DIRECTORLESS SHAKESPEARE

by

ELENA M. PELLONE

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Shakespeare Institute
College of Arts and Law
University of Birmingham
July 2022

Abstract

"Directorless Shakespeare" means an ensemble staging of a Shakespeare play with no single external authority to interpret the play for the actors, where all decisions in the rehearsal room are made collaboratively by the actors, including casting, cutting, design and interpretation of characters. This thesis posits that the heteroglossia (Bakhtin) of Shakespeare's texts, its myriad mindedness (Coleridge) and its dialogical forces have a greater chance of being released by the centrifugal force of the collective ensemble, rather than the centripetal force of the single director: the heterogeneity of the text served by the concomitant heterogeneity of a directorless, diverse acting company. It considers critically the contemporary mindset and cultural bias towards leadership to reconsider possibilities of working without a director when we stage Shakespeare's plays, and the philosophical conundrums involved in giving actors a sense of what the existentialists termed "autonomy". It examines the power imbalances in the rehearsal room with director-led, conceptual, contemporary Shakespeare in contrast with the distributed mindset evidenced in the actor-led historical practice of English Renaissance theatre. As well as investigating praxis at Shakespeare's Globe and the American Shakespeare Center, this thesis conducts original practice-based research as Embodied Literary Criticism (ELC), detailing the process and reception of three directorless Shakespeare plays (five productions) – a History, a Comedy, a Tragedy – with different acting companies, different performance spaces, and in different countries. These directorless Shakespeare productions, by Anərkē Shakespeare and V.enice S.hakespeare C.ompany, revealed obscured aspects of the plays and offered alternative conclusions to currently accepted academic theories on the working process of English Renaissance theatre concerning cue scripts and rehearsals. Directorless Shakespeare as ELC has revelatory potential, supports and empowers the acting process, and can produce great and moving art.

To Stella and Raffaella, who make my dreams come true every day.
And to all the actors who keep the fire burning in the lighthouse.

Acknowledgements

This research could not have been done without the unstinting support of David Schalkwyk and the Centre for Global Shakespeare. Thanks to the luminous guidance of Martin Wiggins who began as my supervisor, and Michael Dobson who ended as my supervisor. Thanks to Hunter Perske for believing in me, helping me to believe in myself, and keeping me sane(ish). Thanks to my father, Gennaro Pellone, who gave me the gift of acting. A special thanks to the American Shakespeare Center and the Shakespeare's Globe, and all the actors and academics who shared the intimacy of their work. Thanks to the support of everyone who enabled the Directorless Shakespeare plays to happen, especially Richard Wilson and Kingston Shakespeare Seminar; Zeno Ackerman, Isabel Karremann and Würzburg University; the Rose Playhouse; Shaul Bassi and Ca'Foscari University; Domenico Stanziani and *Al Colombo*; *Ai Crociferi*; Maurizio Meo, Marta Meo and Casa Shakespeare; Ursula Russel and Holy Trinity Church; St Leonard's Church; and all the talented and courageous actors of Anərkē Shakespeare and V.enice S.hakespeare C.ompany. A thesis cannot be written without the infinite generosity of everybody whose path I have crossed and every helpful act of support and academic exchange. The list is immeasurable. To every person that contributed to this work, my profound thanks.

In memory of my mother who gave me the courage to pursue my dreams against exhausting resistance, and who gave me love.

Table of Contents

Introduction
The Prologue. Opening the curtain: Expressing meaning against hidden backgrounds……...6.

Chapter 1
Act 1, Scene 1. The Globe: Redistributing power, smashing the mirror up to nature…….61.

Chapter 2
Act 1, Scene 2. "We do it with the lights on": Actors' Renaissance Season at the Blackfriars Playhouse…….....102.

Chapter 3
Act 2, Scene 1. Anərkē Shakespeare's *Richard II*: Devolved authority and decolonising theatrical practice……..……..…..150.
Act 2, Scene 2. Vagabonds and Roving Players: Directorless *Richard II* in Würzburg, Germany, Essex's command performance and Stanislavski the unwelcome guest…..…...193.
Act 2, Scene 3. "Thus play I in one person many people": *Richard II* at the Rose Playhouse, Bankside, on the foundations of the past……..….213.

Chapter 4
Act 2, Scene 4. Much Ado About Italy: Embracing alterity, *Much Ado About Nothing/Molto Rumore Per Nulla*, staging Shakespeare's comedy in Venice, Italy……..…...…224.

Chapter 5
Act 2, Scene 5. Anərkē Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: A spectral tragedy by the graves of Shakespeare and Burbage…….....……...….283.

Conclusion
The Epilogue. Tearing the curtain down……...…...352.

Bibliography……..…….……...……361.

Perhaps what is inexpressible (what I find mysterious and am not able to express) is the background against which whatever I could express has its meaning.
— Ludwig Wittgenstein

THE PROLOGUE[1]

Introduction

Opening the Curtain: Expressing meaning against hidden backgrounds
Changing the narrative, destabilising hierarchies, empowering the collective

I love the quality of playing, ay; I love a play with all
My heart, a good one, and a player that is
A good one too, with all my heart.
- *Richard Brome,* The Antipodes

Before one thing and another there hangs a curtain: let us draw it up!
- *Bertolt Brecht*

Shall I draw the curtain?
- *Paulina,* The Winter's Tale

There is an old joke. A person asks the priest the best way to get to the church. The priest answers, the best way is not to start from here…

Director"less" assumes an absence. An impoverished creative process. But Directorless Shakespeare is not a precedent, nor a citation. It is a location: a location of inquiry, in a different gravitational field, with an unstable compass. When we start at a different beginning, we may reach a different end.

Directorless Shakespeare is an ensemble staging of Shakespeare, with no single external authority, where all decisions are made collaboratively by the actors, including casting, cutting, design and interpretation. This is not historical practice but aims to discover something new about Shakespeare's plays in the form of collective embodied literary criticism. It re-orients the entry position of enquiry and circumnavigates centuries of performances, responses, and criticism that have mapped plays that seem familiar, but may yet have uncharted terrain. It is a collective excavation to reveal aspects consistently obscured by conceptual imposition, starting in the Restoration (with its fashion for changing endings and amplifying female provocation with newly allowed actresses) and reaching its apotheosis in the recent century. To start at a different beginning and to discover a different end. And to be unsure what that end will be.

[1] Part of this chapter has been previously published in Elena Pellone, 'Directorless Shakespeare *Richard II*, Embracing Alterity and Decolonising Theatrical Practice', *Otherness: Essays & Studies* 8, no. 2 (2021): 32–59.

The cultural mindset Shakespeare's plays were written in, and created for, was collective: distributed authority and devolved responsibility. We live in an age of the single: concluded theses and conceptual Shakespeare. We may be stuck in cyclical loops of Shakespeare plays being interpreted and staged, then consumed and taught, informed by performance traditions, then interpreted and staged, informed by seminal productions and scholarship, leaving the plays attached to slogans, or labels on a bottle that have little to do with the contents: *Shrew* is misogynist, we stage it as misogynist, so *Shrew* is misogynist.[2] We reflect the norm, but also construct the norm.

In 1966, John Russell Brown asked questions that we have yet to answer. How do we centralise and understand the role of the actor in our study and performance of Shakespeare's plays? Brown starts with the "text and the actor, which is the closest point of contact between Shakespeare and those who perform his plays" and asks, "how should the plays be staged in our theatres to present the fullness of Shakespeare's imagination?"[3]

Directorless Shakespeare aims to maximise the transformative impact of scholarly research and experimental performance on the current predominance of the director-designer in Shakespeare theatre, to challenge the way theatre is created and received. The audience completes the performance and constructs meaning.[4] It attempts to release the play's conflicting theses and themes, wrestling with the philosophical and practical limitations, and liberations, of collective embodiment. This thesis will contextualise the process as a dialogue among text, professional actors, audience members and scholars. Shakespeare's work develops a profound meta-theatricality. A directorless process serves the text's consciousness of itself as a theatrical work, which exists in actors' interaction with each other, moment to moment, shared with an audience. Can Directorless Shakespeare recover and respond to the "myriad-minded" Shakespeare that Samuel Taylor Coleridge admired?[5]

This myriad-mindedness, in its simplest explanation, is like Joseph Jastrow's duck-rabbit:[6] the perspective of the audience member – if given a choice – can see a rabbit one moment, a duck the other, and perhaps both simultaneously. But it also refers to Shakespeare as a playwright, an actor writing for actors, in that each set of words with a speech prefix – what we now term "character" – has a verbal thumbprint, like a planet governed by specific individual principles, but located within a complex solar system, where gravitational force and elliptic orbits are dependent on the surrounding planets. Each autonomous, but working within the constraints of the other. This is similar to the actor in a directorless process: a mirror of the myriad-mindedness of Shakespeare's text. To perceive truth beyond the reasoning intellect and beauty with philosophical uncertainty is what John Keats termed Shakespeare's "negative capability".[7]

Mikhail Bakhtin states meaning in the novel can only be released, not as an isolated autochthonous text, but as a form of internal interactive dialogue.[8] The meaning in

---

[2] As in the gender swap, Justin Audibert, *The Taming of the Shrew* (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2019). Literary studies tend to approach the play with the same attitude, since the taming plot "dominates performance and criticism of the play". Laurie E. Maguire, 'Cultural Control in The Taming of the Shrew', *Renaissance Drama* new series 26 (1995): 83–104.

[3] John Russell Brown, *Shakespeare's Plays in Performance* (London: Edward Arnold, 1966), xi.

[4] Robert Leach, *An Illustrated History of British Theatre and Performance: Volume Two* (London; New York: Routledge, 2020), xxv.

[5] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Coleridge's Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. R. A. Foakes (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 24.

[6] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Wiley–Blackwell, 1973), 212.

[7] John Keats, *The Complete Poetical Works and Letters of John Keats.*, ed. Horace Elisha Scudder (Boston; New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899), 277.

[8] Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

contemporary Shakespeare productions, for actors and audience, is often chosen by the director. This thes posits that Bakhtin's notion of dialogical forces is better served by the myriad of minds in a collective, autonomous and self-governing ensemble, as reflective of the mindset embedded in Shakespeare's texts, and the circulation of cultural energy that surrounded them.

Bakhtin's valorisation of language in the novel overlooks the embodied dialogism of theatrical text, where each word is the tip of an iceberg, a network of thoughts and a web of delicately balanced veils over the "negative capability" of space and the invisible body present in all the actor imbibes. But Bakhtin understands the power of text as words in action and reaction, unquantifiable by study in isolation on the page. Conflicting philosophies released by actors' lines are responses, not just speeches. Bakhtin's heteroglossia is a network of words that create polyphony and contain meanings that do not insist on consciousness for understanding and feeling. This heteroglossia takes the notion of Coleridge's myriad-mindedness even further. Myriad-mindedness positions many minds on the stage in relation to each other as planets orbiting, governed by the internal gravity of the text and audience. But heteroglossia is the echoing of multiple meanings of each word and mind in an interlacing process, more like an intricate river of thought, where the ocean and the tributaries cannot be singled out as individual bodies of water in relation to each other, but as one body of water filled with shifting and conflicting currents. It is Bakhtin's ray of sun in a prism:

> If we imagine the *intention* of such a word, that is, its *directionality toward the object*, in the form of a ray of light, then the living and unrepeatable play of colors and light on the facets of the image that it constructs can be explained as the spectral dispersion of the ray-word, not within the object itself ... but rather as its spectral dispersion in an atmosphere filled with the alien words, value judgments and accents through which the ray passes on its way toward the object; the social atmosphere of the word, the atmosphere that surrounds the object, makes the facets of the image sparkle.[9]

Directorless Shakespeare posits that the myriad-mindedness, negative capability and heteroglossia's sparkling facets have a greater chance of being released by returning the text and authority to an ensemble of actors: the centrifugal force of the collective ensemble, rather than the centripetal force of the single director. The heterogeneity fundamental to the texts is served by the concomitant heterogeneity of a directorless and diverse acting company. This is not authorial nostalgia. The actors freely respond to the nuances of the text, on the rehearsal floor, to engage in democratic complexity, freed from a culture of servility. The text is part of the ensemble, but is not a director. To pay attention to what the text is saying is not an imperative to do what the text is saying: "A Dramatick Poet is … to the Actors, as an Architect to the Builders."[10]

This thesis interrogates a resistance to destabilising hegemonic hierarchical structures in contemporary theatre and the insistence on an "ontological truth" that human beings must follow a leader, and that a leader will naturally emerge, even if we remove the nominal figure of director. It seeks to recover a mindset. And to expose the creative mindset we are in. The heart of this is expressed by Ludwig Wittgenstein:

> What makes a subject hard to understand … [is] the contrast between understanding the subject and what most people *want* to see. Because of this the very things which are most obvious may become the hardest of all to understand. What has to be overcome is a difficulty having to do with the will, rather than the intellect.[11]

---

[9] Bakhtin, 277.
[10] Richard Flecknoe, *A Short Discourse of the English Stage* (London, 1664), 5.
[11] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 17e.

The theatre director is not much more than a century old.[12] There was a world that grew, thrived and created compelling theatre thousands of years before the notion of the director entered the scene. The function emerged in the figure of actor-manager in the nineteenth century, but took even longer to establish itself as an independently named role: "The OED records 'director' as a term of American origin. Its first example dates from 1911. The first example in British usage from 1933, from a film review in *Punch*. And its first example in a theatrical context occurs in 1938, in Somerset Maugham's memoirs."[13] The hierarchical configuration of Western theatre, which lay with actors and playwrights, has only relatively recently shifted to directors, designers and producers.

The director is imposed anachronistically onto Shakespeare's text. It is contingent and historical, not imbedded in the nature of theatre.[14] This thesis will look critically at current problems of actor-director relationships as antithetical to the collaborative nature of Shakespeare's theatre. Award-winning actor Andrew French, who has appeared in seminal Shakespeare productions in the United Kingdom, considers:

> I think actors are frightened to express themselves … Fear is the enemy of creating art. And if you're in a room where the person has directly hired you, of course you're feeling like you're constantly auditioning for them in the room, and so you're trying to make a good impression, and that's not where it should be, that's not where it should be.[15]

Renowned actor and director Scott Handy confirmed that the oppression of actors is an important topic that nobody is really talking about:

> Some directors sometimes forget that the only really undeniably human life element in a production is the actor … and sometimes I don't think actors are given enough respect – it doesn't mean that you genuflect in front of them – but that *is* what's alive.[16]

Handy became a director to gain more power in his work. As a young actor, Handy turned down the opportunity to play Hamlet in a production directed by Steven Berkoff: "I felt in my bones that he's going to be directing his own Hamlet through me, rather than helping me release my Hamlet."[17]

Shakespeare's theatre was an actors' theatre. Plays were staged and performed in a mindset of collaboration, with no notion of the individual genius, or the single figure of director. Directors have a hegemonic hold on an industry that once belonged to actors.[18] There is not a single Shakespeare production on the mainstage, main season, in contemporary

---

[12] David Williams and David Bradby, *Directors' Theatre* (London: Red Globe Press, 2019), 2.

[13] Martin Wiggins, 'Who Was You?' (Unpublished paper, 25 March 2018).

[14] A co-ordinator's role to stage the complicated spectacles of George II, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen's company, circa 1866, may have been the origins of the modern theatre director. See John Russell Brown, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 334. According to Russell Jackson, "A major factor in the 'rise of the director' is the sophistication of stage spectacle … With scenery designed expressly for a production, as distinct from drawn from the theatre's existing stock, a level of interpretation was introduced that called for some kind of 'director.' (In the British and American theatre, the term used until the middle of 20th century was, confusingly, 'producer')", pers. comm., 1 April 2022.

[15] Andrew French, Interview with author, 18 February 2022.

[16] Scott Handy, Interview with author, 17 June 2022.

[17] Handy notes this was a difficult decision as he respected Steven Berkoff as a great artist and found him on a personal level to be a gentle and kind man who loved actors.

[18] Theatre can even eliminate the need of an actor by using holograms or robots. See 'Uncanny Valley', accessed 15 July 2019, https://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project/unheimliches-tal-uncanny-valley; 'Video Creating *The Tempest* | Royal Shakespeare Company', accessed 20 June 2022, https://www.rsc.org.uk/the-tempest/gregory-doran-2016-production/video-creating-the-tempest.

Western theatre that is directorless.[19] Michael Billington, a theatre reviewer in the United Kingdom for fifty years, had never seen a directorless production prior to this PhD's *Richard II* in 2019.

> *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Directing* states:
> Over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the director has come to be identified as a significant creative figure in European and North American theatre … it can be argued that audiences are drawn to productions more by the name of the director than by the name of the author or the title of the play itself, or even by star actors. *And it is to directors that the development of modern theatre can be traced in its varying manifestations.* This book is a response to the emergence of such a vital artistic force.[20]

Theatre cannot exist without directors, which are a *vital* force. Lawrence Switzky acknowledges that "the institutionalization of a coordinating directorial intelligence in late Victorian and modernist theatre changed the performance and writing of plays" but finds indeterminable whether "this influence assisted or effaced the work of actors and playwrights":[21]

> it can be argued, the theatrical art of the last century emerges from the ambivalent responses of actors, audiences, and directors themselves to a new division of labour and the uncanniness of a new model of authority that leaves spectral traces on performing objects and bodies.[22]

Robert Brustein argues that directors dangerously overreach their authority, usurp and overshadow playwrights, dramatically changing theatre and its associated artists and their power in the last century: "Once paramount in importance, the playwright, in consequence, now finds his position overshadowed by the director whose power mushrooms every day."[23] Locating the director as a new theatrical function at the Deutsches Theater in the late 1880's, Michael Hays articulates the resulting subordination of the actor and the audience:

> It was an event at which the public was silenced and taught to submit to the "undisturbed unfolding of the work of art" while the artist retreated into the ensemble in order to carry out the interpretive wishes of the "leader."[24]

The actor-managers of the nineteenth century begin a model of directors as "martinets".[25] The analogous rise of the conductor at the same time displaced the composer: "The breath of

---

[19] Actors From The London Stage (AFTLS), founded by a collective of actors, including Patrick Stewart, in 1975, are still operating and doing "undirected" Shakespeare. AFTLS runs as a theatre in education programme in the United States, and actors travel on academic visas. They teach at a university and then do a performance of a cut text. Each performance is prescriptive to five actors that are cast and given role strings by the producers, and actors are bound to certain conventions – like introducing each character they play at the start of the show whilst donning costumes, and acting to a blank space if they are doubling as a role they have a scene with. This thesis does not engage in their work as it is not genuinely directorless or a creative offer for commercial Shakespeare productions. See 'Actors From The London Stage', Shakespeare at Notre Dame, accessed 12 June 2022, https://shakespeare.nd.edu/companies/actors-from-the-london-stage/.

[20] Christopher Innes and Maria Shevtsova, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Directing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1, my italics.

[21] Lawrence Switzky, 'Hearing Double: Acousmatic Authority and the Rise of the Theatre Director', *Modern Drama* 54, no. 2 (June 2011): 216–43 (218).

[22] Switzky, 240.

[23] Robert Sanford Brustein, 'Why American Plays Are Not Literature', *Harper's Magazine*, 1 October 1959, 170, https://harpers.org/archive/1959/10/why-american-plays-are-not-literature/.

[24] Michael Hays, 'Theater History and Practice: An Alternative View of Drama', *New German Critique*, no. 12 (1977): 85–97 (97); Otto Weddigen, *Gescbichte Der Theater Deutschlands*, vol. II (Berlin: Ernst Frensdorff, 1906), 269.

[25] Switzky, 'Hearing Double', 219.

the living conductor substituted for the dead composer."[26] Directorless Shakespeare works without martinets, using collective breaths, many breaths.

The trail of directors, not actors, codifies theatrical studies. Actors' perspectives are commonly limited to autobiography and biography. Actors more centrally authoritative are also usually directors: Kenneth Branagh, Mark Rylance, Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Michael Chekhov, Lee Strasberg. Central doctrines, stabilising and perpetuating focus for the historian and critic, are rarely purely from an actor's perspective: Constantin Stanislavski tells us how to make theatre, as do Peter Brook, Rodolph Laban, David Mamet, Mike Alfreds.[27] Peter Hall's *Shakespeare's Advice to the Players* and John Barton's *Playing Shakespeare* have canonical status.[28] We can perceive this colonisation not just of the actors' theatre, but of the actors' minds, back to the training institutions. Directors break down the process, once belonging entirely to an actor, into a series of signposts on the road the actor need tread.

Famous ensembles are celebrated for their Artistic Directors: Ariane Mnouchkine, Ivo van Hove, Michael Boyd. Mnouchkine received the 2019 Kyoto prize at Oxford for her lifetime's work transforming theatre, a cash prize of a hundred million yen.[29] Not her company, her leading actors, her stable ensemble (which is a sociative collective), but she, individually. Directors are considered to determine the nature of the productions, which are referred to by the director's name. This is illustrated in performance sections of Shakespeare editions, Arden, Oxford and Cambridge: [Yukio] Ninagawa's *Macbeth*, [Grigori] Kozintsev's *Lear*, [Peter] Bogdanovich's *War of the Roses*, [Ivo] van Hove's *Roman Tragedies*, [Peter] Brook's *Dream*. The play is the property of the director, the property of a single person, carried through history.

In an interview with Brook to mark the fiftieth anniversary of "*Peter Brook's* seminal *A Midsummer Night's Dream* … and reflect on the original impact and lasting influence of *Brook's Shakespeare*",[30] Trevor Nunn lauded Brook: "you have pretty much *single-handedly* created an extraordinary revolution. You changed everything".[31] For Brook's *Dream*, the ensemble of actors, whose names will never be marked down in ownership of the production, were a stable ensemble who had worked together at the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in repertory for a few years. The actors were not assembled by Brook. The play was not cast by Brook.[32] And actors had freedom to experiment:

> He said you're free to do whatever you are doing. We never blocked it, which is a terrible word anyway, which so many directors use … I don't remember choreographing or blocking anything. It is just whatever it is in the moment people

[26] Switzky, 222.

[27] Constantin Stanislavski, an actor and director, was at the theatrical cusp of the emergence of stage director from actor-manager to individual importance. He believed the despotic director could atone for and hide the inadequacies of actors. Stanislavski founded the Moscow Art Theatre, with Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, and directed the premieres of Anton Chekhov's plays. To serve Chekhov's new style of writing, and changes in theatrical traditions, Stanislavski created internal realism techniques for actors, a forefather of the American "method". Stanislavski is remembered as a leading theatre director and innovator in scenic techniques away from naturalism to abstract impressionism, and founder and acting teacher of the "Stanislavski System". See chapter 3 for a fuller discussion.

[28] Peter Hall, *Shakespeare's Advice to the Players* (London: Oberon Books, 2003); John Barton, *Playing Shakespeare* (London: Methuen Drama, 2009).

[29] Ariane Mnouchkine, 'Ariane Mnouchkine: A Life in Theatre | Kyoto Prize at Oxford' (Livestream, 11 May 2021), https://www.kyotoprize.ox.ac.uk/events/ariane-mnouchkine-life-theatre.

[30] 'Peter Brook and Shakespeare', Kingston Shakespeare Seminar, 26 October 2019, https://kingstonshakespeareseminar.wordpress.com/2019/09/23/peter-brook-and-shakespeare-oct-26-2019/, my italics.

[31] 'Peter Brook and Shakespeare', my italics.

[32] Trevor Nunn, 'Peter Brook and Shakespeare'.

> find in between each other, if you're sharing it and it's going into you, then it's coming out into somebody else.[33]

Actors came up with the famous erection, the spinning of plates, and would throw their bodies around as physically trained performers, trusting to catch each other, figuratively and literally.

> There was an amazing moment with Mary Rutherford who played Hermia and Peter said, "well what are you going to do?" when Lysander was running away, and she was hanging from this trapeze, and the door was open and Christopher Gable said, "whatever you do I will catch you" and she ran up to this open door and – she'd been an acrobat in Canada … she jumped up in the air this way … she seemed to be suspended there in the air and then of course, because he was a ballet dancer, he caught her. And every night she got a round of applause … But Peter gave her the permission to do that.[34]

Particular uses of language betray the values and perspectives that remain unconsciously locked into scaffolding structures we forget to question or attempt to deconstruct. Wittgenstein warns us that "philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language".[35] Ideology is propagated through words. Even with actors expressing creative freedom, with a director who considers himself an "enabler", we are stuck in a paradigm that actors need *permission* for their creativity.

Ben Kingsley recalls Brook's direction as "an act of love"; actors uniquely empowered:

> It is impossible to talk about Peter without making comparisons, and there are some directors, sadly, who will keep their cast auditioning for their role forever and there are other directors who allow you to own the part, and there is an enormous difference … If you feel you are auditioning all the time, the ice is very thin underneath you.[36]

Actors beholden to the director must hope they are *allowed* to *own* their parts. There is no question of changing the power imbalances for actors to own their own work, as Shakespeare's company did, without needing to be *given permission*, even in an industry where permission seems rare:

> You are given this amazing experience to share, because that is what it is all about, sharing the moments, and then you look for it again in the work that follows, and sadly it doesn't, I mean it simply doesn't, because how many Peter Brooks are there?[37]

The theatrical language developed in *their Dream*, remarkable for its circus acrobatics, was the language of an ensemble Brook did not choose, whose trust between each other Brook did not foster, and whose design, by Sally Jacobs, Brook did not draw or construct. Where is the distributed acclaim? Brook is unusual in empowering the ensemble. Theatre is revolutionised when actors own their work. Yet the revolution is Brook's. The change in the Shakespeare theatrical paradigm is recalled as Brook's "single-handed" achievement. It is, after all, *Brook's Dream*.

> Jerzy Grotowski, rigorously testing theatre, alchemises it down to its purest elements: By gradually eliminating whatever proved superfluous, we found that theatre can exist without make-up, without autonomic costume and scenography, without a separate performance area (stage), without lighting and sound effects, etc. It cannot exist without the actor-spectator relationship of perceptual, direct, "live" communion.

---

[33] Frances de la Tour, 'Peter Brook and Shakespeare'.
[34] Sara Kestelman, 'Peter Brook and Shakespeare'.
[35] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 109.
[36] Ben Kingsley, 'Peter Brook and Shakespeare'.
[37] De la Tour, 'Peter Brook and Shakespeare'.

> This is an ancient theoretical truth, of course, but when rigorously tested in practice it undermines most of our usual ideas about theatre.[38]

Even though the alchemised *vital* force of theatre is the actor-spectator communion, Grotowski has not considered taking himself out of the equation. Grotowski, as a director, is responsible for theatre's purification, and is an assumption not listed either as essential or superfluous. The hierarchical structure, so deeply entrenched, is invisible.

Multi-award-winning British theatre director Lucy Bailey feels "the tools of the director and designer are brilliant at excavating certain worlds and not always are actors as brilliant as that, so what you are trying to get to with the actors is a playground that they can play in".[39] This infantilising language is common. Even someone of Kingsley's fame needs to hold the white, incandescent stone of working with Brook to help him navigate "struggling in a bad context, where people use words like blocking, and infantilise and patronise and manipulate the actor".[40] In the words of an anonymous actor:

> I truly believe most directors view actors with something akin to suspicion, like I can count on the fingers of one hand the directors that I know love actors, yeah, I would say maybe four and I've had an over twenty-year career – maybe four or five.[41]

Another multi-award-winning theatre director, Robert Icke, citing psychologist Douglas Winnicott, argues:

> All dynamics are parent child dynamics … ultimately the actor will always be a child role, and I don't mean that in a patronising way … there is a level of release required for great acting … actors need someone to be the parent to enable them to be the child.[42]

Actors need enabling parents to make it safe for them to play. Handy reflects it is wonderful to work for a director who loves actors, that one can tell the difference:

> When we act it's connected to the fact that director is parent … you open yourself and it is completely natural, and after a while habitual, that you are seeking approval. And you are going "was that OK?" … Psychologically and culturally and habitually all those three things overlap to make that pattern of – can I be approved?[43]

But why should actors need to be loved and seek approval? It is not whether individual directors are good at loving the actor or not, but a question of structures. Patriarchy is oppressive, whether individual men are caring, or individual women are successful. Actors are artists, not children.

Remarking that this infantilising of actors "happens all the time, all the time", French notes a paradox:

> It's interesting to me how many directors find it difficult to work with producers, and executive producers, because executive producers treat them like children … Oh, so you hate that parent-child when you're the child, but you think it gives us full freedom when it's the other way round. Well, that's interesting.[44]

The job description of the director is to steer the interpretation of the play through their single vision, even if "allowing" collaboration or facilitating the actor-child to play. Theatre has commercial, capitalist demands.[45] A director's name and status bring capital. Play bills have the title of the play qualified with "directed by": "Critics write of 'Brook's

---

[38] Jerzy Grotowski, 'Towards the Poor Theatre', *The Tulane Drama Review* 11, no. 3 (1967): 60–65 (62).
[39] Lucy Bailey, Interview with author, 20 January 2020.
[40] Kingsley, 'Peter Brook and Shakespeare'.
[41] Anonymous Actor, Interview with author, 28 April 2022.
[42] Robert Icke, Interview with author, 25 November 2019.
[43] Handy, Interview with author.
[44] French, Interview with author.
[45] See Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (Westport: Greenwood, 1986), 241–58.

Lear', of 'Planchon's *Tartuffe*', ascribing to the director the role of author."[46] Theatrical programmes have a director's note. Actors do not elect the director, nor have a final say over a director's choices. The hierarchy is clear. The structure is monocratic. Actors must try to keep their jobs, and promote themselves for the next job, in an industry with crippling statistics of unemployment.

Actors must not only seek approval for their work, but for their personality. There are two roles they play – the role of the character, and the role of the actor they wish to be perceived as:

> If you have opinions about a piece of work that involves other people … as an actor, that wasn't very useful … Maybe that is part of the culture of an actor talking is not necessarily welcomed … there was a sense that – "oh it's Scott, he's a bit difficult because he's got ideas".[47]

An actor cannot afford to offer a strong opinion, in case they are cast as difficult:

> All the actresses I've worked with that I really admire have been spoken of to me as "they're difficult" … women who are holding the strongest opinions, who are the most intelligent, who are questioning – a lot of directors – I think male and female – find problems with them – and they are the best, best actresses, it's just they are the most talented.[48]

It can be argued that hierarchy need not be toxic, that Shakespeare plays are not necessarily obfuscated by directorial interventions, and that many actors are empowered by long-standing relationships with auteur directors.[49] But all unquestioned hierarchy is toxic. Where there are power imbalances there is the possibility of exploitation and abuse, always. Actors can be afraid to speak. This is a quote from a major actor, who asked to remain anonymous:

> It's clear to me the smarter I am, the more clear my opinions are to myself, and the more comfortable I am in expressing them, the harder it is for me to get work, I mean there's no two ways about that … I think they [directors] feel like having an opinion or expressing your opinion, or expressing how you feel, or expressing something that you want changed, equals trouble and good actors turn up early, learn their lines immediately, whether they understand them or not, and don't contradict what the director says.[50]

This thesis cannot single-handedly revolutionise contemporary Shakespeare theatrical practise, but it asks us to consider the difference between accepted norms and acceptable norms. If the uncontested status of director as *vital* to theatre is the accepted norm, is this an acceptable norm? We cannot go to the bottom of the barrel, but we can open the lid.

Norman Lebrecht understands the rise of the musical conductor, concurring with that of the theatrical director, as a sociological phenomenon.[51] The synchronic parallels indicate that the shift is one of mindset and emotional need, rather than a creative imperative intrinsic

---

[46] Williams and Bradby, *Directors' Theatre*, 1.
[47] Handy, Interview with author.
[48] Anonymous Actor, Interview with author, 18 February 2022.
[49] See for example: Deborah Warner and Fiona Shaw; Thomas Ostermeier and Lars Eidinger; Gregory Doran and Anthony Sher.
[50] Anonymous Actor, Interview with author.
[51] Norman Lebrecht, *The Maestro Myth: Great Conductors in Pursuit of Power* (London: Pocket Books, 1997). A "conductorless orchestra" is an accepted political and creative alternative, even meriting its own Wikipedia page, see 'Conductorless Orchestra', in *Wikipedia*, 19 May 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Conductorless_orchestra&oldid=1088691860. However, a google search of "Directorless Theatre" only brings up an article I have published on the work. The mindset has yet to shift in theatre to allow "directorless" to be a viable alternative.

to the development of either art form.[52] Rather than theatre needing a director, or an orchestra needing a conductor, society began to need a visible figure upon which to project their fantasy of leadership to worship with applause.[53] The initial liquid cement of this figure then hardens to become a foundational priority. Although theatrical directors do not routinely take the visible applause, they are elevated to the apex, receive top billing on posters, in the press, and in the mythological memory of productions:

> "Unhappy is the land that has no heroes," sighed Andrea in Bertolt Brecht's *Life of Galileo.* "No," contradicted the astronomer, "Unhappy is the land that *needs* heroes."[54]

This is particularly insidious with Shakespeare, which, because of a saturation of productions relies on a conceptual imposition to stamp a directorial interpretation into an overwhelming field of competition: "leaning on Molière and Shakespeare, he [the director] levers himself into a position where he is running the whole show".[55]

Shakespeare would not have known what a theatrical director was. He would have had neither the word nor the concept. His plays were conceived for, and created in, a theatrical collaborative mindset, where authors often co-wrote, Shakespeare himself working in partnership on roughly a third of his canon.[56] The actors staged and performed the plays. Together. The prevailing fashion for director-led conceptualisation others the otherness of Shakespeare's text in an attempt to render it recognisable. It passes up nuanced and democratic collaboration with an audience in favour of didactic and pre-digested interpretations imposed upon them. *Julius Caesar* in Central Park, New York, with Caesar as Donald Trump, is a striking example.[57] Once Caesar is reduced to a populist, sociopathic tyrant, there is no agony for Brutus, no obstacle for Cassius, no ambivalence for Mark Antony in his movement from friendship with "the noblest man / That ever lived in the tide of times" (3.1.282-3) to the political machinations of a public incitement for revenge.[58] Once one piece is set in contemporary concrete, Shakespeare's heteroglossia and moment-to-moment myriad mindedness is simplified and dates more quickly than the texts directors are trying to contemporise. *Measure for Measure* at the Donmar Theatre, London 2018, which offered a historical rendition followed by a contemporary retelling, exemplified this

---

[52] "Wagner wrote a manifesto in 1869 entitled 'Über das Dirigiren' (usually translated as 'On Conducting') that describes the conductor's mission. Wagner's essay became a mainstay of conducting literature and a major reference work in the campaign to legitimize conducting as a profession." Switzky, 'Hearing Double', 220.

[53] "The 'great conductor' is a mythical hero … artificially created for a non-musical purpose and sustained by commercial necessity. 'Orchestral conducting as a full-time occupation is an invention – a sociological not an artistic one – of the 20th century', acknowledged Daniel Barenboim, an eminent practitioner. 'There is no profession in which an impostor could enter more easily', wrote the astute and long-suffering violinist, Carl Flesch. The conductor exists because mankind demands a visible leader … He plays no instrument, produces no noise, yet conveys an image of music making – that is credible enough to let him take the rewards of applause away from those who actually created the sound." Lebrecht, *The Maestro Myth*, 1-2.

[54] Lebrecht, 11.

[55] Roger Planchon qtd. in Williams and Bradby, *Directors' Theatre*, 6.

[56] The *New Oxford* places the number at 17 plays. William Shakespeare, *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition: The Complete Works*, ed. Gary Taylor et al., New Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[57] Michael Paulson and Sopan Deb, 'How Outrage Built Over a Shakespearean Depiction of Trump', *The New York Times*, 22 December 2017, sec. Theater, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/12/theater/donald-trump-julius-caesar-public-theater-oskar-eustis.html.

[58] All Shakespeare quotes, unless otherwise stated are from William Shakespeare, 'Folger Digital Texts', accessed 3 May 2019, http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org.

paradox:[59] "the pertinence of the play to our own time emerges far more strongly when it is done in period."[60]

Directorial concepts invade the stage, like the childless Macbeths, in Iqbal Khan's 2016 Globe production, given a phantom, upstaging child, who wanders around, incomprehensibly, holding Lady Macbeth's hand.[61] Contemporising notions can be muddled and unclear, as Rufus Norris's 2018 *Macbeth*, National Theatre, which played to very poor reviews precisely because it sought to render a supposedly inaccessible historical Scotland in futuristic terms.[62] The top two reasons critics hated *Macbeth* was: "No understanding of the play" and "No respect for the text."[63] And Polly Findlay's 2018 *Macbeth*, RSC, had critics frustrated by the same thing.[64] Even when design is critically acclaimed it may not support the text and actors. *Much Ado About Nothing*, RSC, 2022, was praised for its "look and feel of a pop video or an advert for high-end vodka" but criticised for actors keeping the audience "at arm's length from the emotional drama".[65] It is difficult to act connected in a world where it is difficult to be connected.

The 2022 Acting Artistic Director for the RSC, Erica Whyman, elaborating on the difficulties of rehearsing during the Covid-19 pandemic, with enforced social distancing, reflects:

> I think to be a good director is to hold space with real sensitivity and thoughtfulness and to make space that becomes a genuinely collaborative space. It's so easy to say, but actually most of our theatre making process is way against doing that, which is set out your concept for the show, set out your design for the show, design the costumes before you cast it, persuade people to come and be in it because you've had such a good idea about how they might play it: so much of our practise weighs against that collaborative space. And in a sense, because we couldn't be close with one another …

---

[59] See Elena Pellone, 'Review of Shakespeare's Measure for Measure (Directed by Josie Rourke) at the Donmar Warehouse, London, 19 November 2018', *Shakespeare* 15, no. 1 (23 April 2019): 1–4.

[60] Michael Billington, 'Measure for Measure Review – Sex, Power and Shock as Atwell and Lowden Reverse Roles', *The Guardian*, 12 October 2018, sec. Stage, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/oct/12/measure-for-measure-review-sex-power-and-shock-atwell-lowden-donmar.

[61] See Billington, 'Macbeth Review – It's Not Just the Sisters Who Are Weird in Iqbal Khan's Bizarre Take', *The Guardian*, 24 June 2016, sec. Stage, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/jun/24/macbeth-review-shakespeares-globe-iqbal-khan-ray-fearon-tara-fitzgerald; Dominic Cavendish, 'Macbeth? More like Four Witches and a Funeral', *The Telegraph*, 24 June 2016, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/macbeth-more-like-four-witches-and-a-funeral/; Cf. 'Shakespeare: Iqbal Khan Defends His Globe Macbeth', *TheatreVoice* (blog), 16 July 2016, http://www.theatrevoice.com/audio/iqbal-khan-takes-critics-macbeth/.

[62] See Dominic Cavendish, 'Is This a Dud Which I See Before Me? Macbeth, National Theatre, Review', *The Telegraph*, 7 March 2018, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/dud-see-macbeth-national-theatre-review/; Natasha Tripney, 'Rory Kinnear and Anne Marie Duff in Macbeth – Review at National Theatre', 7 March 2018, https://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/2018/macbeth-rory-kinnear-anne-marie-duff-review-national-theatre-london/.

[63] Paul Lewis, '5 Reasons the Critics Hated Macbeth at the National Theatre', *One Minute Theatre Reviews* (blog), 26 March 2018, http://oneminutetheatrereviews.co.uk/current-productions/macbeth-critics/.

[64] Dominic Cavendish, 'Macbeth Review, RSC, Stratford-upon-Avon – a Case of Theatrical Overkill', *The Telegraph*, 21 March 2018, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/macbeth-review-rsc-stratford-upon-avon-christopher-eccleston/.

[65] Arifa Akbar, 'Much Ado About Nothing Review – a Lavish Vision of Space-Age Shakespeare', *The Guardian*, 18 February 2022, sec. Stage, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2022/feb/18/much-ado-about-nothing-review-stratford-upon-avon. See also Michael Davies, 'Much Ado About Nothing at the RSC – Review', WhatsOnStage, 18 February 2022, https://www.whatsonstage.com/stratford-upon-avon-theatre/reviews/much-ado-about-nothing-at-the-rsc_55952.html; Clive Davis, 'Much Ado About Nothing Review — Much Ado but Nothing to Write Home About', 17 February 2022, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/much-ado-about-nothing-review-much-ado-but-nothing-to-write-home-about-lwkzxv96t.

> [this] teaches me that that dialogue, that openness, that holding space … is the only thing … and the rest is traffic management.[66]

Simon Russell Beale says an actor needs to approach Shakespeare's text without "memory or desire".[67] A director, by definition, approaches the text with both. As much as an actor may try to free themselves to serve the text, they are confined by another's memory and desire.[68]

> With directors in table reads where they go – this is how you should be feeling this is what you should be thinking … this is how this scene should be, usually, not always, but usually the scene dies a little bit, and the play dies a little bit.[69]

British commercial theatre habitually relies on casting a famous film actor. The character becomes even more estranged from the play and the audience, no longer Shakespeare's Hamlet, but Benedict Cumberbatch's Hamlet, or the director's notion of Benedict Cumberbatch's Hamlet. Billington captures this conundrum: "My initial impression is that Benedict Cumberbatch is a good, personable Hamlet with a strong line in self-deflating irony, but that he is trapped inside an intellectual ragbag of a production by Lyndsey Turner that is full of half-baked ideas. Denmark, Hamlet tells us, is a prison. So too is this production."[70] The actors and the text are inside a cage of concept:

> On the first day … you sit down, have a little chat blah blah and then you see the box, and that's a little design box … and you normally have a book, or stuck around the room, pictures of your character. So before you've had a first read through, somebody is already saying to you, so this is how you look and this is the space you are going to stand in, so you're already, whatever you think, before you've even decided what you think, there's already a particular shaped vessel that your liquid talent has to fit into, and I find that, particularly as you get older and more confident in your abilities, it's always difficult.[71]

The theatrical space, once inhabited by a company of collaborative actors, has been colonised by directors who occupy the territory of decision making. Directorless Shakespeare seeks to decolonise, restoring autonomy to the original occupants, to embody the text free of directorial memory and desire and to lift Brecht's curtain: "Before one thing and another there hangs a curtain: let us draw it up!"[72] Directorless Shakespeare is not historical practice, but looks to the past to inspire creation: "the investigation of the past is nothing but the shadow cast by an interrogation directed at the present. It is in seeking to comprehend the present that human beings – at least we Europeans – find ourselves compelled to interrogate the past."[73]

My argument does not presuppose that Shakespeare's theatre did not have hierarchical structures. Young boys were apprenticed, hired men worked swelling a scene. But Shakespeare's company had a stable core of actor-sharers: they played major roles,

---

[66] Erica Whyman, 'RSC Winter's Tale' (Shakespeare Institute, 28 May 2021).
[67] Simon Russell Beale, 'Shakespeare in Italy > Events, News & Blog > News', accessed 22 February 2022, https://www.shakespeareinitaly.org.uk/Events-News-Blog/News/PgrID/408/PageID/21.
[68] See also chapter 1: Michelle Terry speaks of actors having to serve the director's dream and excavated psyche.
[69] French, Interview with author.
[70] Billington, 'Hamlet Review – Benedict Cumberbatch Imprisoned in a Dismal Production', *The Guardian*, 26 August 2015, sec. Stage, http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/aug/25/hamlet-barbican-review-benedict-cumberbatch-imprisoned-prince.
[71] French, Interview with author.
[72] Bertolt Brecht, "A Short Organum for the Theatre" in *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. John Willett (London: Methuen, [1949] 1964), para. 32.
[73] Giorgio Agamben, *Creation and Anarchy: The Work of Art and the Religion of Capitalism*, trans. Adam Kotsko (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2019), 1.

invested jointly in playing stock and scripts, were named on official documents, distributed losses, expenses and profits, and shared company decisions.[74] And even though there were delineated lines of hierarchy, these were not expressed as single points of authority, nor in hands other than actors. When actors did govern, they created theatre "whose brilliance remains unequalled".[75]

In a growing scholarly interest in the pre-1642 acting companies, none of the extensive works definitively locates a director; a figure that, although not named, is speculated as being incarnated in the body of the book-keeper,[76] the impresario, the company playwright and indeed the actor-author Shakespeare. In a field of vexed questions and thin evidence of varying reliability – partial playlists, incomplete cast lists, few surviving manuscripts and platts (plots), differing conclusions of chronology – theatre historians are confined to inductive conjecture. There is a danger that an absence of evidence can be filled by a contemporary, cultural and psychological bias towards authoritarian or leadership models. Some historians insist there was a proto-type director.[77] Some speculate that Shakespeare as author directed his work.[78]

We are left with a blurred question that is difficult to bring into focus: was there a primogenitor of the director in the early modern period? Is directorial function an element that is locatable inside the theatrical ensemble, that is later alchemised into a single external figure? Or, is it something that does not exist in any recognisable precursor and is created and imposed at a future date to resolve theatrical problems that have not yet been introduced? This idea is fascinating. A thing not mentioned is not an absence when it is not a presence at all in the consciousness to be an absence. Thus it is more accurately not director"less", but actor"full". There is work to be done in this grey area if we resist filling in blanks with bias towards the single leader. Surviving evidence, however unable to directly refute a tradition that has yet to be constructed, leaves no trace of an individual auteur controlling the interpretation and production choices for acting companies. But it does leave a saturation of evidence of actor collectivity, that permeated a guild-like culture, of shared responsibility, shared creativity, and shared risk: "most acting companies were effectively actor-collectives".[79]

A clear picture of how decisions were made in the early modern period, that we now attribute to the province of the director – staging, interpretation, costumes, casting, organising, overseeing rehearsal, etcetera – is difficult to comprehend. But there must have been a historically identifiable practice that was viable, and this is an area which can be informed by Directorless Shakespeare research: test existing practice theories, such as Tiffany Stern's assertion of minimal rehearsals, strict observance of cue scripts, and prompters conducting, and to speculate through experience on the nature of shared and collective autonomy.

---

[74] See Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue*, 9 vols (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[75] Taylor and Wells, *The New Oxford Shakespeare*, xxiv.

[76] See Tiffany Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 12 and 94.

[77] Without any extant evidence, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Directing* asserts that in medieval theatre "some sort of stage director would have been required" and insists that in Renaissance and early-seventeenth century theatre there is a "prototype director", using vague illustrations from *Hamlet* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*. See Innes and Shevtsova, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Directing*, 14.

[78] Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 253-7.

[79] Siobhan Keenan, *Acting Companies and their Plays in Shakespeare's London* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2014),17. The incredulity that theatre was conceived and functioned seamlessly without the figure of director renders directorless theatre reactionary, an alternative to theatrical truth, rather than enacting an independent truth.

From the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558 to the puritan closure of the theatres in 1642, there were more than a thousand plays publicly performed and at "the centre of this transformation of the English stage were the period's acting companies".[80]

> Post-hast. Lett's make vp a company of Players,
> For wa can all sing and say,
> And so (with practice) soone may learn to play.[81]

Let us consider theatrical documents of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods to locate the source of power in the professional playhouses.

The Actors Remonstrance, or Complaint, 1643, gives a clear retrospective snapshot of whom the closure of the theatres affects.[82] The document is collective action, an umbrella that comprehends the main stakeholders. Who speaks on behalf of the industry? The actors.

> We the Comedians, Tragedians and Actors of all sorts and sizes … present this our humble and lamentable complaint, by whose intercession to those powers who confined us to silence, wee hope to be restored to our pristine honour and imployment.[83]

The key-cold figure of a holy director, absent. Not encompassed in the "wee".

In a plea for the virtue of re-opening the playhouses the actors, not the playwrights, have purified their theatre: "wee have purged our Stages from all obscene and scurrilous jests".[84] The power to be in control of what is performed, and how it is performed, is the actors'. The collective "wee" is not even a single acting company, but an encompassing notion of "our Stages".

The actors are custodians of "all those that had dependance on the stage", the "Doore-keepers", the "Tire-men", the "stock of cloaths", the "Tabacco-men" and the "ablest ordinarie Poets" who worked for "annuall stipends and beneficiall second-dayes".[85] The natural sufferers are also the "House-keepers" of the theatres, and here the document reveals something of the financial success of the actors and their distribution of wealth to nourish the whole enterprise: "in stead of ten, twenty, nay, thirty shillings shares which used nightly to adorne … they have shares in nothing with us now but our mis-fortunes".[86]

The structure of the playing company is documented. The actors writing the complaint are the sharers, the lead team of creatives: "For our selves, such as were sharers". Then the hired-men who are now "disperst", or still dependant – a sense of patronage and responsibility – "whom in courtesie wee cannot see want, for old acquaintance sakes". Then there are the fools and the boys:

> Our Fooles, who had wont to allure and excite laughter … are enforced, some of them at least to maintaine themselves, by vertue of their bables. Our boyes, ere wee shall have libertie to act againe, will be growne out of use like crackt organ-pipes, and have faces as old as our flags.[87]

---

[80] Keenan, 1.
[81] John Marston, *Histrio-Mastix* (London, 1610), 1.1, 11.
[82] *The Actors Remonstrance, or Complaint: For the Silencing of Their Profession, and Banishment from Their Severall Play-Houses: In Which Is Fully Set Downe Their Grievances, for Their Restraint; Especially since Stage-Plays, Only of All Publike Recreations Are Prohibited; the Exercise at the Beares Colledge, and the Motions of Puppets Being Still in Force and Vigour. As It Was Presented in the Names and Behalfes of All Our London Comedians to the Great God Phoebus-Apollo, and the Nine Heliconian Sisters, on the Top of Pernassus, by One of the Masters of Requests to the Muses, for This Present Month. And Published by Their Command in Print by the Typograph Royall of the Castalian Province· 1643* (London: Printed for Edw. Nickson, 1643).
[83] *The Actors Remonstrance, or Complaint*, A2r.
[84] *The Actors Remonstrance, or Complaint*, A2r.
[85] *The Actors Remonstrance, or Complaint*, A3v - A4r.
[86] *The Actors Remonstrance, or Complaint*, A3r.
[87] *The Actors Remonstrance, or Complaint*, A3v.

The musicians also have found it a lucrative enterprise: "Our Musike that was held so delectable and precious, that they scorned to come to a Taverne under twentie shillings salary for two houres, now wander with their Instruments under their cloaks." [88]

The pronouns, concerns and claimed responsibility indicate a close-knit enterprise, somewhat like a family, in which the actors embody distributed leadership. In a final plea for the restitution of the theatres, the actors swear to reform everything: "reforme all our disorders, and amend all our amisses, so prosper us Phoebus and the nine Muses, and be propitious to this our complaint."[89] Manifold is not only the centrality of ensemble work, the group action of complaint, the autonomy for the actors to reinvent their profession and identity, but the irrelevance of a single leader to facilitate this: a populating and populous "guild" driven by the performers who occupied the stage.

Actors are no longer involved in selection and training at drama schools, casting agents have the power to audition, and artistic directors and producers head corporations. We have shifted dramatically from the organisation of the English Renaissance where actors "endevoured … to instruct one another in the true and genuine Art of acting":[90] actors reduced to a cog in the machine, rather than being the machine.

To learn what was referred to as "the art of stage playing" the apprenticeship model upheld actors' power in selection, training, and incorporation of performers.[91] Not all actors were apprenticed and not all apprentices went on to become adult actors, but it was a common system to secure talented youths to play female and boy roles, even though professional players never had the status of a trade recognised by statute. Training was part of a community, instructed by professionals who had a mutual obligation, and though hierarchical in nature, it was inside a communal structure. Theatrical apprentices were a financial nomenclature, youths on stage and working, sometimes in the most significant and principal parts of the production. Due to output, pressure and commercial demands, and the fact that masters were not always in the scenes or even in the plays with their apprentices, we must assume that the on-the-job training was a fluid, multifaceted, and concerted way of working: "The entire playing company, potentially, constituted their teachers."[92] Intrinsic to the training system was an actor-driven empowerment of craft: "theatrical apprenticeship commonly involved close bonds of affection and trust, as well as of legal obligation."[93]

The typical guild structure was such that once an apprenticeship was completed one would look to setting up an independent business with one's own apprentices, but a player did not have an individuated trade. Once graduating from an apprenticeship, which lasted roughly seven years, he could move into the position of an adult player, and perhaps become a sharer.[94] Again, we see the central role actors play as creative and financial producers: "commerce among the playing companies was built on patterns of fraternity".[95] The company is an organic absorption of what has now disentangled to become individuated parts.

The theatrical world was a tight and small community in London, between 150 and 200 people, "most of whom knew or knew of many of the others, even outside their

[88] *The Actors Remonstrance, or Complaint*, A3v - A4r.
[89] *The Actors Remonstrance, or Complaint*, A4v.
[90] *The Actors Remonstrance, or Complain*, A2v.
[91] Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Profession of Player in Shakespeare's Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 122.
[92] John Astington, *Actors and Acting in Shakespeare's Time: The Art of Stage Playing* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 107.
[93] Astington, 104.
[94] See Wiggins and Richardson, *British Drama 1533-1642*.
[95] Roslyn Knutson, *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare's Time* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 10.

immediate colleagues in any given company".[96] This cross pollination was notable in plays of the period, which referenced one another's work, in an industry fuelled by "imitation, borrowing and competition".[97] There is a culture of collaboration across the whole structure – not only amongst the players, but the poets and playwrights. Nearly two-thirds of the plays that Philip Henslowe procured on behalf of the players were written by more than one person.[98]

Although there was a certain amount of fluidity, theatre troupes were relatively permanent, Shakespeare's notably so. Actors writing for actors, a theatre in the hands of these actors, and a relationship that created invisible song lines connecting London theatrical troupes and audiences. This is of particular interest to the directorless project, which seeks to recapture something of this actor-focused field and stability of ensemble-led productions.

To focus acutely on casting and staging decisions of the acting troupes, and assist the Directorless Shakespeare's casting process, let us consider their practice of doubling.[99] Early plays frequently had more parts than players. Some plays were printed with doubling schemes. *Cambyses*, published in 1569, has a large cast list dispersed among ten actors.[100] Although printed texts are not reliable sources for what actors did on stage, we can still witness a mindset that promotes the flexibility and fluidity of the ensemble, the obvious dexterity of performance and skills, and ability to problem-solve difficult staging issues and practical needs of doubling. Players have many excellent qualities and practised often:

> Player hath many times, many excellent qualities: as dancing, actiuitie, musicke, song, elloquition, abilitie of body, memory, vigilancy, skill of weapon, pregnacy of wit, and such like … so are all these the more perfect and plausible by the often practice.[101]

Evelyn Tribble's research shows early modern actors were not limited by stock characters, but worked in a more complex field of shared abilities, distributed cognition and social bonds of training:

> It was often said that players could only have managed by using stock practices or routines. But a model of distributed cognition can help us see that they succeeded by creating and embedding themselves within physical, social and material smart structures … strong social bonds fostered by the system of sharers in the playhouses; and the regimes of training and education that undergirded their practise.[102]

Actors were not fixated on mimetic casting and age and gender matches, as sometimes confines our stages. Directorless Shakespeare, which effects diversity in casting, draws inspiration from this practice. Apprentices played female parts into their early twenties. Burbage played Hamlet around the age of thirty-one and Lear at thirty-five.[103] Richard

---

[96] Astington, *Actors and Acting in Shakespeare's Time*, 8.

[97] Janet Clare, *Shakespeare's Stage Traffic: Imitation, Borrowing and Competition in Renaissance Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1.

[98] Gerald Eades Bentley, *Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time, 1590-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 199.

[99] All available data on doubling, from all sources, may be found in the "Doubling" subsection under "Roles" in Wiggins and Richardson, *British Drama 1533-1642*.

[100] "the first taking six largely varied roles … and 'one man'– presumably a boy or youth – plays *all* the female roles save Venus, which is a part tacked onto the load of the fourth actor, already playing five male parts". Astington, *Actors and Acting in Shakespeare's Time*, 124.

[101] Thomas Gainsford, *The Rich Cabinet Furnished with Varietie of Excellent Descriptions* (London, 1616), 117v.

[102] Evelyn B. Tribble, *Early Modern Actors and Shakespeare's Theatre: Thinking with the Body* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 4.

[103] Joel H. Kaplan, 'Thomas Middleton's Epitaph on the Death of Richard Burbage, and John Payne Collier', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 80, no. 2 (June 1986): 225–32 (230).

Flecknoe praises Burbage's protean qualities.[104] John Lowin played Bosola in *The Duchess of Malfi* at the premiere (c. 1613) "and kept the part in revival ten or so years later".[105] Joseph Taylor played the light-hearted part of Mirabel "at roughly the same time he did the morbid, violent Duke Ferdinand".[106]

The rehearsal of the plays is a contested topic, with Stern alleging that actors prepared isolated from each other, that for new plays "group rehearsal did not take place on a regular basis", it "was a luxury, not a necessity" and, for revivals, "it was unlikely that there was any collective rehearsal at all".[107] Academics speculate, using Henslowe's *Diary*, how much time a new play would be in a preproduction phase, and conclusions vary from three to fifty-three days.[108] Andrew Gurr, like Stern, asserts "the company cannot have had much free time for full rehearsals of the new plays … and players must have been left largely to their own devices".[109] Roslyn Knutson, who determines "companies had new plays in rehearsal for about three weeks", does not speculate on time devoted to rehearsal but does recognise a discernible pattern of performing continuing plays before a new offering.[110] I believe this to be evidence of time devoted to focused rehearsals. In the following chapters, Directorless Shakespeare demonstrates that group rehearsals must have been a necessity, not a luxury, for all iterations of plays, commensurate with the collaborative creative energy of their actor-led practice.

From a surviving detailed cast list of *Holland's Leaguer* (1631) John Astington concludes difficult staging in final scenes "would have been worked out by the entire company".[111] And of Philip Massinger's *The Roman Actor*, "Much of the play, evidently, required careful ensemble work: the chaos of the final scene ... would have taken some collective working out so as not to have been *actually* chaotic".[112] There is no evidence, or need, for an external eye, or a single person taking charge of staging and clarity. It, however, remains opaque how companies collectively arrived at staging decisions. We must comprehend what we no longer deem or practice. Directorless Shakespeare offers some hypotheses, based on practical experience, circumnavigating familiar fantasies.

The most nourished fantasy is Shakespeare directed his own plays (who directed the others does not seem of interest).[113] Some academics also lean toward a single creative controller. This thesis seeks to redress standard theories about acting practice in Shakespeare's time that have been proposed by academics with little experience of the practical demands of performance. Stern makes claims of *individuated* authority, that although authors were discouraged from being in rehearsals to make directorial decisions, when they did attend "they frequently found important decisions had already been made by

---

[104] "so wholly transforming himself into his Part, and putting off himself with his Cloathes, as he never (not so much as in the Tyring-house) assum'd himself again until the Play was done." Flecknoe, *A Short Discourse of the English Stage*, G6[b]-G7[a].
[105] Astington, *Actors and Acting in Shakespeare's Time*, 132.
[106] Astington, 136.
[107] Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, 56-64.
[108] Stern, 54.
[109] Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, 254.
[110] Knutson, *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company, 1594-1613* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1991), 35; 38.
[111] Astington, *Actors and Acting in Shakespeare's Time*, 153.
[112] Astington, 172.
[113] Audience feedback for the directorless plays performed for this thesis revealed 70 percent did not know Shakespeare's company worked without a director. A significant percentage of those thought Shakespeare, the playwright, or the lead actor, directed the plays. A portion of the 30 percent who did know there was no director still speculated that in actuality Shakespeare must have directed. Answers to when the figure of director was introduced were fairly equally distributed between: not sure, Restoration, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century. There is much uncertainty about this theatrical dominating figure in the cultural memory.

manager and prompter".[114] Not the actors. She continues, "the prompter was something like a *conductor*, bringing into harmony actors who were largely familiar only with what they had to do *individually*; he prompted words, timing and basic blocking".[115] There is much to unpack here. That professional actors would be largely unfamiliar with anything but their roles is unworkable in a real theatre.[116] Actors would not have structured rehearsals to keep themselves clueless enough to need to be conducted. A conductor is an interpreter, not just a stage-hand. Stern supposes actors would be puppeteered by a book-keeper or prompter, who is a menial in their employ, a position not even important enough to be named in documents: a controlling single creative authority external to the actors who *own* the company and create their *own* working conditions. This is a specious argument, but it does expose a cherished need to find a single leader, and highlights the rationale sacrificed in pursuit of this bias. Stern is not the only academic who tends to this. Siobhan Keenan speculated that John Heminges coaching a boy to perform at court might be an early example of directing.[117] Coaching a boy player is different to directing a professional adult actor, or even training an apprentice. Duncan Salkeld, in a class on palaeography, explained that the "platt" (plot) was pinned to backstage "so the director, or whatever he was called at the time, would be able to conduct the stage trafficking".[118] Russell Jackson declared that he could not imagine how they would work without one, proposing that it was a guess either way, but his hunch would be that they had single leaders, listing possible candidates in this order: "The author. The leading actor. The sharers. Burbage."[119] Of course, there was no author, but the playwright was rarely in the room; once they sold the play it was the company's property, and Shakespeare only wrote a fraction of his company's output. Jackson goes on to say, "I just don't accept this model – that somehow the Elizabethan theatre is this ideal communistic version of the theatre enterprise".[120] Communal and collaborative are slurred with the term communist. Gurr also transmutes very thin evidence into concrete speculation that Shakespeare had a hand in directing.

In *The Shakespearean Stage*, Gurr writes a section entitled "Directing Performances".[121] These brief three-and-a-half pages present thin, conjectural evidence, again signalling a desire to find a director. Gurr confesses there are no documents on directing, and like Stern, collapses the book-keeper into the suggestible absence: "Henslowe's records for the Rose mention nobody serving as a director and do not even give a name to the company book-keeper."[122] He is left to infer from an anecdote and the only two in-text examples he has been able to locate. Although it is flawed to use the performative and creative fantasy of the playwright as documentary evidence, neither in-text examples supports a conclusion of a proto-type director. The first is a hint of a playwright staging his plays in Ben Jonson's disclaimer that he was *not* involved in staging:

> wee are not so officiously befriended by him, as to have his presence in the tiring-house, to prompt us aloud, stampe at the book-holder, sweare for our properties, curse the poor tire-man, raile the musicke out of tune, and sweat for everie veniall trespasse we commit.[123]

---

[114] Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, 12.
[115] Stern, 12, my italics.
[116] This is discussed at length in chapters 2 and 3.
[117] Keenan, 'Richard Burbage, a "Delightful Proteus": On the Acting and Reputation of the First Shakespearean Star' (Shakespeare Institute, 26 November 2020).
[118] Duncan Salkeld, 'Palaeography' (Online, 12 April 2022).
[119] Russell Jackson, Interview with author, 30 March 2022.
[120] Jackson.
[121] Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, 253-7.
[122] Gurr, 253-4.
[123] Ben Jonson, *Cynthia's Revels, or The Fountain of Self-Love* (London, 1601), Induction.

