terms of early modern dramatic commonplaces. For example, now that the *Romeo and Juliet* ball is in play, Matt and Sue's earlier conflict becomes a ready signifier of two young people on opposite sides of an argument older than either of them. In *Taxi!* (like *Romeo and Juliet* and the early comedies it sometimes echoes such as *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Taming of the Shrew*), the serious business of love and death is punctuated with comic asides. Each lead is gifted with a sidekick, a less-sophisticated version of themselves, who together end up double-dating with Matt and Sue. Most memorable is Sue's coworker Ruby (Leila Bennett), who establishes herself as an unpretentious observer of human nature (reminiscent of Nerissa or an earthier Celia) well before Sue defines herself as a heroine. In the spirit of Hamlet quipping topically about boys companies with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Ruby rivets her attention to the world outside the narrative she inhabits, keeping the audience in on the joke since her companions rarely catch her drift. Waiting in the queue at the Loew's Winter Garden cinema in Times Square, Ruby takes a jab at a poster of John Barrymore ("Starring In *The Mad Genius*"), who would later play Mercutio in MGM's age-anachronistic *Romeo and Juliet*: "You know what I think? I think he copies Frederic March more and more every year").[3]

Taxi! engages its commonplaces—comedic sidekicks, parallel romances, the staging of violence, and perhaps most significantly, acknowledgment that the audience is part of the film's world—not because they are inherently "Shakespearean" but simply because they are proven functions of narrative grammar, derived from traditions too culturally ingrained, too dense, and too various to rationalize beyond the essential facts of their efficacy. In Shakespearean terms, however, I would argue that *Taxi!* echoes *Romeo and Juliet* for about ten of its seventy minutes, with narrative and thematic repercussions on either side.

Appropriation is never an accident, but how do we process an echo? There are many spaces we can walk into—or find ourselves surrounded by—wherein we might expect voices to reverberate. Are the natural spaces of the echoing world accidental? Hardly, but they are formed by processes so simultaneously arbitrary and deliberate that their measure

cannot be made. In a significant turn from the commonplaces discussed above, echoes seem to form at a nexus of influences: screenwriter and source text; director and screenplay; director and performer; performer and audience expectation; and—perhaps the most consequential in terms of Shakespearean cinema, the filmic text, and audience expectation. Confounding the matter in terms of the American crime drama and Cagney's *oeuvre* are the myriad, seldom mutually exclusive modes of representational death—as a purely narrative function, an extension of authorial desire or audience wish-fulfillment, a manifestation of audience need for justice or closure, a societal mandate, or even a concession to censorship.

In "'Top of the World, Ma': *Richard III* and Cinematic Convention," a study of Ian McKellen and Richard Loncraine's 1995 film adaptation, James N. Loehlin acknowledges *White Heat* as the source of Richard's fiery, *nouveau*-Bosworth Field demise, giving Raoul Walsh's 1949 film some retroactive cachet as a Shakespearean echo:

> [The ending] specifically recalls the "top of the world" finale of one of the classic gangster pictures, *White Heat*. […] McKellen, atop the Battersea Power Station, holds his hand out to Richmond and the audience and invites us to accompany him, "If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell." As he topples grinning into the flames, the soundtrack plays Al Jolson singing "I'm sitting on top of the world." (180)

In the source narrative that "suggested" *White Heat* to screenwriters Ivan Goff and Ben Roberts was a story by Virginia Kellogg. Blackie Flynn, a master thief devoted to his brother and operating exclusively for a mastermind of a fence known only as "The Trader," led his gang from one impossible heist to the next. Blackie's plans and personality, however, were secondary to the Treasury agents pursuing him. These included a womanizing Agent-in-Charge and a father-son team of undercover operatives. Goff and Roberts foregrounded Blackie—reinventing him as Cody Jarrett—replaced his brother with a mother modeled on real life public enemy Ma Barker, and added a backstory wherein Cody's father "died raving in a nuthouse." This newly centralized character suffers from seizures, one of which results in his accidental discharge of a handgun into a roomful of chagrined underlings. Cody's condition is ambiguous, variously described as genetic and, by Treasury Agent-in-Charge Philip Evans (John Archer), willfully psychosomatic.

In the case of *White Heat*, any Shakespearean echoes we might detect beyond Cody's Ma (Margaret Wycherly)—a Volumnia-like enabler—likely occurred at the nexus of director-*auteur* and performer. As Glenn Erickson notes in "*White Heat*: I Am Cody Jarrett, Destroyer of Worlds":

> [The screenwriters] carefully altered Jarrett's particulars to remove any qualities that would encourage audience sympathy. The final touches to the character, the ones that enlarge Jarrett's personality to fantastic proportions, are not in the final script and appear to be the doing of Raoul Walsh and Cagney himself. (141)

Cagney is said to have improvised the scenes that define Cody Jarrett's relationship with his mother, and these act perhaps as a composite Shakespearean echo. These iconic moments, a post-seizure Cody seeking comfort on his Ma's lap and, in the film's second act, his primal reaction to her death, must be seen on their own terms rather than described in mine.

Director Raoul Walsh supports and expands Jarrett's unstable spontaneity by guiding him through a seeming history of distinctively American film genres (the film is set in the "present day" of its filming, summer of 1949), beginning with the Western. The opening credit blocks appear over a desert landscape; the camera pans left, picking up nothing out of place in a period Western other than a small stretch of highway; the action begins with an old-school train robbery, substituting getaway cars for horses and fedoras for cowboy hats. Walsh updates this violent twentieth-century Western to the 1930s gangster film (he collaborated with Cagney on the arguable epitome of the genre, *The Roaring Twenties*) when Cody orders an injured accomplice gunned down rather than leave behind a helpless eyewitness. Cody's obsessive relationship with "Ma Jarrett" also links this section of *White Heat* with the *noir*-est of films *noir*, the likes of *Gun Crazy* (1950) and *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955). Even if the film does not directly imitate the genre layering and recombination of early modern English drama, it clearly draws permission and agency from that earlier narrative form.

Similar to *Taxi!*'s narrative-thematic structure, *White Heat* progresses through a double-genre morph, becoming a prison film (Cody confesses to a lesser crime of his own devising in another state rather than face a Federal rap for the train robbery, then intentionally wounds a Treasury

agent as a diversion) and a post-Code, right-side-of-the-law manhunt picture (à la 1935's *G-Men*, directed by William Keighley and also starring Cagney). This latter comes with a twist, hinting at a science-fiction-becomes-reality exposé when the Treasury agents employ state of the art tracking oscillators and sophisticated tailing systems to apprehend Jarrett, a criminal so rooted in the gun-and-a-fist mentality of the past that he cannot comprehend the means of his own capture.

Of *White Heat*'s component subgenres, only one was seemingly new to Raoul Walsh in 1949: the prison film. The director had been blending genre tropes at least as early as 1939's *The Roaring Twenties* with its pre-*Citizen Kane* blasts of newsreels ripped from the headlines.[4] This stands among the most enduring characteristics of his work, alongside a preternatural sense of cinematic space (inherited from his tutelage under D.W. Griffith) and the firm grounding of each film in specific, tangible "realisms." Perhaps Walsh's most unusual genre blend is the "Western-*noir*" of *Pursued* (1947), starring Robert Mitchum, an actor in transition from the former genre into the latter. The effects of Walsh's genre collisions were not only transformative of their respective leading men and subject matter, but the possibilities of narrative cinema at a moment when this newest of entertainment delivery systems had become almost cynically programmatic.

A consummate professional, Raoul Walsh was able to serve faithfully the studios he shot for (primarily Fox and Warner Bros.) while rewriting genre rules, most often with an eye toward transgressing them (a further aspect of Scorsese's "smuggling"). As Walsh reasoned in his 1974 autobiography:

> Cody Jarrett was not an ordinary killer […] No standard mold would fit him, because he was unstable, raving against society one moment and whimpering at his mother's knee the next. With such a script, I had to take a few chances. In one scene I wanted to put Cagney in his mother's lap. Even the cameraman looked doubtful when I posed the shot. We got away with it because Cagney and [Margaret] Wycherly were absolutely convincing. (348)

Perhaps only Howard Hawks, co-definer of the gangster (*Scarface*) and Western (*Red River*, 1948) genres, approaches Walsh in terms of generic dexterity, emphasis on character and narrative over spectacle, and continuing influence on commercial filmmaking. But while Hawks's populist

visions moved through insular, idealized microcosms of Americana, the leading characters of Walsh's films seem poised to burst forth into the present—insecurities, ammunition, consequences, and all.

The definitive piece of this pseudo-Shakespearean jigsaw is Cagney's performance as—and, according to Cagney, conceptualization of—Cody Jarrett. In his memoir, the actor recalled,

> The original script […] was very formula. The old knock-down-drag-'em-out-again, without a touch of imagination or originality. The leading character […] was just another murderous thug. For some kind of variant, I said to the writers, "Let's fashion this after Ma Barker and her boys, and make Cody a psychotic to account for his actions." (125)

Patrick McGilligan's interviews with Ivan Goff suggest that Cagney may be exaggerating his early engagement in the screenwriting process. That said, neither biographer nor interview subject denies that Cagney's character choices, blocking, and delivery ("goodies," or "touches," he called them) define Jarrett as a character or *White Heat* as a film (McGilligan 189–198). More substantial than, say, *Taxi!*'s momentary lapse into *Romeo and Juliet*, the collaborative result suggests a deeply internalized cinematic echo of Shakespearean tropes.

Like Othello (whose headaches and seizures also resonate here), Cody harbors a pathological need to trust a single individual and depend absolutely upon them. This is clearly what Hank Fallon (Edmond O'Brien), the undercover operative, has set himself up to be. Out of prison but bereft of his Ma, Cody would like to trust his inconstant wife, Verna (Virginia Mayo), who can be trusted insofar as she is patently untrustworthy. In a long scene during which the three leads fantasize about pulling the proverbial "one last job" and subsequently running off to paradise, Cody is almost tender with Verna in spite of her clear infidelity with one of his underlings. Is he really in love, or can he actually feign tenderness when everything in his world feels right to him? Adding a Jacobean undertone to this sequence is the truth of Ma Jarrett's death: Verna shot her in the back but pawned the blame off on her surrogate lover, the recently ventilated Big Ed (Steve Cochran).

Cody has most of his ducks in a row, realizing his potential in spite of Ma Jarrett's demise. He heads off to the big campaign (a daylight payroll robbery at an oil refinery, which he will infiltrate in an ersatz Trojan Horse of a tanker truck), cocksure of victory in full Coriolanus

or Richard Gloucester mode. He has cleaned house of all known traitors (leaving the most dangerous one alive), avenged Ma's death (without actually executing her killer), retained the trust of his patron, "The Trader" (who is ultimately the crux of the Treasury Department's investigation; Cody is merely a dangerous obstacle), and now stands more or less at the top of his illicit profession. Most significantly, he resists the persistently narrowing boundaries of a world folding in upon him.

Like an early modern conspirator trusting that onstage characters who are not supposed to know he is eavesdropping will look right through him, Hank Fallon must hide in plain sight from a convict who could actually blow his cover. Perpetuating the co-dependent *Othello/Coriolanus* echoes established by Cody and his Ma, Fallon becomes an Iago/Aufidius, representing everything Cody should guard against and the only person he trusts. Beyond Hank, whose naturalism must be of the highest order to fool Cody Jarrett, the Treasury agents are uncomplicated and forthright, almost to the point of artificiality—the legal system is their personality. In telling contrast to its performative acts of criminality, *White Heat*'s police procedural aspects are methodical and realistic in the extreme, constructing an immutable proscenium between the highly dramatic, theatrical world of Cody's schemes and the reality which threatens to swallow him whole. Jarrett's final step toward madness, begun with the revelation of "Vic Pardo"/Hank Fallon's betrayal, has a single onscreen witness: Cody's last living cellmate, Ryley (an uncredited Robert Osterloh), who makes a beeline away from his mentor's last stand about the time Cody compulsively refers to himself in the third person: "They think they've got Cody Jarrett. They haven't got Cody Jarrett, you hear? They haven't got him. And I'm gonna show you how they haven't got him." Tellingly, neither this line nor Jarrett's use of the third person appear in Goff and Roberts' screenplay for *White Heat*, though Cody does address Ma posthumously in the present more than once.

The man that the cops definitely haven't got, faculties too impaired to preclude the dishonor of back-shooting a colleague, plugs Ryley less for his lack of faith than for knowing the ultimate truth about his benefactor. Jarrett's conspicuous inability to know his true adversary even when surrounded, is perhaps his definitive echo of Othello in his bedchamber and Coriolanus in Antium. A brief epilogue (Agent-in-Charge Evans existentially sighs, "Cody Jarrett …" and Fallon continues, "… he finally got to the top of the world, and it blew up right in his face") caps the film's

through-metaphor but woefully misinterprets it, suggesting that technology alone has captured the Treasury agents' quarry. This final exchange differs significantly from the Goff–Roberts screenplay, which reads,

> EVANS: One man against the world.
>
> FALLON (shakes head): Why do they try? … Why do they try? (197–198)

Even Fallon, who had to know Jarrett intimately in order to destroy him, appears in neither iteration to have understood him at all. Like Iago, Fallon unbalances what he has done with his final words, removing logic, reason, and agency from the narrative equation.

Evans and Fallon's collaborative misunderstanding (which anticipates the awkward, clinical epilogue of *Psycho* [1960], not least in its mistrust of an audience's interpretive agency) points this discussion once more toward William Shakespeare. Along with collaborators, rivals, and acolytes, the poet-playwright composed for the multifaceted subjectivity of a mass audience. When imaginatively engaged, this early modern hive-mind was natively capable of reading across source and narrative in a way that twenty-first century students must be trained to do. The strategies of narrative cinema, particularly in its developmental decades, echo the densely layered systems of citation and allusion early modern dramatic poets employed to access the collective human imagination. American film reached a twofold state of the art in 1930s and 1940s studio product, culminating first in distinctive "studio styles" (analogous to early modern theatrical companies) and ultimately in auteur-minded, cinematic constructions so uniquely sophisticated they might resonate as alternate realities to an attuned audience.

The exemplar of early modern literary synthesis, Shakespeare's textual appropriations, re-visions, and re-purposings frequently redefine his audience's sense of his source material. These very traits—poetic, performative, and others which overflow the banks of this essay—also suggest Shakespeare as the ultimate progenitor of cinematic subjectivity. The narrative tropes an ideal subjectivity most readily responds to are often inextricable from what it has heard, read, seen, and comprehended. With great stealth, these referents have entered the realm of literary commonplace. In a palpable, critical sense, what we perceive as "Shakespearean" leads willing readers—and forces the unwilling—to rethink and re-see

their world through Shakespeare's kaleidoscope of narrative and poetic sources. Whether deliberately invoking this phenomenon or not, filmmakers as diverse as Raoul Walsh and Martin Scorsese, performers as unique as James Cagney and Robert Mitchum, tapped into the myriad possibilities that "the Shakespearean" engenders on the page and within the limitless spaces of cinema.

Notes

1. See Scorsese's 1995 BFI-produced documentary *A Personal Journey with Martin Scorsese Through American Movies*, particularly the segment "The Director as Smuggler."
2. This is the film in which Cagney (of Irish and Norwegian descent) speaks fluent Yiddish in his introductory scene and utters the immortal, eternally misquoted line, "Come out and take it, you dirty, yellow-bellied rat, or I'll give it to you through the door!" This is hardly the singularity it is misremembered as: Matt Nolan utters variations of the phrase "dirty rat" on at least two other occasions in the film.
3. In another unpretentious appropriation of literary tropes, *Taxi!*'s abrupt transitional fades to black, often in the midst of ongoing dialogue, suggest that while the scene's most narratively significant words have been spoken, the scene lives beyond the melodrama of its narration.
4. To further muddy the waters of collaboration and influence, this approach may have been suggested by the headline-busting immediacy of "The World Moves On," the original treatment by true-crime-minded writer/producer Mark Hellinger, who also collaborated with Walsh on *They Drive By Night* (1940), *High Sierra* (1941), and *Manpower* (1941). Hellinger also produced the brutally realistic prison exposé *Brute Force* (1947) and definitive police procedural *The Naked City* (1948).

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CHAPTER 12

YouShakespeare: Shakespearean Celebrity 2.0

Jennifer Holl

In a 1756 letter, Horace Walpole relayed his plan to adorn the exterior of his neighbor David Garrick's grand, Thames-side Temple to Shakespeare with a motto: *Quod spiro et placeo, si placeo tuum est* (456), or "That I am inspired and give pleasure, it is because of you." The motto, borrowed from Walpole's namesake Horace's *Odes* (4.3.24), precedes a few lines of verse, ending with "Shakespeare, all I owe to you." But the motto could just as easily have emanated from within the shrine's walls, perhaps uttered to Garrick himself from the marble lips of his prized statue of Shakespeare that served as centerpiece, for in the eighteenth century, no one did more than Garrick to breathe new life into the departed dramatist. Establishing himself as the world's first Shakespearean—a term just coming into being during the mid-eighteenth century—Garrick rose to international fame playing the title roles in *Hamlet* and *Richard III,* among others, and was also lauded as a competent adapter, editor, and publisher of Shakespeare's work. As James Granger observed in his 1769 *Biographical History of England*, "It is hard to say whether Shakespeare owes more to Garrick, or Garrick to Shakespeare" (10).

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Garrick is generally characterized by what Celestine Woo calls his "giddy worship" of Shakespeare (2), and James Shapiro argues that Garrick "had few rivals as a bardolater" (30); so fervent was Garrick's idol-worship that he regularly commissioned his temple's guests to compose verse in memory of his beloved poet and lay their lines at the feet of his centerpiece statue, Louis-François Roubiliac's *Shakespeare* (McPherson). But Garrick's supposed apotheosis is complicated by the overtly liberal license he took with the poet's memory and work, and a number of scholars have categorized the Garrick–Shakespeare relationship as something more akin to shrewd appropriation, rather than abject prostration. Though he claimed his intention as adapter and editor was to present a play "as Shakespeare wrote it" (qtd. in Dircks 80), his adaptations contained numerous omissions and emendations, "in deference to the exigencies of effective eighteenth-century stage presentation" (Dircks 80). For example, Garrick eliminated the first three acts of *The Winter's Tale* to avoid the confusion of the sixteen-year time lapse, then refocused the play's attention onto a less severe and more sympathetic Leontes, whose part Garrick played (Cunningham 91). "How genuinely heartfelt Garrick's frequently professed devotion to Shakespeare actually was can never be known," Vanessa Cunningham argues, as she acknowledges that Garrick "seized the opportunities offered by the rising tide of bardolatry" in order to advance his own career (5).

In *The Making of a National Poet*, Michael Dobson argues that, above all, Garrick sought to become "the definitive embodiment of the Bard," even to the point of usurpation, as he attempted to wrest the sites of Shakespeare's canonization away from the cathedrals and libraries in order to relocate them within his own stage and, indeed, within his own body (168). Thus, Garrick circumscribed Shakespeare's memory within his own reputation and career and stamped his name and image upon the poet's legacy wherever he could. During his 1769 Stratford Jubilee, for example, he placed Gainsborough's *Portrait of Garrick with the Bust of Shakespeare* on permanent display in Stratford's Town Hall (McPherson). The installation of his portrait, his head nestled against the immobile shoulder of the watchful Bard, wove Garrick's image indelibly into the fabric of Shakespeare's legacy at its point of origin, boldly announcing the reanimation of Shakespeare in the body of his most diligent spokesman.

Far from sacrosanct, Garrick treated Shakespeare's memory and work as unfinished texts that invited revision—specifically, his own revision—and not unlike the scientists of *Jurassic Park*, filled in the lacunae of Shakespeare's preserved narrative DNA with the vital strands of his own in order to animate a new hybrid being entirely: the Shakespearean celebrity. Located somewhere at the intersection of Woo's "giddy worship" and Dobson's colonizing impulses, Garrick's self-conscious attempts to resuscitate Shakespeare's wavering renown, while simultaneously merging his own personal and professional narratives to Shakespeare's renewed cultural force, initiated a paradigm of far more enduring resonance than any of his performances or adaptations. As the first Shakespearean celebrity,[1] he established a model of popularly conferred, as opposed to institutionally sanctioned, Shakespearean authority that emerged through the uproarious applause and fawning admiration of the public, rather than through the installation of national monuments. And he did so by promoting himself as an expert, even a new incarnation, by means of his own fervid fan-worship, thus providing a reflective and enfranchising mirror to his own substantial fan base.

Celebrity, as I will explore in this chapter, is a collaborative, intermedial, and democratic process, crafted through a complex matrix of reciprocating commercial and affective exchanges between performers and their audiences, through which the public elevates its own cultural stars; the Shakespearean celebrity occupies a distinct position in the pantheon of stars in its compounded, symbiotic conflation of narratives to become an amalgamated cultural sign that stands in not only for Shakespeare, but for Shakespeare's most visible and ardent devotees as well. To be a Shakespearean celebrity is to be both star and fan, or rather, Shakespeare's star fan, and thus, to embody the public's power to craft its own cultural narratives and shape its own Shakespeare. From Garrick to Kenneth Branagh and even, I argue here, the Twitterverse's @shakespeare, Shakespearean celebrities continuously reanimate Shakespeare in the bodies (or handles, as the case may be), of his most diligent, visible, and celebrated admirers, reeling in Shakespeare from otherwise elitist heights and grounding him in the everyday, accessible forum of popular celebrity. While Cunningham correctly observes that, despite Garrick's near-monopolizing hold on all things Shakespeare during his lifetime, he remains today "only a marginal figure in the scholarly world of Shakespeare studies" (5), Garrick's establishment of the Shakespearean

celebrity paradigm has proven both potent and mutable enough to survive the ever-evolving arenas of celebrity—from the stage and print to film and new media.

Theorizing Celebrity

In 1961, social theorist Daniel Boorstin famously defined the celebrity as "a person known for his well-knownness" (57), citing circulation in the public sphere as the celebrity's sole defining characteristic. Boorstin's seemingly circular, and undeniably derisive, definition actually echoes the term's etymological origins: *celebrity*, which entered the English lexicon in 1831 to denote public persons, traces its origin to the Latin *celebritās*, signifying both "fame" and the state of being "crowded" (*OED s.v.* celebrity, n. 2). Unlike other icons of fame such as the hero or the legend, which originally signified either superhuman strength or saintly piety respectively, the term *celebrity* speaks only to the mechanisms of fame, indifferent to causation. Therefore, the etymological origins of celebrity likewise place primary focus on the role of the public, or the crowd, through which the celebrity's fame circulates. "It's not what they are," observes film theorist James Monaco of celebrities, "but what we think they are that fascinates us" (14), and what we think they are can arrive from any host of real or imagined sources, as celebrities' publicly understood identities generally involve a conflation of performed roles, tabloid headlines, popular fantasies, and cultural fixations. Celebrity, therefore, is a remarkably reflexive phenomenon, a passive imprint of popular imagination; as Neal Gabler says, "Celebrity isn't really a person" (Gabler), but rather, a collaboratively authored narrative that promotes public values more than it signifies the illustrious figure to which it is attached.

Celebrity might well be thought of as a kind of ethereal double, a multifariously authored narrative body tethered to the corporeal one that shares its name, as star power is less an individual property than a collaborative process of narrative-building that emerges through the transmedial negotiations of stage, screens, popular print and visual media, and the everyday realm of gossip. As Rosemary Coombe argues, "the celebrity is authored in a multiplicity of sites" (722), as celebrity is not only circulated but crafted through active consumption and trade, and thus, the public functions both as consumers and producers of celebrity narrative. This primary public agency, according to P. David Marshall in

Celebrity and Power, lends celebrity its decidedly democratic force: "the celebrity embodies the empowerment of the people to shape the public sphere symbolically" (7), he argues, as celebrity offers a sort of grassroots alternative to institutionalized authority.

As Lawrence Grossberg explains, "Audiences are constantly making their own cultural environment from the cultural resources that are available to them" (583), and the elevation of cultural stars selected from a contemporaneous body of peers provides a vehicle to valorize and negotiate current social forces and conditions. If mythologized heroes resonate eternally as manifestations of near universal virtues of genius, strength, or beauty, the celebrity embodies, instead, a particular strand of the current cultural milieu, becoming a narrative of the cultural here-and-now, which helps to explain what Chris Rojek calls "the peculiar fragility of celebrity presence" (16); in their immediate resonance, celebrities can easily slip into obsolescence. Consider, for example, Richard Dyer's assessment of the celebrity of Marilyn Monroe: "Her image has to be situated in the flux of ideas about morality and sexuality that characterized the 50s in America," he argues, as through her "combination of sexuality and innocence […] she seemed to 'be' the very tensions that ran through the ideological life of 50s America" (31). In Dyer's analysis, Monroe could only have achieved such remarkable celebrity amidst the sexual turmoil of her own era, with the public's investment in Monroe's image inextricably tied to its own negotiation of competing sexual discourses, including, as Dyer notes, "the spread of Freudian ideas in postwar America, the Kinsey report, [and] Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique"* (31). But Monroe's celebrity died along with her in 1962, as she ceased to provide an evolving, reciprocating vehicle of sexual exploration, and her image remains statically situated in 1950s America, forever The Girl in the ruffling white dress over the subway grate in *The Seven Year Itch.*

As collaboratively authored narratives of popularly conferred authority, celebrities exist in decidedly accessible arenas, from television and the tabloids to blogs and water-cooler chat, as a celebrity's ability to arouse public discourse necessitates popular access, not only in terms of easy and widespread visibility, but also through a sense of personal resonance and relatability. Celebrities, according to Rojek, "seem, simultaneously, both larger than life and intimate confrères" (16–17), or as Joseph Roach notes, "at once touchable and transcendent" (16); their widespread prominence remains tempered by a sense of easy accessibility, an

oxymoronic kind of ordinary extraordinariness, that reels them in from abstraction and promotes them as popular targets of desire. For the past several decades, scholars have debated the historical moment that birthed the phenomenon of celebrity, based upon the emergence of the requisite platforms that allow fans to interact with their stars: Boorstin deems celebrity a product of the twentieth-century "Graphic Revolution"; in *The Stars*, Edgar Morin traces celebrity to the early film era and the fan clubs and magazines that accompanied it. Both Fred Inglis's *A Short History of Celebrity* and Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody's *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain* point instead to the emerging mass media and thriving theatres of eighteenth-century London as the birthplace of celebrity culture, and Garrick certainly provides a robust example of an eighteenth-century celebrity. Aside from his regular, highly attended performances on the Drury Lane stage, Garrick appeared in more eighteenth-century portraits than any other Briton (Burnim 185), and such portraits were frequently reproduced for public sale or in the pages of popular periodicals, where whispers of his private life, including, as befitting the celebrity, reports of scandal and controversy, also circulated (Bertelsen 308).

As not only a celebrity, but a Shakespearean celebrity, Garrick himself became a site where fan and star could meaningfully intersect, as his highly publicized devotion to and promulgation of Shakespeare held a mirror to the crowds that simultaneously lifted Garrick to prominence. In fact, through his extensive collection of memorabilia, his Jubilee, his portraits that paired him with his idol, and, most profoundly, his elaborate Temple to Shakespeare, Garrick might well be considered Shakespeare's first fanboy,[2] but his highly publicized, obsessive admiration for his Bard became an integral narrative strand in his own celebrity; he was both fan and star, accessible and elite, a popularly appointed Shakespearean authority who affirmed the authorial capacity of his fans to shape their cultural sphere. He was a narrative of popular power, with his larger-than-life presence mitigated by his self-professed devotion to his idol, as he ceaselessly proclaimed himself to be, like his many adorers, just another fan.

The Cult of Shakespearean Celebrity

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term *Shakespearean* (originally, *Shakespearian*) first appeared in print in the 1750s, denoting persons, texts, and experiences "having the characteristics of William

Shakespeare or his dramatic or poetical productions" (adj. a), and it hardly seems coincidental that the term, signifying both a likeness to his person and his work, emerged simultaneously with Garrick's sustained efforts to publicize himself as Shakespeare's living embodiment. Today, Shakespeare remains the only playwright whose name in adjective form signifies a type of actor, but to be a Shakespearean does not confine one's body of work to the plays of Shakespeare; out of Laurence Olivier's eighty-seven film and television credits over the span of five decades, only seven were as Shakespeare's characters, as Shakespeareans are labeled as such even in their non-Shakespearean capacities. Branagh's name, for example, hardly surfaces in print unless prefixed by "Shakespearean," such as in the 2011 *Washington Post* headline, "Shakespearean Kenneth Branagh Talks about the Challenge of Directing *Thor*" (Mermelstein).[3] Alternately, many actors who perform Shakespeare's roles are never assigned the Shakespearean label at all, such as Julia Stiles, who played Ophelia in Michael Almereyda's 2000 *Hamlet*, starred in two teen-oriented film adaptations of Shakespeare, and played Viola in the 2002 Shakespeare in the Park production of *Twelfth Night*. As is the case with celebrity as a whole, Shakespearean celebrity reflects less upon any given performer's body of work than it does the public's projection of Shakespearean authority, which, in turn, reflects upon the public's own authorial capacities.

"The Shakespearean star text," according to Jennifer Barnes, "appears to offer a solution (however temporary or illusory) to the desire to know what Shakespeare is 'really like,' promising access to coveted Shakespearean meaning" (417), and Shakespearean celebrities, beginning with Garrick, offer the tantalizing promise of satiation though their own publicized devotion to their idol. Through the same kind of rigorous consumption and admiration that reflects fans' own experiences, the Shakespearean celebrity is thought to possess special access unavailable to the general population. Olivier frequently lent credence to such assumptions, musing in a 1983 interview, for example, that "Mr. Shakespeare and I are very close, you know. We've done a lot for each other" (qtd. in Lewis 164), and he further channeled that intimacy into a nearly empathic understanding of Shakespeare: "I spoke Shakespeare as if that was the way I spoke" (qtd. in Coleman 63), he said, offering himself up, as did Garrick, as Shakespeare's living spokesperson. As Barnes argues, "In suggesting that he somehow has access to Shakespearean 'truth' […] Olivier posits his performing body as the site through which this idea of 'true' Shakespeare can be represented" (423), and thus, following Garrick's model, Olivier persistently announced himself as a reanimated,

fleshly Shakespeare for the film age, becoming in the eyes of the public a conflated incarnation that promised renewed access to the departed dramatist.

Collaboration upon collaboration, the Shakespearean celebrity compounds the already multifariously authored celebrity body in its symbiotic merger of two co-created narrative bodies that both feed, and feed upon, each other, re-invigorating Shakespeare in the bodies of his most ardent admirers while bestowing a popularly acclaimed sense of Shakespearean authority and, hence, the label "Shakespearean" onto new generations of performers. Garrick was undoubtedly the first Shakespearean celebrity, and perhaps nowhere is this highly enmeshed, collaborative endeavor rendered more visible than in Garrick's prized statue, Roubiliac's *Shakespeare*, as it is widely held that Garrick himself posed for its sculpture (Shapiro 30, Dobson 182), providing the inspiration for the body as the Chandos portrait provided the source for Shakespeare's face. The statue offers a potent symbol of the paradigm Garrick initiated, as it simultaneously attempts to resurrect Shakespeare in the guise of a contemporary, eighteenth-century man of letters, while irretrievably weaving Shakespeare's reanimated existence to Garrick's body and art. As Dobson notes, "Garrick's Shakespeare statue is constructed not in the image of Britain's heroic past, but in exactly the image Garrick wishes to project for himself" (182); it is an eighteenth-century "bourgeois Shakespeare" (158), that celebrates Garrick's success and promotes middle-class values as much as it memorializes Shakespeare. Along with miniaturized versions of the Roubiliac *Shakespeare* and other statuary, the Garrick–Shakespeare hybrid spawned a great deal of celebrity memorabilia in the London media and markets, including portraiture and poetry, in which the two actor-manager-playwrights' names and images were paired, if not indecipherably amalgamated.

In 1758, poet Paul Whitehead captured the spirit of this popular conflation and the extent of Garrick's devotion in his "Verses, Dropt in Mr. Garrick's Temple of Shakespear" (592). Published in *The London Magazine*, the poem imagines a conversation between Garrick and his Shakespeare statue, in which "the marble God" thanks his fleshly patron (line 9):

> Unnotic'd long thy Shakespear lay,
> To dullness and to time a prey;
> But lo! I rise, I breathe, I live
> In you my representative! (17–20)

In the poem, a humble Garrick protests the poet's effusive gratitude, proclaiming himself only "the organ of thy spirit" (32), which prompts the god Phoebus to intervene and settle the dispute by placing a laurel wreath on each, declaring, "Each matchless, each the Palm shall bear / In Heav'n the Bard, on Earth the Play'r" (37–38). Bestowing twin wreaths upon "twin stars," as Garrick's tomb would later label the pair, Whitehead's poem not only succinctly encapsulates popular treatments of the Garrick–Shakespeare relationship, as it figures Garrick as Shakespeare's human reincarnation, but also reveals a rather complex politics of celebrity. Invoking what was by the eighteenth century an already archaic model of the monarch's divinity, Whitehead positions Garrick as a living representative of his "marble God," granting a middle-class "Play'r" the divine right to speak on behalf of his deity. This play on outdated notions of monarchical power confers, as does celebrity, an alternative, unsanctioned form of popular authority onto Garrick, granted by means of his successful theatrical enterprise and humble devotion, which have rescued the poet-God from "oblivion and disgrace" (15). The authority that Garrick has accrued is further reified when Phoebus laureates both in an equal exchange of power and acclaim, even as each insists he owes his ennobled status to the other.

Whitehead's verse aptly demonstrates the intricate web of interdependence that continues to characterize the Shakespearean celebrity, including his delineation of heavenly, inaccessible "Bard" from the earthly "Play'r" that resurrects him anew in the popular imagination. The poem also captures Shakespearean celebrity's dialogic function, for as much as stars like Garrick are bestowed a popularly conferred Shakespearean authority, Shakespearean celebrities from Garrick to Branagh have likewise reintroduced Shakespeare into the popular realms of contemporary celebrity, from *The London Magazine* where Whitehead's poem first appeared to Twitter and popular gossip sites today. Providing the public with an accessible Player as a counterpart to the increasingly elitist Bard of gilded anthologies and national monuments, Shakespearean celebrities lend their contemporary, popular acclaim to the poet whose mantle they bear. In celebration and in scandal, Shakespeare continues to travel the pathways of publicity available to celebrities, as his continued presence in the accessible venues of celebrity media grounds the heavenly Bard in the much more personally resonant form of earthly Player.

Although Michael Bristol argues in *Big-Time Shakespeare* that, among a great many literary giants of the last several centuries, "Shakespeare is unusual in that he has […] achieved contemporary celebrity" (3), the supposition that the dead can retain celebrity status remains a point of contention among celebrity theorists. Both Monaco and Rojek argue that celebrity power hinges on immediacy (Monaco 6, Rojek 404), and celebrity presence, unlike the time-tested values of legends or heroes, can prove remarkably fleeting. Yet centuries after his death, Shakespeare remains a fairly consistent subject of media speculation, playfully wielded with the familiar combination of reverence and humiliation that marks contemporary celebrity gossip, from persistent questions of his authorship to such headlines as *Time*'s 2013 "Shakespeare Was a 'Ruthless' Businessman, Hoarded Food" (Wang) to *Vanity Fair*'s 2015 "Did Shakespeare Smoke Pot?" (Beggs). Moreover, he continues to operate as a site of present fixations. As the dim-witted patsy of Roland Emmerich's 2011 *Anonymous*, Shakespeare became a site of conspiracy in line with an early twenty-first century cultural fixation on conspiracy that made *The Da Vinci Code* the bestselling adult fiction book of the 2000s. The directionless young poet-romancer of John Madden's 1998 *Shakespeare in Love* seeks fulfillment in his work, in his love life, and on his therapist's couch, not unlike the ambitious young professionals of a string of 1990s television shows such as *Friends,* who strive to fill the existential voids in their hearts. While the legendary Shakespeare of quasi-divine genius focuses on Shakespeare's singularity as author, the pastiche of cultural narratives that constitute Shakespeare's presence in popular culture remains much more in line with the dispersed, multifarious authorship of celebrity, perhaps, I would suggest, owing to Shakespeare's persistent reanimation in the bodies of new Shakespearean celebrities, who continuously reintroduce the poet to new modes of publicity.

Throughout the intervening centuries since Shakespeare's death, the public has rarely lacked a Shakespeare, or rather, a Shakespearean celebrity with whom they could continue to collaborate in the construction of a celebrity body and, thus, valorize and negotiate their own cultural spheres through the entity understood as Shakespeare. In her account of the evolution of Shakespearean stardom, Barbara Hodgdon provides a brief history of more than a dozen star actors celebrated for their performance of Shakespeare, beginning with Shakespeare's contemporary Richard Burbage and continuing through such notable Shakespearean

actors as Edmund Kean, Henry Irving, John Gielgud, and Ian McKellen. Interestingly, few of these performers' careers, until the twentieth century, substantially overlap, and when, for example, Hodgdon discusses the concurrent careers of Kean and William Betty, she notes Betty's struggle to "compete with the blazing star of Edmund Kean" (52). For much of the history of the Shakespearean celebrity, public consumption has rarely proven capable of accommodating room for more than one popularly appointed Shakespearean authority at a time. As a testament to the singularity of the Shakespearean celebrity, consider Terry Coleman's account in his 2006 biography *Olivier*, in which the Prince of Wales reportedly selected Branagh as his representative to attend Olivier's 1989 memorial service. According to Coleman, Olivier's family bristled at the notion and subsequently banished Branagh from attendance; his presence, especially in the revered position of a proxy prince, would sanction Branagh as heir to Olivier's throne and potentially disgruntle the numerous Shakespearean actors in attendance (470–471). Of course, the hypothetical offense held weight precisely because the media had recently begun to designate the then-28-year-old upstart as Olivier's successor, suggesting, as does Hodgdon's history, that popular sentiment has rarely crowned more than one Shakespeare(an) at a time. However, in the untamed wilds of the Internet, where celebrity and, I would argue, Shakespearean celebrity thrive most robustly today, celebrity itself has proliferated to include a far more diverse pantheon of stars than ever before, and a far more diverse collection of Shakespeareans as well.

New Media, New Shakespeare(an)s

In a 2006 essay, Marshall explores a fundamental question of the Internet's impact on concepts of celebrity, specifically "whether the elaborate discourse of celebrity [...] is challenged by the shifts in the way that we use media in this era of new media cultures?" ("New Media" 636). What Marshall found was that new media offer new opportunities for self-promotion that can be wielded by the stars of more established forms—television, film, or music, for example—as well as by those traditionally understood as the celebrity's audience. Conventional structures of celebrity, he argues, involved "representational" media, through which audiences use celebrities and their high visibility as a means of asserting cultural concerns and negotiating values; new media offers

"presentational" opportunities, through which audiences may offer themselves up to broadcast such concerns and values (636–637). These presentational forums have resulted in an entirely new and diverse kind of celebrity, variously termed the cyberstar, netstar, or more commonly, the Internet celebrity. But "Internet celebrity" is itself a broad classification, as it encompasses those whose fame circulates solely on the Web as well as those who have crossed over into other forms of traditional celebrity media, with varying levels of endurance, from fleeting viral sensations to the steady following of YouTube personality Jenna Marbles, whose channel maintains sixteen million followers, to pop star Justin Bieber, who began his career by posting videos of himself to YouTube at age twelve.

The stars of new media are quickly gaining in cultural cachet and market clout, and a 2014 survey conducted by *Variety* magazine found that the stars of the Internet may hold more influence over America's youth than those of film, TV, and music. In the survey, American teens listed the online comedy duo Smosh, video producers The Fine Brothers, video game commentator PewDiePie, rapper and comedian KSI, and comedian Ryan Higa—all YouTube stars—as their top five favorite celebrities (Ault). Much of the allure of these online personalities is, according to *New York Magazine*'s Joe Coscarelli, their accessibility, as they promise near universal access to what Andy Warhol once deemed "fifteen minutes of fame": "It's a total rethinking of how to be a celebrity," he writes. "Entry to this new star system is as simple as signing up to YouTube, Twitter, Vine, Tumblr, Instagram, or, more likely, all of the above" (Coscarelli).

As online platforms of self-promotion have diversified and expanded both the concept and number of celebrities, these same presentational opportunities have likewise broadened the possibilities of Shakespearean celebrity, wresting the form away from the singular actors who have dominated in it and dispersing a popularly conferred form of Shakespearean authority to a broad range of writers and performers. In line with YouTube's slogan of "Broadcast Yourself," online channels of self-mediatizing have fostered what Stephen O'Neill, in his 2014 *Shakespeare and YouTube*, calls "do-it-yourself Shakespeare" (2), or perhaps, a kind of YouShakespeare, as fans, like Garrick, wield Shakespeare as an incomplete narrative that invites perpetual revision. Informed by what Web theorist Henry Jenkins labels the Internet's "participatory culture" that blurs distinctions between media consumers and producers (2–3), YouShakespeare, in all its various platforms,

invites users to participate in the construction of its Shakespeare and, in fact, to become, like Garrick and his successors, a new Shakespeare for a new era. Promoting themselves as conflated twenty-first century incarnations, online Shakespeares speak not only the poet's verse, but as the poet himself. On Twitter, where Shakespeare maintains a particularly active presence through the various handles he occupies, users resurrect Shakespeare in decidedly contemporary terms: @shakespearesong, with 357,000 followers, reinterprets popular song lyrics through a quasi-Shakespearean rhetoric, translating, for example, "Stop! Hammer time!" into "Halt! The time of Hammer is upon us!"; @shakespearesays offers quotations from Shakespeare's plays as commentary on current events, such as the following tweet lifted from *Macbeth* upon the Supreme Court's decision legalizing same-sex marriage: "A heart to love, and in that heart, / Courage to make's love known."

Boasting about 16,000 followers, @shakespeare is easily the most ardent and studied of Shakespeare's Twitter devotees, as its profile and tweets reveal thorough familiarity with the poet's life and work. @shakespeare's bio borrows from Robert Greene's 1592 *Groatsworth of Wit* and introduces followers to Shakespeare as "An upstart crow! A tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide!" below a rendering of the Droeshout portrait, modified with the tagline, "This shit writes itself—William Shakespeare." But, of course, this shit does not write itself, as the tagline offers a subtle nod of acknowledgment to the contemporary writer behind Shakespeare's mantle, to the conflation of Twitter user and Shakespeare that tweets its thoughts on Shakespeare's characters ("Richard III did quite well with the ladies. Mostly with his old 'Can I show thee mine hump?'"), his fellow English writers ("Ben Jonson snores in perfect iambic pentameter. Lots of enjambment"), and his career ("Pitching Loves Labours Won at a party in Laurel Canyon"). Like Garrick, @shakespeare offers a highly enmeshed collaboration of narratives that reflects as much, or more, upon its audience as it does upon Shakespeare, providing a series of disembodied cyber-communiques that speak for the poet and his fans at once. Though many would undoubtedly remain loathe to label a Twitter handle a celebrity, I would argue that online Shakespeares, especially the highly informed kind presented in @shakespeare, perform much of the same cultural work that Shakespearean celebrities have performed since Garrick—that is, they promote themselves as conflated, contemporary incarnations; publicly wield their status as fans as a form of authority, even to the

extent of special personal access; and offer an easily relatable iteration of Shakespeare through accessible forms of media. The sheer size of their followings, ranging from the tens to hundreds of thousands, and the numerous retweets their posts generate to even larger audiences, demonstrate their widespread public visibility and suggest a hearty reception; that noted Shakespeare scholars and established organizations like the Marlowe Society retweet and participate in conversations with @shakespeare also suggests something of the authority such online personalities can accrue.

The presentational platforms of YouShakespeare extend well beyond Twitter into the various social media where Internet celebrity thrives: "William Shakespeare, author" maintains an active Facebook account with more than 16 million "likes," and on YouTube, in what is likely the most highly visible Shakespearean cyberstar with around 80 million views, Shakespeare engages in an "Epic Rap Battle" with Dr. Seuss. Tumblr, too, hosts a wide range of Shakespeare-themed pages, many of which have been deemed by followers as authoritative sources of Shakespearean knowledge, as evidenced by the questions users submit. Tumblr's *FuckYeahShakespeare*, a mix of Shakespeare memes, quotations, GIFs, and general information, regularly answers readers' questions, such as, "What is up with 'thou,' 'thee,' 'thy,' and 'thine'?" to which a bespectacled Shakespeare responds, "Thou asketh a good question," before proceeding to a lesson in subject and object pronouns. Also on Tumblr, *That's. Not. Shakespeare.* invites questions as to the authenticity of quotations popularly attributed to Shakespeare; as the page's title indicates, the site is primarily invested in weeding out imposters and disabusing readers of inaccuracies. Like conventional Shakespearean celebrities, the stars of YouShakespeare enjoy a popularly conferred form of Shakespearean authority achieved through highly publicized fan status.

Though the presentational platforms of YouShakespeare have certainly expanded the scope of Garrick's Shakespearean celebrity paradigm to include a much more diverse array of performers, in many ways, these 2.0 stars only practice a kind of disembodied iteration of the same form, as their performances simultaneously self-promote and promulgate Shakespeare's continued relevance, to the point that each form of publicity becomes indecipherably intertwined with the other. Internet celebrity is itself less a seismic shift in the foundation of celebrity discourse than it is a magnifying glass for the process and politics of

celebrity, and conventional forms of both celebrity and Shakespearean celebrity will undoubtedly survive the expansion. What Internet stardom contributes most profoundly to celebrity structures is the means by which it renders particularly visible the collaborative construction, dispersed authorial agency, and popular acclaim at the heart of the phenomenon, as users quite consciously insert themselves into the narrative bodies they consume. New media Shakespeare experiences likewise highlight the public's role as both producer and consumer of Shakespeare's celebrity sign, and Shakespeare, as an ever-evolving celebrity, continues to provide a site upon which the public may negotiate present tensions through his persistent possession of new bodies, new media, and new technologies.

Notes

1. Barbara Hodgdon instead names King's Man Richard Burbage as "the first Shakespearean star" (47).
2. "Fanboy," a term that grew out of the comic book culture of the 1970s, denotes a particularly obsessive type of fan.
3. With fifty-seven film credits, Branagh has starred in five film adaptations of Shakespeare's work.

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CHAPTER 13

Finding Shakespeare in Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby*

Natalie Loper

In *William Shakespeare and Others: Collaborative Plays*, published by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2013, editors Jonathan Bate, Eric Rasmussen, Jan Sewell, and Will Sharpe collect a group of ten plays that are not traditionally included in the Shakespeare canon. These include plays that were never formally attributed to Shakespeare but that scholars through the years have argued were at least partially written by him; plays that were attributed to Shakespeare but did not make it into the First Folio, and therefore remain at the margins of his generally acknowledged corpus; and plays by other authors that he possibly added to or emended sometime after their initial composition. The collection is significant because it is the first book since 1908 to gather together the so-called Shakespeare Apocrypha and the first to provide not only fully edited, modern spelling editions of the plays but also justification for their inclusion in the anthology (Bate 15, 27–28; Sharpe).

The book is also significant because it shows how textual scholars work to distinguish "Shakespeare" from "not Shakespeare" within early modern texts. Using external evidence (such as title pages, collected

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works including folio editions, or other references to a play's authorship) and internal evidence (such as stylistic and linguistic markers that connect portions of the plays to authors' other works), the book's editors—and other scholars in the field of attribution studies—seek to determine what is and is not Shakespeare. They study whether a play attributed to Shakespeare is in fact "Shakespeare" and exactly where his distinctive writing style appears in plays co-authored by two, three, four, or even more authors. Thanks to an ever growing body of evidence by attribution scholars and others, it is clear that many works that have always borne Shakespeare's name both *are* and are *not* "Shakespeare" because they also contain words written by other playwrights and ideas that come from many different sources.

The contributors to our collection are grappling with a similar question of how to understand Shakespeare versus Not Shakespeare in a diverse body of works. Like attribution scholars, we are trying to answer similar questions about the author Shakespeare, including how and where he is present in other works. In his essay in *Collaborative Plays*, Sharpe provides a sliding scale of Shakespeare's presence in various plays: from "almost certain" to "worth considering" to "almost impossible" (642). In a similar vein, the works in this book occupy a sliding scale from "definitely Shakespeare" to "loose appropriation" to "tangential but compellingly related." The text I present for scrutiny occupies the latter end of the scale. Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* is certainly not Shakespeare; it is an adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's great American novel. And yet, the film shares much in common with Luhrmann's earlier films, particularly *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996), so much so that it serves as a type of sequel, epilogue, or re-imagining of Shakespeare's play.