The Children of the Chapel Royal must accept full responsibility that their transgressions in the performing of the play are not Jonson's lack of wit in the writing of it. Boys being (not) railed at is different to an adult professional joint-stock company. The only other in-text example is an epilogue in which William Beeston is commended for training his boys:

> by whose care and directions this Stage is govern'd, who has for many years both in his fathers days, and since directed Poets to write & Players to speak till he traind up these youths here to what they are now.[124]

The words "directions" and "directed" must not be overlaid with a nineteenth-century definition. Even Gurr, who evidences this as "a statement about a supervising or directing hand", must conclude that Beeston's management is "training in playing, of course, not directing in performance".[125]

The final hint Gurr offers of a poet staging his plays is Samuel Rowlands' anecdote about Richard Burbage's mannerism when playing Richard III – "his hand continuall on his dagger"[126] – which has historical justification in Holinshed's account. Gurr contrives this into Shakespeare controlling his actors' interpretations: "There was at least one fellow of Burbage who knew Holinshed and could have told him of that mannerism. The same author would most likely have been the one to elaborate on the bare stage direction, '*Enter Clifford wounded'* in the folio text of *3 Henry IV*, and to tell the player or tire-man what to do."[127] The "most likely" is the revealing problem. Why most likely? Here we expose the mindset that this thesis is working to de-stablish. Even if information did come from Shakespeare, who had certainly read Holinshed, and Burbage was too busy to wade through the chronicles for himself, there are no grounds for supposing it was passed on in the form of a director's note. It can be as well interpreted as a helpful piece of collaboration. We should not axiomatically comprehend a working process measured from our own time frame, prejudices and experiences. There is no evidence to attribute stage and textual extrapolations and directions to Shakespeare, and presumably Burbage had the capacity to read Holinshed for himself. One of the biggest projections that eclipses circumspection is that Shakespeare, a larger-than-life figure, is imagined as an intervening and imposing entity on creation and production. But it is just as "most likely" for Heminges, who between 1595 and 1625 had bound ten apprentices, had multiple apprentices at one time, to be the fellow giving staging and acting advice.[128] To conflate the idea of a manager of boy companies, a book-keeper, or an author into a prototype director, betrays a philosophical and political bias toward monocratic creativity. What is critical is that no single figure is recognised or worth noting as a director. We must "most likely" conclude that the business of staging, casting and acting was collaborative. If that is difficult to imagine, it is due to scepticism that great theatre, or human endeavour, cannot exist without a leader.

Martin Wiggins's unpublished paper, "Who was You?", evidences through surviving theatrical documents the collective fluidity and multiplicity of distributed responsibility and authority.[129] Wiggins considers the question posed by various manuscript directives that offer

---

[124] Richard Brome, *The Court Beggar* (London, 1653).
[125] Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, 255.
[126] Samuel Rowlands, 'Humors Ordinarie Where a Man May Be Verie Merrie, and Exceeding Vvell Vsed for His Sixe-Pence.', EEBO-TCP Phase 1 2006, http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A11127.0001.001.
[127] Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, 256.
[128] Jeanne H. McCarthy, *The Children's Troupes and the Transformation of English Theater 1509-1608: Pedagogue, Playwrights, Playbooks, and Play-Boys* (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 74.

[129] Wiggins, 'Who Was You?' Wiggins gave this paper at all three symposiums accompanying this PhD's Directorless Shakespeare productions.

alternative staging options, finishing with open invitations – "A songe Iff you will";[130] "to musicke if ye will";[131] "or what prettie triumph you list":[132] who was the "you" invited to make creative decisions in the acting companies? Tracking the documented financial record of several plays' journeys from pre-production to performance, Wiggins establishes the involvement of multiple company members. Wiggins demonstrates the multi-hands, signatures and variable authorities involved in commissioning a play, listening to it being read as a company, working out possible casting, authorising Henslowe to buy the play, buying costume and prop items and organising theatrical staging. Wiggins concludes the offer of playwrights in open stage directions was not to the singular formal "you", but to the plural "you". All of which renders the question – "Who was you?" – into the more accurate question – "Who *were* you?" – determining that "you" is a collective pronoun, and concluding that sixteenth and seventeenth-century theatre was "a process of joint decision making in a collective enterprise".[133] When asked who constituted the company making the decisions, Wiggins replied, referring to Henslowe's accounts that itemise money for "good cheer" at play readings:[134]

> It is a perfectly good question to which there is no answer. The only thing that might lead us to an answer, or to give us material on which to speculate possibility of understanding, is how much cheer you could get for five shillings or how drunk you could get before the whole occasion becomes pointless. That would suggest that for those five-shilling readings quite a few people were there. For the two-shilling readings maybe only the sharers or the master actors were there.[135]

Not only in terms of performing acuity and staging choices can we see the evidence of collaborative responsibilities, but surviving documents also conserve trails of multi, rather than single, hands of authority: "John Townsend and Joseph Moore, co-signed a duplicate bond with theatre-owner Philip Henslowe (29 August 1611), along with 11 other players."[136] In 1616 the principal actors of an amalgamated company all signed an agreement with Jacob Meade and Edward Alleyn.[137] The collaborative nature can also be seen in the five extant manuscript licenced playbooks. From these, we can glean something of the book-keeper's limited role. Several of the extant manuscripts have stage adaptations and annotations which would assist with backstage management: stage directions, missing speech prefixes, large properties, and cuts and revisions for performances. The interspersions of different hands on these texts confirm the various ways the censor, author and book-keeper worked together, and the uncertainty of definitive responsibilities.[138] The general lightness of the adaptors'

---

[130] Thomas Heywood, *The Escapes of Jupiter* B.M., MS. Egerton 1994. *c.* 1625. in W. W. Greg, *Dramatic Document from the Elizabethan Playhouse Stage Plots Actor's Parts Prompt Books* (Delhi: Facsimile Publisher, 2015), 318.

[131] Robert Wilson, *The Pleasant and Stately Morall, of the Three Lordes and Three Ladies of London With the Great Ioy and Pompe, Solempnized at Their Mariages: Commically Interlaced with Much Honest Mirth, for Pleasure and Recreation, among Many Morall Obseruations and Other Important Matters of Due Regard. by R.W.*, 2005, http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A15517.0001.001.

[132] Robert Greene, *The Scottish History of James the Fourth, 1598* (Oxford: Malone Society, 1921), TLN 2052-3.

[133] Wiggins, 'Who Was You?'

[134] Philip Henslowe, *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. R. A. Foakes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 88 (Fol. 45).

[135] Wiggins et al., 'Much Ado About Italy Symposium'.

[136] Keenan, *Acting Companies and their Plays in Shakespeare's London*, 34.

[137] Keenan, 42. The actors were from Lady Elizabeth's Men and Prince Charles's players.

[138] For a detailed account of manuscript "alterations, corrections, additions and deletions" in various hands see Grace Ioppolo, *Dramatists and Their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton and Heywood: Authorship, Authority and the Playhouse*, Routledge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture 6 (London; New York: Routledge, 2006).

markings, and the fact they do not always resolve staging problems, is evidence "much was left to the actors (including their exits and the carrying on of small properties)".[139]

Even censorship evidences that "the relationship between players, playwrights and censor was collaborative."[140] In *Sir Thomas Moore*, different authors adapt, rather than cut, to Edmund Tilney's suggestions.[141] Just as playwrights might revise a play right up to (and even after) its sale to an acting company, it is customary for manuscripts to be revised by various theatrical personnel readying them for performance. There is evidence of three hands at work in the manuscript of John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt*,[142] the scribe, the censor and the stage adaptor, but no evidence of Fletcher and Massinger participating in the revisions and annotations.[143]

The myth that Shakespeare as author directed his plays can be disabused by this multi-dimensional access and dispersed authority over a living and changing performance document, and the study of the relationship of playwrights to acting companies. Playwrights were commissioned agents or willing merchants, often not actors in the company. Some playwrights even claimed actors ruined their work and were only able to right the wrongs of polluted theatre in print.[144] Playwrights had no ownership or rights over manuscripts once sold to the companies. Revisions could be done by different agents, at different times of revival. Playwrights appeared to specialise in specific scenes, as in the pattern of collaboration between Fletcher and Massinger.[145] And playwrights such as Thomas Dekker and Jonson "could be equally vociferous in their resentment of the playhouse and acting establishment, which continued to set the artistic agenda and held control of the funds".[146] Playwrights were not in a position to direct. But this does not mean that there was no way for texts to be interpreted.

Evidence survives that interpretation of plays was realised in performance in democratic interchange with the audience: "dramatists were not able to control audience interpretations fully" and "audience members could be highly active and independent agents when it came to shaping the meaning of contemporary plays."[147] Stern argues that "spectators' 'judgement', solicited at the end of the first performance, would shape what was to be altered or cut from the play – and … determine whether or not the play would 'survive' to be performed again".[148] Detractors of the stage were terrified of corrupting audiences by encouraging crime, licentiousness, lewd behaviour and immorality.[149] Defenders of the stage championed theatre's capacity for revelation, moral salvation and communal catharsis.[150] Detractors were anxious theatre pollutes the mind, defenders assured theatre cleanses the spirit. Both agreed that audiences were essential to interpretation.

---

[139] Keenan, *Acting Companies and their Plays in Shakespeare's London*, 70.
[140] Keenan, 85.
[141] G. Harold Metz, 'The Master of the Revels and The Brooke of Sir Thomas Moore', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1982): 493–95.
[142] John Fletcher and Philip Massinger, 'Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt' (n.d.), BL, Additional MS 18653, British Library.
[143] Keenan, *Acting Companies and their Plays in Shakespeare's London*, 75.
[144] The authorial prefatory material in John Webster, *The White Devil (Vittoria Corombona)* (London, 1612), complains about everything connected with the production, except for one performance by Richard Perkins.
[145] Massinger more often wrote the first and last acts. See Wiggins and Richardson, *British Drama 1533-1642*.
[146] Bart Van Es, *Shakespeare in Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 39.
[147] Keenan, *Acting Companies and their Plays in Shakespeare's London*, 152.
[148] Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 86.
[149] William Prynne, *Histrio Mastix: The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragoedie* (London, 1633).
[150] Philip Sidney, *An Apologie for Poetrie. VVritten by the Right Noble, Vertuous, and Learned, Sir Phillip Sidney, Knight* (London, 1595).

> The action of the theatre, though modern states esteem it merely ludicrous unless it be satirical or biting, was carefully watched by the ancients, so that it might improve mankind in virtue … and certain it is … that the minds of men in company are more open to affections and impressions than when alone.[151]

Thomas Heywood's formal written defence "touching the antiquity, the ancient dignity, and the true use of Actors, and their quality" was inserted into an increasingly hostile environment towards the power of the theatre to influence its audiences.[152] Heywood argues that theatre instructs "humanity and good life" and re-counts that actors have so transported murderers that they have confessed their crimes.[153] Although Heywood is a playwright and author, he is also an actor; his various dedications in his *Apology* address the "Citty-Actors" whom he calls "good Friends and Fellows". This substantiates a collaborative profession's intrinsic sense of fellowship. Heywood, recycling Shakespeare, elevates the theatrical world and the part of all actors on a par to human existence with God as the spectator: "The world's a theatre, the earth a stage, / Which God and nature doth with actors fill / … Then our play's begun / When we are borne, and to the world first enter, / And all finde exits when their parts are done."[154] Theatre is "bewitching" and "hath the power to new-mold to the harts of the spectators, and fashion them to the shape of any noble and notable attempt".[155] Theatre provides a virtuous service for an audience, rather than an audience providing the service for the actors, by passively spectating:

> Modern playgoers are set up … to be solitary spectators, sitting comfortably in the dark watching a moving picture … In fundamental contrast … Shakespearean receivers were far from passive objects.[156]

Directorless Shakespeare productions, not conceived to please a single figure in the rehearsal room, release the audience from passive spectator to active participant. Without a director to "excavate" the play, the audience is free to decide whether their minds fall and how their loyalties lie, and whether they are seeing a duck or a rabbit (or both). A play is incomplete when read, but it is also not complete when acted; it is only in its fullest stage of realisation when it is performed with an audience. The audience is the multivalent embodied interpreter.

There exists a perceived ontological truth that it is human nature to follow a leader, and a leader will naturally emerge. Janet Suzman uttered this with conviction, affirming Shakespeare was too much of a genius not to have been involved in directing his plays.[157] Bailey's resistance to Directorlesss Shakespeare also lies in this well touted truism that "at all points there would have been some form of leader … I'm sure he [Shakespeare] was very directorial in his approach to plays".[158] In recent populist fiction, Shakespeare receives a letter with news of his son Hamnet's death while he is busy directing a play. Here "Shakespeare the director" is a fully imagined piece of embodied human behaviour, as distinct from a casually proposed theory. Even without reference to the evidence-based historical argument that there is no director, as an imagined phenomenon it remains implausible because of how null it renders the actors: at one point Shakespeare tells them how many paces they must take across the stage, warning them not to fall off.[159]

---

[151] Francis Bacon, *The Works of Francis Bacon: De Augmentis Scientiaurum* (London: M. Jones, 1815), 40.
[152] Heywood, *An Apology for Actors* (London: Elibron Classics, 2005), 3.
[153] Heywood, 53-60.
[154] Heywood, 13.
[155] Heywood, 21.
[156] Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-4.
[157] Janet Suzman, pers. comm., 8 September 2018.
[158] Bailey, Interview with author.
[159] Maggie O'Farrell, *Hamnet* (London: Tinder Press, 2021), 60.

It appears difficult to grapple with a belief in the cultural energy of distributed authority and devolved responsibility. Directorless Shakespeare's philosophical concern is to overcome this mindset. When we remove the directorial figure from the room, how do we remove it from our minds? Wittgenstein reminds us: "What is inexpressible (what I find mysterious and am not able to express) is the background against whatever I could express has its meaning."[160] Before change or revolution is possible, we must expose the background: express the framework that makes expression possible. For therein lie the hidden structures by which we create all meaning.

The insisted need for a leader is essentially Hobbesian. Thomas Hobbes's sociological or political explanation is, in short, that people are brutish and self-interested. Giving up freedom to a single ruler guarantees stability and safety.[161] This is a cynical view of human nature, but even if it were true, what if self-interest is the good of the acting company? Shakespeare's theatre survived by companies being successful, not individuals. Turning to existentialism we can illuminate the philosophical and political conditions of directorless work: authenticity, autonomy, freedom. Authenticity in a directorless process should not be conflated with ideas of essentialising text or searching for an authentic interpretation. Authenticity is adjudicating and taking conscious ownership for our choices, the autonomy to create art without a leader or institutional commands. Directorless Shakespeare re-introduces authority to actors as individuals in service of the collective. According to Jean-Paul Sartre, inauthenticity is choosing to believe we are not free, allowing extraneous forces to determine us, accepting, without question, values that are given. With exertion we take control of our choices. Sartre captures the burden of this: "condemned to decide without support from any quarter, condemned forever to be free".[162] Simon de Beauvoir notes that turning toward freedom "we are going to discover a principle of action whose range will be universal … My freedom must not seek to trap being but to disclose it. The disclosure is the transition from being to existence".[163] The freedom of the actor in directorless work is in service of a possibility of releasing something revelatory in Shakespeare's work that may have been obscured through historical performance and critical traditions. It is a freedom to disclose.

The belief that actors are children striving for love and approval from a parental figure is Freudian.[164] But actors are not children, they are adult artists. Beauvoir's examination of the process of growing up is like the actor's journey from directed to undirected Shakespeare. The adult must become free of the child's constructed world. When we are children, values and rules are given to us like gravity. The comfort of the child is that we know what we must do. Once we realise values are human constructs, adolescence becomes a time of crisis: "Why must I act that way? What good is it? And what will happen if I act another way?"[165] Directorless Shakespeare aims to free actors of these constructs, of a belief in the essential need for a director, and discover what will happen if they act another way. As adults if we are obliged to ceaselessly renew the denial of our freedom we remain in-authentic and dishonest.[166]

---

[160] Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, trans. Peter Winch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 16.
[161] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
[162] Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Age of Reason*, ed. David Caute, trans. Eric Sutton (London: Penguin Classics, 2001). 243.
[163] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity: Pour Une Morale de l'Ambiguite*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Open Road Media, 2018), 23-30.
[164] See Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, trans. James Strachey (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995); Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985).
[165] Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, 41.
[166] Beauvoir, 51.

This view of the human condition applies in two ways to the directorless project. First, the larger external concept of the philosophical implications – the crisis entered when we come to question the inherited given circumstances of a director-driven industry and the need to look further back to try and reconstruct and replace the values we are questioning, which seem opaque, complex and destabilising: "The past is an appeal; it is an appeal toward the future which sometimes can save it only by destroying it."[167] Then there is a practical crisis on the floor – giving the actor freedom comes with a gift of fear and uncertainty, being "condemned to be free". Anthony Renshaw comments on the ambivalent experience of acting in the directorless Shakespeare plays:

> There are many words to describe working with Anərkē Shakespeare. Among them are intense, frightening, alarming, terrifying and downright petrifying. But, more importantly, other words are, liberating, joyous, exciting, mind blowing and downright amazing.[168]

The freedom must be a commitment to individual freedom, but also a commitment to the whole, which suffers if individual eccentricities are in service solely of the comfort of self. It is a philosophical and a practical concern. Autonomy exists when the directorless actor releases themselves from the need for external rule or external approval.

In conflict with this notion of authenticity and freedom is the fetishising of individual genius and individual freedom in a capitalist world. The cult of the director, like the conductor, centralises individual worship, which is different to individual freedom in a communal world. Authenticity is the opposite of narcissism: "this individualism does not lead to the anarchy of personal whim. Man is free; but he finds his law in his very freedom".[169] Beauvoir reminds us that a commitment to one's own freedom is only possible by a commitment to the freedom of others: "it is not solipsistic, since the individual is defined only by his relationship to the world and to other individuals; he exists only by transcending himself, and his freedom can be achieved only through the freedom of others."[170] In order to free oneself one has to not reify the self. Returning authority to actors, self-governing rather than listening to directives, informs and sustains a tension between the self and the whole. This circular energy flows between the text, actor and audience, as opposed to the triangular energy, or circuit breaker, of the director who proposes an interpretation of the text, that actors perform seeking the directors' approval, which is fed back into the play, and out to the audience, through the directorial lens.[171]

Immanuel Kant's notions of autonomy and freedom, although focused on morality, are useful in further developing the philosophical framework of Directorless Shakespeare:

> As with [Jean-Jacques] Rousseau, whose views influenced Kant, freedom does not consist in being bound by no law, but by laws that are in some sense of one's own making. The idea of freedom as autonomy thus goes beyond the merely "negative" sense of being *free from* causes on our conduct originating outside of ourselves. It contains first and foremost the idea of laws made and laid down by oneself, and, in virtue of this, laws that have decisive authority over oneself.[172]

---

[167] Beauvoir, 102.
[168] Anthony Renshaw, 'Anerke Shakespeare: Macbeth', 28 January 2021.
[169] Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, 170.
[170] Beauvoir, 169.
[171] Chapter 1 looks at Michelle Terry's work at the Globe which seeks to "dismantle the triangle of hierarchy that is part of our culture". Michael Billington, 'Michelle Terry's Plan for Shakespeare's Globe is Democratic – But Is It Doable?', *The Guardian*, 4 January 2018, sec. Stage, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/jan/04/michelle-terry-shakespeares-globe.
[172] Robert Johnson and Adam Cureton, 'Kant's Moral Philosophy', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2022 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2022), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2022/entries/kant-moral/.

We must throw off bondage of particular structures, to be creators of laws we follow, rather than following laws created for us: "a rational will must be regarded as autonomous, or free, in the sense of being the author of the law that binds it".[173] This condition of self-governance is essential to understanding what genuine freedom is. The work on the directorless floor is an enactment of self-government. Kant's idea of deliberation about what you do and who you want to be, can be directly transposed to the notion of the actor freely exploring their character in relation to the text, the other actors and the audience. Kant believes we share a universal rationality.[174]

An exemplum is the removal of road signs from an area or town. Hans Monderman's innovations "adopted in some 400 towns across Europe, have led to dramatic falls in accidents … Behind this demarking lies the concept of 'shared space' and 'naked streets'".[175] This "shared space" and "naked streets" are the creative thresholds the directorless company inhabits; no longer following external directives. Despite an anxiety that this leads to chaos, conflict and egocentric self-serving, in this practical example it leads naturally from freedom of individual choice to a protection of the whole: "there are fewer accidents when drivers are trusted not to kill themselves, and each other. Assuming we need constant protection is the mark of a controlling state."[176] The actor no longer needs the director's permission to own their own work.

Kant's autonomy is not a chaotic sense of anarchy, but similar to Giorgio Agamben's notion: anarchy as a philosophical principle and secret centre of power, and creation as an act of resistance.[177] An-archē is without origin or command.[178] Hobbes defines the command as "an expression of appetite and will".[179] For Agamben the definition of religion is the "attempt to construct an entire universe on the basis of a command".[180] The director constructs the universe of the play by a series of commands, and even if those commands are permissive and empowering, inbuilt is the assumption that an actor needs to be commanded, even if paradoxically, like Brook, the command is to be free. Speaking of Reiner Schürmann's work, Agamben describes "an attempt to separate origin and command in order to reach something like a pure origin, a simple 'coming to presence' severed from every command".[181]

Directorless Shakespeare is an attempt to release the text and sever it from directed creative commands. And to analyse the process with a focus on embodied literary criticism. The "coming to presence" is what the company of actors feel they wish to explore, through conscious choice. Directorless Shakespeare is a creative enterprise based on apophantic discourse. Anarchy is what becomes possible only when we grasp the anarchy of power: "Construction and destruction here coincide without remainder. But, to cite the words of Michel Foucault, what we gain in this way 'is nothing more, and nothing less common than the unfolding of a space in which it is once more possible to think'."[182]

---

[173] Johnson and Cureton.
[174] 'Kant's Ethics Summary', Philosophy & Philosophers, 10 April 2012, https://www.the-philosophy.com/kant-ethics-summary.
[175] Simon Jenkins, 'The Removal of Road Markings is to be Celebrated. We Are Safer Without Them', *The Guardian*, 4 February 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/feb/04/removal-road-markings-safer-fewer-accidents-drivers.
[176] Jenkins.
[177] Agamben, *Creation and Anarchy*.
[178] Agamben, 51.
[179] Hobbes, *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, ed. J. C. A. Gaskin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 76.
[180] Agamben, *Creation and Anarchy*, 59.
[181] Agamben, 53
[182] Agamben, *Creation and Anarchy*, 77; Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 342.

Directorless Shakespeare has the potential to stage a relationship between theatre and thought.

In his preface to *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein surrenders his desire to have written a book of thoughts proceeding from one subject to another "in a natural order".

> After several unsuccessful attempts to weld my results together into such a whole, I realized that I should never succeed. The best that I could write would never be more than philosophical remarks; my thoughts were soon crippled if I tried to force them on in any single direction against their natural inclination. – And this was, of course connected with the very nature of the investigation. For this compels us to travel over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction. – The philosophical remarks in this book are, as it were, a number of sketches of landscapes which were made in the course of these long involved journeyings.[183]

This framework is important to the thesis for two reasons. The negative space of the philosophical questions encountered in this investigation cannot be neatly packaged into a PhD, which by its nature must be conclusive in its selectivity, and must argue, more or less convincingly, a position. But it must also be understood that what has been discovered and what I hope to show in the body of this work, is that the investigation into Shakespeare plays in performance without a director, is in its most profound manifestation when the work becomes like sketches, without a unified, conceptualised, digestible framework. Without being a "book" so to speak, but thought in action, changeable, mercurial, revelatory, opaque and confusing, but always an embodiment of a shared question, rather than a single answer. The myriad-minded approach is to resist forcing the plays into "any single direction against their natural inclination".[184] Wittgenstein goes on to say – "I should not like my writing to spare other people the trouble of thinking. But if possible, to stimulate someone to thoughts of his own."[185] My hope is this PhD stimulates the reader to think about a creative process, and a political model, that is about shared responsibility. That reading Shakespeare's text carefully together in performance with the audience, and without a single person directing interpretation, is a communal process of discovery. "*Thought* can be of what is *not* the case."[186] Theatre is the space of the unthinkable alternative.

The first chapter of this thesis considers the determination in the Original Practice (OP) experiments at Shakespeare's Globe, London, to retain a director. It further looks at the establishment of the first ever Globe ensemble, under the stewardship of the Artistic Director, Michelle Terry, in 2019, who is making a genuine attempt to liberate actors, but within structures and commercial systems working against this.

The second chapter considers the directorless work at the American Shakespeare Center (ASC), Staunton, Virginia. It focuses on the original Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005, and how certain conclusions devolved into working processes that retain single points of authority, even without the nominal director. It further critiques the central position of academic discourse around OP, that actors worked solely from cue scripts with short or no rehearsals, arguing that the practical needs of staging a play render this theoretical position questionable.

As the research cannot depend solely on other people's experience, especially where the work claims to be "directorless" but falls short of a rigorous model, the second half of this thesis uses practice to test what is released in Shakespeare's text when plays are embodied through distributed authority. Three Shakespeare plays were selected from each of the First

[183] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, ix[e].
[184] Wittgenstein, ix[e].
[185] Wittgenstein, x[e].
[186] Wittgenstein, 44[e].

Folio categories – History, Comedy, Tragedy. Each production used a different mix of actors, in different locations, with different audiences.

The third chapter details the first directorless production, *Richard II*, a history, mounted by Anərkē Shakespeare, with eight actors in six days at the Rose Studio Theatre, Kingston-upon-Thames, 2018. Actors cast, cut and staged the play collaboratively to allow for a collective vision, rather than a single interpretive eye. Academics responded to aspects of the play as revelatory. This chapter further discusses the transformations and questions raised by subsequent productions – a tour to Würzburg, Germany and the Rose Bankside, London.

The fourth chapter details the second directorless production, *Much Ado About Nothing*, a comedy, a bi-lingual, intercultural production by the V.enice S.hakespeare C.ompany, performed in Venice, Italy, 2019. The directorless process is notated using diary entries and recorded memos, as well as critical reflections to give the reader an indication of the day-to-day processes as the company tried to define their notion of directorless, and struggled with different languages, different traditions, and different cultural apprehensions of comedy. It questions a veneration of unity.

The fifth chapter details the final directorless production, *Macbeth*, a tragedy, mounted by Anərkē Shakespeare, with mostly veteran Directorless Shakespeare actors, performed in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, and St Leonard's Church, Shoreditch. The company used an uncut text (without Thomas Middleton's additions) in an attempt to investigate its heteroglossia without excisions. This chapter focuses on close text analysis of the dialogical forces freed through undirected performance.

The final chapter concludes the thesis.

Finally, in order to locate Directorless Shakespeare's practice inside a research framework, I turn briefly to a discussion of its relation to contemporary notions of research in performance. It is difficult to select a definitive term for my method from established but contested guidelines.[187] Joanna Bucknall's struggle to define the nature of research through performance focuses on a stripped-down sense of its linguistic dimensions, all pertaining to research in theatre, not literary criticism.[188] Whereas, I am working with a linguistically rich practice. My research, therefore, is hybrid; it does not fit into standard notions of theatre practice, nor the usual route of literary criticism. Distancing myself from Bucknall, but embracing something "not forcibly pursued", that "academic research can lead to creative practice", my enterprise exists partly in "practice-led research and research-led practice … as

[187] Some of the terms include: Performance as research (PAR), Practice as research (PaR), Practice-based research (PBR), Practice-led research (PLR), Arts-based research (ABR), Research-led practice (RLP), Research-based practice (RBP), Research practice (RP), Research through practice (RtP), Research creation (RC), Creative research (CR), Studio research (SR), which is by no means an exhaustive list. Bruce Barton even refuses to *attempt* to define Performance as Research in the introduction to the book entitled *Performance as Research*. See Bruce Barton et al., eds., *Performance as Research: Knowledge, Methods, Impact* (London: Routledge, 2018), 1-5. For further discussion see Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean, eds., *Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009); Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); B Brown, P Gough, and J Roddis, 'Types of Research in the Creative Arts and Design', March 2004, https://praguk.files.wordpress.com/2018/07/types-of-research-in-the-creative-arts-and-design.pdf; Michael Cawood Green and Tony Williams, 'On Reflection: The Role, Mode and Medium of the Reflective Component in Practice as Research', *TEXT* 22, no. 1 (April 2018), http://www.textjournal.com.au/april18/green_williams.htm; Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, eds., *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry* (Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2014); Joanna Bucknall, 'The Daisy Chain Model: An Approach to Epistemic Mapping and Dissemination in Performance-Based Research', in *Performance as Research*, ed. Annette Arlander et al. (London: Routledge, 2017), 50–74.

[188] Bucknall, 'The Daisy Chain Model'.

interwoven in an iterative cyclic web".[189] But with a further distinction. This is not theatrical research. Annette Arlander delineates an "umbrella term" for all practice categories as Artistic Research (AR), which is "a landscape of various approaches to knowledge production in performing arts".[190] Although I am using performance as part of my research methodology, I am not exclusively doing research in performing arts. My work is practice based, but as an embodied form of literary criticism. It seeks to free the bodies that embody the literature from a particular contemporary practice in the rehearsal room that is anachronistic to the *text* they are embodying. It proposes two things – that the myriad-mindedness of Shakespeare's text is better elucidated in performance, contrary to Harry Berger's belief that the myriad of textual possibilities can only exist through a single mind in reading;[191] and secondly, that this myriad-mindedness is embodied through interactive performance of actors, without a director, allowing revelatory possibilities for academics and audience members. My research is philosophical, political, historical and concerned with close reading of Shakespeare's text as done through collective embodied performance. Thus, I propose a new term for my practice in researching Directorless Shakespeare – "Embodied Literary Criticism" (ELC).

Research through performance is concerned with how to turn what is ephemeral, largely non-linguistic and subjective, into something that counts as knowledge.[192] Reflection, and the quality and method of that reflection, play a critical role in transferring the intangible to the tangible, the personal to the critical. Therefore, I reflect in two voices, during the event, as an actor in communal discussions, and after the event, with an overall critical eye. This is dialogical, with a palimpsest of voices: actors, academics, and audiences. Facilitating a reader's connection to the material, diary entries and actors' reflections offer immediate grabs as the work progresses and its minutiae in the greater context of trying to wrangle with bigger philosophical and political concepts of working with new (old) models of dispersed authority. The questions of "conventionally acceptable and less ambiguous results"[193] are attended to by consistent data gathering through the multiple ELC directorless performances that are analysed, but largely left unedited to speak for themselves, thereby avoiding directed or biased interpretation of feedback. Actor reflections (written and recorded), interviews, audience feedback (written and verbal), reviews, and academic reflections are contained in the body of the chapter, and I will not refer the reader to an appendix; the myriad voices are free to speak and represent themselves dialogically with my critical voice.[194] Photographs are used throughout the chapters as a visual diary, and a link to a website with more documentary evidence of productions is provided, but not critical to following the argument.

The subjective nature of enquiry in these case studies was assisted by my presence inside the process, but compromised for the same reason. Allowing the reflections, testimonials, reviews, anonymous feedback and interviews to resound as fully as possible, the author acknowledges a methodological issue: that being the main investigator for the project in charge of practical organisational issues, and also an actor inside the ensemble, may have compromised what respondents, especially actors, felt able to say.

---

[189] Smith and Dean, *Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts*, 2.
[190] Annette Arlander, 'Artistic Research — from Apartness to the Umbrella Concept at the Theatre Academy, Finland', in *Mapping Landscapes for Performance as Research: Scholarly Acts and Creative Cartographies*, ed. Shannon Rose Riley and Lynette Hunter (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 77–83 (77).
[191] Harry Berger, 'Text Against Performance in Shakespeare: The Example of *Macbeth*', in *Power of Forms in the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Norman, Oklahoma: The Book Service Ltd, 1983), 49–80.
[192] Bucknall, 'The Daisy Chain Model', 59.
[193] Barton et al., *Performance as Research*, 2.
[194] Extensive audience feedback was collected throughout all productions which is scanned and made available in the appendix, but not essential to following the argument in the relevant chapters.

The directorless working process attempted to create space for an inclusive practice and foster open discussion, disagreement, self-autonomy and methods of overcoming obstacles as a collective. Even if reflections were possibly attenuated, actors did feel able to reflect negatively and took space for these observations as evidenced, especially in chapter 4, by various actor testimonials and records of day-to-day discussions and conflicts.

Embedded within generally positive actor reflections is also an acknowledgment of the difficulties and terrifying aspects of working in an unfamiliar directorless practice. The complexities of this unusual way of approaching a production, in a speculated experience of a Shakespeare's directorless theatre, meant that with the sense of freedom afforded them actors often found the process simultaneously enabling and terrifying. As Renshaw reflects: "I've likened working with Anərkē Shakespeare to childbirth … you forget the pain when the outcome is something so beautiful."[195] The actors' responses should not be treated as measure of success or failure of the productions, but a record of their experience working in an unique way in professional theatre, all of them for the first time – except actors that continued to participate in the directorless work, where for the final production of *Macbeth* half of the cast were veterans.

Much of the material for this PhD is primary material. Therefore, throughout the thesis there may be longer quotes than standard. There are two reasons for this: first, to provide readers with an access to material they are unable to consult elsewhere; second, to support a fundamental philosophical ethos and allow the myriad perspectives and voices to represent themselves, rather than being manipulated as sound bites into unnuanced support of the dominant argument.

As this thesis focuses solely on Directorless Shakespeare it will not engage in any larger theoretical writings about contemporary ensemble practice. The research is finely tuned as an alternative to the trend for conceptual Shakespeare on the main stages, not as ensemble work in all forms of theatre. The ELC uses an ensemble without a director solely for Shakespeare text and these newly formed conditions, inspired by historical practice, will not be in relation to other theories of ensemble practice in contemporary theatre.

ELC can attempt to replicate Shakespearean theatre processes of working actor-led, but cannot replicate audience's expectations and customs. To make Directorless Shakespeare democratic, to awaken critical engagement, it is not enough to empower the actor and free the text; it is also necessary to reinstate the status of the audience to construct meaning. To ascertain if Directorless Shakespeare is a viable working process, which creates commercial and meaningful productions, audience responses will be significant.

There is much research into the psychology and sociology of audiences, theories of audience reception, and the complexities of ascertaining from data collection accurate reflections of an event.[196] Theatre respondents, knowing feedback will be used and read, may feel an implied social pressure to please those asking for opinions, and those with negative

---

[195] Renshaw, 'Anerke Shakespeare: Macbeth', 28 January 2021.

[196] See Stuart Hall, 'Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse', ed. Ann Grey, *Centre for Contemporary Studies* 2 ([1973] 2007): 386–98; Kirsty Sedgman, *The Reasonable Audience: Theatre Etiquette, Behaviour Policing, and the Live Performance Experience* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Pivot, 2018); Mireia Aragay and Enric Monforte, eds., *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English* 4, no. 1 (2016); Chris Megson and Janelle Reinelt, 'Performance, Experience, Transformation: What Do Spectators Value in Theatre?', ed. Mireia Aragay and Enric Monforte, *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English* 4 (2016): 227–42; Jason Demeter and Ayanna Thompson, 'The Merchant of Ashland: The Confusing Case of an Organized Minority Response at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival', in *The Shakespearean International Yearbook*, ed. Susan Bennett (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 49–64; Helen Wood, 'The Mediated Conversational Floor: An Interactive Approach to Audience Reception Analysis', *Media Culture & Society* 29 (2007): 75–103; Ben Teasdale et al., 'How Audiences Engage With Drama: Identification, Attribution and Moral Approval', *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (2021).

responses may not stay to fill in forms, rendering data gathered incomplete. Audience feedback for this research was mainly collected as testimonials, reviews and written observations on the night, with the option to remain anonymous. Mireia Aragay and Enric Monforte note that Helen Freshwater's seminal work *Theatre & Audience* "sees absence of trust as having distorted the relationship between practitioners, industry and theatre scholars and audiences".[197] Freshwater observes there is "a deep-seated suspicion of, and frustration with, audiences".[198] Whilst recognising that feedback may be compromised, this thesis will consider the overwhelmingly positive response from collected data as a serious marker of the viability of directorless Shakespeare as ELC, with trust of the audience as its foundation, for several reasons. Firstly, we did not have a homogenous audience base like the "primarily white, upper-class audience" of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.[199] We performed three different plays, five different productions, in ten different venues, in three different countries – Germany, Italy and UK – to intersectional and significantly diverse audiences, audiences which included: academics; students; international and local theatregoers; multilingual speakers; primarily German speakers; primarily Italian speakers; primarily English speakers; in the Midlands, and greater and central London. Secondly, over ninety percent of audience members stayed to fill in forms and further discuss the work. Thirdly, the positive responses were detailed, specific and repeated remarks across all the productions: that the directorless production was one of the best or the best Shakespeare they had seen, particularly for actor investment, clarity of storytelling, distributed focus on all roles, character relationships, non-mimetic casting, and that they understood things about the play and noticed characters and relationships they had never considered before. As a document that supports the reliability of this positive feedback, I refer to an email written by an audience member on the opening night of *Macbeth,* 2020. The importance of this document is that it was never intended to be seen or collected for data, and captures an immediate response written as a group email to acting friends, veterans of Michael Boyd's RSC history ensemble, to encourage them to see the play. This audience member had no prior relationship with anyone in the cast, and two years later, at a chance meeting, remembered me and forwarded the email, adding: "It touched me so deeply, it's engraved into me, it's in my soul, Elena. In my very soul forevermore."[200] What is germane are the notes of praise, in a personal email never intended for data collection, resound with the main positive responses in the collected feedback: best production of *Macbeth* seen; noticed characters never considered before; engaged moment-to-moment; struck by actor investment; found the company's approach to non-mimetic casting persuasive; understood things about the play for the first time.[201]

---

[197] Mireia Aragay and Enric Monforte, 'Introduction: Theatre and Spectatorship – Meditations on Participation, Agency and Trust', *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English* 4, no. 1 (1 May 2016): 3–20 (3).
[198] Helen Freshwater, *Theatre and Audience* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Red Globe Press, 2009), 4.
[199] Demeter and Thompson, 'The Merchant of Ashland', 49.
[200] Janey Howarth, pers. comm., 29 November 2022.
[201] Email written by Howarth, 7 March 2020, forwarded to the author, 29 November 2022:
I went to see Macb8th last night...
Best production of Macb8th I have ever seen.
It reminded me of The Histories at times...and The Histories - BEST THEATRE I HAVE EVER SEEN - until last night, and this is up there with The Histories.
2 hours of stunning theatre.
[…]
I'm in an ecstatic state of bliss and tempest, which is what theatre should do...set your bones alight and make your blood sing.
[…]
I understood the play more deeply and intuitively than ever before and the passion, the greed, the ambition, the horror and the madness, the love, so much love, all moved me like never before.

The value in attempting to forge a new theatrical and literary-critical language that is Directorless Shakespeare lies not only in its interculturality, accessibility and global resonances, but also in making theatre, both on and off the stage, a communal space: in transforming the relation of academic, performer and audience, by bringing these three constituencies together in democratic interchange where speaking with and through Shakespeare is a shared language, not owned or distorted through typical hierarchical relationships that exist in academia and on the commercial stage.

It is challenging an entrenched idea, in the place where we would expect democracy to flourish, that elevates a star controller as the focus of attention. It is building plays on structures that need to be questioned. To build on a new structure: a new (old) mindset that is the mind of the world the play was created in. What is revealed if the text is not bruised by external concepts impressed into it? If the director no longer imposes themselves between the text and the actor, and the actor and the audience? That, perhaps, there are still things to be discovered about Shakespeare.

The actors were all a phenomena, I'd never really noticed Malcolm before, (by this point in the play we're all usually losing interest as it's just swaggering interchangeable warriors, but it was all utterly mesmerising), I was hyper alert for every second, every nano-second, don't think I breathed for two hours....and joyously all the gender switching didn't rankle for a change. All the witches were men. You know how switching genders usually feels like they are making a stand, making a point, battering the audience with how non-anti anything they are. It wasn't like that. The actors were the characters, the characters came fully to life and I believed in all of them, every one, and I journeyed with them as the tale unfolded. Full immersion and I didn't want it to end. Blown away... still...

ACT 1, SCENE 1

Chapter 1[202]

The Globe: Redistributing power, smashing the mirror up to nature.

> *We were handed a 400-year-old model that is absolutely about multidisciplinary voices, myriad voices, and somewhere underpinning it all, is about social justice, equality, egalitarian, cheek by jowl, reaching across difference.*
>
> - *Michelle Terry*

> *Into a thousand parts divide one man,*
> *And make imaginary puissance.*
>
> - *Chorus,* Henry V

> *Then through the prism of these plays, with the light above us, and the depths of the Thames beneath, we will bear and carry and journey together, beyond the literal, rational, conscious order, to the unconscious, the irrational: another world, a different time, a place elsewhere.*
>
> - *Michelle Terry*

Under "Shakespeare Original Practice" (OP), the World Shakespeare Bibliography contains surprisingly few entries.[203] In a critical examination of OP, Jeremy Lopez notes the problematical "diffusely defined amalgam of critical and theatrical practices ... and theoretical perspective".[204] He writes, "there is no scholarly treatise that amounts to a systematic statement of original practice principles" and critiques the loose definition of OP on theatrical websites in the language of marketing.[205] Don Weingust notes "absent historical

[202] Much of this chapter contains primary material that is not available to consult elsewhere. To benefit the reader, quotes in the body of the text are longer and more frequent than standard.
[203] Prominent theatre historians who have contributed scholarship on Original Practice (OP) are Martin Wiggins, Tiffany Stern, Alan Dessen, Andrew Gurr, Franklin Hildy, and Roslyn Knutson.
[204] Jeremy Lopez, 'A Partial Theory of Original Practice', ed. Peter Holland, *Shakespeare Survey* 61 (2008): 302–17 (303).
[205] Lopez, 303.

evidence of sufficient clarity to allow codification of these techniques".[206] The (now defunct) www.originalpractices.com emphasises this need for further scholarly and practical investigation: "The single factor uniting scholars and practitioners under the heading of the modern original practice movement is the understanding that there is much left to discover".[207] Weingust observes that "original practices are as varied as those companies engaging in them and the spaces in which those companies work".[208] The main areas are universal lighting, recreated stages, reliance on early texts and cue scripts, costumes, and music. Lopez concludes, theatrical companies working in OP are united by two overriding concerns: audience interaction and theatrical space.[209] The work in OP has mainly focused on material aspects of staging, rather than practical aspects of rehearsing. The American Shakespeare Center (ASC) "has been somewhat less fastidious than the Globe in its approach to early modern materiality … [and] has taken a greater interest in some methodological approaches to OP" relying, according to Lopez, on Tiffany Stern's research, who "set the theatre historical worlds on end by demonstrating that the norm for professional theatre in Shakespeare's day was only a single group rehearsal before the opening of a new play".[210] This is not entirely accurate. Stern did not demonstrate, but speculate. This PhD argues that her conclusions, drawn from limited evidence, are premised with an academic mindset without experience of the process and requirements of practically memorising a body of lines and performing in front of an audience.[211] Further, the ASC's early work, as well as being informed by, also informed Stern's, as yet unpublished, work.[212] Following criticism, the ASC distanced themselves from the term OP, preferring "Shakespeare's Staging Conditions". Their main concern was not to replicate the materiality of playing conditions, but to conserve something of an essence: to work with cue scripts and audience interaction, and, above all, to "do it with the lights on".[213]

In one of the latest collections on OP (yet over a decade old) Alan C. Dessen appraises that, in the majority of productions between 1997 and 2005 at Shakespeare's Globe, London, "directors have not sought to conform to OP", that "the findings of theatre historians have had little impact" on productions, and that the presence of a director "provides a controlling point of view that can trump OP concerns".[214] The director acts as a circuit breaker, not only between actor, audience and text, but between actor, audience and process: a dilution of the practice part of original practice. Ralph Alan Cohen states that Shakespeare's Globe and the Blackfriars Playhouse "face difficulties in positioning themselves as serious contributors to the progress of theatre", since many "talented directors are hesitant to work in what they view as the constraints of the two theatres".[215] This presupposes that to create

---

[206] Don Weingust, 'Early Modern Theatrical Practice in the Later Modern Playhouse: A Brief Overview', in *Thunder at a Playhouse: Essaying Shakespeare and the Early Modern Stage*, ed. Peter Kanelos and Matt Kozusko (Selinsgrove Pa.: Susquehanna University Press, 2010), 249–58, (250).
[207] Lopez, 'A Partial Theory of Original Practice', 307.
[208] Weingust, 'Early Modern Theatrical Practice in the Later Modern Playhouse: A Brief Overview', 249.
[209] Lopez, 'A Partial Theory of Original Practice', 308.
[210] Lopez, 251.
[211] See introduction, chapters 2, 3 and 4.
[212] Chapter 2 offers an in-depth account of the Actors' Renaissance Season (ARS), at the Blackfriars, and their process of staging sixteenth and seventeenth-century plays without a nominal director.
[213] 'We Do It With The Lights On', American Shakespeare Center, 7 September 2018, https://americanshakespearecenter.com/products/we-do-it-hoodie/.
[214] Alan C. Dessen, 'Original Practice's at the Globe: A Theatre Historian's View', in *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, ed. Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 45–53 (45-6).
[215] Ralph Alan Cohen, 'Directing at the Globe and the Blackfriars: Six Big Rules for Contemporary Directors', in *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, ed. Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 211–25 (211).

progressive Shakespeare one needs a director: that OP will be restricted to museum theatre and off-peak programming. Cohen notes that directing on early modern stages allows the work to "look forward to a theatre freed of the nineteenth and twentieth-century developments that in many ways have fettered it and its audience", but polemically observes that *directors* need to return the plays to the "two elements most crucial to the future health of theatre: the performer and the audience".[216] The director, paradoxically, frees theatre of nineteenth-century fetters.[217] The latest essay covering OP does not discus working without a director, and concentrates on different directorial styles at the Globe.[218] Dessen asks, "can a sense of OP that extends beyond period costume and music expand rather than constrict our approach to the surviving playscripts?"[219] This PhD answers in the affirmative, detailed in the final chapters on *Richard II*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Macbeth*, mounted solely by actors, without a director.

OP was coined for the early work at Shakespeare's replica Globe, London. The Globe, which opened to the public in 1997, was founded as a sort of theatre laboratory to test original plays in approximated original staging conditions. The Globe's OP productions were a fertile cross-pollination of scholarship and practice, but mainly experimented with materiality, aesthetic reconstruction and original music: "OP was not about re-enactment, it was about re-discovering the phenomenology of early modern performance."[220] The Globe has been written about extensively so this chapter will not offer another survey. Rather, it focuses on what is germane to this research, that the Globe never mounted plays without a director.[221]

On the Globe website, explaining OP, Farah Karim-Cooper writes:

> When Mark Rylance was the Artistic Director at Shakespeare's Globe, he and his artistic team pioneered a visually and aurally stunning artistic movement which has been termed "original practices" … to recreate or replicate as many *performance practices* of Shakespeare's company who occupied the original Globe.[222]

These "performance practices" do not encapsulate the practice of performance for the actors. Karim-Cooper details the focus on a somatic experience, of music, costume and architecture:

> Unprecedented was the painstaking research that went into each production to re-create the clothing the actors might have worn, the music that audiences might have heard in the space and the ways actors might have engaged with audiences … most theatre productions that were designed with the Renaissance in mind, had not typically been designed with as much historical accuracy as these early Globe productions.[223]

However, Ella Hawkins's survey of the Globe's "historically accurate" costumes reveals limitations. The high-profile inaugural play, tied into, as Stephen Purcell notes, myth-making about British national identity, was an "'authentic', all male, historically costumed *Henry V*,

---

[216] Cohen, 212.
[217] For another instance of the claim to recover OP that retains the director (and even instructs the director on OP), see 'Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company', Shakespeare Theatre Association, accessed 14 June 2022, http://www.stahome.org/member-template-profile-page-78-1.
[218] Sarah Dustagheer, 'Original Practices: Old Ways and New Directions', in *The Arden Research Handbook of Shakespeare and Contemporary Performance*, ed. Peter Kirwan and Kathryn Prince (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 65–81.
[219] Dessen, 'Original Practice's at the Globe: A Theatre Historian's View', 52.
[220] Farah Karim-Cooper, Interview with author, 4 June 2019.
[221] Patrick Tucker's 'The Original Shakespeare Company' was invited to perform at the Globe, but this was not inhouse. See chapter 2 for a fuller account of how Tucker's company was not genuinely directorless.
[222] Karim-Cooper, '*Twelfth Night*: Original Practice', Teach Shakespeare, 5 May 2016, https://teach.shakespearesglobe.com/twelfth-night-original-practice, my italics.
[223] Karim-Cooper.

directed by Laurence Olivier's son Richard".[224] The costumes of the court at the betrothal of Henry and Katherine were indeed replica patterns of original Renaissance clothing, but they were replicated dressing gowns, garments that would have been inappropriate in court. Following the limited patterns available in Janet Arnold's *Patterns of Fashion* book sometimes "resulted in garments that were historically accurate(ish) in design, but geographically and socially problematic in usage".[225]

Innovations flourished in the textile and music industries through the early work of the Globe:

> There were huge inroads in terms of what we now as a culture understand about Renaissance clothing because of Jenny [Tiramani]'s work here … Clare van Kampen … really helped to bring about the early music movement as a regular performance feature in a theatre.[226]

But little changed in the rehearsal room.

The focus on external form was not achieved through the substantive essence of an original working practice, the visual and aural aesthetic of the actors was left to the continued auteur-ship of very clearly demarked contemporary hierarchical structures. Karim-Cooper details "not every original practice could be tested: no intervals, no directors, three day rehearsals, working with parts/cue scripts".[227] In employing, and even coining the words "original practice" there is an incongruity. If we conceive of Shakespeare's actors' "practice" as what they did to rehearse and perform a play, then no original "practices" were tested.[228] In some productions they went so far as to dye the underwear of the actors by original methods, which involved urine, but, as Patrick Spottiswoode clarifies, there was never a willingness to explore an early modern directorless model. A bias remained towards single leadership:

> I don't think there was ever an attempt or suggestion that we – I don't think Mark [Rylance] ever discussed the idea of working in a directorless way here as one of the original practices – I can't think of a production that worked in that way – no we never did.[229]

Purcell notes a conflict where "any study of the work of directors of the Globe is self-evidently an account of modern, rather than 'original' practices".[230] Sidestepping this conundrum, Purcell argues that under Rylance's leadership directors were displaced from their role as author of a production's concept, and positioned as the guide or coach of an ensemble. Rylance explains: "I like the way sports teams had many coaches for the different skills required, under the leadership of one manager".[231] Rylance observes that directors are "expected to be fathers, teachers, therapists, patrons, gurus" and this role needs re-defining to allow a "freedom of communication between actors and audience".[232] Apart from Rylance's problematical, gendered language, this further evidences the patronising image of director

---

[224] Stephen Purcell, *Shakespeare in the Theatre: Mark Rylance at the Globe* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017), 38.
[225] Ella Hawkins, '"Original Practices" Costume Design at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre: Practice as Experiment, Re-Enactment, and Research' (Research Seminar, Shakespeare Institute, 2018).
[226] Karim-Cooper, Interview with author.
[227] Karim-Cooper, '*Twelfth Night*'.
[228] For a longer disquisition on the polemic of not actually doing theatrical "practice" see, Holger Syme, 'Where Is the Theatre in Original Practice?', *Dispositio* (blog), 25 July 2014, http://www.dispositio.net/archives/1942.
[229] Patrick Spottiswoode, Interview with author, 24 April 2019.
[230] Purcell, *Shakespeare in the Theatre*, 59.
[231] Mark Rylance, *Play: A Recollection in Pictures and Words of the First Five Years of Play at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.* (London: Shakespeare's Globe, 2003), 88.
[232] Rylance, 'Playing the Globe: Artistic Policy and Practice', in *Shakespeare's Globe Rebuilt*, ed. J. R Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 169–76 (170).

who infantilises actors. A resistance to this category marks Rylance's artistic directorship: he wanted the ensemble to work *with* a director, not merely *for* them.[233] But Rylance did not wish the Globe to be perceived as anti-director. He "found it difficult to recruit well known directors to the Globe throughout his tenure", possibly because directors were put off by the constraining rigour of OP.[234] Trying to recruit well-known directors undermines the notion of trying to displace the director: "A total of nineteen directors worked on the in-house productions during Rylance's artistic directorship", with ten productions to his name, "Tim Carroll was by far the most prolific director of the period".[235] Karim-Cooper recalls: "It was clear that Tim was in charge of the room, but I think he was more about facilitating actors."[236]

As part of the displacement and attempted historicity in 1999, Rylance re-titled roles to "Masters": the director became "Master of Play".[237]

> We changed our own government to a circle of "masters" in verse, voice, movement dance, music, clothing, led by the Master of Play, and all serving the actors and the audience.[238]

There is an unquestioned reliance on hierarchy, even in experiments that rhetorically profess a desire to change the hierarchy. Wittgenstein warns us against bewitching our intelligence with language.[239] In honouring circular government, and wishing to empower the ensemble, Rylance sets up configurations which privilege single authoritarian figures, patriarchal and patrilineal in structure and language. The idealism that "Masters" are "serving" conflicts with a system that appoints so much authority over an actor. When given notes from the "Masters of Play, Dance, Words, Voice and Movement and the Assistant to the Master of Play, actor Chu Omambala described the experience as 'a bit mindboggling', because 'so many notes from so many different people' were difficult to process in a single sitting".[240]

Although Purcell argues compellingly that Rylance wanted to displace conceptual directorial leadership, and Karim-Cooper affirms that it was an actor's theatre under Rylance, not much detail of actual working processes supports this. Self-evidently, a focus on the aesthetic reproduction is conceptual, and the "first three seasons of the Globe were strongly rooted in the post-Stanislavskian tradition".[241] Rehearsals were concentrated mainly on the modern practice of "character analysis".[242] Character is itself an anachronistic concept, the term "character" in Shakespeare's time meaning style of handwriting.[243] Interviews with actors revealed "a broadly Stanislavskian approach … and indeed some actors may have

---

[233] Purcell, *Shakespeare in the Theatre*, 60
[234] Purcell, 62.
[235] Purcell, 63
[236] Karim-Cooper, Interview with author.
[237] This problematical use of gendered language, like directors expected to be "fathers", is redressed under the leadership of Michelle Terry, who has implemented a 50:50 casting policy. See Mark Brown Arts correspondent, 'New Shakespeare's Globe Chief Promises Far More Diverse Casting', *The Guardian*, 18 August 2017, sec. Stage, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/aug/18/new-shakespeares-globe-chief-promises-far-more-diverse-casting-michelle-terry.
[238] Rylance, *Play*, 88.
[239] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Wiley–Blackwell, 1973), 109.
[240] Chu Omambala, 'Malcom Played by Chu Omambala', Adopt an Actor, Shakespeare's Globe, accessed 15 November 2016, shakespearesglobe.com/discovery-space/adopt-an-actor, qtd. in Purcell, *Shakespeare in the Theatre*, 79-80.
[241] Purcell, *Shakespeare in the Theatre*, 74.
[242] Purcell, 64.
[243] See chapter 3 for a detailed discussion on the damage Constantin Stanislavski methods can have on directorless Shakespeare. For a further discussion of problems with notions of teleological characters and internal realism see Elena Pellone and David Schalkwyk, 'Content but Also Unwell: Distributed Character and Language in The Merchant of Venice', *Shakespeare Survey* 72 (2019): 243–55.

utilized it, not because they were asked to do so by Globe directors though (Mark Rylance and Mike Alfreds certainly encouraged its use) but because it is widely taught in modern actor training".[244] The colonisation of the acting process to serve a director's perspective is deeply entrenched from training institutions. Actors made lists, actioned lines, decided on objectives and super-objectives, played hot seat and modern drama games, played for truth and the truth of intention, all the time receiving notes from their "Masters".

Purcell devotes a chapter to Mike Alfreds's directing and early influence on "practice" at the Globe.[245] This use of "practice" embodies Alfred's approach to rehearsals and directing, a standard use for "practice" which has no sympathy or synonymity to the "practice" attached to "original" in the Globe's coinage of OP. Rylance was the "Master of Play" once only – *Julius Caesar,* 1999 – utilising Alfreds's Stanislavski and Laban-based exercises for rehearsals. Rylance discovered he was more comfortable as an actor leading the ensemble from within. There remains a clear hierarchy that marks Rylance's position as nineteenth-century actor-manager. Rylance even refers to himself as actor-manager, confessing it was overwhelming being Artistic Director and lead-actor: "Eventually, not effectively enough for me to be able to stay, I got overwhelmed really. I think actor-managers you find who have the energy for being artistic directors are a very good thing."[246] Challenging contemporary structures, influenced by historical practice, the mindset does not retreat farther than the nineteenth century.[247] Directorless Shakespeare locates and attempts to depose this mindset.

The penultimate Artistic Director, Emma Rice, left under criticism of her heavy directorial intervention at the Globe, which had never clearly settled on its exact position on the spectrum of contemporary theatre and historical replica space. But Karim-Cooper explains that Rice was at the tail end of the Globe becoming an increasingly directorial theatre:

> Dominic Dromgoole really ushered in director's theatre at the Globe … he was a very hands-on Artistic Director in terms of overseeing what the other directors were doing, and sort of giving them guidance and that kind of thing – and really I think it was in that time the sets got bigger … it became, very much about director's concept, a director's vision, and I think Emma was just at the tail end of that. But Emma didn't bring that into the building, that was here, and Dominic had established that over the last decade.[248]

Partly the problem lies in the architecture. The heterogenous nature of the space has a resistance to the homogenous vision, but certain anachronisms with reconstruction lead to the theatre itself assisting in a resistance to the myriad-minded vision:

> In the auditorium we have four doors … and the one on the stage right and stage left are anachronisms (they're there because of fire safety) … we don't really have a wooden O … those two doors create this sort of pros-arch feeling. So, a lot of directors come in … they sit in the bay that's directly in front of the stage, and they do their tech rehearsal there, and they don't move around – so the actors are kind of facing out – and then the sets they create also contribute to a sort of proscenium arch … and so the Globe itself becomes sort of dwarfed to the vision of the director.[249]

---

[244] Purcell, *Shakespeare in the Theatre*, 69.
[245] Purcell, 84.
[246] Mark Rylance, 'Discoveries from the Globe Stage', in *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, ed. Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 194–210 (194).
[247] This is also seen in chapter 2 where lead actors in the directorless season at the ASC are given the title "actor-manager".
[248] Karim-Cooper, Interview with author.
[249] Karim-Cooper.

The staging is reduced or "dwarfed" to the single gaze. The Globe as a director's theatre. The corollary was a reaction and ultimate resistance when Rice's work was deemed to fully cancel, what had already been happening less overtly, an audience's cognitive ability:

> Looking back you can see that where Emma Rice's tenure seemed to be a sort of culmination of the developing attitude towards the building and so when she came in – someone who's widely known for her work with sound and light – she uses a lot of underscoring in her work … so her use of sound and light was a massive intervention which Dromgoole would never have proposed. So, that's why I think it blew up in the way it did because it was a massive intervention into the fundamental intention behind the twenty-seven-year reconstruction, which was to create a space that approximated the conditions in which Shakespeare's company worked … What we discovered along the way was that one of those conditions was the cognitive agency of the audience – and without that then you just have a normal theatre situation … Anytime that you have a light telling you where to look – or you have actors' voices that are kind of coming at you from all directions because it's miked – then you're told exactly what you're supposed to be doing. Underscoring when it's not Shakespearean, directed underscoring is an emotional direction – so it's telling you how to feel … In the Globe, it's a free for all, so the sort of heterogeneous environment that you have in the Globe becomes an emotionally heterogeneous environment.[250]

A democratic exchange, central to this thesis, reinstates social and interpretive power to the actor and audience, and, above all, to the audience-actor relationship. The Directorless Shakespeare Embodied Literary Criticism (ELC) of the later chapters details a communion with the audience, where freedom to follow one's autonomous cognitive agency made watching the play a process of self-discovery.[251]

Rice admitted, "I felt like Polonius behind the curtain".[252] For Rice, her artistic vision innovated the Globe, transformed the space into something central and contemporary: "we were able to host a spectacle of such aural, visual and intellectual excellence and ambition, the Globe became one of the greatest music venues in the country".[253] There was an outcry that the Globe shouldn't reject innovation. But it was not that simple. Rice infamously declared that she knew very little about Shakespeare, had only directed one of his plays in her twenty-year career, and that Shakespeare made her "very sleepy".[254]

The media resounded with a forceful interest.

There was pro Rice:

> Emma Rice brought Bowie into Shakespeare. What is peculiar is that a theatre that was routinely reviled as ersatz is now regarded as in dire need of protection from innovation. The Globe never was merely a heritage project.[255]

and con Rice:

---

[250] Karim-Cooper.

[251] See Zed Josef's reflection on *Macbeth*, chapter 5.

[252] Kate Kellaway, 'Emma Rice: "I don't know how I got to be so controversial"', *The Observer*, 1 July 2018, sec. Stage, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/jul/01/emma-rice-controversial-shakespeares-globe-wise-children.

[253] 'This Magical Space: Emma Rice's Top 10 Globe Moments', *Shakespeare's Globe* (blog), 20 April 2018, https://medium.com/@shakespearesglobe/this-magical-space-emma-rices-top-10-globe-moments-3d349c32e7fb.

[254] Sohrab Ahmari, 'Emma Rice Reduced Shakespeare's Plays to Lectures—She Had to Go', *Prospect Magazine*, 1 November 2016, https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/arts-and-books/emma-rice-reduced-shakespeares-plays-to-lectures-she-had-to-go.