The film brings together the two literary works through Luhrmann's choice of Leonardo DiCaprio to play the title character, as well as particular shots, added sequences, and set pieces. Although some of the parallels may be attributed to Luhrmann's directorial style, DiCaprio's acting, Catherine Martin's vivid set designs, or the contemporary soundtracks that some critics found jarring and others found exhilarating, the film's visual and narrative similarities draw *The Great Gatsby* into the orb of "Shakespeare." In his discussion of intermedia, or "how narratives travel in and across media, in and through cultures," Daniel Fischlin highlights the transformative nature of intermedial adaptations,

"in which multimodal forms of narrative fuse in spaces that radically remediate traditional narratives" (8). Fischlin uses an extended example of the *Romeo and Juliet* meme in Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* to support his argument that "intermedial adaptation is a form of hyper-adaptation, especially so when multi- or intercultural contexts are also foregrounded as part of the multimodal approach to revisioning" (8). Luhrmann's film adaptations are intermedial; he blends time periods, cultures, costumes, narratives, musical influences, and genres in order to provide new interpretations of and possibilities for his sources.

Even as it works within the plot and dialogue of Fitzgerald's novel, certain moments of Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* are uncannily similar to his *Romeo + Juliet*; these include moments Jay Gatsby shares with Daisy Buchanan and Nick Carraway, as well as visual references such as the climactic car scene, the elaborate costume parties, and the swimming pool. Gatsby, like Romeo, is a hopeless romantic, but neither character can overcome birthright or time. The only escape from the harsh and corrupt world is death. *The Great Gatsby*—both the novel and the film—is many things to many people, but I wish to focus primarily on how it operates as a love story. The film (and by extension, Fitzgerald's novel) seems to imagine an alternate future for Shakespeare's characters. What if Romeo and Juliet did not marry, and Juliet chose Paris instead? This may seem like an imaginative leap, but I propose that it is possible: Romeo becomes Jay Gatsby, who spends his life trying to woo back his beloved Daisy. Juliet becomes Daisy, the woman who made the more practical choice to marry a well-established, socially respectable man, instead of voyaging into an unknown future with her youthful lover. When viewed together, Luhrmann's two films bring us back to Shakespeare while also imagining new possibilities for his works.

Leonardo DiCaprio as Romeo and Gatsby

Luhrmann began production of both *Romeo + Juliet* and *The Great Gatsby* by casting Leonardo DiCaprio as the central male character. For *Romeo + Juliet*, he brought the young DiCaprio to Australia and filmed several scenes, which he used when he pitched the film to Hollywood producers. One rehearsal scene included shots of the actor smoking a cigarette and writing in a journal. This scene would later be re-shot to introduce Romeo at the beginning of the film; he sits on a ruined

stage, setting sun in the background, smoking and writing. He is isolated from the violence of the opening sequence, in which a confrontation between the younger generation of Montagues and Capulets at a gas station ended in gunfire and an explosion. The Petrarchan lines of Romeo's speech to Benvolio ("Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate, / O anything of nothing first create" [1.1.172–173]) play in voiceover, while Romeo scratches in his journal. The scene emphasizes Romeo's romantic vision and distance from the rest of the world: his poetry serves as an escape from the violent playacting of his friends and the high society of his parents. The footage of the young lover is crosscut with shots of Ted and Caroline Montague, who ride in their limousine with Benvolio, worrying about their son's melancholy. Romeo eventually finds his match in Juliet, and together they reject the wealth, excess, and violence of their parents and the rest of Verona Beach—first through a plan to escape together and then, when that fails, through suicide.

Luhrmann thought of DiCaprio again as he was writing *Gatsby*. He asked both DiCaprio and Tobey McGuire, who would play Nick, to join him and his co-writer Craig Pierce in New York for a meeting ("Greatness"). Before he pitched the film to DiCaprio, Luhrmann created a painting for the climactic scene in which Gatsby and Daisy, who is driving Gatsby's yellow car, strike and kill Myrtle, the mistress of Daisy's husband Tom Buchanan ("Prologue"). The scene recalls the climactic scene of *Romeo + Juliet*, when DiCaprio's Romeo pursues Tybalt in his car. Tybalt's car crashes, and the spiraling camera follows it in the same way it will later follow Myrtle's body, which flies up and over Gatsby's car. Both films feature a close-up of DiCaprio's face, and the expression is nearly identical (see Figs. 13.1 and 13.2).

The car crash is crucial to the novel, whereas obviously cars do not appear in any of Shakespeare's plays. Still, the moment recalls Shakespeare because this scene, in both films, captures the anguish of DiCaprio's character. Romeo has already confronted Tybalt, inviting Tybalt to kill him but saying he himself will not fight Tybalt. Mercutio dies as a result of Romeo's interference, and a grief-stricken Romeo avenges his friend's death by killing his new bride's cousin. This scene is relatively short in the play, although not insignificant. Luhrmann expands it to increase its dramatic effect: the car chase begins at dusk and ends well after dark. Tybalt's death signals the beginning of the end for Romeo and Juliet: a comic ending is no longer possible.



Fig. 13.1 Romeo just before he collides with Tybalt's car



Fig. 13.2 Gatsby just before the car hits Myrtle

Automobiles and Violence

Automobiles are more than means of transportation in *Romeo + Juliet*. In the opening sequence, the young Montagues and Capulets arrive at the gas station in flashy cars with personalized license plates that identify their clans. After taunts and threats turn to gunshots, the characters protect themselves behind car doors, and screaming tires and honking horns stand in for the cries of townspeople in Shakespeare's play. The parents of Romeo and Juliet ride in limousines, which pull up to the crime

scenes like hearses after Tybalt's death and the lovers' double suicide. Wealth cannot protect the older generation from violence and death. Romeo, in contrast to his peers and parents, drives a beat-up, dusty old car that he uses to escape Verona after his banishment. Luhrmann shows him speeding back toward town after he learns (mistakenly) of Juliet's death, while the delivery van that bears Friar Lawrence's message lumbers in the opposite direction. Neither of Romeo's high-speed chases ends well; first comes Tybalt's death, when Romeo shoots Juliet's cousin after they emerge from their cars, shaken and bloody. Later, upon Romeo's return to Verona Beach, a police chase follows him to the church where he seeks sanctuary, Juliet, and eventually death by gunshot. One of the film's last scenes captures the teens' two white-shrouded bodies being loaded into an ambulance. Automobiles, then, represent the social differences among characters in *Romeo + Juliet*, as well as the violent culture of Luhrmann's Verona Beach.

In Fitzgerald's novel, the car crash is the moment that drives the plot to its tragic conclusion, when Myrtle's husband avenges her death by killing Gatsby. John McNally argues that automobiles in *The Great Gatsby* symbolize death, with ill omens including a car accident after one of Gatsby's parties, a hearse that Nick and Gatsby pass in the "valley of ashes" where Myrtle will be killed, and of course the hit-and-run that kills her (14–16). McNally also compares Nick's comments about Tom and Daisy to a car accident: Nick says that the Buchanans "smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made" (Fitzgerald 179). Luhrmann keeps this observation in his film. Nick calls Daisy, played by Carey Mulligan, to tell her about Gatsby's funeral but is told that she has already departed, when in fact she and Tom are still preparing to leave their home. Daisy looks pained at ignoring the phone call but goes with Tom after he whispers something in her ear. Nick makes his observation about the Buchanans in voiceover after he hangs up the phone, but he stops at the word "carelessness." Even though the line is truncated, Luhrmann's film retains the idea of Tom and Daisy's carelessness, represented in part by Daisy's failure to take responsibility for Myrtle's death and clear Gatsby of false charges. "In the automobile," claims McNally, "Fitzgerald has found a workable symbol, not only to illustrate the rampant carelessness so typical of the corrupt easterners in the novel, but also to forebode injury as well as accidental and natural death" (16).

Automobiles in both films symbolize the corruption and destruction of not only individual characters but also whole societies, which value wild parties or violent carelessness over individual integrity and love.

Love and Parties

The most obvious Shakespearean echoes found in *Gatsby* occur in scenes that feature Gatsby and his beloved Daisy. Both films depict scenes between the lovers that are either undeveloped or merely suggested in the source texts. In *Romeo +Juliet*, Romeo first meets Juliet, played by Claire Danes, at the Capulet ball. This ball is spectacular, full of masked and gaudily clad extras, loud music, and dizzying camera angles. An overwhelmed Romeo staggers to the men's room, where he dunks his head in the sink; when he emerges, the dance music has been replaced by the film's love song. Romeo pushes his wet hair out of his face and turns his attention to a huge tank of tropical fish that divides the men's room from the ladies' room. There, among the neon yellow and blue fish, he spots Juliet, her eye and pale face framed by the swimming fish. A series of shot-reverse shots captures each character's expressions as their initial surprise turns to shyness, interest, and finally open adoration. Juliet's nurse whisks her away before they can speak because Juliet is supposed to be dancing with Paris, whom Juliet's parents want her to marry. Romeo finds Juliet on the dance floor, where she is giggling at Paris's silly dancing and obvious (but failed) attempts to impress her. Romeo sneaks around a stone column and grasps Juliet's hand. Grateful to be pulled away from her social obligations, Juliet moves toward Romeo and speaks to him for the first time. The column represents their initial distance from each other, but they retreat behind it in order to share a moment of privacy.

A meeting between the lovers in Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* parallels this sequence through several key motifs, including water and a joining of hands behind a stone column. This time, the lovers are older and more world-weary, and the visual similarities of both films also demonstrate their narrative contrasts. Gatsby asks his neighbor Nick for a simple favor: have Daisy over for tea so that Gatsby can meet with her. This will be their first meeting since Gatsby left for the army five years earlier. Although they exchanged letters during the war, Daisy eventually married Tom Buchanan. Gatsby, meanwhile, worked to overcome poverty,

becoming enormously rich in order to win Daisy's heart and provide her with the level of comfort she expects. Daisy never attended the parties Gatsby hosted at his house, which he bought in hopes of attracting her, so it is Nick who provides the opportunity for a reunion. Luhrmann plays the scene for comedy as well as pathos: Gatsby's arrangements for the tea include a full landscaping job and an entire roomful of costly yellow, white, and green orchids. (Nick associates Daisy with orchids in the novel, saying she "was young and her artificial world was redolent of orchids and pleasant, cheerful snobbery" [Fitzgerald 151].) When Daisy arrives, a panicked Gatsby flees the house into a thunderstorm. Nick convinces him to come back in, telling him, "You're acting like a little boy."

Nick's admonishment could apply equally to Gatsby's or Romeo's youthful naiveté—to their dreams that lead to heartbreak and death. Mercutio's Queen Mab speech is a response to Romeo's declaration that dreamers "do dream things true" (1.4.50). When Romeo dismisses Mercutio's talk as "nothing," Mercutio responds:

> True, I talk of dreams
> Which are the children of an idle brain,
> Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,
> Which is as thin of substance as air. (1.4.94–97)

This response causes Romeo to pause; he reflects on the significance of his journey to the Capulets' ball, saying that his "mind misgives / Some consequence yet hanging in the stars […] / But he that hath the steerage of my course / Direct my suit" (1.4.104–105, 110–111). Romeo, like Gatsby, is a dreamer, and his voyage leads him to tragedy. Gatsby, whose path toward wealth and a new life began with a voyage at sea, maintains his youthful dream and prepares to meet Daisy again. Coming in from the storm, he pushes his wet hair out of his face, recalling Romeo's gesture just before he sees Juliet for the first time, and steps into the parlor where Daisy waits. She is framed by the orchids as Juliet was framed by the fish, and again a series of shot-reverse shots captures the lovers' recognition and conflicted emotions: Daisy is surprised and then glad, while Gatsby is nervous, anxious, and finally resolute. Fitzgerald's characters are older and more experienced than Shakespeare's, but these initial encounters represent the possibility of new beginnings for all of the characters: for Juliet, a rejection of parental control and marriage to Paris; for Romeo, an abrupt end to his

youthful infatuation with Rosaline and a new understanding of love and possibility; for Daisy, a rekindling of an old love and an alternate life away from Tom; for Gatsby, the realization of his youthful dream of life and love with Daisy.

After the storm ends, Gatsby and Daisy go onto the porch to look at her shining house across the bay. Gatsby reaches behind a white pillar to grasp her hand. This moment signals the beginning of their renewed affair. In both films, the grasping of hands is the first time the lovers touch. The vertical pillar between them visualizes the illicit nature of the lovers' affair; it represents the social forces that divide the lovers and the impossibility of a happily-ever-after ending (see Figs. 13.3 and 13.4).



Fig. 13.3 Romeo grasps Juliet's hand to pull her away from Paris



Fig. 13.4 Gatsby grasps Daisy's hand to rekindle their relationship

The moment foreshadows both couples' fates: even though they momentarily escape social pressures and rules in order to explore their love for each other, neither couple can overcome the forces that divide them. The placement of hands and the lovers' body language are different, however. The earlier film shows Romeo and Juliet joining hands in front of the column, representing their togetherness and tenacity in trying to escape division. Their bodies are turned slightly outward, representing their openness to new possibilities. In contrast, Gatsby and Daisy's hands are behind the column; they will never truly be together. Daisy's shoulders are slightly hunched and she appears more cautious and closed off than Juliet. Gatsby points at Daisy's house, its wealth and old-money grandeur representing something Gatsby will always covet and from which neither he nor Daisy will be able to free themselves. Even though the films contain narrative and visual parallels, these scenes hint at different endings for the characters.

Bathtubs and Swimming Pools

One of the primary connections between the films is Luhrmann's use of water, including rain, bathtubs, and swimming pools. In "Underwater Women in Shakespeare Films," Charles Ross argues that many films use water as a way to depict women's oppression, and he analyzes moments in Shakespeare films "where a figure, usually a woman, floats underwater, silently and in slow motion, and then emerges, often as a changed person or in different circumstances […] [T]he immersion and surfacing of a woman does not express a complaint about a specific man, but a more general grievance about the way women are forced to exist in the world" (2). He says that in *Romeo + Juliet*, both lovers become "the underwater woman" because both are trying to escape their oppressive world. James Loehlin remarks that the "the watery cocoon in which Luhrmann shelters his young lovers evince[s] a romantic nostalgia that is a surprising and poignant response to the frenetic excess of late twentieth-century culture" (121). This description of the lovers protected in a "watery cocoon" is one of my favorite descriptions of Luhrmann's film: it captures the idea that the director carves out a private space to help protect these young characters from the chaos that surrounds them. The "romantic nostalgia" mentioned here could also apply to Jay Gatsby. Courtney Lehmann discusses *Romeo + Juliet*'s water imagery at length in *Shakespeare Remains*; she traces the imagery backward to Shakespeare's source text, *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus*

and Juliet by Arthur Brooke (140–158). Lehmann's astute analysis of the connections between Shakespeare, Brooke, and Luhrmann demonstrates the slippery divide between Shakespeare and Not Shakespeare, as several sequences in Luhrmann's film, such as the lovers' initial meeting through a fish tank, have more connections to Brooke than Shakespeare: "Precisely in its deviations from Shakespeare," she argues, "Luhrmann's film reveals its 'primal baptism' as *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, uncannily reproducing the Bard's head-on confrontation with Brooke's *Tragicall Historye*" (152). Put another way, "the genealogy of adaptations is often nebulous and spectrally intertextual, a web of meaning waiting to be made out of convergences and unthought relations that continue to be created and identified across multiple spaces and times" (Fischlin 25). From Brooke to Shakespeare to Fitzgerald: water imagery in Luhrmann's films highlights the intertextuality of all of these narratives.

In *Romeo + Juliet*, Romeo is introduced with the ocean in the background, and Juliet is introduced underwater in her bathtub. In contrast to her chaotic household, in which everyone rushes around preparing for the party to be held there that night while her mother and nurse frantically search for her, Juliet is calm and still. The underwater camera captures Juliet from below; her hair floats freely around her, and her eyes are open. She emerges from the bath, and her simple white bathrobe, lack of makeup, and clear speech ("Madam, I am here" [1.3.7]) cut through the chaos to depict her as both more grounded and less at place in her home. Although Ross traces Juliet's transformative emergence to her encounters with Romeo, I argue that it begins the moment Luhrmann introduces her. She emerges from the bath as a young woman who will not be afraid to free herself from her oppressive life. This moment is mirrored later in the film, after Juliet faces her father's alcohol-fueled rage and tells him that she will never marry the wealthy Paris. After both parents threaten to disown her, Juliet retreats to her bathroom. She tearfully asks her nurse what she should do, and the nurse advises her to marry Paris. The scene depicts a turning point in Juliet's life: either accept the arranged marriage or follow Romeo, even if that path means death. She chooses to leave her family and risk all for Romeo, while pretending to accept her father's mandate and her nurse's advice. The nurse begins filling the bathtub with water. Ross argues that for "For Angelica [the nurse], water is a cleansing agent that symbolically allows Juliet to deny her marriage, but for Juliet and the audience, it is a sign of Juliet's oppression" (11). I do not disagree, but I find it significant that Luhrmann does not depict

Juliet returning to the bathtub; she has already emancipated herself and does not waver from her decisions.

Contrast this with Daisy's bathtub scene in *The Great Gatsby*. Jordan Baker, Daisy's childhood friend, tells Nick that Daisy received a letter on the morning that she was to marry Tom. In flashback, the film shows a clearly distressed Daisy; she clutches the letter and tells Jordan and her mother that she has changed her mind and wants to be left alone. Her mother will have none of it, and a tearful Daisy sits in her bathtub with the letter. Just before it disintegrates underwater, the camera captures fragments as they float past: "Darling Daisy, the truth is..." Only at the end of the film, when Nick asks Gatsby what was in the letter, does the flashback show the next line: "I'm penniless." Daisy goes on to marry Tom later that day, looking distracted but resigned to her fate. This scene unfolds slightly differently in the novel, where Jordan tells Nick about finding Daisy drunk in her room on the night before the wedding. Daisy "had a bottle of Sauterne in one hand and a letter in the other" and told Jordan, "Tell 'em all Daisy's change' her mine. Say: 'Daisy's change' her mine!" (Fitzgerald 76). Jordan continues: "She began to cry—she cried and cried. I rushed out and found her mother's maid, and we locked the door and got her into a cold bath. She wouldn't let go of the letter. She took it into the tub with her and squeezed it up into a wet ball, and only let me leave it in the soap-dish when she saw that it was coming to pieces like snow. But she didn't say another word" (76). Jordan and the maid got Daisy ready for the bridal dinner, and she married Tom the next day. Fitzgerald depicts this scene as a moment of regret on Daisy's part. She attempts to hold on to Gatsby through his letter, but the possibility of being with him disintegrates like the letter; she allows herself to be ushered into her new life and makes the most of it. Luhrmann depicts the scene similarly, but the word "penniless" that we see later in the film represents the social gulf between Daisy and Gatsby. Daisy may regret losing her young love, but she follows the safer path of a more socially acceptable marriage. If the bathtub in *Romeo + Juliet* emancipates Juliet to pursue a different future than the one planned by her parents, the bathtub in *The Great Gatsby* demonstrates both Daisy's changed state—her acceptance of marriage to Tom Buchanan—and also the oppression that confines her to a particular lifestyle and future that she will be unable and unwilling to escape.

Depictions of water, and their contrasting representations, figure even more prominently in the use of swimming pools as major set pieces.

The most prominent depiction of water in *Romeo + Juliet*, and perhaps the most radical re-imagining of Shakespeare in the film, is the swimming pool that serves as the site of the famous "balcony scene." Juliet descends to the poolside courtyard where an unseen Romeo listens in on her thoughts, shyly waiting for the right moment to make his presence known. In response to her bid to "doff thy name, and for thy name—which is no part of thee—take all myself," Romeo finally speaks: "I take thee at thy word" (2.1.90–92). A surprised Juliet shrieks, slips, and pulls him with her into the pool. The majority of their conversation takes place in the cool blue water, where they intersperse their dialogue with passionate kisses. Toward the end of the scene, Juliet climbs out of the pool and Romeo, standing on the ladder, asks for "Th' exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine" (2.1.169). Delighted, she cries, "I gave thee mine before thou didst request it" and leaps into his arms (2.1.170). They fall into the water again, where the underwater camera captures their embrace. The pool, at its most basic symbolic level, represents their love and their vows to be true to each other no matter what, while their words show that they do not care about names or birthright. Ross claims, "The ability of Juliet and a [*sic*] Romeo to wash themselves from their social conditions lies at the heart of the balcony scene that Luhrmann transfers into Capulet's swimming pool [...] At the very end of the film, a series of flashbacks of Juliet underwater establishes a connection between her surfacing in a swimming pool and her death as some kind of release from the world that lead [*sic*] her to suicide" (11). In this film, then, the swimming pool represents the lovers' deliberate rejection of their society and their commitment to each other.

The pool in *The Great Gatsby* represents a different sort of release. If a swimming pool seems out of place in Shakespeare's play, it is an important part of Fitzgerald's novel: Jay Gatsby is murdered while swimming in his pool. According to Luhrmann, the pool was one of the first locations he decided upon. During an early scouting trip to New York, he visited the Vanderbilt Museum Long Island and discovered a courtyard that featured a grand double staircase and a filled-in pool. He and his companions filmed an impromptu version of the novel's ending, blocking the positions of Gatsby and George Wilson. Luhrmann later recreated the swimming pool in Australia, where the film was shot, and the final version of the scene replicates the early version almost shot by shot ("Greatness"). The pool also features prominently in the elaborate party sequences at Gatsby's mansion, but neither Gatsby nor Daisy ever enters

it—until the morning after they part for the final time. Myrtle is dead, and Gatsby admits to Nick that Daisy was driving the car that killed her. Daisy has retreated home with Tom, and Nick witnesses a moment between them that suggests that she has changed her mind about leaving her husband to be with Gatsby (if she ever considered that choice in the first place). Gatsby retains hope that she will call and that he can continue trying to recreate the past, when he and Daisy will be together. He decides to go for a swim. The phone rings, and thinking it is Daisy, Gatsby grasps the ladder and begins to climb out of the pool, his face full of hope and light (see Figs. 13.5 and 13.6).



Fig. 13.5 A hopeful Romeo makes his vow to Juliet



Fig. 13.6 A hopeful Gatsby hears the phone ring and thinks it is Daisy

Gatsby does not see Myrtle's widowed husband standing on the staircase, and when George Wilson pulls the trigger and shoots him in the back, it takes several moments for Gatsby to realize what has happened. He falls backward into the pool, and the cinematography recalls the lovers' fall in the earlier film.

The contrast here is poignant: Romeo, full of hope, has his love returned. Juliet follows him to death. Their story is tragic, but part of its tragedy is that they choose to die side by side. They may be "star-crossed" and young, but they make the crucial decisions throughout the play to do whatever it takes to stay together. Gatsby dies alone, still hoping that his Daisy will return to him. Unlike Romeo and Juliet, who are quick to doff their names in order to be together, Gatsby's obsession with names, heritage, and wealth are partly to blame for his aloneness. Still, Luhrmann changes Fitzgerald's novel to retain Gatsby's hope that his dream may be realized after all. The phone never rings in the novel, even though "the butler went without his sleep and waited for it until four o'clock—until long after there was any one to give it to if it came" (161). Nick says that he thinks "Gatsby himself didn't believe [the phone call from Daisy] would come, and perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream" (161). Luhrmann cuts these lines, and instead the film suggests that Gatsby never fully realized that Daisy was gone forever.

And yet, Gatsby is not alone. He has Nick, who is on the other end of the line, calling to check on his friend. Just after Gatsby plunges into the water, the film dissolves to Nick, who hears the gunshot and asks repeatedly, "Hello? Hello! Is everything alright?" The superimposition of Nick's worried face over Gatsby's dying body suggests that their fates are intertwined, like those of Romeo and Juliet.

Repeating the Past

The film's focus on the relationship between Gatsby and Nick extends into the final scenes, which continue to recall Luhrmann's earlier film. In *Romeo + Juliet*, the lovers die in the sanctuary of the church where they were married, not in a crypt. The bier is placed where the altar usually stands and is surrounded by hundreds of white candles. At the end of the scene, a crane shot shows the lovers on their deathbed. The beauty of this scene, including the setting, the camera work, and the music, idealizes the lovers' suicide. Their world is corrupt, confusing, and unjust; they are

right to leave it, the film suggests. Jay Gatsby's coffin is not so elaborate, nor his death so idealistic, but his funeral bier is remarkably similar. The casket is positioned at the far end of a grand room and is surrounded by scores of white candles and rich sprays of flowers. A high wide-angle shot looks down on his body. The flowers recall the way the orchids framed Daisy's face when she and Gatsby reunited earlier in the film. Here, she is conspicuously absent, having ignored Nick's plea to come to the funeral. Once again, though, Gatsby is not alone. Nick is there, sleeping on the stairway, guarding his friend from the 1920s version of the paparazzi, whom Nick has shooed away (see Figs. 13.7 and 13.8).



Fig. 13.7 Romeo and Juliet on their funeral bier



Fig. 13.8 Gatsby in his coffin, with Nick sleeping on the staircase overhead

This insistence on Nick's presence and loyalty echoes the novel, in which Nick "found [him]self on Gatsby's side, and alone […] because no one else was interested" (164). By focusing on the relationship between Gatsby and Nick, which lasts even beyond death, Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* explores the bonds of male friendship that Shakespeare abandons after Mercutio's death. Romeo may kill Tybalt to avenge his friend's murder, but the focus quickly shifts back to Juliet. *The Great Gatsby* shows that love is not exclusive to heterosexual partnership and that Gatsby's singular focus on Daisy shuts him off from life in all of its many possibilities.

Earlier in *The Great Gatsby*, Nick tells his friend, "You can't repeat the past" but Gatsby insists, "Why of course you can. Of course you can." Even though Gatsby's insistence that we can repeat the past is proven wrong by his inability to win Daisy back, Luhrmann's film flirts with an idea that is similar to Gatsby's. By recalling scenes from an earlier film and a different set of lovers, Luhrmann suggests that the past is a constant cycle. To quote Nick at the end of *The Great Gatsby*, "So we lead on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past" (180). Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* imagines an alternate ending for *Romeo + Juliet*, seeming to ask, "What if?" If Juliet had married Paris, as Daisy marries Tom, could Romeo hope for a different ending? Or, would he encounter the same fate as Jay Gatsby, dying with hope on his face waiting for a phone call that would never come? These questions cannot be answered, but people who search for, study, and appropriate Shakespeare embark on a similar endeavor. We are constantly pushing against the current of time, and yet our scholarship, performances, and interactions with his works continue to bear us back into the past. I think Luhrmann's green light is the possibility of recreating a work of literature in a way that is new and fresh but also true to the story's essence as he understands it. As he said in an interview, "For some reason, I am compelled towards these tragic romances, the issue of love and all its variances […] The mark of a great book is that it can be told many different ways in many different times in many different places" (Welch 133–134). Luhrmann's intertextual adaptations are a lush mashup of visual references and verbal parallels, snippets that connect various pasts to each other, to the present, and to the future. And for these reasons, *The Great Gatsby* retains its Gatsby-ness but also becomes, in a sense, Shakespeare.

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PART V

Accidents and Intertexts

CHAPTER 14

Surfing with Juliet: The Shakespearean Dialectics of Disney's *Teen Beach Movie*

Melissa Croteau

In the summer of 2013, The Disney Channel aired a new offering in the teen musical genre, generically entitled *Teen Beach Movie*. Following the incredibly lucrative *High School Musical* model, the Disney Channel released the film straight to their television outlet. It paid off enormously. The July 19 premiere of *Teen Beach Movie* (*TBM*) garnered an audience of 13.5 million, which makes it the second most watched made-for-television film in cable television history, behind Disney's 2007 *High School Musical 2*. *TBM* quickly became a phenomenon amongst its target audience, six- to fourteen-year-old children. Kids were inspired to redecorate their bedrooms in *Teen Beach Movie* paraphernalia, sing *TBM* karaoke, and beg their parents for all things *TBM*. It was a marketing coup. One reason for its overwhelming popularity seems to have been its obvious emulation of popular filmed musicals from earlier generations. The writers of *TBM*, Vince Marcello and Mark Landry, have appropriated various types of narrative, visual, and aural material from *Beach Party* (1963), *Beach Blanket Bingo* (1965), *West Side Story* (1961), and *Grease* (1978), exploiting the elements of

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teen drama, conflict, and romance, as Shakespeare did more than four hundred years ago with *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, which is a consistent intertext in this film. While direct and (re-)mediated allusions to Shakespeare's work abound in *TBM*, the film is not, and does not purport to be, an adaptation of any Shakespeare play. Instead, "Shakespeare" is used as cultural capital marking the superior intelligence and enlightened sophistication of the twenty-first century teen girl compared to her counterpart of the early 1960s; ironically, at the same time, Shakespeare's work serves as a tool used by dumb teen boys to seduce women, despite the boys' ignorance of the source of their amorous patter. This self-contradictory representation of the Bard, both as a romantic lure to concupiscent behavior and as evidence of a sharper mind with knowledge of high culture reflects *TBM*'s juxtaposition of lowbrow and highbrow intertexts, from *Beach Blanket Bingo* to *Romeo and Juliet*, a playful postmodern mélange of multivalent discourses.

In *TBM*, a modern-day teenage couple, McKenzie (Mack) and Brady, are transported via a tempest into a 1962 surf film called *Wet Side Story*, the plot and style of which are a bricolage of American International Pictures's (AIP's) extremely popular beach party movies—beginning with *Beach Party* in 1963 and ending with *How to Stuff a Wild Bikini* in 1965—which starred the original Mouseketeer herself, Annette Funicello, as the female protagonist Dee Dee. In addition, *Wet Side Story* clearly flaunts its ironic debt to *West Side Story*, Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise's 1950s New York City-set musical classic based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, which was made into a 1961 multiple Academy Award-winning film. *TBM*'s narrative and mise-en-scène also allude directly to the Broadway musical *Grease* and its filmic incarnation, the first reference being the casting of Barry Bostwick to play Mack's grandfather, Big Poppa. Bostwick played the male lead, Danny Zuko, in the original Broadway cast of *Grease* in 1972, the part that would later be immortalized on screen by John Travolta. While caught inside the movie *Wet Side Story*, Mack and Brady must struggle to preserve the "original" storyline of the film in order to ensure its happy ending and set up the storm that takes place at the end of the film, which they believe will take them back to 2013. They become the internal manipulators of the narrative.

Self-reflexivity and self-mockery rule in this über-meta film, and one of the most interesting aspects of this pervasive element is Mack's rejection of and revulsion to the roles and expectations of women in 1962.

As the Juliet/Maria/Dee Dee character of this musical within the film, Mack is presented as a model for the enlightened and empowered twenty-first century teen girl. Even her name is androgynous and alludes to the Mack truck, symbolized by a tough bulldog. Unlike the Juliets of latter twentieth-century film adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, such as Franco Zeffirelli's (played by Olivia Hussey in 1968) and Baz Luhrmann's (played by Claire Danes in 1996), this young woman has agency, a sarcastic wit, and a propensity to question and challenge even when she is not under the spell of "violent love." Conversely, Mack is still a "Disney girl": she gets her Prince Charming in the end rather than meeting her untimely demise beside him. Though *TBM* overtly preaches a "be true to yourself" and "girls can do anything boys can do" message, its relationship with its intertexts tells a different story.

TBM opens with a slow-motion medium shot of a teenage couple running on a beautiful, sunny Hawaiian beach carrying surfboards. This is followed by a slow-motion montage of these two young people surfing the "killer" waves and having a fantastic time. They are both expert surfers, and the footage of their prowess on the waves is genuine, as evidenced by the splashes of seawater on the camera lens and the typical cinematography of authentic surf documentaries. A lively pop song sails over this first scene, performed by a high-pitched, young female voice, connecting the audience with the female teen's point of view. Though she (Mack) is out there in the ocean "ripping up" the waves just as aggressively as her male companion, the song's lyrics tell us that all she really wants is to be his girl:

> Baby, tell me is this good for you?
> Cause for me it's a dream come true
> I think about you boy day and night
> If this is wrong, I don't care if I'm right […]
> [Chorus]
> I wanna be the ocean to your shore
> Bring you comfort evermore
> I wanna be the only thing you need
> Be the oxygen you breathe.

The song, "Oxygen," is sung by Maia Mitchell, the actress who plays Mack, the surfing female protagonist. This non-diegetic song acts as a narrative agent in this opening scene, communicating vital information

about Mack and how she feels about her boyfriend Brady: her true desire is to be a girlfriend and wife, serving her man. The dissonance between Mack's active, surfing body (in shorts and a rash-guard rather than a bikini) and the bouncy, high-pitched love song is jarring. The non-diegetic song's positioning at the opening of the film, along with the idyllic beach setting, resemble the diegetic opening musical numbers featured in all the AIP beach party movies. As the AIP movies are *integrated* musicals, they use music to narrate, augment characterization, and entertain both the teen audiences in the movies and the audiences *of* the movies. It can be deduced that the sentimental lyrics for "Oxygen," much like the songs Annette Funicello sings diegetically in the beach party movies, are meant to express Mack's feelings, values, and personality.

After Mack and Brady's beach day, they return to the surf shop owned by her grandfather, Big Poppa, and when they arrive he is watching a movie on an old television. Mack disdainfully remarks, "Please tell me this isn't …" Big Poppa and Brady exclaim simultaneously: "*Wet Side Story*!" When Brady tells Mack that this is the "best movie ever made," she asks the men, "How can you two like this silliness?" Her grandfather explains, "this movie defined an entire culture," clearly referring to the AIP beach party movies of 1963–1965, which were generally despised by actual surfers and loved by marketers and landlubber teens (Lisanti 7–10). As this conversation takes place, we see the poster for the 1962 movie *Wet Side Story* in the background of the shot. It is modeled after the posters for the AIP beach party movies, but this one features the motto, "BOY CATCHES GIRL & SHAKES UP THEIR WORLD." This is the first of many allusions to Shakespeare in the film.

The parallels between *Wet Side Story*, *West Side Story*, and *Romeo and Juliet* become clearer when, responding to Mack's derision, Brady self-mockingly defends the movie by describing its ridiculous plot: "A surfer guy and a biker girl share a secret love while trying to unite the rivaling gangs as an evil real estate mogul tries to turn their hangout into a resort by building a weather machine which blows up causing a massive storm. Silliness? Really?" Anyone who has been exposed to the "silliness" in Shakespeare's comedies (e.g., two sets of twins separated at birth, or ass's ears on a weaver) and the often bizarre vicissitudes of fortune in his tragedies (e.g., Hamlet being saved by random pirates) understands that implausibilities are the stuff of narrative media. *TBM* is no exception and affectionately mocks its own fantastical storyline here. Theatre

and film demand a suspension of disbelief, and musicals, in particular, are known for eschewing realism in aesthetics and narrative both on stage and screen. Mack and Brady epitomize this tension between resistance to (or disdain for) the effusive "silliness" of the musical and acceptance of the joy and romance of it all, allowing oneself to be swept away into the fantasy:

> MACK. Come on. They sing for no reason. They come out of the water and their hair is dry. The girls never surf as well as the boys […]
> BRADY. But it's always summer, and everyone just sings and surfs.
> MACK. But really, the surfing looks fake. They'd drown on a real wave. Seriously, they sing in the ocean, and never spit out water.

The expected gender roles are reversed here. Brady is the romantic and Mack the pragmatic one. She is clear-eyed, not desirous of reveling in romantic nonsense. Mack is a twenty-first century teen girl, intelligent and savvy, who knows better than to be enchanted by a piece of shiny, fluffy fiction.

Shakespeare does something similar with the lovers in *Romeo and Juliet*. Irene Dash points out the contrast between Romeo's hyperbolic Petrarchan language and Juliet's "language of moderation and direct address" (100). In the balcony scene, for example, when Romeo vows by the "blessed moon," Juliet repudiates his romantic swearing by the "inconstant" orb (cf. 2.2.107–111). Shortly before this, Juliet bids farewell to "compliment" and asks Romeo directly, "Dost thou love me?" (2.2.89–90), then apologizes for not playing coy. She quickly gets to the point: "If that thy bent of love be honorable, / Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow" (2.2.143–144). If Annette Funicello's character Dee Dee in AIP's beach party movies had taken her cues from Juliet, she might have attained her primary goal, a marital commitment from Frankie (Frankie Avalon) in the first picture, sparing the world four *Beach Party* sequels. However, Dee Dee was fashioned as the ideal American "good girl" of the early 1960s, who must "win" the dedication of her man-boy by subterfuge and game-playing. In *TBM*, Dee Dee's equivalent is found not in the straight-talking Mack but in her *Wet Side Story* foil, Lela, the beautiful sister of Butchy, the leader of the biker gang The Rodents.[1]

Directly following Mack's attack on *Wet Side Story*, her very uptight, professional-looking Aunt Antoinette arrives at Big Poppa's, announcing that she is there to pick up Mack and take her to her new "exclusive, overpriced" school, Dunwich Preparatory Academy, on the East Coast. In response to Mack's disappointed look, her aunt reminds her, "[This] has always been the deal […] Your new life begins tomorrow. Your endless summer has come to an end." The reference to Bruce Brown's seminal 1966 surf documentary *Endless Summer*, one of the earliest authentic surf movies capturing the lives of real wave-riders, indicates that the surfing lifestyle is not only a marketing ploy presented in "Fantastiscope" (as declared on the *Wet Side Story* poster) to exploit the teen demographic; there is a genuine surfing culture upon which one can build a rewarding and meaningful life, as Big Poppa has done with his shop. Much like *TBM*'s dialectical use of Shakespeare, the movie presents surfing and surf culture in contradictory ways—serving up a lowbrow portrayal in its goofy *Beach Party* parody, *Wet Side Story*, and a highbrow, or at least pseudo-authentic, depiction of honorable, "real" surfers in the characters of Big Poppa and Mack, as well as through allusions to genuine surf documentaries. As with Shakespeare, the hyperbolically "stupid" young men of *Wet Side Story* use surfing as a prop or tool with which to attract women, while Mack's expertise in the realms of surfing and Shakespeare marks her superior skill and intelligence; she is our twenty-first century heroine: smart, athletic, and bold.

Despite Mack's strengths, however, she is unable to break away from parental expectations. When Brady later demands, "Why are they making you do this?" Mack insists, "They're not making me. It's my choice." She explains that when her mother died, she made a deal with her aunt that "when it was time to get serious," Mack would move away from Hawaii and work to "make something of herself." Her mother's voice, through her journal, guides Mack from beyond the grave: "Most of all, I dream that my daughter becomes a great success. That she isn't just pulled through life but marches through it triumphantly." Brady tells Mack that she does not need to conform to others' definitions of success, but Mack declares, "I have to do this." She obviously feels duty-bound to follow the dreams of her matriarchs. She breaks up with Brady shortly thereafter, crying "what choice do I have?" In this way, Mack is different from the intrepid, rebellious Juliet, who marries the son of her father's enemy, and more like the conformist Dee Dee, who pushes for marriage while maintaining her chastity. However, unlike the 1960s

audience of the "clean teen" *Beach Party* films, the 2013 tween audience is meant to disapprove of Mack's capitulation to the pressure of parental authorities because, in doing so, she is not being true to herself (Doherty 191). In his study *Teenagers and Teenpics*, Thomas Doherty argues, "During the 1950s and 1960s, when parent culture was at its strongest and most authoritative, the teenpics catered to rebellion against Mom and Dad […] In an age where parent culture is vacillating, disjointed, or absent, the teenpics commemorate filial duty" (209).

Unlike juvenile delinquency films, such as *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), the *Beach Party* movies did not interrogate the mainstream values of North American culture; nonetheless, they did feature scantily clad youth in provocative erotic clinches behind the dunes. Also, there is a peculiar absence of authority figures in the *Beach* films—no parents present or discussed—which is emulated in *Wet Side Story*. The beach is these teenagers' halcyon world away from all meddling "adult" authorities. Doherty contends that after the AIDS epidemic arose in the 1980s, the young characters in teen films were "sexually neutered," either by focusing on pre-teen children or on "good" teenagers who are temperate and chaste (201). Of course, Disney films and television, both animated and live-action, are known for catering to wholesome, conservative values. Plus, *TBM* was aimed specifically at a tween demographic, so desexualizing the teen protagonists, Mack and Brady, is expected. What is not expected is the sexualization of the teens in *Wet Side Story*'s 1960s, emulating the more mature themes of the beach movies and using this plot device as a license to sexualize. *TBM* also embraces a further theme that arose in teen films of the latter 1980s—a twist on the rebellion in 1950s teen films—which is to be true to yourself *while* garnering the respect of your parents/authorities. Indeed, Mack's choice to yield to her authorities is posited as a case of unquestioning, and unhealthy, self-denial.

Enter the green world of *Wet Side Story*. On the day Mack is scheduled to depart for the East Coast, she awakens to see an old, beautiful surfboard leaning against the wall. Earlier, Big Poppa had described its significance: "Me, your grandfather, and his father, we each found our destiny on it." Taking this as a sign that she is meant to surf the rare forty-foot waves rolling in that morning, Mack grabs the board and is annoyed to find Brady waiting for her on the beach. Placatingly, he insists, "I just came to watch you surf, not to *propose*!" This is another humorous juxtaposition between Mack and the marriage-obsessed, virginal Dee Dee in the AIP *Beach Party* movies. Like Dee Dee,

Shakespeare's Juliet insists on marriage before a sexual relationship, and Maria in *West Side Story* has a symbolic wedding ceremony with Tony in the bridal shop before they spend their one night together. In *TBM*, however, neither sexual activity nor marriage is ever mentioned. As in the 1999 adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, *10 Things I Hate About You*, the stakes are much lower in these chaste high school relationships; the future and its adult decisions and consequences can barely be seen on the distant horizon.

When Mack takes to the turbulent waves, Big Poppa is worried about the stormy skies, and a lifeguard indicates to Mack that she should paddle into shore, but the headstrong girl stays out in the water. Brady then motors out on a jet ski to save her, but she refuses to be "rescued," insisting on riding the next giant wave despite the coming tempest. She catches the massive wave and wipes out badly, prompting Brady to dive underwater to get her. The camera submerges into the ocean, following him into the turgid water, then rises back to the surface, which is now calm and glassy under clear skies. This is a sea change, indeed. The first thing we see in this transformed seascape is the surfboard of destiny shooting up out of the water; then, the heads of Mack and Brady emerge. As the two walk up onto shore, Mack is indignant, "What are you doing here? […] What did you do?"

> BRADY. I tried to save you. This is the part where you tell me I'm your heroand then you shower me with kisses.
> MACK. I didn't *need* saving! This was my last chance to ride that monster wave before I leave forever!

Mack seems to be the anti-princess at this point: she does not need a Prince Charming to swoop in on a white jet ski and save her from the big, bad wave. She wants to conquer the wave and is clearly more capable of doing so than her boyfriend. We have little time to ponder this deviation from the classic Disney princess persona, however, because suddenly the fighting couple realizes that they are in the middle of a musical beach number, which, in true AIP beach party-film fashion, varies between fast-motion and the usual twenty-four frames per second. Like the battling lovers in the forest of Athens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Mack and Brady find themselves in a world of inexplicable magic where they are "translated" into new situations that transform their

characters. Mack is horrified, exclaiming, "We've died and ended up in a musical!" The irony of this announcement in a Disney musical makes it an easy joke, and the sentiment falls in line with Disney's self-reflexive and self-mocking trend of revisionist fairy tale films such as *Enchanted* (2007) and *The Princess Diaries* series (2001, 2004). The frenetic musical number they have landed in the middle of, "Surf Crazy," is the one we heard earlier in our glimpse of *Wet Side Story* on Big Poppa's television, and this alerts Brady and the audience to our location: inside the "silly" musical beach movie. The music has shifted from comfortably non-diegetic to flamboyantly diegetic. The lyrics simultaneously mock and celebrate the AIP beach party movie numbers:

> Sunshine and sweet harmonies.
> Time to play.
> No more complications
> From now on, just good vibrations […]
> Surf, sun, and sand.
> It's a bikini wonderland.

While Brady jumps into the number and dances and sings along joyfully, Mack reluctantly joins in, and we can see the confusion and disgust on her face, another source of comedy. The vapidity of the opening musical numbers of the AIP films, such as "Beach Blanket Bingo," are clearly the referent, but intertextual allusions to the Beach Boys and other popular 1960s surf music are also evident ("sweet harmonies" and "good vibrations"). The declaration of a "bikini wonderland" also recalls the *Beach Party* series, two of which include *bikini* in their titles, all of which feature a plethora of diminutive swimsuits. One noticeable difference between the AIP beach numbers and those in *TBM* is that the young women frugging in the sand are wearing relatively modest, navel-covering bikinis. In the AIP movies, only Funicello wore one-piece suits because Walt Disney demanded that her navel be covered at all times (she was still under contract with Disney; see Lisanti 76–77). As discussed above, the delusional promise that there are "no rules at all" in this sandy fantasyland was far from accurate in the 1960s and is not true in 2013, either. From their splashy openings, it is clear that the *Beach Party* movies, and *Wet Side Story*, were intended to be escapist daydreams aimed at a youth audience, yet their didacticism in regard

to supporting the status quo containment culture of the early 1960s lies just below their shiny surfaces. *TBM*, in contrast, while starting on an (albeit more realistic) idyllic, beachy note, quickly plunges the audience into Mack's life-altering dilemma. The *TBM* frame narrative is also rendered more "serious" in its contrast with the ebullient world of its embedded film-within-a-film.

Before launching into *Wet Side Story*, the mode of transport of our two protagonists to their brazen new world bears investigation. The plot device of characters washing up on an "unknown" shore following a tempest is common in Shakespeare's work, including *Twelfth Night*, *Pericles*, and, of course, *The Tempest*. As in *The Tempest*, this storm is magical: Mack is on the surfboard of destiny when it takes place and ends up inside an alternate universe—the movie *Wet Side Story*, also set on a beach in the Hawaiian Islands (although filmed in Puerto Rico, which raises additional postcolonial issues). The movie-within-a-movie in *TBM* perhaps most closely resembles *Twelfth Night* in regard to its doubling of the couples, identity confusion, and switching of partners. In act 1, scene 2 of *Twelfth Night*, having washed up on the shore of Illyria, Viola asks, "What country, friends, is this?" (1), and when she is told, she asks, "And what should I do in Illyria? / My brother, he is in Elysium" (3–4). When Mack is confused about where they have washed up, asking if they have died, Brady tells her, "Mack, we're in the movie […] My movie. *Wet Side Story*." Incredulous and distressed, she inquires, "What?! How? Why? […] What do we do?" These questions mirror Viola's in matter and tone, but Brady's elated answer to Mack's questions is pure comedy—"Have fun! Woo!"—as he prances off to participate in "Surf Crazy." (A few scenes later, the opening lines from *Twelfth Night* are quoted verbatim.) The doubling of the Romeos and Juliets—Brady and Mack are mirrored by Tanner (*Wet Side Story*'s Romeo) and Lela—and the broad slapstick comedic style rooted in misrecognition and "wrong place, wrong time" situations are reminiscent of the two sets of twins in *The Comedy of Errors*, as well as the magically-inspired partner-swapping antics in the forest of Athens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Moreover, *TBM*'s movie-within-a-movie structure, in which an embedded, hyperbolic narrative comprises the lion's share of the text, resembles the structure of *The Taming of Shrew*, in which the Sly framework tells us how to read the Kate/Petruchio tale: as a farce, a delusional wish-dream staged for a drunken idiot. Mack's open contempt for *Wet Side Story* provides a point of connection for viewers who also find the highly unrealistic,

zany beach party movies "silly" and insubstantial. The (ri)bald comparison of the highly acclaimed, dramatic Academy Award-winner *West Side Story* to *Wet Side Story* (a title surprisingly redolent of pornography) is particularly effective. Of course, as with the Kate/Petruchio story, the narrative and characterizations in the embedded *Wet Side Story*, vacuous as they may seem, communicate a great deal about gender norms and expectations, relationships with authority figures, and the limitations of personal agency in a hierarchical society. In her efforts to teach Lela to break out of the gender strictures of 1962, Mack will realize that she, too, has allowed the expectations of others to control and define her.