[255] Susannah Clapp, 'The Globe Isn't Just a Heritage Project – Emma Rice Understood That', *The Observer*, 30 October 2016, sec. Stage, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/oct/30/emma-rice-shakespeares-globe-ousting-comment-susannah-clapp.

a particularly unbridled attack from Richard Morrison in the *Times*, who said she was "wrecking" the Globe with productions of "perversity, incongruity and disrespect".[256] For Rice the controversy was more than lighting and sound, she felt, as she revealed in an open letter posted to the Globe website, that her artistic vision was distrusted: "My artistic process is all I have".[257]

For the purpose of this research, what is fascinating is all the singular language around the merits and disadvantages of the work. Rice refers to *her* artistic process, *her* artistic vision. There is no language of the collective decisions, the group's artistic vision, of artists changing the Globe, together. In all the talk of lighting and audio, it is Rice's name that is infamously attached to innovation and the iconography of sacrifice, on no-one's lips were the designers' names trippingly articulated.[258] It is a single person experimenting and a single person who is either condemned or worshipped. A single person that is either allowed to experiment or not:

> The sense now is that some experiments are more permissible than others. Perhaps it's that some people are allowed to experiment where others aren't … It's about who gets to make Shakespeare, for whom and how.[259]

The polemic is *who* is allowed to interpret Shakespeare. Not, should Shakespeare be interpreted by a single "who" at all.

This final apotheosis of the Globe as a directors' space allowed the Globe to strongly redefine itself, or to define its purpose more carefully on the spectrum between then and now. Michelle Terry announced:

> I personally think Emma Rice was the best thing that has ever happened to the Globe because it has forced an organisation to go through a most healthy form of protest. It has afforded a time of unbelievable self-reflection.[260]

Currently at the Globe, under Terry's artistic directorship, there is energy surrounding a re-establishment of actor-driven theatre. This is perhaps the closest the Globe has been to a directorless experiment, although the work is a hybrid which aims for egalitarian creative process, but retains directors. These are Terry's words to the public:

> The ensemble approach is important in a theatre like the Globe, since it again goes back to the model of the original company. The egalitarian stake or shareholder position of some of those original players meant that there was a vested interest and ownership from everyone about the work. It mattered to everyone that it was a success … Everyone, from every creative discipline, has contributed to creating these worlds. It speaks so perfectly to the democracy of the plays in the communal nature of the theatre as well. Along with the audience, we are all figuring it out together.[261]

This is the ideal, the vision, the attempt. And the heart of this PhD's directorless research. For the remainder of this chapter, we will be interrogating the Globe's ensemble project. Although ultimately I argue that structures worked against ensemble-driven work, and that

---

[256] Richard Morrison, 'The Globe Has Been a Success Story — and Emma Rice Is Wrecking It', 30 September 2016, sec. times2, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/richard-morrison-the-globe-has-been-a-success-story-and-emma-rice-is-wrecking-it-xrrgxz3ml; Kellaway, 'Emma Rice: "I don't know how I got to be so controversial"'.
[257] Kellaway, 'Emma Rice'.
[258] Jay Jones (sound) and Ben Nichols (lighting). 'This Magical Space'.
[259] 'Emma Rice's Departure Is Not about Lighting | WhatsOnStage', 25 October 2016, https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/matt-trueman-emma-rice-shakespeares-globe-lighting_42100.html.
[260] 'Michelle Terry: "Emma Rice Was the Best Thing That Happened to the Globe" | WhatsOnStage', 4 January 2018, https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/michelle-terry-emma-rice-best-shakespeare-globe_45457.html.
[261] 'Hamlet Programme', 2018, GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/27/1, Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive, 20.

the hybrid nature did not either shift the paradigm enough, or allow actors to be fully happy in their ill-defined and unclear state of "freedom", I wish to make clear that I have nothing but respect for Terry's fearless and genuine struggle. Terry stands in the firing line. Right at the heart of the United Kingdom's Shakespeare industry, where tourists and locals come to look for what Shakespeare means, to buy him from a gift shop, a change is trying to be made. And it must be lonely:

> Michelle is way ahead of the game and it's lonely out there and she's going to take a few hits, but she's … motivated to keep going until everyone else catches up.[262]

Terry understands that inherent in the Globe theatre is the breakdown of structures: the privileged watch the play through the eyes of the less privileged. Shakespeare was a revolutionary, who somehow managed to get past the censors to create radical artwork about those myriad-minded questions: the humanity, the complexities, the chaos, the lack of unity; plays without a single answer, or maybe no answer at all, and no single interpretation. It is lonely because one is not supported by existing structures. One must try to change a structure inside a structure. Terry talks of inserting an organic ecosystem into the machine:

> We talk about it [Shakespeare] as inclusive – but inclusive in whose world? Because it's not inclusive to everybody. So how are we truly holding a mirror up to the whole of nature – and actually having to smash it up a little bit. Smash the mirror, because for a little bit it's not going to look pretty and it's not going to adhere to the world prism. It's not going to adhere to the worldview that people have relied upon these plays to do for such a long time. So, as you try and put an ecosystem in the machine it's going to collapse a little bit – and that's the lonely bit … the idea that anybody should be left out is a complete anathema to the plays.[263]

This seems hard for some Globe audiences, especially when it comes to non-mimetic casting.[264] To the criticism that people want something "traditional", Terry responds that the Globe is giving them something traditional, something more traditional than the "traditional" of a nineteenth-century representation of Shakespeare:

> We regularly get – I was sold a ticket thinking I was going to get a traditional experience. You got one! This is what Shakespeare did, it could not be more historically accurate. If that's what you mean by traditional. If you mean the Victoriana appropriated misogynistic, racist, worldview, we don't have that kind of tradition. Because we're the Globe. And it's in the name. But it's complicated, and as the world gets more complicated, and as the trauma narrative makes everybody feel so much more impotent, I understand that you look to places for the simple message. But it doesn't feel like the most honest place to be, or the most honest transaction. I think our most democratic artform should be an offering.[265]

Terry commandeered language to usher in a shift, away from the Globe's early definition of original "practice", to an expanded, incorporating term of original "process":

> Original practice for me has limiting or almost pejorative connotations now because it implies that women can't be in the plays, and what's not going to happen. The term "original process" expands it.[266]

Will Tosh articulates the non-hierarchical ethos behind the expanded term "original process":

---

[262] Karim-Cooper, Interview with author.
[263] Terry, Interview with author, 2 December 2019.
[264] Of the hundreds of feedback forms collected at the Directorless Shakespeare productions of this thesis there was not a single criticism about non-mimetic casting, and much noteworthy praise about the positive revelatory effects this had on the plays. See chapters 3, 4 and 5, for further discussion. A scan of all feedback is available in the appendix.
[265] Terry, Interview with author.
[266] 'Michelle Terry: "Emma Rice Was the Best Thing That Happened to the Globe" | WhatsOnStage'.

> The approach that Fed [Holmes] and Elle [White] and Michelle have taken has been sort of inspired by, or through a desire to honour or to kind of be informed by historic practice. And it's not the mode that the Globe in the past has explored, which goes by the term, the name of Original Practices, which is a very kind of material-focused desire to recapture historic playing conditions. And that's focused on clothing, on music, on comportment, on the use of the stage. Instead, what the Ensemble have been keen to explore is what's coming to be called Original Process, which is taking inspiration from the ways in which early modern companies might have managed their own business of playing and business of performance. And that is (from our point of view and modern theatre) quite un-hierarchised. You know, early modern England is not a non-hierarchical place, but given that the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the King's Men, operated in quite a shared experience way.[267]

The two inaugural plays, *Hamlet* and *As You Like It*, 2018, were accompanied by media-hype that they were directorless, although, in reality, this was not the case. Federay Holmes, who was one of the officially titled directors, found it problematic that the directorless idea had been extrapolated and exaggerated.[268] Peter Viney's theatre blog, reviewing Claire van Kampen's *Othello*, which followed these inaugural plays, captures the tone of a mis-informed, snide, criticism and suspicion of Terry's, so-called, directorless project:

> The Michelle Terry era seems to dislike set and costume designers as much as directors! … It's going to be a four star, along with the critical consensus, a very welcome lift after the two director-less and misguided "Globe Ensemble" productions this year.[269]

F. Holmes tries to clarify the ambiguity about the director's role: "I don't know if I would call this process exactly 'directorless' so much as play-led and, crucially, egalitarian."[270] The "process", instead of actors turning up and being told their costume and design concept, was all "creatives" would collaborate from the first day of rehearsal. Elle White, the co-director, reflected:

> We had to hold our nerve leading up to rehearsals. The director and designer usually have an in-depth process to decide on the design and world of the play before starting on the first day with the acting company. We wanted to start from a place where we were responding collectively to the plays … It has been thrilling to see what a collection of minds can discover.[271]

Terry explains:

> I was really keen to try and make sure that we started together on day one of rehearsals. What tends to happen in the normal process is the director and the designer and the team we effectively called the creatives – meet months and months before the rehearsals start – and then so much excavation and archaeology of the plays happens in those months – and then the people that rock up on day one of rehearsals – the actors that aren't ever called creatives – have to then represent basically somebody else's excavation of their psyche – and it's really hard. So you're sort of employed for

---

[267] Terry et al., *Podcast Season 1, Episode 3: The Ensemble Experiment.*, 2018, GB 3316 SGT/COMM/WEB/1/3, Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
[268] Federay Holmes, Interview with author, 26 November 2019.
[269] Peter Viney, '*Othello* – Globe 2018', *Peter Viney's Blog* (blog), 13 August 2018, https://peterviney.com/stage/othello-globe-2018/.
[270] F. Holmes, *As You Like It*, Question and Answer, 4 July 2018. ("F. Holmes" and "S. Holmes" will be used to distinguish between Federay Holmes and Sean Holmes).
[271] Elle While et al., 'Ensemble Voices', in *Hamlet Programme*, 16–21 (15), 2018, GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/27/1, Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.

> all of who you are – but you're never allowed to use it – because what you're trying to do is then play catch up with someone else's dream effectively.[272]

When the play is made in directors' and designers' heads, and the actors move into the play, positioned as pieces, serving someone else's excavated psyche, the struggle then is between "the microcosm and a macrocosm – because then it becomes this OR that – rather than this AND that. The play is this AND that".[273]

F. Holmes defines herself, as Rylance did, as a coach or facilitator:

> So, in a way, our way is nothing like a traditional directing role; it's much more coaching, facilitating, augmenting and training … The term "ensemble" extends to not just the actors; it includes the fight director, the choreographer, the movement director, voice and text specialists, the costume designer, everybody, we are all the ensemble. So those decisions are entirely collective. It's a bit like we are the managers of the football team.[274]

It appears as if the wheel is being re-invented, still unable to move past the idea that actors need coaches and managers, and cannot govern autonomously. Along with misinformation about it being directorless, there was further misinformation, and criticism, around what an egalitarian creative process meant for casting. The media circulated myths about actors casting themselves. An interview with Michael Billington captures this general scepticism:

> But it's very striking, you know Shakespeare's Globe last year, they started with an ensemble … although the word director is ultimately credited, I got the impression that the directors were there to just stage manage. But it was very striking – I mean you put a group of actors at the Globe in a room and guess who ends up playing Hamlet? Michelle Terry who runs Shakespeare's Globe. I mean democracy, yes…[275]

When questioned about the casting choices F. Holmes clarified:

> There is a little bit of a myth around that … some journalists decided that actors cast themselves, but that didn't happen – it's fake news. No self-respecting theatrical agent would hand their client over to a contract that was – oh let's just see what happens. So that didn't happen.[276]

No self-respecting agent would allow it. Here again the actor is disrupted from the representation of their own work. The anxiety is not that *actors* will not accept a contract with uncertain role-strings, but that *agents* will not allow them. Jonathan Broadbent – a Globe ensemble actor – confided he was discouraged from accepting the job:

> There are people that didn't want me to do this job because it doesn't fit within the construct of what they perceive to be good or interesting or critically worthy … you know a lot of people are suspicious about the Globe … you can't sort of do anything with that stage – designers have tried, they've built out into the yard, they've tried lighting, they've tried all sorts of different things … It's an actors' theatre.[277]

Billington, who experiences the quality of productions at the Globe as something that is always in flux, professed that he thought *Hamlet* and *As You Like It* were some of their "least good":

> I think back to those two Globe shows though, I thought they were visibly under-directed or undirected actually, you know very well, every production involves

---

[272] Terry and Shubham Saraf, *Company Q&A Hamlet*, Audio Recording, 2018, GB 3316 SGT/ED/EV/7/2018/6, Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
[273] Terry, Interview with author.
[274] While, F. Holmes, and Rona Kelly, *Elle While & Federay Holmes: Adopt an Actor*, Audio Recording, 2018, GB 3316 SGT/ED/LRN/2/105/1, Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
[275] Michael Billington, Interview with author, 23 February 2019.
[276] F. Holmes, *As You Like It*, Question and Answer.
[277] Jonathan Broadbent, Interview with author, 8 March 2019.

> choices doesn't it, decisions, particularly Shakespeare, and I thought the decisions seemed not to be taken actually, about *Hamlet* particularly, you know – what the play was about, what Hamlet's predicament was etc. There was a sort of wooliness about it, I thought, and that led me back to thinking – oh well, perhaps we do need directors. There was no visible interpretation, it was a jumble really.[278]

Natasha Tripney again argues against (supposed) directorless theatre:

> If ever there was an argument for director's theatre it is this production of *Hamlet* which is so muddled, so various in style, so completely incoherent in action, that Terry finds herself beached in the centre with nowhere to go.[279]

The difficulty here is the hybrid execution, as Billington puts it below, is a "poor advertisement" for the directorless cause.[280] But the cause is not being advertised. The actor empowerment at the Globe, due to commercial and structural pressures, was inevitably curtailed, and none of the ensemble work was directorless. Major theatre institutions have not fully explored the potential commercial success of actor-led Shakespeare. It is noteworthy that Billington, a theatre critic for *The Guardian* for fifty years, asked if he had ever seen a directorless Shakespeare production, responded:

> No. I've seen shows that have been under directed, I've seen shows that have been badly directed, poorly directed, the nearest I got was that ensemble at the Globe last year, where the director was, as you said, a facilitator … Those two Globe productions are the nearest I've seen, but they weren't a good advertisement for the cause. I thought they were a poor advertisement for the cause because I thought they looked – I don't know – although they'd spent twelve weeks or something – they looked undernourished actually – in terms of the relationships.[281]

After the inaugural productions, Terry established the first resident ensemble company at the Globe.[282] The ensemble project, like this PhD, was attempting to make visible the invisible structures. And trying to change the rules. The Assistant Artistic Director, Sean Holmes, explains:

> So, basically, we all exist and work in structures and obviously, and often, not obviously, often, we're so familiar with those structures, we don't even see them anymore. We don't realise they're the rules we've created and that we can change them. One of which in this country is how we work with actors.[283]

For the ensemble Summer 2019 season, *Henry IV Part 1, Henry IV Part 2,* and *Henry V,* were co-directed by F. Holmes and Sarah Bedi. The Winter season's *Richard III* and *Henry VI* were co-directed by S. Holmes (no relation) and Ilinca Radulian. The ensemble-led approach attempted to free actors to creatively contribute inside an egalitarian structure. F. Holmes, in conversation with Tosh, locates this philosophical kernel: "Philosophically, this is a big overturning of conventional 20th-century practices which are a director-orientated,

---

[278] Billington, Interview with author.

[279] 'To See or Not to See: What Did Critics Think about Michelle Terry's Hamlet at Shakespeare's Globe? | WhatsOnStage', 18 May 2018, https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/michelle-terry-hamlet-shakespeares-globe-reviews_46609.html.

[280] This was also the case with Patrick Tucker's cue script experiments, see chapter 2.

[281] Billington, Interview with author.

[282] Sarah Amankwah, Philip Arditti, Nina Bowers, Jonathan Broadbent, Leaphia Darko, Steffan Donnelly, Colin Hurley, John Leader, Sophie Russell, Helen Schlesinger. The Winter Season had a change in line up, substituting Helen Schlesinger and John Leader for Matti Houghton and John Lightbody. (Leader felt the project was restrictively text-centred and too much like authorial nostalgia. pers. comm., 2019).

[283] Sean Holmes, *Podcast Season 2 Bonus: Meet Sean Holmes*, 2019, GB 3316 SGT/COMM/WEB/1/12, Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.

commercial model that does not prioritise or foreground the actors."[284] This resonates with the philosophical aims of this thesis, and its fundamental question – can we discover something new about these plays if we clear the static, emendations and directorial interventions? – is also expressed by Terry: "Here's 400 years of legacy of these plays, and people have judged them in particular ways, so for me a big part of this process has been putting to one side people's assumptions."[285] Neither the Globe experiment, nor Directorless Shakespeare, contemporised the texts to insist on them being relevant, but let the audience find connections for themselves.[286]

> It's unique to feel like we're not trying to persuade audiences that these plays are relevant, we're just doing the plays and then the audience can decide whether it's relevant or not … It's about the detail, not any overarching message.[287]

The parallels suggest there is an energy inside Shakespeare's texts that inspires analogous visions and desire for this work:

> Frankly these productions weren't meant to be ready for press night. Lots of productions are made ready for press night – they happen on press night and from there on in they decline … that's the danger of directorial theatre … It should continue to grow.[288]

Shakespeare's plays need to be developed with an audience. The work is in the auditorium, not the rehearsal room.

Although at the core of the Globe's work there is a mirror to the core of this PhD, there remains that cherished idea that there must have been someone leading. And it can only work now with someone leading. This is a conversation with two of the Globe ensemble actors:

Sophie Russell:	But there would have been a manager – an actor-manger – whoever that was, right?
Helen Schlesinger:	Probably.
Russell:	Who would have said you play that part, you play that part.
Elena Pellone:	The actor-manager is nineteenth century.
	…
Russell:	But someone has got to have said you play that, you play that.[289]

Even with scholarly acceptance, as Tosh articulates above, of non-hierarchical structures being a historical shift away from the fetters of nineteenth-century theatre, there remains this predilection for a "facilitator". Karim-Cooper retains this scratch in the record: the work *needs* a leader:

> I think what Michelle was trying to do is break down some of the hierarchies that are associated with traditional theatre companies … she really wanted to undermine that idea that the actors were just these people that are told where to stand and what to do and also that they were not the creatives as well … she wanted to mix that up and suggest that everybody is a creative … And, so, the directors would become

[284] F. Holmes, Sarah Beddy, and Will Tosh, 'Federay Holmes and Sarah Beddy in Conversation with Will Tosh', in *Henry V Programme*, 12-13 (12), 2019, GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUV/1/29/3, Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
[285] '*Henry IV Part 1* or *Hotspur* Programme', 16-17, 2019, GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/29/1, Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
[286] See chapter 3 where audiences made political connections between *Richard II* and Bexit.
[287] Steffan Donnelly et al., 'Second in a Series of Conversations', in *Henry IV Part 2 or Falstaff Programme*, 16-17 (17), 2019, GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/29/2, Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
[288] James Garnon and Helen Schlesinger, *Company Q&A Hamlet*, Audio Recording, 2018, GB 3316 SGT/ED/EV/7/2018/4, Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
[289] Sophie Russell and Schlesinger, Interview with author, 6 March 2019.

facilitators. But you *need* someone like that in the room who is kind of holding a vision for the production.[290]

The Globe ensemble is an exciting project, one that has the integrity of redressing power imbalances, the oppression and infantilisation of actors. But the issue is the blind spot that remains firmly fixed. The faith in a non-negotiable "need" for a facilitator. Professing an admiration for a non-hierarchical system, whilst retaining single points of hierarchy, undermines itself like a cancer from within. It is a mindset so deeply entrenched that it is hard to awaken our minds to the possibility it is erroneous. The ELC takes the project to the ideal extreme where actors do not need a facilitator to facilitate them away from the need for a facilitator.

F. Holmes unselfconsciously details this paradox:

> Well, firstly our roles are utterly unnecessary! At least that's the theory … so my role as a director is to kind of build a space around and a skill set around the actors where they can be free of the need for a director. So, ironically, I am doing my best job if I am putting myself out of the job.[291]

The work cannot prove that directors are unnecessary, if they are necessary to make them unnecessary. Either you need a director, or you do not. The problem with hybridity, as we have seen from reviews and misinformation in media responses, is that it leads to clarity issues for the audiences, critics and even interferes with actor happiness. Either a director's role is essential, or not essential. It cannot be essential in rendering it non-essential. This is the conundrum, for then it is essential.

The conversation with Russell and Schlesinger captures the corollary of this lack of clarity:

> Russell: Well one of the things we have never done, at the beginning actually, we have never talked about what is an actor, what is a director.
>
> Schlesinger: Which is an interesting thing actually, I wonder why we didn't do that?
>
> Russell: That would have been helpful.
>
> Schlesinger: Because we still have directors – people who are called directors and people who are called actors – and we've never actually discussed the difference between those roles – and I don't know quite why that is – whether it's just that's too difficult – do you know what I mean – you get twelve different versions and what that would be – because in the end we'll be the ones standing on stage and they'll be the ones giving the feedback – that's one of the things I suppose, that's one of the ways in which one defines that difference.
>
> Russell: I struggle to see how this can happen purely when we are now jobbing actors employed to be a collective and we haven't chosen each other, the plays, our parts – so many things we haven't had a collaboration on – then suddenly we are asked to be partners, without any discussion of what that means actually – you've bought that up and that's true. We had a discussion – what is it? – mantras? – our manifesto? – what would be our manifesto? But it was vague, wasn't it? It was very vague.

Much crucial authority had not been ceded to the actors.[292] Another contributing factor to the vagueness was an overreliance on games. Take away the notion of the director infantilising the actors and putting them into the playground, and here we have the "facilitators" putting the actors literally into a playground. Schlesinger elucidates:

---

[290] Karim-Cooper, Interview with author.

[291] While, F. Holmes, and Kelly, *Elle While & Federay Holmes: Adopt an Actor*.

[292] This is also the case in the American Shakespeare Center, see chapter 3.

> We played a lot of games, I suppose as a way of practising the text … we had loads of costumes and loads of props – so it was like a playground.[293]

In the Rylance era rehearsals were subsumed in Stanislavski character realism, here there is a reliance on an ecosystem of games. Weeks into rehearsals actors were still not off book. They played copious directed games, but found it hard to learn lines without handles. Broadbent reflects:

> So, we don't know what that style is yet because we are sort of working it out together. And I think at the moment we're finding it a little bit frustrating. We haven't got anything to latch onto, so lines are coming slowly. Because there isn't something to pin it onto. And maybe that's fine because there will be eventually.[294]

The drama games, Terry explains, were to keep it fresh, alive and improvisatory:

> Because that takes a confidence not only in the play but in your fellow players to come along with you – so if you are all playing the same game – so it's just really important that we set as many conditions as possible that we were all in it together, and lots of games around the text.[295]

This is yet another circuit breaker away from the text. The danger is the infantilising "play" game language has a self-interested tangent. Observing rehearsals and watching the video recordings online, there is an apparent performative quality.[296] Actors are playing games for someone watching them, for inevitable approval. Sometimes this appears pushed, contrived and representational. Further, games were used to avoid habits and keep performances fresh in production, obviously an anachronism to an original process. When F. Holmes was asked what her role was once the show was on stage, she responded that she created "little interventions".[297] Literally, the director creates an intervention. F. Holmes, asked by Terry, gave the actors two pages, detailing twenty-five games, inviting them to play one without disclosing it. Games that had little to do with Shakespeare's text and the given circumstances of their scenes. These are two examples:

> 1 – I [F. Holmes] will give a tenner to any person who persuades an audience member in the gallery to leave their phone number at the stage door. Not allowed to go off text and scene partner can't know what you are doing.
>
> 2 – Make sure you don't get any laughs in this scene, at the same time you must make sure your scene partner gets a laugh. You haven't won the game unless your scene partner gets the laugh.[298]

Playing games, and not setting anything very clearly, can make the work seem, as Billington articulated, undernourished. Shubham Saraf reflects, that although it is exciting, it is also terrifying, and somewhat inconsistent:

> You never know what's going to happen every show – which means whatever you discovered yesterday may not be relevant in today's show or tonight's show, you know what I mean, and in a way, that's completely terrifying every time, but also so like so exciting. No problem of something going stale, just doesn't exist, doesn't exist with this way of working.[299]

There are some flaws in this notion of the chaotic, making it terrifyingly fluid; different to the process we used for the ELC directorless productions. We did not play any games, we

---

[293] Garnon and Schlesinger, *Company Q&A Hamlet*.
[294] Broadbent, Interview with author.
[295] Terry and Saraf, *Company Q&A Hamlet*.
[296] *Rehearsal for Henry IV Part 1*, Video, 2019, GB 3316 SGT/ED/LIB/REC/2019/3/1, Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive; *Richard III Rehearsal Run-Through*, Video, 2019, GB 3316 SGT/ED/LIB/REC/2019-20/2/1, Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
[297] While, F. Holmes, and Kelly, *Elle While & Federay Holmes: Adopt an Actor*.
[298] While, F. Holmes, and Kelly.
[299] Terry and Saraf, *Company Q&A Hamlet*.

focused on text. Actors learned lines in a short time, the rehearsal periods ranging from six days to two weeks. We did not have an infinite flexibility in our notion. We embodied and articulated the text, but it was not a hit-and-miss thing. Granted we did not have to sustain this through long runs, due to financial constraints, which would be an interesting further experiment. But our audiences consistently commented on the lucidity of storytelling and relationships. Even with non-mimetic casting, actors playing multiple roles, and speaking foreign languages, audiences followed the story telling without difficulty.[300]

Terry articulates a generous and meaningful response to an audience member complaining that *Hamlet* was difficult to follow:

> The intention is never to make it difficult, but I think the plays are more difficult than conceptual productions have made them. And offering solutions to the plays, I think, undermines them because, I think, he writes so acutely how hard it is to be human. And that's the truest offering to me. The intention is never to make it more difficult than it should be, but I think those "accessible" productions often are – I've been in them – and you are lying. It's a lie.[301]

Terry, in the Royal Shakespeare Company's (RSC) 2014 *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Love's Labour's Won* (*Much Ado About Nothing*), reflected that the director, Christopher Luscombe, conceived the productions at a particular time in British history, just before World War I, and his concept was about joy. But the melancholy was missed. Terry reminisced that, even though the plays were pressed and supressed, the text resisted. The text resists its own suppression. People come and see it and feel something does not quite work, or something is not quite right.[302]

S. Holmes shared an anecdote that he believed added fuel to Terry's wish to empower actors' creative expression as activists, for it was at the RSC that Terry heard a director tell an actress: "I don't pay you to try things, I pay you to do what I tell you."[303] S. Holmes tried to clarify the impetus behind the Globe ensemble:

> I think there is confusion around the idea of director, role of director, what Michelle's vision is for director – 'cause I think what Michelle wants – Michelle is an actor, and she's probably been the smartest and most creative person in 75 percent of the rehearsal rooms she's been in, getting frustrated with that lack of agency. So, for Michelle, it's really important to find a way, and also to find some space, to give the actor agency. And that comes about by questioning the role of director and challenging that, just the assumption that that person will be head of the pyramid and telling everyone.[304]

The Globe ensemble actor, Philip Arditti, captures the possibilities of being afforded that freedom and the revolution of work attending to the essential nature of making theatre alive and responsive:

> This is my very first experience working in this way, so I've got a lot of experience working in big theatres with directors, and sometimes more concept-led directors, sometimes less, so and I have been very excited and really enlightened, and sort of also lightened, I feel lighter as a result of not having an overarching concept. But I do also realise that in this particular way we are looking for something that a director might not necessarily be able to provide, which is being in the moment and spontaneity and being in touch with our instincts and impulses on the spot, that's for

[300] See audience responses in chapters 3, 4 and 5. Members of the Italian-speaking public watching *Much Ado* felt they could understand English.
[301] Terry and Saraf, *Company Q&A Hamlet*.
[302] Terry, Interview with author.
[303] Sean Holmes, Interview with author, 4 June 2019.
[304] S. Holmes.

> the performance itself, which would be very difficult to do if the director had shaped the thing from beginning to end. So, I realise there's great pluses, but pluses for the particular enterprise, which is to be in the moment, you know, that's what we're looking for, we're looking for being present in front of the audience.
> When you have directors, moments have to be worked out previously, because the director is not going to be there, to make decisions, and help you make decisions, and help you shape things in the performance itself, which is why you have to take all the decisions before, and then what you do on the stage is apply those decisions, bring them alive, bring them to life as best as you can, performance after performance. What inevitably happens, of course, is that it becomes stale and very tired after a while, because you can't keep bringing something, that has been pre-decided, to life, all the time, you know.
>
> I've been an actor twenty years, I've done lots of shows at the National Theatre and in the West End … and I think this is a really great way for me to work, it works much better. And as I said, I've always struggled, because there is another element, there's another side to the coin, there's another dimension to the argument, which is that directors also make decisions. Because now we've just talked about what happens in the moment of performance, so how alive you feel when you're performing in front of an audience, and how much liberty you have to go with what you feel and look at the other person and see what you feel, and they look at you and then we do something together. There's the other element is that directors decide on things … what we wear and the set and the whole concept of the production, which really bears heavy … and that is decided even before you've been cast, and it's likely that you have been cast according to those things as well, so the other kind of maybe cage potentially, I mean some things are really liberating about that as well, but I think another thing that also happens is you find yourself inside someone's idea.

It is worth quoting Arditti in full because it captures various factors of the Globe ensemble, and details the confines of an actor in a director-led industry. The director, paradoxically, is a hinderance to the very nature of theatre, its live communion, spontaneity, and being "present in front of an audience". The director is not on stage with the actor to respond to "instincts and impulses on the spot". A director pre-decides things, and then the actor must maintain and keep alive those decisions. In a director-led project, as free as an actor tries to make themselves, or are "allowed" to be, they find themselves imprisoned in the limits of someone else's mind. As Terry says above, in someone else's psyche, someone else's dream.

But, surprisingly, or not surprisingly, not all the ensemble actors were happy. Colin Hurley reveals that sometimes the process did not successfully liberate or protect the actor: "It's certainly a bit harder on the actor's ego, but the greater good is the priority here."[305] The project was not necessarily clear, and, as Pierce Quigley reflects, there was a toll on actors:[306]

> I didn't know what it was, I didn't know how, why it was different, what was different about it, till we started it. And to be absolutely frank, the biggest difference for me was that we were there all the time … to be absolutely frank, if I'm lucky enough to work again – to do a job that is conventional again – just to do that again to have these days off – because it did my head in. I know it's not a great thing to say,

[305] Sarah Amankwah et al., 'Third in a Series of Conversations', in *Henry V or Harry England Programme* GB, 14-16 (14), 2019, 3316 SGT/COMM/PUV/1/29/3, Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
[306] This was also a problem for the actor Sorab Wadia in *Much Ado*, see chapter 4.

> but it's hard if you're not used to it. At my age it's hard work, you're on your feet all day.[307]

Not all the creatives welcomed change in rehearsal hierarchy. It was evidently hard on the design and stage-management team. And difficult for actors, trained to obey and please a director, to unravel that training. F. Holmes reflects:

> Actors are not trained to work without a director – in fact they are trained to *obey* the director, really first, and above the writer, it could be argued. You learn to please the director, 'cause that way you'll work again. If you go in to bat for the writer, then you might come up against the director, and it is not the writer who is going to employ you. So, I'm sort of often trying to take the actors to a place where they are reclaiming that space … which they haven't been trained or really given the opportunity to do it. Not everybody welcomes that.[308]

Not every actor wanted the vulnerability of being accountable for the whole production, and actors, who had supposedly worked in ensemble-driven companies, were discovered not to be familiar with real autonomy and input.

> Not everybody wants it. Because isn't it so much easier to go – well I know but I was told to do it that way – it's a kind of an issue of accountability. Because if all of you share responsibility for the work, you share responsibility for criticism … it puts you in a very vulnerable position, on top of the vulnerable position of going out there in the first place. So, I've also found that a lot of people here that say – I inhabit this space, I'm used to doing collective work – turn out not to be at all. Because a lot of companies that we think are collective – use the word ensemble – actually, there is a guru. There is a guy usually at the top who dictates, whose work it is.[309]

Agency comes with responsibility, and, as S. Holmes articulates, that is complicated:

> That's the thing I noticed in this ensemble a bit – is like – "well I've got the right to speak" – but you're like – yes that's interesting you've got the right to speak, but you are not necessarily thinking about the effect it will have, or the time it's taking up, or the – is this the best – you know. 'Cause the problem is that the agency also comes with responsibility, doesn't it, to the whole. And that's a complicated thing.[310]

S. Holmes, discussing a tangible level of unhappiness with some actors in the Summer season, explained what I had witnessed in rehearsal: that he had been asked to address the cast, who, at some point, appeared to have given up and were just talking.[311] Billington's criticism of the inaugural productions was that decisions seemed not to be taken. This was S. Holmes's concern. That decisions were by negative default:

> So, for example in the battles in *Henry V* there's no weapons, there's no blood, there's no dirt on faces, there's very little off-stage noise – apart, so you've got the occasional firing – there's not that much music … now that might be completely right if that was a really considered decision – that we're going to do war with none of the usual things you do war with. But it's been – it happened more by accident, which is – "I don't really want to, I don't want that, I don't want that."[312]

A no-man's land for the actors. Two facilitators/directors/leaders to empower them and give them autonomy, then to be always in the room leading, then to expect autonomy from them. The confusion, what Billington termed undernourished, is that in the process, the

---

[307] Pearce Quigley and Colin Hurley, *Company Q&A for As You Like It*, Audio Recording, 2018, GB 3316 SGT/ED/EV/7/2018/5, Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
[308] F. Holmes, Interview with author.
[309] F. Holmes.
[310] S. Holmes, Interview with author.
[311] F. Holmes, Interview with author.
[312] S. Holmes, Interview with author.

contemporary mindset did not really shift, or did not shift far enough. S. Holmes details something of this:

> For me there's a confusion in Fed's process, which also then has become confusing in this building between ensemble and a particular artist's process. And I think there's a false democracy in that process, which is that if you don't make any decisions prior to starting, it's really, really hard because, um, complete freedom of choice is not creative, it's actually constipated. Because you've got an idea and I've got an idea – how can we decide whose idea is better? … So I think that the confusion – and therefore I think the actors got confused – and a bit beaten down – because the only, the only thing that was in room was a kind of – um – a no: no, no that's not right, or no I don't really want that to happen … So, it was actually – to my mind – not really using the ensemble. Not using the ensemble in a very useful way, because it's a sort of false promise of a democracy, where everyone takes so long to make a decision at anything, and then often decisions aren't made. Or they are made by the director anyway, but not, but sort of in opposition to other ideas.[313]

F. Holmes felt this was inaccurate. Decisions had not been arrived at by default and creating the productions had been an organic and almost un-articulatable process:

> But I wouldn't say we are making a decision by default – oh we've seemed to end up here accidently – but certain decisions make themselves. So, there's hardly anything for combat – a fight director – to do in *Henry V*. There is Fluellen beating up Pistol with a leek – that was the fight director's biggest job on *Henry V*. And because there was a lack of fight, that doesn't then creep into the language that we are speaking in the room – it doesn't creep in …We are kind of importing a sort of directorial arrogance in going, well it should have been a self-conscious, external, isolated *decision* and it should have been expressed as a decision.[314]

Different notions of director and ensemble remained in tension. S. Holmes confirmed that the freelance actors for his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2019, appeared happier:

> But what I think the difference is, is a structural thing, so for example in this room – I am – there's a pyramid. A status in the room – which prob goes like me, Jim stage-manager, actors with more lines, actors with less lines – even though everyone is very happy within that structure.[315]

This is the philosophical and practical hurdle of the work: how do we create egalitarian working processes, inspire true autonomy and render actors happy? Were the actors in S. Holmes's rehearsal room actually happier, or were they just not asking questions about empowerment and happiness as the actors were encouraged to do in the Globe ensemble?

S. Holmes, when directing the ensemble in *Henry VI* and *Richard III*, refused to pretend he was not a director: "If you've got a director, don't pretend you haven't got one, and don't pretend there aren't skills, skills that person can bring."[316] What surfaces, again, when S. Holmes talks about his style of direction, are the patterns of well-trodden directorial language. Freedom for actors has to be *given*. Actors need to be *made* to own their own work.[317]

---

[313] S. Holmes.
[314] F. Holmes, Interview with author.
[315] S. Holmes, Interview with author.
[316] S. Holmes.
[317] Owen Horsley, in a workshop on directing *Macbeth* at the Shakespeare Institute, also used these familiar word patterns – "you have to create a space for actors to play … you have to make the actors feel like they have ownership … you have to make the actors feel like they have agency", 6 March, 2023.

> So, what I'm doing is – you make them all own it … So, I think my job is to build – whatever show I'm doing – is to build a really strong frame that allows freedom and play within the frame.[318]

S. Holmes cherishes the general suspicion that a leader will inevitably emerge:

> A company of people can get together – actors – somewhere and decide to make work and evolve into a company that play in here, and what's interesting often – like you look at *Complicité* – somebody eventually ends up being the director.[319]

But Terry is looking for a room, even if directors are part of the creative collective, without labels: "how do we have a diverse room of people – co-collaborators, co-makers – where, god forbid, you could just not have to label anybody anything, you could just call them by their name".[320] Resisting labels, changing labels, redefining labels. Getting rid of labels.

An obstacle to the ideal of actor agency is the limitations and demands imposed by commercial structures.[321] S. Holmes articulates this anxiety: "But there is no public subsidy here and you've got to sell 1,600 seats a night."[322] You have to sell tickets; come up with product; please something commercially. Terry also reflects on the recalcitrant, capitalist machine:

> How do you stand outside the glare of advertisement, and the public – how do you value autonomy? … We want individuals to blame, and we want individuals to applaud … you don't know quite how to celebrate the collective somehow.[323]

The work with the first Globe long-term ensemble was exciting, ground-breaking, difficult and ultimately disbanded. One of the main obstacles that prevented it from continuing to develop came from Equity, the actors' union. Another entity holding control over an actor's career:

> Well, it can't necessarily continue in that we are not in a place where we can have a permanent ensemble – like it is in Germany. Partly for money, partly our union protects everyone's freelance status, so how long you can have contracts or rolling contracts is complicated.[324]

The structure of ensemble, a stable company, as it thrives in European theatres, does not currently exist in the same way in the United Kingdom. Equity protects the freelance status of the actor. But the longer the contract, the longer one has security to develop one's work, the freer and braver one can become: "in Europe there is a lot more power for the actor … and there is a certain kind of respect for an artiste. Whereas in England and America you are desperate for work."[325] Art needs time to mature. When Robert Icke directs in Europe, he works with actors who know their craft, are more authoritative than he is, because they are not working contract to contract. Sometimes it is a lifelong gig.[326]

The 2022 season at the Globe, returning after the crippling Covid-19 pandemic, seems to have reverted to a more familiar, director-led theatre.[327] But Terry continues to throw the

---

[318] S. Holmes.
[319] S. Holmes.
[320] Terry, Interview with author.
[321] These may be only perceived limitations. In the Embodied Literary Criticism (ELC) chapters there is overwhelming evidence that Directorless Shakespeare can be commercially successful, artistically exhilarating, and greatly appreciated by audiences.
[322] S. Holmes, Interview with author.
[323] Terry, Interview with author.
[324] Terry.
[325] Scott Handy, Interview with author, 17 June 2022.
[326] Robert Icke, Interview with author, 25 November 2019.
[327] The Globe ensemble did its final programmed show just before Covid-19 pandemic seized the world and shut the theatres. For this reason, there is little archived on the ensemble in the Globe library. In the final pages of this chapter Terry speaks at length from material not available elsewhere to consult.

wooden-O's arms open to a diverse group of artists. At the start of the year, the Globe put out its first ever open-casting call, a monthly ballot into which, in the first instance, over 4,000 actors applied. A lot of actors need work, and would love to work at the Globe.

In a thesis that is about the collective, the hive mind, the multi-valent perspectives, locating Terry as a gifted leader and a visionary might seem problematic. But what makes Terry a singular Artistic Director is precisely her ability to empower others. Some leaders hoard, absorb, accumulate power, withdraw it from others and stockpile their own with insatiable, insecure, desire. But Terry distributes, and re-distributes, power. She shares the resources to the collective and beyond, bringing in rogue elements, unafraid of chaos, fighting an inorganic machine with organic matter that values human capacity, uncompartmentalized, unlabelled creativity, and true collaboration. Terry is trying to create theatre called Shakespeare in Shakespeare's Globe, best serving it by empowering voices that are not normally empowered. Whatever ego has allowed Terry to reach one of the highest positions of an artist in the United Kingdom, it is not the ego of an artist seduced by their own entitlement.

We are used to power being in singular strong-holds, actors servants to that power: trying to please the director, trying to get the next job, trying to please the critics. But as Tolstoy expresses in *War and Peace,* we are mistaken to think power is the collective will of the people conferring it to the one: "power is power: in other words, power is a word the meaning of which we do not understand".[328] Power is intangible, it exists in the many, historians are wrong to locate it in single figures:

> The movement of nations is caused not by power, nor by intellectual activity, nor even by a combination of the two as historians have supposed, but by the activity of *all* the people who participate in the events, and who always combine in such a way that those taking the largest direct share in the event take on themselves the least responsibility and vice versa.[329]

Actors take the largest direct share in the event.

Terry is committed to the myriad voices:

> We were handed a 400-year-old model that is absolutely about multidisciplinary voices, myriad voices, and somewhere underpinning it all, is about social justice, equality, egalitarian, cheek by jowl, reaching across difference … get unapologetic about that … the endeavour of the practice is to try and have multiple – those myriad of voices in the room – and it will demand a bravery from everybody else going – we genuinely won't know what the costumes are going to be until maybe first day of rehearsal.[330]

An alternative to a rehearsal model of external validation is to resist looking to the director as parent:

> Anxiety is rising, depression is rising, the journey of art is ultimately the journey of the self, because you are looking to people to go – you're okay, you're safe you're understood. It's kind of an act of self-reflection, as much as it is an act of generosity towards the text. You've got to be prepared to go on that journey and not look to mum or dad going – fantastic you did really well, or, no get your room not so great. Because it's an act of autonomy and act of self-discovery, which takes great courage. And also, as you say, it is really lonely. Because it also means self-validation – and we don't have a culture that does that. Your kids are facing Facebook which constantly gives you literally a thumbs up or thumbs down. External validation is

[328] Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, trans. Louise and Aylmer Maude (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). second epilogue, chapter 5, 1285.
[329] Tolstoy, second epilogue, chapter 7, 1292.
[330] Terry, Interview with author.

> something we are so reliant on, and again that's what the director has – that's not necessarily what the role of the director inherently could be – but it has definitely become that.[331]

The trouble in "the rehearsal room situation is that you are only inherently worthy if you please the director".[332] When the director controls an actor, whether with a growl or a smile, it is civil tyranny:

> But we are taught not to trust. We are taught not to trust ourselves. We are taught to – we are infantilised … Those directors saying my job is to make the actors feel like they got there themselves – even though I told them how to do it – that's civil tyranny. Whether you've got a smile on your face or not, that's tyranny. And we accept tyranny, when it comes in sort of like – wrapped up sweet and lovely forms, but it is no less tyrannical that somebody would be telling you, consciously or unconsciously, what to do. And yet we go along with it.[333]

For Terry there is a civic responsibility of the artform: a civic duty to social change, in the rehearsal room and auditorium. Artists are activists. Actors are literally activists.

> But god, where is the civic duty of our work though? It goes back to what you were saying about the Greeks – it was your civic duty to go … But we don't treat artists as activists, we don't treat actors as activists – the very name is you are an act-or – but we don't talk about our artists as activists, so why would you behave like an activist? Because you come in, you behave like a servant or a puppet and you don't question, we're not asked to question, we are not given time to question, we are not given enough space to question. Plays have to be created in six weeks, but the idea that – as you said at the beginning – what you could create with the hive mind. We no longer value chaos, we just crave order – of course we do, because life is hard … I get why people want to go into a rehearsal room – just tell me what to do, tell me where to stand, tell me how to say the line – but then that's the difference between an imitator and an activist … But how do you create rooms where you can be all of you, and not just one of you in servant to someone else.[334]

Theatre is the place of revolution, of social change, of civic responsibility. Shakespeare is not the place to look for simple answers, or any answers.

Terry stands in the brittle machine of commercial and "traditional" demands and softens the creative world to allow change through the strongest and most revolutionary way. Through – without its sentimental notion – a kind of love that she seems to share, unselfconsciously: for the work, for the artists gathered, for the audience, for the Great Globe itself and for the plays: the complex plays that ask us to work imagination, be in the collective, and watch the show through the eyes of the groundlings.

There is something extraordinary going on at the Globe. But there is still much to do to fully empower actors, and make Shakespeare theatre truly egalitarian.

Directorless Shakespeare has potential to be the order in chaos that reaches its fractural tendrils to the hive mentality and sustains creative life, together.

Sometimes to hold a mirror up to nature, we have to break it.

---

[331] Terry.
[332] Terry.
[333] Terry.
[334] Terry.

ACT 1, SCENE 2

Chapter 2

"We do it with the lights on": Actors' Renaissance Season at the Blackfriars Playhouse

> *To us, their decedents, who are not historians and are not carried away by the process of research and can therefore regard the event with unclouded common sense…*
>
> - *Leo Tolstoy*

Through the house give glimmering light…

I am sitting in rehearsals, in the warm glow and embrace of the replica Blackfriars Playhouse, Staunton, Virginia, that is as cosy as it is imposingly beautiful. The actors of the 2019 Actors' Renaissance Season (ARS or Ren) are gathered on stage, an exhausted pallor colouring their faces, in their slightly dishevelled, comfy clothes, after an intensive week of rehearsals. Brandon Carter is wearing the company's motto "We do it with the lights on". And they certainly do. The lights on in many ways: in the kindness and generosity of how they work together; in the alacrity and playfulness of their minds; in the intensely switched-on backstage crew, ever available to search and source and support and suggest. And here they are fumbling through a music call. Trumpets blaring, double bass sonorously and sensuously plucking, and a chorus of voices singing "Good Times Roll…"

During the Ren season actors work as an ensemble, without a director. This replicates Shakespeare's staging conditions: a circulation of cultural energy, where even the earth, alive and animate, was connected to its inhabitants. The actors needed each other, and audiences flocked to the theatre for the whole tapestry, not the single threads.

I know of no other theatre like the American Shakespeare Center (ASC) committed to performing early modern plays without a director. The casting is gender and race blind. The knowledge of Shakespeare is fathoms deep. The tapestry is rich.

At the ASC the lights are certainly on!

But, of course, lights cast shadows. Tracking through the history of the ASC to understand whether their evolution of directorless work is at a healthy apotheosis after fifteen years of Ren seasons, we must start the narrative at the beginning and see it through to its conclusion.

The Blackfriars Playhouse, home of the ASC, is possibly the most important and – according to Ralph Alan Cohen – the only authentic replica of Shakespeare's Blackfriars:

"we envisioned ourselves from the start as a destination".[335] Cohen began as a theatre dilettante. Having taken students to London since the 1970s to watch every possible Shakespeare production, he realised he could direct: "By '83 I was so sure I knew how to do it where people would like it better."[336]

In 1986, Patrick Spottiswoode, Head of Education of the as yet unbuilt Globe, London, talked to Cohen's students about the learning possibilities of performing in a replica space. Cohen recalled, it "blew me away", first enticing him to think about original practices (OP).[337] Cohen realised "lights on" was the most important thing: "that opens the text completely, everybody gets an actor – all those acting partners – which is the audience".[338]

In 1988 Cohen directed *Henry V* using the OP platform with his student Jim Warren in the lead, laying the future ASC's foundational tenets: "lights on, get the thing done in two hours, know what you're saying".[339] Warren, Artistic Director till 2018, instigated the Shenandoah Shakespeare Express touring company (afterwards ASC):

> I said – let's start a professional company based on this idea. Shakespeare is so cool and accessible and awesome in this kind of environment … let's try to re-create Shakespeare's staging conditions as the gateway into showing folks how awesome Shakespeare is.[340]

This developed into the house style at the Blackfriars – "cool", "accessible", "awesome" – a style that, we will see, interrupts a democratic and complex interchange between directorless actors, text and audience, damping the dialogical forces in the plays. Cohen directing *Henry V* was like the Globe's OP experiments where the director appears indispensable, even if there is a nominal attempt – the Globe renaming the director "Master of Play", and Cohen casting himself in the troupe: "much to the detriment of the production I was an actor too … I'm a terrible actor. I don't understand how they do it."[341] Experiencing acting as ineffable and himself as terrible did not inhibit Cohen directing or being an authoritative voice on how to act. In *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, Cohen contributes a manifesto for directors: "Directing at the Blackfriars and the Globe: six big rules for directors".[342] He squeezes "direct" twice into the title of an essay on OP, using an imperative mood, perceptible in his first "big rule": "HAVE THE ACTORS ATTEND STRICTLY TO THE WORDS".[343] An incongruity remains in which the return to "Shakespeare's Staging Conditions" retains the director as central, and by extension infects the ideal of the company's directorless work.

In 2001, the replica Blackfriars was built, housed inside an old red brick building that had been almost torn down. And so, the ASC was born.[344]

From the beginning Warren recalls two factors at play: "Money and art … Performing in repertory, it's great art and it's great money."[345] In his seminal work on the ASC, Paul Menzer apprehends a profound paradox:

---

[335] Ralph Alan Cohen, Interview with author, 5 February 2019.
[336] Cohen.
[337] Cohen.
[338] Cohen.
[339] Cohen.
[340] Jim Warren, Interview with author, 17 January 2019.
[341] Cohen, Interview with author.
[342] Cohen, 'Directing at the Globe and the Blackfriars: Six Big Rules for Contemporary Directors', in *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, ed. Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 211–25 (213).
[343] Cohen.
[344] Officially renamed from Shenandoah Shakespeare to the American Shakespeare Center on April 23, 2005.
[345] Warren, Interview with author.

> Walter Benjamin points out that the Greeks had only one art form that required mechanical reproduction: the minting of coins. We might conclude from this that money ceased to be art at precisely the point at which all art became money.[346]

Money was the reason to create a season which had never been part of an initial plan. In 2005 the company inaugurated the Ren Season. The off season was the lowest point for ticket sales, and Jay McClure, the then Associate Artistic Director, proposed a solution:

> He [McClure] said "look we are not making any money anyhow, if we did this we wouldn't have to pay a director, we wouldn't have to pay a costumer, you know we'd learn something more" … god, I loved the idea.[347]

Money was the principal motivator, but McClure knew actors were capable of constructing complex shows in a short time because of his experience doing summer stock.[348] Warren recalled:

> We could merge all of the great speculation we have on how Shakespeare's company mounted stuff with modern day practices that they do in summer stock musicals all the time, and we could do titles that are further off the beaten path, because if we do a bunch of big titles in that time, when it is harder to sell tickets, we are kind of wasting those big titles.[349]

Directorless work, it is assumed, would waste the financial possibilities of the great plays. The experiment had commercial foundations, commercial needs and commercial, and therefore artistic, limitations. But McClure was also invested in the educational possibilities from such a venture, which was, and still is, unique:

> Yeah we needed to save money – if you're doing five shows, you're paying five directors, five designers then all of the backstage staff support, so it does add up – but I also knew that actors were entirely capable of making decisions by themselves – when you have a room with twelve people being creative, rather than having to funnel through one person, I think you are going to get great stuff.[350]

For the first ARS three titles were selected: William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, John Fletcher's *The Tamer Tamed*, and Francis Beaumont's *King and No King*. An ensemble of eleven actors was cast.[351] A minimal backstage crew retained some authority.[352] They were allocated a short rehearsal period – roughly twenty-five hours per play – with actors working from sides.[353] Cohen told the press: "We wanted to go back to original practices … We are the only (modern-day) professional Shakespeare theater in the country that has ever done a season like this."[354]

---

[346] Paul Menzer, *Shakespeare in the Theatre: The American Shakespeare Center*, 23.

[347] Cohen, Interview with author.

[348] An American tradition of mounting a new musical every week for the three months of summer, with sets and costumes already in stock.

[349] Warren, Interview with author.

[350] Jay McClure, Interview with author, 18 January 2019.

[351] Doreen Bechtol, Miriam Donald, Jessica Dunton, Sarah Fallon, Jason Guy, John Harrell, James Keegan, David Loar, Thadd McQuade, Eric Schoen and René Thornton Jr.

[352] McClure was in the room as the stage manager/prompter. He experimented with being backstage, not only to prompt lines, but also entrance cues. This was inspired by the surviving prompt book of Philip Massinger, *Believe as Ye List*, Folio Series (London: Tudor Facsimile Texts, 1631). Other backstage crew were: Dramaturg - Brian O'Connor, Mary Baldwin College M.LITT./MFA program; Costume assistant - Janie Sprouse, Mary Baldwin College M.LITT./MFA program; Artistic Director - Jim Warren (involved in planning only); Executive Director - Ralph Alan Cohen. See Brian O'Connor, 'The Actors' Renaissance Season: Read Me First', 17 May 2005, American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

[353] "Sides" or "cue scripts" is where only your part is written on a document (a "roll") with one or two words of your cue line.

[354] Cohen in Alice Mannette, 'Back to The Bard's Way: Shenandoah Shakespeare Makes Theater History', *The News Leader*, 13 March 2005, American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

In the first iteration actors were given the freest reign. John Harrell recalls their early attempts to figure it out:

> We didn't know what we were doing at all, and, in fact, one of the things looking back on I always think is funny – we were so un-used to the concept of not having a director, that the very first few things we did was … set up a table that someone could sit behind and watch a rehearsal, and offer notes too – like a director *pro tem* – and then that quickly became pointless … I'm working on this scene, I think I understand this scene better than the person who is watching it, and they just weren't necessarily offering useful things – we sort of abandoned it. It just seemed like a holdover – like we couldn't rehearse without someone sitting behind a table watching you with a script is what it felt like – and that doesn't seem right. [355]

Directorless actors felt ownership and liberation from subservience:[356]

> What we've all had to do is really own our own performance in a way that you don't have to when there is always somebody else to – I mean an actor is always being told, what to wear, where to stand, what role, and your job is always to say – yes, thank you, thank you, thank you.[357]

Although ARS sought to return creative power to the actors, many things were decided by Cohen, Warren and McClure: the plays, the casting, the cutting, the rehearsal length, the parameters, and the mandate to work from sides, an obstacle which greatly interfered with comprehension and preparation for actors already inexperienced in working without a director, and unfamiliar with the two more obscure titles.

Looking to a "Millennium Renaissance" a short one-page document – "purpose", "precepts" and "promise" – was given to the ensemble. These directives were drawn up by McClure, in consultation with Cohen and Warren, but not the actors. The brief guidelines resulted in confusion:

Thadd McQuade:	Arriving here it turned out not to be that clearly defined by the people who put together the season … I have brought my expectations, my dream, somebody else came in with very different ones, and neither of us met with very clear set of parameters. So, the first day … I felt the most tension in the room because we all suddenly confronted the fact that there were different sensibilities. And that it had not been decided we will do everything in Elizabethan dress … that would have been a parameter that, regardless of your sensibility … would have made one of those decisions for us …
Interviewer:	This process probably intentionally does not have that imposed on it.
McQuade:	Right, it seems arbitrary to me, because plenty of parameters were chosen for this process. Where we would be rehearsing, what time of day, how long the rehearsal process, what shows were being done, who was playing what role – you know there are plenty of things decided before we got here that had nothing

[355] Harrell, Interview with author.

[356] This is a common response. In directorless *Richard II* the actor Jim Findley used almost identical words. See chapter 3.

[357] McQuade in Harrell, McQuade, and Fallon, *Actors' Renaissance Season 2005: Talk Back, 4/3*, Compact Disc, 2005, American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

> to do with us whatsoever. This was one that I think would have let us do a lot more work within the parameters.[358]

Actors experienced guidelines they had not made as vague, arbitrary and restrictive, creating conflicting expectations, anxieties and tensions. Some felt casting was inhibiting: "Part of what we have here is a type of type-casting system. This is a role I'd rather not be playing because it's not interesting to me."[359] But most concurred it would be a disaster for actors to cast themselves:[360] "They never cast themselves, that would have been chaos."[361]

Doubt is cast on how much autonomy is possible within parameters actors were not in charge of positioning:

> We are not sharers in the theatre, and we are not the final authority, and in this case we actually do have bosses that sign our pay-checks, so that way I think that the best thing that they could do, the next time they do this, is to articulate rock solidly clear, here are the boundaries in which you can do anything you want, you will not be vetoed, you will not have check ins, it's your call, but here are the parameters within which you have no say – you will do X, you will do Y, you will do Z.[362]

The ideal is compromised in a directorless experiment that is set up without consulting the ensemble, and where the people signing the pay checks have authority, weight, ability to veto, and presence in the rehearsal space:

> McQuade: We've been given quite a bit of freedom to talk through the text, and in fact, in the case of *Tamer Tamed,* Jay [McClure] suggested that we needed actually to cut quite a bit more of the text.
>
> Interviewer: And that's the book-keeper.
>
> McQuade: Right. But also part of the administration … our only liaison with the people who put this experiment together. Because part of the enormous dynamic is, this is an experiment in which I'm a very interested participant, I had nothing to do with putting together the experiment, which is a role I'm very conscious of, because I would put together a different experiment towards the same end, so I'm always having to distinguish between, you know, what I'm thinking about the overall frame and what actually my job is within this frame that I've accepted … even as I find out sort of day by day what the actual actualities of that frame are. So, Jay as book-keeper, but also as sort of the voice from the people who are signing our pay checks, said we need to cut maybe about 500 lines from this text … we're actually doing this in the absence of any information about how long the run of the play that we now have is … which would be the reason to cut lines.[363]

The actor, not contributing to the overall framing, is uncertain of his place within that frame. They were told to cut lines, but not the reason to cut them. Actors seemed confused and, as Warren recalls in that first year "so unhappy".[364] And people were watching, perhaps simply out of curiosity about an uncharted experiment, but in addition to the short rehearsal time, the difficulty of working with sides, the unfamiliar texts, the actors were also being documented,

---

[358] McQuade in Harrell et al., *Interviews with Actors: Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*, DVD (American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2005).

[359] Keegan in Tiffany Stern et al., *Tiffany Stern with the Cast of Actors' Renaissance Season 23/2/2005*, Compact Disc, 2005, American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

[360] For Directorless Shakespeare self-casting was a powerful tool of freeing and interpreting text, rewarding for actors, and surprisingly easy and not chaotic. See chapters 3, 4 and 5.

[361] Cohen, Interview with author.

[362] Guy in Harrell et al., *Interviews with Actors: Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.

[363] McQuade in Harrell et al.

[364] Warren, Interview with author.

studied and under surveillance. The voice representing the people signing the cheques in the room, and Warren, the person signing the checks, in an office with a window that overlooked the rehearsal space. The ensemble were actors who had worked at the Blackfriars before, probably keen to work there again, practiced in being hired actors and not shareholders:

McQuade: In a way the resident company has been trained to be not very good at this – they have a communal experience, but the communal experience they have is the opposite of this, is having to defer to another voice … The Artistic Director of the company is sitting in an open office right there listening to everything that's going on. And he's been very hands off … but he's there, I mean, all the time. Or even when he's not there, you don't know because you can't tell if he is there or he isn't – creepy … I think it would be foolish to dismiss the influence of something like that, I mean it would be like the Master of the Revels or somebody was sitting there and they're like – "no, work it out on your own, you know, no problem" – but you know ultimately at the end of the day if I make a choice – … He had to sort of redefine himself to everybody … he said my role, I think, is sort of like Cuthbert Burbage, Richard Burbage's brother, where he is a stakeholder in the company, but he's not part of the artistic decision-making process …

Doreen Bechtol: I remember before we started this, and we had a meeting … and I asked – "what will the Ren season look like? How will it look different from the regular season? … I think it was "Cuthbert" who said he didn't think it would look any different from our regular season.

McQuade: … Who decides that it doesn't look any different? But if it's true then what does that mean? I mean is the company willing to say – "Oh well then, we don't need directors"? I mean the manifesto we got at the beginning was mailed out that said very clearly on it – "we are not intending to get rid of directors and designers" – but I mean, why not? I mean why not be at least open? I mean, what if it looked the same? It will be a very interesting situation.[365]

It is worth quoting part of this interview at length for various points. One is that clear hierarchy the actors are still subservient to and in tension with, no matter how supportive or seemingly benign, necessarily acts as an inhibitor to creative freedom and authentic collaboration and enfranchisement. Warren, even retitled "Cuthbert", retains a panopticon position. The ensemble, seasoned to adhere to those hierarchical structures by deferring to this very authority in the main stage seasons, may not be the best actors to test the experiment's purer transformative possibilities. There is no desire to disrupt a style that has been curated through the Artistic Director's taste in the directed season; the expectation is it will look the same.

The precepts' rough guidelines stipulate that scenes should be "compelling, funny, and fabulous".[366] Blackfriars' house style promotes a comedic, crowd-pleasing interpretation of text. Promotional material also captures this conditional promise:

---

[365] McQuade and Bechtol in Harrell et al., *Interviews with Actors: Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.