Following the "Surf Crazy" number, Mack and Brady follow the surfer gang into a diner on the beach called Big Momma's, which suspiciously resembles Big Poppa's Surf Shop. When the leather-clad motorcycle gang, The Rodents, enters the diner, the two groups confront one other, insisting that each gang wants the hangout for themselves. This is the territory these "warring" factions will fight over, as in *West Side Story*. However, though these tough-looking Rodents can dance and sing like the Puerto Rican members of The Sharks, they are ridiculously klutzy and stupid, in emulation of the Rat Pack in the *Beach Party* series; therefore, there is no real threat of violence or tragedy here. While in Big Momma's, The Rodents launch into an elaborate Elvis-inspired musical number, "Cruisin' for a Bruisin'," which, despite its pugilistic title, is not nearly as threatening as its counterpart in *West Side Story*, "Jet Song." The leader of The Rodents, Butchy, and his beautiful sister, Lela, greatly resemble the iconic Fonzie and Pinky Tuscadero from the popular, nostalgic American television series *Happy Days* (1974–1984), as he is decked out in black leather while she wears a pink leather jacket and short-shorts, and they are dancing in a 1950s-style diner. The allusion to *Happy Days* is particularly apt here because, like *TBM*, the series portrayed a sanitized and hyperbolized late 1950s/early 1960s environment of bonhomie amongst young people who congregate in a diner, a symbol of American suburban unity. Any conflict in Big Momma's, like the conflicts that took place at Arnold's in *Happy Days*, would be resolved peacefully and amicably. Unlike its namesake, *West Side Story*, or its hypotext, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Wet Side Story* presents no credible threats of harm or destruction of life. The tone of the situation comedy pervades it.

Continuing to follow the plot elements of *West Side Story*, *Wet Side Story* goes on to feature a "shindig" at Big Momma's that is analogous

to the "Dance at the Gym" scene in *West Side Story*, where Maria and Tony first meet and fall in love. In *Wet Side Story*, our Juliet and Romeo, Lela and Tanner, also are supposed have their initial encounter here. Unfortunately, the presence of Mack and Brady changes the outcome of the events that evening, so when Lela sings her jejune number "Falling for Ya," she accidentally stumbles off the stage and into the arms of Brady instead of Tanner, the leader of the surfers. Of course, the airheaded Tanner has been distracted by Mack, who agitatedly reports to Brady, "The mannequin with six rows of teeth just asked me out" (followed by a close-up of Tanner with a toothy grin, accompanied by a twinkling sound effect). Our Romeos and Juliets have switched partners, once again highlighting the presence of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as an intertext.

Mack's frustration with being trapped in a corny, hackneyed romantic plot is exacerbated when the "twitterpated" Lela performs a cloying song about finding the perfect boy. The vexed Mack demands, "Why does she need a boy to be happy?!" Brady responds matter-of-factly: "Because it's 1962." This exchange indicates that gender roles and expectations have shifted dramatically in the US over the past fifty years. Nevertheless, *TBM*, in large part due to its dual diegesis structure, is able to give its audience the classic Disney "someday my prince will come" ethos, embodied in Lela, while supporting a more postmodern, twenty-first century "girl power" message through Mack. Despite Mack's contempt for the classic princess narrative, the audience gets to have its princess cake and disavow it, too. It is an open secret that the fairy tale story of the young, beautiful, oppressed woman rescued by a handsome, strong prince is alive and well (and beloved) in our feminist/post-feminist age. The Disney Corporation masterfully navigates these self-contradictory impulses in our popular culture. Recently, Disney has produced successful animated films such as *Brave* (dir. Mark Andrews et al. 2012) and *Frozen* (dir. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee 2013), in which strong, independent young women, who also happen to be princesses, must overcome formidable obstacles without the aid of a prince or father. This shift caters to current public taste. Regardless, Disney continues to make monumental profits from selling media and merchandise that pedal conservative gender roles. Disney's Princess products had the highest sales numbers of *all* licensed merchandise in 2011, bringing in a stunning three billion dollars worldwide (Goudreau). Capitalizing on contradictory impulses in North

American culture in regard to the agency of young women has proven to be extremely lucrative for Disney, and it is a hallmark of *TBM*.

In the dramatic "Dance at the Gym" sequence in *West Side Story*, the rival gangs participate in a spectacular dance competition that serves as a metaphor for the real violence these young people desire to do to one another. Likewise, in *TBM*, a "full-on dance war" is supposed to break out in Big Momma's because of the attraction between Tanner and Lela. However, this turf battle does not take place as our Romeo and Juliet/Tony and Maria have fallen for the "wrong" people. The omission of this crucial scene indicates that the narrative in *Wet Side Story* is now in peril of disintegrating. Mack and Brady realize they must do something to bring the plot back on track, so they determine to "deflect" the attentions of their admirers onto the correct partner. When Mack pairs off with Tanner, he immediately lays on the romantic clichés to woo her. He holds his guitar across his chest, looks her in the eyes dreamily, and says in an English-accented, deep voice, "If music be the food of love, play on" (*Twelfth Night* 1.1.1). Mack looks perplexed, "Was that Shakespeare?" Tanner vapidly replies, "Huh? Ah, no. That was me. Sometimes I talk low for effect." This exchange establishes Mack's intelligence through her knowledge of Shakespeare while it reveals Tanner's vacuity. He mindlessly uses Shakespeare as a tool for seduction. This direct quotation of *Twelfth Night* draws an amusing comparison between the speaker of these lines, the love-addled Count Orsino, who is often overwrought in his desperate love-suit to Olivia, and our monumentally dimwitted teen heartthrob. More than a decade ago, Richard Burt coined the term "Shakesploitation flicks" to describe teen films that adapt Shakespeare's work or use it as a key reference point. *TBM* falls into the latter category and carries on the legacy of the Shakesploitation films of the 1990s in that it "reveal[s] a dialectical contradiction between dumbing down Shakespeare and making him a genius (and, by extension, making those who appreciate him intelligent and morally superior)" (223). Mack, who obviously knows her Shakespeare, is not impressed by Tanner's "low voice," so he launches into another stock device to beguile her: a sappy ballad. This proves irresistible. Tanner's number "Meant to Be" is eventually joined by Mack, Lela, and Brady, and its lyrics contain allusions to Juliet's words in the balcony scene ("you forget your own name") and the imagery of Tony and Maria's song "Tonight" ("the stars seem to glisten"), all within the trappings of an insipid pop

song. Tucked into *Wet Side Story*, this performance is a parody of a parody, yet it has true emotional impact on these characters, unlike the Shakespeare charade that precedes it.

Mack's superior intellect and independence is also emphasized when Mack attends a slumber party with Lela and the girls from The Rodents in a scene clearly inspired by a similar episode in *Grease*. Mack, instead of being the naïve Sandy character, is the progressive thinker who asks the other girls, "Why should a boy influence what you choose to wear? Or anything you do?" When the girls gasp at her audacity, she pushes on and tells them they should try asking a boy out for a change, "It's your life. You can decide what to do [...] We can do anything a guy can do." A comical musical number ensues, called "Like Me," in which gender norms in 1962 and 2013 are contrasted as the cross-cutting in the scene jumps between the boys in Big Momma's and the girls at Lela's house (e.g., Mack sings, "Pick up the check," and Lela purrs, "Bake him a pie"). The preposterous end result of this number is that the girls dress Mack up in black leather and skin-tight Lycra pants—an outfit closely resembling that of Sandy at the end of *Grease* when she finally gets her man. However, when Brady sees her, he immediately mocks, "What's up Elvis?" The clear message sent is that this "trashy" look is *not* what makes a boy like a girl in 2013. However fitting this illustration might be in the sanitized Disney-verse, the claims made here about the less-sexualized (and sexist) sartorial landscape of the twenty-first century are patently delusional. Although sex is not mentioned directly in *TBM*, sexuality is vividly present within *Wet Side Story* in the dancing, song lyrics, and costuming. Nonetheless, through the lens of a fictional, far away 1962, sexuality in teens seems quaint and does not "corrupt" the teens of 2013. As a Disney television product of 2013 targeting tweens, this makes sense, but it does strip away the roiling, barely contained sexuality of the *Beach Party* movies. Gary Morris points out the dissonance between the staunchly conservative values espoused by these movies and their pervasive sexual imagery, which reflects the "growing split in the social fabric" of the 1950s and early 1960s (Morris). Essentially, AIP's *Beach Party* movies are a part of the "containment culture" of the Cold War. Any kind of "deviance" from the norms and expectations of middle-class, white Americana must be repressed and contained. In *TBM*, the greatest transgression a young person can commit is not being true to oneself. The pinnacle of orthopraxy is to acknowledge your true desires and "follow your bliss." (Juliet and Romeo do this and end up

dead.) This is a lesson Mack will have to learn in *Wet Side Story*, where the conflicts appear to be different but prove to be didactically similar. Mack must realize that her submission to parental expectations is equally as retrograde as Lela's drive to please boys and conform to early 1960s gender norms.

As *Wet Side Story* draws to a close, Mack and Brady rush to steer the movie back on course, ensuring that the evil real estate developer's nefarious plan to create a powerful storm over the beach succeeds so they can be transported back to 2013. Meanwhile, Tanner and Lela bump into each other on the beach, fall in love at first sight, and reprise the "Meant to Be" number. Tanner and Lela jettison their affection for Mack and Brady as quickly as Romeo forgets Rosaline upon spotting Juliet. Indeed, Tanner uses garbled Shakespearean language resembling that in *Romeo and Juliet*'s balcony scene to impress Lela: "you're stunning as a moon lighteth up a day." This time, "dumbed-down" Shakespeare works for Tanner. Movie destiny cannot be thwarted. The united Lela and Tanner then ask the rival gangs to work together to save Mack and Brady from the villains. Like the Prince in *Romeo and Juliet*, Lela makes a heartfelt plea for peace, "All that fighting ever did for us is stop us from seeing what we all have in common: Big Momma's, the beach, and [Lela grabs Tanner's hand] us." Big brother Butchy, with a menacing look on his face, approaches Tanner, then extends his hand amiably and tears up, telling his sister that he loves her. The conflict between the gangs here, in comedic contrast to *West Side Story*'s tragic, bloody conclusion, ends easily with a quick handshake and hugs all around. Of course, the unified group rescues Mack and Brady from the bumbling criminals, and our 2013 protagonists ride the stormy waves back to their time and place on the surfboard of destiny.

When Mack and Brady's heads pop up out of the ocean, they find themselves back "home," and, magically, no time has passed since their departure to *Wet Side Story*. Brady reminds Mack that she still has a chance to surf the "killer" wave and sweetly promises not to save her, showing his faith in her surfing prowess. Mack admits, "If I needed saving, I'd want it to be you." She has learned something from her voyage to 1962. She hops on the surfboard of destiny and rides a giant wave into shore, shooting the curl masterfully, which is shot in slow-motion, "extreme sport" style. Back on shore, Mack finally has the courage to tell her aunt what she truly wants, asserting that her mom would want her to do what she loves: "I wanna stay here for high school […] I wanna

be with Brady. I wanna surf more. And later, I don't know what. But the thing is I don't have to know. And when I do decide, it'll be my choice." In *Wet Side Story*, Mack learns that she needs to take the advice she has been giving to Lela, to be her own person, not to be controlled by the expectations of others. *TBM* concludes with one final musical number, "Surf's Up," performed on the beach in 2013. This time, Mack does not scoff; she is happy to join in and dance with the pack of energetic teens who are dressed noticeably more modestly than those in 1962. Most of the young women are wearing tank tops and shorts rather than bikinis, and the boys are wearing long board shorts. In this Disney teen paradise, sexuality is buried in the sand. Back in the "real" world, Mack is now choosing to be a carefree teen and eschewing the "adult" expectations of her aunt that she will "get serious about her future." The values of self-assertion and prolonging childhood prevail. Romeo and Juliet are perpetual teenagers because they die in that state, having committed themselves to death in the service of their "violent delights." Their demise is a painful impetus to make peace in society. Tony and Maria have been raised in a socio-economically disadvantaged, racially riven, and dangerous urban landscape. By the time tragedy befalls them, they are mature beyond their years. It is unclear whether Tony's demise and Maria's poignant final words will effect any change in Harlem. In vivid contrast, Brady and Mack's journey ends well for them both; they will continue to be innocent teens frolicking in the surf, affectionate but not sexual, never too serious. Brady does not grow or change during the narrative because he is the ideal teen from start to finish, never doubting who he is or what he wants. The dynamic character in *TBM* is Mack, a teenage girl who learns that she must choose to pursue her own dreams, which means staying in the Hawaiian paradise where she has lived her whole life. In other words, this is a Disney fairy tale. Mack does not need to coerce Brady into marrying her, as Dee Dee attempts to do in the *Beach Party* movies, and she does not have to objectify herself to capture her man, as Sandy does in *Grease*. Like Peter Pan, Mack simply must decide to abjure the adult world and hold on to her childhood as long as possible. Just as the "good clean fun" of the AIP beach movies was reassuring to the Cold War culture of the early 1960s, *TBM* reassures tweens and their parents that the complexity and struggles of the later teen years and movement into adulthood can be postponed if you wish strongly enough. Time can be stopped; innocence can be preserved.

The perpetual present of the summer of 1962 in *Wet Side Story* markedly underscores this idealization of stasis.

In conclusion, the relentless intertextuality and self-reflexivity in *TBM* certainly does not render it ideologically progressive. As I have argued, this film reifies conservative cultural gender norms even as it openly questions them; it is a fairy tale masquerading as a deconstruction or unveiling of such narratives. This is an approach to storytelling that has proven to be fabulously remunerative for The Walt Disney Company, and many other media corporations, in recent decades. Stuart Hall astutely observes, "In the study of popular culture, we should always start here: with the double-stake in popular culture, the double movement of containment and resistance, which is always inevitably inside it" (228). Hall identifies this as the "dialectic of cultural struggle," which "make[s] the field of culture a sort of constant battlefield" (233). *TBM* vibrantly and boldly manifests this "double movement," which places it on the front lines of our culture wars.

Notes

1. All five films in the AIP Beach Party series feature the surfers in conflict with a bumbling motorcycle gang, the Rat Pack, led by the klutzy Eric Von Zipper, meant to be a travesty of Marlon Brando in *The Wild One* (1953).

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CHAPTER 15

"Accidental" Erasure: Relocating Shakespeare's Women in Philippa Gregory's *The Cousins' War* Series

Allison Machlis Meyer

Analyses of Shakespearean appropriation frequently focus on the ways that texts, television, and film *desire* to evoke Shakespeare. Douglas Lanier notes that "Shakespeare" is "a collectively created, adaptational rhizome rather than a body of texts appropriated by single adaptors […]" (113). Lanier's work reveals that in recent adaptations Shakespearean language becomes less important than visual iconography, so that "Instead of being particular texts, 'Shakespeare' thereby becomes a collection of narratives highly mobile from context to context, verbal style to style, genre to genre, media platform to platform" (107). Focused on the flexibility and mobility of its context, style, and genre, Lanier defines "Shakespeare" as a rhizome of narratives that interacts with Shakespeare's cultural capital in complex ways. Implicit in this concept is a desire to signal the rhizome, to declare a relationship with Shakespeare the author, and to use "Shakespeare" for a purpose, however broadly "Shakespeare" is defined. Like Lanier, Sarah Olive reads

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contemporary television's "incidental" relationships to Shakespeare as attempts to signal a connection to the playwright (3). Rather than rewriting Shakespeare's plays, the appropriations Olive analyzes frequently assess audiences' cultural knowledge of Shakespeare, borrow Shakespeare's cultural capital, and respond to Shakespeare.

Approaching Shakespeare's afterlives, as Lanier and Olive do, as part of an adaptational rhizome, provides a useful framework for situating textual, visual, and televised relationships amongst Shakespeare, his narrative sources, and pop cultural adaptations; doing so also assumes a desire to connect with and make use of the Bard. But what do we make of appropriations that are intentionally relocated: made "*not* Shakespeare" on purpose? And what do we make of such "*not* Shakespeare" appropriations where the Bard finds his way back in? This essay examines Philippa Gregory's first novel of her *Cousins' War* series, *The White Queen*, and *The White Queen* television adaptation, as an aggregate work consciously constructed by its author and her critics as "*not* Shakespeare."[1] While reviews and interviews with Gregory establish this work in opposition to Shakespeare's drama in its representations of both women of the Wars of the Roses and the historical figure of Richard III, I argue that it nevertheless functions as an appropriation of "Shakespeare," recalling his plays and sources, such as Thomas More's *The History of King Richard the Third*. The appearance of Shakespeare in Gregory's work stems from a tension in her revisionist project: her dual motives, to create new stories from the perspective of the female Plantagenets and to argue for Richard's innocence, become competitive intentions. While both desires are conceptualized as a rejection of a Shakespearean version of English history, Gregory's novels redeem Richard by recycling Shakespeare's own negative characterizations of Edward IV's wife, Queen Elizabeth Woodville Grey. In *The White Queen*, then, I find a sustained engagement with Shakespeare in spite of the authorial and critical stances that explicitly reject his historiography.

By examining how Gregory's construction of her work as "*not* Shakespeare" joins with cultural attitudes about contemporary historical fiction imbedded in reviews of her work to loosen her novel's affiliations with Shakespeare, I interrogate the gendered investments that participate in determining a work's status as historical fiction and as either "Shakespeare" or "*not* Shakespeare." These investments are made to establish a popular, female-centered perspective from which to market novels, and to protect a masculine and elitist conception of

the Bard and of Renaissance history. The effect of such determinations of "Shakespeare" is to shift attention away from the presence of clear appropriations of Shakespeare's history plays and his sources visible in *The Cousins' War* series and its television adaptation. This essay redirects our attention to this historiography, its presence in Gregory's series, and the erasure of this presence by the author and her critics.

In a 2009 interview, Gregory describes her approach as that of a revisionist historian: "It's an act of historical recovery […] In my writing what I'm trying to do is give a side of history that hasn't been visible" (Owchar). One part of her recovery project focuses on the women of the Plantagenet dynasty, consorts and queen mothers ignored by modern historians and marginalized by Shakespeare's plays. In her nonfiction book co-authored with historians David Baldwin and Michael Jones, *The Women of the Cousins' War*, Gregory identifies the dearth of medieval accounts and modern biographies about Elizabeth Woodville Grey, her mother Jacquetta, and Margaret Beaufort as symptomatic of women's absence from history: "Women are not in the record, and they were not allowed to write the record" (29).[2] Both her nonfiction work and her novels are constructed to redress this absence. Each novel uses the point of view of a female figure and emphasizes the imaginative development of the romantic, maternal, and personal relationships of English queens to participate in an act of historical reimagining from a woman-centered perspective.

Commentary about the success of Gregory's best-selling "formula" identifies her subject matter as female-centered and assumes a gendered reading audience. Kate Kellaway notes that "Gregory always puts women centre stage in her work." Jane Thynne focuses on Gregory's commercial success and influence, which "has spawned an entire industry of wife-lit around the consorts of English kings." Helen Brown's review of *The White Princess* praises Gregory's "impressive career" as one marked by "breathing passionate, independent life into the historical noblewomen whose personalities had previously lain flat on family trees, remembered only as diplomatic currency and brood mares." Reviewers repeatedly present Gregory's novels—with varying degrees of censure or support—as a revisionist women's history. Some reviewers, like Kellaway, identify this focus as feminist, while others describe it in terms that link historical women's writing to the romance novel, as literary critic Jerome de Groot does in his overview of the genre: "historical fiction written by women for a predominately female audience" includes romance fiction that "has

often been characterised as empty and conservative, in so far as it seems to sustain the dominant models of social ordering: family, heteronormative relationships, and strictly defined gender roles" (52). Critic Diane Wallace details similar assumptions about the historical novel as a genre marked by escapism, romance, and popularity, and "which has come to be seen as a 'feminine' form" (3).

Historian David Starkey, who admits to wanting even Booker Prize winning author Hilary Mantel to "sta[y] off my patch as a historian," derogatorily identifies Gregory's works as "good Mills and Boon," referring to the British imprint of Harlequin (Davies). While Starkey's admonition that "we really should stop taking historical novelists seriously as historians" emerges from valid frustrations about the public devaluing of scholarly research, his censure of Gregory reveals cultural attitudes about the intersections of women's historical fiction and "proper" historical subjects (Davies). He claims that the "danger" of telling the story of Henry VIII through his wives is that history thus "hovers on the brink of soap opera," a phenomenon that "feeds into this sort of modern historical novel, which is largely written about women, written by women and read by women. Stuff like *The Other Boleyn Girl*" ("Starkey"). In an attempt to reclaim his patch of historical ground, Starkey identifies the wives of Henry VIII as "too big to be left to chick lit," finds the genre of the historical novel indistinguishable from romance, and locates Gregory's novels as key examples of threatening revisions written by and for women (Davies).[3] While her own assessments of her historical recovery project position Gregory against a male-centered historical record, Gregory seems most strongly to write against *this* discourse, about the dangers women-centered fiction poses for "proper" historical accounting. And it is against the backdrop of this contentious conversation about English history, genre, and gender that Gregory defines her work as "*not* Shakespeare."

The other revisionist view of history Gregory promotes, and the one most intimately tied to her authorial stance as "*not* Shakespeare," is the redemption of Richard III. It is, like her focus on the "untold history of women," a revision that reviewers and critics frequently recognize and comment upon (Kellaway). Nick Owchar notes *The White Queen*'s surprising "retreat from portraying Richard III as the tyrannical, hunchbacked usurper," while Rebecca Bain sees Gregory's Richard as a corrective that raises questions about the veracity of Shakespeare's representation: "Indeed, one wonders if Shakespeare had not painted

such a black picture of Richard […] whether or not history might have treated Richard more leniently." Finch Bronstein-Rasmussen, using language reminiscent of the turf war Starkey stakes out, finds that Gregory's subject matter gives the author "far fewer competitors" to contend with than her earlier focus on the Tudor period. Bronstein-Rasmussen identifies only two real competitors for Gregory: Shakespeare, whose Richard III is "a scheming, crook-backed monster," and Josephine Tey, whose novel *The Daughter of Time* absolves Richard from his infamous crimes. On this point, Tey is most certainly an ancestor rather than a competitor; the role of antagonist to Gregory's work belongs to Shakespeare and his sources. Owchar's interview is framed as a conversation about "attitudes to Richard," in which Gregory "sides with those who see [Richard] as the victim of an extraordinary propaganda machine." Gregory accepts Owchar's categorization of her as "a latter-day Yorkist" and confesses to *Goodreads*, "I am a Yorkist […] by nature" ("Interview"). In her novels, this Yorkist stance is narrow (she vilifies Edward IV's brother George, for example) and exclusively devoted to reversing Shakespeare's representations of Richard III as a tyrant.

In contrast to Shakespeare's Tudor propaganda, Gregory's novels reclaim Richard, casting him as a devoted brother and kind husband, and exonerating him from the murder of his nephews. That crime Gregory lays at the feet of Margaret Beaufort, and in this reassignment of villainy, we find one of many examples where Gregory's historical recoveries—of royal women, on the one hand, and Richard III, on the other—become contradictory and challenge the "*not* Shakespeare" assignations provided by both Gregory and her critics. Gregory's Yorkist vision provides not only an innocent Richard, but a love affair between Richard and Elizabeth York and a ruthless Henry Richmond. Both Richard and Henry are driven to make many of the infamous decisions for which history and fiction censure them by ruthless female relatives: in Richard's case, his wife, Anne Neville, and in Henry's case, his mother, Margaret Beaufort. Gregory's women do take center stage, but they often do so not to challenge prior historians' negative views of them but to embody those portrayals in service to Richard's redemption.

Reviews of Gregory's work position her novels and television adaptations as "*not* Shakespeare" in two ways: because she tells the story of the Wars of the Roses through the eyes of its women, who are overlooked in Shakespeare's stage drama, and because she resists the Tudor myth codified by Shakespeare with an alternative story of Richard's place in history.

Gregory likewise identifies her portrayals of both Richard and royal women as "*not* Shakespeare" and describes her novels as writing against Shakespeare's influence:

> Official history of that period says Elizabeth was greedy, that she filled key positions with her people because of her ambition—it wasn't that. She did that in order to survive. You have to place your people in power. This aspect is overlooked, and that's a tragedy, really, like every new production of Shakespeare's "Richard III." Each time a production gets staged, we're repeating the lesson that Richard was nothing but a hunchback villain. That's the tragedy. (Owchar)

In her oppositional evocations of Shakespeare, Gregory evaluates "official history" as critical of Elizabeth's participation in politics and challenges Shakespeare's fictional version. Performances of Shakespeare's play tragically reinforce his narrative, while history ignores the complex motivations of Elizabeth that Shakespeare's plays foreclose and Gregory's fiction releases.

Gregory's identification of her work as "*not* Shakespeare" resists the highbrow/lowbrow distinction some reviewers are eager to make in their comparisons between Gregory and her most famous "competitor." While many reviews of Gregory's books repeat the "*not* Shakespeare" categorization that Gregory herself endorses, other reviews seek distance invested not in promoting her work as a valid counterpoint to Shakespeare—as she would have it—but in denigrating it in sharp contrast. Alex Strachan's review describes the television adaptation as "light as a feather," and positions the show in opposition to the "ambitious, epic adaptation" of Shakespeare's plays in *The Hollow Crown*. Strachan claims "*The White Queen* has about as much in common with Shakespeare as *The Other Boleyn Girl* had with *The Tudors*." As odd as this parallel contrast is (equating *The Tudors* with Shakespeare's cultural cache, and a film version of Gregory's most popular novel in negative opposition), Strachan's point is clear: the television show is not to be mistaken for Shakespeare. The dialogue, as he says, "is more Jacqueline Susann than Shakespeare."

Strachan echoes David Starkey as he voices familiar cultural attitudes about the romance novel, "that most vilified of American genres," this time with Shakespearean literature rather than Tudor history as stakeholder (Osborne 47). This categorizing of filmic adaptations as

either appropriate ambitious epic and gritty male gaze, or inappropriate "light as a feather" romance, speaks to the anxiety Laurie Osborne sees produced by the presence of Shakespeare in historical romance: if "Shakespeare's plays can be so readily adapted into romance conventions, how different can the highest of high culture be from the much-scorned, nearly entirely female endeavors of romance?" (64).[4] As Daniel Fischlin's account of intermedial adaptation shows, media—which "are themselves always already cultural"—influence the reception and interpretation of Shakespearean adaptation, and "the place of Shakespeare in the general cultural economy shifts in relation to the prestige and power of the media through which his presence is diffused" (5). Critiques such as Strachan's, which seek to reify Shakespeare's high status by identifying Gregory's fiction with the valueless romance novel and pulpy film and Shakespeare's fiction with aesthetic prominence, are clearly invested in policing Shakespeare's place in this cultural economy. The romance novel and the cable TV series are intermedial creations that threaten Shakespeare's prestige through their adaptations of his work. In this context, Gregory's assertions of "*not* Shakespeare" seem to be strategic defenses of fiction that shares subject matter with a symbol of highbrow culture. Just as Gregory's insistence upon the absence of women from official histories functions as a defense against the denigration of historical fiction as an inferior form, her insistence upon a (false) distance from Shakespeare likewise functions as a defense against critics patrolling the borders of masculinized high culture demarcated by the Bard.

Strategic, too, is the nature of Gregory's opposition to Shakespeare, which she characterizes as humorously irreverent: "I find myself often in disagreement with Shakespeare—which is rather amusing to me. But his view of women, and especially his view of Richard III, is very much the view of Thomas More […] But I agree, it has been fascinating to tread on Shakespeare's toes in this way" ("Interview"). Gregory's playful treading on Shakespeare's toes here reiterates her dual revisionist approach, emphasizing her novels's "*not* Shakespeare" challenges to both Shakespeare's view of women and his view of Richard. Gregory follows many scholars in tracing Shakespeare's representation of Elizabeth Woodville Grey to More, whose *History* is not only a source for Shakespeare but also our most engaging story about Elizabeth's political interventions. However, both Gregory and literary critics of the histories are too quick to link the perspectives of Shakespeare and More; Shakespeare, like many of his contemporaries, modified all his

sources—and especially More—to downplay Elizabeth's political agency in his drama.[5]

Gregory maintains that Elizabeth is an "oft-neglected character in history" (Naylor) and reviewers note that the Queen is maligned by both medieval and modern historians: "even allowing for naturally partisan sentiments, the histories of the period tend to paint an uncharitable picture of Elizabeth […]" (Bronstein-Rasmussen). More's account of Edward's courtship of Elizabeth in *The History*, however, is surprisingly positive, and purposefully introduced into the narrative to show that Richard's slanders against the legitimacy of Edward's children are built upon "how slipper a ground" (More 76). Through interior perspective that, like Gregory's first-person narration, gives us Elizabeth's thoughts, More depicts Elizabeth's power as legitimate and rooted in her intelligence:

> Whom when the king beheld and heard her speak—as she was both fair, of a good favor, moderate of stature, well made, and very wise—he not only pitied her but also waxed enamored on her […] Whose appetite when she perceived, she virtuously denied him. But that did she so wisely, and with so good manner, and words so well set, that she rather kindled his desire than quenched it. (71)

More repeatedly describes Elizabeth as virtuous and "wise," even as she rejects Edward's sexual advances. It is More's Elizabeth who "boldly say[s] her mind," and "showed him plain that, as she wist herself too simple to be his wife, so thought she herself too good to be his concubine" (71–72). Edward, unused "to be so stiffly said nay, so much esteemed her continence and chastity that he set her virtue in the stead of possession and riches" and decides to marry her (More 72). More imagines a king initially motivated by sexual desire who is prompted to marriage by Elizabeth's wisdom and virtue. It is More's text, in fact, that David Baldwin uses in his chapter in *The Women of the Cousins' War* to describe Elizabeth's spirited resistance to the Archbishop, and it is in Edward Hall's description of Elizabeth's beauty, eloquent speech, and pregnant wit that Baldwin finds "something […] that rings true" about Elizabeth (Baldwin 233). Despite Gregory's conflation of More and Shakespeare, More's view of Elizabeth is so far afield from Shakespeare's that his *History* becomes a key source of Baldwin's own revisionist account offered in Gregory's co-authored nonfiction.

Shakespeare's staging of Edward's courtship in *The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth* dramatizes *The History* but excises much of More's positive evaluation of Elizabeth and emphasizes Edward's attraction to her as a personal failing. Conversing with Elizabeth, who has come to court to request her husband's inheritance for her Grey sons, he says "To tell thee plain, I aim to lie with thee" (*3 Hen. VI* 3.2.69). Elizabeth's resistance, wit, and virtue do, as More notes, convince Edward to consider making her his wife if she will not be his mistress:

> Her words doth show her wit incomparable;
> All her perfections challenge sovereignty:
> One way or other, she is for a king;
> And she shall be my love, or else my queen. (*3 Hen. VI* 3.2.85–88)

But the asides of Edward's brothers make light of Elizabeth's predicament and assume her eventual sexual acquiescence. Richard remarks, "I see the lady hath a thing to grant, / Before the King will grant her humble suit" (3.2.11–12). George describes Edward's interest in Elizabeth as merely sport: "He knows the game: how true he keeps the wind!" (3.2.14). They joke about Edward impregnating her, they laugh at Edward's licentiousness, and George describes him as "the bluntest wooer in Christendom" (3.2.83). Both brothers perceive Edward's proposal as a shocking and irrational passion—it is "ten days' wonder at the least" (3.2.113).

Gregory's courtship story also focuses on Edward's passionate attraction to Elizabeth and the foolishness of his choice: "Gregory does not seek to convince us of Elizabeth's deserts" but makes her marriage "the prime reason for many misfortunes that befell the house of York" (Martirosyan). Gregory's novels pin many ill deeds on Elizabeth and Edward's decision to marry her, the chief of which is linked to history's maligning of Richard. As one reviewer proposes, "we might even have had a completely different picture to draw of the Duke of Gloucester, had Edward IV married Lady Bona instead" (Martirosyan). Gregory creates a view of Edward that seems very like the one his Shakespearean brothers construct through their asides, and her representation of Elizabeth works against an "official history" not to recover her, but to reduce her influence and intelligence. Gregory's Edward asks to meet Elizabeth in private, where he tells her "I think you are driving me mad

[…] I am desperate for you" (22–23). In both the novel and the television series, Edward tries to rape Elizabeth, who unwisely meets the King alone in the woods and then unwisely pulls a knife on her sovereign before threatening to kill herself to avoid his assault.[6] This defense of her chastity, rather than convincing him of her virtue as her less dramatic resistance does in More's *History*, enrages him. Edward tells her, "you have made a fool of me," and vows never to see her again, but his lust eventually forces him to return (25).[7] Gregory's Elizabeth says nothing of marriage to Edward, as More's Elizabeth does, and Edward never credits her for her virtuous rejection of his advances. Instead, he professes his love as an irresistible madness and proposes to a shocked Elizabeth, who replies, "You are joking with me" (36).

In addition to aligning with Shakespeare's emphasis on Edward's lust, *The White Queen* also explains the relationship of Edward and Elizabeth as one produced by witchcraft. After Elizabeth meets Edward under an oak tree, her mother, Jacquetta, takes her to a riverside and tells her to choose one of three strings and wind it up slowly: "'Magic,' I say flatly. My father has banned these practices in his house: the law of the land forbids it. It is death to be proved as a witch […] we are named as forbidden. 'Magic,' she agrees, untroubled. 'Powerful magic, for a good cause. Well worth the risk'" (14). The gradual winding of Elizabeth's thread, as she reels in a gold ring shaped like a crown, frames her meetings with the King and implies a supernatural hold over him that explains Edward's famously inconvenient interest in an English widow. The witchcraft that Gregory introduces drastically alters the circumstances of Edward's wooing of Elizabeth by locating her influence not in her earthly intelligence but in a family legacy of magic that remains opaque even to its practitioners.[8] Elizabeth, her mother, and her daughter all use witchcraft and experience "seeings" in the novels, where they are given vague foretellings of events to come. But the arc of Gregory's narrative emphasizes the *lack* of knowledge gleaned by these "seeings"—Elizabeth senses she should not relinquish her sons but does not know, as her readers do, why that hunch is accurate—and the unintended consequences of their shortsighted curses.

In Gregory's novel, Elizabeth and her mother conjure a storm to prevent Warwick's ships from reaching France, and Elizabeth curses both Warwick and George after her father is executed. Her use of magic is foolhardy; as she muses after the death of George, "I wish I had remembered […] that it is easier to unleash evil than call it back again" (257). Elizabeth cannot discern who has killed her two boys—she thinks it

might be Richard, but considers that it might also be Henry Tudor and his mother, Margaret Beaufort—so her curse on the murderer's firstborn child condemns her grandson Arthur to an early death. It is Richard himself who points out the accidental consequences of her witchcraft: "'Your curses last too long and strike at the wrong people,' he says. 'Maybe one day you will wish that my right arm was strong enough to defend you. Maybe one day you will regret the death of someone's son and heir, even if they were guilty, even if your curse runs true'" (362). Nowhere is Elizabeth's witchcraft more pronounced—or more revelatory of the presence of Shakespeare in Gregory's "*not* Shakespeare" novel—than in her interactions with Richard. Gregory's suspicious Elizabeth takes the offensive against a Lord Protector who may or may not have intended to steal the throne from the nephew he has seized to keep away from her corrupting influence: "I am set on war against Richard. I shall destroy him, and free my son and my brother and release the young king" (282). Elizabeth's aggressive strategy and paranoia drives Richard's usurpation, and Gregory's narrative blames his seizure of the throne on Elizabeth's overeager arming of forces against him.

Before Richard visits Elizabeth in sanctuary to declare his innocence and remind her of the unintended effects of her witchcraft, Elizabeth carries out the curse that Richard rightly attributes to her and warns her she might soon regret. When Elizabeth hears word that her brother's fleet and her forces have been lost, she has a hazy vision of Richard's defeat at Bosworth: "I see he will be sorry that he started this" (288). Elizabeth then binds the napkin her sister has brought her from Richard's table around her own arm to fashion a curse: "I feel the weakness in my arm as I throw the cord in the fire. 'So weaken,' I say to the flame. 'Lose your strength. Let your right arm fail, let your sword arm grow weak, let your hand lose its grip'" (288). Elizabeth's magic is effective, and none other than Edward's mistress, Elizabeth Shore, brings a report to Elizabeth that Richard has named them both witches and "bared his arm in the council chamber" to show it "withering away" (293).

The scene is, of course, Shakespeare's famous council scene, where Richard sets up Hastings by asking,

> I pray you all, what do they deserve
> That do conspire my death with devilish plots
> Of damnèd witchcraft, and that have prevailed
> Upon my body with their hellish charms? (*Rich. III* 3.4.64–67)

In Shakespeare's play, Richard uses his already deformed body as a pretense for executing Hastings, and he slings the charge of witchcraft against his female enemies for good measure:

> See how I am bewitched. Behold mine arm
> Is like a blasted sapling withered up.
> This is that Edward's wife, that monstrous witch,
> Consorted with that harlot strumpet Shore,
> That by their witchcraft thus have markèd me. (*Rich. III* 3.4.73–77)

In Shakespeare's play, Richard employs, to good effect, the charge of witchcraft to silence Hastings and attack his female rivals. Shakespeare finds both Richard's accusation and an early modern stage audience's reaction to his charge against Elizabeth in More's *History*:

> Then said the protector: "Ye shall all see in what wise that sorceress and that other witch of her counsel, Shore's wife, with their affinity, have by their sorcery and witchcraft wasted my body." And therewith he plucked up his doublet sleeve […] where he showed a wearish, withered arm and small (as it was never other). And thereupon every man's mind sore misgave them, well perceiving that this matter was but a quarrel: for well they wist that the queen was too wise to go about any such folly. (More 55–56)

More also notes that Elizabeth would be the last person to keep counsel with her husband's mistress, and that all "well knew that his arm was ever such since his birth" (56). But his primary evidence for proclaiming Richard's accusation as nothing more than a quarrel designed to eliminate Hastings is that Elizabeth is too savvy to dabble in witchcraft.

Gregory's novel transforms Richard's clever rhetoric and outlandish accusations against Elizabeth, represented in More as beneath her own wisdom and in Shakespeare as a transparent political machination, into the actual means of her power. To recuperate Richard, Gregory reduces Elizabeth to the woman Shakespeare's Richard says she is. This revision emerges from Gregory's dual desires to create new stories for the female Plantagenets and to argue for Richard's innocence. To tell the story of Elizabeth's ambitions and survival is to tell the story of her opposition to Richard, but to redeem Richard, his opposition must be at fault. Shakespeare's view of Richard III might have been drawn directly from

More, but his depictions of royal women are not. In Gregory's recovery project, she prioritizes a "Yorkist" narrative that rescues Richard from Shakespeare's slander, but her view of women looks much less like More's complex depiction of Elizabeth's legitimate political interventions, and much more like the gaze of Shakespeare's own villainous Richard, whose words about Elizabeth seem to work through Gregory's pen. In spite of Gregory's self-conscious stance as "*not* Shakespeare," Shakespeare's fictionalized history is clearly present in Gregory's account of Elizabeth and her female rivals. While her Richard is innocent of his most horrific crimes, Gregory's women are made newly guilty. It is the Shakespearean Richard's perspectives on these women that permeate Gregory novels; she gives breath to that particular facet of Shakespeare's Richard even as her novels profess to recuperate both the maligned king and his female enemies.

Gregory's representation of Elizabeth in The Cousins' War series suggests we might widen our analyses of Shakespearean appropriations to consider why authors and critics want to break works away from associations with the Shakespearean rhizome. It also suggests we might pay closer attention to how defining "Shakespeare" as a collective rhizome erases Shakespeare's appropriations of his own sources. The unintended consequences of this erasure of adaptation, like those of Elizabeth's curses, are to strike at the wrong people. The accidental presence of Shakespeare's Richard in Gregory's adaptations is most importantly a reminder that determinations of "Shakespeare" and "*not* Shakespeare"—like determinations of "proper" history and "chick lit"—are imbued with cultural power and deployed to locate texts in opposition to or under the aegis of Shakespearean cultural capital. These determinations are used in ways both strategic and censorious and often have little to do with the presence of "Shakespeare" visible within a set of texts. I have attended to the presence and erasure of Renaissance historiography and Shakespearean appropriation in Gregory's series not to identify Gregory's stance as inaccurate or her work as inadequately feminist, nor to patrol a specific patch of historical ground. Rather, I want to suggest that the patch of historical ground Gregory and Shakespeare occupy is in fact populated by complex early modern historical narratives about royal women that are frequently hidden from us—even when we are looking for them—by larger cultural attitudes and assumptions about Shakespeare, gender, genre, and the process of creating history.

Notes

1. *The Cousins' War* series titles include *The White Queen* (2009), *The Red Queen* (2010), *The Lady of the Rivers* (2011), *The Kingmaker's Daughter* (2012), *The White Princess* (2013), and *The King's Curse* (2014).
2. The absence Gregory identifies is a subjective one. While early modern chroniclers are charged by literary critics with negatively representing Elizabeth Woodville Grey, their depictions are often more complex than such assessments suggest. For modern historians' growing interest in these royal women, see Baldwin's *Elizabeth Woodville* and Hilton.
3. Unlike Starkey, Tom Betteridge identifies Gregory's novel about Anne Boleyn as radical but nonetheless valuable because it reminds us, as Barthes does, that history is a "process of creating positive meaning" rather than an objective endeavor (219).
4. Osborne argues that such romance novels' appropriations "reinforce[e] and challeng[e] the culturally conservative codes of the romance" while raising questions about the divergent cultural statuses afforded to Shakespeare and the romance novel (47). Tamara Whyte sees in these appropriations a "postmodern blurring of high and low cultural forms," but solidifies Shakespeare as "high" literature when she reassures her readers that romance "doesn't bring Shakespeare down to the masses" (221–222).
5. I analyze chronicle histories' depictions of Elizabeth and Shakespeare's revisions in "*Richard III*'s Forelives." See also Finn.
6. The "dagger story" recreated here emerges from Antonio Cornazanno's ca. 1468 poem *De Mulieribus admirandis* and Dominic Mancini's 1483 *The Usurpation of Richard the Third*. Cook, Seward, and Baldwin detail its incorporation into later chronicle histories. Fahy, Finn, Higgenbotham, and Yoran address the similarities between More's account of Elizabeth's refusal of Edward and these dagger stories but note that More neither describes an attempted rape nor an apocryphal dagger. For the text of Cornazzano's poem, see Fahy.
7. Even in the dagger stories of Mancini and Cornazzano used as sources for this scene, Elizabeth's chastity prompts Edward to see her spousal worthiness rather than angering him.
8. Gregory draws on an accusation, leveled by Richard III in *Titulus Regius*, that Jacquetta and Elizabeth used witchcraft to instigate the marriage. See Gregory, Baldwin, and Jones 196–197; Seward 121; and Finn 21.

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CHAPTER 16

Dramas of Recognition: *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Warm Bodies* as Accidental Shakespeare

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In January 2016, while visiting the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, I stumbled into an exhibition entitled *Man Ray—Human Equations: A Journey from Mathematics to Shakespeare*. Together, this Shakespeare sighting and the work it documents offer a paradigm for "accidental Shakespeare." Man Ray began by photographing a collection of mathematical models that were on display at the Institute Henri Poincaré in Paris. "Otherworldly" and mysterious, these "black-and-white photographs of the abstract models were pristine, disciplined studies in surfaces and shadows" (*Man Ray* 21). In Los Angeles twelve years later (1948), he "transformed" the photographs once again "into a series of intriguing and highly provocative paintings," each of which then "was assigned a title of a play by William Shakespeare"; collectively, they were known as the *Shakespearean Equations* (41).

With the artist working from photographs and thus at a temporal and geographical distance from the original objects—they remained in a storage room in Paris—the paintings' identities emerged from a dialectic between stubbornly abstract forms and the accidental effects that result from applying paint to canvas. In his painting of *King Lear*, for instance, Man Ray alludes to the play's obsession with scalding, futile tears by

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"means of a diluted pigment dripping down the canvas," presumably a "fortuitous effect" that "provides inspiration for the choice of title" (55). The vagaries of pigment determine, post hoc, the identity of the painting's subject. The relationship between name and painting, however, is not always so clear. Although Man Ray originally thought that the model chosen to represent *Hamlet* "resembled a stylized geometric white skull" (54), he wound up adding a spot of rosy pink to the object's lower right corner and voilà—we have instead the breast of Ophelia. With a touch of the brush and the creator's prerogative of naming his works, Man Ray enacts an allegory of the womb/tomb, sex/death binary so often associated with *Hamlet*; he entices us, as well, into identifying in this object the seeds of a classic Freudian narrative by way of Shakespeare.

How True! Dramas of Recognition

In *Human Equations*, Man Ray initiates and invites us into a drama of recognition, by which he assigns a name to a form, leaving us to sort out its "deeper" meaning. Rhetorician Richard A. Lanham would call him an artist of human behavior, engaging viewers in the play of "at" and "through" vision through the trope he calls *oscillatio*, courting our human desire to find pattern and meaning in the world and then subjecting that same allegorizing impulse to irony (xiii). (Really, *that* is Ophelia's breast?) The verb "to recognize" involves a rich array of meanings, ranging from the (physical) ability to see and (cognitive) ability to understand to the more ethical senses of accepting a person or thing *as* someone or something (e.g., woman, American, or homeless), and even, in a stronger sense, honoring them.[1] Recent criticism has focused mostly on the ethical implications of recognition. Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, for instance, defines recognition as an ethical and political act, with "misrecognition" through stereotypes a means of stigmatizing subaltern groups as the "other" (25–73, *passim)*. Emanuel Levinas also grounds ethical relations in acts of recognition produced through face-to-face encounters that strive to achieve a reciprocal relationship between self and other—to acknowledge a relationship with the other, and at the same time, the alterity within oneself.[2] It is important, however, to recognize that these relations go beyond interpersonal empathy. As Alexa Huang and Elizabeth Rivlin point out in their introduction to *Shakespeare and the Ethics of Appropriation*, Martin Buber's "I-thou" relationship, which is implicit in Levinas's formulation of ethical

relations, is predicated on the simultaneous establishment of an "I–it" relationship (3–4). Objectification therefore is not antithetical to, but a part of recognition. We experience a dialectic between identification *of* and identification *with* others of all kinds.

Because an ethical identification with the other depends on the basic ability to *see* that other as "some-thing," acts of recognition are embodied and thus involve perception and cognition as much as a discourse of ethics. To "recognize" Ophelia's breast in an ovoid shape with a rosy patch in the bottom right, in the case of Man Ray's painting, and to connect this stand-in for Ophelia's breast to the sexual dynamics of *Hamlet* involves the psychology of perception, an oscillation between "making" (projection of a visual schema) and "matching" (taking account of disjunctive details that violate the schema and making the requisite adjustments) as much as it does an education in psychoanalytic theory.

E.H. Gombrich's classic discussion of the topic in *Art and Illusion* begins with a now-famous optical illusion of the rabbit-duck. You can see the shape as either rabbit or duck, but never both at once. Gombrich elaborates on this model to explicate more generally the way that perception works by making and matching. For instance, a draughtsman sketching from life a beached whale gives the beast ears, in compliance with available schemata of mammals (79–81). He "makes" the picture based on the schema he has at hand, and only after matching the animal against that shape could the artist then correct his error and eliminate the ear. In terms of Lanham's oscillation between "at" and "through" vision, this process takes as its point of departure a physical, cognitive, and emotional recognition that is largely responsive rather than contemplative, rooted in basic human processes.[3] Rhetorically speaking, recognition-as-perception is also an effect of metaphorical language and thinking. In Book 3 of his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle assigns to metaphor the power of *energeia*, or "bringing" things—specifically, things in motion—"before the eye." This perceptual capability has cognitive consequences, supporting the ability to make us see some-*thing* as something else—in effect, a form of recognition as misrecognition. Effects of *energeia* have the conviction of proof; they make us say, "How true," but how "wrong" I was previously (3.11.1.1411b, 3.11.6.1412a). From metaphorically-induced recognition comes a new, if contingent, "truth." This drama of recognition will be examined in the remainder of the essay through two limit cases: Guillermo del Toro's film *Pan's Labyrinth* and Isaac Marion's zombie novel *Warm Bodies*, which through accidents of

cognition and perception become identified as Shakespearean appropriations. They exemplify just how thin the line is between "Shakespeare" and "Not Shakespeare."