[366] McClure, 'Blackfriars Playhouse Actors' Renaissance Season: Purpose, Precepts, Promise', 2005, American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

> We'll be learning how the asylum would run if the inmates could take it over from Nurse Ratchet … by daring to throw away a few more of our twenty-first century theatrical norms, we hope to create an even stronger bond between performer and audience and an even greater level of fun and excitement for an audience experiencing the raw energy of the Renaissance theatre.[367]

This showmanship contributes to an absorbing focus on aesthetics, which, in the absence of the director, actors generally feel they have to give disproportionate time to:

> As actors from the twenty-first century our aesthetic is so much more visual and in creating pictures … I think that's also a huge difference that we spent a lot of time on.[368]

Actors' freedom to pick costumes, without group consensus, caused conflict, some preferring a unified world, others creative miscellany, for, if it was not a directive from the administrative team, who had the right to tell anyone else what to wear? The modern inclination for visual design means the absence of director is felt in the need for concepts, a unified world and blocking. Actors did not articulate feeling an absence in the "need" for someone to help interpret roles:

> When it gets to the acting people are being very, very, you know, keeping their distance, but when we started talking about costumes or props or whatever, then people came in and said OK we need to define the world of the play … some of those things weren't chosen along with the other things that were chosen in advance – we were in that problem right away.[369]

A distrust remained of art by consensus, and conflict over aesthetics added further pressure to the fault lines of individual focus:[370]

> Because what's happening now is there are people like me, who I think – OK well that hasn't been decided therefore you go choose your space suit and I'm going to go choose my Bobby costume and someone else will choose their whatever, and let's make it work onstage … whatever my opinion may be about your space suit, it's just going to not be my deal. My deal is going to be how do I get my Bobby to interact with your space suit … the issue was – and René [Thornton Jr.] nailed it right in that first day – he identified it as, people who are interested in reaching a consensus about these things, as opposed to people who, like me, feel like this isn't the process to reach a consensus, and I don't personally believe in consensus – art making by consensus anyway – I just don't believe that leads to anything good – it lowers the bar almost always.[371]

Another contributing factor to house style, and an example of individualised authority, is embodied in the actor Harrell – "John is our great actor"[372] – a central actor, who stayed with the company until 2021, and during my visit had been named "actor-manager" for ARS; the only actor empowered to give unsolicited notes, and the textual authority in the room, having cut the plays. Harrell curated the house style through the shortcut of flamboyant costume choices. A review of *King and No King* snapshots this:

---

[367] Warren, *'Actors' Renaissance Season 2005, Program: The Taming of the Shrew; The Tamer Tamed; A King and No King*', 2005, American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
[368] Donald in Harrell et al., *Interviews with Actors: Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.
[369] McQuade in Harrell et al.
[370] In contrast to this distrust of art by consensus, Directorless Shakespeare productions empowered the collective to discuss and solve costumes, set, cutting and casting. We chose costumes as a company, not as individuals going upstairs to forage through stock by ourselves. This was a positive and fruitful mode of designing and staging. See chapters 3, 4 and 5.
[371] McQuade in Harrell et al.
[372] Cohen, Interview with author.

> Someone at Shenandoah Shakespeare obviously thinks that slapping the most outlandish costume imaginable on John Harrell is funny, because they do it in play after play after play. And they're right. The get-up Harrell wears as the cowardly braggart, Bessus, elicits guffaws nearly every time he walks on stage.[373]

Harrell purposefully telegraphs his comedic function through his costume:

> I also wanted something that was sort of initially comic … that you just see the costume and you say "OK that's the comic guy" … so that I can show where I fit in.[374]

Being one of the original actors, and celebrated star performer, Harrell brands in a trade-mark shortcut of the funny costume as interpretation. This house style surfaced with or without the director, possibly as a result of tight rehearsals and reliance on actor tricks. This is part of a foundational issue that is magnified and influences later directorless practice. Atoning for a lack of coherent costume design, and unhappiness of actors negotiating an aesthetic, was one of the main reasons further backstage support was introduced:

> That first year we really went raw. I mean it got more and more elaborated and then there was a point at which the costumes – we let them choose whatever they wanted – but they looked like shit … so we added in a costumer.[375]

In ARS 2019 *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Harrell decided with the Stage Manager, without consulting the cast, to purchase and wear an orange, blow-up fat suit as Falstaff. This enormous focal point obliterated any nuanced or interpretive offer, upstaging and drawing attention when on stage, and undermining the action when off stage as the blow-up fan remained clearly audible. It made the production definitively cartoon-like, without scope for darker interpretations of infidelities and complicated marriage relations. The discursive articulation and complexities of Shakespeare's text allow possibilities for more profound engagement in human entanglements, rather than a falsified sitcom, which an over-the-top comedic costume renders a *fait accompli*.

Evidently, focusing on costume choices is a reductive view of Harrell, who is an intelligent, philosophical actor, a great supporter of non-authoritarian work, and whom other actors look to as the deftest, cleverest brain on text, having acted in early modern plays for twenty years. The problem lies not in a fun costume, but in the company's financially driven concerns, allowing early patterns of individual focus and superficial short-cuts to propagate, rather than building structures that genuinely facilitate dispersed authority and sensitivity to Shakespeare's heteroglossia. In contrast, this PhD's directorless productions emerged on the floor. Everyone had final power over their scenes and characters, and whatever was pre-decided was arrived at collectively.[376] And no one was empowered to interpret the text with an overwhelming stage decision like a blow-up fat suit.

The incongruous costumes and mandate that scenes should be "compelling, funny, and fabulous", is antithetical to this PhD's research – to reveal aspects that may have been obscured by conceptual interpretations and inherited performance traditions; a democratic discovery with the audience, without attenuating dialogical complexities, contradictions, or erasing heteroglossia by exaggerated characterisation. Can we reveal new things in an oversaturated industry of Shakespeare consumption where Shakespeare seems terminally familiar?

The Ren 2005 season's struggle with inconsistent freedoms and restrictions, uncertainties about what directorless work is, or what it should look like, were problems that

---

[373] Charles Culbertson, 'Royals Take Hilarious Romp Across Stage', *The News Leader*, 17 March 2005, American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
[374] Harrell et al., *Interviews with Actors: Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.
[375] Cohen, Interview with author.
[376] Cf. Johnston, Interview with author, 15 January 2019, below.

needed to be resolved in subsequent years, but we cannot rely on these findings to elucidate a directorless process. These problems were necessitated by the set-up of the experiment, the particular actors that were cast to take part, and the particular conditions and pressures they were under. Harrell, in the middle of the already fraught rehearsal period, had his first-born child (Eliot, the first Ren baby) and suddenly the company were faced with having to rehearse an understudy into a play they were not yet sure of:

Thornton Jr:	Our very first meeting as an entire group was on the 18th of January. Our first performance is on the 2nd of February … But to add to that, you know, as soon as we got everybody together, we lost an actor who is having a baby, and two actors who are doing another show. So, we're spending a lot of our rehearsal time right now trying to figure out what to do without these actors …
Sarah Fallon:	And today we had a "put in" rehearsal – we have not opened the show yet and we do not even know what's going on.
Miriam Donald:	We introduced a new actor today.
Fallon:	And now we are putting someone into the show. That is amazing.
Donald:	He has his own ideas too, I mean like in trying to figure out what to do with the end of Act 5, he had ideas about what to do with it, so now you have actor number twelve in the mix. It's so strange.
Fallon:	I was struck today, I was thinking, I'm like we have all of this shit to do, we have all this, all of these things that are just not done and not ready and now a "put in".
Donald:	Yeah.
Fallon:	On top of all that, wow this is just going to be quite a ride, wow.[377]

A major contributor to the difficulties was working from sides: "It wasn't clear to me when I signed the contract that we had to work from the sides."[378] Every actor reported being inhibited by this directive. They did not understand the play, the plot, the character they were playing, and even during the runs, especially of the convoluted and intricately baffling *Tamer Tamed*, actors still did not feel they had a grip on what was going on.

> Yes, it was difficult to remember lines. It would be safe to say not all of the lines you heard tonight you would find on a page. And some of the lines that are on the page did not make it today.[379]

Actors found it near to impossible to learn lines in isolation without a framework of what they were saying and to whom they were saying it, and, having only a few words or less as a cue prompt, could not conceivably comprehend when to come in before rehearsal, as poor Thisbe understands in *Midsummer Night's Dream*:

> We all walked out and said do you really think that they only put two words down, do you really think that that was enough information for those actors, because how, you know – "there Sir" – I mean how many people are going to say – "there Sir"?[380]

As a rehearsal condition, in the precious little time afforded them as a company, asking actors to turn up off book when they had to master that from sides, without access to the play, added

[377] Donald, Fallon, Thorton Jr. in Harrell et al., *Interviews with Actors: Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.
[378] McQuade in Fallon et al., *Final Feedback Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*, DVD (American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2005).
[379] Harrell in Harrell, McQuade, and Fallon, *Actors' Renaissance Season 2005: Talk Back, 4/3*.
[380] Donald in Harrell et al., *Interviews with Actors: Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.

a level of contrived difficulty that did not advantage performance and increased interference to collaborative work in the "directorless" room:

> The experiment is disingenuous in several ways already, just because it is and it has to be that, only with the sides it doesn't add anything, it doesn't help.[381]

There is a practical difference between being off book at home and off book on the floor; cues need learning by repetition and embodiment in the space with other actors.

> I think I have these lines down and I walk in and I start hearing people say stuff and I don't have the lines no more, they are gone, you know because I am not used to that, I suddenly am taking in information.[382]

This is an enduring concern for actors, even when they have a personal copy of the whole script.[383] Actors still treat contemporary scripts as cue scripts, evidenced by line highlighting, or carrying around just their parts when they work on the floor.

> I even had to highlight my lines and I was only looking at my lines, because that's how I've always – taken a script and highlighted it – but they were only mine, but I had to have them highlighted.[384]

This is an addendum to imagining cue scripts were an alien rehearsal and performance condition, and would have informed an alien style of acting, with magical resources to stage a play and learn lines without knowing what was going on. Contemporary actors do not need cue scripts to experience a historical working process, or to augment an OP condition of working directorless. We still mostly learn our parts in isolation and are more concerned, in preparation, with what we say than what is said to us.[385] Actors need to work on the floor with other actors to deepen and discover performance possibilities. And they need to know the play:

> Your reason to talk is often six to seven words before your cue word … the best way to learn your lines like this, is to hear the other person say your entire cue sentence, so there's a very horse before the cart and cart before the horse, to me that just makes me frustrated.[386]

When the original Ren actors, in desperation, tried to find out more about the play they were trying to stage, self-assessment was expressed in negative language and humorous self-effacement:

> I cheated. I had to. I had tried to memorise my sides by themselves first and I didn't, because I don't know the story, I didn't know who I was talking to, or what I was saying, or what was going on at all, even though I had thirteen pages of dialogue, you know, I still didn't know what's going on. So, I cheated.[387]

They felt they were "cheating", yet all reported they could not perform their parts without this "transgression":

> I found that I learn lines by the story. I say Y because the person before me says X and that's how I know what my next line is because I'm responding to X. But without X I only had my Ys. But in *Shrew* it was not a big deal because I knew what X was. For *Tamer Tamed* it was very difficult for me and I finally cracked under the pressure, I had no idea what I was talking about, and I didn't know how to memorise it 'cause I

---

[381] Loar in Fallon et al., *Final Feedback Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.
[382] Stern et al., *Tiffany Stern with the Cast of Actors' Renaissance Season 23/2/2005*.
[383] See Hunter Perske in directorless *Much Ado About Nothing*, chapter 4.
[384] Bechtol in Harrell et al., *Interviews with Actors: Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.
[385] See extended discussion in chapter 3. Some contemporary companies provide cue scripts as standard: "When I started acting at least one of the big musical theatre companies – Tams-Witmark – still provided cue scripts when you rented the play." McClure, Interview with author.
[386] Guy in Harrell et al., *Interviews with Actors: Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.
[387] Donald in Harrell et al.

> didn't know how to tie it together. I just had no context for what I was saying so it was literally just words on a page.[388]

The Ren experiment proved it universally near impossible for actors to memorise lines with no context:

> just having run a few of the scenes from that play a few times, I feel already stronger with it than I know I ever could by myself in a room with a legal pad and a pen, going over and over and over … it has to be put into context for me to make sense of it, and for me to memorise it.[389]

Further, word play, the pillar of Shakespeare's writing, was rendered unactable without apprehension of more than a single cue word:

> I mean a well-constructed play, the language of it, I say something that picks up off of someone something else says. I mean it would have been interesting with the wooing scene, for example, in *Shrew*, had I already not known what her lines were, it would have been very difficult to know why I was saying – "oh slow winged turtle shall a buzzard take thee" – without knowing that I'm riffing off of what she was saying, and that's how the scene is constructed.[390]

Working from sides and impossibly short rehearsals interferes in actors "saving" each other on stage: **"**Don't know how it has to be because we only got our sides. Really just listening for your cue lines and then they'll be a pause and you'll be thinking, can I help?"[391] Embedded stage directions and emotional directives are likewise impracticable without familiarity with other lines: **"**we did a read through, and it's like 'I feel sorry for him he weeps' and we all burst out laughing because he hadn't been weeping."[392] The playwright takes pains to notate staging and emotional cues, and personage clues, in the mouths of others, necessitating a familiar auditory appraisal of the script:

> A lot of times your character doesn't talk about who you are, so a lot of what you do get is what's said about you … when we were backstage and whoever's got the line … "The quaint musician, amorous Lucio", he turns to me backstage and goes – "Quaint? I did not get that memo. I am not doing that quaint." It is a description of his character that is not even in a scene that he is in, so it's not even something that if we got together and rehearsed the scenes that he is necessarily ever going to hear.[393]

It could be argued that an actor need not know what other characters say about them, as being endowed through language would characterise them regardless of how they acted, the audience making their own assessments of, perhaps deliberate, incongruities. But this cannot be sustained in any significant sense, as mostly an actor must know who they are in the tapestry of the story in order to tell it:

> I was somebody's wife and I just imagined I was old so and so's wife and so I was like some old mistress, and then everyone kept talking about how young and beautiful I was and how everyone wanted to sleep with me – I was like well this isn't who I had in my mind at all, because my lines don't reflect any of that, right? So, it's not until you're in the room with everybody else and you're off book and you have this idea and then people start talking about you and you go – that's who I am? But that's who I was, and everything changes, you know, you have to be able to pivot like that.[394]

---

[388] Thornton Jr. in Harrell et al.
[389] Dunton in Harrell et al.
[390] Thornton Jr. in Harrell et al.
[391] Fallon in Harrell, McQuade, and Fallon, *Actors' Renaissance Season 2005: Talk Back, 4/3*.
[392] Stern et al., *Tiffany Stern with the Cast of Actors' Renaissance Season 23/2/2005*.
[393] Stern et al.
[394] Burrows (née Donald), Interview with author, 14 January 2019.

Even without nuanced investigation of character, simple needs for structure and plot would require access to the whole play; a "platt" summary would be insufficient, as exemplified in Donald's mad scene, where her character's actions are detailed in other people's lines and would need collaborative rehearsals, discussions, planning and blocking:

> Our stage manager did give us a scene breakdown which helps, but there was one section that says … – *Enter Maria mad* – but none of my lines in my sides made any sense to me if I was crazy … I didn't realise until we got here … but my whole mad scene happens in my silence, according to other people's dialogue.[395]

Cue-scripts have become a cardinal part of OP rehearsal and performance conditions and are purposed as a talisman to inform acting style. Apart from the work at the ASC, the central proponents of these entrenched ideas are the theatre practitioner Patrick Tucker and his niece, and celebrated scholar, Tiffany Stern.[396]

In *Shakespeare in Parts* Simon Palfrey and Stern maintain that cue scripts were used for purposeful directorial instructions from author to actors, who memorised roles individually, and then performed them, without knowing other parts of the play.[397] They assert that "Shakespeare, an actor as well as an author, undoubtedly wrote his plays with the 'part' always prominent in his mind".[398] However they acknowledge that a play performed from cues can only work when actors know their cues as well as their speeches.[399] We have seen that one to three words is an insufficient cue signal, especially when there are premature or false cues (see below), and that, under practice conditions, verbal and embedded acting cues can only be sufficiently known through embodied rehearsal. The theory that actors were unfamiliar with anything but their parts can only work if, as Stern surmises, the bookkeeper functioned as a "conductor, bringing into harmony actors who were largely familiar only with what they had to do individually".[400] In *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, Stern presents far more evidence on practice after the Restoration and tends to back-project eighteenth and nineteenth-century theatrical practice into Shakespeare's theatre, underplaying the active artistic and intellectual involvement of the actors in the production of plays. Why would actors purposefully remain in "relative ignorance of 'outside' parts and contexts" and therefore "always have been open to anxiety"?[401] It is unlikely that shareholders, constructing their own working conditions, would keep themselves ill-informed enough to need de facto direction from a menial in their employ, thereby operating a system in which they would feel constantly anxious while they work.

At the time of ARS 2005, cue scripts did not have the following they do today, but Tucker's Original Shakespeare Company (OSC) was using them, whose "directorless" work had a short foray at the Globe: "Patrick Tucker's approach is what I'd call a First Folio fundamentalist".[402] Stern, informed by archival research, and working with Tucker and ASC, published her suppositions, which found a willing following of theatre practitioners:

> 1 The cue script is an important tool to understanding the working practices and construction of Shakespeare's plays. It is a way to impart pertinent information to actors while enabling them to perform with little to no rehearsal …
>
> 2 Shakespeare's actors and their contemporaries approached plays differently from their modern counterparts as evidenced in the research of Tiffany Stern …

---

[395] Donald in Harrell et al., *Interviews with Actors: Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.
[396] See Patrick Tucker, *Secrets of Acting Shakespeare: The Original Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2001).
[397] Simon Palfrey and Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
[398] Palfrey and Stern, 2.
[399] Palfrey and Stern, 84.
[400] Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 12.
[401] Palfrey and Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts*, 123.
[402] Patrick Spottiswoode, Interview with author, 24 April 2019.

> 3 According to Stern's research, actors prepared on their own, learning their parts from cue scripts with possible help from book-keepers or stage managers, and possibly a synopsis of the plot and characters. Full group rehearsals were minimal, and most likely a complete run-through of the play did not occur before the opening performance.[403]

Stern's work bleeds into the fantasy that Shakespeare's actors are a different species from their "modern counterparts", approaching plays "differently", and that cue scripts are a purposeful rehearsal condition that informs performance, which, if true, makes it more problematic that Stern insists actors barely rehearsed.[404] We have evidenced at length that actors working from cue scripts struggled to learn lines, did not know who they were, who they were speaking to, what they were saying, when to speak, what was going on, had no concept of embedded staging, emotional cues, mad scenes, or how to perform their character. The scholarly appraisal that cue scripts are an important psychological informant of rehearsal practice feeds into a practitioner's belief in its orthodoxy.

OP leans on scholarly research, whose theories, in the most part, have leant on observation of performance practice, not participation. Arguments about OP rehearsal conditions are porous and tendentious. Sides are not a deliberate tool to inform a style of acting, but rather a financial necessity given a lack of photocopying, prudent protection of texts in the absence of copyright, and not so different from the contemporary practice of highlighting your own lines and needing to rehearse to cement them, learn cues, and mount a successful show. Playwrights, commissioned or pitching a play, wrote to specific ensemble strengths. There is evidence that actors listened to authors read through the whole play.[405] A surviving fragment, inscribed with different hands, requests Henslowe to pay for the play, which has been heard and liked, with a scrawled tablature, on the reverse side of the request, working out the feasibility of casting.[406] The different hands are testament to their dispersed and collective responsibility, and remind us that the main actors would need to know the play's composition to cast it and would not have been left to fumble around on stage with little to no rehearsal to understand who their character is and what happens to them in relation to the rest of the story. The texts are not unstable objects. Actors chose, commissioned, wrote, and owned the valuable texts, and would have been able to consult them in the hands of the book-keeper at the playhouse. They needed to cast and costume the plays. They would be more than adequately familiar with plot, staging, cues and character through focused rehearsal.

In arguing that cues scripts were a singular and different approach to acting, much has been conjectured about playwrights purposefully writing interruptions when cue words appear more than once on a page:

> We were working on a scene the other day and Doreen [Bechtol] had a cue that was "away", and "away" got said three times before it was actually her "away" that she was responding to. So how, how is anyone supposed to know that? … is it on purpose or is it happenstance? That's the question.[407]

It is happenstance.

Palfrey and Stern speculate that part of playwrights' "directorial control" of the scene's arc and the actors' interpretation are determinative "premature cues": "A playwright who wanted 'directorial control', in an age years before a director was thought of, had only

---

[403] Andy Kirtland, 'An Unrehearsed Cue Script Perspective on *Love's Labour's Lost*', *Actes Des Congrès de La Société Française Shakespeare*, no. 32 (11 March 2015): 1–11 (1), https://doi.org/10.4000/shakespeare.3232.
[404] Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 56-64.
[405] See Philip Henslowe, *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. R. A. Foakes (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 88 (Fol. 45).
[406] Martin Wiggins, 'Who Was You?' (Unpublished paper, 25 March 2018).
[407] Thornton Jr. in Harrell et al., *Interviews with Actors: Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.

the medium of parts through which to guide the players: premature cues could be an important means of such determinative scripting."[408] For this to be tenable, playwrights, who are not writing cue-scripts, would have to perform an extraordinary imaginative feat to understand the placement of false cues, and what each individual cue-part by the scribe would look like, even when inventing a scene with a large cast of characters. Further, according to Martin Wiggins, out of 497 named playwrights, only twenty-four were also actors, making the use of cue parts for "directorial" purposes highly improbable for playwrights who had no experience of acting, or the requirements of memorising and speaking lines in the correct order.[409] Not only do the logistics appear impractical, especially in an industry where collaboration was more common than the production of single-authored plays, but a fundamental misunderstanding of the craft of acting also underlines Palfrey and Stern's assertions – that the actor's practical uncertainties on stage create the character's theatrical emotions: "the Macduff-actor is forced, very consciously, to 'perform' a sequence of dead-end, impotent, self-echoing attitudes. Reduced thus to stage ineffectuality … the actor's sense of alienation can itself suggest – and produce on-stage – the fear and ego loss entailed in the accommodating tyranny."[410] Actors do not need to be anxious to play anxiety, or uncertain to play uncertainty, or unsure of when to speak to really listen. In fact, being anxious, unsure and uncertain on stage paradoxically makes it harder to play those feelings, even if they are appropriate to the scene, which they would not always be.[411]

McClure, who has prepared hundreds of cue scripts, does not believe playwrights were informing performance, or craftily manipulating false cue lines:

> I absolutely don't believe that the playwrights were writing the plays to somehow direct from the cue scripts, it is completely illogical to me … I mean he was just writing the play … and somebody else is doing the scribing … And something like Hamlet's cue script from Q1 is fascinating because probably 75 percent of his cues are "my lord", "my good lord", "my whatever lord".[412]

But this is principally what Tucker orchestrated with OSC to inform a particular OP acting style: raw theatre, listening attentively, responding to surprises in plot, incongruent staging (kneeling quickly after someone says "kneel not"), discovering on the fly what you

---

[408] Palfrey and Stern, 192.
[409] Martin Wiggins, pers. comm., 6 October 2022.
[410] Palfrey and Stern, 133.
[411] Palfrey and Stern, elucidating how false cues work as a directorial informant in an exchange between Shylock and Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*, note that "him" appears three times in Shylock's soliloquy, which is the cue for Bassanio to say "doe you heare" (198). They suggest that Bassanio will repeat "doe you heare" three times until it is finally said in the right position, thereby making the scene comical, with both actors "simultaneously seeking the chuckling confidence of the audience" and that Shakespeare is giving the "cue-effect a sort of narrative arc" (198). Relying on these repeated cues as a deliberate playwright's injunctive to the actor, they even go so far as to say "the Venetian world can never quite allow soliloquy" (199). Practically, if Bassanio speaks his line after the wrong "him", not having the rest of Shylock's speech to hand (or in his head if he has had no rehearsal) the actor would have no way of realising he has responded to the wrong cue, and therefore not need to repeat the line. Secondly, Bassanio's line, which is a cue line itself, would trigger another actor to speak. With false cues this means that two actors could often speak together, rendering the stage and the audience in confusion, a mess that would be undesirable for an author meticulous with linguistic precision and actors who need to be in control of their performance. In this instance, Bassanio's cue "doe you heare" triggers Shylock to respond, and thus, if it comes in at the wrong time, Shylock, may jump what is left of his text to respond correctly to the cue, or be confused whether he should continue with his text, as he, too, does not have the whole scene to hand and would not wish to fall out of his part, a very important factor of performing a play successfully. But the obvious problem is that once the actors have done one performance, or one rehearsal, the effect of directive false cues would be negated, as the actor would then be aware of the order of the dialogue. To avoid the confusion of false cues in performance, scenes would need to be plotted in rehearsals for actors to know what was required, without the need of a "conducting" external figure.
[412] McClure, Interview with author.

are saying, who you are talking to, and who is talking to you. Stern admits that in Tucker's productions the blocking "goes a bit odd", and in reality Tucker is the "supreme director":

> What he does, which is way too extreme, is he tries to deny them knowledge of the play, he tells them they may not read the play, that they are not to talk to each other about the play, which is a bit absurd. But he makes them very, very intensely focused on their part and he then individually rehearses them, which he calls "verse nursed".[413] "Verse nursed" means him and their roles. Once they have been "verse nursed" they are really, really good on their parts. They then come together on the stage in ignorance of – I don't know whether you are my husband or my father – they don't know anything – and what is strange is that it pretty much works – the blocking goes a bit odd … The irony of the thing, the whole point is that this is undirected … and in fact no one could have more power than him and he is the supreme director of this thing.[414]

This early faux "directorless" work is damaging to a shift in consciousness that directorless can have a main stage purchase and offer a more profound ensemble-driven Shakespeare. Acting style is raw, actors are confused, blocking goes awry, and people congregate to see a boutique experiment, much as one would go to a side show at a carnival. The actors are being "supremely directed" in a directorless play. Tucker affirms, through his working process, that early modern actors would have no idea what was going on: "His afternoon must have been a confusion of costume and prop changes – no time for him to stand in the wings and get an idea what the play was about".[415] Tucker claims this is "what actors would have done",[416] yet this method only works with Tucker coaching and controlling the actors *individually*. They somehow did not have time for rehearsals, but they had time for individual tutorials. In Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre there is no sense of the actor infantilisation that exists in the present; here Tucker literally "nurses" actors. The book-keeper "verse nursing" Burbage is not feasible.

My argument, and the extensive practical research in directorless performance upon which it is based, has exposed a curious desire to invent some kind of orchestrating figure for Shakespeare's theatre. Imagining an isolated use of cue scripts, littered with directorial false cues, with little or no rehearsal, ignores the most *fundamental* aspect of OP – that theatre was an actor-collective and there was no director, or anything like a director. The experience of Anərkē Shakespeare and the V.enice S.hakespeare C.ompany (see chapters 3, 4 and 5), the ASC's struggles to work from cue scripts, and Patrick Tucker's need to "verse nurse" his actors individually, show that to take this fundamental aspect of early modern practice seriously means to question the other so-called "truths" that have entrenched themselves, including the conclusion that "more than one rehearsal was rarely desirable" and that actors "did not have the same concern to practise together".[417]

Cue-script "methods" play into an isolating and individual focus, rather than a group responsibility to the whole concerns of the play. There appears a desire to create an acting species different from modern actors: they played two-dimensional stock characters, with accompanying gestures, in uniform agreement that is not written down anywhere (see below); they did not bother to learn lines in case the play was damned (see below); they did not need

---

[413] "I started early on getting together with each actor and going over the assigned lines. This meeting led to one of the most powerful weapons that the OSC has in preparing its productions: the verse nursing session." Tucker, *Secrets of Acting Shakespeare*, 56.
[414] Stern et al., *Tiffany Stern with the Cast of Actors' Renaissance Season 16/2/2005*, Compact Disc, 2005, American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
[415] Tucker, *Secrets of Acting Shakespeare*, 35.
[416] Tucker, 35.
[417] Palfrey and Stern, 71.

group rehearsal; they only had access to their own parts and would not know other scenes or characters; they did not need to be responsible to the whole play: different cognition, different memories, different gestures, different needs.[418]

The Stern and Tucker orthodoxy of cue script rules has thin evidence, with only one professional cue script surviving from this period in a fragment.[419]

> Most documents associated with the early modern playhouses are fragmentary or do not survive at all. Tiffany Stern's foundational work in this new wave of theatre history appeals to the documents that do survive – for instance, the lone cue script of the part of Orlando from a version of *Orlando Furioso* that doesn't match up exactly with the extant editions of the same play.[420]

Much is based on this tenuous document, which evidences contrary notions to Stern's hypotheses. The scribe, transposing from authorial papers, has made textual errors and left blank spaces, and the scroll has been annotated and filled in with appropriate words by Alleyn.[421] This means Alleyn had time with the original manuscript to augment and amend his sides, and time in rehearsal to sort stage directions. This shows actors were not uncertain on stage.

In ARS 2005 feedback, Stern speaks to the actors about performance theories, and actors share their surmises and experiences. This interchange contributes to something concrete and inhibiting, as naturally the flaws in the framework, the human fallibility inside those flaws, and the tenuous evidence of surviving performance documents, finally retains a scholar – with no experience of performing on stage – as the authoritative voice on OP rehearsal and performance conditions:

> Warren: Well, we started the Ren season before Tiffany wrote her first book – then she wrote her first book, and because we liked her and wanted to help, we would reference her book as a piece of scholarly source material – even though we were already doing it beforehand. So, sometimes folks will erroneously say that the Ren season is based on Tiffany's work – it is not. As a scholar brain first, Ralph had drunk the Kool-Aid of they didn't rehearse very much, and so two and a half days – crazy Uncle Patrick would have thought that's even more than they had … There was a point where I said – wait a minute the people that want less rehearsal time are the people that want to watch the train wrecks. I am not interested in producing train wrecks.
>
> Elena Pellone: Neither were the Lord Chamberlain's Men otherwise they couldn't become the King's Men.
>
> Warren: That is my thought, that is my thought – that is not everybody else's thought.[422]

---

[418] There would evidently be very different training and memorisation habits for sixteenth and seventeenth-century actors. The critical point is that the main actors would have necessarily been more familiar with the scripts than just their parts and cues in order to cast and costume the play texts which were owned by the company.

[419] Robert Green, 'Orlando Furioso: Cue Script Fragment' (n.d.), MSS 1, Article 138, folio 8r, Dulwich, https://henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/catalogue/mss-1/article-138/08-recto/.

[420] Lukas Erne, *The Arden Research Handbook of Shakespeare and Textual Studies* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021), 25.

[421] "It seems that Alleyn himself supplied words where necessary, such as the names 'Ate' and 'Galaxsia', and the words 'crimson' and 'caus[e]lesse'. There are a few stage directions in the hand of the scribe, and 'Exeunt' was twice added by Alleyn, once at a point where Orlando is alone on stage (the Quarto has 'Exit') and he leaves to remain offstage for the next 65 lines." R. A. Foakes, 'The "Part" of Orlando in Robert Greene's Play | Henslowe-Alleyn', accessed 16 June 2022, https://henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/essays/the-part-of-orlando-in-robert-greenes-play/.

[422] Warren, Interview with author.

In the final feedback, when asked if actors would benefit from scholarly "verse nursing", the response was: "it would be more helpful to have a theatre person around and not a scholar".[423]

Stern's performance theories shared with Ren actors warrant further cross-examining. Stern cites the possibility of audiences damning the play as evidence that actors had little regard for rehearsal:

> The first performance the audience pays double to have the right to damn the play … and I wonder what effects that might have on an actor, as it might not be entirely worth your while absolutely learning your part when you're only going to say it once.[424]

This betrays a mindset not in tune with what an actor would demand of their professional craft, even for a single performance.[425] Contrariwise this can be construed as evidence for concentrated rehearsals, to avoid the misfortune of a play being damned. An actor, or an acting company, would be fully committed to learning their parts, particularly where sharers have a financial stake, and the danger of being imprisoned if they are politically insensitive.[426] No actor would be deliberately unrehearsed in an occupation on which their livelihood depended, let alone willingly feel the misery of not doing their best work. James Keegan reflects:

> The whole thing feels really unpolished in a way that I am not accustomed to … it's a shit shit feeling … because I am uncomfortable with how I am approaching my fellow actors on stage, I think the audience knows that.[427]

Actors feel wretched when they are uncertain or do not know their parts.

Andrew Gurr also deduces that "the company cannot have had much free time for full rehearsals of the new plays", and actors would not bother being too prepared for a show they might only perform once.[428]

> Quite a few of the seventeen or more plays taken on each year at the Rose appear in the performance lists only once. So the temptation must have been great not to put too much effort into a new play until its success on stage and its retention in the repertory were assured. Only then, perhaps, would much effort be put into polishing the production … no company could afford to spend much time on the niceties of staging. The players must have been left largely to their own devices.[429]

There are several flaws to consider. The first is that "quite a few" of the seventeen does not suggest a majority, so even if it were the case that it would be less likely a company would focus on a new play that may be unsuccessful, the majority of new plays were successful, and it would be impossible for the companies to tell which one was destined to be. Since the company chose, commissioned, and programmed the play texts, one assumes that they did so in the belief that they would be successful. Secondly, the lists are not necessarily comprehensive, nor do they tell us where the company may have performed the play

---

[423] Fallon et al., *Final Feedback Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.
[424] Stern et al., *Tiffany Stern with the Cast of Actors' Renaissance Season 16/2/2005*.
[425] This would be similar to deducing that critics' power to close a show on Broadway would mean a company would not think it entirely worth their while to open with a well-rehearsed show.
[426] The Directorless Shakespeare actors learnt parts for three performances of *Richard II*, four performances of *Much Ado* and six performances of *Macbeth*. In 2022 the V.enice S.hakespeare C.ompany mounted *Othello* with eight actors, four of which flew to Italy, for one performance. In 2021-22, I learnt three one-women shows – *The Rape of Lucrece*, *Enter Hamlet*, *Ophelia Herb Woman* – all for a single performance (with the hope of touring or remounting them).
[427] Fallon et al., *Final Feedback Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.
[428] Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 209.
[429] Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*. 209.

elsewhere, nor is Henslowe's diary any evidence that other companies replicated his business model. But the main flaw is in imagining that if a play has only one performance this would mean less focus on rehearsal or stage "niceties" in an industry where the most successful plays may have had as little as thirteen performances a year. By our contemporary standards they had very short runs. The livelihood of the company depended on them staging successful plays, with deductive reasoning one would rather conclude that they put more effort into ensuring a success by adequate rehearsals, rather than waiting for something to be a success before they rehearsed it properly.

Constantin Stanislavski writes his company "took on themselves the tremendous task of producing a new play each week, as was the custom in all the other theatres of Moscow".[430] This repertoire is faster than the mode of production of English Renaissance stages, and yet production demands for Russian stages had elaborate set, light and costume constructions. Companies were not producing a play a week without rehearsals, and therefore Stern and Gurr's supposition that there was limited time is inconsequential to the length of time and dedication the actors would devote to a rehearsal in the time available. Actors need rehearsal. Acting is a vocation and a livelihood. And, as Stanislavski writes, it is even deeper. Acting is a spiritual livelihood.

After studying all surviving documents and working in a replica theatre for nearly twenty years, McClure summarises what he has learned about OP: "Right, what I've learned is we don't know much of anything other than we have these plays".[431] McClure believes they would have given considerable focus to rehearsal:

> Yeah, I absolutely believe that they had more time to rehearse – it's not like they were sitting around going – "no, we are not going to rehearse" … Eight of them or however many, they were sharers, they had money in the company, so they had to do well.[432]

We have seen working from cue scripts necessitated rehearsals, each play, having group scenes, would necessitate group rehearsals to compose, coordinate, and choreograph.[433]

Stern supposes that early modern actors would not have struggled working from sides with minimal company rehearsal as they had stock characters, set gestures and rhetorical acting rules:

> And there were certain rules … you were all trained in the arts of rhetoric. So having got a part you would be looking to sort out what are my passions and when am I changing passions, because changing a passion is a sign of a really good actor. Hamlet saying give us a taste of your quality "a passionate speech" … and your passion has relatively set gestures.[434]

Knowing how to decipher parts without reference to the whole text because you would be trained in the art of rhetoric is a leap. Acting is different to speaking rhetoric since it involves much more complex sets of emotions, circumstances, language use and dialogical interaction. Rhetorical tropes may be commandeered in acting speeches as poetic form, but rules of rhetoric cannot be transcribed as acting rules. Oration is not acting. Thomas Heywood elucidates, oratory is a shadow perceived by the ear, portraiture is only for the eye, but acting is for the whole spirit.[435] Further, Hamlet asks players not to do any large gestures, and to moderate the whirlwind of passion with "a temperance that may give it smoothness" (3.2.8).

---

[430] Constantin Stanislavski, *My Life in Art*, trans. J. J. Robbins (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 160.
[431] McClure, Interview with author.
[432] McClure.
[433] The actor Robert Dawes has a contract that apportions a fine if he turns up late or does not show up to rehearsal. See Alwin Thaler, 'The Elizabethan Dramatic Companies', *PMLA* 35, no. 1 (1920): 123–59 (134-6), https://doi.org/10.2307/457244. See chapter 3 for a fuller discussion on evidence of rehearsals.
[434] Stern et al., *Tiffany Stern with the Cast of Actors' Renaissance Season 16/2/2005*.
[435] Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors* (London: Elibron Classics, 2005), 21.

Hamlet need give acting advice because there is not a unified art of performing: a thriving and newly minted professional industry that does not have established and codified norms. The plea for players to "not saw the air too much with your hand" (3.2.4-5) suggests there were no set gestures with accompanying set passions, as sawing is an undiscriminating gesture. And asking for temperance in gestures, to not imitate humanity abominably as if they are made nature's journeyman, suggests a desire for "naturalism", whatever that may mean to an early modern company.

Stern asserts that stock gestures were relatively absolute. And enormous. Yet the only evidence she supplies is a book of sign language for deaf people, and the unlikely idea that early modern audiences were chronically short sighted:

> There are these couple of pages … from Bulwer's *Chirologia*[436] which show hand gestures – but those are books for deaf people … you can over conclude out of those. But I think you can get at, for instance, huge, enormous gestures, because if you think of how short-sighted we all are now … and at that point in time … you didn't have corrective spectacles for short-sightedness … so I think you're going to do big gestures for everyone.[437]

You do not need enormous gestures for the audience to "see", one goes to "hear" a play. Myopia is a contemporary crisis and on a steep rise, but our health concerns are not theirs.[438]

Stern states the prompter would conduct, like Tucker did, and actors would not need autonomous knowledge of their stage craft:

> There are all sorts of things that you might feel that you want to know but actually at that point you might be completely happy to know that was in the prompter's hand. I am also guessing – at a guess – I would think that for something like say a fight the prompter would – I'm guessing – you would have fight A, B and C.[439]

"Guessing" is a revealing acknowledgement.

In relying on experts and experiments to elucidate OP we must return to Wittgenstein. How do we make apparent the hidden background? What are the unspoken assumptions? How does one think the framework that makes thinking possible? Many things in ARS 2005 were premised on, or primed to draw, certain conclusions.

In a replica experiment there is much we cannot be certain of. But we can be certain actors did not rehearse three new plays at once. We can be certain they did not have to turn up to rehearsal with no clue about what was going on. We can be certain that they constructed their own working conditions in the company they owned. And we can be certain they were not under this much academic scrutiny: "I would like it to be less talked about, less analysed, and less observed."[440]

The actors, not consulted on the parameters, were left to decipher what they were: "I would like to know more clearly what the experiment actually is and then stick to whatever is the experiment. Even if the rules are there are no rules, then we know that."[441] Working from sides unnecessarily added to the actors' pressure and hampered potential discoveries to be

---

[436] John Bulwer, '"Chirologia" by John Bulwer — A Pioneer in the Education of the Deaf in England', *Swann Galleries News* (blog), 21 October 2019, https://www.swanngalleries.com/news/early-printed-books/2019/10/john-bulwer-pioneer-education-deaf-england/.

[437] Stern et al., *Tiffany Stern with the Cast of Actors' Renaissance Season 16/2/2005*.

[438] According to Vincent Ilardi myopia only affected a small percentage of the Renaissance population and eyeglasses could be made to prescription by the early seventeenth century. See Ilardi, *Renaissance Vision from Spectacles to Telescopes* (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 2007). For a medical perspective on the rise of myopia see: Bhavin Shah, 'Defusing the Myopia Time-Bomb', The Ophthalmologist, 20 February 2019, https://theophthalmologist.com/subspecialties/defusing-the-myopia-time-bomb.

[439] Stern et al., *Tiffany Stern with the Cast of Actors' Renaissance Season 16/2/2005*.

[440] Loar in Fallon et al., *Final Feedback Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.

[441] Thornton Jr. in Fallon et al., *Final Feedback Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.

made about working directorless: "I think that was kind of pretty disturbing to rehearse that way."[442] Actors felt disillusioned, that the experiment was not for them:

> There should be some type of – this is the plan before we start, so that people can chose to sign up or not – that every person specifically wants to do that.[443]

Or that they failed:

> One of our best actors, this guy named David Loar, said at the end … "this was not a theatrical experiment, this was a psychological experiment, and I failed. I'm never going to do this again".[444]

The unhappiness actors felt, in these somewhat perfidious conditions, influences the way the season continues to run and develop. If they had different conditions, it may have developed differently, and may also have introduced Stern to different conclusions. Readjusting for the experiment's internalised flaws is not counterpart to readjusting to be more successful as a directorless ensemble. They had little time. *Tamer* was a difficult text. Harrell had a newborn. They couldn't memorise lines from sides. They spent roughly 50 percent of the available time working on the musical interludes, which was a house-style directive and would never have been an early modern actor's concern.

In future, they all demanded in aggrieved voices, give us more structure: "I just like a certain amount of structure. Because people know where they are supposed to be and what they are supposed to be doing."[445] Harrell begs for hierarchy, he does not care how it is arrived at, roll a dice, flip a coin, but decide these four people have the final word.[446] Like a filmic cut from his demand to 2019, this is entrenched into the process. There are very specific points of final say. Harrell, the actor-manager, being one of them.

The original REN ensemble struggled with a flawed notion of democracy, and a misapprehension of Shakespeare's company's capacity to create with dispersed and collective authority:

> We were all sort of raised in a democratic mindset which can get in our way at times too, because you want to allow everyone's voice and opportunity and that takes time … And in Shakespeare's day it probably wouldn't be democratic, it would probably be lead actors making most of the decisions and everyone else sort of gets out of the way of the lead actor.[447]

Paradoxically we are not familiar with this use of "democratic mindset". We have a sense that because we live in a democracy, we are democratic in our daily lives, but many of our structures are individuated and hierarchised.

> It seems like if they were actually performing that many plays you need an incredibly efficient system and democracy, for all its wonderful merits, is an incredibly inefficient system.[448]

The problem lies in conceptual issues about the nature of democracy, and the supposed inefficiency of allowing too many people a say in the room. Ren actors experienced their notion of "democracy" as debilitating, and rightly point out that Shakespeare's company would not have a notion of a political democracy. But working collectively is different to democracy, and democracy is not the opposite of getting out of the way of the main actor. A liberal democracy is about the individual right to vote – it has an emphasis on liberal, *individual* rights. A communal responsibility would need a communal project, and the

---

[442] Stern et al., *Tiffany Stern with the Cast of Actors' Renaissance Season 23/2/2005*.
[443] Fallon et al.
[444] Cohen, Interview with author.
[445] Loar in Fallon et al., *Final Feedback Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.
[446] Fallon et al.
[447] Fallon in Harrell, McQuade, and Fallon, *Actors' Renaissance Season 2005: Talk Back, 4/3*.
[448] Harrell in Fallon et al., *Final Feedback Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.

existentialists' sense of autonomy: freedom of self as responsibility to others' freedom. The Ren actors cast in an unstable experiment found negotiating as a group inefficient, but this is because they did not really have the time or autonomy to do that.

Asked if there would be a set of advice for the theatre if they were to mount a directorless season again, actors responded: "you need to remove as many obstacles that you possibly can remove"; "some more hard and fast rules about comfort"; "I'd rather learn the first time more about fewer things than little about a tonne of stuff."[449]

It is difficult to draw conclusions from an experiment that in some ways was actor pressured rather than actor empowered. Under inordinate stress, there was a collective "hue and cry" to fortify structures that should have been dismantled in directorless theatre. They wanted more rules.

> Would you have rather had more rules?
>
> Yes.
>
> Even if those rules might have restricted your personal choices?
>
> Yes. *Especially*.[450]

However, even with the pressure,

> Would you do it again?
>
> In a heartbeat.[451]

But management were not so sure:

> That first year was a disaster. The whole experiment looked like it was going off the rails – it wasn't going to work and here's why … the problem was two or three of them … dear friends and super smart intellectuals … were people that really think about things – and that ruined everything … They wanted to talk, they wanted to talk about the play, they wanted to talk about what it meant, they wanted to talk about the decisions, and they wouldn't make decisions, they wouldn't just realise what matters is the time.[452]

Actors struggled with a notion of democracy and talking things out was considered a liability by management. Management concluded actors had too much time. Instead of alleviating pressure, they thought it would be beneficial to add more:

> The first two shows were not good and *Tamer Tamed* is not a good play anyway, but it was incomprehensible … But they didn't have any time left when they got to *King and No King* … they just had to put on the show and it was so good, it saved the idea for me. If that show had been bad, I think the three of us – Jay and Jim and I – would have said no, but that show was so fucking good, there were so many gasps at the reveals, they were so good that we knew it would work. So, it needed another show, so we put in a fourth show the next year. [453]

They added a fourth. Then a fifth.

More shows, less time. The conclusion was the last play was the best because the actors had less time to do it. Not because they had adjusted to the unfamiliar working conditions by the third play, or that it was an easier text, or that the ensemble had started to develop a shared language as the process solidified (see McQuade below). Now actors were doing five plays, in fewer weeks, and more obscure titles.

> Adding more plays added another layer of what I think was an essential key ingredient to Shakespeare's staging conditions, that I thought was valuable for the art

[449] Stern et al., *Tiffany Stern with the Cast of Actors' Renaissance Season 23/2/2005*.
[450] Stern et al.
[451] Donald in Fallon et al., *Final Feedback Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*.
[452] Cohen, Interview with author.
[453] Cohen.

> and for ticket sales – we can't sit around talking about it quite as much if we are busy working on the next play.[454]

Great for ticket sales, but less great for deepening the work, nourishing a directorless process, not relying on tricks and shortcuts and individual responsibilities. The season was financially successful:

> So, we do it the second year and we notice a boost in sales that is quite remarkable. Scholars have heard about it, they start coming to see things they could never see anywhere, 'cause we're doing these rare titles … it went from being third lowest season to our third highest … We've learned that opening night, when they're going to be the most mistakes, when lines are going to be roughest, is so hot – everybody wants to be there. But it's not that they love the train wrecks, they love the escape from the train wrecks. They love watching the actors act, they love watching the actor figure out how to fix it.[455]

The audience come to see actors try not to have a train wreck. We are back to something like the Tucker theatre side-show. Audiences do not flock to the great directed shows to see actors avoid train wrecks. What could a great undirected show be?

The early experiments' lack of continuity or clarity led to erasing potential conflict, but potential courage as well. When I watched the ensemble rehearse in 2019, they were very polite, but perhaps not very honest. People were still watching. Now there was an equity Stage Manager in the rehearsal room. Writing everything down.

> Rick Blunt: Me and John kinda got in a fight because we had a missed communication … but I worry to death 'cause like – argue with him you go.
>
> Pellone: No, but he would never do that.
>
> Blunt: Well, but it may not be up to him, it may be up to whoever watched that debate – you see what I'm saying.[456]

The Ren season developed a system that could produce "directorless theatre" but with specific locations for hierarchy. Most actors interviewed in the 2019 ensemble said they had a preference for a director, even as far as defining an actor's job as being told what to do:

> Certainly, it has happened that I have disagreed with a director, but I have always known that my job is to do what I'm told. So having the director makes it a little easier on me, whether or not I like it, I can just say I'm doing what I'm told.[457]

Choices were made between the lead actor and the Stage Manager that the cast had to accommodate, discreet notes given by the new Artistic Director, Ethan McSweeney, in the lobby, and all sorts of structures that, to this PhD's definition of distributed authority and ensemble-driven creation, tempered or at times even obliterated nuance, heteroglossia and layers of social discourse.

One fatal flaw in working with cue scripts is it feeds the star performer mindset, thinking that the person who has the most lines to hand must have known the play best, and thus was the default director: "it seems apparent … that in Shakespeare's time whoever were playing the lead roles would have a lot of say in how things happen because they have the majority of the script."[458] Because of an inability to trust in recovering a lost mindset, we are sure it makes sense to serve the star performer:

---

[454] Warren, Interview with author.
[455] Cohen, Interview with author.
[456] Rick Blunt, Interview with author, 10 January 2019.
[457] David Anthony Lewis, Interview with author, 2 January 2019.
[458] Keegan in *Actors' Renaissance Season 2005: Talk Back, 17/3*, DVD (American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2005).

> That's how you can see how a lead actor, impresario, director kind of thing would be a natural movement, would grow out of the play, you know. I did a nineteenth-century play a few months ago and that's what it always is about – get out of the way of the lead actor – the whole thing is to serve him … I can't believe that it wouldn't be like that.[459]

The first Ren season's unweeded garden grown to seed means that the director's responsibility is dissected and redistributed in singular points of authority: the Artistic Director, casting director, actor-manager, stage-manager, fight choreographer, bandleader, props manager, literary manager, costume advisor, dance choreographer, prompter, and a default position that the actor with the largest part will be the final authority on the play – the director if you will: it is Hamlet's *Hamlet* after all, named *Hamlet* for that reason:

> It sort of quickly became clear that whoever has the biggest part is sort of the *de facto* director … I'm supposedly the actor-manager, is that what they call it? … I was this job for *Hamlet* and then the guy that played Hamlet was this job for *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* … when we did *Hamlet*, especially when you get in to Act 5, what you want is someone just to kind of tell people where to stand, or just – Queen wait until such and such happens downstage before you let the poison drop – just one person to kind of keep an eye on where things are happening, deploy actors that way, so that was where it was most useful.[460]

This hybrid form of "directorless" evolves to allow for the individual perspective, in contrast to the practice of this PhD's directorless research, to empower multivalency.[461] It is understandable that a commercial theatre is concerned with controlling their productions, but Directorless Shakespeare experiments, served by the collective, were not commercially compromised.[462] Having clear hierarchical single points of authority is a nineteenth-century notion, even down to the ASC labelling these figures "actor-manager".[463] This is the opposite of what this thesis is trying to release with directorless; it is what it is trying to atone for.

The ideals transformed into practice are subject to flaws and the limitations of economics and human vision. Short rehearsal periods mean Ren actors have learnt to rely on shortcuts. In 2019 *Merry Wives* Chris Johnston, a long-time company member, band-leader and second in authority to Harrell, made a major staging decision without company discussion:

> I'm hoping that when I get in the rehearsal room the director already knows what that stealing of Anne Page at the end is … I want them to have all these answers so that I can work within their train tracks of what they've given us … It also is a way to lean back a little bit 'cause I think that without a director your foot kinda has to always be on the gas, because if you don't make the decisions they are not going to get made. So that's why I was thinking about what to do for the Anne Page theft with the dragons back in December – I was working it out, so that I knew that on day one we would have that taken care of … I wanted puppets to be on the stage. I think that we don't use enough puppets, so I was like – what could we do with puppets? We could use Chinese New Year dragons for the Anne Page thing … then I wrote down pieces and

---

[459] Stern et al., *Tiffany Stern with the Cast of Actors' Renaissance Season 23/2/2005*.
[460] Harrell, Interview with author.
[461] In our productions, although actors could offer feedback or help actors that asked for help, no person had the single authority to block, clothe or give actor notes. No actor had the single authority to interpret the play – their *Hamlet* – just because they had the larger role. The world evolved collaboratively and not interpretively. See chapters 3, 4 and 5.
[462] Audience feedback gathered evidenced that it had a commercial appeal and value, some audience members even responding that it was some of the best Shakespeare they had seen. See chapters 3, 4 and 5.
[463] The earliest use recorded in OED is from 1826.

> bodies and I figured out who could do what … Then I could write the piece of music for the dragons.[464]

Johnston pitched his idea fully formulated, cast and composed on day one, even though a couple of company members were absent. This was Johnston's way of having the company's (and his own) back, as from experience he knew they did not have enough time to work out things together on the floor. Johnston was trying to remove obstacles, but this is entirely damaging to a collaborative process. The Ren 2005 company had pleaded for obstacles to be removed, but instead Management added more. Johnston clarified that in the Ren season you are allowed to say no to an idea only if you have a fully formed one to replace it, but who had a chance to form a counter proposal to his, unless they had an entire plan before day one? Some of the actors in the Ren 2019 season were working directorless for the first time. This is a clear power imbalance. The residue of distrust for "democracy" left the directorless work somewhat directed.

Harrell, a major supporter of directorless and anti-authoritarian work, experiences the imposed layers of structure as efficiency:

> I'm an anti-authoritarian person anyway you know – I mean I've always rebelled against directors personally because I always feel like – well you're only here for three weeks, you know, I have to do this thing for months … Why do you care what I'm thinking or how I'm moving, you know, just let me do my thing … So, I think the authority as structures that exist now are more about efficiency.[465]

ARS is the central engine of the ASC and where Harrell does his best work. And where, when it works, theatre is most rewarding:

> To me it's where the heart of the thing is. And that was much to my surprise … it turns out when it works it's the most rewarding theatre. The rewarding thing is when I know that it's my performance … I loved our *Hamlet*/*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* double that we did last year. I really enjoyed doing it. And it was ours. It was OURS.[466]

Although Johnston, who was Harrell's stage partner in their celebrated *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, professed he liked to take his foot off the pedal and let the director control things, all his favourite roles, over a two-decade career with the company, were in directorless plays.[467]

Yes, actors were stressed and tired – "I started feeling stupid. Here I am taking the hardest plays … that nobody's doing because they are hard – and I'm giving them to tired actors with tiny rehearsal time" – but exhilarated.[468]

Over the subsequent Ren seasons, after the initial experiment, the actors forged a family, a core group.[469] With no realistic rehearsal time, they met at each other's homes and in each other's kitchens, solving problems over a glass of wine:

> I remember gathering the lovers saying can we please meet back in my kitchen tonight after this party is over so we can work on the big fight, because we have two days starting tomorrow and I feel like it's not enough time for us to do this really well, and we've got four great actors doing this, so let's do it really well. And I remember rehearsing in my kitchen, in my house, lots and lots and lots of times you know, with a lot of the other actors, drinking wine and going – "you know what

[464] Johnston, Interview with author.
[465] Harrell, Interview with author.
[466] Harrell.
[467] Johnston, Interview with author.
[468] Warren, Interview with author.
[469] This was fairly stable until 2018 when key actors left in protest after Warren was stepped down for undisclosed reasons.

would be great here – you say what? What is that thing that you say? Okay so I think…" and, you know, until the wee hours of the morning.[470]

The actors found a way to rehearse that would not be recorded in a historical document.

They had each other's backs, and more than one romance blossomed, and more than one child followed. Donald, now Burrows, recalls it as a time of being in love:

> Looking back on your life at that time you were in love...
> And I was in love with this whole chapter of my life.
> This is deeply embarrassing because it is so very true.[471]

She treasures a letter the company received from Cohen in the second year of ARS:

> You have also signed up for a particular experiment that others might think of as sketchy. Your friend and admirer was hoping at the end of the show on Saturday that the twelve of you realize how much your work matters, how you are changing things, how you are making history … Theatre is precious in part because it is so fleeting and evanescent. Great theatre is like a flash of light that we bask in long after it's gone. I think you should look back on Saturday night and think you were part of a supernova.[472]

Despite limitations, ASC created a season of the most actor-driven work of perhaps any modern commercial Shakespeare theatre: "The place failed in a lot of ways, but it was the only place you could even fail at it … It was more actor-centred than any place I've ever worked."[473] Amidst all the unhappiness of the first Ren season, McQuade's voice finally resounds on its behalf:

> Well, this is the third of the three that we have put up. So, one way or another I think we are kind of in our individual and collective grooves about how we approached it. The first show was full of questions to each other. And I think each show we handled a little bit differently … especially by the second group show, there was a lot more freedom, I think, for people to try things, without feeling like there was someone out in the house who, after you'd tried it the *first* time, would say no that's not working, we gotta go back to the other thing, or I don't buy that, do this other thing. The big difference was knowing you could go try something – you'd certainly have to face your other actors – but because we were *all* in the situation, we were *all* trying our thing out, there was an enormous amount of tolerance and patience that I seldom see in a rehearsal process because the director – like everyone else in that process – feels like – ok exploration is fine but we've got to get this thing up. We knew there was no point where someone was going to say – alright that's fine, playing around is great, now here's what you're going to do. And so, we really had to keep working individually, and then off with each other collectively – there was a lot more permission than I've seen or experienced.[474]

Tolerance, patience, freedom to explore, to try things out without someone telling you not to or what to do, permission and collectivity. The question is – why would we want actors to work on Shakespeare in any other way?

Ren shows may not have looked different. But for the actors they felt different. When you did a Ren show, you had ownership.

> It was OURS.[475]

---

[470] Burrows, Interview with author.
[471] Burrows, 'Reflections on Actors' Renaissance Season', 13 January 2021.
[472] Cohen, 'Letter to the Ren 2006 Company', 2006.
[473] Blunt, Interview with author, 13 January 2022.
[474] McQuade in Harrell, McQuade, and Fallon, *Actors' Renaissance Season 2005: Talk Back, 4/3*.
[475] Harrell, Interview with author.

The company, after firing Jim Warren in 2018 for undisclosed reasons, has gone through a process of retrenchments and eliminations, which an actor described as "autophagia". Harrell is no longer there. Neither is Johnston. The only one left is Cohen. I cannot discuss the current status of the ASC artistic endeavours, but I can say they were brave enough to do it with the lights on. And to sometimes blind their audiences with celestial supernovas. But not brave enough to truly free the actors from the capitalist, hierarchical structures that dominate in and out of the Shakespeare rehearsal room. Actors were empowered in a cage. The lights on for the audience requires transparency on and off stage. Directorless Shakespeare has the potential not only to make the cage bigger, but to remove the cage entirely.

What encapsulates the spirit of directorless work, and is encouragement to keep making profound, courageous, and revolutionary offers of art in Shakespeare practice, is captured by the words of Blunt:

I get to pick my shoes and my feet don't hurt.[476]

[476] Blunt, Interview with author, 10 January 2019.

ACT 2, SCENE 1

Chapter 3[477]

Anərkē Shakespeare's *Richard II*: Devolved authority and decolonising theatrical practice

The best-spoken, most emphatically and efficiently performed production of Richard II *I have seen since Steve Berkoff's much showier and conceptually stylized 1994 production in London and New York.*

- *Tom Cartelli*

The best Shakespeare performance that I have seen for years!! The actors were so phenomenal that there was no need for a director of the play.

- *Audience member*

[477] Some material in this chapter has been previously published in Elena Pellone, 'Directorless Shakespeare *Richard II*, Embracing Alterity and Decolonising Theatrical Practice', *Otherness: Essays & Studies* 8, no. 2 (2021): 32–59; Elena Pellone and David Schalkwyk, '"Breath of Kings": Political and Theatrical Power in *Richard II*', *Skenè. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies* 4, no. 2 (19 December 2018), https://doi.org/10.13136/sjtds.v4i2.239, (from which I use only my contributions).

https://www.globalshakespeares.co.uk/richard-ii-rose-theatre

***Richard II* performed by Anərkē Shakespeare**
Rose Studio, Kingston upon Thames, March 24th -25th

Directorless Shakespeare Embodied Literary Criticism (ELC) is an attempt to pay close attention to things that may have been missed or misunderstood, or inherited from performance traditions and landmark productions. We think the plays are familiar, but, surprisingly, they may not be.[478] Approaching Shakespeare's text with a directorless ensemble as ELC tests how to destabilise the entrenched hierarchies that inform Shakespeare, and the insistence that he needs to be interpreted through the medium of a director – this single governing vision as antithetical to the dialogical forces and heteroglossia of Shakespeare's written words and the creative culture they were written in.

This chapter focuses on Anərkē Shakespeare's directorless production of Shakespeare's history, *Richard II*.[479] *Richard II* had three stagings, in the United Kingdom

[478] See also Michelle Terry, chapter 1: "Here's 400 years of legacy of these plays, and people have judged them in particular ways, so for me a big part of this process has been putting to one side people's assumptions."
[479] Anərkē Shakespeare, founded for this first directorless experiment, was named in response to the strongly held opinion – expressed concisely by the Royal Shakespeare Company's associate actor Joe Dixon – that without a director there would be "chaos" and "anarchy" (Dixon, pers. comm., 2017). Ironically appropriate, without an inherent relationship to chaos, the etymology is "without ruler". Anərkē Shakespeare is now a United Kingdom-based company that works internationally and interculturally. For an archive on their directorless

and Germany between 2018-2019, in which I was both a practitioner and a scholar. The productions were ensemble driven, non-mimetic, embraced alterity, and directorless, in which relevance for the audience could be free and subjective rather than predetermined and imposed. The chapter articulates the directorless working process as it unfolded, recording actors' reflections, audience responses and academic insights.[480] Each directorless production was accompanied by a symposium.[481] Richard Wilson reflected:

> The Anərkē company's highly professional staging of *Richard II* in the Studio at the Rose Theatre was the crowning glory of a collaborative weekend colloquium on the play … and a resounding tribute to the vision of the theatre's founder, Sir Peter Hall, to bring actors and academics to work together … The Anərkē *Richard II* was a truly innovative piece of theatre research, as satisfying emotionally as it was intellectually rewarding.[482]

productions, and further details about the company and their work, in collaboration with Global Shakespeare Research, see: 'Theatre Group | Global Shakespeares | London', Global Shakespeares, accessed 30 May 2022, https://www.globalshakespeares.co.uk.

[480] This case study relies on unpublished material, such as interviews with other practitioners, scholars, reflections during rehearsals, conversations with company members, audience members, email correspondence, reviews and comments. Everything gathered was done with the awareness and permission of contributors.

[481] The symposiums, as well as Question and Answer sessions, in combination with performance aimed to offer theatre as a complementary form of intellectual engagement to the academic paper, bringing together the academic and artistic enterprise to critically analyse the outcomes of Directorless Shakespeare. See appendix for symposium programmes of *Richard II* and *Macbeth*. (*Much Ado About Nothing* had an accompanying symposium but not a printed programme.)

[482] Richard Wilson, '*Richard II* Report', 12 April 2018.