What's in a Name? *Pan's Labyrinth* as *Hamlet*

One winter evening my husband and I were multi-tasking, playing gin rummy while simultaneously glancing at a movie on Netflix. Gradually, the film became more absorbing; the dealer forgot to deal, and the game died a quiet death. We had settled into watching, when suddenly I realized: "This film is an appropriation of *Hamlet*!" Once I recognized *Hamlet* in Guillermo del Toro's *Pan's Labyrinth*, proving the point was child's play.

Pan's Labyrinth is a beautiful piece of magic realism that features a young girl's heroic *bildungsroman*, a journey toward death and reunion set in 1944 Spain. The child, whose widowed mother has remarried a fascist officer, comes with the now-pregnant mother to live with her evil stepfather at his post in an abandoned mill. Against a background of political repression and resistance, the girl enters a parallel world, where she is set three tasks by a wily faun. During the course of the child's forays into magical adventures to satisfy the first two tasks, her mother, already confined to a wheelchair, becomes increasingly ill. While fulfilling her second task, the girl disobeys the faun and eats two grapes from a banquet, at which point she is pursued and nearly caught by a child-devouring monster whose eyes, memorably, are embedded in his hands. The disgusted faun rejects the girl.

Matters go from bad to worse when the Captain discovers under his wife's bed a mandrake, given earlier to the girl by the faun to protect both mother and unborn child; the mother throws it into the fire and instantly goes into an agonizing labor, her shrieks mingling with those of the writhing mandrake that the child had so carefully fed and tended. The mother dies, but the Captain's infant son survives. The faun, meanwhile, gives the girl one "last chance" to be reunited in the parallel world with her parents. As the conflict between the Captain's troops and local resistance fighters comes to a head, the girl escapes with her newborn brother from the mill to the faun's labyrinth, the Captain pursuing her with murderous intent. At the entrance to her magic kingdom, the girl refuses to hand the child over to the faun, who claims to need just a few

drops of innocent blood to open the magic portal. The faun accedes to the girl's choice but harshly dooms her to aging, death, and oblivion in the world of mortals. The girl is then shot by her evil stepfather who, confronted by the resistance fighters, yields the boy to them and dies with the galling knowledge that the child will never know his parentage. Meanwhile, the dying girl has a final vision, in which the faun returns with the news that she has indeed fulfilled the final task, a test of character that she performed successfully by choosing the brother's safety over her own happiness. The girl steps into a shining light and is greeted lovingly by her deceased parents, now restored to their true status as King and Queen.

From this plot description, *Pan's Labyrinth* does not resemble *Hamlet* in any obvious way. Things change, however, with a recognition that the heroine is named Ofelia. Linked to Shakespeare's character by their common name, del Toro's Ofelia suffers that beleaguered daughter's loss of family and her ultimate fate, death. Like Ophelia, she is an innocent victim of political intrigue, that rotten something at the Spanish nation's heart. But there is something distinctly different about del Toro's Ofelia. As a child, she remains safely outside the sexual dynamic that drives Shakespeare's Ophelia to madness; her brother, too, is a pre-sexual and pre-political infant, whose innocence can command the sister's complete devotion and sacrifice. Protected from the adulterous world (in both senses) that taints the youth of *Hamlet*, Ofelia in *Pan's Labyrinth* is remarkably free from the enervating waste that has plagued Shakespearean versions of Ophelia, real and fictional, from the nineteenth century right up until the popular self-help book, *Reviving Ophelia*.[4] Del Toro's Ofelia never needs reviving because she never grows up.

Furthermore, in the adventures of del Toro's Ofelia the iconography of Shakespeare's Ophelia is reworked to make the child heroine mistress of her own narrative. While Ophelia's white garments finally drag her down to muddy death, at the beginning of del Toro's film Ofelia muddies her party dress (to the Captain's rage and her mother's consternation) while on a successful, if dangerous, mission to achieve the first of her tasks, retrieving a key from the innards of the gigantic toad that is slowly killing its host, an ancient oak. Ofelia evokes her Shakespearean prototype again at the end of the film as she lies motionless in the rain at the edge of the labyrinth, a bullet through her back, her white garments,

limp, outstretched, bloody hand, and vacant gaze making her at last recognizable as the tragic Ophelia of post-Romantic Shakespeare. But in the film's final twist, Ofelia rises from her death trance, her soaked dress transformed into royal red velvet and her hands miraculously free of the blood that linked her metonymically to evil figures ranging from the Captain as torturer to the monster with his eyes in his hands. Del Toro's Ofelia needs neither society's maimed rites nor Gertrude's eulogy; she has completed her heroic journey.

By making Ofelia his film's hero, a role generally withheld from girls by mainstream cinema, del Toro simultaneously casts her, in Shakespearean terms, as both Ophelia and Hamlet: Hamlet not as a brooding, melancholy prince, but as the sly haunter of Denmark's dark corners, waiting for his cue to act. Ofelia-as-Hamlet is thus a revenge heroine who outdoes her Shakespearean prototype: while Hamlet successfully wreaks mayhem in Claudius's Denmark, his demise marks the end of the elder Hamlet's line; Ofelia, by contrast, delivers up the lost heir successfully to Spain's freedom fighters, who will raise him in proper folkloric anonymity. And whereas Hamlet may be sung to his rest by the music of sweet angels, Ofelia actually reaches an afterlife. Best of all, she repairs the family structure fractured in both cases by an evil stepfather, the foul usurper of both state and family. The final tableau of *Pan's Labyrinth* shows the beloved daughter welcomed back into a nuclear family untainted by betrayal, sexuality, and tyranny. For her, to reverse a standard Shakespearean trope, the tomb is redeemed as the womb.

Del Toro's Ofelia is a hybrid of two *Hamlet* figures, a bi-sexual victim/hero, but as a literary "child" of the age of appropriation, she also achieves her status as a character indirectly. The tie that binds Shakespearean text and appropriation is tenuous, indeed, in *Pan's Labyrinth*—nothing more than the name Ofelia. An appropriation that wishes to acknowledge its Shakespearean debt, such as Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres*, often signals that connection by multiple character identifications. (In Smiley's revision of *King Lear*, for instance, Goneril becomes Ginny, Regan is Rose, and Cordelia is Caroline.) Pinning a literary identification on a single name strains the structures of identification, if not to the breaking point, at least perilously close to incoherence. Finally, like the lost prince whose rescue concludes del Toro's adventure, *Pan's Labyrinth*, as an appropriation of *Hamlet*, lacks an authenticating genealogy. Del Toro's villains, such as the evil handyman Jacinto in

Devil's Backbone and the Captain in *Pan's Labyrinth*, have been referred to loosely as embodiments of an evil that is Shakespearean in its proportions. In the absence of direct authorial testimony, textual allusions, or strong structural parallels, however, a claim for appropriation becomes exponentially more difficult to sustain.

But such a claim is precisely what I want to make for *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Hamlet*. The textual metaphors through which scholars define relations among texts in a dynamic of appropriation reinforce, perhaps unintentionally, the primacy of chronology and intention in adaptation. Linda Hutcheon, for instance, thinks in terms of a palimpsest whose spatial layers are multiple, but nevertheless register the temporal priority of some layers over others (21–22 and *passim*). And in *Adaptation and Appropriation*, Julie Sanders cites J. Hillis Miller's version of the paratext, a spatial model that elides questions of temporal priority between a so-called "source" and appropriation; but she also uses the botanical metaphor of grafting, which implies organic growth and thus a temporal progression (3–4, 12). By contrast, what is required for a definition of appropriation that can accommodate the elusive connections between *Hamlet* and *Pan's Labyrinth* is an a posteriori model of appropriation, one that understands an identification between texts historically as a mapping of one onto another through indirect means, or even by accident. Such a model would abrogate any need to claim direct kinship between *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Hamlet*, allowing instead for the idea that a connection is established by way of multiple discourses, ranging from iconographic constructions of Ophelia over the last two centuries, to the fairy tales and their critics that del Toro claims as inspiration for his film, to the body of del Toro's own work. Such a claim also rests, ultimately, on an act of recognition that is perceptual, rooted in the body and in cognitive and emotional processes of identification. For me, that fleeting moment in which *Pan's Labyrinth* crystallized as a *Hamlet* appropriation—when I could see the film as a rabbit, as it were, rather than a duck—is not a verbal, but a visual one. When little Ofelia, dressed once again in white, lies dying and drenched with rain, she is connected to Shakespeare's doomed maiden by way of the trope in recent Shakespeare films, adopted from mainstream Hollywood movies, of associating violated women with water and drowning; Charles Ross has called them Shakespeare's "underwater women." Such a moment is an accident of textual and cinema history.

"Slow on the Uptake": How *Warm Bodies* Became *Romeo and Juliet*

The case of Isaac Marion's mass culture zombie novel, *Warm Bodies*, and the film based on it unfolds differently. With *Pan's Labyrinth*, the drama of recognition I have described was my own, private and individual; for *Warm Bodies*, by contrast, the debt to Shakespeare was articulated and elaborated only in retrospect by its readers in electronic venues, until the status of *Warm Bodies* as an appropriation of Shakespeare's love tragedy finally became institutionalized within educational circles. I was about one-third of my way through the book when a reference to the novel as being derived from *Romeo and Juliet* came to my attention, and this time, I was the one for whom recognition came late; nothing I had read to that point indicated that slowly degenerating zombie "R" and his human love Julie were descended from Shakespeare's canonical lovers. But once the connection was made—once again, through the tenuous device of parallel names—the analogy not only took shape for me, but gained traction generally in the popular blogosphere.

From the start, Marion himself owned the Shakespearean connection, although he downplayed its importance to his book: "It wasn't really meant to be *Romeo and Juliet*; I just noticed some parallels and decided to make that a subtext. It's more of a little wink to the audience than a whole deep element of the book" ("Interview with Isaac Marion about *Warm Bodies*"). Readers, however, were slow to pick up on the parallels between *Warm Bodies* and *Romeo and Juliet*. At the time of publication (2011), Nisi Shawl's review in the *Seattle Times* noted the affiliation between Marion's novel and Shakespeare's love tragedy, but that early notice proved to have little stickiness. Neither did Nancy Fontaine's acknowledgment of the Shakespearean debt in a review from April of that year.[5] With these exceptions, the earliest references to *Warm Bodies* as *Romeo and Juliet* that I have found involve not the book, but the 2013 film starring Nicholas Hoult and Teresa Palmer. The *New York Times Review* from January 31, the date of the film's release, noted the plot's affinity with the Pyramus and Thisbe archetype, but went no further in a Shakespearean direction (Dargis). Two other reviews from January 31, 2013, however, assume and articulate the connection with *Romeo and Juliet*: Richard Scott Larson said that the Shakespeare connection is subtle enough to be "enjoyable," and Bob Mondello, broadcasting on NPR's *All Things Considered*, said: "It's a romantic-comedy

riff on *Romeo and Juliet*, involving zombies—a rom-zom-com, if you will."

Given these critics' identification of *Warm Bodies* as Shakespearean appropriation, the filmmaker's failure to capitalize on the connection seems puzzling. The official film trailer gives no hint of a Shakespearean connection, nor in retrospect, did the trailer concocted, on a tight budget, for the book itself ("Warm Bodies Official Trailer # 1"; for the novel trailer, see Smith). Nevertheless, the Internet, both highbrow and popular, soon picked up the thread and developed the Shakespearean theme. On February 1, 2013 there appeared a posting on the site *Io9: We Come from the Future*, a sci-fi blog sponsored by Gawker Media. Lauren Davis's movie review there asserts confidently: "What if Juliet was a post-apocalyptic scavenger, Romeo was a zombie who ate Paris' brains, and Mercutio was a monosyllabic Rob Corddry? Zombie rom-com *Warm Bodies* takes us to a post-apocalyptic future in which zombies stalk the Earth eating human brains—at least until one walking corpse, R, falls for Julie, one of the last living girls." Erik Kain's more official review, appearing in *Forbes* on February 22, is pleased to find that the film has more affinity to Shakespeare's play than to *Twilight* and continues: "I suppose I'm just slow on the uptake, but I didn't realize that *Warm Bodies* was an adaptation of 'Romeo & Juliet' until the balcony scene, when the sentient zombie protagonist 'R' sneaks into the fortified human encampment to warn Julie of encroaching danger." On March 12, three postings solidify the identification. *One-elevenbooks*—the review blog of a writer and artist with aspirations to both renovate her farm and found a publishing firm—offers a sensible, and more substantive, essay on the parallels between the film and the play ([Arterberry]). Another amateur review on *HC: Her Campus* also rehearses the similarities and concludes: "I found the parallels throughout the film to be subtly placed, and the creative take on the traditional story was refreshing. Yet, I found myself bored several times throughout the movie, and it wasn't until the end that I was actually finally engulfed by the action and romance" (Robertson). My survey is by no means exhaustive, but the pattern is clear: within six weeks of *Warm Bodies*'s release, the affiliation between the film and *Romeo and Juliet* became real. Its place in the canon of Shakespeare/Not Shakespeare is confirmed by a brief, largely derisive mention in Richard Burt and Julian Yates's *What's the Worst Thing You Can Do to Shakespeare?*

Once Shakespeare's tragic lovers are spotted in the film of *Warm Bodies*, *Romeo and Juliet* finally begins to be recognized within Marion's novel as a potential source for that film. When Vanessa Berbin mentioned Shakespeare in her 2012 interview with Marion for *The Huffington Post* prior to the film's release, that theme was not elaborated upon in the subsequent question-and-answer with Marion, which might suggest that the parallel was accepted but not considered to be of particular interest. After fans noted the parallels between film and Shakespeare, however, the more scholarly arm of the blogosphere also began to take notice of those between novel and play. *Bardfilm*, a microblog from "K.J.," identified as a professor of English and Literature at a small Christian liberal arts college, discusses the novel's (rather than primarily the film's) debt to Shakespeare, and even reproduces the first page of the "balcony scene" as evidence. A piece on the website of YALSA, the Young Adult Library Services Association, offers not Levine's film, but Marion's novel, as a contemporary take on and palatable introduction to the themes of Shakespeare's play and recommends the Folger Shakespeare edition for those readers ready to tackle the original ("From Classic to Contemporary").[6] Finally, a posting on *Goodreads*, posted "about seven months" before June 14, 2016, asks: "Are R and Julie based off *Romeo and Juliet*. Will you be bringing any other Shakespearean themes/motifs to your next book(s)?" Isaac Marion's response at this point in time is worth quoting in full:

> There is a Shakespeare motif running through *Warm Bodies*, although it's meant to be more of a winking allusion and definitely not a "zombie remake" of *Romeo and Juliet*. I actually didn't set out to reference Shakespeare in the beginning. I noticed the parallels halfway through the writing process and found it fascinating that there are themes so deeply ingrained in the human consciousness that they keep popping up throughout history, by design or by accident. *Romeo and Juliet* itself is a remake of a remake of a remake, going all the way back to ancient times with Ovid's "Pyramus and Thisbe." There are timeless ideas in there—love thriving against safety and reason, the suffocating narrowness of our labeled identities, the power of youthful imprudence to disrupt the social order—and I love that they're strong enough to find their way into my post-apocalyptic zombie story without me even realizing it. Once I did realize it, I decided to run with it, so I named the characters accordingly and scattered cute little references throughout. Although despite the reference, R's name is in fact NOT Romeo…. (Staples).

Isaac Marion's account of discovering Shakespeare's tragedy in his evolving fiction and then adjusting details to solidify the analogy sounds like the inverse of Man Ray applying a rosy patch of paint to an abstract form and finding in it Ophelia's breast.

I was as "slow on the uptake" as *Forbes*'s reviewer Kain, but once alerted to the status of *Warm Bodies* as Shakespearean appropriation, I could easily find in the novel the same parallels with *Romeo and Juliet* that bloggers had noted. The zombie romantic lead "R," who can no longer articulate or even remember his own name, is Romeo; Julie is, as one blogger noted, about as close to Juliet as you can get without giving away the game entirely. M, R's friend, in hindsight, bears a resemblance to Mercutio, if not a particularly strong one. Hapless Perry, the boyfriend of Julie, whom R initially kills and whose digested brains support and sustain his transition back to humanity, is, of course, Paris. By the time we are introduced to Nora, Julie's friend back in the stadium that serves as the human stronghold, we are well-primed to accept her in the role of Juliet's Nurse. Shakespeare's "cankered hate" between two Italian households is translated into a war between the surviving humans and the zombies that eat them. As was the case with *Pan's Labyrinth*, the identification is triggered by nothing more substantial than a constellation of names—in this case, even, names in the minimalist form of initials.

In another critical twist, the Shakespeareanization of the film *Warm Bodies* depends more on cinematic than on textual evidence. On November 27, 2013, Pieter Ketelaar posted a brief clip on YouTube of *Warm Bodies*'s "balcony scene" intended "for educational use in teaching the play" ("'Warm Bodies' 'Romeo and Juliet' Balcony Scene"). Viewed up close and in isolation, the scene is indeed redolent of *Romeo and Juliet*—that is, of Franco Zeffirelli's iconic film version of *Romeo and Juliet*. As we approach the balcony with R, the light through the window on Julie's balcony shines out from above. When Julie comes out and perches on the railing, R utters a single word: "Julie." Like her Shakespearean forebear, Julie chastises her Romeo and warns him of the danger of his situation: "The people here, they're not like me. If they see you, you'll be killed." An off-camera summons from Julie's friend Nora punctuates the lovers' hushed conversation to evoke the trademark calls from Zeffirelli's Nurse. The verbal exchange between Julie and R is a plain-language translation of the more florid exchange between Shakespeare's lovers, but without the set, soft music from Marco

Beltrami and Buck Sanders, and long zoom shot-reverse shots between the elevated girl and boy standing exaggeratedly far below on the ground, the connection would be difficult to recognize. In fact, Levine's balcony scene establishes a connection between Nicolas Hoult as R and not so much Shakespeare's Romeo, as Leonard Whiting's Romeo. Pale with dark smudges under his eyes but alight with wonder at the sight of his true love, Hoult is transformed from shuffling, blood-stained zombie loser into the glowing, fresh-faced youth of Zeffirelli's 1968 film. R becomes human, ironically enough, by transforming himself into a filmic simulacrum of Shakespeare's character.

Although I have not found discussion of it in the talk surrounding *Warm Bodies*'s affiliation with *Romeo and Juliet*, a second scene reinforces the connection by linking R and Julie to two other filmic Shakespearean lovers: Claire Danes and Leonardo DiCaprio. When making their final escape from the stadium, with armed humans in close pursuit, Julie and R half jump, half fall from a great height. In the novel, the still-not-quite-human R takes a big hit as he shelters Julie from the unyielding ground. In Levine's film, by contrast, R and Julie plunge in slow motion to the bottom of a large water cistern. In a variation on Baz Luhrmann's re-scripting of the balcony scene, Juliet rises to the surface, but R, himself "slow on the uptake," lies lifeless at the bottom. Julie has to dive down and rescue her Romeo before they can engage in the expected watery kiss.[7] As Natalie Loper discusses in this volume, an actor's star-body can help to link different films, as is the case of Leonardo DiCaprio in *Romeo + Juliet* and *The Great Gatsby*, with the swimming pool scenes further cementing the tie. In the case of *Warm Bodies*, the actor's absorption of not one, but two filmic Romeos is appropriate to the hero's zombie condition. Having taken on the role and appearance of Leonard Whiting, R solidifies his Shakespearean identity by "ingesting" Leonardo DiCaprio's role as Romeo. Compounding Whiting's Romeo with DiCaprio's completes the regeneration of R's slacker identity, as he retains his millennial essence but gains an even prettier face—no longer in need of the heavy makeup whose application at the hands of Julie and Nora has amused YouTube audiences so much.

In Levine's film, R becomes recognizable as Romeo largely through a post-textual Shakespearean congeries of filmic citation.[8] Ironically, however, none of the commentary on *Warm Bodies* that I have cited notes that the novel, rather than the film, offers evidence of the kind that critics traditionally have valued: a direct and self-conscious quotation from

Romeo and Juliet. And yet, there is one in the so-called balcony scene. Recording a journal entry in her tape recorder while R watches from the shadows, Julie muses about how, after her escape back home, she misses him and laments the existential divide between them: "I mean, isn't 'zombie' just a silly name we came up with for a state of being we don't understand? What's in a name, right? If we were … If there was some kind of … " (loc. 1766).[9] The failure of zombies to remember or articulate their own names and to remember the names of others is a constant theme in the novel. Even the reflective R, unlike his Shakespearean prototype, lacks the quintessential facility with language for which Shakespeare's young lovers are celebrated. He says, "In my mind I am eloquent; I can climb intricate scaffolds of words to reach the highest cathedral ceilings and plant my thoughts. But when I open my mouth, it all collapses. So far my personal record is four rolling syllables before some … thing … jams. And I may be the most eloquent zombie in this airport" (loc. 186). Translating the poetry of her Shakespearean predecessor into plain speech, Julie, like another zombie, just stutters and winds up throwing the recorder off the balcony in a fit of frustration, so that the famous line "what's in a name?" passes by unrecognized by R himself and, apparently, by the readers of Marion's novel. The film of *Warm Bodies* can help us "see" *Romeo and Juliet* in the novel, but not to recognize even a blatant quotation from the play's most famous scene. "What's in a name," as a Shakespearean phrase, is merely accidental, a textual citation that is not only lost in translation from novel to film but remains an unheard echo in the novel itself.

Conclusion

An accident, in the Aristotelian sense, is a non-necessary attribute, something not essential to the identity of any person or thing. To recognize Shakespeare in any artistic artifact is, in effect, to deny that the analogy between them that cements that identification is accidental, in either the sense of being "inessential" or in the more common meaning, the result of a mishap. Yet as this essay has suggested, those acts of recognition are often grounded in the inessential, the quixotic, the stray look or thought. *Pan's Labyrinth* achieves recognition as a Shakespearean appropriation accidentally in my own narrative, as a kind of unexpected epiphany. This perception is supported narratologically through an accumulation of folkloric characters, narrative memes, and a single

cinematic moment that collectively constitute what Linda Hutcheon calls a "heterocosm" (14). Yet the identification between *Hamlet* and *Pan's Labyrinth* rests, in the end, on a single name. *Warm Bodies*, by contrast, multiplies parallels in nomenclature but achieves the status of Shakespearean appropriation primarily through the novel's paratext, both the film's interpretation of its narrative and the critical commentary on the blogosphere surrounding both novel and film. It is verbal quotation that, paradoxically, becomes accidental rather than essential to its status as appropriation.

In the end, what makes *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Warm Bodies* interesting as Shakespearean appropriations is that portion of them that is "not Shakespeare." As Graham Holderness points out in his essay for this volume, "the facts do not make sense, or at least hold very little interest, unless they are elaborated and embroidered." The bare bones of the Shakespearean analogy, once elaborated, become a dead end. What makes R more of a character than a corpse in *Warm Bodies* is the pathos in the details of Marion's narrative—in how the humans scavenge not only for food, but also for the rapidly diminishing supply of medicines; how the tyrannical undead elders, the "bonies," organize the wandering zombies into marriages and families; how both cultures teach their young the mechanics of ruthlessly slaughtering the enemy; how a cute German Shepherd puppy, quite naturally, and nonchalantly, takes a bite out of the dead flesh of R's calf. Concomitantly, what makes *Pan's Labyrinth* so powerful are the fantastic details of the girl heroine's journey set against the grim realities of wartime Spain. Finding the appropriation within such a wealth of narrative riches is the surprise brought on by the recognition of Shakespeare in its midst—as Aristotle might put it, "How true, but I never saw it before!" "What's in a name?" then, is an invitation to recognition that accompanies moments of Shakespearean appropriation, whether they are found in abstract sculpture, high-art film, or popular "rom-zom-com."

Notes

1. For "recognize, v. 1," here are the three definitions to which I refer: "To perceive clearly; to realize, understand, or apprehend that recognize" (3c); "To acknowledge, consider, or accept (a person or thing) as or to be something" (2c); and "To show official appreciation of (a person, achievement, etc.); to reward or honor formally" (2e) (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

2. For an explication of the role played in Levinas's ethics by face-to-face encounters, see Chap. 3 of Michael Mangan, *The Cambridge Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas*, loc. 1527–1528.
3. A visual representation of Lanham's "At/Through" matrix can be found in *The Economics of Attention*, 158.
4. See, for instance, Elaine Showalter's landmark analysis of Ophelia as a study in nineteenth-century hysteria; see also Mary Pipher, *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Lives of Adolescent Girls*.
5. More typical of early reviews was the notation of the novel's similarity to the teen romance *Twilight*. See, for instance, "Review of *Warm Bodies*, by Isaac Marion."
6. See also "Warm Bodies by Isaac Marion—review."
7. Early web reviews of the novel, even within the niche genre of YA vampire novels, failed to pick up on the Shakespearean echoes. Early reviews of film, even those that noted and reproduced screen shots of the watery escape and kiss near the end of the novel, did not pick up on any Shakespearean parallels. See, for instance, Rawden.
8. "Post-textual" is Douglas Lanier's term for appropriation/adaptations that bypass Shakespeare's language.
9. In the film, the verbal exchange between R and Julie is radically shortened and does not contain this musing on names.