Bottom asks, "What beard were I best to play it in?" Quince responds, "Why, what you will" (1.2.86-7). Freeing the actors' autonomous choices, and diversity in casting, took a central hold on the experimental conditions for Directorless Shakespeare.[483]

Nine diverse actors, spanning three generations, gathered: four women, five men, from South Africa, Trinidad, Italy, Australia/Italy, Wales, Sri Lanka/Netherlands, England. Jim Findley captured the rarity of the work:

> I realised the other day, it was my fortieth anniversary of being a professional, that I have never done a project … without a director. I've always had somebody tell me where to stand, what to wear, what to say, how to say it, and how loud. So, I'm really excited by this.[484]

The thirty-seven speaking roles were distributed by actors choosing the characters they wished to play, whilst facilitating the logistics of doubling.[485] Casting themselves gave strength to the framework of collaboration, the bridge of empathy to character central to unlocking text, more than overriding aesthetic and gender considerations. Jack Klaff surmised, from his time at the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), actors were not often cast for talent or suitability, but for tractability to the director's will. Klaff, as Duchess of York, observed her plea for pardon was akin to Portia's Mercy speech: "I think this is a scene in which a great woman tells a King the virtue of pardon".[486]

The authority to cast themselves and embody the thought-to-thought process of lines and interactions released actors from performance traditions, conceptual handles, and an imperative umbrella, such as Richard as Michael Jackson:[487]

> Having the freedom to follow our instincts as actors was so refreshing. Not having someone trying to push you in a certain direction because that's their idea of where you should be was a great thing … It was a real eye opener for me.[488]

---

[483] I had played Richard II in Verona, 2017, and, on the strength of this performance, Global Shakespeare Research and Kingston Shakespeare Seminar offered funds and resources for me to perform Richard as part of the KiSS conference on *Richard II*, 2018. It was decided to mount the production as directorless and therefore have a funded opportunity to contribute to the research of this thesis. In setting up the experiment it could be argued that it was somewhat compromised with me playing Richard and in the position of a Quince-like figure. As it was my research, I was necessarily more invested in the organisation of the production. There are always further levels of purification for directorless work, but, although the logistics of setting up the experiments were dependant on me as the organiser, I was not the creative director. The uncompromised and foundational principle remained that there was not a director in the rehearsal room or as part of the creative process. Actors were asked to join the project based on their experience with Shakespeare and willingness to do a production in a short rehearsal period (dictated by budget constraints), with no director. From there, all creative decisions were discussed and arrived at collectively. Once Quince chose the play, actors could wear what beards they willed.

[484] Jim Findley, pers. comm., 18 February 2018. All quotations from the Anərkē ensemble are from discussions, recorded memos and written correspondence, gathered during the rehearsal process, with disclosure and written permission.

[485] **Mary Davies**: Queen, Sir Stephen Scroop, Harry Percy; **Jim Findley**: Duke of York, Gardener; **Jack Klaff**: John of Gaunt, Sir John Bagot, Earl of Salisbury, Duchess of York; **Elena Pellone**: Richard II, Duchess of Gloucester; **Alison Reid:** Henry Bolingbroke; **Anthony Renshaw**: Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Northumberland, Queen's Lady-in-waiting, Exton's Servingman; **David Schalkwyk**: Sir Henry Green, Gardener's Servingman, Bishop of Carlisle; **Vik Sivalingam**: Lord Marhal, Sir John Bushy, Lord Willoughby, Abbot of Westminster, Sir Pierce of Exton. **Alessandra Quattrini**: Duke of Aumerle, Lord Ross, Keeper of prison.

[486] Klaff, pers. comm.

[487] Rupert Goold directing Ben Wishaw, "Wanted to do a Michael Jackson themed RII and the monkey (King Richard has a pet monkey) is a tribute to that." Rev Stan, 'BBC Richard II: Rupert Goold Talks Working with Ben Whishaw and Michael Jackson Influences', Rev Stan's theatre blog, 1 May 2012, https://theatre.revstan.com/2012/05/bbc-richard-ii-rupert-goold-talks-working-with-ben-whishaw-and-michael-jackson-influences.html. David Tennant also used Michael Jackson as the modern equivalent of his *Richard II.* David Tennant, *David Tennant Richard II Interview*, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l9LVP76t0Rw.

[488] Renshaw, pers. comm., 2018.

We experimented with treating every character and relationship with the dignity the play affords them, to release interactive things working for and against each other, so that no single thesis or point of view is produced.

In performance traditions, *Richard II* is frequently pressured by the conceptual imposition that Richard, as a poetic king, is a capricious, weak, effeminate, gay man with ineffectual political advisors, who are his camp lovers (as if being gay and effeminate equates to being weak), who is deposed by the hirsute and manly Bolingbroke.[489] We are familiar with David Tennent's near caricature of a homosexual, childlike and ethereal Richard, his gay councillors whispering worm-tongue in his ear.[490] We are struck by Ben Wishaw's reincarnation of Michael Jackson, complete with pet monkey, as the otherworldy, Christlike figure of poetic melancholy and homosexual longings, crucified in the brutal world of a masculine politics.[491] We remember Fiona Shaw's angelic Richard, delicate, teary and in love with Bolingbroke.[492]

[489] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, an early champion of this interpretation, writes of Richard's "insincerity, partiality, arbitrariness, and favouritism": *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor, vol. 1 (London: Constable & Co., 1930), 153. Michael Billington confirms this tendency, reflecting that John Barton's 1973 production, where actors alternated performing Richard and Bolingbroke, worked against the stereotype "of the usual conflict between a winsome dandy and a burly pragmatist": Michael Billington, 'Best Shakespeare Productions: What's Your Favourite Richard II?', *The Guardian*, 8 April 2014, sec. Stage, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/apr/08/best-shakespeare-productions-richard-ii-david-tennant-ben-whishaw. See also Lyn Gardner: "Fragility has very much been the key to the Richards of our day, such as Eddie Redmayne's performance at the Donmar in 2011. Redmayne's king was painfully young and gauche." Lyn Gardner, 'Shakespeare's Richard II: Which Actor Wears the Crown Best?', *The Guardian*, 24 January 2013, sec. Stage, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2013/jan/24/richard-ii-actors-david-tennant.
[490] Gregory Doran, *Royal Shakespeare Company: Richard II* (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2013).
[491] Goold, *The Hollow Crown: Richard II* (NBC Universal Television, 2012).
[492] Deborah Warner, *Richard II* (Illuminations, 1997).

Working directorless and responding to the nuances in the text, without conceptual handles, the ELC revealed that rather than being arbitrarily capricious, Richard is beholden to political advisors in a complicated system of factions, alignments and manoeuvrings for power that, historically, had surrounded Richard for twenty years. Richard speaking poetic verse does not make him a poetic king, with its connotations of pragmatic weakness and abstract fantasy. Richard in action goes in person to the war in Ireland. He is engaged in battles and political machinations. He violently resists his assassins.

Richard is defined, in Shakespeare's play, by his relationships. Whishaw's Richard leaves the jousting field, interrupting the challenge between Mowbray and Bolingbroke, in a whimsical moment to feed his monkey and decide – by himself – to banish them both. In the play, this decision is made after a parliamentary committee, to which Gaunt gives a party vote. Compressed to a few moments on stage, this historical council lasted two hours.[493] In othering Richard by turning him into Michael Jackson there is a danger of fetishizing the individual. The crowning lines of Richard's plea for his shared humanity in the "hollow crown" speech, is that he "need[s] friends" (3.2.81). This was a revelatory aspect of the ELC. Wilson responded:

> Two powerful and related intellectual ideas seemed to motor the production: that the dynamics of a Shakespeare play can best be explored by an ensemble working without the nineteenth-century imposition of the director; and that in this particular historical drama, the protagonist has to be viewed within the matrix of social relationships that comprise Shakespeare's representation of the Ricardian court.[494]

There is little textual evidence to support Richard's homosexuality. The one reference occurs at the execution of Green and Bushy when Bolingbroke, hardly a disinterested party, unfolds causes of their deaths to wash the blood from his hands, sodomy the only capital crime he lists.[495] This accusation is contrasted with the sympathetic relationship between Bushy and the Queen (2.2) and the parting moments between Richard and his wife (5.1). It is Bolingbroke who stains the fair queen's cheeks, Richard's lament mirroring and fragmenting Bolingbroke's discourse.[496]

By not overtly staging sub-textual relationships, but investing in textual relationships, a directorless company can allow the audience shifting viewpoints, the empathy and the freedom either to credit or to dismiss Bolingbroke's accusation:[497]

> It's really interesting what you were saying about giving the audience a choice of a perspective instead of imposing a perspective … it's probably more democratic to give them the freedom to choose which side … I'm thrilled to start.[498]

To bias the audience to believe Bolingbroke's accusation productions must underplay the sympathetic relationship between the Queen and the accused, and her parting love scene with the King. Shakespeare invents this love scene, in shared rhyming couplets, in which Richard

---

[493] Peter Saccio, *Shakespeare's English Kings: History, Chronicle, and Drama* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 25

[494] Wilson, '*Richard II* Report', 12 April 2018.

[495] "You have in manner with your sinful hours / Made a divorce betwixt his queen and him, / Broke the possession of a royal bed, / And stained the beauty of a fair queen's cheeks / With tears drawn from her eyes by your foul wrongs" (3.1.11-15). All quotations are from William Shakespeare, 'Folger Digital Texts', accessed 3 May 2019, http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org.

[496] "Doubly divorced! Bad men, you violate / A twofold marriage – twixt my crown and me, / And then betwixt me and my married wife." (5.1.72-4)

[497] In Doran's *Richard II* Aumerle and Richard kiss passionately.

[498] Quattrini, pers. comm., 2018.

and his wife exchange hearts.[499] This moment between Richard and Isabel is all but ignored by some contemporary productions.[500] Greg Doran thinks Richard is unable to respond to love, and places him on the autistic spectrum:

> David [Tennant] and I discussed this quite a lot … it's almost as if he is sort of on a kind of autistic spectrum that means that he observes people's passion and anger and irritation and even love from the queen, but he seems not to genuinely be able to respond to it … his emotions are somehow cauterised.[501]

Playing Richard, I found him sensitive and passionate, intensely human. The opposite of cauterised. This was not a gendered response but a response to the text, freed of gendered clichés and character pathologies.

Mary Davies, a sweet Queen, used her Welsh heritage as analogous to Isabel being French, marked as an outsider, and spoke Welsh when she was alone with her lady-in-waiting, played by Anthony Renshaw.[502]

[499] The historical Richard II was married to a nine-year-old at the time of deposition (Saccio, *Shakespeare's English Kings*, 22). In creating a love scene Shakespeare uses familiar conventions of love language – shared rhyming couplets – which have been immortalised in his previous play, *Romeo and Juliet.*

[500] The lines are radically cut, or the romance underplayed. See Warner, *Richard II*; Goold, *The Hollow Crown: Richard II*; Doran, *Royal Shakespeare Company*.

[501] Doran, *Royal Shakespeare Company*, 'Director's Commentary'.

[502] Renshaw is also Welsh but trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA) and has no trace of an accent left. In reality, he spoke very little Welsh and played his small line interjections to great comic effect.

Double click this picture to hear Davies' Welsh Queen.

Davies threaded the play with a haunting Welsh song, to which she taught harmonies to the company. The song reprised itself in Richard's soliloquy, when the discordant music that he hears is the broken voice of the queen singing her Welsh lament outside his prison window.[503]

The diversity that ensued from the casting process in Anərkē Shakespeare's *Richard II* was not based on a conceptual design or interpretation, but obviated biases and preconceptions of gender and race as identity. The production disputed the need to rationalise with conceptual handles, such as staging Shakespeare in a women's prison to justify female actors,[504] or in Africa to justify black actors.[505] There is no way to create historical accuracy, nor any desire to do so in a play, which, as Shakespeare frequently reminds us, is what we are watching. A play as reflection and refraction. Written for an audience unresistant to roles being played by the opposite gender, Shakespeare's plays permit playful as well as serious interrogations of identity.

The casting resulted in a female Richard and Bolingbroke among other nonconventional decisions:

> To say that cross-gender casting in the two main roles made no difference in a performance of *Richard II* would understate the difference it did make in relieving the performance of the predictable imbalancings of hormonal masculinity that are only

[503] In the second production of *Richard II* the Queen – Jenni Lea Jones – was also Welsh, but less fluent, and made the part less lyrical and more comical by simplifying the language. Jones also brought her Welsh heritage of an incandescent singing voice. In the third production Aumerle – Alessandra Quattrini – doubled as the Queen, who became Italian. Quattrini chose an Italian love song to teach the company. Another actor in the final production – Richard Hall, also with an angelic voice, filled the echoey basement of the water-filled foundations of The Rose, Bankside, with his haunting traditional folk song – *'Tis the last rose of summer*. All of these memorable decisions were offered to the company by the actors bringing their personal talents and skills to the directorless rehearsal.

[504] See Phyllida Lloyd, *Shakespeare Trilogy* (Donmar Theatre, London, United Kingdom, 2012).

[505] See Doran, *Julius Caesar* (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2012); Simon Godwin, *Hamlet* (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2016).

too thoughtlessly replicated in two recent stage productions that went on to become films, featuring a delicately poetic Richard in one version and an overtly effeminate Richard in the other, played by Ben Whishaw and David Tennant, respectively, with a solid-as-a-rock man's man occupying the role of Bolingbroke. Elena Pellone in the role of Richard presented the character with an assurance and self-possession, even under duress, that was positively refreshing while never having the audience think for a second that she was anything other than a she portraying a him.[506]

When Richard is a played by a woman, he is othered, and yet paradoxically we can be drawn closer to him. The audience is challenged to accept a picture that is supposedly incoherent or in conflict with the text. But who, other than the historical Richard II, well entombed, is the closest candidate to represent him? We must put pressure on the notion of representation itself, for all representation involves difference. Representation is a repetition necessarily other to its initial iteration, and defers the final meaning.[507] In treating actors as varying identities of other we obfuscate that all actors are other, and not other, to every character. All as close and far as expectation, convention, and prejudice place them. But mostly they are as close as their ability to imbue the role with something of their human spirit.

There is a compelling contention that casting is never "blind", nor should we desire to be "blind" to our differences. "Fanni Green argued one could erase too much: 'I don't want you to forget that I was a black woman that played that man. Because otherwise ... I get invisible.'"[508] But Directorless Shakespeare attempts to dislocate categories of definition by

[506] Tom Cartelli, 'Unpublished Review Anərkē Shakespeare *Richard II*', 2018.
[507] Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984),1-28.
[508] Qtd in Tony Howard, *Women as Hamlet: Performance and Interpretation in Theatre, Film and Fiction* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 295.

commencing with human actors playing a character as human: "Showed that Richard is a person, undergoing an experience. 'Character' needn't come into it at all. Gender certainly doesn't."[509] We are not blind to difference but interrupt the constructs of what the difference signifies. This challenges a fixation with the concept of mimesis, for what really can be regarded as the right casting or a coherent and visually acceptable tableau?

In the RSC's newly commissioned work, *Imperium* (2017-2018), out of twenty-three actors only four were women.[510] There were no female actors playing senators because there were no female senators in Rome. The inexpressible, hidden background lies in casting white English men or even a black Caesar. What is comprehended by mimetic casting? We are never able to achieve mimesis, in a Wittgenstein conundrum, we just assume it has meaning, but rarely question what our assumptions are. All mimesis is other. We must take a Heraclitan view: one can never step into the same river twice.

Tony Howard reflected:[511]

> The diversity of the performance was an unalloyed and uncomplicated success … The male-female casting wasn't an issue … Similarly, the production made questions of ethnicity completely irrelevant. There is always an argument about casting black actors as English aristocrats in the Histories because of 'truth to the facts'… And with a few exceptions even modern stage productions of *Richard II* tend to limit BAME presence to background roles – despite the fact that the anti-illusionist Shakespearean stage can be a crucible for change. But this production again benefited hugely from the experience and authority of its multiracial cast. That can't be overstated.[512]

The Shakespearean stage as a crucible for change means that a lack of conceptual force externally determining interpretation, and a tapestry of actors with no single congruent race, theme or political motivation, could be revelatory:

> The lack of fuss about mimetic casting, so that one simply set aside any concern with the identities of the actors and listened to the characters instead, cleared the way for the play to shine radiantly through.[513]

The general public also responded to this revelatory aspect, and paradoxically found the story- telling clearer without reliance on conceptual hooks and "realistic" casting:

> * The characters came across strongly without any thought of the gender etc.
> * It made the production feel live + interesting.
> * Made me think about the roles rather than the personalities.
> * Perhaps <u>heard</u> the words better – simpler to understand the meaning rather than focus on the personalities.[514]

The text was cut collaboratively, four weeks before rehearsals, to avoid privileging a single interpretive eye.[515] This was, surprisingly, seamless. Instead of actors, as people had warned would happen, trying to keep their own lines padded, they were brutal with repetition, but consistently precious with the "greatest hits".

---

[509] Howard, 'Reflections on Anərkē Shakespeare *Richard II*', 6 April 2018.
[510] Doran, *Imperium Parts I and II* (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2017).
[511] Howard headed the research projects, "Multicultural Shakespeare" and the "British Black and Asian Shakespeare" at Warwick University.
[512] Howard, 'Reflections on Anərkē Shakespeare *Richard II*', 6 April 2018.
[513] Michael Dobson, 'Reflections on Anərkē Shakespeare *Richard II*', 16 April 2018.
[514] Comments proceeded with "*" throughout the following chapters are audience feedback. All written feedback from Directorless Shakespeare productions are scanned and available in the appendix. There is hardly any criticism of note, with over 95 percent of the feedback replete with praise, even as far as to say productions were one of, or the best Shakespeare they had seen.
[515] We used the Folger Digital Text, ed. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine. Shakespeare, 'Folger Digital Texts'.

Gaunt's "England" speech (2.1.35-74) remained wholly intact, as did Richard's soliloquy (5.5.1- 67), one of the longest in Shakespeare, whose sixty-six lines are usually mercilessly cut.[516] An actors' cut made for an actor interpretation. The best bits to act were kept, and the story was clear and rewarding for actor and audience:

> * Outstanding – the text sprang out with real immediacy, as if the ink from the author's pen (or more likely quill) was still wet on the page! Seven actors performing all the roles between them, yet it was never confusing, because they allowed the text itself to tell us who they were … Excellent ensemble work. This is too good to miss.[517]

We agreed to rendezvous, with lines conned, on the first day of rehearsal.[518] Everyone communicated via a WhatsApp group to make pre-production decisions. Renshaw offered to arrange a series of solid wooden packing cases, variable in size and shape, for the set. Unanimously, the company agreed that costumes should be modern with a historical hint, inspired by film noir, with dark lighting and classic lines: "Charcoal strokes. Let the audience fill in colours if they want or need."[519] In rehearsal we decided to light the show with a single state, switching on a hurricane lamp for Richard's soliloquy. The play ended in darkness with the lamp casting its shadowy illumination over Richard's dead body.

[516] See all productions already listed in this chapter.
[517] Audience review, *Richard II*, Rose Bankside, 2019.
[518] QUINCE: But, masters, here are your parts, and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you to con them by tomorrow night…
BOTTOM: We will meet, and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains. Be perfit. Adieu. (*Midsummer Night's Dream* 1.2.94-103)
[519] Findley, pers. comm.

On the first day of rehearsal, we worked through the play. All staging and creative ideas were debated and collectively arrived at in our intensively short rehearsal period of six days (open dress day seven, then three performances).[520] The short rehearsal period was not ideal and further confirmed that current academic theories of minimal to no rehearsal on Elizabethan and Jacobean stages are erroneous (see below).[521]

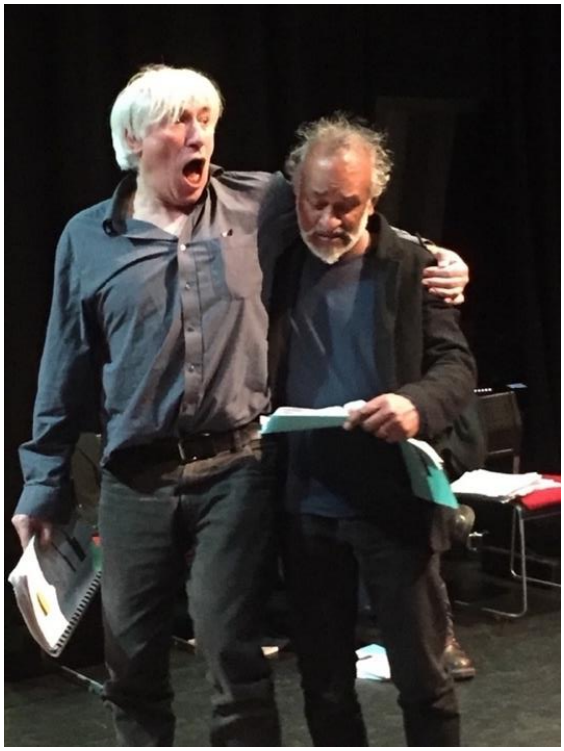
Complicating the experiment was the lack of familiarity between actors.[522] We were an un-established ensemble, in some cases strangers, in contrast to the Lord Chamberlain's Men who had formed a year prior to the first performance of *Richard II*.[523] The most apparent obstacle was that, apart from myself, none of the actors was off book. But, despite scripts in hand, and without the usual weeks dedicated to table talk and ensemble building, what was achieved during the day was astonishing. Characters began emerging through interaction and reaction. The company were generous and careful with each other, self-contained in their own roles, and figuring out what would work and what they were interested in trying. There was warmth and camaraderie, as well as tension, as we learnt to collaborate.

[520] The main obstacle to a rewarding rehearsal period were the financial constraints. It is not ideal to place actors under so much pressure, but funding did not allow for a longer rehearsal period. This is something that needs to be considered when attempting directorless work. Until it can be institutionalised commercially, there is always the hurdle of it being financially undernourished.

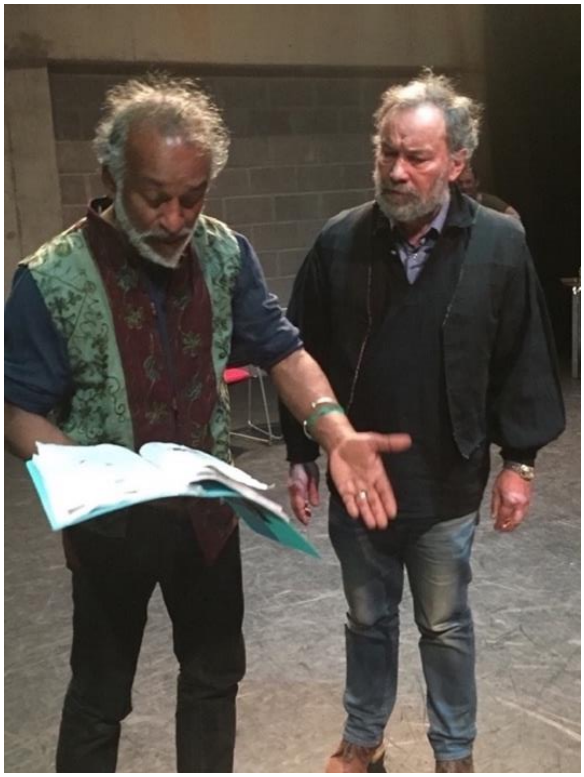
[521] See also introduction and chapter 2.

[522] The rehearsal process in directorless *Much Ado About Nothing* belied this conclusion. In *Richard II* we remained polite to each other during the research, in ways the familiarity and friendships of the *Much Ado* ensemble did not privilege, and which led to emotional exchanges on the floor. See chapter 4.

[523] Siobhan Keenan, *Acting Companies and their Plays in Shakespeare's London* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 28.



Klaff, a veteran RSC actor who had been in *Richard II* before, remarked that every seven minutes he was discovering something new about the play. The reason, according to another actor (and academic), David Schalkwyk, was that there was no single interpretive vision. People were unearthing the play on the floor without any table talk led by a director or dramaturg.



The play was not othered to the actors. It became a site for egalitarian exploration and distributed ownership. Robert Icke stated that "actors need someone to be the parent to enable them to be the child".[524] But no one was parenting the actors in Anərkē's *Richard II*.

There was a fluidity and ease in which actors used their artistic instincts to agree on the strongest staging choices. There was never a disagreement when something was working, we all knew it immediately, there were no conflicting tastes or suggestions. It was more difficult to solve something that was not working, but this only became apparent as the tension escalated closer to opening night.

Michael Billington, who had never seen a directorless Shakespeare, and felt the Globe ensemble work was a bad advertisement for the cause, articulated what he regarded as a paradox:

> You are working with experienced actors, so they presumably have brought with them their memories of, you know, the other Shakespeare plays they've done, so you are using the inherited knowledge from director-led productions. That's the paradox.[525]

But Renshaw responded: "Where did the directors get their ideas in the first place? From the actor."[526] That is the true paradox. That we have forgotten to acknowledge that in our cultural memory. It is still *Brook's Dream*. Billington, sceptical, came to the third iteration of *Richard II* at the Rose Playhouse, and responded with commendation: "Well, you proved it can be done!"[527]

Richard II is Shakespeare's most metatheatrical King. This is expressed by his play between shadow and substance in the deposition scene – actors are shadows – and by the performative nature of his language. The image of political theatricality is consecrated by York's description of the dethroned Richard as an unapplauded actor following the great performance of Bolingbroke.[528] In the deposition scene (4.1), Richard calls for a mirror to read his sins in the book that is himself and see what face he has, "Since it is bankrupt of his majesty" (4.1.278). Richard calls for the mirror, not merely a theatrical game, but a need to know who he is when he no longer has an assigned role to play. On the first day, at the crucial moment in rehearsal, a masking tape roll was grabbed to stand in for the mirror, no prop having been pre-designed. And that transformed to the actual mirror. A metal, hollow circle, resonant with the crown, and, as Richard looks through it, the audience is his glass.

Richard must see himself reflected to understand, at this moment of utter desolation, when he has no name, no identity, no role, what it is that he must do, say and perform – "I know not now what name to call myself" (4.1.270). Richard seeks an instructional manual to know himself, and the audience simultaneously looks in this mirror of performance to know themselves.[529] With Richard, the audience enter the looking glass, become inverted, and transform perceptions and emotions. A hollow looking glass, to match the hollow crown. Poetically apposite.

---

[524] Robert Icke, Interview with author, 25 November 2019.
[525] Michael Billington, Interview with author, 23 February 2019.
[526] Renshaw, pers. comm.
[527] Permission given to use comment in Billington, 'Personal Correspondence', 5 February 2022.
[528] "As in a theater the eyes of men, / After a well-graced actor leaves the stage, / Are idly bent on him that enters next, / Thinking his prattle to be tedious, / Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes / Did scowl on gentle Richard" (1.2.25-30).
[529] The mirror held up to nature is something of which Hamlet reminds us. The mirror was an instrument of education. Early modern instruction manuals bore titles like: *Mirrour of Good Manners* (c. 1518) which Alexander Barclay, a monk in the Benedictine monastery of Ely, translated from the Italian of Dominic Mancini.

In a directorless environment, the actors responded unrestricted to an offer, opening up a myriad of possibilities, rather than being modulated or externally conducted.[530] We worked like a jazz ensemble improvising in a particular key. This is supported by the textual construction of the play. Lines mirror each other, inverted ironical responses and rhyming puns: "In this play particularly, the actors are musicians and the instruments they play are themselves."[531]

The complication in replicating original practice (OP) was that not everyone had committed to the "pains" to be "perfit".[532] Some actors were never on top of their lines. This retarded detailed work. Our difficulties, such as deterioration in memory, are indicative of what their strengths must have been. Findley, himself still on book, was prompting until the open dress. Renshaw dried, even on the final performance and Klaff is the only actor I have ever known that can improvise in iambic, throwing in random phrases, even one night, as we laughingly recalled after at the pub, "Something whatever". The audience did not notice at all and Klaff stayed so fully in character that it seemed perfectly normal for Gaunt to say such a thing. Although I was off book, I kept stumbling over cues. It was, in practice, a test of the cue-script theory, as actors sometimes did not give the actual cue, but would not wish an actor coming in before they had finished. I got into a habit of waiting for there to be a pause, longer than an actor's pause, to ensure that it would be fertile to say my next line. I posit this must have been something reminiscent of working from cue scripts in the English Renaissance, that offered little disjunction with our working method. When the mechanicals

[530] There are directors who encourage collaboration and improvisation, but the salient point is that they are ultimately responsible for curating an over-all aesthetic and interpretation, and their word is regarded as final.
[531] Howard, 'Reflections on Anərkē Shakespeare *Richard II*', 6 April 2018.
[532] *Midsummer Night's Dream* 1.2.103.

meet to rehearse, none of them has their script in hand, but they need to work out when to speak.[533]

A comical interchange on WhatsApp revealed a more profound essence, that actors learning their parts still conserve something of a cue-script working method:

Renshaw: I only read my own lines
Findley: There are other lines? Oh you mean the white noise!
Pellone: Blah blah blah. My line. Blah blah blah
Renshaw: I say my line. If there's a pause, I'm in with my next.[534]

What the process made clear is how little room for improvising there is on a cue line. The actor would need to know more of their cue than the one to three words on a cue script. If the line is punning on the entire proceeding line, then there is a larger aural cue that needs to be heard and memorised in rehearsal. Actors are the embodiment of their cue script and when they come together must create a single play. Actors need rehearsals to become familiar with their cues and their character's relationships in the play.[535] Alessandra Quattrini, English her second language, reflects:

> I had to schedule my reactions because I have basically no lines but loads of reactions to huge monologues. So basically, whenever Richard says, "Don't cry Aumerle" and I have to cry before, *before*, he says it, or, "Why are you laughing Aumerle?" and I have to laugh before he says it or, "Why are you mocking me?" I should probably do something with Carlisle and look at each other to mock him.[536]

[533] QUINCE: "Ninus' tomb," man! Why, you must not speak that yet. That you answer to Pyramus. You speak all your part at once, cues and all.—Pyramus, enter. Your cue is past. It is "never tire." (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* 3.1.97-9)

[534] Mostly, we still treat our scripts, even though we have access to the entire play, as cue scripts. We highlight our texts, making for ourselves our own cue scripts. Some actors will write, or cut and paste a document, with just their lines and cues, their own working 'roll', to assist in learning or to carry on the rehearsal floor. Some actors will audio record just their parts and cues to learn lines.

[535] See chapter 2 for extended discussion.

[536] Quattrini, pers. comm.

These emotional cues do not fall on cue lines. A blueprint needs to be made, between actors, to familiarise nonverbal injunctions that facilitate key moments. When Duchess of Gloucester appeals to Gaunt, "Nay, yet depart not so!" (1.2.65), Gaunt must be departing to activate the line. This again contradicts Tiffany Stern's assertion that there was little to no rehearsal: "he would have little time to do more than learn or relearn his lines".[537] Rather, there is apparent necessity to rehearse intricate staging needs, like dances and sword fights, and intricate performance needs, where another's lines depend on a particular set of actions or responses from another character, which cannot be understood in isolation.

As explored in the introduction and chapter 2, Stern's theories about minimal to no rehearsal practice have become a kind of gospel; academics and theatre practitioners repeating academic "findings" with addendums like Stern "demonstrates" or "proves". There seems to be no public platform of dispute. But some prominent theatre historians remain sceptical. Roslyn Knutson wrote in private correspondence:

> I've resisted (perhaps perversely) Tiffany Stern's thesis in *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (2000), which reinvigorated the discussion of rehearsal (if it did not *start* it) because – like you – I find the claim that players (even ones closely bonded over time as were the Chamberlain's men in the 1590s) could stage 15-20 plays in a season of 3-4 months, working in new plays and revivals, without something more than coming to the playhouse 'off book' and running through the play a time or two (I exaggerate, but only a little). But, as I say, I don't have a handle on evidence that counters such claims.[538]

Also, in private correspondence, Martin Wiggins affirms that there is no consensus among scholars about Stern's theories, about which he remains unconvinced, and mentioned refuting evidence, such as the 1630s letter in which Richard Robinson has to break an appointment because he has been unexpectedly called in for a rehearsal.[539] Another substantial document in support of committed rehearsals is Robert Dawes' contract, recorded among the papers at Dulwich College, where he agrees to certain penalties for breach of actor conduct, including a fine for being late or missing rehearsals.[540]

---

[537] Tiffany Stern, *Making Shakespeare: From Stage to Page* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 63.
[538] Roslyn Knutson, pers. comm., 3 November 2017.
[539] Martin Wiggins, pers. comm., 24 May 2022. For details see Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue*, 9 vols (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2471.
[540] "and that he the said Robert Dawes shall and will at all times during the said term duly attend all such rehearsal, which shall the night before the rehearsal be given publicly out; and if that he the said Robert Dawes shall at any time fail to come at the hour appointed, then he shall and will pay to the said Philip Henslowe and Jacob Meade … 12d; and if he come not before the said rehearsal is ended, then the said Robert doors is contented to pay 2s." Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry, and William Ingram, eds., *English Professional Theater, 1530-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 283.

The Gallery at the Rose theatre was available for rehearsal on the second day. After three hours of line repetitions in smaller groups, we began stumbling through scenes and transitions, working in a detailed way. Some of the day-one edges were smoothed:

> It's cool. I like the democratic process. I like that everybody has their own opinions and it's good to just get up and play and do it and I think there is a lot of freedom in what we are doing, which is good.[541]

A playful, light-hearted touch brought out the ironical humour in the Gaunt death-bed scene (2.1), and the ridiculous humour in the first gauge-throwing scene, as the men posturing resembled somewhat childish boys, throwing things at each other and daring each other to "stoop" (1.1.76):

> The spontaneity of the movement, which went completely with the text and the interactions between people, I think is extraordinarily good … You can actually see the body being driven by the thought and the feeling of the actor.[542]

[541] Davies, pers. comm.
[542] Schalkwyk, pers. comm.

Text work organically occurred as people paused to ask, “What am I saying, what does this mean?” We collaboratively delved deeper into scenes, questioning received interpretation:

> Another thing that was extremely interesting today was the way in which just spontaneously you turned the usually formal opening scene of the play into an intimate scene with Gaunt. I’ve never seen it done like that and I don’t think any director would actually think about it in those terms.[543]

[543] Schalkwyk.

This occurred when Klaff and I had been running lines in the morning and were pacing in the coffee shop, we proposed, "why don't we do it like that?" It came out of actors working together without going through an external body. The relationship is no longer triangular. Everything is not fed out and back in. The offer was between ourselves. Everybody in the scenes, and sitting on the sides, was supporting what needed to be tidied up: costume changes, musical transitions, the liminal spaces. This happened in a circular way. A virtual circle. It was Richard's crown:

> As a theatre director, the project had 2 points of interest for me: 1. I got to be onstage as an actor speaking Shakespeare's words 2. How can actors work to create a piece of theatre without the "outside" eye? My general observation is that we DID create a piece of theatre under fairly stringent conditions and this in itself is an achievement and a testament to the will and the generosity of the collective.[544]

[544] Vik Sivalingam, 'Director-Less Shakespeare Feedback', 11 April 2018.

On the third day we had access to the Studio theatre. Working intensely, all of us responsible for each other, we began to form a company. The transitions between each day were quantum. Subjected to the process we had to transform from strangers to a working ensemble, able to be honest with each other. There is an exponential expansion because of the condensing of the normal trajectory of rehearsal into a time compression of a week:

> You might have in your head some idea of how it's going to be, but you can't do that on your own. It has to be a point of shared vision that evolves somehow … which it kind of feels like it is.[545]

On the fourth day Vik Sivalingam joined the company. He did not know his lines! We did a lines run with Sivalingam on book, in continued frustration that much rehearsal energy was drained for line learning, and that other practical parts of mounting the play needed attention. We needed to concentrate the liminal structures, finalise ensemble transitions, and shift energy dynamically; to hold the play as an ensemble, every part of that desiring attention, not just one's individual performance. The "directorial" function circulates around the room at different times. We play tag with it: assume it, vie for it, allow it to be somebody else's. There are some things actors understood as directorless, but in other parts still treated structures as if they could abdicate responsibility: "Doing it without a director is fine, but next time let's not do it without a stage manager. I'm sure they must have had one of those!"[546]

People were asking me what the rehearsal times were, or if they could leave early. What we were working on the next day and what will we get to. An actor asked what colour socks they should wear. The way actors are trained, and 400 years of theatrical developments, means they look for a director. They will look for reassurance, for information, for external authority; they have no practice in being responsible for costume or set design which have become the domain and worry of other people. In order to give actors freedom, you increase their worries.

---

[545] Reid, pers. comm.
[546] Reid.

It is of note that any sense of authority or responsibility for parts of the play, other than our lines and characters, take on the tarnish of "directorial". Perhaps interest in other layers are simply an early modern actor's concern, which now we assume to be the provenance of director. However self-conscious that makes one when raising a firm opinion, it is important that the collaborative process is not an apathy or lack of responsibility to anything other than our roles, but rather an increase in assertion and care:

> Even without the presence of the outside directorial eye, as actors we consciously or unconsciously sought this which often meant that those not in the scene assumed the role of sounding board. This chimed nicely with the "we are all in it together" ethos. However, the challenge here was, having been brought together only for this project, there was disparity in methodology, aesthetic and modes of communication. Nonetheless, a willingness to pull together carried the company through these challenges.[547]

To work without a director is not simply eliminating the figure. It is eliminating the mindset. And that is the philosophical problem. A director did not feel missed in steering an actor's character interpretation, but for production concerns and larger accountability for the play.[548]

[547] Sivalingam, 'Director-Less Shakespeare Feedback'. See chapter 4 for a discussion of the problem of making a god of "unity".

[548] This was similar to the feelings of the actors in the American Shakespeare Center's directorless season, see chapter 2. This evolved by the final production of *Richard II* at the Rose Playhouse, Bankside, in which actors further distributed production and promotion responsibilities. Directorless Shakespeare need not have these responsibilities and could be sustained inside a commercial theatre structure. The principal element is that creative decisions that the actor must embody are decided by the actor, with the other actors.

On the fifth day we loaded in the set and found it exhausting and difficult work. The company feeling is disintegrating. Over a minor blocking issue, or whether a box had its lid on or not, Alison Reid (Bolingbroke) and I argued at a ridiculous pitch. We left at the end of the day exhausted and unhappy, after having blocked half the play. The interior politics of the play permeated out, and what became apparent is the short rehearsal period left actors vulnerable. The increasing terror as we approach opening, externally interfered with the internally collaborative ease we had in the first few days. Extreme responses to seemingly simple alterations made apparent the stress the actors were enduring. People struggling with lines have two tiers of negative consequences. The most apparent is the detailed nuanced work in the scenes cannot be accessed when all the energy is in placing the first broad brush strokes. But more insidious is that, as the pressure of an audience and performance conditions loom, the stress of actors still struggling to get off book begins to fray the working relationships between ensemble members. There is displaced fear and tension. Preparedness, a sense of the needs of the play, rather than the needs of an individual performance, and a feeling of respect between actors, must be factors in replicating the early modern model. Perhaps we need concede that the exhausted tensions and break downs must be part of the model too.

On the sixth day we blocked the rest of the play.

We tried to weave the threads of the work to a congruent whole to hold us together. It is demanding on the actor who in the most instances is playing a few characters, to work out costume and character changes on the hoof. The metatheatrical frame is supporting the metatheatrical text, actors changing on stage and changing each other.

On the seventh day, in preparation for the open dress, we top and tailed. We worked on ensemble moments, intersplicing scenes and finalising dissolves between one scene and the next. Everyone is enthusiastic about the language of the play's scaffold. The acting body dynamically supporting the story. Some character transitions are embedded in scenes. Klaff's transformation to Gaunt happens on stage when Richard learns Gaunt is dying. Klaff slowly removes Bagot's coat, removing the character, and sinks to Gaunt's deathbed. Richard's last lines (1.4.65) are interspliced with Gaunt's first lines (2.1.1):

KING RICHARD
Pray God we may make haste

GAUNT
Will the King come?

KING RICHARD
and come too late.

This splicing (initially accidental) is repeated stylistically throughout. Another example is the final farewell between Richard and the Queen (5.1.103-4) interlaced with the first lines of the following scene between the Duchess and Duke of York (5.2.1-2):

KING RICHARD
We make woe wanton with this fond delay.
DUCHESS
My lord, you told me you would tell the rest,
KING RICHARD
Once more, adieu! The rest let sorrow say.
DUCHESS
When weeping made you break the story off

The dissolves and cross fades are aesthetically satisfying – there was vocalised pleasure from an audience member – and textually illuminating. The ending and starting of scenes easily lend themselves to this textual interweaving, as musically Shakespeare resounds repeating and harmonic notes in the transitions, like a film editor finding a linking visual image for a cut, Shakespeare does this with words.

The material requirements of the production were minimal. The costumes contemporary with a historical gesture. The lighting a single state. The set composed of variously sized solid wooden packing cases, the throne stamped FRAGILE:

> The starkness of the studio staging, shared lighting, shrewd cutting of the text, continuous group engagement, and the lightning reflexiveness of the central performance, combined to make this production a revelatory X-ray of the deep structure of the play.[549]

The opening beat of the show arose when Quattrini, Reid and I were mucking around with the crown. It turned into the three children, cousins, playing at being King, a game of keep 'em off: physical and surprising, breaking out from the pre-show state of the ensemble warming up in the space. The joy of the game, and the metatheatrical veil, descends, as child Richard, left without the crown, cries and stamps his foot while child Aumerle worships child Bolingbroke. In disgust, Richard's cousins give him the crown and leave him alone on stage. He puts it on. Richard was ten when he was crowned. He calls to his uncle in his forsaken, lonely child's voice – "Old John of Gaunt" (1.1.1) – and the play proper starts. Richard is now an adult King and whispering confidant to Gaunt to understand the conspiracy that threatens his court. Then the ensemble stride into position on stage, to the sound of a flute call (the instrument Davies could play), and the court forms around Richard as he proclaims: "Then call them to our presence" (1.1.15).

[549] Wilson, '*Richard II* Report', 12 April 2018.

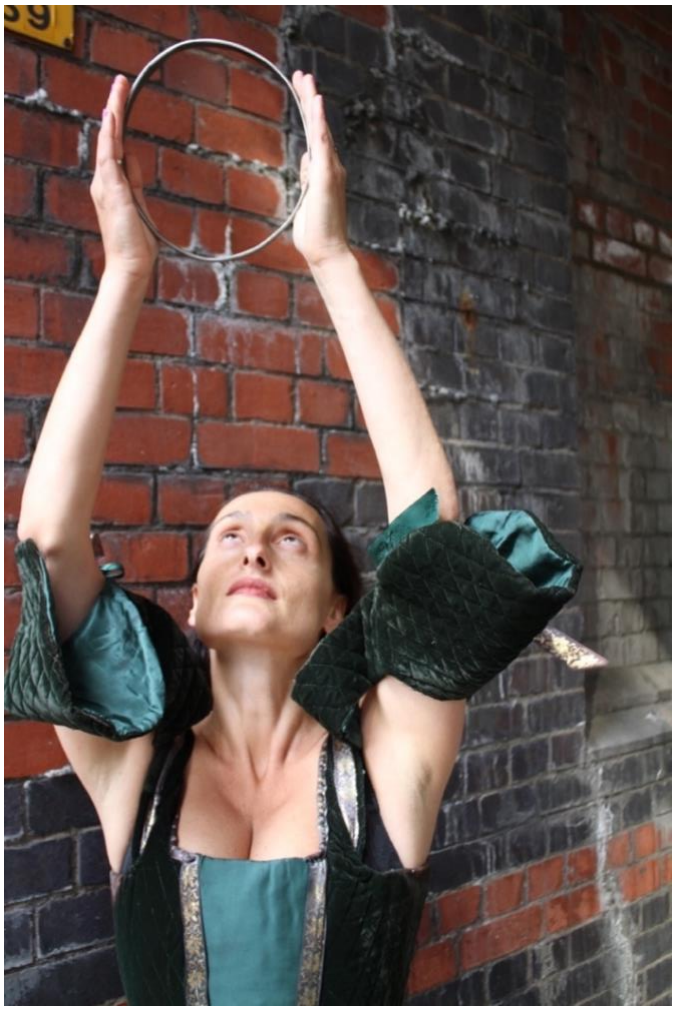
We did three performances in the Rose Studio theatre, for general public and academics participating in the conference, to enthusiastic applause and hearty congratulations. Many proclaimed it was one of the best Shakespeare productions they had seen.

> The best-spoken, most emphatically and efficiently performed production of *Richard II* I have seen since Steve Berkoff's much showier and conceptually stylized 1994 production in London and New York.[550]

Anərkē Shakespeare's rendition of Shakespeare's historical tragedy without imposing an explicitly contemporary concept still offered a platform to reflect on unstable political machinations (United Kingdom in the throes of Brexit, Teresa May's deposition by Boris Johnson, his subsequent fall from grace once he assumed power, and the rise of autocratic and conservative governments in Europe), gender fluidity, and the tension between solipsism and shared grief:

> These ideas came together in the permanent onstage presence of the seasoned company, whose varied reactions to Richard's unfolding disaster, whether of apathy or agitation, had the gripping compulsiveness of a Greek chorus. And they were personified by Elena Pellone's quicksilver performance as the doomed king, which was riveting not for its domination of the space, but for its responsiveness to the actions of the other characters. Much was projected through the actor's eyes: aptly, given the imagery of the play. The political complexity of the role of Shakespeare's Sun King, historically torn between absolutism and parliamentarianism, was brilliantly caught by this realisation of the company's collective thinking.[551]

[550] Cartelli, 'Unpublished Review Anərkē Shakespeare *Richard II*'.
[551] Wilson, '*Richard II* Report', 12 April 2018.



The directorless work is fruitful: in revealing aspects of the text as a form of embodied literary criticism, for actors, academics and audience members; and in creating a beautiful and poetic aesthetic, with moving performances:

* Excellent. Well blocked, staged, spoken
* I loved it!
* It's a really well told story and the actors are much more personally invested in it – much more than the Macbeth I saw at the RSC
* I was completely engaged throughout, and rather moved: this does not always happen
* The actors seemed far more "invested", or in "ownership" of "their" play
* I really liked seeing the interactions between the actors and knowing that those interpretations came from a more personal place
* The story telling was pure, swift + unimpeded
* STAGING WAS TERRIFIC
* The story was clear and the acting very strong
* So well acted
* A great production
* Shakespeare was crystal clear
* Each actor was able to portray their character(s) with their own interpretation + feeling

It was rewarding for the actors, who could own their work without having to be enabled or given permission:

> I've been a professional actor for thirty-six years now and been very lucky to perform in numerous productions at the National Theatre, the RSC and various tours all over Britain. I can honestly say this project of directorless Shakespeare has been the most exciting and invigorating and sometimes frightening thing I've ever done. Normally on the first day of rehearsal the company meets and everything has already been decided … With Anərkē Shakespeare this is completely decided by the actors! Which is the most liberating thing ever. Also it's a huge responsibility … The fact is, it is a forgotten, extraordinary way of working that is so fulfilling and rewarding. The actual performance results have been wonderful too. So many audience members have said to me that the story and character relationships are so clear. I think that's what happens when actors work for each other and not a director. It's woken my creative soul up again and reminded me why I wanted to act.[552]

[552] Anthony Renshaw, 'Anərkē Shakespeare: *Richard II*', 13 January 2019.

Academics reconsidered a play they thought they knew intimately:

> It also made a point I'd never thought of – that Aumerle is in the same generation and situation as Richard and Bolingbroke. I've always seen him played as a handsome, probably gay, young hanger-on/minion of Richard, as (often) were Bagot and co. And there's a lot of "weakness" and "dependency" built into those stereotypes. Now I've looked him up and see he was only about six years younger than his cousins Richard and Bolingbroke – and that makes sense of his rebellion scenes – it's not just a comedy with funny parents in a tizzy. He is a serious threat to the new King himself. You may have thought about that in rehearsal – I only realised it on Sunday (after many years!) because of the non-type casting, which can truly free the spectator's imagination.[553]

Directorless Shakespeare ELC proved that it is possible for things sometimes obscured in the text to be noticed: "Richard's vulnerable dependence on his court, in a rapidly changing political environment, had never hit me so much before."[554] The directorless process allows for the otherness of the text – its nuances, grey areas, ambiguities, liminalities, shadows lurking around its corners – to have space and breath on the stage. It circumvents Lucy Bailey's notion that the director needs to create "a coherent, well thought through, understood, utterly excavated world" and "the moral framework of the play".[555]

In a Q&A an audience member pointed out the fitness of a play about deposition performed by an ensemble seeking to depose the director. But the true deposition must happen in our minds. The crowning can then be of the collective enterprise, joint decision making and plurality of ensemble-driven work.

[553] Howard, 'Reflections on Anərkē Shakespeare *Richard II*', 6 April 2018.
[554] Wilson, pers. com.
[555] Lucy Bailey, Interview with author, 20 January 2020.

ACT 2, SCENE 2

Vagabonds and Roving Players: Directorless *Richard II* in Würzburg, Germany, Essex's command performance and Stanislavski the unwelcome guest

https://www.globalshakespeares.co.uk/richard-ii-university-of-wurzburg

***Richard II* performed by Anərkē Shakespeare**
Foyer Philosophische Fakultät, Würzburg University, Germany, November 7th

After the United Kingdom premiere, Anərkē Shakespeare's *Richard II* toured to Würzburg, Germany, with a site-specific performance to over three hundred students and members of the public in 2018.

The performance took place in a three-tiered liminal space of stairwells and thoroughfares, partly a cafeteria (the throne a metal food trolley), thus evoking the historical practice of itinerant players who transformed spaces – manors, halls, inns, courtyards, squares – meant for another purpose.

Not all of the original actors could make the performance date, so new actors joined the ensemble.[556] This was something like, I imagine, remounting the show for a command performance on the eve of the Essex rebellion, though slightly less dangerous and political.[557] For the Chamberlain's Men, the impression of the first production must have remained in them re-doing the play nearly six years after they first performed it. Original apprentices would have graduated, and someone would have needed to take over George Bryan's role, who had left in 1597. There exists no theatrical tradition equivalent of making each iteration

[556] *Pace* Stern and Gurr, these actors learnt their lines, some travelling from Italy to England to rehearse for a single performance in Germany. **Richard Hall**: Lord Marshal, Sir Henry Green, Harry Percy, Abbot of Westminster; **Nathan Ives-Moiba**: Duke of York, Gardener; **Lelda Kapsis**: Henry Bolingbroke Duke of Hereford, Gardener's Servingman; **Jenni Lea Jones**: Queen, Lord Willoughby, Earl of Salisbury; **Johnathan Peck**: Sir John Bushy, Thomas Mowbray Duke of Norfolk, Bishop of Carlisle, Duchess of York, Sir Pierce of Exton; **Elena Pellone**: Richard II, Duchess of Gloucester; **Alessandra Quattrini**: Duke of Aumerle, Lord Ross, Keeper of prison; **Anthony Renshaw**: John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaster, Earl of Northumberland, Sir John Bagot, Queen's Lady-in-waiting, Exton's Servingman

[557] In 1601, after the play is performed, the privy council set up an investigation and somebody had to be interrogated from the Lord Chamberlain's Men. In considering the companies' theatrical collective decision making, we are also considering collective responsibility. Authorities of law are not structurally responsive to collective responsibility, they are better at trying to pin down individuals. People that mostly end up imprisoned are scriptwriters. But in this investigation, the Lord Chamberlain's Men did not send William Shakespeare to answer for the company, nor did they send Richard Burbage, who presumably played the leading role. They sent Augustine Phillips, a senior member of the company. This further evidences collective responsibility.

a different concept. The show, which belongs to the company, is remounted, even with changes in the ensemble. The old play must have been the chessboard for the new pieces.

Analogously, for us, the original production remained as a “director” of the remount. This compromised the directorless experience and curtailed new participants from their desired autonomy. Conflicts occurred: some actors assumed that directorless meant they could do what they pleased and resisted the directorial echo of a previous production. What became clear in the process, and what needed definition for the final directorless *Richard II* at the Rose Playhouse, was that a remount is not a new production. These conflicts did not re-occur in the final staging of *Richard II*.

The "director" function embodied in a previous production also found embodiment in acting training – most notably in the Stanislavski method. What became clear was Stanislavski techniques can act as an internalised director and interfere in linguistic precision, with the process of actioning lines and interpolated pauses for emotional and sensory recall. The director, in the form of an internalised Stanislavski, exists in the room controlling actors' choices, leaving them focused on the psychological state of the character, and less responsive to the stimulus and demands of the text in a verse drama: the nuances, flexibility and linguistic precision. Speaking in a word-perfect order and rhythm, without interrupting or superseding it with what Stanislavski calls a "star pause".[558]

Consider an exemplar of the mirroring quality of rhythm and punning replete in *Richard II*, a play entirely written in verse, with many rhyming lines:

BOLINGBROKE
My gracious lord, I come but for mine own.
KING RICHARD
Your own is yours, and I am yours, and all. (3.3.206-7)

The rhythm, repetition, and monosyllables, create a symphony of betrayal. The one double syllable – gracious – loaded with the irony set up earlier in Bolingbroke's exchange with York.[559] Here, is another example:

KING RICHARD
How soon my sorrow hath destroyed my face.
BOLINGBROKE
The shadow of your sorrow hath destroyed
The shadow of your face.
KING RICHARD Say that again.
The shadow of my sorrow? Ha, let's see. (4.1.303-6)

[558] Constantin Stanislavski, *Stanislavski Produces Othello*, trans. Helen Nowak, Theatre Arts Books (New York, 1963), 192.
[559] "Grace me no grace, nor uncle me no uncle. / I am no traitor's uncle, and that word "grace" / In an ungracious mouth is but profane." (2.3.91)

The relationship of Richard to Bolingbroke is contained in these language exchanges. If an actor cannot get a cue line right, which needs to be mirrored in the responding line in word and rhythm, the relationship of the play's personages fragments. If Stanislavski trumps the language, the play is broken.

As noted in chapter 1, Stanislavski techniques were used extensively in rehearsals for the Globe OP productions. Michel Foucault reminds us that the most dangerous form of control are internalised constraints.[560] In drama training actors internalise other's processes. They are trained to be responsive to direction from the outside, and from the inside. Many taught "acting" techniques are from Stanislavski or derivatives of Stanislavski. Although directorless work attempts to embrace the diversity of the ensemble, multiple perspectives, and individual methods, for further liberation from the "director" function, a critique and re-imagining of acting training is desirable.[561]

I wish to take an extended moment to consider the historical domination of the Stanislavski system in western contemporary drama and argue that, not only does it not work for Shakespeare, which Stanislavski noted several times, it can damage a directorless process. Stanislavski, an originary figure of actor-manager turned director, distrusted actors and his method was autocratic. Stanislavski is representative of the rise of the director, and the mentality behind this rise. In order to depose the figure in our minds we must understand these Wittgensteinian hidden structures. Let us consider this in detail.

Stanislavski came from a wealthy merchant family.[562] He put on amateur dramatics, on their estate, in their purpose-built theatrical hall. Stanislavski would direct as well as act.

---

[560] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Classics, 2020).

[561] In *Much Ado About Nothing* although different training methods and stage languages finally evolved into a synthesis and rich exchange that did not cancel difference, they did give rise to many heated conflicts (see chapter 4).

[562] "They had season tickets to opera, ballet and theatre, rubbed shoulders with rich nobility and privileged intelligentsia and when his cousin was promoted, Stanislavski, at age twenty-two, was given the co-directorship of the Russian Musical Society with Anton Rubenstein and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky." Stanislavski, *My Life in Art*, 87.

But the mysteries of acting perplexed him. Inspired by great artists, he did not know how to be one.[563] It was not taught at dramatic schools (he left disillusioned after three weeks): "We were taught practical methods without these methods being systematised scientifically."[564] And actors could not betray their secrets:

> not a single artist will ever betray his secrets … Some do it simply because they don't know themselves, because they create intuitively and have no conscious relation to their creations.[565]

What exists in great artists as an unarticulated or oral tradition, or intuitive creation, Stanislavski wants to scientifically systematise. But the danger is that the once inarticulable secrets of individual artists might be replaced by systematic imprisonment. Stanislavski creates a system for the actor – who did not need his system – to now rely on. Actors dress their bodies in preparation, Stanislavski wants the pattern for actors to dress their soul: "the imitation of a favourite actor can only create an outer method, but not the soul, without which there can be no art".[566]

Stanislavski founded The Moscow Art Theatre, in 1898, with Vladimir Ivanovich Nemirovich-Danchenko. Their goal was "to destroy the ancient hokum of the theatre" [567] and for actors to express a spiritual veracity and inner state of emotional realism instead of "the fullness of shouting, exaggerated gesture and action, and a primitively vulgar delineation of the rôle, fed by animal temperament".[568] In quest of his system for the actor, Stanislavski does not relent his reliance on despotic directorial leadership: The director is emerging, as actor-manager, into a dominant position over actors:

> I was saved by the despotism of stage direction that I had learned from the methods of Kronek with the Meiningen Players. I demanded that the actors obey me, and I forced them to do so.[569]

Stanislavski describes his assistant straddling the back of a tragedian in order to squeeze emotion out of him: "the stage director sat on him and beat him to encourage him".[570] To "encourage" him. In some ways, Stanislavski's developing system is a replacement of "encouraging" an actor to an inspired passion by the stage director, into an internal, proscribed programme to receive the inspiration of great art. But substituting the external director for an internal director, ignores millennia of actors in charge of their own craft and inspiration. Especially if that director is one that sits on you and beats you.

The Moscow Art Theatre premiered Anton Chekhov's new writing and it is for Chekhov, and because of Chekhov, that Stanislavski's system is conceived and realised.[571]

---

[563] "How simple, clear, beautiful, and tremendous was everything that [Tommaso] Salvini did and showed! But why was it that when I saw Salvini I remembered [Ernesto] Rossi and the great Russian actors whom I had seen? Why did I feel that all of them had something in common, something that I seemed to know very well, something I met only in greatly talented actors? What was it? I tired myself with thinking, but I could not find the answer." Stanislavski, 219.

[564] Stanislavski, 77.

[565] Stanislavski, 61.

[566] Stanislavski, 50-55.

[567] Stanislavski, 245-6.

[568] Stanislavski, 246. Stanislavski's system fixes a problem we no longer have. It is no longer a theatrical norm for actors to exaggerate gestures, declaim, shout and overact. Stanislavski has contributed to this shift. But there is no point to add sugar when the tea is already sweet.

[569] Stanislavski, 247.

[570] Stanislavski, 381.

[571] "Chekhov gave that inner truth to the art of the stage which served as the foundation for what was later called the Stanislavski System, which must be approached through Chekhov, or which serves as a bridge to the approach of Chekhov. Playing Chekhov, one is not forced to search for the feeling of truth, which is such a necessary element of the creative mood." Stanislavski, 280.

The system must be approached through Chekhov and is only understood through Chekhov. But there is a problem using the system for Shakespeare.

Gordon Craig, "one of the original coiners of the job description 'director'" came to Moscow to direct *Hamlet*.[572] Because of innovations of set, style and modern technical capacities, the stage director increasingly becomes the focus of the stage art. Stanislavski considers Craig "a genius as a stage director."[573] But Craig dislikes actors:

> Craig dreamed of a theatre without men and women, without actors. He wanted to supplant them with marionettes who had no bad habits or bad gestures, no painted faces, no exaggerated voices, no smallness of soul, no worthless ambitions. The marionettes would have cleansed the atmosphere of the theatre, they would have given a high seriousness to the enterprise, and the dead material from which they were made would have given Craig an opportunity to hint at that Actor who lived in the soul, the imagination, and the dreams of Craig himself.[574]

Above all, Craig distrusts women:

> "Women", he said, "ruin the theatre. They take a bad advantage of the power and influence they exercise over men. They use these evilly and bring intrigues, favouritism and flirtation into the realm of art."[575]

This evidences the patriarchal structures embedded in the conception of director. Actors are not to be trusted with theatre; women banned from the stage. The mindset entrenching itself in the work being created, filters down to us diluted in drama schools and in the industry. Actors pollute the theatre, they are a poor lot of imperfect puppets.

Stanislavski's system did not work for Craig's *Hamlet*: "naturalness" is insufficient for the demands of verse drama. Stanislavski recalls: Craig protested the old conventionality of theatre but would not accept the "humdrum naturalness and simplicity which robbed my interpretations of all poetry".[576] Stanislavski's system is unhelpful and anachronistic, even in Stanislavski's directed theatre:

> Apparently it is not the inner feeling itself, but the technique of expression that prevents us from doing that in the plays of Shakespeare which we were able to do to a certain degree in the plays of Chekhov … we do not possess a technique for the saying of the artistic truth in the plays of Shakespeare.[577]

A nineteenth-century method developed to stage nineteenth-century plays – a system actors used to "some degree of success in the plays of our modern repertoire which were near to their own lives" – is apposite for contemporary reality, but not for heroic, epic and classical texts.[578]

Stanislavski discovers that truth in Chekhov, and truth in Shakespeare, are two different things.

---

[572] Lawrence Switzky, 'Hearing Double: Acousmatic Authority and the Rise of the Theatre Director', *Modern Drama* 54, no. 2 (June 2011): 216–43 (218).
[573] Stanislavski, *My Life in Art*, 412.
[574] Stanislavski, 410. One would hope this attitude is uncommon, or dated, but in 2022 an anonymous actor confessed in their interview: "Most directors I've worked with don't really like actors. I think they are terrified of us. In David Mamet's book he says that in Ancient Greece actors used to be staked through the heart once they were dead because people were afraid of them. That fear has been there ever since." (Anonymous Actor, Interview with author, 28 April 2022). The work of Rimini Protocol is realising Gordon Craig's dream and replacing actors with automatons. See 'Uncanny Valley', accessed 15 July 2019, https://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project/unheimliches-tal-uncanny-valley.
[575] Stanislavski, *My Life in Art*, 410.
[576] Stanislavski, 420.
[577] Stanislavski, 279-80.
[578] Stanislavski, 421.

We have grown up watching film and theatre of psychologically "truthful" acting. We need to work, when performing Shakespeare, to refocus on the artificial construction of poetic language and erect and manoeuvre on a superficial frame. A level of linguistic artifice that we must develop, consider a virtue, and not hide or discard in striving to attain theatrical "realism".

Michel St.-Denis cautions against the overuse of Stanislavski's system.[579] It is too common for actors to look first to themselves and internal feelings: "one must do everything possible to turn them away from it, to free them from this absolute subjectivity. We must not encourage actors to dally with it and cultivate it."[580] St.-Denis asks, are there any benefits in Stanislavski's system for Shakespeare – "the question of what beneficial relationship may exist between the System as modified by the Method, and the interpretation of Shakespeare"[581] – and answers, not really. Methods and Systems do not really help an actor perform Shakespeare:

> Shakespeare cannot be reduced to a single style. His world is both within nature and outside it. His world and his style build their unity from a diversity that one must understand and merge with … I do not believe that actors will find more than an elementary "grammar" in Methods or Systems.[582]

In directing Knut Hamsun's Symbolist play *The Drama of Life*, and insisting actors use his system, Stanislavski found actors resistant and their work regressive, and was frustrated that stage directors and the production team had ensured the success of the production without getting the applause: "How many productions in the theatres of all time can be mentioned where giftless actors hid behind an artistic stage director."[583] He disparages the art of the actors to offer a reason for the increasing domination of the directorial figure:

> Perhaps it was the very nature of the theatre, perhaps it was the imperfection of the art of the actor, perhaps it was the backwardness of the actors themselves that moved the stage director into the limelight.[584]

Actors brought their disenfranchisement on themselves.

Stanislavski's producer's plan for *Othello*, which he writes when sojourning in Nice, shows a detailed micro-management of the production, dictated to actors, whose work on their roles he has never seen, and whose ideas are not taken into account in influencing each nuance articulated for them.[585] Stanislavski curates every last detail: tiny bits of stage business;[586] character's interiorities;[587] what the spectator will think and feel;[588] the exact

---

[579] Michel St.-Denis, a French actor, director and influential drama theorist, on seeing the Moscow Art's Theatre's production of *The Cherry Orchard* in 1922 records: "The play is written in an impressionistic style that leaves room for silence and long pauses … solely through the skill of the actors, everything became as true as life." Michel St.-Denis, 'Stanislavski and Shakespeare', trans. Simone Sanzenbach, *The Tulane Drama Review* 9, no. 1 (1964): 77–84 (78), https://doi.org/10.2307/1124780. These silence and long pauses would be damaging to Shakespeare who is not striving for naturalism, or to be as true as life.

[580] St.-Denis, 80.

[581] St.-Denis, 80.

[582] St.-Denis, 82- 84.

[583] Stanislavski, *My Life in Art*, 383.

[584] Stanislavski, 382.

[585] This book is published from Stanislavski's notes sent from Nice in 1929-30 to the Moscow Art Theatre. Stanislavski, *Stanislavski Produces Othello*, trans. Helen Nowak, Theatre Arts Books (New York, 1963).

[586] "Emilia is putting Desdemona's jewels in a box: a broach, bracelets and other things." Stanislavski, 205.

[587] "Othello knows he will do everything she wants, but he teases her and resists - a lover's game." Stanislavski, 145.

[588] "May the spectator say to himself at this moment, his heart contracting slightly: Oh, why is she doing it now!" Stanislavski, 210.

tone and expression of the actor's voice;[589] tasks for the actors;[590] a "mimo-drama" replacing lines to give Othello a rest on stage and because the lines are not very good;[591] a choregraphed scene accompanied by a diagram of movement and a timely "star pause".[592] Everything that is imagined in Stanislavski's head is detailed down to the kind of breathing the actor does.[593] Stanislavski turns the play into a sentimental novella, painting a *mis en scène* of melodrama. He inflicts cumbersome interiority, coupled with cumbersome staging, both anachronistic to Shakespeare theatre and the alacrity of text and staging.[594]

There are pages devoted to a treatise on how to act, which details a formula for the performance mapped out by specific physical actions.[595] And advice for "star pauses" to protect the actor from overstraining, and to convey emotion: "the most important pieces of acting occur frequently not in words but in the pauses between the sentences".[596] Othello must interlace his monologue with acting pauses as "Shakespeare gives little material to express this torment of suffering".[597]

To bolster my argument, I could transcribe the entire document. It is micromanaged in a near parody of a fantastical, despotic, directorial intervention. A veritable novel of invention. But at no point is there a simple glossing of Shakespeare's text, no focus on techniques of verse, on observing precise rhetorical tropes, or attention given to scene rhythms when characters swap between prose and verse. The rhythms of the language are interrupted by introducing an abundance of pauses for acting rests and for conveying characters' emotional suffering that Shakespeare is found inadequate to provide. It is acting between the lines that matters, not acting with them.

And this is what happened in this iteration of *Richard II.*

Stanislavski came into Anərkē's *Richard II* rehearsal as heavy-handed as his producer's notes. Actors who had actioned their scripts, turned them into a blue-print of interiority, loaded themselves up from emotion-memory to play the scenes truthfully, were sometimes not able to precisely articulate verse lines. This reduced nuance and complexity.

One notable instance where psychological realism and character arcs and objectives interfered with imbedded stage directions, was when Bolingbroke, wanting the crown, snatched it when Richard teases: "Here, cousin, seize the crown" (4.1.190). This is in opposition to the staging articulated in the following lines: "On this side my hand, on that side thine. / Now is this golden crown like a deep well" (4.1.192-3). They must both hold the

---

[589] "He speaks these words in a lifeless voice. His glances questioning her." Stanislavski, 211.
[590] "Pause. Othello sits down, plunged in thoughts, and begins to weigh up once more. In this action of appraising things there is also enumeration; it will help to escape ranting too. *Enumerate Desdemona's qualities*: there is a task for you." Stanislavski, 241.
[591] "He is to act a whole scene without words which, if not a rest, means to a certain degree greater ease. I maintain also that these asides on Othello's part never do well on the stage." Stanislavski, 238.
[592] Stanislavski, 192.
[593] "He is motionless for some time. Both breathe heavily. Othello feels sick at what has happened; he wants to flee people, himself; he rushes to the back, up to the landing, throws himself prostrate, face down, his head to the backdrop, feet facing the audience." Stanislavski, 194.
[594] This novelistic approach can be understood by his glossing for Emilia's line: "I am glad I have found this napkin" (3.3.334): "She notices at once that it is not an ordinary everyday handkerchief; she is interested, remembers the history and origin of this handkerchief. She examines it, and taking advantage of her being alone in the room and her mistress and master at dinner, she decides to copy the pattern of the embroidery. She looks for paper on Othello's table, then sits down in Othello's chair and begins to copy the drawing. Servants are fond of sitting in their master's chair at any time. Emilia is rather more than a servant and therefore permits herself this liberty with even greater matter-of-factness." Stanislavski, 176.
[595] Stanislavski, 150.
[596] Stanislavski, 148-9.
[597] Stanislavski, 148-9.

crown. The hollow crown that lies at the centre is a stage where death “the antic” keeps his court, and a deep well that will fill one bucket and empty another.

It is the chiasmus of the play. The central heart, where staging and themes are balanced on a linguistic and physical hinge that will invert itself: the suspended crown, with mirrored language and mirrored stances. Then the mirror is, literally and figuratively, smashed.

The actor playing Bolingbroke, focused on character trajectory and sense of internal realism, could not proceed: “I want the crown, and I would grab it.” Here the “objectives” part of Stanislavski’s system butts up against the nuances of human changeability articulated in the myriad-minded details of Shakespeare’s text. Having the crown is different to pursuing the crown. Bolingbroke becomes the silent King; if it is a moment of victory, it is hard won.

Stanislavski tends to go against a directorless process with Shakespeare text because it is based in autocratic structures and individualist psychology. There is no space in the demands of specificity with heightened language and rhythm for interrupting star-pauses to display acting talent, or over-wash with individually focused emotion. Stanislavski is interested in interiority: Shakespeare lines replaced with a “mimo-drama”; Shakespeare linguistic expression of emotion replaced with pauses. An inner life, anachronistic to Shakespeare, cannot supersede the needs and techniques of an artificial and highly constructed poetic verse. Language in its superficial and artificial construction, stripped of negative connotations, gives the scenic rhythm, relationships, emotional states and mercurial fluidity with no need of fixed character arcs, or objectives. Shakespeare’s text has different requirements. The acting is not in the pauses. There is no subtext to embody. No sense memory necessary. The sounds, rhythm, and imagery give the myriad-minded, linguistic soul print of each character. It is not inner truth that is worth striving for in a Shakespeare performance of heightened verse and prose, it is an outer truthfulness constructed of embodied text.

Stanislavski is pursuing the secrets of great art. But his spiritual aims are forged in the hard work of the actors, and his mistrust of their will if they do not want to use his system:

> the will of the actor is not well exercised; it is lazy, capricious. In order to awaken it one needs praise, success, applause, curtain calls, material presents, or simply narcotics and alcohol. The actor will be obstinate until you force him to action by your own personal interest in the work. The poor stage director must play for ten,

> sweat for ten, in order that the lazy will of the actor may react to his desires for at least one moment.[598]

Actors reduced to animals needed to be broken of self-interested capriciousness and narcissistic drunkenness.

There is more to make us wary when we use Stanislavski as a memorised and internalised system, without following his quest to serve the eternal in art: "let us not forget those light houses of art which must be kept in order; Let us, like the vestals, keep the fires always burning."[599] Artists are vestals: "we dreamed of creating a spiritual order of actors … who could worship in the theatre as in a temple."[600] It is a consecrated quest: "May the Lord aid me in this task!"[601]

Stanislavski did not mean his system to be taught in a few semesters at drama school. He meant it to be an artistic life quest: "my system … must be systematically and practically studied for years."[602] Stanislavski wanted (like this PhD) to challenge the status quo.[603] Once Stanislavski's method becomes the status quo, it is no longer his method.

For the directorless project to serve Shakespeare's text and actors' liberation, we need to also rethink actor training, and we need a new language. A way to talk about actors, and a way for actors to talk about themselves. Actors are not poor, imperfect puppets. They are not children who need supervised playgrounds. They are not unable to own their own work without a leader's permission. They are not lazy, capricious, in need of despotic direction. Actors are artists, and, as Michelle Terry reminds us, "activists".[604]

---

[598] Stanislavski, *My Life in Art*, 421.
[599] Stanislavski, 279.
[600] Stanislavski, 433.
[601] Stanislavski, 461.
[602] Stanislavski, 426.
[603] Stanislavski, 255.
[604] Michelle Terry, Interview with author, 2 December 2019.

We should never give up Stanislavski's spiritual quest of great art and to be great artists. In Directorless Shakespeare we can work collectively without despotic direction; without the director externalised or internalised. We can act on the line. We do not have to act in the pauses.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the conflict in rehearsal, *Richard II* was received with three tiers of audience giving a standing ovation, and many rounds of applause.

The interaction off-stage informed the dynamics on stage. The practice of us working things out together translates to an a-live rehearsed process of interaction that has not been mediated, controlled, contoured or designed. Zeno Ackerman found this tangible:[605]

[605] Zeno Ackerman is Professor of British Cultural Studies at Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg.

> In a more direct and less artificial way than the usual directorial midwifery would have admitted of, the significance and the meanings of the play could be seen to emerge from a (certainly well-rehearsed) process of interaction – a process of interaction that unfolded before the audience's eyes and on the very floor of the auditorium … One of the many consequences of this more dynamic, more open *and* more coherent style of performance was to fully admit of the complexities of and inherent tensions within the main characters, Bolingbroke and Richard. Richard, for example, could successfully be performed as both sophisticated and naive, strong and weak, arrogant and self-conscious.
>
> The way in which the two female lead actresses contended in the play heightened rather than displaced the issue of politically dominant masculinity (or of masculinity as a form of politics) as a key theme of *Richard II*. This Richard was not 'effeminate'; his fragility was the inescapable fragility caused by masculinist fictions inhabiting a human being. However, the insight into the historical constructedness of such masculinity – and thus of its necessary vulnerability in the face of human History – could be seen to be raised by the presence of a historical text, and not by the forceful imposition of directorial will. As a result, the Anərkē performance – in spite *and* by force of its limited expenditure or extravagance – proved to be considerably more convincing, striking and provocative than many artfully calibrated or outrageously daring instances of (German) directorial theatre.[606]

Directorless Shakespeare ELC again confirmed the revelatory possibilities. Isabel Karremann reflected that her attitude to Shakespeare's rhyming couplets had been transformed by watching the performance.[607] Rather than empty ringing notes of artificiality, she experienced a darker, more moving music in Richard's use of his performative and expressive language.

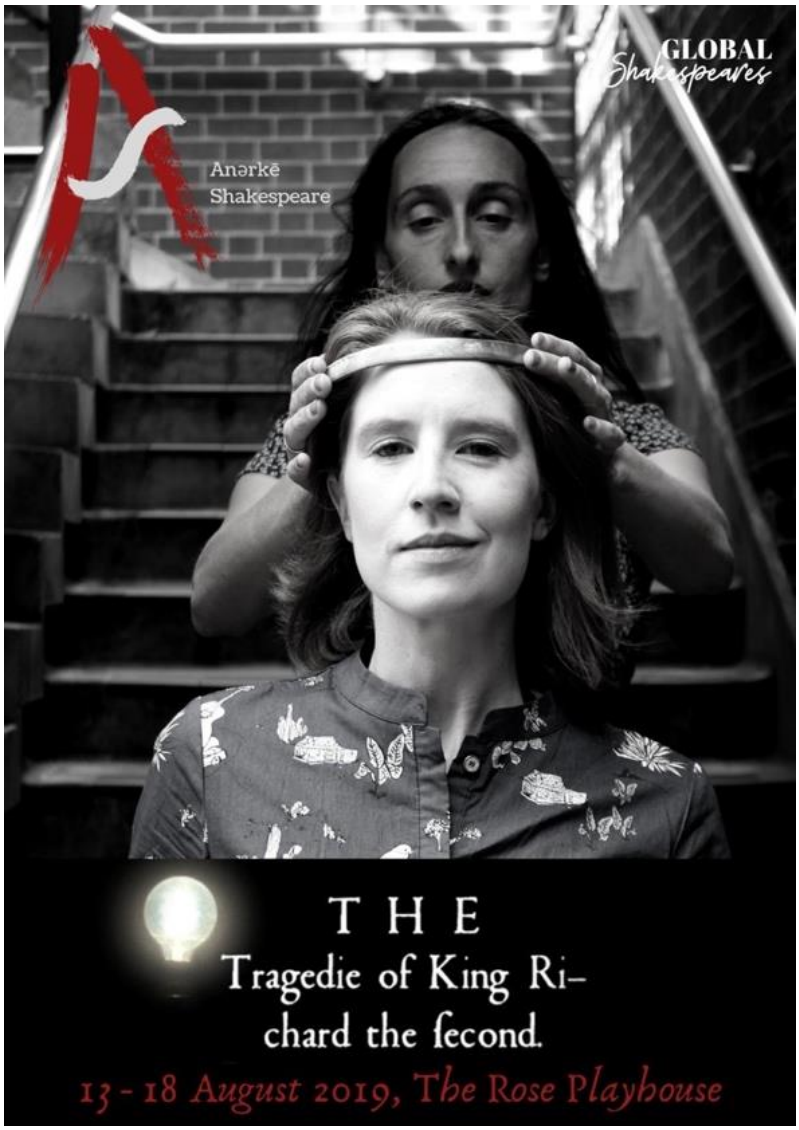
[606] Ackermann, 'Anərkē Performance of *Richard II* at Würzburg University (7 Nov. 2018): A Brief Viewer's Report', 25 February 2019.
[607] Karremann was the Professor for Early Modern Literatures in English at Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg.

ACT 2, SCENE 3

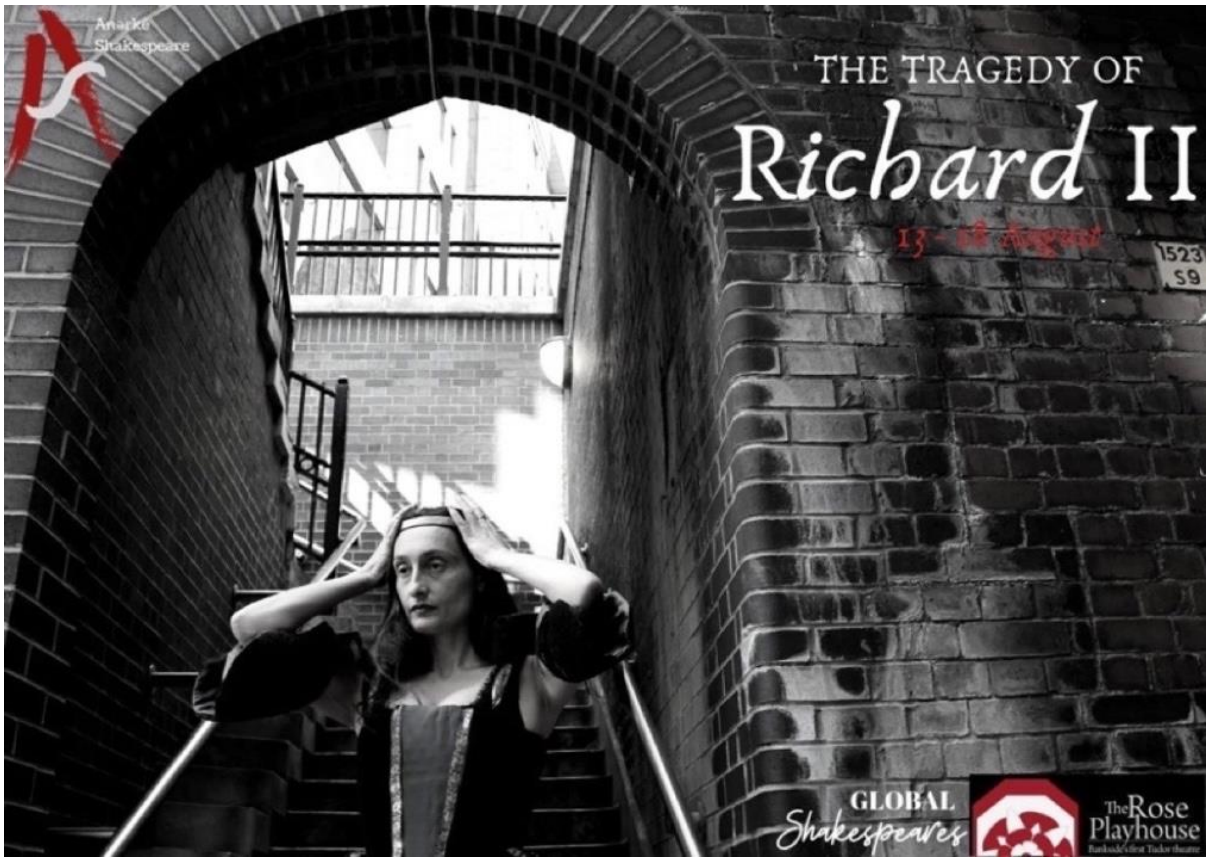
"Thus play I in one person many people": *Richard II* at the Rose Playhouse, Bankside, on the foundations of the past

I really enjoyed so many things about the show. This play really teeters on the edge of comedy, tragedy, pathos, and "performance" and l have never seen a company handle it so deftly as yours did tonight...l felt everything! Yours also has to be THE model for gender-blind casting. The conventions were absolutely clear so l knew when an actor was playing a man and when the same was playing a woman and vice versa without resorting to playing gender stereotypes.

- Varsha Panjwani



The third production of Anərkē Shakespeare's *Richard II* took place in the historical foundations of the Rose Playhouse, Bankside, London, August 2019.



https://www.globalshakespeares.co.uk/richard-ii-rose-theatre-playhouse

***Richard II* performed by Anərkē Shakespeare**
The Rose, Bankside, August 13th – 18th

The company now comprised seven actors, making the doubling and concentrated collectivity even more acute, with Richard playing smaller roles.[608] Again, the audience responded to the fluidity and transparency of the meta-theatrical storytelling:

[608] **Richard Hall**: Harry Percy, Scroop, Lord Marshal, Sir Henry Green, Abbot of Westminster, Guard; **Rebecca Peyton**: Duke of York, Sir Pierce of Exton; **Jack Klaff**: John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaster, Bishop of Carlisle, Duchess of York, Sir John Bushy; **Elena Pellone**: Richard II, Duchess of Gloucester, Lord Willoughby; **Alessandra Quattrini**: Duke of Aumerle, Queen, Lord Ross, Keeper of prison; **Anthony Renshaw**: Thomas Mowbray Duke of Norfolk, Earl of Northumberland, Sir John Bagot, Earl of Salisbury, Queen's Lady-in-waiting, Exton's Servingman; **Bridget Sweeney**: Henry Bolingbroke Duke of Hereford; Gardener's Servingman.

* At the end of the play, Richard says “Thus play I in one person many people.” This excellent, director-less production really takes this remark to heart, with doubling of parts (marked by quick-fire clothes changes) used to very good effect. Elena Pellone, as Richard II, was outstanding (and I very much hope to see her in further productions), projecting magnetism and charisma throughout, even as Richard changed from petulant imperiousness, at the start, to wretched dejection at the end, helping to vindicate the gender-blind casting. The doubling provided some new insights, with the same actor playing Richard’s loyal cousin, the Duke of Aumerle, and the queen, and with Richard showing as much love, if not more, to his cousin as to his queen. The quality of speaking in this wholly verse drama was excellent … I liked the detail of the main props being large wooden boxes marked as “fragile” – a splendid metaphor for the fragile kingdom and for those who would be king, who stood at various times, at their peril, upon them.

A spectator, unfamiliar with the play and worried that she would not be able to follow it with the unconventional casting and numerous doubling (especially without the aid of a programme due to technical difficulties on opening night), responded that, where she usually found herself in difficulty, even with plays that were familiar to her, the storytelling was lucid. Audience feedback captured this enthusiastic response, people again responding that it was one of the best Shakespeare plays they had seen:

* The best Shakespeare performance that I have seen for years!! The actors were so phenomenal that there was no need for a director of the play.
* An extraordinary collective feat of the closest cooperative spirit. This certainly was a powerful and moving production. This has been a moving enjoyable and thought-provoking afternoon.
* This was a thrilling and satisfying performance of *Richard II* by a talented cast. Emotionally intense, fast paced (90 minutes with no interval) a great sense of the verse and smart use of the small space. I love Shakespeare, so I have seen *Richard II* a few times, and this was really one of the best I have seen. Really first-class performance by the lead actor as Richard II.
* Absolutely brilliant acting in this atmospheric setting. Riveting – producer or no producer. So nice to hear some clear diction.
* Wonderful production which really honoured the words of Shakespeare
* Particularly effective and moving realisation of the play – imbued with emotion – not mere recital of lines. One of the finest Richard II I have seen
* It seemed to work well in establishing good teamwork, with everyone playing in equal part, regardless of the size of their roles – avoiding categories being the "star" and audience being just passive listeners.
* An excellent production of Richard II. The performances were convincing and I've never seen a more compellingly performance of Richard II. The female actor playing the part evokes such pathos that the audience forgets that she brought her own destruction on herself.
* Directorless does not mean that this company had no sense of Direction – Directness & Determination & Delivery … An interesting thought is to consider how this company forged the spirit of "The Hollow Crown" by working together with such excellent results. I felt privileged to be part of the audience and experience tonight.

Actors changing on stage, and dressing each other, allows for the veil of pre-digested illusion to slip in a meta-theatrical complicity that means the audience see an ensemble in service of the play that exists as other to the cast in the space. The actors are not the play. The play always remains other, through each iteration. But Directorless work can make the other of Shakespeare familiar to the audience with all its complexity by exposing unabashedly its inherent meta-theatricality.

For the three productions of *Richard II* there was hardly any negative feedback.[609] The most marked criticism came the night Sweeney invited a colleague to officially review the show. Every other response gathered that night was glowing – all four and five stars. His read as follows:

> * Directors are a captain of a ship. Without a captain, the ship will likely sink. There were many shipwrecks back in Shakespeare's day. We don't need anymore now.

He confided to Sweeney that his main concern was he could not understand why the play was relevant. The reviewing industry is built on explicating and assessing directorial concepts for the audience. On the same night he could not make sense of directorless *Richard II*'s relevance, another uninvested member of the public responded:

> * An engaging and immersive production which struck great resonance with the Brexit politics of today.

Without actors dressing as Boris Johnson and Teresa May the play can still speak to current deposition and betrayal politics. Audiences take what they want, respond in ways that resonate with their souls, and are not didactically enforced to a perspective. But they need to be open to that. As an audience member commented in *Macbeth*, watching a directorless show is a process of self-discovery.[610]

> * The intimate venue enables us to easily appreciate how well the actors perform multiple roles – certainly, they (especially Richard II) make a case for casting, which, prioritises great acting rather than matching genders. The performance (which intends to give us an experience of performance in Shakespeare's time) doesn't subsequently have a director, however, it flows from start to finish. Simple but clever props work really well, for example, the crown as a simple band rather than ornate reminds me of a halo, which, in turn, is effective in highlighting an important theme in the play of The Divine Right of Kings.

The final two-page soliloquy of *Richard II*, left wholly intact in our collective cutting, expresses a need for connection when Richard, once surrounded by the court, is othered in his cell, alone. He turns thoughts into words, words into a populus, casting away the performativity of self, moving from shadows to substance. At his most solitary, isolated moment, Richard connects profoundly, in sublime verse untrammelled by rhyming couplets, with an extended humanity. Stripped of everything except his power to think and speak, Richard thus confronts the problem of solipsism by inverting it. For all his attempts to compare his prison to the world he finds he cannot do it. In contrast to his earlier solipsism, in which he acted as if he alone were the whole world, now, alone, he finds that the world must be peopled by others.[611] Richard must forge his world, like a playwright forges the world we are watching, with words, giving birth to a whole population of embodied thought. He struggles to "hammer it out" (5.5.5), and build, word by word, a connection to the

[609] See scans of audience feedback in appendix to corroborate this extraordinary feat of overwhelming, and almost universal, praise.
[610] See Zed Josef, chapter 5.
[611] "I have been studying how I may compare / This prison where I live unto the world, / And for because the world is populous / And here is not a creature but myself, / I cannot do it." (5.5.1-5)

audience, isolated and imprisoned in their own bodies, yet recognising the self in the other. Richard's thoughts draw comfort in the fact that they are not all alone unhappy.[612]

His competing thoughts finally lead Richard to a single, clinching conclusion that includes all human beings in its embrace: "But whate're I be, / Nor I, nor any man that but man is / With nothing shall be pleased / Till he be eased with being nothing." (5.5.38-41) Our quintessence of dust. Then there is a volta, a change in rhythm with the intrusion of music in the middle of the speech. It comes from outside the world he has created, from beyond the prison cell, evoking the idea of music from the celestial spheres. But the music is out of time. Just as his planetary alignment is harsh and jangled.[613] Now the verse gallops on, the thoughts run uninterrupted, the metre regular like a ticking clock. Having struggled through his thoughts, he now struggles through his feelings, which carry the verse like a breaking wave. His sighs strike, like a clamouring bell on his heart, his finger is a dial point to wipe away his tears, he has become a timepiece measuring each minute with his grief, a puppet beating out time dictated by Bolingbroke, who sweeps forward unchecked. His ear is now true, and we listen to his lamenting chiasmus, sharing the sadness of its music, as the regular pulse of the iambic line heals the broken time of the earlier verse: "I wasted time, and now doth time waste me" (5.5.50).

This utterly exposed and powerless man has performed to us in solitary intimacy. It is a completely different performance from the formulae of the challenge scenes or the commanding histrionic ironies of the deposition scene. Now the performance of self, the shadows of those performances, is the substance that he thought ineffable, hidden within, in the private consumption of grief. In the final soliloquy Shakespeare has forged a way for Richard to lament and to share that lament, not in public show, but in our willingness and

[612] "That they are not the first of fortunes slaves, / Nor shall not be the last" (5.5.25).
[613] "How sour sweet music is / When time is broke and no proportion kept. / So is it in the music of men's lives." (5.5.43-5)

capacity to *follow* Richard, along the lines of a unique theatrical power that, miraculously, makes "that within" something shared.

On the Shakespearean stage, in the solitariness of despair, the connection between the actor and audience means that we are no longer "other", alone. Shakespeare transitions us constantly from a reminder that we choose to suspend disbelief and that it is our complicity that transports us. The actors and the audience face the shared moments of otherness in the liminal place between the theatrical experience and its meta-theatrical self-reflexivity. We are all players on the stage, in connection rather than estrangement.

Directorless Shakespeare can heighten our connections.

ACT 2, SCENE 4

Chapter 4

Much Ado About Italy: Embracing alterity, *Much Ado About Nothing/Molto Rumore Per Nulla*, staging Shakespeare's comedy in Venice, Italy

All of us we are going to die one day. Let's dance before the death comes.

- *Michele Guidi, actor*

Finalmente vedo "recitare"! ... La scelta di lavorare senza regista ha indubbiamente alleggerito la messa in scena riportandola a quello che in teatro, a mio parere, dovrebbe essere: Raccontare storie di umanità.[614]

- *Audience member*

Yes benefitted from not having a director as each actor performed from their heart with direction by themself.

- *Audience member*

[614] Finally I see "acting"! … The choice to work without a director has undoubtedly lightened the staging, bringing it back to what the theatre, in my opinion, should be: telling stories of humanity. (All translations are the author's, unless otherwise stated.)

V.enice S.hakespeare C.ompany presents

Much Ado About Nothing Molto Rumore Per Nulla
in English and Italian

Al Colombo, July 28th – 29th

https://www.globalshakespeares.co.uk/much-ado-about-nothing-campo-del-teatro

Crociferi, July 30th - 31st

https://www.globalshakespeares.co.uk/much-ado-about-nothing-crociferi

Our second Directorless Shakespeare experiment took place in continental Europe, moving the collaborative process into a more complex myriad of minds, with even greater refractions of perspectival engagement. This was an intercultural, bilingual production of *Much Ado About Nothing/Molto Rumore Per Nulla* by the V.enice S.hakespeare C.ompany (V.S.C.). It was mounted in open-air, site-specific locations, reaching a diverse, multi-lingual public in Venice, Italy. The opening night was performed in *Al Colombo, corte del Teatro,* the location used for the first *Teatro Biennale* in 1934.[615] The final two performances were at *Crociferi*: staged in its large cloister with a *pozzo*, bordered by arched covered walkways.[616]

[615] With Carlo Goldoni's *La Bottega del Caffè*, directed by Guido Rocca.
[616] This historic site was a convent of the crociferi from the twelfth century to 1656.

The cast was composed of a local and international ensemble.[617] This production took the Directorless Shakespeare exploration further by assembling actors who had worked together on Shakespeare productions in Venice, in an attempt to re-create the collegial shorthand developed in the Chamberlain's/King's Men.[618] The familiarity made discussion honest and intense; friendship, paradoxically, did not facilitate an easier dynamic. The politeness and reservedness of the initial experiment were lost. The rehearsal period was still intensively short – ten days. The weather excruciatingly hot. The humidity 80 percent. And the needs of a comedy were far more demanding, in staging and performance decisions, than the needs of a historical tragedy.

Many of the actors, despite being fervent about doing a show together in Venice, were sceptical of working directorless. In *Richard II* the premise and enthusiasm (and trepidation) were to work with devolved authority and destabilised-hierarchy, actors liberating themselves to make unfettered, un-auteured decisions. In *Much Ado* the premise was to perform Shakespeare in Venice, and if it had to be directorless, although not ideal, it would be accommodated.

After the first Zoom read-through, in which we all reconnected and discussed as a group what the favoured casting choices were, how to cut the text, and the principles of working bilingually with integrity and not tokenism, I received a text message from Jenni Lea Jones, a central actor of the V.S.C., the resident comedian, and our Dogberry.

> She was pulling out of the production.
>
> It was different when we did Taming, because yes, it was a collaborative process, but there was process, there was a director. You … with no-one steering the ship I feel I won't be able to give my best work. And I am such a proud actor, proud of what I know I can and should be doing, and honestly the thought of not having the circumstances to do my best work will kill me.[619]

The anxiety for Jones was not that the show would suffer, that concepts would be unclear, that the outside eye would be missing, but that her own work as an actor would be impoverished. The mindset, so deeply entrenched, is of the solo artist, needing the solo director, to reach their apotheosis.

This anxiety, and focus on individual performance, disturbed the rehearsal process throughout, markedly in the actor from the United States of America, Sorab Wadia. His frustration, and perception of not doing great work individually, led him to strike out at the difficulties of the process and undermine, at times, his fellow actors.[620]

Further complicating the experiment was a marked difference in theatrical styles. Half the cast were trained in Italy, with *commedia dell'arte* as a central tenet of their acting doctrine. Others used Method, Meisner, Stanislavski or text-based performance styles. This interculturality, and the needs of a bilingual production, forced us to consider different ways of executing things. Staging was more complicated than *Richard II*. We needed a masked ball choreographed, physical and precise comedic moments with Dogberry and the watch,

---

[617] From United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, Untied States of America, South Africa and Italy: **Betty Andriolo**: Margaret; **Bruce Boreham**: Antonio, Sexton; **Carsten Garbode**: Claudio, watchman; **Michele Guidi**: Friar; **Elena Pellone**: Beatrice, Dogberry; **Hunter Perske**: Benedick, Verges; **Raffaella Perske**: Ursula; **Alessandra Quattrini**: Hero; **David Schalkwyk**: Leonato; **Sorab Wadia**: Don Pedro, watchman; **Enrico Zagni**: Don John, watchman.

[618] V.enice S.hakespeare C.ompany, *The Taming of the Shrew* (2014 and 2015), directed by Pellone; Compagnia de' Colombari, *The Merchant in Venice*, Venetian Jewish Ghetto (2016), directed by Karin Coonrod.

[619] Jenni Lea Jones, pers. comm., 16 June 2018. After Jones pulled out, I picked up Dogberry which made for a beguiling double with Beatrice, as Benedick was also doubling as Verges. The doubling of the watchmen created a commentary with Don Pedro, Don John and Count Claudio's foolish alter egos, satirically displaying the inadequacies of the system to protect Hero.

[620] Wadia apologised to everyone for this after the project, see below.

asides and split stages with Beatrice and Benedick's gulling scenes, fainting, hysteria, and physical violence in the wedding scene, and integrating Italian and English scenes, with various scenes interiorly swapping between languages. There was a clash of approaches which was especially evident in attitudes towards comic acting. The South African actor complained of the overacting in the comedy scenes and lack of truth. An Italian actor responded, "On stage all truth is a lie".[621] At a heightened moment of cultural conflict an Italian actor politely interrupted a scene and expressed doubts about the actor's interpretation of Leonato when he thinks Hero is disgraced: "I'm sorry but he is just too British. Leonato is a Sicilian father. He would murder her."[622]

This was above all an exercise in interculturality. What finally happened was not an obliteration or a homogenisation. *Commedia* infused the production with a physical sense of rhythm and precision, drumming underscoring the Dogberry scenes. Text-based actors infused the production with a linguistic sense of rhythm and precision. The integrity of each style was retained whilst interacting with other styles, enriching the performance and production and speaking to the different aspects of the audience. It was an adaptation. An intercultural dialogue which retained differences. An embracing of alterity.

The show, again, was received with almost unanimous praise:

* Please go on with the project inspire the world with Shakespeare.

* Finalmente vedo "recitare"! Vedo pensieri e intenzioni … La scelta di lavorare senza regista ha indubbiamente alleggerito la messa in scena riportandola a quello che in teatro, a mio parere, dovrebbe essere: Raccontare storie di umanità.
Gli attori conoscono bene le dinamiche della scena e possono effettivamente trovare senza la guida, spesso pretenziosa, di un regista. Vi ringrazio e continuate così![623]

* Ricordava le compagnie che giravano per l'Inghilterra ai tempi di Shakespeare. Bravi! Tutti bravissimi, una piacevolissima serata. Vi invitiamo a continuare. GRAZIE![624]

* L'assenza del regista comporta l'affiatamento impeccabile tra tutti gli alimenti che compongono l'equipe … Il progetto è ambizioso, e meritevole di interesse. Auguro a tutti un buon proseguimento.[625]

* Vedere uno spettacolo in questo spazio, con questi ritmi, con questi meravigliosi attori è stato un'esperienza indimenticabile … Continuate la vostra sperimentazione con questa energia. Grazie.[626]

* BRAVI! Complimenti per l'impegno e la passione e buona continuazione. Tutti adriee![627]

* You guys delivered a sense of passion I have not seen before … I hope your projects take you further.

* … keep doing what you're doing.

---

[621] Quattrini, pers. comm.

[622] Zagni, pers. comm.

[623] Finally I see "acting"! I see thoughts and intentions … The choice to work without a director has undoubtedly lightened the staging, bringing it back to what the theatre, in my opinion, should be: telling stories of humanity. The actors are familiar with the dynamics of the scene and can actually find it without the, often pretentious, guidance of a director. Thank you and continue like this!

[624] It recalls the companies that toured England in Shakespeare's time. Well done! All excellent, a very delightful evening. We invite you to continue. THANK YOU!

[625] The absence of the director leads to an impeccable harmony between all the elements that make up the team … The project is ambitious, and worthy of interest. I wish everyone a good continuation.

[626] To see a show in this space, with these rhythms, with these wonderful actors, was an unforgettable experience. Without a director, your creativity expressed itself in a masterly way … Continue your experimentation with this energy. Thank you.

[627] WELL DONE! Compliments for your commitment and your passion, and I wish you a good continuance.

* … grandi lavoro, grazie and go on.[628]
* … I hope the project continues!
* … spero che voi continuate.[629]

Every one of the above reflections repeat a request, like an incantation, to continue, to keep going, to continue. Audiences are engaged, responding and interested in Directorless Shakespeare. One Italian-speaking audience member commented that at some point, whilst watching, she thought she could speak English.

* È stato molto bello tutto molto vivo dopo un può si capisce tutto anche se non sì conosce la lingua. VERAMENTE BEN RECITATO!!!![630]

Other reflections also responded positively to the bilingualism:

* Bravi a regalarmi emozioni sebbene il mio inglese sia modesto.[631]
* Nonostante non parli bene inglese, ho potuto seguire tutta la trama senza difficoltà.[632]
* The phenomenon of language is one to be treasured in itself, but for ideas of love to be told in language that transgresses both centuries and geographies in such a corner of Venezia is a treasure still greater.
* Magnificent … The coordination and inclusion of Italian with old English added a special touch. Bravo
* I greatly enjoyed this interpretation of the text. I felt the "directorless" approach allowed for greater linguistic fluidity, in particular the alternating Italian/English scenes – allowing the production to reach wider audiences.
* I really enjoyed the fast pace of the production. The switching between languages seemed to make the text flow more naturally than I have seen in other productions.

For the audience, *Much Ado* was a night of revelry under the stars, in the magic of Venice, experiencing the anxieties and ecstasies of love in Shakespeare's comedy, that timely reminds us that although men can humiliate and abuse women, they can also stand by them and support their voices against injustice; that aristocrats would be better off if they gave respect to the common people; and that to love is to risk everything:

* Uno spettacolo suggestivo e inusuale, volutamente senza regia, come accadeva ai tempi di Shakespeare. Bellissimo poter godere, ancora una volta, di una storia, una bella storia d'amore portata in scena in mezzo al pubblico e regalata al pubblico, in modo spontaneo … Una storia che ci aiuta a vivere, che ci fa gioire ed emozionare come quando eravamo bambini. Grazie![633]

This chapter will detail the directorless process of *Much Ado*, as it unfolded day by day in the rehearsal room and on the performance *corte*. I reflect as an actor engaging in the process as a distinct voice from my overall critical reflections, the verb tenses changing fluidly between present and past. A palimpsest of voices in the form of a rehearsal diary, actors' recorded conversations and uncut reflections, is used to give the reader an immediate perspective of actors engaging moment-to-moment in the process: the struggles, the difficulties, the triumphs, and the soul-ache that comes from striving for great art at the

[628] … great work, thank you and keep going.
[629] … I hope you continue.
[630] It was very beautiful all very alive and after a time you can understand everything even if you do not know the language. REALLY WELL ACTED!!!!
[631] Well done you gave me the gift of emotions even though my English is modest.
[632] Although I don't speak English well, I was able to follow the whole story without difficulty.
[633] A suggestive and unusual show, purposefully without a director, as was the case in Shakespeare's time. Beautiful to be able to enjoy, once again, a story, a beautiful story of love brought to the stage in the middle of the audience and gifted to the public, in a spontaneous manner … A story that helps us to live, that makes us rejoice and feel like when we were children. Thank you!

sacrifice of comfort when resisting established norms. What kept arising was the question – What *is* directorless?

Day One: 15 July, Sunday
Rehearsal

We met at *Casa Shakespeare*, the nickname given to the historic Venetian apartment where four of the company members were staying, and whose enormous living area became the place for indoor rehearsals.[634] We discussed a working manifesto: how could we sail the boat and steer its course with all hands-on deck, but without a single navigator? What *is* directorless?[635]

The overriding concern, and focus of some hazy ground rules, was to address what Raffaella Perske (thirteen-years-old) candidly articulated:

> Together respect each other and ideas because everybody has an idea. Usually, you have criticism from one person. But now it will be criticism from everybody – eleven people![636]

Under pressure, without the scapegoat of someone being responsible for creative decisions and administrative practicalities, we feel exposed to the multi-voices that will criticise. It is a fascinating default. For we could as easily imagine that the multi-voices would praise and champion, solve collectively and share responsibility. Again, it is not the director that we need to depose. But the mindset: deep, familiar, human. The conviction our nature is to follow a leader, that we are only free when we are imprisoned to the director, and that the boat will be shipwrecked or steered by the loudest, not the worthiest, voice.

The play is set in cabaret.[637] There is a synergy between costumes readily available and what codifies the world of the play.[638] Cabaret slips into the sexual anxiety, the oppression and objectification of women, the fear of women's sexuality, as well as masked dancing and sexual performative music.[639]

---

[634] The frustration, already burgeoning, was that we were not quite a full company yet. Alessandra Quattrini and Bettyna Andriolo were elsewhere working. This would be a running condition for most of the rehearsal period, with different people being absent on different days. We only had the full ensemble the day before we opened. Again, money as a driving force, acted as an external authority. People had to negotiate other projects; the budget not able to pay for their full focus for two weeks.

[635] Wadia's main concern was that he felt he did not have a character yet and there would be no director to tell him – "try it like this" or "do it like that". This is a marked concern of the actor trained in modern acting techniques: What is *my* character? Who am *I*? What do *I* want? See chapter 3.

[636] R. Perske, pers. comm., 15 July 2018. ("R. Perske" and "H. Perske" will be used to distinguish between Raffaella Perske and Hunter Perske).

[637] The company had discussed and arrived at this design interpretation in a Zoom meeting pre-production.

[638] Jenni Lea Jones, who dropped out of the cast, is a cabaret performer with a plentiful supply, and remained happy to lend the company her costumes.

[639] Jones lent the women opulent corsets and decadent fans. Dogberry wore a sparkling sequinned top hat and tails.

For “Sigh No More”, some wanted Renaissance traditional music, others cabaret. David Schalkwyk said, “why don’t we just write a piece?” So Wadia (a concert pianist) quickly wrote a ditty. Zagni, who will sing it, is an opera singer trained by Luciano Pavarotti and will personalise the composition.

Although there is something exciting for the performer to be in charge of all decisions the actor has to embody and manifest, with a limited budget and no designers, this part of the work can feed into actors’ exhaustion; the varied foci and responsibilities wearing them thin. The entrenched way of working for an actor means one need usually only worry about one’s lines and performance. To remove the director seems, by default, like a pin toppling in a bowling alley, to knock out all the other supports the actor has come to rely on. The costume designer, the set designer, the sound designer, the publicist, the stage manager – to name a few.[640]

In all three experiments, although actors were happy to work without a director, many felt they wanted to retain a stage manager. Especially when it came to lugging gear in and out of the space and setting props. After the first day of rehearsal Wadia wanted proper

[640] The American Shakespeare Center’s (ASC) directorless season evolved to re-enfranchise most of these elements, but there is something counter to the ethos of distributed responsibility in continuing to locate single points of authority and hierarchy in the creative process (see chapter 2). Nonetheless, it is worth considering how to make directorless ensemble-driven theatre with devolved authority, but with creatives and actors working together to realise the full potential of the production and production elements, without sacrificing the actors’ creative power and freedom. For this PhD directorless experiments, however, the actors were wholly in charge of the entire production. The design elements were never Peter Brook’s “empty stage” but did retain Jerzy Grotowski’s notion that all things, other than the performer in front of the audience, are non-essentials.

structuring with timetabling and consistent breaks. It was unfamiliar for him – even unacceptable – to work with a timetable whose basic requirement was that all actors be present all the time.[641] To resolve this, we made a timetable collectively for the next day every evening and sent it to the group chat. People could take breaks if needed while others rehearsed their scenes, or go off in other rooms to rehearse individually, but, when possible, we were present, taking responsibility for more than our parts. Without a director and a stage manager the responsibility to the whole must be self-regulated.

No one was fully off book yet. Italian actors were unhappy with the translation (which was recommended by an academic). Guidi sourced an actor's translation but still felt it needed amending. Although we had expressed anxiety over how we would stop, how we would comment on each other's work, how we would debate differences, we got almost halfway through the play and none of these concerns materialised. The directorless process as Embodied Literary Criticism (ELC) allowed collaborative textual exploration. We addressed questions collectively, discussed *Much Ado About* "No - thing", the "noting", the imposed scene divisions, and considered different interpretations of the Prince's marriage proposal – as sincere or superficial. As things arose, we excavated, explored and deliberated amicably.

Day Two: 16 July, Monday

In the morning we met at *Crociferi*. We decided to use the natural scenography of the space and activate surprising, unexpected places and vertical dimensions, making it immersive, blending reality and fantasy.

[641] This was also expressed as a problem in the Globe ensemble, see chapter 1.

We also did this to poetic effect at *Colombo*.

The men rehearsed through their many scenes as the temperature became increasingly unbearable, reflecting off the stone paving and bricked walls.

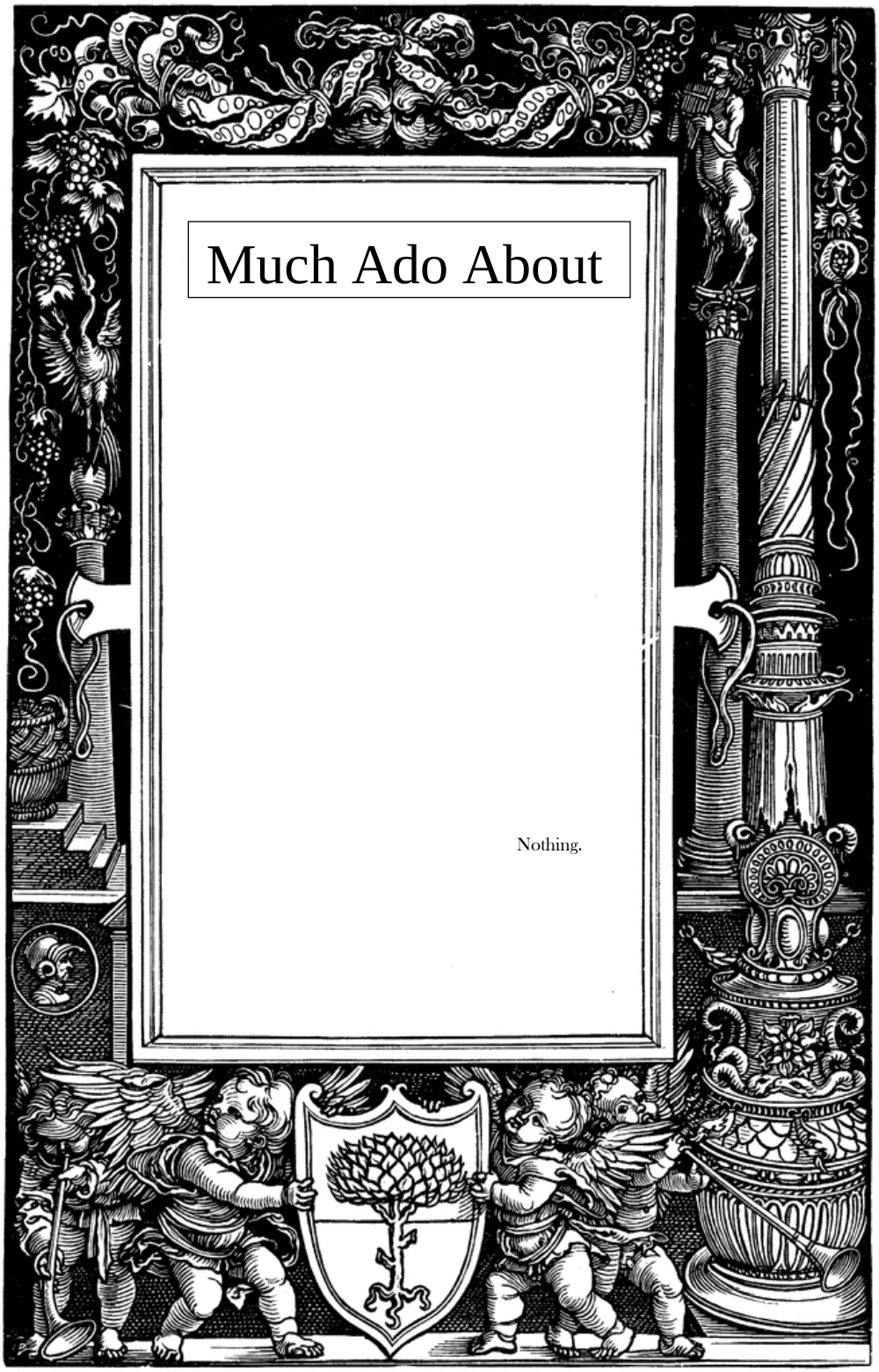
Although I "directed" the staging of Don Pedro making a grand entrance with his entourage from the back of the space to the front of the well, other actors "directed" also. Michele Guidi staged Claudio and Benedick to sit at a table; Hunter Perske staged Claudio and the Prince to stand for their more serious exchange; the men worked together on staging and acting their scenes. Did this constitute "directing" each other? What *is* directorless? There is a lively feel of contribution, no one is afraid to speak or offer suggestions – or resistance. It is more intrusive than when we staged *Richard II*, which happened mostly organically without an embodied external eye. But then we were on a contained stage, with a simple set to negotiate, and most of the action revolved around the eponymous hero. Here we were in a sprawling, unfocused space, full of interesting textures, levels and complicated acoustics, ambient sounds of people at the bar, changing light as the sun set and endless theatrical possibilities of how to use and transform the space. *Much Ado* is a larger collective enterprise, an ensemble piece with a tapestry of characters sharing the narrative and driving the plot: dispersed stage time, interweaving story lines, multiple protagonists and antagonists. It requires complicated staging.

After lunch we met at *Casa Shakespeare* to rehearse in a cooler space. Actors, helping each other, are working hard to get off book. Guidi and I finalised the Dogberry scenes, which trapeze the edited text around English and Italian, and he went to print them.[642]

Struggling as I was to step into a famous comedic role, a role that I had never found particularly funny, and get my tongue dexterously around a bilingual interpretation, I stared to be interested in the dignity and humanity Shakespeare had bestowed on Dogberry. Dogberry shows compassion, unable even to hang a dog, which would have been common practice. The scenes as a comment on social justice and law seem more interesting than merely playing them as over-inflated comedy.

In the evening I began to toy with ideas for the flyer.

[642] DOGBERRY If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man, e con i ladri meno ci avete a che fare, e meglio è per la vostra onestà.
GUARDIA Ma sapendo che è un ladro non dobbiamo acchiapparlo?
DOGBERRY Truly, by your office you may, but I think
chi tocca merda si merda. The most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is to
let him show himself what he is and steal out of your company.
VERGES You have been always called a merciful man, partner.
DOGBERRY Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will,
much more a man who hath any honesty in him.
VERGES Vero vero (3.3.49-63)


Much Ado About
Nothing.

Day Three: 17 July, Tuesday

We met at *Casa Shakespeare* and went through both wedding scenes.[643] This was Quattrini's first rehearsal.[644] She and Carsten Garbode, great friends, worked respectfully and generously with each other as Hero and Claudio. In the final wedding scene, when Claudio moves to kiss the resurrected Hero, Quattrini said that for her the moment was not working and felt it would be much harder for Claudio, after what he had done, to have an easy resolution. Garbode responded to the provocation with consideration and sensitivity, both to his acting partner and the needs of the scene. These are the directorless moments that are luminous. When actors work together to find relationships, in some sense of "truthful" transaction, that are embodied and owned physically and emotionally by the actors experiencing and sharing the moment.

Wadia is a strong voice in the room. In the wedding scene, he helped Guidi, playing the Friar, to slow down, and gave him lessons in iambic rhythm, hitting the end of verse lines.[645] Wadia helps in constructive ways but gets aggravated by the heat, the lack of full company attendance, the lack of precise scheduling, and at the tardiness.

English native speakers can take for granted the herculean effort to newly-mint Shakespeare's words with a Italian tongue:

> I have realized that for me English is a beautiful language, incredibly direct and synthetic, it can draw extremely vivid and concrete images. It is at the same time stone and crystal, where with a few words you can say everything … it's like having a range of meanings but having a few keys in hand. Shakespeare is a master for choosing the right key at the right moment … Sometimes it seemed to me I had a sword instead of my tongue, and I loved all this.[646]

The exchange and transformation were taking place cross culturally, cross theatrically, cross linguistically.

[643] We were still not a full company. Boreham and Andriolo were absent.

[644] Quattrini, trained in Italy, fluent in English, worked with Anərkē Shakespeare on *Richard II* in every iteration. There she felt less able to offer suggestions, but in her own country, with a theatre troupe of familiar friends and colleagues, she was a very powerful creative presence.

[645] There is a congeniality between these two actors as they played Shylock/Grazanio (Wadia) and Bassanio (Guidi) in *Compagnia de' Colombari'*s *Merchant in Venice*, Venetian Ghetto, 2016. In that process the Italian actors worked with a voice coach to pronounce the text.

[646] Guidi, 'Reflection on *Merchant of Venice*', 2016, directed by Karin Coonrod.

We then rehearsed both gulling scenes in separate rooms. Quattrini, R. Perske and I worked shaping the comedy, and figuring out the text. Our gulling scene is partly in Italian, the men's fully in English.

Wadia, David Schalkwyk, Garbode and H. Perske collectively explored:

> The humour is from the misadventures that the scene gives you, rather than what you can create as an actor or try to put on top of … all I have to do is listen to what they're saying and react … The physicalness will come in each space … There is a point when Leonato whispers something to the Prince and it would be funny if I can as Benedick be creeping around and trying to get up and listen in on them whispering as close as I can before they split apart and I'll have to jump away from them, and you can't really gauge that until we are in the space.[647]

After lunch a Shakespeare scholar joined the room. It had felt important to a collective ethos to have an open rehearsal room, with voices empowered to contribute: sparking a tapestry of perspectives, enabling a creative, academic interchange. But this part of the process went extremely wrong. It began to breed division and factions. Undue weight was given to an academic reading which undermined a scene actors already felt comfortable with. It also exposed a flaw in allowing voices to criticise and comment on a process they did not have to embody, and had no experience of doing. Like a director who does not act. It interrupted the circle of performers and located a voice of authority in someone reading the play to a particular agenda. Schalkwyk, an academic and actor in the ensemble, also insisted on the scholar's interpretation, arguing it as a common academic reading. Both interpreted Benedick asking Claudio, "But did you think the Prince / would have served you thus?"

[647] H. Perske, pers. comm., 17 July 2018.

(2.1.193-4) as Benedick's incredulity that the Prince had betrayed Claudio. This was counter to H. Perske's (Benedick) reading: incredulous at Claudio's jealousy maligning the Prince as capable of betrayal. H. Perske now felt pressure to take on their academic perspective. The difficulty was they were *insisting* on their interpretation. This perspective relied on one of the academics perceiving the play in binaries – as unworthy men vs worthy women. Acting Shakespeare complicates these binaries: nuanced alliances, friendships, love affairs and betrayals in permutations and microdetails, that do not rely on gendered stereotypes, or treat males and females as block categories.

After days of trying, H. Perske finally felt he could not play this academic reading of the scene and went back to his initial instinctive response:

> I found it impossible because it goes counter to every other action and reaction of Benedick … He reads straight away that Claudio is green with jealousy, that he has the green giant in him, and he realises how silly Claudio is being, because the Prince that they are talking about is the man they have just gone to war with, fought with and ready to die for … he's teasing and having fun, which is what Benedick does through the whole play, except for the one moment when he realises how much he is in love with Beatrice.
>
> It's a dumb reading and it's a wrong reading to make him sincerely believe the Prince has stolen Hero, because it alters the nature of the play. It alters the nature of the play if you make Benedick into that kind of character at that point in the play. It's in the title. The play is called *Much Ado About Nothing*. He's looking at Claudio making much ado about *nothing*. It is the core of the play … Claudio has wound himself up into this and has much ado about nothing, because the Prince hasn't done that, and Benedick knows that absolutely.

What was affirmed by this conflict was the actor should, and did, have the final say.

It was not remarkable to have different interpretations, the actors amongst themselves had negotiated various perspectives until this moment in rehearsal quite amicably. Serving the myriad-mindedness and heteroglossia of Shakespeare's text by not rendering a single vision, paradoxically co-exists with the obstinacy of a single interpretation. Each single mind on the collective was fixed on their single way of interpreting the line, suggesting that there was a definitive reading. Here the adamant division of interpretation put pressure on the fault lines of the rehearsal process and unfixable cracks appeared. Wadia, playing the Prince, needing little wind to flame his evident dissatisfaction at not having a director to lead interpretation and extensive table talk, sided with the academics. H. Perske, playing Benedick, was left unhappy and confused, trying to appease, but finding it difficult to wrestle the line into meaning something contrary to the rest of his words and actions. I participated in the conflict, upset that the actor's liberty had been undermined, and sided with H. Perske's interpretation.

It proved problematical to invite external voices, especially ones that have authority because of their academic status. It is essential to directorless work that there is no "expert" voice in the room as superior to another's. The academic's voice may distinguish itself as more schooled than an actor. Dramaturgical culture has sprung up around director-driven culture. Actors defer to the "expert". The "expert" is usually someone who does not act.

Jonathan Dollimore argues that Shakespeare's lines can only be understood by studying them, an actor could not play profound interpretations, and that Shakespeare was a frustrated novelist.[648] But why did he spend his career writing for the theatre? Harry Berger's position is an actor makes a finite choice and the reader can do more justice to the multiple possibilities of text. But an actor speaking with a particular intonation does not obliterate the multiple possibilities for an audience, the dialogical nature of theatre releases the dialogisms,

[648] Joanthan Dollimore, KiSS Shakespeare and Sex conference, 2017.

and the reader, as seen above, is limited to their own mind. Performance text is phenomenological: bodies in space, in an acoustic reality, in relationship to an audience. Schalkwyk reflected on a transformation of his ability to interpret text after he had worked through the process of embodying it:

> I had taught the play for forty years – thought I knew it as well as anyone could. But it was only in acting it, in sharing it with others trying to come to terms with it without any authority figure telling us what our lines mean that I recognised that the best – the only – way to understand Shakespeare is to work communally with fellow actors to realise his texts in the process for which they were written.[649]

After the unpleasant division that occurred in the morning with Benedick's lines, a further conflict arose when we began to rehearse, for the first time, the Dogberry watch scenes, in front of the invited scholar, in the afternoon. This again felt like a betrayal of a sacred space. Opening a first draft to criticism, inviting the external eye to be part of construction, rather than finding it from the inside out. As the actor that had stepped into this famous comedic role, unconvinced of its humour, trying to work bilingually, and respect Dogberry's evident humanity, I laid myself open to heavy scorn and criticism. It was evident that the scene was not funny – yet. But the comments were destructive, not helpful.

"You need to cut more"

"It's not focused"

"It's not funny"

"This scene is soooooooo long"

H. Perske, doubling as Verges, had been in another production of *Much Ado* where the Dogberry had been clownish and tried to give me "helpful" advice to interpolate the scene with repetition and movement that were not in the text. I wanted to play the scene as it was. Productions usually over-conceptualise the watch, drawing the comedy from buffoonery, overlaid physical gags, strange costumes, or invisible horses.[650]

I responded to Dogberry's integrity and ingenuousness. I wanted to have some time and space to understand the scenes and pull out the social commentary, rather than just trying to be absurdly funny. What I learnt over the rest of rehearsals is that I had approached the scenes with a director's mentality. With a single identity idea. With a star performer cipher. How could *I* allow Dogberry his dignity? How could *I* be funny? But that was the wrong question to ask. It is not Dogberry who is funny. They are not scenes concerned with the self-obsessed "I" of the modern actor. It is an ensemble piece. Dogberry is part of a classic comedy duo structure with Verges, who was a delight to perform with (the poetic doubling distorted refractions of Beatrice and Benedick's alter egos).

---

[649] Schalkwyk, 'Reflection on Directorless *Much Ado About Nothing*, 2018', 3 August 2021.

[650] See Kenneth Branagh: "I figured Dogberry would be the hardest character to do for a modern audience. He's one of those dangerous, thick people who believe they are intelligent and responsible but are actually a few sandwiches short of a picnic. For example, the whole idea of having him ride in on an imaginary horse … We shot it several ways, including just having him walk and run, but this way was bigger and bolder. The truth – and I'll probably be struck by lightning for saying so – is that a lot of those Dogberry gags just aren't funny as written. The fun is in the size of the man's ego and his assurances about his own competence as a constable." Robert Butler, 'Interview Kenneth Branagh', 13 June 1993, http://www.branaghcompendium.com/artic-kcs93.htm.

Dogberry is rendered funny by his relationships to the other characters, who are all constructing the humour in precise comedic timing and characterisation given by their dialogical interchanges. I was not alone in rendering the text. I was surfing the waves and ripples of a network of words and circumstances full of sincere and competent watchmen negotiating the incompetent and violent world of the law. But quite aside from the humour was the profound dignity of Dogberry. The truth rendered visible by his malapropisms. These mistaken words are not mistakes. Attempting to say, "correct the prisoners" he exposes the real truth: "correct yourself, for the example of others" (5.1.337-8).

Day Four: 18 July, Wednesday

We worked on the watch scenes at *Colombo*: on devising group physical comedy, delivering lines with precise comedic timing and gestures, which Quattrini, drawing on her *commedia* skills, helped to choreograph. Although Quattrini was assisting the process of development and exploration we retained a tapestry of collaboration, people not surrendering to a single directorial aesthetic, but still contributing from inside the piece, whilst Quattrini helped with an outside eye. We decided to use an audience member for one of the characters of the watch when assembling the guard.