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CHAPTER 17

Shakespeare / Not Shakespeare: Afterword

Douglas M. Lanier

The opposition "Shakespeare/Not Shakespeare" would seem to be the most elementary classificational move one might possibly make. Yet it poses, I think, one of the more challenging theoretical problems in current Shakespeare studies. Undoubtedly we need to be able to make this fundamental distinction if our object of study, "Shakespeare," is to have any clear disciplinary shape. And yet the old means for making this distinction—Shakespeare is the text, and "not Shakespeare" is everything else—seems no longer so firmly or so easily to hold. The disciplinary field of "Shakespeare" has expanded dramatically in recent decades. It includes the published scripts of Shakespeare considered in their original historical contexts, long regarded axiomatically as the center of the discipline. But "Shakespeare" now includes performances, translations, transmediations, adaptations, appropriations, and even memes, not just in English but also in myriad languages from around the world.

This disciplinary expansion—some might say, erosion—springs from a long list of sources. There are the insights of the New Bibliographers, with their problematizing of the notion of a single, ideal Shakespearean script and, more recently, the assertion that some of the scripts we've inherited from the past are collaborations, that is to say, demonstrably

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"not Shakespeare," or "not-all-Shakespeare." There is the work of book historians, who have reminded us that Shakespearean textual documents are always caught up in "not Shakespearean" material pressures of medium, commerce, and circulation. There is the rise of performance criticism, with its rallying cry that Shakespeare "proper" is to be found on the stage, not on the page. There are the insights of cultural materialism, which have stressed the ways in which Shakespeare's material transmission is bound up with political dynamics. There is the profession's embrace of "global Shakespeare," which suggests that what we designate "Shakespeare" cannot be confined to the language in which Shakespeare wrote. There is the pressure of a postmodern sampling aesthetic that puts citation, intertextuality, and adaptation, rather than an older notion of originality, at the heart of the creative enterprise, as well as the triumph of digital media, which has accelerated that sampling aesthetic and made possible a new class of amateur consumer-producers. There is the (re)popularization of Shakespeare in the last decades of the twentieth century, enabled by Shakespeare's affiliation with mass media and pop culture. And, not to put too fine a point on the matter, there is the need for Shakespeare studies, at risk of critically exhausting its core materials, to expand its archive.

On the one hand, it's a brave new world in Shakespeare studies, with work proceeding on many fronts at once and new forms of cross-fertilization flourishing between subfields. But, on the other hand, it would seem that our shared object of study—that to which we give the name "Shakespeare"—has become increasingly unwieldy and ill-defined. Of course, it will always be the case that a few examples challenge boundaries, and it is undoubtedly the case that the distinction between Shakespeare and "not Shakespeare" has shifted over time. But at present we Shakespeareans have not considered the full consequences of including adaptations in our analytic repertoire, about the theoretical problem of how we distinguish Shakespeare from "not Shakespeare." Though I have no definitive answer to this conundrum, I want here tentatively to raise some issues of adaptational theory we Shakespeareans would do well collectively to engage, and, more crucially, to point out the value of raising the issue.

Our identifying of Shakespeare only with the surviving printed documents of his age risks ignoring what is most remarkable about his work: its exceptional capacity to outlive the historical moment of its creation, its status as arguably the greatest artistic success story in the history of

humankind. Shakespeare has become what Foucault calls a "founder of discursivity," a writer who has produced "possibilities and rules for the formation of other texts," including "not only a certain number of analogies but also (and equally important) a certain number of differences" ("What is An Author?", 114).[1] Like other founders of discursivity, Shakespeare has "created the possibility of something other than [his] discourse, *yet something belonging to what [he] founded*" (114, emphasis added). Foucault provides an apt description of Shakespeare's discursive afterlife, but his somewhat enigmatic formulation—"something other than [his] discourse, yet something belonging to what [he] founded"—leaves in place the challenge of the Shakespeare/"not Shakespeare" conundrum: how does something other than his discourse "belong" to what he founded? In what sense "other than his discourse"? In what sense "belong"? What exactly are the analogies and differences that Shakespeare founded (and in what sense did *he* found them, as opposed to *find* them)? What is the relationship between "possibilities" and "rules" ("la possibilité et la règle" ["Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" 831]) for the formation of adaptations?

We have several competing models for thinking about the structure of this transmedial set of objects we call Shakespeare: Foucault's discursive model, which stresses the interconnection between particular discursive modes of truth-making and legitimation, and the institutional agents of those modes; the arboreal model, in which "the Shakespearean text" serves as originary root and all other works are derivative offshoots; the rhizomatic model in which "Shakespeare" is a network of adaptations through a series of decentered relationships or relays, a network with nodes but no originary center (Lanier, "Shakespearean Rhizomatics"); the actor-network model, which places stress upon the aggregated agency of individual producers within the network but remains agnostic on the question of a textual center. But illuminating as debates over the structure of this ever-emergent "Shakespeare" might be, what we've left largely unaddressed is the question of membership in the discourse or set or tree or rhizome or actor-network we call "Shakespeare." How do we tell Shakespeare from "not Shakespeare"? Where to place the slash?

What we need, I think, is a fuller theoretical account of fidelity. Yes, I know, I can hear your collective groan. For at least a generation, participating in a ritual thrashing of fidelity has been the requisite initiation for joining the circle of adaptation criticism. Fidelity discourse has regularly been taken to task for its preoccupation with similarities to the source

to the exclusion of differences, the latter being the focus of attention of most contemporary adaptation critics. (That focus, not coincidentally, homes in on the very traditional concern of criticism, the adaptor's authorial originality.) The principle of fidelity, we are told, tends to establish the priority of text over other media ("it wasn't like the book, or in Shakespeare's case, the script"); fidelity discourse tends to view other influences, intertexts, and material pressures in the adaptational processes as contaminants in the adaptation's proper, faithful relationship to its source; fidelity discourse inevitably imports ethically-coded, prescriptive judgments into the relation between source and text (to be unfaithful to one's source is a matter of failure or a lapse of duty, akin to political treason, religious heresy, or romantic betrayal).[2]

The ideal of absolute fidelity—and we've tended to conceive of fidelity as an ideal of exact duplication—serves to establish a hierarchy of degrees of deviation from the source that too quickly become recoded as aesthetic evaluations: the farther from the source, the worse the adaptation. Indeed, the thrashing of fidelity has become such a cliché that recently the thrashers have themselves come in for a thrashing for beating the same dead horse, that is, for being too much the same (the ironies are rife).[3] Rather than engage in either form of thrashing, I want first to stress axiomatically that without some degree of fidelity, there can be no adaptation. Resemblance to the source is certainly not the only quality an adaptation might have. There are levels, intensities, and types of resemblance, and resemblances can be coincidental or superficial rather than intended or deep. But every adaptation must be shown to have some degree of fidelity to a source for it to count as an adaptation. Adaptation studies simply cannot do without some concept of fidelity, even if charting fidelity may not be the primary or most interesting thing we do.

We might consider, then, several propositions for addressing fidelity and the Shakespeare/"not Shakespeare" problem. The first of those propositions has to do with our notions of the Shakespearean source. Too often we tend to conceptualize Shakespearean adaptation as a matter of direct engagement with the originary Shakespearean text. Indeed, precisely this conception of Shakespeare as source has allowed adaptation to be included in the field of Shakespeare studies. So conceived, Shakespearean adaptation does not threaten the idea that the "real" Shakespeare is the text (in fact, it enhances it), and it establishes the study of Shakespeare adaptation as a comfortably supplementary, subsidiary pursuit.

In reality, however, no adaptation directly engages the Shakespearean text in some pristine state (if it need engage a Shakespearean text at all). Rather, the Shakespeare it adapts—whether a textual Shakespeare or a stage Shakespeare or an audio-visual Shakespeare—is always already itself an adaptation, a Shakespeare that has been edited, performed, transmediated, subjected to multiple prior interpretive operations, incarnated in all manner of formats, from some prior form. The Shakespeare an adaptor encounters is historically and interpretively situated in particular ways and encountered in specific media forms, even when that Shakespeare is a text. In fact, "text"—rather than manuscript or book or pamphlet or Kindle—is the word we use when we want to erase our awareness of medium. And nothing prevents an adaptor from using multiple Shakespearean sources of different eras, cultures, formats, and interpretive orientations in the making of a single Shakespearean adaptation. This is in reality a fairly normal state of affairs. For this reason, the source for any Shakespearean adaptation is best imagined as a network—or rhizome—of prior Shakespearean adaptations, with the adaptation tapping into multiple nodes in that network. It is on that point that I part with Jim Casey's textual conception of "the real" Shakespeare in his fascinating discussion of *Romeo x Juliet*. That networked "Shakespeare" might include but is not limited to what we loosely call the Shakespearean text, loosely because that "text" is in fact multiple objects that are not identical to each other. Nevertheless, it is to the Shakespeare network and not to a single originary text that a Shakespearean adaptation establishes some relationship of fidelity.

The second principle of fidelity is this: necessarily, faithfulness to "Shakespeare the rhizome" is always selective. Because of our situated perspectives, we encounter that huge Shakespeare network always in partial form, and it contains elements that are, as Foucault suggests, contradictory and mutually exclusive. In the process of adapting Shakespeare, the adaptor fastens on a particular element or elements of the Shakespearean network they encounter, making those the object of their adaptational focus. Those elements might be a specific item within the Shakespearean aggregate, or particular qualities in that item, or qualities shared among several items. Deleuze speaks of this as seizing upon potentiality. But the process involves Shakespearean adaptors identifying what they see as essentially, irreducibly Shakespearean and leaving out as "not Shakespeare" that which seems superfluous, extraneous, irrelevant, inessential. In his discussion of the continuing popularity of

Shakespearean comedy, Samuel Johnson identifies an analogous process at work. Johnson observes that the survival of Shakespeare's comedy is threatened by his reliance upon turns of phrase or quirky personalities that are too particular to Shakespeare's cultural moment (a problem of topicality to which much comedy is prone). But, Johnson claims, the essence of Shakespearean comedy does not consist of those superficial "particular forms" but rather of the underlying "discriminations of true passion":

> As [Shakespeare's] personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places; they are natural, and therefore durable. The adventitious peculiarities of personal habits are only superficial dyes, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tinct, without any remains of former lustre; but the discriminations of true passion are the colours of nature; they pervade the whole mass and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance which combined them; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay (Johnson 128–129).

The impersonal passage of time, he suggests, removes "the adventitious peculiarities of personal habits" from Shakespeare's comedy like stains from a fabric, revealing the essence beneath, what Johnson calls the indelible "colours of nature." Of course, what fashions the essential Shakespeare in this famous passage is not the action of time, but Johnson himself. He completes this process of selective essentialization by suggesting that the "discriminations of true passion" "pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them" (128), denying that those "discriminations" might themselves come to be regarded as superficialities that could be washed away by time. The superfluous "body" of comic "peculiarities" serves only as a material means for exhibiting that essential Shakespearean spirit, even though paradoxically the spirit saturates them all. Johnson's thinking is profoundly metonymic, a matter of taking a part for the whole and then mapping that part—now regarded as Shakespeare's essential spirit—back onto the whole, discarding or eliding everything he regards as "not-essentially-Shakespeare."

The selective essentialization of Shakespeare to which Johnson subjects Shakespeare is, I want to argue, analogous to what happens during the process of adaptation. A Shakespearean adaptation fastens upon one particular element or instantiation of the "Shakespeare network" (or some group of particulars from that network), and then treats those elements as quintessentially Shakespearean, containing or exemplifying "the spirit of Shakespeare"; those elements regarded as inessential are discarded or elided. It is in that sense that every adaptation actively projects—rather than passively reflects—its source(s), after which the adaptor can then strike a particular attitude—reverent, ambivalent, revisionary, hostile—toward that projected source.

Some corollaries flow from this conception. First, since each adaptation potentially projects a different notion of the source's spirit, that essentialized "source" is not the same from adaptation to adaptation, even though they all may go by the collective name "Shakespeare." A number of critics have recently revived fidelity discourse by recourse to this idea of being "true to the spirit" of the source,[4] since that "spirit" provides a means to move beyond fidelity to the "letter," slavishly literal duplication of the text in some other format. But insofar as this revival has assumed that a source has one true "spirit," it has doomed itself. The spirit so codified becomes the very letter against which it seeks to position itself. Second, it is crucial to view the process of selective fidelity as multiply conditioned rather than, as the word "select" might imply, a matter of free choice. This process of selectively essentializing Shakespeare is, to some extent, shaped by one's historical and cultural situatedness, a factor that conditions what of the Shakespearean rhizome one might experience and in what ways. And how one selects is also shaped by practical and institutional pressures, the ideological orientation of the adaptor and the formal qualities of the target medium; if one is adapting Shakespeare to television, for example, those qualities of Shakespeare most amenable to televisual adaptation and mass audience consumption are perhaps those most likely to be privileged. However, selectivity is *conditioned* rather than *determined*—it is certainly possible for an adaptor to work against the grain of their medium, their culture, or prevailing politics or institutions. Third, the term "selection" implies a level of active, conscious agency that may belie the more complex processes involved with adapting Shakespeare, a process that might include intuitive or unconscious responses to the source. We have here entered the tricky realm of intention in the adaptive process: is it possible to adapt Shakespeare without intending to do so?

The question of intention brings into play a related issue, one especially vexed for adaptation criticism: attribution. There are, I think we will all concede, works that their creators claim are adaptations of Shakespeare, yet the relation between the work and the putative Shakespearean source is so difficult to discern or unspecific that one suspects the attribution. On the other hand, there are myriad Shakespeare adaptations that do not announce themselves as such, ones in which there is no mention of Shakespeare in the credits, no acknowledgment of Shakespeare in the creator's interviews, no riffs on play titles, no citations from dialogue, no references to characters or place names—nothing that points back to Shakespeare as a source, and yet the work would nevertheless seem to be a Shakespearean adaptation. ("Seem to be" is a formulation that begs for unpacking.)

This kind of adaptation, what we might call an "unmarked adaptation," one for which there is no authorial or directorial warrant and no unequivocal sign of the source, has become a new and provocative front in the study of Shakespeare adaptation, test cases for the Shakespeare/"not Shakespeare" opposition. Let me point to several examples. Eric Mallin has offered bravura readings of the space invader films *Independence Day* and *Starship Troopers* as mutant reformulations of *The Merchant of Venice*, and the film *Memento* as an adaptational "reassembly" of *Hamlet*;[5] Rob Conkie has recently examined the "Shakespeare aftershocks" of *The Merchant of Venice* in *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*, *Borat,* and *Tropic Thunder*;[6] Amy Scott-Douglass has made the case for *Othello* and *Hamlet* as sources for the first *Star Wars* trilogy and the first *Spiderman* trilogy (respectively), and for *The Taming of the Shrew* as a source for the thriller *Kiss the Girls* and the comedy *Serious Moonlight*;[7] Diana Henderson has recently characterized *Hobson's Choice* as a feminist and working-class reimagining of *King Lear*.[8] Most provocatively, Christy Desmet has argued that an anecdote about Seminoles stealing and then wearing the costumes of a traveling Shakespeare troupe in 1840 is an instance of "accidental appropriation," which Desmet defines as a moment in which "the motives and mindsets of both source and appropriator converge as a matter of pure chance" ("Recognizing Shakespeare, Rethinking Fidelity," 53, 54).[9]

What these cases share is the absence of conventional signifiers of adaptational contact—a direct citation, some statement of the adaptor's intent. In his reading, Mallin, for example, explicitly disclaims any "organic textual connection" between *The Merchant of Venice* and

recent space invader films, suggesting that they instead share "an organic *ideological*" connection (144, emphasis in original), specifically a "thematic disposition" in which "the Beautiful defends turf or self against the incursions of the Ugly" or alien (145). Rob Conkie characterizes the relationship between Shakespeare's Shylock and examples of stereotyping in three anti-PC film comedies in terms of "reverberations" and "aftershocks" that "make no conscious connection to, or acknowledgment of, the source" (Conkie 549).[10] These cases are illuminating, I think, because they highlight the extent to which theories of fidelity have been trapped exclusively within a paradigm of *textual* fidelity, more specifically within a novel or playscript-to-adaptation paradigm. For the films Mallin and Conkie discuss, *The Merchant of Venice* is not a textual source so much as the source for a specific ideological operation; for the films Scott-Douglass discusses, Shakespeare plays offer collections of distinctive narrative motifs and character relations that can be productively rearranged; for Henderson, Shakespeare's *Lear* articulates a master patriarchal scenario to which the many cinematic incarnations of *Hobson's Choice* respond with revisionary irony. And I have argued that Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More* conceives of its *Macbeth* not as a text or as a narrative or set of character relationships, but as a distinctive collocation of affect, a specific mix of dread, guilt, and bodily abjection linked to birth, blood taboos, and transgressive eroticism, all of which the work communicates without a word of Shakespeare (except in its title).[11]

These "unmarked adaptations" illustrate powerfully the principle that Shakespearean adaptation involves quite different projected essences of Shakespeare, and that, more important, adaptation criticism too depends upon such projections. The essays in this volume illustrate the process of selective essentialization at work in a variety of guises and highlight the critical questions that process raises: how to think differently (and more precisely) about identifying adaptational sources? How to taxonomize different sorts of projected Shakespeares without placing them in a hierarchy? What are the cultural politics of attributing an adaptational relationship between Shakespeare and another work, particularly a work "unmarked" as Shakespearean? That is to say, who is authorized to make such an attribution, to say, echoing Foucault, that a work "belongs" to the discourse Shakespeare "founded"? What sorts of evidence or rhetorical tactics legitimize such attributions? In many (though not all) of the cases I've cited above, critics still cite Shakespearean text, even though they concede that ultimately the adaptational objects under discussion aren't textual.

Many make moves that naturalize the essentialized projections they are discussing. Mallin, for example, speaks of an ideological connection between Shakespeare's *Merchant* and invader films that is "organic," that is, natural, not critically imposed upon the material; Conkie uses the metaphor of an earthquake to naturalize the power of an essentialized *Merchant* reverberating in the present. And in many cases, readings of "unmarked adaptations" are powered by progressive political values that work tacitly to legitimize the adaptational relation to Shakespeare the critic is proposing. Finally, it is worth considering the question of disciplinary imperialism, that is, the degree to which our extending the label "Shakespeare adaptation" to ever more works ends up simply bolstering Shakespeare's cultural authority (or recuperating it at a moment of crisis), in the process crowding out other important discursive sources from consideration. As a matter of professional training, we Shakespeareans tend to see Shakespeare everywhere, in part because we've already seen so many different Shakespeares and are always on the lookout for more. But without a robust category of "not Shakespeare" and some discussion of how we tell the difference, we run the risk of making all cultural production a form of Shakespeare adaptation. That prospect radically overestimates the cultural centrality of Shakespeare, but more crucially it obliterates the very discursive differences that criticism has sought to articulate and respect for the past thirty years.

This last issue returns us to the Shakespeare/"not Shakespeare" conundrum with which this essay began and which remains after the many perspicacious discussions of adaptations in this collection. In our zeal to proliferate case studies of Shakespearean adaptations, we have been slow to reflect theoretically upon adaptation as a conceptual process.[12] The challenge is that we need to distinguish between Shakespeare and "not Shakespeare," and yet we also need not to close off adaptational possibilities that extend what Shakespeare can mean, for those are the very condition of his works' continued vitality. We are unlikely to create some algorithm for determining this crucial distinction (nor am I calling for one), for where one might place the slash has long been a matter for productive change and fruitful debate. What one can say is that a predominantly textual conception of fidelity has prevented us from appreciating other principles of fidelity and difference at work in the process of adaptation. Indeed, this textualist conception has often prevented us from talking about fidelity in a constructive way. What we need, I think, are more precise articulations of how Shakespearean adaptors

have conceptualized and deployed the "spirit of Shakespeare" in their works, with the proviso that Shakespearean texts cannot serve as privileged standards or ultimate sources for the category "Shakespeare." This is not just because the category "Shakespeare" has outgrown the text (if it could ever be reduced to it), but, more crucially, because evoking "the Shakespeare text" itself necessarily involves selective essentialization of quite different material objects. If the act of adaptation imposes the necessity of paraphrase, what adaptation offers Shakespeare is, in effect, different principles of paraphrase. All of these involve fidelity as well as difference, and all contribute to Shakespeare's capacity to cross historical, cultural, linguistic, and medial barriers. And insofar as adaptations lay claim to the label "Shakespearean," or have those claims made by critics for them, they force us to engage the cultural politics of reception, in particular questions about the conditions for recognition of Shakespeare and the legitimation of Shakespeare's "presence" in adaptations and our criticism. Shakespearean adaptations force us, in short, to reconsider what exactly we mean when we speak of "Shakespeare." Such reconsiderations are likely to be complicated, messy, contentious, and inconclusive, but the results are likely to be ultimately constructive and potentially illuminating. Most important, asking these questions returns us to an abiding mystery central to the nature of art itself: how does Shakespeare live on?

Notes

1. Christy Desmet has noted the applicability of Foucault's discussion of the author-function to Shakespeare in her introduction to *Shakespeare and Appropriation*, 4–5 (1999).
2. For discussions of the problems with fidelity discourse, see, for example, Thomas Leitch, "Fidelity Discourse: Its Cause and Cure" (2008); Leitch, "Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory" (2003); Robert Stam, "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation" (2000); and George Raitt, "Still Lusting After Fidelity?" (2010).
3. See, for example, Michael Friedman, "In Defense of Authenticity" (2002); Rochelle Hurst, "Adaptation as an Undecidable: Fidelity and Binarity from Bluestone to Derrida" (2008); James M. Welsh, "Adaptability: Questioning and Teaching Fidelity" (2010); Lindiwe Dovey, "Fidelity, Simultaneity and the 'Remaking' of Adaptation Studies" (2012); and Casie Hermansson, "Flogging Fidelity: In Defense of the (Un)Dead Horse" (2015).
4. See *True to the Spirit: Film Adaptation and the Question of Fidelity* (2011).

5. Mallin, "Jewish Invader and the Soul of State: *The Merchant of Venice* and Science Fiction Movies" (2000); and "Out of Joint: *Memento* as Contemporary *Hamlet*" (2010).
6. Conkie, "Shakespeare Aftershocks: Shylock" (2009).
7. Scott-Douglass, "The Bard and the Blockbuster" (2014).
8. Henderson, "The Romance of *King Lear*: Genre and Modernity in *Hobson's Choice* and *Life Goes On*" (2016).
9. See also Robin O. Warren, "Hamlet Rides among the Seminoles" (2001).
10. Conkie credits this formulation to Marjorie Garber (*Shakespeare and Modern Culture*). Late in the article he returns to the tricky question of whether Shakespeare is indeed a source for the films he reads by appealing to Alan Sinfield's metaphor of durable ideological "faultlines." Conkie presents *The Merchant of Venice* as "partially driv[ing]" a "narrative or performative inevitability" that necessarily "*must* either reproduce or deconstruct itself" (564, emphasis added). This formulation dodges the central Shakespeare/not-Shakespeare problem, something which, to be fair, Conklin himself acknowledges. Shakespeare is represented as both participating in and propelling forward an ideological vector of force that has its own natural momentum.
11. Lanier, "Post-Textual Shakespeare."
12. That situation is changing. Now emerging are a number of models which complicate the still reigning appropriative model developed by cultural materialists. See, for example, Diana Henderson's collaborative model discussed in "Shake-shifting: An Introduction," in *Collaborations with the Past* (2006); William Worthen's cross-medial performative model in *Shakespeare Performance Studies* (2014); or Christy Desmet's discussion of the ethics of recognition in "Recognizing Shakespeare, Rethinking Fidelity" (2014).

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