On a vaporetto going home from rehearsal Wadia expressed his continued dissatisfaction with the directorless process:

Wadia: I'm a little happier today. It's a trying process for me but I've made my decision to come and so I am here … I feel like the acting is sub-par … because I think we are fractured, we're thinking of many things, and I don't think anyone is doing their bestest work …

Pellone: But are you ever four days in rehearsal and everyone is doing amazing acting? I mean that's a big pressure on a play that's only four days on in rehearsal.

Wadia: Interesting point, yes.

Pellone: And we're just sketching things out. I mean we've sketched out most of the play that's pretty amazing after four days, I think.

Wadia: Yes, yes.

H. Perske: The fourth day of *Merchant of Venice* we were still sitting in that godforsaken hot theatre around that table.

Wadia: But a lot was found in those, I found that time very precious. I think it deepens the performance when it does actually get on its feet *if* the talk is good … And I feel that getting off on to feet, as an American, I'm not used to that, getting on one's feet immediately, when you don't really know why you're on your feet.

But Anthony Renshaw reflected that table-talk usually was a period of stasis where actors just had to imbibe decisions already made by the director.[651] Working without extensive table talk meant that discoveries are divergent, made on your feet, as you actively solve the scenes in fluctuating discussion.

[651] See also Andrew French, introduction.

Day Five: 19 July, Thursday

We worked at *Casa Shakespeare*. Wadia, H. Perske, Bruce Boreham and Schalkwyk rehearsed Act 5, scene 1 while Quattrini, R. Perske and I rehearsed Act 3, scene 1. Then, with Guidi, the company present sketched through the end of Act 5, scene 1, the denouement, with Dogberry revealing the machinations of the villains.

After a break we sat together and did a lines-run until the end of Act 3. As with *Richard II*, the short rehearsal period, and the fact that people were not off book when they arrived, is hindering the deepening of the work, as people are still struggling to put their books down or interact at speed, responding accurately to cues and word play, which needs as much precision in prose as in verse. H. Perske reflected, even arriving off book, there is a transition period where you must convert the accuracy of doing lines by yourself through the errors of trying to make it accurate with other actors in the space: it is imperative to have group rehearsals, to go from cued lines to full scenes.[652]

When Betty Andriolo arrived in the evening it was transformative. Great friends with most of the company, open, receptive, prepared, and passionate, her work added oxygen to the claustrophobic stress of trying to wrangle an unwieldy play with multi-perspectives into a performance piece, without a director, in fourteen days.

At times the differing acting aesthetics are in conflict, some tending toward pantomime, others to naturalism. We are still exploring and throwing paint on the canvas. No matter what the result, everyone is throwing paint, no one is remaining inactive. We are trying to make it work.

Day Six: 20 July, Friday

We met at *Colombo* for an 8:30am start, but earlier than the company call H. Perske and I went down to work on Beatrice and Benedick scenes. Their love scene, at the end of Act 4, scene 1, is astonishing. There is no moon, no Goddess, no kissing. And yet it is one of the most powerful love scenes in Shakespeare's canon. It ends with a vow to kill or to die. A vow made on Beatrice's soul. They say goodbye, perhaps for the last time. The pain and the seriousness of this love gathers storm clouds over the frothy poniards that have littered the stage with their fricative love. Beatrice exposes her heart for the love of her cousin, her fury at the powerlessness of being a woman in a violent, self-serving patriarchy: "Sweet Hero, she is wronged" (4.1.326). The power of women loving each other. This scene made me fall in love with Beatrice – finally. An extraordinary discovery for me, fusing my soul to Beatrice's, was how difficult it was at first to like her. She seemed bitchy, opinionated, sure of herself, disdainful of others, talking all the time, and instigating conflict with Benedick. She is defensive, wounded in love, and unlike Juliet, who will surrender her soul to the god of her idolatry, Beatrice remains guarded, till the very end.

> I'm not naturally her. I'm naturally Kate and I'm naturally Richard II in a weird way, and I'm naturally Juliet, actually I'm totally Juliet, Juliet is the closest Shakespeare character to me, but maybe as I get older, I'm more Cleopatra.[653]

I found Beatrice's defensiveness a sign of weakness. I had inherited the play's slogan that Beatrice was a great, strong female heroine, an Elizabeth Bennet. But she never gives Benedick "thee", not in their love scene, not when they are alone and he gives her a sonnet

[652] For a longer treatise on the necessity of rehearsals to solidify lines and cues, see chapter 2.
[653] Pellone.

and declares intimate love – "I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes" (5.2.101-2) – not even at the very end.

I learn lines quickly, and usually pride myself on delivering them speedily and trippingly on the tongue, but with Beatrice I was unable to. Her words are saturated with tongue-twisting consonants. She *literally* speaks poniards, plosives of T's and D's and B's and P's and C's spattering out through her witty prose like swathes of defensive soldiers; her short, sharp words do not surrender to heart-open vowels.[654] The only time Beatrice speaks in verse is when she is alone with the audience, after the discovery of Benedick's love. It is almost a sonnet. Beatrice can almost surrender to love. Almost.[655] This was in performance, spoken partly in Italian, a moment of fervent release. Her armour consonants making way for open-hearted vowels – "love on" (3.1.117). But this is the only time her guarded heart is exposed and she gives Benedick "thou". He must declare love first. I began to consider that much of the alluded to history of their relationship may have had these very obstacles, and not be as simple as Benedick betraying her.[656]

The final moments of *Much Ado* make this merry-go-round clear. Benedick is as guarded as Beatrice. Neither wishes to claim publicly *first* that they love.[657] It is others that make them use their mouths for kissing, rather than for duelling. Without Leonato's intervention we might resume at the beginning. Editors often change this line to Benedick's, but that would alter their symmetry of power. We decided Leonato must speak the line: "Peace! I will stop your mouth" (5.4.102):

> Pellone: At the end when you ask which one's Beatrice and I say that's me I think you're going to ask me to marry you, because that's all we've talked about until now – I will live in your eyes, die in your heart – and there's a friar there and you've stopped everyone and made this public thing of which one's Beatrice? And I say that's me. And then you say – do not you love me? I just feel so exposed. You arsehole. You just totally expose her and throw her to the fishes. Because you're asking her to confess it *before* you confess it, in front of everybody. And how can I do that? Because you might turn around after I say that and say ha ha, see she loves me.

---

[654] BEATRICE Is it possible disdain should die while she
hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick?
Courtesy itself must convert to disdain if you come
in her presence. (1.1.118-21)

[655] BEATRICE
What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?
Stand I condemned for pride and scorn so much?
Contempt, farewell, and maiden pride, adieu!
No glory lives behind the back of such.
And Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To bind our loves up in a holy band.
For others say thou dost deserve, and I
Believe it better than reportingly. (3.1.113-22)

[656] PRINCE Come, lady, come, you have lost
the heart of Signior Benedick.
BEATRICE Indeed, my lord, he lent it me awhile, and I
gave him use for it, a double heart for his single
one. Marry, once before he won it of me with false
dice. Therefore your Grace may well say I have lost
it. (2.1.271-77)

[657] See Act 5, scene 4, 74-102.

H. Perske: But in my mind, I've just confessed to everyone. But in my mind, because I've confessed to Leonato and I do see her with an eye of love.

Pellone: But she doesn't know that. That's why I think she says he played false dice with her heart, because that's what happened, they keep wanting the other one to declare it.

Beatrice will swear on her soul for her cousin. But she keeps her heart close. I finally fell in love with her during the rehearsal. In her extraordinary and unique love scene. How marvellous to play Beatrice and discover her human frailties, when for all the world it is only her bravado on show. Her mother cried in the pain of childbirth. Fundamental to life's existence is pain. But then a star danced, and Beatrice was born. And I was born into her under the stars of Venice. Without a director telling me who she was and how I should play her.

When the company arrived, we worked on blocking the two gulling scenes in the *campo*, infused with *commedia* physicality, Beatrice hiding behind pot plants, menus, and falling downstairs, and Benedick climbing up and hanging from the black iron stairwell, by a single hand. Everybody was pitching in ideas:

> Individual people are beginning to take over in small areas, in small scenes, a sort of directorial role with other people pitching in. Unlike *Richard* there is a much more individual direction happening, and it's passed like a soccer ball.[658]

Trying to work through the notion of "What *is* directorless?" various conversations were happening about whether our work was a pure enough example. Wadia's voice was important in the room, oscillating between supportive company member and disdainful exasperation. He stated that none of us would survive in New York if we did not turn up to rehearsal on time. He still longed for a stage manager. Critical to the experiment is that these dissatisfactions enabled a conceptual distinction, forced a fine-tuning of the definition of directorless, right to the final curtain call.

> I think that's a misunderstanding from the beginning when you say Directorless Shakespeare, and people think there is absolutely no direction and that is not the concept. It is that the direction doesn't come from one single person or one production value.[659]

The democracy means there is not a singular voice able to dictate a definitive choice for the collective. Anyone can pitch in an idea:

> you have people with very different traditions, aesthetics, sense of the voice of the theatre, and although everybody feels much freer to contribute their vision, or their sense of what would work in the scene, what you're getting is a mix of different conventions.[660]

Working Beatrice's gulling scene, actors were making physical offers and actors watching were fine-tuning those offers. The idea comes from the actor, and then others help the execution, with an outside eye, which is not singular. The theatrical language and traditions were fusing, emerging, in tension, creating an unhomogenised aesthetic, that did not cancel out its multi-valency, or offer tidy solutions.

> Direction and director are kind of made up-words in the theatrical process. There is still – you could use any other verb: orchestration, participation, discussion – but you say "direction" and it sounds as if someone is ordering people what to do. It is a multi-dimensional or multi-collaborative interpretation in the end, because everybody gets to participate and pitch in the level that they want.[661]

---

[658] Schalkwyk, pers. comm.
[659] H. Perske, pers. comm.
[660] Schalkwyk, pers. comm.
[661] Pellone.

In the afternoon we worked through the wedding scene, etching out details and staging it, with the complications of a group tableau, Hero collapsing and the ensuing violence. We worked through the complementary wedding scene at the end. Garbode said he needed a moment of resolution with Hero. Whereas a director might say – you do not have any moment of resolution, we are going to keep this unresolved, because we are going to punish Claudio and isolate him, so you cannot kiss her. What Garbode was saying is – what I need is to connect to Hero – so that moment becomes directed by the active thinking inside the scene. Whether that is true or not is irrelevant, because Garbode is playing Claudio. The directorial motion comes from the inside, even if the whole concept does not support that, even if the concept wants Claudio to be a villain and not to be forgiven, even if Quarttrini's Hero feels that he is not forgiven. We find a moment and we tweak it, we detail it from the actor's perspective.

Day Seven: 21 July, Saturday

We are one week in. Strings are tightening and tensions are straining, but not snapping. Wadia, who has felt the absence of a director, relaxed by ceding some authority to Quattrini. When an actor feels unsure, he needs external markers to navigate through the fog: "I found myself needing a leader. Maybe because I am habituated to being a "mere actor" or maybe it's my psychological makeup, but I find comfort in having a leader."[662]

We spent the afternoon working on the masked ball. Two actors said they would not be able to dance and talk and were resistant to trying the steps Andriolo proposed.

[662] Wadia, 'Directorless *Much Ado About Nothing* Reflection', 2 October 2018.

They had a different vision of the scene, and were worried partly about the time they had to block and memorise everything. In a room with a director they would probably not feel able to freely express disapprobation and reluctance. H. Perske chimed in: "We're in a masked ball scene, what do you expect? That you sit down and do it?" Guidi was firmer: "It's your job. It's your job. You have to make a scene. It's your job as an actor, even if you are not a trained dancer." Andriolo reflected on these difficulties.

> I'm not a professional dancer …. so I don't feel entitled to lead a dance choreography, but in this case, we are a directorless company, so I might try to say something … I mean it's difficult when you're a group and you don't have a leader if you don't take your own responsibility and try to propose something, but when somebody does this all the others should at least try.[663]

Finally, everyone stepped up trying to execute the dance, to offer suggestions of how to hold each other, when to change partners, which direction to turn, what position hands would touch, and how to focus the changing bantering of flirting couples.

> It's been an interesting and painful day, the play is getting along, but my frustration and unhappiness are not getting along.[664]

Macbeth evolved more cohesively without the egotistical and disruptive behaviour in *Much Ado*, but the tidal wave of differing needs, differing cultures, differing languages, differing training, differing theatrical languages and the complexities of a comedy, were not added complications to that rehearsal room. The tensions intersect what is acceptable stage language with differing aesthetics. Some actors want naturalism, others heightened reality. In theatre we are in a world of make believe, and that means we can take the audience anywhere.

There are two ensemble music scenes. With "Sigh no more", Zagni, as Balthazar, sings to the ensembled men with his slow jazz song, which speeds up in the chorus and

[663] Andriolo, pers. comm.
[664] Pellone.

surreal-like the women float in as moths to a flame and turn around and do a choreographed dance number to “Hey nonny nonny”. Then they disappear, leaving the audience with the aftermath of a whirlwind, and Zagni sings the second verse, “No more ditty” in a melancholic strain. The other choral moment is the funeral elegy. Claudio speaks the epitaph and then Zagni begins to sing an opera song that he has composed, and Wadia joins him in a duet. The company blend in harmonies and light their tapers from a single flame, transfusing with fragile light, the natural darkness that would have fallen in the outdoor spaces. The scene ends and all the candles are blown out.

Day Eight: 22 July, Sunday

We met this morning at 8:30am at *Crociferi*. We blocked both gulling scenes, the women getting ready for the wedding scene, and we top and tailed entrances and exits. The crafting of the double-takes and physical comedy is a group effort. Beatrice, as she acrobatically works the space to get closer to the conversation between Hero and Ursula, hides behind the columns on the covered walkways, a moving pot plant, a waiter's tray full of glasses, and finally sits down at an audience members' table, covering her face with a menu.

Benedick uses the large historic well in the middle of the cloister to great comic effect, falling in and scaling it in impossible positions with body contortions.

The satisfying playful element, which we address seriously as we etch it out, is an antidote to some of the fatigue, the heat, the stress, the uncertainties. Our cross-pollinating stage interrupts strict divisions of genre, as does Shakespeare. Both spaces are in dialogical exchange with the play, directing interpretation, which has not been imposed uniformly. We imagine the most appropriate and delightful spots in situ to activate the scenes, using the natural scenography and lay out, to make it immersive, surprising, and theatrical. In the different locations the play flexibly changes for the audience:

> The most powerful thing that I remember about the two performances is how the change of venue changed the dynamic of the play. The restaurant setting had a long stage area which ran the visual gamut from some pretty brutalist modern concrete to more overtly classical Italianate architecture at extreme stage right, where you used the upper level and so let irrelevant echoes of *Romeo and Juliet* into my memory of the performance. This meant the show had a diversity of tone which chimed with the diversity of language: the watch are associated with the concrete area, giving them an appropriately urban air; the use of the bosky area at the end brought out the romantic dimension.
>
> The second venue wasn't diverse in this way: it was basically a very large paved quadrangle with the large communal wells which were used inventively at several points. This focused the play in a different way: less romantic, less urban comical, and, for me, much more civic – the dimensions and regularity of the square somehow creating an atmosphere consistent with Leonato being the governor and Don Pedro the prince, meaning that there seemed to be, dramatically, more at stake in these performances than in the first venue.
>
> I don't know that I have any strong preference for one or the other, just that they came across as different, and I suppose this is partly to do with the way the directorless cast instinctively adapted the play to each venue, rather than having a

commanding "vision" of it that had to be adhered to and communicated, irrespective of the performance space.[665]

After a lunch break, we reassembled at *Casa Shakespeare* and Zagni taught us the funeral elegy in harmony. We worked on Act 5, scene 1, trying to detail the Dogberry scenes. Schalkwyk gave notes that the scenes were too hammy and expressed unhappiness that he felt his voice was not being taken seriously enough in the room. Tensions broke the fissure cracks to gashes. But the cast responded warmly, reassuring him that his voice was valued. Band-aids were administered, but the labour pains of creation are not slight, for any artist involved.

Day Nine: 23 July, Monday

In the evening we debriefed through the day, exemplifying the difficulties of having different actors making suggestions:

Pellone:	Do you like working without a director Michi?
Guidi:	Hell, a fucking hell! It's a dream – dreamless.
Schalkwyk:	There is this crazy member of the company that just went berserk this afternoon.
Guidi:	We are bizarre.
H. Perske:	No you are not crazy, don't take it to heart David. Don't think of yourself that way. And that was a big concern, when Jen pulled out, that was one of her fears, that it would be those with the loudest voice

[665] Martin Wiggins, 'Directorless *Much Ado About Nothing* Reflection', 19 August 2021.

that would get the biggest say, and in a way, you can be quite softly spoken.

…

Guidi: This is an incredible journey. Today we prepared, you know running through the lines, and this morning some people met at *Colombo* and we went through the villain scenes … We're growing, we're growing, from a child to adults.

…

Pellone: Yesterday when you were saying the Dogberry scenes are ham, and you thought we were pitching it wrong, what you didn't understand was it was just our first pitch … it's debilitating for me to be criticised constantly. It's not just you, right from the beginning people were saying this scene is too long, it's not funny, you have to do it like this or that with conflicting feedback, and I have had no time to find it. The watch scenes are incredibly difficult. I am just starting to orient myself where I think I can make a role that can speak to an audience. And I have to know what that is, and in order to get there I have to try things. And I might be trying stupid things … sometimes you need to spend time on the draft before you get the editor. Do you understand what I'm saying? It's not a rejection of the editor, you're just not ready yet.

Day Ten: 24 July, Tuesday

We met at 6pm for a run at *Casa Shakespeare.* Afterwards, H. Perske said it was "the worst piece of shit in the world". And then we sat down for a note session, which I instigated. With *Much Ado* it seemed necessary and appropriate to call a meeting to give each other notes, whereas that was not necessary in either *Richard II* or *Macbeth*.

A discussion after the notes:

Perske: It was the best note session, the first proper note session we've had

…

We're more than halfway through this process and I'm not sure that I like working without a director … I feel better having someone with the outside eye to discuss with me what's going on.

Pellone: And do you need a single person to do that? Because it's not about not having an outside eye. Working like Shakespeare's company it is not a single person telling you, it's a company decision. Do you get confused with more than one eye?

Perske: No, I don't get confused but there are people that I trust. Like I trust your eye. If Michi told me something, I trust his eye. But other people in the company tell me something and I kind of – they are not talking the language.

Guidi: I think he's right because not every voice has the same weight.

…

But the problem is this process is quite democratic. For me theatre is a fascist – is a fascist. And I love that it's like this, because I don't care about your idea, because I just follow someone that can guide me into the darkness … But if I don't have this situation, I have to understand that every door opens. If every door is open, I have to weigh all the time the voice from all of you. This challenge, this process is

> democratic – unfortunately. But I don't want to say I hate it, but directorless is quite – everyone of us is focusing on you in the end, because it's your kind of idea, you grab all of us together. This is a strong thing that you do, you have to recognise that you do a great job, … the choice to do it directorless is super rare, and if you believe in that, just go forward.

The difficulty lay in the varied distinctions of directorless. Can I ask for feedback? Is it allowed to offer each other unsolicited feedback? Whose opinion in the room do I respect if I am not obliged to listen to feedback? Voices naturally had different weight in proportion to the respect you felt. Whereas even without respect one must listen to the director. The difficulty also lay in the resistance to working directorless, that had not been an issue in *Richard II*. Guidi, like the actors in the first Ren season at the American Shakespeare Center (ASC), distrusts art by democracy, for him theatre should be fascist. Because of modern actors' temperaments there is a natural inclination to give over a certain amount of authorship. Guidi looked at me for the final word in the room because he wanted a dictator and he trusted me. It was partly a problem of me being the usual director for the V.S.C. and being more fully invested in making sure the directorless production happened by default of it being my PhD research.

> The research is difficult because I'm in the production, but ultimately, I am much more responsible for it than any other actor in the production. Nobody else is doing publicity, making the programme, ultimately those things end with me … I'm the one thinking we need this, we need that, we need to get this. I'm trying to organise someone to film it, I'm trying to organise someone to photograph it, I'm promoting it, I've organised a way to pay the actors, I'm organising so much of the structure of it, unless somebody says to me – I want to be responsible for the publicity and just takes it off my shoulders. In the end I have more responsibility that way, it matters to me that the play is successful.[666]

But despite my extra investment, the directorless work, with all its shifting power dynamics, was finally genuine in that everyone felt they had a voice, even if it was expressed in dissent or dissatisfaction, there was room for its expression: everybody an organic component in the body of the art we created together. The intersections of the fantasy of directorless, cultural differences, pressures of performance, and intense feelings of friendship, finally served a collective, unhomogenised, directorless production of *Much Ado*, even when we made much ado about nothing in the rehearsal room, we were making ourselves heard, and we were listening.

Day Eleven: 25 July, Wednesday

We met at *Casa Shakespeare* at 9am to do detailed work on smaller scenes, then after lunch we worked on group scenes. We practiced the ball, the watch scenes (which continue to be a struggle) and the funeral scene. We also tried to finalise costumes from the stock we had

[666] Pellone. In *Macbeth*, the directorless project evolved to dispersing the back-stage structural burden among the ensemble: booking the venues, props and costumes, designing posters and flyers, publicity, organising the conference, filming, updating the website and social media, organising accommodation for the actors. It was produced with distributed authority and responsibility. It is unnecessary to put this level of structural burden on the actors, and if the work can be supported commercially the creative alchemy may even have greater artistic possibilities.

collected. We have to pull off an extraordinary feat, and we still never have had a full company.

Day Twelve: 26 July, Thursday

We had a stop-start run at *Colombo* today. The play is in a strong place and has a good shape. Boreham brought in a drum which Guidi is now playing for the Dogberry scenes. This musical heartbeat has completely transformed and supported the energy of the watch scenes, making them work. Dogberry and Verges tango in from opposite sides of the stage, clumsily meet in the middle for an abortive cabaret attempt, then call the watch together. Actors enter, reluctantly or enthusiastically, dragging along a willing audience participant, George Seacol. What is extraordinary is how many actors have taken care to help make the Dogberry scenes, some of the most challenging parts of the play, work. It has been a collaborative effort, and Guidi, initiating the idea to underscore it with rhythmic drumming, since comedy is all rhythm, helps the jokes and physicality land with precision. Guidi is not in the Dogberry scenes, but he is in the play, and has lent his theatre magnetism and instinct to transform the scenes, as has every cast member, infusing it with individual and cross-pollinating threads, making the watch scenes some of the strongest tapestries of myriad-minded cultural and theatrical exchange in the play. I was afraid I couldn't make Dogberry funny. I was right. *I* couldn't. But *we* could.

In Directorless Shakespeare we do not establish how to work in a single common language. We are working with experimental conditions that we are not used to, which may

be uncomfortable, with conflicting elements, but we are forging a new language. Myriad-minded. Ensemble-led. Devolved authority.

Wadia continues to be frustrated, wanting to withdraw, believing his acting is substandard and retaliating by being critical of other performers:

> Because this process shows you up as an actor. And it shows off what you can contribute as an actor. Because the process demands more than just learning the script and being told where to be on a certain day. And if all of us aren't doing it … then the project doesn't take the next leap that the project needs to take.[667]

It was a strange paradox: Wadia lashing out from insecurity and frustration; but in other ways his experience, talent and strength as a performer kept the ship tightly on course, even as he felt himself directionless. Resistant to being a watch member, as he ate his crisps on the couch, he transformed this rehearsal moment into one of the funniest watch members – a reluctant watchman, disinterested, munching chips on stage, ending up giving his chip packet to the audience recruit and slinking off. He is both antagonistic and supportive. He is present every day at every rehearsal, one of the most committed and professional actors, even while longing for a director, a stage manager and those scheduled times off.

Amidst clouds of dissatisfaction and different apprehensions of directorless, actors still contributed generously and lathered oil in the hinges of the process. Guidi, although believing theatre should be fascist, was a supportive company member, working in both languages, anchoring the translations, and keeping a camaraderie alive among the cast. Andriolo was living her dream of acting Shakespeare in Venice:

> working with the VSC has been an amazing and fulfilling experience … It's been like a deep plunge into an extraordinary dimension where every single word had an enormous weight itself, behind and beyond which a whole universe was to be discovered, devised and created by the actors themselves … Working as an ensemble without the external eye of a director, we've been encouraged to listen to each other trying to respect each other's views but at the same time putting ourselves forward in order to contribute to the realisation of the final show.[668]

Garbode's reflection captures the conflicts and trials of working directorless with a limited rehearsal and not a more permanent ensemble:

> Working directorless offers actors to have their voices heard … However, it seemed that this didn't always work … There were very different personalities in the company … What I've learnt from this is that the directorless approach is very much dependent on the company and what everyone brings to the table. In Shakespeare's company this would have probably been less of an issue as it was more a "permanent" ensemble … The trust and respect for each other was earned, but with our limited rehearsal time, this didn't have a chance to develop in our company … we had a good stab at it, but I felt the outcome was more a "hybrid" system between a directorless and directed production.[669]

Contrary to Garbode, Zagni experienced the work as directorless, but doubts that a directorless tragedy would be as successful:

> I think it's important to clarify that this kind of work is impossible if you don't have friends around you, that in this context we should also refer to as colleagues, ready to support a real team group … This kind of show presents a lot of difficulties due to the ancient language, the multiple characters performed by the same actor, elements of commedia dell'arte, tears, laughter, hot weather, people that come and go while you're performing, all kinds of elements that could be distracting but this can be

[667] H. Perske.
[668] Andriolo, 'Directorless *Much Ado About Nothing* Reflection', 1 October 2018.
[669] Garbode, 'Directorless *Much Ado About Nothing* Reflection', 23 January 2019.

> solved by a solid team that knows which path to follow … Are all Shakespeare's plays right for this project? I don't think so. Comedies are better for this kind of project … tragedies need an outside point of view more than comedies. In this "Much Ado" we had a goal.[670]

The reflections engage with the complexities of working directorless, but the conclusions and experiences differ. Sometimes in direct opposition. Quattrini believes a directorless tragedy is more successful:

> As much as I enjoyed fully the experience, I think *Much Ado* directorless version was a little less successful than *Richard II* … from my perspective as an Italian actor, in order to work effectively, theatrical comedy needs much more the intervention of a director in terms of staging, blocking, deciding rhythm and rehearsing other than spontaneous acting: I'd say it needs more technical work, whereas, in a tragedy, the spontaneous flow of emotions without a massive intervention from a director might be something that can even help the performance.[671]

The needs of a comedy were much more demanding for Quattrini without a director, especially in a cultural exchange. As with the ASC, we are working with 400 years of developments in theatrical language; Shakespeare's company would not have had the same plethora of choices in professional acting styles. But the directorless work is not purely a historical replication, it is allowing the multiplicity of text space for the audience to have a more complete or more complex engagement in its moment-to-moment nuances. Negotiating difference, but not obliterating it, is difficult. The job of the directorless company was tested.

Although the conflict and vocal debates were more heightened than *Richard II*, and there were shifting viewpoints about what constituted directorless, the PhD research questions were still being asked and answered. The play's heteroglossia resounded in the text, the staging, and in the different cultural and linguistic components. The work continued to be revelatory and engaging for audience members and academics. And we had a directorless definition of directorless, which dialogued with the play and allowed eruptions of difference.

The art of theatre is messy. In Italian, rehearsals are called *prova*. There is the sense of it being *provato* – which is almost like suffering. The dress rehearsal is – *prova generale* – the general trial. Not just trying something but going through a trial. A trial by fire. And you are in it, it is the forge, and that is why, especially in directorless work, you need courage.

After a lunch break we met at *Casa Shakespeare*. We worked in detail through the second half of the play. At a heightened moment of cultural conflict Zagni politely put his hand up and interrupted Schalkwyk's performance of Leonato (paradoxically using a British manner of politeness) when he discovers Hero's "shame" at the wedding: "Excuse me, I'm sorry to interrupt, but I have to say, he's just too British, Leonato is a Sicilian father, he would kill her."[672] Schalkwyk resisted this note, he felt his character was more complex, and shied away from the violence of the language, playing it self-reflexively sad. But after a tense group discussion, he let his Leonato go to those extreme violent and dark places, and there was an unharnessed electricity that lit up the scene, fear and destruction heightening the stakes. Schalkwyk felt the power of that moment being released in him.

Day Thirteen: 27 July, Friday

We met at *Colombo* at 8am to do blocking for an hour, then a run, which did not eventuate because we spent a lot of time blocking Act 5, and when we started to run it was punishingly

[670] Zagni, 'Directorless *Much Ado About Nothing* Reflection', 23 May 2019.
[671] Quattrini, 'Directorless *Much Ado About Nothing* Reflection', 3 October 2018.
[672] Zagni, pers.comm, 26 July 2018.

hot. We abandoned the plan to run in performance conditions and had a large break in the middle of the day.[673]

In the evening we met at *Crociferi* with the purpose of doing a dress run in performance conditions, but again we started blocking and it took way too long, with people losing their tempers. Everyone is incredibly tired, and we are very under-rehearsed for a performance. We were a full company yesterday for the first time, we have not done a run yet, we have never done a run in performance conditions, and we open tomorrow night.

We are meeting at 9am, on the morning of the performance, for our first run.

Day Fourteen: 28 July, Saturday
Opening night Colombo

We ran the play at 9:00am and certain things were not working. We sat together and collectively did notes, then tried to tidy things up and look at entrances and exits. For the music, we placed a speaker in an old gramophone, worked out who could operate it, and recorded a fade out for the song. Then we had a break for the remainder of the day.[674]

We met at 6pm to go through the dances, the songs, and the watch scenes. When we arrived a person from *Goldoni*[675] came and expressed, in unabashed Italian style, that he was irate we were starting at 8:00pm as the noise would interrupt their show's starting time. We accommodatingly pushed the start time back and readjusted the space and the chairs. Starting late in Italy caused not a wrinkle in time or mood. Then we performed to a full house.

There is a jubilant feeling, celebratory, intriguing, Shakespeare on the Venetian stones under the Venetian stars: luminous moments when we used the windows, the dance, the gulling and the Dogberry scenes, which are full of dynamic concentrated energy. Some audience members responded that the watch scenes were their favourite scenes, which is a surprising journey from the first rehearsal where nothing was working. Andriolo's teenage son, not very good at English, responded: "yeah I was following, it was alright, but when that Dogberry scene started, the whole play changed for me." You could feel the audience surrender to a deeper, darker realm of comedy. Everyone is very tired. Intertwined with elation of performing and the camaraderie, tempers are frayed.

Day Fifteen: 29 July, Sunday
Second night

On the second night we arrived early to re-stage some things. We used the window another time and moved the love scene more in the romantic light of the historic wall. The play grew, and was again triumphant, audience members responding enthusiastically in feedback forms. An audience member had come to both nights, transfixed, ebullient, and said she is coming again. The temperature is off the scale. Actors are dripping in sweat. Working so hard. It is tight and running at one hour and forty-five minutes, no interval. Completely gripping, full of transformative scenes, atmospheric interchanges, light-hearted comedy, darker social commentary, deep hearted love, betrayal, redemption, bilingual cacophony. Despite all the

[673] I used this time to run around and get props, masks, candles, and finalise the programme. Shaul Bassi corrected my translations and we have used an operatic style of short act descriptions in both languages to assist audience members who do not speak either English or Italian. Martin Wiggins wrote the programme note which we translated.

[674] I printed the programmes and feedback forms for the audience.

[675] The main theatre of Venice whose stage doors border the *corte del Teatro*.

tensions, the exhaustion, there is something miraculous about the performance. A testament to the work, that it can withstand the heat of Venice, the heat of directorless and the firmament of radical artistic endeavour.

Day sixteen: 30 July, Monday
Symposium and third night

In the morning we had a symposium: "Much Ado About Italy".[676] In the general discussion the Mechanicals in *Dream* were used as evidence that Quince was a director figure to prove that Wadia's evident dissatisfaction was because it was disingenuous to imagine early modern actors did not have someone telling them what to do. In response to the argument that Quince is a directorial figure, or may have been played by Shakespeare and therefore Shakespeare directed his plays,[677] the analogy of *Dream* is only sufficient in parts of the text that support the cherished notion that actors need a single authority figure. The heightened or condensed reality of a group of amateurs staging a play within a play is probably as representative of actual working processes as watching a film about making a movie. We cannot take a creative, satirical invention as documentary evidence, but if we *were* to, it would only support a process of joint decision making. Once Quince has handed out parts, Bottom is free to wear whatever beard he will, they debate as a company to solve staging and text issues – find out moonshine, write a prologue so as not to fright the ladies, etcetera – and Quince is an actor in the play. Thisbe speaking cues and all evidences the need to rehearse the text in detail before the performance. This PhD research puts pressure on the dominant ideas of lack of rehearsal, that actors only heard the play for the first time in performance, and notions of stock characters and gestures. It challenges established theories and offers new conclusions on Original Practise as necessarily seen from the actors viewpoint.[678] Burbage played Hamlet, Lear, and Othello, all of them tragic heroes – the same "stock-character" – but none of them with linguistic, age, status or circumstances that cross over.[679] Early modern actors could not be beholden to conventions they were inventing.

Wadia's reflection captures his frustration:

> I'm sure truly communal theater is possible, but I don't think this production was a great example of it. There were too many restrictions/problems including:
> 1) A short rehearsal period, made even shorter by the fact that we only had the full company on was it two days?
> 2) The abilities of the actors spanned the gamut from beginners to seasoned professionals.
> 3) The budget was low.
> 4) We had no real theater-home…
> 5) The weather was beastly, making outdoor work truly unbearable. Some actors felt ill and faint, others like me, irritable and foul-tempered.
> 6) Many things that needed to be or might have been pre-thought/pre-planned/pre-

[676] Co-hosted by Ca' Foscari University and Global Shakespeare.
[677] Patrick Spottiswoode posited that Shakespeare played Quince: "Because there is all that punning in the prologue – 'if we offend it is with our good*Will*'" (interview with author, 24 April, 2019).
[678] That an actor knows how to replicate something of a stereotype and therefore need not rehearse, would be unsound even for contemporary actors who have made careers out of supposedly playing themselves in the one type of role, where each rendition still requires precision, detail and nuance. As Castiglione reminds us, there is an art that conceals art – *sprezzatura.* 'Baldassarre Castiglione', accessed 30 June 2022, https://www.filosofico.net/baldesarcastiglione.htm
[679] Joel H. Kaplan, 'Thomas Middleton's Epitaph on the Death of Richard Burbage, and John Payne Collier', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 80, no. 2 (June 1986): 225–32.

> done were not. A lot of time was spent on costume conversations, memorizing lines, etc.
> 7) No director or voice of authority.
> A few of these would have been easy to deal with, but all 7 together ended up making for a substandard show. You can't have inexperienced actors who are not off-book AND have to spend hours on discussions that a director or leader could've solved with one swift commandment AND not have adequate time AND have weather that makes rehearsing in the actual spaces between 11AM and 6PM totally unbearable.
> I think this project was "A Directorless 'Much Ado About Nothing' Directed by Elena Pellone." You might not want to hear this, Elena, but that's how I saw it. And this to me is NOT a criticism I was totally GRATEFUL for your leadership and your vision someone had to have one, and this was your baby, and you stepped up to the plate every time there was a vacuum.[680]

As noted, there is something interfering with me being more invested in the project than other company members. If there was a vacuum – something that needed to be done – I did step up to the plate, like organising publicity and programmes and performance venues. Wadia wrongly assumes that I might not want to hear he thought it was a directorless *Much Ado* that I had directed. For the research to have any genuine weight, it needs to be truly tested, and honestly responded to, it needs a fair *prova*. But Wadia's assessment of me acting as a director is not entirely unbiased. Wadia lists having no director and voice of authority as one of the restrictions and problems he experienced (point 7). In the day-to-day machinations, detailed above, everyone was contributing, debating, offering staging advice, composing music, choreographing dances, bringing in props and costumes. The first-person accounts and recorded conversations capture the palimpsest of voices working hard to be collective, to offer ideas, to listen and respond, without being a passive follower. The conflict and dissatisfaction arose because there was not a final voice in the room instructing, as mine would have had to be if I were the director of the directorless work. Wadia complains that discussions were not resolved with one swift commandment. I took more responsibility for structural things, but I was in the play and subject to the same conditions as everyone else. We still had to find out moonshine together. To say I had any authority over Wadia as a director is inaccurate. Wadia's own admission that he was irritable, and foul-tempered (point 5) means that he did not feel the need to follow any external directive and participate positively in the work if he did not feel like it. This is both the quality and the defect of directorless. Actors that reserve their dissatisfaction for the pub, are more silent and passive in the rehearsal room. In our rehearsal room, if Wadia did not want to do something, he did not, or voiced that he did not want to. Wadia experienced his empowerment as negative, and at times this infected others' joy of the process. But every actor confirmed they would do it again and expressed, in the reflections above, a gratitude for the collective work. Even Wadia was surprised to discover his contribution was meaningful, supportive and constructive:

> However, I found myself leading some things myself … helping to direct some scenes … giving acting coaching to some when they asked for it. I honestly thought, going into the process that I would have little to offer, but I think I ended up being of some use to the company.[681]

H. Perske had a more moderate response, but also with valid criticisms:

> I think the next time we do it, there would be a language that we know what needs to be done. Even though we don't have a director I would sacrifice half my wage to have a stage manager. Because trying to put on a play, as well as doing the acting, to then

[680] Wadia, 'Directorless *Much Ado About Nothing* Reflection'.
[681] Wadia.

> be responsible for the set, the production, the lugging of stuff to the performance in the thirty-three-degree heat, to get all that stuff up and done, and then to be ready to perform is a big ask. It's a huge ask.

The weight of responsibility on actors is a burden.

Opening night Crociferi

The audience was packed with people, noisy people, enthusiastic people. *Crociferi* is an evocative space, difficult to work because the main playing area can be quite dark, but we were using all the space: the depth, the height, the peripheries, the well, the alcoves, the doorways, the tables, the audience.

Again, we had intensively scribbling audience members writing enthusiastic feedback forms. People from Brazil introduced themselves and loved it, a Canadian philosopher loved it, an audience member stopped me and said that she was lost today and saw a poster somewhere and decided to come and loved it. The organisers at *Crociferi* loved it. Fabbio Mangolini responded:[682]

> I enjoy it totally the enthusiasm of everyone, the joy to be there. It was wonderful to see the meeting: I'm telling you a story with the generosity, and you are here to accept and to be with us. It was very beautiful.[683]

Shaul Bassi commented on the watch scenes being topical because people are taking it upon themselves to gather watches in Italy and administer justice how they see fit; without conceptual intervention contemporary connections are still made, and more than one may be.

Tomorrow night is our last night.

Day seventeen: 31 July, Tuesday
Closing night

Tonight was the final night. Plentiful and effusive audience feedback again. It was probably the strongest show we have done. At the end Wadia left, barely saying goodbye, the penultimate note, dissonant. But we made a show. The rest of the company exhausted, elated, emotional, went for dinner at *L'Orso,* near the *Ponte de Rialto*, where, after many speeches and tears and thankyous, the event was not concluded, but rather a pact was made in desire for future events – after a well needed interlude.

It did not take Wadia much time, after the pressure subsided, to write the group an apology:

> My dear castmates,
>
> This note to you all is LONG overdue.
>
> I need to apologise for my sour and petulant behaviour towards the end of our production. I let the communal living, my frustrations with the process, and the infernal HEAT all get to me. But there really is no excuse for my shitty behaviour … Please forgive me. I hope we get the chance to work together again so I can make it up to you with love and good humour.[684]

---

[682] Fabbio Mangolini is a well-known Italian theatre practitioner and teacher, who gave a workshop on *commedia dell'arte* at the Much Ado About Italy symposium. See 'Fabio Mangolini', accessed 24 June 2022, http://www.fabiomangolini.com/About_Me.html.

[683] Mangolini, pers. comm.

[684] Wadia, pers. comm., 3 October 2018.

Wadia's talent and experience sustained the work, but his frustrations and disappointments revealed the inordinate pressures placed on actors in this process. This honest and humble response from Wadia shows that, despite the difficulties, there remains something worthwhile pursuing in forging an actor-led Shakespeare ensemble.[685]

As the palimpsest of voices subside, let the last musical notes of our *Much Ado* chime in the voices of the audience, who sound the final answer if Directorless Shakespeare can be revelatory:

> * I'm usually not a theatre goer but this recital of Shakespeare was so accessible, and entertaining, it has spurned a desire to seek out more Shakespeare!
> * Easily among the best Shakespeare performances I've seen in terms of understanding and portraying the meaning of the text.
> * Thank you for this truly wonderful performance! In this age of (profound) over production this performance was fresh, touching, loved and just what we need.
> * I had the best time. This is the first time I have watched/read 'much do about nothing', and I am so pleased I saw it here first.
> * I think having no director makes the effort a "team" effort that allows freedom and a mixture of opinions
> * Concordo con la sperimentazione tra attori nella ricerca di espressività e significati, percepiti vissuti dagli attori stessi. Grazie[686]
> * Shakespeare is stronger than a direction. All is there.

A major resistance to Directorless work is that an external eye needs to ensure the unity of the piece. We are fixated with unity. Scared of the rogue, unstable element. Of the other. And is there a single concept of unity? All the productions, and especially *Much Ado,* lacked unity in a traditional sense. They included a conflation of non-mimetic casting, different accents, different genders, different theatrical traditions, and different languages. But is unity intrinsically necessary and valued in and of itself, or are we displeased when it is absent because that is what we have come to expect when we see a theatrical event? A neatly packaged, well-thought out, decided, conceptual meal, already eaten and digested before it arrives to table.

> I think that a lot of the danger of English theatre is – good taste is a terrible killer of art … In life we are all in different scenes all the time: I'm in the middle of a Pinter and suddenly I'm in a farce, I thought I was in a Beckett and … I'm having a scene with somebody else that thinks they're in a Strindberg. That's true to life and true to Shakespeare. … Some Shakespeares can completely live in that plastique design – it shifts.[687]

Shakespeare was a stranger to the unities; a friend of inconsistency, uncertainty, and anachronism. Unity on stage is not necessarily worth striving for. It is not reflective of the world we live in and can never be the "mirror up to nature".[688] We always are other and living with other. And we must embrace alterity.

---

[685] In a friendly text exchange Wadia wrote: "I feel like I've done you a service. You need a villain for a good story, and I've played right into that!" pers. comm., 24 February 2023. Of course, Wadia was not our villain. He was our Don John - the hero that is capable of a little villainy. What his discomfort with the process revealed was that for directorless to be viable actors need structural support nourished by proper financing and longer rehearsal periods to attenuate unnecessary production pressures. Directorless actors need money and a room of one's own.

[686] I am in total agreement with experimentation between actors to search for expressiveness and meaning, experienced and perceived by the actors themselves. Thank you.

[687] Scott Handy, Interview with author, 17 June 2022.

[688] *Hamlet* 3.2.23-24.

This experiment has shown we need to fight against a fixation with unity, against the star individual, against the homogenisation of thought and theatre. We need to lift the curtain together, in a collective enterprise of group decision making.

ACT 2, SCENE 5

Chapter 5

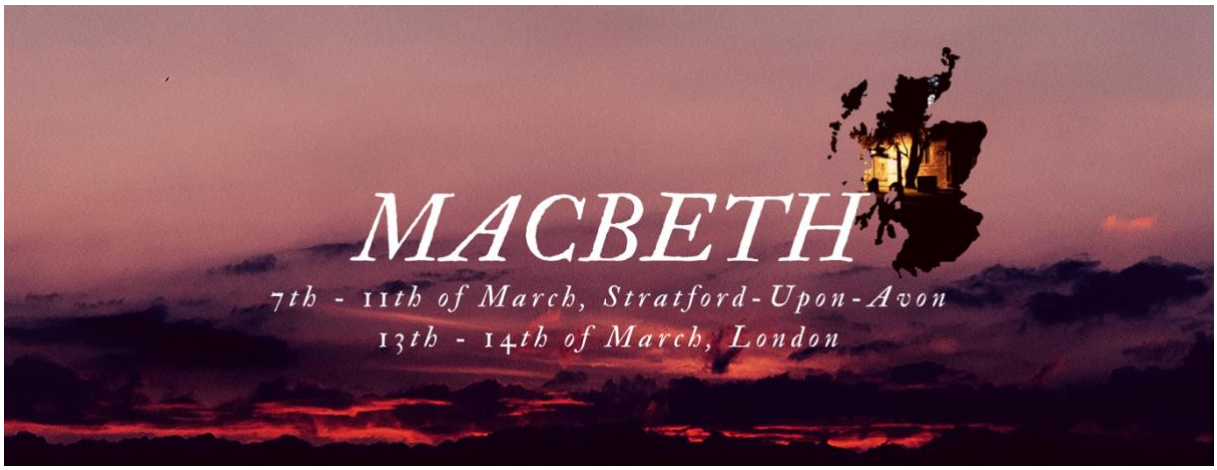
Knock Knock. Who's there? Director. Director who? Director-less.
Anərkē Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: a spectral tragedy, by the graves of Shakespeare and Burbage

Least our old Robes sit easier then our new.

- *Macbeth*

For me, I want to leave a theatre knowing that it will never leave me – with my bones on fire and my blood singing. You did this to me

- *Audience member*



***Macbeth* performed by Anərkē Shakespeare**

Holy Trinity Church, Stratford upon Avon, March 7th -11th, the final resting place of William Shakespeare

and

Saint Leonard's Church, Shoreditch, March 13thh -14th, the final resting place of Richard Burbage

https://www.globalshakespeares.co.uk/macbeth-holy-trinity-church

https://www.stratford-herald.com/whats-on/director-axed-for-unique-macbeth-at-holy-trinity-9131915/

Let us set the scene…

The audience files in. Buys a cup of wine. The gothic Holy Trinity church is dimly lit by house lights in the high vaulted ceiling. The actors are in the space, available, getting ready, meta-theatrically present. Katherine Abbot, the angelic soprano, playing every servant and messenger, walks through the space with a taper, singing, chanting and lighting candles. The place flickers into focus; sacrificial, ritualistic, magical, eerie. Candles that line the high windowsills illume the stained glass of torture and ecstasy. Candles on old wooden tables border the transept, the main part of the stage. The world transforms with the audience in it. And when the last person sits, the house lights dim. The actors take an unlit taper and walk to the tomb of Shakespeare, in the chancel at the back of the church. A moment of stillness. Then Kathrine beats a drum. Lifts her single voice to the harmonic chant of the haunting folk tune *Apple Tree*. She has one candle. The spot of light far in the distance. The ensemble begins to light their tapers from this light, distributed like an Orthodox ritual, and join their voices into the three-part harmony. They walk from the tomb in a procession of two lines, ghosts emerging, doomed to tell Shakespeare's tale over and over as they haunt the liminal space of fantasy, the past embodied in a spectral present: from the apse, through the crossing, to the transept. While Katherine beats her drum and sings the melody under the acoustically amplified crossing, the company reach the stage and peel off leaving three cast members in blacks. Three bearded men, epicene in the darkness, black lace veils lifted over their faces. And one candle. The final haunting refrain echoes off the walls and ceiling. "When shall we three meet againe?"[689] The play has begun.

[689] TLN 1. All *Macbeth* quotations, unless otherwise stated, are from William Shakespeare, *Macbeth: First Folio Edition* (First Folio Press, n.d.).

The final directorless production, The *Tragedy of Macbeth*, at Shakespeare and Burbage's resting places, arose out of the graves, haunting the spaces, by candlelight. Shakespeare's tragedy of darkness and shadows flickered in and out of focus by candle flames that illuminated as they obscured. The work flickered in and out of focus by actors that were as liberated as they were petrified. Anərkē Shakespeare's directorless *Macbeth* used an uncut text (except the excision of the Thomas Middleton interpolated scenes).[690] The actors cast the

[690] We chose to use a facsimile edition of the First Folio, as *Macbeth* does not have a complicated print history. The Folio is the only original printed copy and the text on which all subsequent editions are based. Although the Folio prints a version of the play which the King's Men had continued to use and modify after Shakespeare's death, and although the mediation of scribes and printers will have introduced further minor variants to the playhouse copies used when the play was first acted, this earliest surviving edition provides the richest and least pre-processed material for an embodied literary study attempting to circumvent the accruements and accretions that have been inscribed through subsequent editorial and theatrical practice. (For more on the complexities of Shakespeare's textual history see John Jowett, *Shakespeare and Text: Revised Edition*, Oxford Shakespeare Topics (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2019)). With *Richard II* and *Much Ado About Nothing* we had facsimile copies of Quarto and Folio editions in the room to consult, but both plays were cut collaboratively, and *Much Ado* was interlaced with Italian and intercultural translations. *Macbeth* presented the opportunity, with the excision of Thomas Middleton's ascribed additions, to interface with Shakespeare's text as uncut and unedited as possible for an embodied textual analysis on our contemporary stage.

characters as a company. Staged as a company. Promoted the show as a company. Designed the set, costumes and lighting as a company. Interpreted the roles as a company.

In less than two weeks.

Location was part of the ensemble, informing the atmosphere. Actors used all the space of both Churches. In Holy Trinity: the baptismal font at the back of the church for the cauldron rituals; the crossing for the apparitions; Becket's chapel, behind the pulpit, to change costumes on the visual periphery; the aisle for battle scenes and processions and charged entrances; the columns for secret whisperings of murderers; the nave filled with audience for the guests at the banquet; the Clopton chapel with its alabaster Renaissance tombs, where Duncan lies asleep and is sacrificed. In St. Leonard's: the raised platform with the altar filled with candles for sword fights, castles, and battle fields; the pews for creeping Birnam wood; the balcony for apparitions, with organ pipes towering overhead; the stairwells for echoes; the aisles for processions; the wooded alcoves for bedrooms; the church bell for knolling. The actors lit each other with lanterns and tapers. The audience were in the battlefield, in the castle, at the feast, in the home of Lady Macduff, in Scotland, at the murders, and at the final crowning of Malcom.

Anərkē Shakespeare's directorless *Macbeth* was received by standing ovations:

* For me, I want to leave a theatre, a performance, knowing that it will never leave me – with my bones on fire and my blood singing. You did this to me.
* A director has a single viewpoint like a camera. This production had a different viewpoint for each person present.
* The complex staging issues that usually arise in *Macbeth* were solved simply by the use of darkness and light in this terrific production.
* The humility in the atmosphere was refreshing. A celebration of each individual and also teamwork at the same time.
* There's an ownership about the production that led to a genuine performance.
* You are lucky enough in a production to see some actors fully present. But in this every actor was there giving it everything. I will never forget it.
*This is the best Shakespeare I have seen in twelve years, and I go to every Globe and RSC show.
* It was the best Macbeth play I have ever seen (and I am not young).

Ricardo Cardoso reflects:[691]

> E os atores tão presentes no jogo um com o outro, no olho, na respiração, na movimentação … No momento das aparições, a audiência não acreditava na (simples) dramaticidade do que via. E tudo com o Shakespeare batizado e enterrado ali em um canto, o mesmo de onde as três surgiam para suas cenas. O grupo Anarké é formado por atores profissionais e estudiosos shakespereanos, maior prova da importância da colaboração entre academia e palco … Eu confesso, nunca morri de amores por esse texto, mas nesse contexto político mundial (evocado) e na encenação quase poeticamente religiosa, ele se revelou para mim em toda sua enorme potência. E como um alerta.
>
> Finalmente entendi.
>
> Espetáculo para levar para a vida![692]

[691] Ricardo Cardoso is a Brazilian historian who writes on international diplomacy in Shakespeare's works.

[692] "The actors were so conscious/present in playing one with each other through their eyes, their breath, their movement … By the time of the "apparitions", the audience would not believe in the (simple) drama before their eyes. Moreover, all this was taking place while a baptized-and-buried Shakespeare was there in the church background, the very one from which mind the three sisters once emerged. The Anərkē company is formed by professional actors and Shakespearean scholars, which represents the greatest proof of the importance regarding collaboration between the academy and the stage … I confess, I have never been a great fan of this text, but in

Reflections, as with *Much Ado* and *Richard II*, comment on the revelatory nature of directorless work. Academics detail things they never noticed before, such as Cardoso finding *Macbeth* "revealed itself", that he "finally understood it" or Varsha Panjwani interested in other characters for the first time: "Usually, I just concentrate on the lead pair but, for the first time, I noticed the great supporting roles which this play provides."[693] This continues to answer this PhD's research questions: that Directorless Shakespeare's Embodied Literary Criticism (ELC) can better serve and illuminate Shakespeare's heteroglossia.[694] Paul Edmondson reflects:

> I recall peering into and beyond the flickering flames, which made me believe I was rediscovering, as it were, the interiority of the play afresh. What I mean by that, in part, is that this production encouraged me to meditate on *Macbeth*, and portrayed for me an atmosphere that most productions do not. A few feet from us, Elena Pellone's Lady Macbeth was moving "like a ghost" as she sleep-walked; Hunter Perske's Macbeth reached for the heroism in the role. And all the time, my sister, who hardly ever goes to the theatre, was sitting next to me transfixed and terrified.[695]

How did we choose *Macbeth* for the final experiment? It was a moment to make Rino Pellone's dream of playing the porter come true.[696] This is his reflection:

---

this worldly political context (evoked in the production) and in the almost poetically religious staging, *Macbeth* revealed itself to me in all its enormous power. And as a warning. I finally understood it. A spectacle for a lifetime!" Cardoso, 'Directorless *Macbeth* Reflection', 11 March 2020. (Translated by Cardoso.)

[693] Varsha Panjwani, audience reflection.

[694] "I understood the play more deeply and intuitively than ever before and the passion, the greed, the ambition, the horror and the madness, the love, so much love, all moved me like never before." (Janey Howarth, 7 March 2020, forwarded to the author, 29 November 2022)

[695] Paul Edmondson, pers. comm., 6 May 2021.

[696] Rino Pellone (my father), a Neapolitan comic actor, rang me and said he wanted to play the Porter; it was on his bucket list. He believed he could transcend any actor he had ever seen perform it. He flew from Australia to

> I've been on stage for over 50 years … All throughout my career as an actor/director I always waded through endless notes, either giving them or being given them by directors who had their set views on how the play/characters should be presented to the audience … I have come to realise certain things that I hadn't even considered before … I thought that being without a director, and only having a very short time to stage such a classic play, was going to be chaos to say the least. However, since our first reading, I noticed that every member of the cast took responsibility in having the freedom to discuss openly with the rest of the cast in interpreting Shakespeare's words in defining what was in every character's mind and heart. The result was astounding. It did prove that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts … each individual member of the cast added that extraordinary quality to the end product to make it a success.[697]

So, the play was chosen, our Robert Armin cast. For the other actors it felt important to have experienced directorless Shakespeareans to evolve a deeper engagement, but dates and logistics made that difficult. Some veterans came for the tour;[698] some new recruits entered the battlefield.[699] And thus, we had a company, and a play, fitted.

Anthony Renshaw reflects:

> There are many words to describe working with Anərkē Shakespeare. Among them are intense, frightening, alarming, terrifying and downright petrifying. But, more importantly, other words are, liberating, joyous, exciting, mind blowing and downright amazing. Last year's production of Macbeth was all of this. Two weeks' rehearsal of the uncut play (we had a couple of read throughs on line), what's the problem?
>
> Not having a director? No. It's incredible how some actors can adapt. Usually, on the first day of a "normal" rehearsal, the director and the production team, between them, have decided what the play is about, what each character will wear and what the set will be. There is absolutely nothing wrong with this.
>
> But imagine the first day you all meet as and company of actors and you have to decide!
>
> How exciting, how daunting....
>
> Some actors find it too much … We were lucky enough to open this production of the Scottish play in Holy Trinity Church Stratford-upon-Avon, the church wherein Shakespeare lies. Imagine that! … for me the most astonishing thing about this process of not having a director was the realisation of responsibility. To your own performance, to other actors' performances and the production as a whole … I swear the bond between actors who are all looking out for each other is so much stronger.
>
> In my own mind, I've likened working with Anərkē Shakespeare to childbirth. (Please forgive me all you mums out there!) I only mean that you forget the pain when the outcome is something so beautiful.

---

take part. He was knighted in 2022 for his contribution to Italian culture in Australia for his lifelong work in Italian theatre.

[697] R. Pellone, 'Directorless *Macbeth* Reflection', 28 September 2020. ("R. Pellone" and "E. Pellone" will be used to distinguish between Rino Pellone and Elena Pellone).

[698] **Elena Pellone**: Lady Macbeth, Ross, young Siward, Menteith; **Hunter Perske**: Macbeth; **Anthony Renshaw**: Macduff, Son, Third Witch, Captain, Second Murderer; **Bridget Sweeney**: Malcom, Angus, Fleance, Gentlewoman, Lord.

[699] **Katherine Abbott**: Donaldbain, messengers, musician; **Michael Bartelle**: First Witch, Duncan, First Murderer, Lennox, Siward; **Kirstin Daniels**: Banquo, Lady Macduff, Doctor, Caithness; **Rino Pellone**: Porter, Second Witch, Old Man, Third Murderer, Seyton.

I've been lucky enough to work for "big" theatre companies and felt pride at the shows produced. But no work I've ever done has made me feel so alive as an actor, as Anərkē has.

It's a magical process I would recommend to any actor.

It's something I would do again and again.

It's an experience I hold dear to my heart.

It's simply wonderful.[700]

By now, some of the working ropes were familiar. We collectively cast. We choose the costumes as a company from what stock we had access to.[701] A morning of fashion shows and parades, trial, error and voting, resulted in a lush aesthetic that was mostly mediaeval: historical and hand-made pieces, blood red, deep blue, maroon and gold, and royal purple velvets, fur lined robes, doublets and trousers, white ghostly nightgowns, Macbeth in an intricately woven leather vest, and an ensemble base of blacks. The company helped each other dress in the shadows at the edge of the staging frame, for scene and multiple character changes. Sometimes the changes happened on stage. The three weyward sisters, after the first vignette, became the King, the bloody captain and a soldier in the second scene, using the final line of their incantation to transform themselves. The Son of Macduff (or mini-duff as we called him) played by Renshaw, who also played Macduff, was murdered by the murderers de-robing his leather trimmed, cotton-woven shift in one violent movement, leaving him on stage as Macduff for the next scene.

Katherine Abbott reflects:

It was a fascinating journey of discovery to work within a directorless company of players; each person discovering his or her own boundaries when it came to suggesting ideas, finding out how far one could push themselves as both actor and visualiser, discovering the limits of one's energy when the impetus is up for grabs and when everyone's opinion is valid and equal.

Somehow our patchwork quilt of ideas was weaved and meshed beautifully. Ideas were quickly turned into action and scenes were gradually solidified and approved of by the collective.

People's energy levels would change day to day but as the week drew to an end and we grew closer to opening night – it felt as though we'd all reached the same level, a charged equilibrium, we contained the same amount of fire, knowing, pride and excitement about the work we were about to present.

Doing a production of Macbeth in the space of a week seemed daunting but we were all so willing to take on the task at hand and pour our hearts and souls into it, that the intensity our time limits created I believe only added to the relentless drive and passion that was so evident throughout the entire process. We became like one organism, working seamlessly as a team and by closing night, the collective energy we held as a company felt explosive. Confirmation of this came from the audience's reaction when we could hear a pin drop and the space between the audience and the cast was swallowed up by a mutual connectivity.[702]

[700] Renshaw, 'Anerke Shakespeare: Macbeth', 28 January 2021.

[701] From the Holy Trinity Players, Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) costume hire, personal items and the Shakespeare Institute Players' store.

[702] Abbott, 'Directorless *Macbeth* Reflection', 28 January 2021.

The scene changes were interlaced, seamless, and replete with the metatheatrical ensemble weaving and supporting the liminal boundaries of the play. Lanterns and candles exchanged hands through characters, light and shadow on a journey through the tapestry and threads of the play, the actors, and its characters.

> I love the brazenness of doing a devilish play inside of a church and using the sacred places, using the tomb to murder Duncan, with a dead person really there. And I love how fast the transitions are, so that the whole play is done in one hit. I love how it's metatheatrical and you can see us changing, liturgically, in Becket's Chapel. And I love how there is very little superimposed, so if there is music, it's really coming out of the positions in the text where there might be music, rather than now we're going to do this scene, you know people are always adding in little scenes and little dance scenes that have nothing to do with it. I love the beauty and the mystery of the candles. I love the elegance of the storytelling.[703]

We moved to St Leonard's in Shoreditch for the final few performances; bringing the play to the resting place of Richard Burbage, and putting it to rest just before the Covid-19 pandemic closed theatres for more than a year. The staging, slightly changed, was still immersive, using the beauty, the ritual and the sacredness of the holy space: the aisle, the pews, the altar with a towering crucifix as a backdrop, the raised dais as the playing field, the roaming sword fight clanging frighteningly close to the audience, the hidden chamber as Duncan's final resting place.

We used even more candles and candelabras, lent to us by the church, masquerading in the dark play from their usual purpose at mass. The apparitions appeared in the heavens, on the balcony, by the organ diapason pipes, at the back of the church, behind the audience; then silently ran down the stairs to form the procession of Kings, ominously marching down

[703] E. Pellone.

the aisle, circling Macbeth with their loud, crescendo cry until, blowing out their candles, they left him, alone, in darkness.

Zed Josef reflected on the space for discoveries about the play, and even self-discovery, in the democratic plurality of the staging, and of directorless work:[704]

> What struck me immediately was how undemocratic a proscenium arch theatre is for audience members – we are forced to engage with a production from one very definite point-of-view … staging precludes a plurality of views: everything must be channelled through the front-on view of a world-behind-a-frame, fourth wall very much intact, in which the director's vision is the only one permitted. This is why thrust stages and performances in the round have always been and will always be a nightmare for any theatre director: the staging throws into sharp relief the impossibility of their megalomania because they cannot control the totality of what audience members will choose to look at. In this production, we as audience members are empowered to be a part of the production because the production is everywhere: we have the autonomy to choose which characters, which storylines, which production it is that we want to watch. Authors write in 3D, not gilt picture frames. …
>
> Directored theatre presupposes that an audience wants to watch a singularity of interpretation and vision: this is "x's" version of Shakespeare/Marlowe/Moliere/etc (it becomes more difficult to include twentieth-century authors in this list by which time the convention of a director is established and work is more often written with this singularity in mind). While watching your production I lost count of the amount of times I thought to myself "I've never noticed that this play is about 'x'." Just as in our experience of life, every person will compute, interpret, and react to this production in subtly unique ways for the simple reason that this show has allowed them to: the brilliance of the writing is that it is open to interpretative multiplicity, of the actors' and therefore of the audience's. A writer with any ambition will seek to

[704] Zed Joseph a professional actor who was at the time working for the Royal Shakespeare Company.

> create work that defies easy definition; this is because storytelling is not a tradition of interpretation, but a practice of relation. Directored work negates this ambition by removing the possibility of the exquisite richness of exchange in favour of the dull certainty of artistic vision: it confirms that art is an act of testament rather than connection. Put simply directored work is a lecture, while directorless work is a conversation. In your Macbeth I was able to impose myself on the work, surprise myself in my understanding of it, and therefore enjoy it as a process of self-exploration.[705]

It is worth quoting this at length as it articulates the realised ambitions of the research: Directorless Shakespeare as a conversation not a lecture; as an audience's self-exploration; as interpretative multiplicity that allows the spectator to notice things never noticed before.

To be best able to embody the subtleties of the text, we shared research into *Macbeth*'s historical backdrop by consulting Shakespeare's major source text, Holinshed's *History of Scotland*.[706] *Macbeth* occurs at a particular historical fulcrum where the old ways of succession, through violence, assassination, and election, are being replaced by the newly devised custom of being appointed, or, further, establishing the rights of primogenitor. Thus,

---

[705] Josef, 'Directorless *Macbeth* Reflection', 16 March 2020.

[706] Raphael Holinshed, *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland ...: Scotland* (J. Johnson, 1808), Vol. V. See also 'The Holinshed Project Texts', accessed 22 January 2023, http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/Holinshed/. For a detailed study and analysis of Holinshed and *Macbeth* see Robert Adger Law, 'The Composition of "Macbeth" with Reference to Holinshed', *The University of Texas Studies in English* 31 (1952): 35–41 and 'The Source of Macbeth: Holinshed's Chronicles', accessed 8 May 2021, https://shakespeare-navigators.com/macbeth/Holinshed/index.html.
There are many literal inspirations in the history of Makbeth for the plot of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in Holinshed, with actual line and scene appropriations, including: the battle against Sueno, King of Norway; the three "weird sisters" in strange and wild apparel who all hail Makbeth as thane of Glamis and Cawdor, who hereafter shalt be King of Scotland, and prophesise Banquho's issue as kings in a long line of continual descent; the vanishing of the three women; Duncan's appointment of Malcolme (to defraud Makbeth of all claim to the crown); Makbeth's wife inciting the assassination; the fleeing of Malcolme and Donald Bane; Makbeth invested as King at Scone; Duncane buried at Colmekill; Makbeth hiring murderers to kill Banquho while Fleance escapes; Makbeth's increasing fears and slaugters; a witch telling Makbeth that none of woman born shall slay him nor will he be vanquished till Bernane wood come to Dunsinane; Makbeth putting all fear out of his heart; murdering Makduffe's wife and children; Makduffe pleading for Malcolme to come back from England and Malcolme's long test of Makduffe's worthiness; the invasion of Scotland; Malcolme ordering branches to be cut at Bernane wood; Makduffe's untimely birth ripped out of his mother's womb and slaying and decapitation of Makbeth; king Malcome creating the first Scottish earls (Holinshed, Vol. V, 264-277). Although Macbeth did slay Duncan in the chronicles, he does this in a battle at Enverns. We find the details for Shakespeare's assassination of Duncan in the murder of king Duffe. The parallels abound, including the gifts that Duffe bestows before proposing to leave the castle, the murderer Donwalde and his wife feasting the chamberlains till they fall into unconscious sleep, Donwalde slaying the chamberlains, and the eternal night that follows (Vol. V, 233-235). These are not the only places of inspiration. Holinshed's Macbeth is not the favoured choice for the throne over Duncan because of his "crueltie". Shakespeare infuses the character of Macbeth, with "milk of human kindness", and a more complex and conflicted interiority - guilt, consciousness and most importantly fear. This is drawn from Holinshed's account of Kenneth, located midway between the story of King Duffe and Makbeth. Kenneth gives a long oration detailing his change to the ancient order of the crown being decided by election to that of being appointed, because of the pursuant danger unto the issue left behind of the King: the sundry murders, civil discord and wicked practises. He appoints his son Malcom, though as yet underage, prince of Cumberland. The multitude, realising that it would be vain to deny that which would be had by violence, agree that the king should appoint whom he thinks most meet, abrogating the ancient law of devising kings (Vol V, 246). But this gives Kenneth little comfort. After murdering Duffe's son to assure his own son's succession, Kenneth lives in continual fear (Vol. V, 247). Shakespeare develops this into the disturbed mind, full of scorpions, the restless ecstasy, that is so notable in his eponymous hero. Kenneth hears voices and can no longer sleep (Vol. V, 247). This interiority is what gives the play its powerful narrative of fear, ambition and finally the isolation and loneliness that is the inevitable succession of these things. The world is violent from the beginning of the play. The Macbeths are created in a world of violence to be violent. The way Malcom comes to power at the end of the play is through violence and regicide.

when Duncan names Malcom, his first-born, as his successor, it is a political manoeuvre designed to weaken Macbeth's legitimate claim. This is a conflation of old and new customary practice to obtain the crown.[707]

Macbeth's very first thought, after the weyward sisters' prophecy of his kingship, is to commit murder.[708] We recognised as a company that the Macbeths' way to seize power was not the pursuit of tyrannical sociopaths, but a way to "make themselves" in the bloody mess of succession that had historical precedence.[709] Lady Macbeth reminds Macbeth of this precedence: "They haue made themselues, and that their fitnesse now / Do's vnmake you".[710] There is only one other time "made themselves" appears in the play: in Macbeth's letter to his "*dearest Partner of Greatnesse*" – "*they made themselues Ayre, into which they vanish'd*".[711] To make yourselves is a powerful, almost magical act. Dangerous, but remarkable and necessary.

The normalcy of the practise of regicide in Scottish succession gives a particular reading to the ambitions of the Macbeths, not as appalling monsters who lack conscience, but rather as a product of a brutal, war-torn, and anxious society. It also informs the ensemble responses in Act 1, scene 3, that the naming of Malcolm is not a matter of course but somewhat of a surprise. To understand the world of the play, rather than collapsing it into a particular agenda, serves not only to attend to the subtleties and amplify the concerns of the text, but renders the interpretation open to various contemporary concerns, rather than in service of one overtly political statement. We still live in a violent society, where violence is not only a threat but is heroically rewarded.

In attending to text intricacies another interrupter to the directorless process became evident. The academic editor. In Arden's third edition Ross' lines – TLN 76-83 – are glossed with confusing or doubtful notes.[712] Note 55, glossing "Bellona's bridegroom", is a

---

[707] Raphael Holinshed's *History of Scotland*, Shakespeare's major source text, makes this clear. 'The Source of *Macbeth*: Holinshed's Chronicles', accessed 8 May 2021, https://shakespeare-navigators.com/macbeth/Holinshed/index.html.

[708] If good? why doe I yeeld to that suggestion,
Whose horrid Image doth vnfixe my Heire,
And make my seated Heart knock at my Ribbes,
Against the vse of Nature? (TLN 245-8)

[709] In 997 CE King of Scotland Constantine was murdered, suspicion fell on Kenneth III who succeeded him, who was killed by Malcom II in battle in 1005 CE, who then ruled in a rare moment of stability for 29 years. Malcom II was the son of Kenneth II who was nicknamed *An Fionnghalach*, "The Fratricide" and who succeed from King Cuilén when the latter was killed in 971 CE. Macbeth's mother, Doada, was the second daughter of Malcom II and his father, Findlaech MacRuaridh, was mormaer (an earl) of Moray. His father was murdered by Macbeth's cousins, Malcolm and Gillecomgain, when Macbeth was fifteen, on suspicion that Findlaech MacRuaridh was too close to the King of Scotland, Malcom II. Macbeth is of royal lineage and as much in line for the throne as his first cousin Duncan. Holinshed details the reason why Macbeth is not elected: it is his cruelty in contrast with Duncan's clemency: "After Malcolme succéeded his nephue Duncane the sonnne of his daughter Beatrice: for Malcolme had two daughters, the one which was this Beatrice … the other called Doada, was maried vnto Sincell the thane of Glammis, by whom she had issue one Makbeth a valiant gentleman, and one that if he had not béen somewhat cruel of nature, might haue been thought most worthie the gouernment of the realme. On the other part, Duncane was so soft and gentle of nature, that the people wished the inclinations and maners of these two cousins to haue been so tempered and interchangeablie bestowed betwixt them, that where the one had too much of clemencie, and the other of crueltie." Holinshed, *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland ...: Scotland* (J. Johnson, 1808), Vol. V, 264 – 265.

[710] TLN 532-3.

[711] TLN 351-8.

[712] *Norway* himselfe, with terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyall Traytor,
The *Thane* of Cawdor, began a dismall Conflict,
Till that *Bellona's* Bridegroome, lapt in proofe,
Confronted him with selfe-comparisons,

complicated account of differing editorial readings, and a continuing debate whether the murder of Cawdor is by Macbeth or Macduff, the latter a proposition to counter an apparent inconsistency when Macbeth is shortly after surprised to hear of Cawdor's death.[713] This is confusing because Cawdor is not murdered on the battlefield: Norway is the main clause of the passage and continuing subject for the scene, Cawdor only a sub-clause. Textual evidence supports Bellona's bridegroom as Macbeth, foreshadowing Lady Macbeth as the goddess of war. A few lines after this passage Duncan asks Ross to greet Macbeth with Cawdor's title, bestowed for Macbeth's nobleness, and Ross informs Macbeth that the title is a reward for his exploits in battle against the Norwegian ranks.[714] Angus follows with lines that prove Cawdor still lives.[715] Directorless Shakespeare ELC must remain scrupulously sceptical of inherited interpretations of text.

Further, the hand of the editor works powerfully to direct the actor. Randall McLeod reflects:

Point against Point, rebellious Arme 'gainst Arme,
Curbing his lauish spirit: and to conclude,
The Victorie fell on vs. (TLN 76-83)

[713] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Sandra Clark and Pamela Mason, 3rd edition (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2015), 135.

[714] "He findes thee in the stout Norweyan Rankes, / Nothing afeard of what thy selfe didst make / Strange Images of death" (TLN 199-201).

[715] "Who was the *Thane*, liues yet, / But vnder heauie Iudgement beares that Life, / Which he deserues to loose" (TLN 216-18).

> I realized that editors had made a vast number of changes that affected meaning. At that point, I became deeply unsatisfied with editing and I became resentful of what editors had done.[716]

The Arden third edition professes to be a relatively faithful rendition: "The play needs to be allowed to make a case in its own terms … to respect the layout of the Folio text presents rich and expressive lines for reader and actor; editorial practice seems to have gained nothing and lost a great deal".[717] However, a close comparison of lineation and punctuation reveals this is not the case. Punctuation and lineation will tell actors something very particular. Editorial interpolation is like a director, only silent, and potentially more deadly. In directorless work the actor must guard against narrowing choices permitted by the "imperfections" of the text:

> It came to me that I was captured by the eighteenth-century mindset. They [editors] had taken these lines of little snippets and strung them out as a pentameter line, and you go down like a staircase. That's very pretty but it's not what it's like to read an original text.[718]

The Arden alters lineation to establish which are shared lines, and where they fall: a directorial imperative for an actor trained to treat shared lines with alacrity. But this is decided at times without clear indications in the Folio text.

> *Rosse.*
> …
> Contending 'gainst Obedience, as they would
> Make Warre with Mankinde.
> Old man. 'Tis said, they eate each other.
> *Rosse.* They did so:
> To th'amazement of mine eyes that look'd vpon't.
> *Enter Macduffe.*
> Heere comes the good *Macduffe.*
> How goes the world Sir, now? (TLN 940-51)

Compare:

> ROSS
> …
> Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would
> Make war with mankind.
> OLD MAN 'Tis said they eat each other.
> ROSS
> They did so, to th' amazement of mine eyes
> That looked upon 't.
> *Enter* MACDUFF.
> Here comes the good Macduff.
> How goes the world, sir, now? (Arden, 2.4.14-21)

The Arden editors have rendered "Make war with mankind" and "'Tis said, they eat each other" into a shared line, untidily finishing the iambic and leaving the line too long in stresses. The shared line falls more naturally between "'Tis said they eat each other" and "They did so" with a pause ensuing at the end of the line before the dramatic reveal: "To th'amazement of mine eyes that lookd vpon't", which if left as one full iambic line allows for the comedy to be timed perfectly. If it is turned into a shared line we lose the comedy, but

[716] Lorenzo Dell'Oso, 'Looking at Books, Instead of Reading Them: A Conversation with Randall McLeod', *Tipofilologia. Rivista Internazionale di Studi Filologici e Linguistici sui Testi a Stampa*, no. XI (2018): 131–41.
[717] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Clark and Mason, 302-8.
[718] Randall Mcleod, pers. comm., 5 May 2021.

also the gear shift of the scene when the duologue is rhythmically interrupted to make a very tense trinity of the old man, with his weight as timekeeper, and the two lords embodying the division of the realm after Macbeth's accession.

This vignette of a scene, with three characters embodying the trinity of division in a world unstable, fractured and dark, resounds in the echo chamber of language that runs through the play, and harmonises with Shakespeare's extended metaphor of the existential state of man as actor. Ross's words, on the heavens being troubled by man's actions, plays on the theatre, the heavens the canopy above the stage.[719] Shakespeare collapses the bloody earth and the actor's stage. In the theatre the light is changed by man's act: daylight in the Globe transforms to night through Ross's words. There is something unnatural, sinister even, about the nature of theatre which has power to change the heavens with a human act. Undirected, I was able to connect to the metatheatrical heart of the play in this moment as Ross. I was a fraction of the whole and one of the parts that added to a greater sum than myself.

Macduff reflects metatheatrically on defining identity by changing costumes:

Well may you see things wel done there: Adieu
Least our old Robes sit easier then our new.[720]

[719] *Rosse.* Ha, good Father,
Thou seest the Heauens, as troubled with mans Act,
Threatens his bloody Stage: byth'Clock 'tis Day,
And yet darke Night strangles the trauailing Lampe:
Is't Nights predominance, or the Dayes shame,
That Darknesse does the face of Earth intombe,
When liuing Light should kisse it?
Old man. 'Tis vnnaturall,
Euen like the deed that's done (TLN 929-37).
[720] TLN 975.

In directorless work, perhaps the old robes, the forgotten way of working, sit easier when mounting a Shakespeare production, than our new.

Another example of the Arden's re-lineation is between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth immediately after Duncan's assassination:

> Lady. My Hands are of your colour: but I shame
> To weare a Heart so white. *Knocke.*
> I heare a knocking at the South entry:
> Retyre we to our Chamber:
> A little Water cleares vs of this deed.
> How easie is it then? your Constancie
> Hath left you vnattended. *Knocke.*
> Hearke, more knocking.
> Get on your Night-Gowne, least occasion call vs,
> And shew vs to be Watchers: be not lost
> So poorely in your thoughts.
> Macb. To know my deed, *Knocke.*
> 'Twere best not know my selfe.
> Wake *Duncan* with thy knocking:
> I would thou could'st. *Exeunt.* (TLN 726-40)
> Compare:
> LADY MACBETH
> My hands are of your colour, but I shame
> To wear a heart so white. I hear a knocking *Knock*
> At the south entry. Retire we to our chamber;
> A little water clears us of this deed.
> How easy is it then. Your constancy
> Hath left you unattended. *Knock*
> Hark, more knocking.
> Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us
> And show us to be watchers. Be not lost
> So poorly in your thoughts.
> MACBETH
> To know my deed 'twere best not know myself. *Knock*
> Wake Duncan with thy knocking. I would thou
> couldst. *Exuent.* (Arden, 2.2.65-75)

It has been completely reorganised. All the dramatic tension is drained out it in an attempt to make it follow iambic rules, which do not allow for the stage tension and interruptions of the knocking and the continual reorganising of new lines, trying to manage a new situation that is threatening to spiral out of control and unravel the very state of their beings. The precision of the repeated lineation in the Folio of short sentences may not be an accident, or lack of space, or the need to notate *knock*. Even if it is, there is no reason to re-organise it. It prints a poetic moment that has a linguistic presence unlike all that has gone before: a rupture from the way this couple in love, with shared language patterns and rhythmic interchange, have spoken to each other. The re-organisation is directorial, but the interference occurs when the actor is unaware of who the guiding force of interpretation is being suggested by. It's the lack of transparency in all these line changes that is troubling, especially in an edition that professes:

> there has been a determined commitment to clarity and transparency in the way in which textual matters have been discussed and resolved … It is dangerous … to argue

> that because sections of the text can be rearranged to offer more regular lines than appear in the Folio an editor should re-lineate.[721]

Not only is the lineation consistently changed, but the punctuation is continually re-ordered. Commas are changed to full stops, full stops are changed to dashes, colons become semi-colons, question marks are introduced. It would take too long to do a study of this in great detail, but all of these silent, even small "amendments", reduce the actor's autonomy and choices when it comes to interpreting the coded clues and cues of Shakespeare's text.

> I mean, it comes down to punctuation and constructing these long lines of pentameter with five different speakers each having a di-syllable. It's turning it into high art rather than raw material – a recipe for making a production or Shakespeare expressing his thought.[722]

Shakespeare's text is raw source material. A member of the ensemble. Words can be like actors liberated from editors, as actors are liberated from directors. Intrinsic to the process of learning lines is discovering meaning constructed at the microlevel. From the smallest sign you create a ligature to the whole play, internalising its music, heartbeats, syncopation, rhythm, the secrets revealed in the grain of sand that is each syllable, and even comma or full stop. That is why the text should be considered without the directorial hand of the editor.

I have begun, and will develop, a language analysis, that drove character, relationships and themes of our *Macbeth*, but this chapter cannot analyse all the intricacies of *Macbeth*'s language or share all the thoughts and revelations that happened on the floor as we embodied the text and as the play embodied us. Therefore, I must function as a director, directing the choices of what to share, and for this I feel at a loss. You cannot find a play in quotations; it is in the echo chamber of the world of the language from woe to go. In directed plays, actors are usually more invested in the scenes they are in, scheduled only to be in rehearsal for these moments, in performance listening for a cue on the tannoy, as if your part is yours but the whole play belongs to the director. The undirected actor may notice things about the whole play. Being in the space, helping sow seeds, means the language of the play is developed as a company, not as individuated scenes. The links and crossovers reveal themselves. The Anərkē ensemble were there in creation as much as possible, listening to the reverberations of language and plot throughout the whole, and haunting the liminal metatheatrical space during the performance, sustaining and supporting. Spending time with language without being directed or interpreted, the actors, even the actors who are not in the scenes, are invested in every moment.

Directors often imagine that being an actor is a kind of precious, vulnerable state that needs to be cared for, providing them a safe space to play: "The attitude exists that, in the relationship between producer, director and actor, they are the adults and we are the children".[723] But actors do not carry the play or a huge role, it is not an exhausting burden, the words bear weight. The play and the text are the suspension bridge that actors walk across, actors are not the bridge that the play walks across: "Simple thought, beautifully put, and I'm trying not to get in the way of it."[724] If the words are in place, then the bridge is suspended.

Shakespeare writes verse and rhythm in characters' heartbeats: not just with literal words, but with the sounds and the rhythm of the language, the heartbeat of the text. *Macbeth*

---

[721] Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Clark and Mason, 301-5.
[722] Randall McLeod, pers. comm.
[723] Christopher Eccleston, *I Love the Bones of You: My Father and the Making of Me* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2019), 173.
[724] Perske, pers. comm., 25 February 2020.

uncut allowed the heteroglossia to be released. The following section details some discoveries of the ELC through collaborative performance.

Bridget Sweeney discussed Malcom's speech patterns: his marked repetition of "but" and 'yet':

> I feel like all our characters are like – I know what I want *but* I am going to retract it and say something so that there's a loophole, and what is Macbeth about? It's about a loophole, it's about finding loopholes in the whole entire play because that's what the twist is – there's a loophole in the prophecy. And what are you doing when you're saying a sentence that then says *but* or *yet*? You're saying something but in the midst of that you say that you are on both sides. All of my conjunctions are generally a *but* or a *yet*.[725]

Actors discovering and sharing language patterns inform the play, without table talk: "We are *yet but* yong indeed."[726]

This echo chamber of language in *Macbeth* was remarkable for its very precision. The struggle to memorise word perfect, phrase perfect, rhythm perfect, punctuation perfect, reveals things about the text that can be missed in reading. In the dagger speech, Perske initially substituted a "that" for a "which", but micro details matter. Perhaps coded into that moment, and into the language of the play, is the supernatural, the homophone "which" echoing in the space as "witch": "Is this a Dagger, which I see before me?"; "And say, which Graine will grow, and which will not"; "*they made themselues Ayre, into which they vanish'd.*"[727]

Loaded words are like a telegram of the play: worthy, dare, deed, fear, horror, weird, knock, blood, hands, heart. The heteroglossia was resounding. The echoes in the church, resonating with the echoes of the text: the words rang through the play like the bell Lady Macbeth rings to invite the murder. The play's myriad-mindedness interrogates categories of binaries and individualism. If we read the play as single words, spoken by single heroes, through the concept and direction of the single mind, we may miss this: words disseminate, repeat, amplify, distort.

You can see this with the trajectory of the word *worthy*. Both the thane of Ross and Lady Macbeth use the term "worthy thane". This word, tracked on its journey through the play in the mouths of many characters, is always, except its first usage (which in the Folio has a different spelling to the rest) an adjective directly followed by a person or group of people. This consistent usage is different to other Shakespeare plays. The term "worthy", in various states of candour, mutates, morphs, repositions who is worthy, what one must do to be worthy, in a journey that we know will not cease when the play does.[728]

In a play riddled by fear, and grappling with what it means to have courage, the word *dare* resounds in its cave of echoes, hauntingly amplified by its repetitions and resonances.[729]

---

[725] Bridget Sweeney, pers. comm., 27 February 2020.

[726] Macbeth TLN 1437, my italics.

[727] Macbeth TLN 613; Banquo TLN 159; Lady Macbeth TLN 352.

[728] The merciless *Macdonwald /* (Worthie to be a Rebell) … worthy gentleman … worthy *Thane* of Rosse … worthy *Thane* … most worthy thane … Worthy *Macbeth* … O worthyest cousin … My worthy *Cawdor* … worthy *Banquo* … worthy Cawdor … worthy *Thane* … worthy *Thane* … worthy Friends … My worthy Lord … my most worthy friends … many worthy Fellowes … worthy Vncle … Worthy *Macduffe* … (Captaine TLN 29-30; Duncan TLN 43; Malcome TLN 68; Duncan TLN 72; Duncan TLN 342; Rosse TLN 211; Banquo TLN 263; Duncan TLN 296; Duncan TLN 335; Duncan TLN 342; Lady Macbeth TLN 406; Lady Macbeth TLN 701; Macduffe TLN 789; Lady Macbeth TLN1321; Lady Macbeth TLN 1356; Lady Macbeth TLN 1359; Rosse TLN 2023; Malcome TLN 2383; Malcome TLN 2385).

[729] Letting I dare not, wait vpon I would … I dare do all that may become a man / Who dares no more, is none … Who dares receiue it other … Looke on't againe, I dare not … that dare looke on that / Which might appall the Diuell … What man dare, I dare … I dare not speake much further … I dare abide no longer … For goodnesse dare not check thee … I thinke, but dare not speake … Which the poore heart would faine deny, and

And *deed*, the recurring euphemism for murder.[730] *Hands* is another word that echoes.[731] The heteroglossia, the repetition, astonish throughout the play: all the promises, all the broken promises.[732]

Sometimes the lack of repetition was also surprising. *White* appears only once, as a figuration of cowardice.[733]

Deed, do, done … knock, knock, knock … Horror, Horror, Horror … false, fair, foul … eye, hand, tongue … hail, hail, hail … I'll do, I'll do, I'll do … tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow … the number three resounds throughout. Much noted in its structure and themes, it also occurred to us as we immersed ourselves in the world of the whole play. Three witches meet three times, three servants, three messengers, three murderers, drink is a great provoker of three things, three ears, within three miles, thrice the brinded cat hath mewed, thrice times thrice to make up nine.

The play is strikingly organised with a heartbeat of three.

There are doubles, and binaries, which the third liminal space transforms. One becomes the other. Fair is Foul. It is the liminality of desire for what is not in front of us – the third realm, between shadow and light – that the play inhabits. It is the unquiet mind, the poor-rich gain that sacrifices what we already have, to have not. What emerged for us were the shadow and light in *Macbeth*, served by the candlelight in our play. Candlelight illuminates and obscures; casts ephemeral and manifold shadows. The candlelight highlights the ambiguity in the text, the moving from darkness to light through shadow. It is beautiful and ritualistic. The shadow of the whiteness of the flame. The pressure of what are you thinking? What you are not thinking? What are you looking at? How goes the night boy?:

---

dare not … (Lady Macbeth TLN 521; Macbeth TLN 524-5; Lady Macbeth TLN 560; Macbeth TLN 710; Macbeth TLN 1327-8; Macbeth TLN 1376; Rosse TLN 1731; Messenger TLN 1784; Macduff TLN 1853; Doctor TLN 2171; Macbeth TLN 2254).

[730] Strong both against the Deed … Shall blow the horrid deed in euery eye … Words to the heat of deedes too cold breath giues … th'attempt, and not the deed, / Confounds vs … I haue done the deed … These deeds must not be thought … A little Water cleares vs of this deed … To know my deed, / 'Twere best not know my selfe … 'Tis vnnaturall / Euen like the deed that's done … Is't known who did this more then bloody deed … which puts vpon them / Suspition of the deed … There shall be done a deed of dreadfull note … Till thou applaud the deed … We are yet but yong indeed … A deed without a name … This deed Ile do … vnnaturall deeds / Do breed vnnaturall troubles … (Macbeth TLN 487; Macbeth TLN 498; Macbeth TLN 641; Lady Macbeth TLN 661-2; Macbeth TLN 665; Lady Macbeth TLN 698; Lady Macbeth TLN 730; Macbeth TLN 737-8; Rosse TLN 953; Macduff TLN 959-60; Macbeth TLN 1202; Macbeth TLN 1205; Macbeth TLN 1427; Witches TLN 1579; Macbeth TLN 1707; Doctor TLN 2164).

[731] The weyward Sisters, hand in hand … The Eye winke at the Hand … beare welcome in your Eye, / Your Hand, your Tongue … Giue me your hand … euen-handed Iustice … The Handle toward my Hand … Hangmans hands … wash this filthie Witnesse from your Hand … What Hands are here? hah: they pluck out mine Eyes. / Will all great *Neptunes* Ocean wash this blood / Cleane from my Hand? no: this my Hand will rather / The multitudinous Seas incarnardine … My Hands are of your colour … In the great Hand of God … vnlineall Hand … with thy bloodie and inuisible Hand … Strange things I haue in head, that will to hand … Vnder a hand accurs'd … Looke how she rubbes her hands … seeme / thus washing her hands … will these hands ne're be cleane … sweeten this little hand … Wash your hands … giue me your hand … His secret Murthers sticking on his hands … selfe and violent hands … (Witches TLN 130; Macbeth TLN 340; Lady Macbeth TLN 419-20; King TLN 467; Macbeth TLN 484; Macbeth TLN 614; Macbeth TLN 683; Lady Macbeth TLN 704; Macbeth TLN 720-3; Lady Macbeth TLN 726; Banquo TLN 899; Macbeth TLN 1053; Macbeth TLN 1207; Macbeth TLN 1422; Macbeth TLN 1524; Doctor TLN 2120; Gentlewoman TLN 2122; Lady Macbeth TLN 2135; Lady Macbeth TLN 2143; Lady Macbeth TLN 2153; Lady Macbeth TLN 2158; Angus TLN 2195; Malcom TLN 2533).

[732] I goe, and it is done … Ile goe no more … sleepe no more … double trust … Double, double, toile and trouble … double sence … (Macbeth TLN 643; Macbeth TLN 708; Macbeth TLN 700; Witches TLN 1537; Macbeth TLN 486; Macbeth TLN 2460).

[733] "My Hands are of your colour: but I shame / To weare a Heart so white" (Lady Macbeth TLN 726-7).

night, shadows, thresholds. The haunting figures of the ghosts doomed to repeat the play over and over, coming out of the grave, out of Shakespeare's mind, and then returning, resonated with all the ghosts in the play, the spectral figures, the liminal spaces.

We decided to stage the murder without literal blood. With figurative blood. Befitting a play that mistook what was real for what were "horrible imaginings".[734] But we chose to have literal water. This scene became something liturgical in the church, resonating with the altars, the graves, the baptismal font, the candles, the knave, the pulpit, the crossing, fir branches for Birnam woods, and props of chalices. When Lady Macbeth entered in Act 2, scene 2, she was slightly tipsy, drinking from a chalice, giggly, breathless and excited: "That which hath made thẽ drunk, hath made me bold."[735] Later, Lady Macbeth washes the "blood" from their hands with the liquid from this chalice cascading into a basin. An inverted miracle. Wine to water. The sanctity of ritual turned to the ritual of murder. With a play that resounds in threes, the religious and sacrilegious converge in the liminality of the mirrored inversions of the holy spirit. The two Macbeths and the ghost of their child. The space for this, with no blood and a chalice of water, appeared from the text and the company's collective thinking, rendering the moment beautiful, heart wrenching, and simple to stage. Another example concerns staging the sleepwalking scene. We never actually rehearsed it before opening night, due to much more complex and pressing needs of the play taking priority. As I ran around ensuring tickets and programmes before the doors opened, I cried:

> One of the most famous scenes in Shakespeare and I wanted to try it in different ways. I wanted to see how much time I have, how far I can walk, where I can walk, you know, where are the best spots to stop and wash my hands, where are the best places to stop, you know, just to tease out the theatricalness of that scene. Ideally in my head she's roaming the corridors. So, I wanted to be walking mostly until I need to be washing my hands, and I have to put the candle down and wash my hands, but that requires very specific timing with the lines, and I barely even know my cue lines because we've rehearsed it so little.[736]

[734] Macbeth TLN 249.
[735] TLN 648.
[736] E. Pellone

But Kirstin Daniels and Sweeney reassured me that they had my back. That we had each other's backs. I could go anywhere, they would support me. We were in the scene together. To have such an extraordinary scene and extraordinary role but to be so little prepared because limited funding did not allow the desired time to attend to the magnitude of the task of mounting a Shakespeare production. Lack of money acts like a director.

> It is not ideal to place actors under so much pressure. Daniels reflects:
>
> 1) working on a play (a full length) in a week is absolute torture! and it's amazing all at the same time. I judge the amazing part to be what comes out of the terror. The need to work together as a cohesive unit in order to support each other during every stage.[737]

Sweeney cried during rehearsal; Michael Bartelle insisted he needed to take some mornings and a day of rest, worn out by the process; Abbott wrote all her cues inside her drum; Renshaw – after missing entrances, dropping lines, coming on with glasses on top of his head – wanted to give up acting, believing he was not good enough; and Perske was in a dark place as he struggled on opening night to invest more in the title role than just the mechanics of a play we had only run once, and not in the space.

But the support of directorless work, the ensemble and the trust in those relationships, meant that even though we had not staged the sleepwalking scene, and the nascent performance was in front of the audience on opening night, I had a suspension bridge to cross composed of the greatness of the text and my fellow actors having my back.

In spending time on stage with, and helping Perske learn his lines, we discovered that Macbeth is a character made up of many monosyllables. A compression of language. Short syllables interspersed with complex polysyllables. Macbeth often uses monosyllables in striking moments, the simple condensed language bearing the weight of thought. This is not as consistently noticeable in any other Shakespeare character. Short, compressed words demand clearly articulated consonants, to articulate a man as he articulates himself. This was critical for audible clarity in the acoustics of an echoey church, with a high vaulted ceiling.

[737] Daniels, '*Macbeth* Musings', 27 January 2021.

Macbeth does not uniformly express himself in monosyllables, but some of his lines and speeches are most strikingly organised around them, remarkable enough to draw attention.

Macbeth's very first line begins in this characteristic way: "So foule and faire a day I haue not seene."[738] The final lines of his aside are crammed with monosyllables which are interrupted by "without" and "roughest".[739] A phonic rhythm of Macbeth's thought. In the next scene, Act 1, scene 4, Macbeth again organises his mind in monosyllables.[740] There are two multi-syllable words in six lines of verse: the proper noun "Cumberland" and "desires". "Desires", central to the play, floats, sonically extended, on a sea of monosyllables.

At the top of Act 1, scene 7, Macbeth's soliloquy begins with a string of thirteen monosyllables with a rhythm, a heart, that is racing; words, short, tight-clipped, full of T's and D's. The sharpness of his language, like daggers. The daggers of his mind.[741] Apart from seven words – **"**quickly", "assassination", "trammel", "consequence", "surcease", "success", "upon" – the string of monosyllables lasts for seven lines. All the polysyllables grasping at desire to extinguish Duncan's life and extinguish the consequences, with a tongue tripping over the intrusions to the monosyllables, working hard to articulate the horror and complexity of the act of murder. "Quickly" interrupts with urgency as the first double syllable. And then the cadence of "assassination"– five syllables – the longest word in the monologue, breaking out from the monosyllables, the hardest word to articulate sounding the hardest thing to do. The other polysyllables in the monologue are constructed of either two or three syllables, making the five syllables "assassination" trumpet tongued. After the heart-racing beginning, the pulse and thought cools, Macbeth uses a more considered language, that interweaves mono and polysyllables, rationalising his way out of committing the "deed". Monosyllables create the structure of the cathedral of his thoughts.

Some lines ring with the heartsore directness of his monosyllables, and the weight of thought.[742] The dagger speech is such a moment, the double syllables – Duncan, summons,

---

[738] TLN 137.

[739] *Macb.* If Chance will haue me King,
Why Chance may Crowne me,
Without my stirre.
…
Come what come may,
Time, and the Houre, runs through the **roughest** Day. (TLN 255-62)

[740] *Macb.* The Prince of **Cumberland**: that is a step,
On which I must fall downe, or else o're-leape,
For in my way it lyes. Starres hide your fires,
Let not Light see my black and deepe **desires:**
The Eye winke at the Hand; yet let that bee,
Which the Eye feares, when it is done to see. (TLN 336-41)

[741] *Macb.* If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twer well,
It were done **quickly**: If th'**Assassination**
Could **trammell** vp the **Consequence**, and catch
With his **surcease**, **Successe**: that but this blow
Might be the be all, and the end all. Heere,
But heere, **vpon** this Banke and Schoole of time,
Wee'ld iumpe the life to come. (TLN 475-81)

[742] If we shoud faile? (TLN 539)
False Face must hide what the false Heart doth know. (TLN 566)
Still it cry'd, Sleepe no more to all the House (TLN 698).
To know my deed, / 'Twere best not know my selfe. (TLN 737-8)
We haue scorch'd the Snake, not kill'd it (TLN 1167).
Whom we, to gayne our peace, haue sent to peace (TLN 1175).
If I stand heere, I saw him. (TLN 1345)
What man dare, I dare (TLN 1376).
It will haue blood they say: / Blood will haue Blood (TLN 1403-4).

heaven – erupting out.[743] Macbeth's first thoughts, after Duncan's murder, are condensed into the horror of single syllables.[744]

He continues to litter his recounting of the murder with strings of monosyllables.

Perske grappled with the weight of complex polysyllables that break out of a mind that relies on the support of a string of well-defined individual syllables. When staring at his bloody hands, the rupture of "multitudinous" and "incarnadine", drowning in a sea of monosyllables and four double-syllables, underscores the stain of blood on Macbeth's mind.[745] The weight of the transformative blood breaking out in five and four syllables, respectively. They hang heavy in the soundwaves of the air.

The end of the Banquet scene, in Macbeth's nine verse lines, out of eighty-eight words, eighty of them are monosyllables. Wading in blood with heavy monosyllabic steps. The double and triple syllables, again, linguistic variants with distinctive meaning.[746] In our production, attending to the idiosyncrasies of language, the portrayal of characters, and the play itself, was a process rather than an answer. This differs from a teleological view of character, that a character develops or unfolds in a straight line and has something that's consistent. There are micro-variabilities in the historical texts that survive, in performance we also have those micro-variabilities that do not conform to a concept of character but allow the thought-to-thought nature of directorless work to be experienced between the audience and the actor. Lady Macbeth does not present an edited version or directed version of herself. She is on the move, in process, rather than an interpretation or an answer to which everything conforms. Directorless work gave me the freedom not to play Lady Macbeth as a "this kind" of Lady Macbeth. When I am an actor with a director there is always an agenda where one has to play "a something", but I could just play the words with the person I was onstage with, or with the audience; talk to them, think through the thoughts, and that gets put together somehow, but not by me. There is something human about this. Josef captures this:

The minde I sway by, and the heart I beare (TLN 2223).
Hang those that talke of Feare. (TLN 2256)
Ile fight, till from my bones, my flesh be hackt. (TLN 2251)
There would haue beene a time for such a word (TLN 2339).

[743] Thou sowre and firme-set Earth
Heare not my steps, which they may walke, for feare
Thy **very** stones prate of my where-**about,**
And take the **present horror** from the time,
Which now sutes with it. Whiles I threat, he liues:
Words to the heat of deedes too cold breath giues.
A Bell rings.
I goe, and it is done: the Bell **inuites** me.
Heare it not, ***Duncan,*** for it is a Knell,
That **summons** thee to **Heauen,** or to Hell. (TLN 636-645)

[744] "I haue done the deed: / Didst thou not heare a noyse?" (TLN 665-6)

[745] What Hands are here? hah: they pluck out mine Eyes.
Will all great ***Neptunes*** **Ocean** wash this blood
Cleane from my Hand? no: this my Hand will **rather**
The **multitudinous** Seas **incarnardine,**
Making the Greene one, Red. (TLN 720-4)

[746] *Macb* I will to **morrow**
(And **betimes** I will) to the **weyard Sisters.**
More shall they speake: for now I am bent to know
By the worst meanes, the worst, for mine owne good,
All **causes** shall giue way. I am in blood
Stept in so farre, that should I wade no more,
Returning were as **tedious** as go ore:
Strange things I haue in head, that will to hand,
Which must be **acted,** ere they may be scand. (TLN 1415-23)

> The goal of the actor is always to communicate character. The goal of the director is to assemble these communications into a coherence that serves his/her vision for what he/she thinks the author was "trying to say". What this ignores in earlier works such as Shakespeare's, is that what Shakespeare is "trying to say" is already said, by his characters. A production that removes the directorial film of interpretation enables the audience to behold these characters (i.e. what is being said) with all the clarity of their original thought. They are not lines of text to be deciphered and cajoled in the service of some novel, eye-catching spectacle; rather they are people, speaking to themselves and us, across time, about themselves and us. When the imperative of a production, as was the case with your *Macbeth*, is the communication of humanity rather than ideology, even something as potentially inaccessible as Shakespeare lays itself open to be experienced by anyone. It is very hard for this to be achieved in directored work because, while an "outside eye" lends aesthetic and intellectual uniformity, it also disfigures the rich, beautiful chaos of the human experience. In a production created by actors every character is given the vital importance and lavish texture of real human beings.[747]

Macbeth sometimes uses language like a bratty child: "I will be satisfied",[748] he tantrums at the three weyward sisters. At times I also found Lady Macbeth's language very child-like and excited.

> Lady Macbeth interpretada de forma humana, como uma criança mimada e ingênua, que começa tudo aquilo por capricho e não sabe onde vai parar. A atriz aniquilou toda aquela grandiloquencia inútil (e chata) que em geral caracteriza a interpretação do papel, herança do romantismo.[749]

In Lady Macbeth's invocation, which so often is presented as evil, in alliance with the supernatural and the witches, I discovered this child-like desire.[750] She wants to rid herself of

[747] Josef, 'Directorless Macbeth Reflection'.
[748] TLN 1649.
[749] "Lady Macbeth was interpreted in a human way, as a spoiled and naive child, who starts all that on a whim and does not know where it will end. The actress annihilated all that useless (and boring) grandiloquence that generally characterizes the role playing, inheritance of Romanticism." Cardoso, 'Directorless Macbeth Reflection'. (Translated by Cardoso.)
[750] For further discussion of this original reading, with Lady Macbeth usually portrayed as evil, see below.

troublesome feelings that get in the way of attaining desires. She has a conscience, because she has to ask for it to go away.[751]

Macbeth as man disrupts Lady Macbeth's fantasy of what a man is. She is utterly confused about what qualities men have and what women are. Naively she believes to be unsexed means she can be full of cruelty. Unsexed may mean to become a man, but it may also mean a liminal space, a third space, without gender, beyond nature. Lady Macbeth does not have a natural access to murder, which is why she attempts her transformation. She not only wants to forget her own femaleness, but to forget her own self.

She calls to the spirits but does not really know what the spirits' names are, or where they are – it does not appear a very well thought out spell. The spirits have a relationship to human thoughts: between the evocation of desire, and the realisation of desire, there is fantasy and reality, and something that collapses the two. She calls to night and the darkness so heaven cannot see her act, and she hopes the night will shroud her in un-discovery.[752]

---

[751] Come you Spirits,
That tend on mortall thoughts, vnsex me here,
And fill me from the Crowne to the Toe, top-full
Of direst Crueltie: make thick my blood,
Stop vp th'accesse, and passage to Remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of Nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keepe peace betweene
Th'effect, and hit. Come to my Womans Brests,
And take my Milke for Gall, you murth'ring Ministers,
Where-euer, in your sightlesse substances,
You wait on Natures Mischiefe. (TLN 391-401)

[752] Come thick Night,

We staged this by walking backward into the darkness, disappearing, as she tries to dehumanise herself, into the acoustically resonant crossing, where my voice could echo, and the candle I was holding was a distant prick of light, which I blew out at the last cry against discovery. Before running back into the arms of Macbeth, who appears as if conjured by the spell.

The energy and excitement in the childish enthusiasm of her language become unravelled as the echoes of the language that she sets up, keep repeating and distorting. She calls for the dark, then the dark comes for real, there is no sun or moon, and the dark shrouds her mind. She scorns that only a child would fear a painted devil, as she, child-like, cannot understand the consequences of her actions, naively saying "*If* he doe bleed"[753] as she holds the daggers bathed in blood, completely unprepared for what she is about to face, chastising Macbeth and also galvanising herself. This then transforms and matures to her heart-wrenching moan as she sleepwalks – "yet who / would haue thought the olde man to haue had so much / blood in him."[754] Even unsexed, she cannot lose her capacity to feel. When she washes the blood from her hands and has the realisation, "How easie is it then?"[755] I felt it to be a real, spontaneous utterance, not gleeful, sinister or callous, but a kind of wonder that it is as simple as washing your hands to commit murder. And it is not. And that is the sad thing. Because we watch how it is not easy, but she really thinks it would be. She is determined to turn the world into an image of fantasy, but it won't respond. It is the tragedy of desire.

The Macbeths pay everything to have nothing. Desire is gotten without content.[756] Macbeth confesses he has no rest or peace in his brain and would rather tear the worlds apart than live in the fear that shakes them. He does not want to be afraid anymore.[757] He expresses his tortured mind to Lady Macbeth and she again tells him to dissemble as she did before the murder: "To beguile the time. / Looke like the time" echoed and repeated as: "sleeke o're your rugged Lookes, / Be bright and Iouiall among your Guests to Night.[758] It is a missed moment. A moment in their relationship where he rips open his soul and cries out to her, and she says push all that down, not to be okay, but to *seem* okay. He responds by giving her,

---

And pall thee in the dunnest smoake of Hell,
That my keene Knife see not the Wound it makes,
Nor Heauen peepe through the Blanket of the darke,
To cry, hold, hold. *Enter Macbeth.* (TLN 401-5)

[753] TLN 714, my italics.

[754] TLN 2130-3.

[755] TLN 731.

[756] *Lady.* Nought's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without content:
'Tis safer, to be that which we destroy,
Then by destruction dwell in doubtfull ioy.
Enter Macbeth.
How now, my Lord, why doe you keepe alone?
Of sorryest Fancies your Companions mak.ing,
Vsing those Thoughts, which should indeed haue dy'd
With them they thinke on: things without all remedie
Should be without regard: what's done, is done. (TLN1157-66)

[757] *Macb.* But let the frame of things dis-ioynt,
Both the Worlds suffer,
Ere we will eate our Meale in feare, and sleepe
In the affliction of these terrible Dreames,
That shake vs Nightly: Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gayne our peace, haue sent to peace,
Then on the torture of the Minde to lye
In restlesse extasie. (TLN 1170-7)

[758] TLN 418-9; TLN 1184-5.

aberrantly, the formal "you": "So shall I Loue, and so I pray be you".[759] The distancing and the heart-breaking misunderstandings, compounding the tragedy of the disintegration of their relationship and Macbeth's increasing isolation. Then he replicates her language in pain and parody, asking her to make her face and tongue into a vizard of eminence toward Banquo, knowing she will never see Banquo again.[760]

At the end of the scene Macbeth repeats Lady Macbeth's earlier incantation, distorted and augmented – "Come, seeling Night"[761] – calling, as she has, for night to scarf up the light. It is the spell she made before anything has happened – "Come thick Night"[762] – but he was not there when she made it, leaving her to experience the shock of hearing words that she's spoken – come, come, come – reverberating back into the fissures of their relationship. We witness Lady Macbeth's seminal language conjuring without truly understanding what she has conjured. The consequences of a childlike evocation amplified like ripples in the water into a tidal wave of destruction.[763]

Macbeth's language casts a spell. Light thickens, rookie wood, good things of day begin to droop and drowse, hypnotic language that hypnotises you into seeing the thickening of the light. Lady Macbeth's language, in his echo chamber, is repeated back and twisted and distorted into deafening proportions: "There shall be done a deed of dreadfull note."[764] The bell that she invited him to do the deed, now clamours in a dreadful note. When I heard the language of fantasy repeated back to me in real horror, I audibly gasped. Macbeth gives Lady Macbeth her staging clue – "Thou maruell'st at my words: but hold thee still"[765] – so I knew something physically was happening, a deluge of response, probably even trying to leave the stage. It is the terror of "what's done, is done"[766] not being a full stop: "Things bad begun, make strong themselues by ill",[767] completes his rhyming couplet. But then he reaches for her – "So prythee goe with me" *Exeunt*[768] — a cry of intimate helplessness, after giving her the formal "you" earlier in the scene. Often this is staged where they exit separately, but we felt they must go together. Still hanging in there as the final threads tear apart.

Panjwani's response captures these echoes and distorted iterations in the play, in its language and how we staged it:

> Also, lovely moments that chimed – lady Macbeth reading the letter that Macbeth sent by candlelight then carrying the candle while sleepwalking. Also, really liked

---

[759] TLN 1186.

[760] *Macb.* Let your remembrance apply to *Banquo,*
Present him Eminence, both with Eye and Tongue:
Vnsafe the while, that wee must laue
Our Honors in these flattering streames,
And make our Faces Vizards to our Hearts,
Disguising what they are. (TLN 1187-92)

[761] TLN 1205.

[762] TLN 401.

[763] MACBETH Come, seeling Night,
Skarfe vp the tender Eye of pittifull Day,
And with thy bloodie and inuisible Hand
Cancell and teare to pieces that great Bond,
Which keepes me pale. Light thickens,
And the Crow makes Wing toth'Rookie Wood:
Good things of Day begin to droope, and drowse,
Whiles Nights black Agents to their Prey's doe rowse. (TLN 1205-12)

[764] TLN 1202.

[765] TLN 1213.

[766] TLN 1166.

[767] TLN 1214.

[768] TLN 1215.

> lady Macbeth recoiling in horror as Macbeth reveals his plan regarding Banquo ... dreading the psychopath he is turning into.[769]

In directorless work the play can be contained in the single kernel of a moment. It is captured and crystalised and belongs to all the play. It is what happens when we give to every moment without obliterating nuance to try to sustain a theme or concept in all moments. The play does it for us. The play embodied by the collective. Anthony Russell articulates this in his review:

> The players involved here form a true "collective" without the guiding hand and spirit of a single individual … It compared well, in its coherence, to the productions of many strong and famous directors … the final impression is of a truly collective performance … It is the shared spirit that ultimately matters. Those eight actors, mostly young, certainly had that spirit. And we can learn from them.[770]

Directed work, editorial intervention, academic glossing – especially when informed by directorial work – can leave us with a play subservient to received or imposed labels. Emma Smith's comments exemplify this: "I mean I think the play is wonderfully deeply misogynistic."[771]

We had also inherited the belief that *Macbeth* is misogynistic. But very quickly, after spending time inside the lines, we began to see the play as interrogating particular ideas of what it means to be a man and a woman, and none of the characters finally know. It shows the permeability of boundaries, critiquing binary opposites. Boundaries separate and connect things, and where they connect, they create a third condition that defies the binaries, the interaction and mixing of the two. The play never settles on gender binaries. The play is troubled by, and troubles, identity.

This chapter offers a close reading of the nuances of gender interrogation in *Macbeth,* and the play's complex character interpretation, through its heteroglossia and complicated conceptual landscape and language resonances. This is an original reading enabled through a collective, embodied approach, and it interrupts traditional scholarship and performance that have framed *Macbeth* within stable categories of gender, and which often identify Lady Macbeth and the witches as "evil". It makes a new contribution to *Macbeth* and gender, a topic which, curiously, has been relatively unexplored.[772]

---

[769] Panjwani, audience reflection.

[770] Anthony Russel, 'Anərkē Shakespeare Macbeth Review', Holy Trinity Church newsletter, 2020.

[771] 'BBC Radio 4 - In Our Time, Macbeth', BBC, accessed 9 May 2021, https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000mytn.

[772]The edited collection *Shakespeare and Gender* contains no essay on *Macbeth*, nor does Dympna Callaghan's *Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy*. Callaghan's *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Shakespeare Stage,* has very few passing references to *Macbeth*. Emma Smith does not mention gender at all in relation to *Macbeth* in *This is Shakespeare* and fleetingly only twice in *Macbeth: Language and Writing*. *Shakespeare, Feminism and Gender*'s contribution on *Macbeth* is an article that focuses on a political critique of the witches and does not interrogate gender. Introductions to the latest editions of *Macbeth*, including the New Cambridge, Folger, Arden, Oxford, Norton, RSC and Riverside do not mention gender and the Penguin does so only in passing. A survey of further reading of seminal works again focuses little on gender. John Russel Brown discusses the source texts and performance history and does a survey of critical views which include language, structure, genre and afterlife of the play, but not gender as a topic. James L. Calderwood considers the nature of *Macbeth* and tragedy, but not gender. Coleridge's "Notes on *Macbeth*" does not include any examination of gender. Marjorie Garber focuses on the uncanniness of the play, not on gender, and also on a persistent sense of doubling (which the ELC of this chapter extends into a third, liminal space.) In the Yale annotated *Macbeth*, Burton Raffel writes of the supernatural and the Macbeths' ambition with no discussion of gender, and the included essay by Harold Bloom treats on witchcraft and *Macbeth*'s status as the unluckiest play.
(Bruce R. Smith, 'Resexing Lady Macbeth's Gender-and Ours', in *Presentism, Gender, and Sexuality in Shakespeare*, ed. Evelyn Gajowski (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 25–48; Ana Penjak, '"Trans-Gendering" in William Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth', in *The Whirlwind of Passion: New Critical Perspectives on William*

A search on the World Shakespeare Bibliography of "*Macbeth* and gender" has only twenty-seven entries in English, only one article by a major recognized academic, Bruce Smith, which is one of only two articles (the other by Ana Penjak) which engage with non-binary ideas of gender. Scholarship and performance history that does engage with gender in *Macbeth* generally treats it as distinct binary opposites, often with female as evil, male as violent, and a tradition of conflating Lady Macbeth into a fourth witch, with the witches clearly defined as female, in a misogynist work:[773] "The witches remain 'bad' mothers, but

Shakespeare, ed. Petar Penda (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2016), 230–50); Deborah E. Barker and Ivo Kamps, eds., *Shakespeare and Gender: A History* (London; New York: Verso Books, 1995); Dympna Callaghan, *Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989); Callaghan, *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage* (London; New York: Routledge, 1999); Emma Smith, *Macbeth: Language and Writing* (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2013); Emma Smith, *This Is Shakespeare: How to Read the World's Greatest Playwright* (London: Pelican, 2020); Diane Purkiss, 'Macbeth and the All-Singing, All-Dancing Plays of the Jacobean Witch-Vogue', in *Shakespeare, Feminism and Gender*, ed. Kate Chedgzoy (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2000), 216–34; Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. A. R. Braunmuller, Updated edition (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013); Shakespeare, *Macbeth: Arden Performance Editions*, ed. Katherine Brokaw (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2019); Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth: The Oxford Shakespeare*, ed. Nicholas Brooke (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Stephen Greenblatt et al., eds., *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015); Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Eric Rasmussen and Jonathan Bate (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2009); Shakespeare, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. Frank Kermode et al., 2nd edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997). Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. George Hunter (London: Penguin Classics, 2005); John Russell Brown, *Macbeth: A Guide to the Text and Its Theatrical Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); James L. Calderwood, *If It Were Done: 'Macbeth' and Tragic Action* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986); Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Notes and Lectures Upon Shakespeare and Some of the Old Poets and Dramatists and Other Literary Remains of S.T. Coleridge* (W. Pickering, 1849); Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Burton Raffel, Annotated edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 171).

[773] See Janet Adelman, '"Born of Woman": Fantasies of Maternal Power in Macbeth.', in *Cannibals, Witches and Divorce: Estranging the Renaissance*, ed. Marjorie Garber (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 90–121; Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest.* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Andrew C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy : Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth* (Macmillan and Co., 1951); Brown, *Macbeth: A Guide to the Text and Its Theatrical Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Calderwood, *If It Were Done: 'Macbeth' and Tragic Action* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986); Callaghan, ed., *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*, 2nd edition (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014); Stephanie Chamberlain, 'Fantasizing Infanticide: Lady Macbeth and the Murdering Mother in Early Modern England', *College Literature* 32, no. 3 (2005): 72–91; Kate Chedgzoy, ed., *Shakespeare, Feminism and Gender* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001); Coleridge, *Notes and Lectures Upon Shakespeare and Some of the Old Poets and Dramatists and Other Literary Remains of S.T. Coleridge* (W. Pickering, 1849); Jennifer Drouin, ed., *Shakespeare/Sex: Contemporary Readings in Gender and Sexuality* (London; New York: The Arden Shakespeare, 2020); Juliet Dusinberre, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women* (London: Macmillan, 1996); Terry Eagleton, *William Shakespeare* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Garber, *Profiling Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1983); Joan Larsen Klein, 'Lady Macbeth: "Infirm of Purpose"', in *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 240–55; Lenz, Greene, and Neely, eds., *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980); Phyllis Rackin, *Shakespeare and Women* (Oxford England; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Purkiss, 'Macbeth and the All-Singing, All-Dancing Plays of the Jacobean Witch-Vogue', in *Shakespeare, Feminism and Gender*, ed. Kate Chedgzoy (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2000), 216–34; Wilbur Sanders, *The Dramatist and the Received Idea: Studies in the Plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Smith, *Macbeth: Language and Writing* (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2013); Smith, *This Is Shakespeare: How to Read the World's Greatest Playwright* (London: Pelican, 2020); Madelon M Sprengnether, "I Wooed Thee with My Sword': Shakespeare's Tragic Paradigms', in *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. Gayle Greene, Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, and Carol Thomas Neely (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 150–70; Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. George Hunter (London: Penguin Classics, 2005); Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. A.

bad mothers dealing in dead and symbolic children rather than real ones."[774] Smith interprets aspects of the play as either feminized or masculine and believes the play is "so concerned with correct gender roles".[775] Smith, in line with general academic consensus, subscribes to uninterrogated binaries – female and male; good and bad: "In its witches and the depiction of Lady Macbeth, the play indulges fantasies of monstrous femininity, but even its ideal wife and mother, Lady Macduff, falls victim to its insistent patterns of male violence."[776] The RSC also reads the play through the politics of James's court with a "cosmology of good and evil".[777] The New Cambridge similarly hails Lady Macduff as "ostensibly the play's single 'good' female character", and states that in her sleepwalking scene Lady Macbeth is transformed into a witch: "Many actors and many critics have taken Lady Macbeth's behaviour here as a lightly rationalized version of demonic possession".[778] In the Norton, Stephen Greenblatt concurs: "There is something uncannily literal about Lady Macbeth's influence over her husband, as if marital intimacy were akin to demonic possession", but he makes no acknowledgement of what happens when she has no influence, or that Macbeth, who thinks of murder first and writes to her suggestively, may be influencing her.[779] The RSC introduction calls the witches "prophetic females", and claims "Lady Macbeth sacrifices her womanhood to these 'murdering ministers'.[780] She unsexes herself, seeking to suppress her femininity".[781] Wilbur Sanders asserts "her frightening invocation of the spirits connects her with the sisters".[782] Greenblatt calls them "malevolent bearded women",[783] and in the Riverside edition Frank Kermode affirms: "The role of the Weird Sisters is, then, to represent equivocal evil in the nature of things which helps deceive the human will."[784] Our ELC argues for Lady Macbeth as distinct from these "malevolent" "females", that the weyard sisters are gender ambiguous and fluid, their morality ill-defined, and that for them it is Macbeth who is wicked (see below).

Feminist readings also tend to qualitative statements which support a gender binary reading:[785] "In these plays [*Macbeth* and *Lear*], the perception of the masculine

---

R. Braunmuller, Updated edition (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Eric Rasmussen and Jonathan Bate (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2009); Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013); Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth: The Oxford Shakespeare*, ed. Nicholas Brooke (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Burton Raffel, Annotated edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Stephen Greenblatt et al., eds., *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015); William Shakespeare, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. Frank Kermode et al., 2nd edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

[774] Purkiss, 'Macbeth and the All-Singing, All-Dancing Plays of the Jacobean Witch-Vogue', 229.

[775] Smith, *Macbeth: Language and Writing*, 95.

[776] Smith, 149.

[777] Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 2009, 10.

[778] Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. A. R. Braunmuller, 2008, 22; 20.

[779] Greenblatt et al., eds., *The Norton Shakespeare*, 2015, 2715.

[780] Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 2009, 7.

[781] Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 2009, 146.

[782] Sanders, *The Dramatist and the Received Idea*, 10.

[783] Stephen Greenblatt et al., eds., *The Norton Shakespeare*, 2713.

[784] Shakespeare, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 1357.

[785] Janet Adleman's landmark work: *Born of Woman: Fantasies of Maternal Power in Macbeth* again reads in oppositional binaries, where the witches are seen as female; male and female are in an antagonistic dialectic; and men are in fear of the female that needs to be expunged, again, as if these categories have clear and stable definitions for the play or for us (90-121). The Folger 2013 edition, summarising Adelman's contribution, states that she argues for "the vulnerability of men to female power on the cosmic plane", that "the play's images of masculinity and femininity are deeply disturbed" and that after the assassination "the female becom[es] either helpless or poisonous, the male bloodthirsty" (2013, 213-14). For Adleman the play affirms "that violent separation from the mother is the mark of a successful male" (108). This differs from our embodied critical reading where Macduff, in a repetition of horror and regicide, is not "successful", and where Malcolm's

consciousness is that to be feminine is to be powerless, specifically in relation to a controlling or powerful woman."[786] Lisa Jardine asserts: "It is this steady misogynistic tradition which is involved at moments when female figures like Lady Macbeth are represented as 'not-women' at the peak of dramatic tension before committing 'unwomanly' acts".[787] She concludes that Lady Macbeth encapsulates misogyny, carries less weight than other strong women and summarises: "Lady Macbeth is a nightmare". [788] Joan Larsen Klein, although trying to distance herself from the casting of Lady Macbeth as unwomanlike, still makes qualitive and binary statements, as if actions make us unwomaned, unmanned, or worse than our gender traits, thereby making the same erroneous assumptions Lady Macbeth makes: "most critics believe that Lady Macbeth, 'the fiend-like queen' (v.viii.69), lapses from womanliness. I want to suggest, however, that Shakespeare intended us to think that Lady Macbeth, despite her attempt to unsex herself, is never able to separate herself completely from womankind – unlike her husband, who ultimately becomes less and worse than a man".[789] Juliet Dusinberre, who devotes very little space to *Macbeth* in *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women*, also makes this judgement: "Seeking to be more than a woman she becomes less than one" and claims that to spur Macbeth to action Lady Macbeth "embraces manhood herself".[790] But to unsex oneself may not be to become a man; it is a stripping of markers to a space unconstrained by notions of sex or gender. Lady Macbeth fantasises that to be "unsexed" will make her remorseless.

Performance tradition and scholarship tend to focus on the "evil" of murder rather than the historical conditions of regicide and the deeply human tragedy of the deceiving nature of fantasy and desire that emerged from our collective telling. Trevor Nunn asserts the play deals with "the nature of evil" and Greg Doran staged the wayward sisters under the table in the Banquet scene "to show it was their influence".[791] Sanders states: "It offers the possibility of a world in which the balance has been tipped imperceptibly towards evil".[792] And the Riverside also adheres to this judgement: "He dares to do all that may become a man, he says; but his unnatural act is, precisely, more than becomes a man, and he sinks below manhood, as his wife, by an evil effort of will, casts off womanhood and so loses her mind in guilt."[793] Smith believes "Lady Macbeth is the prime culprit for the murder. She makes her conscience-stricken husband go through with a murderous act which is always against his better judgement, curdling in him that 'milk of human kindness' (1.5.16)".[794] Peter Hall affirms that Macbeth would not have done it "without Lady Macbeth's urgent sexual taunts and insinuations".[795] The RSC acknowledges there are moments of "tenderness" between the Macbeths but claims "there is an emptiness at the core of their relationship".[796] Again, this is counter to our embodied close reading in performance where Macbeth instigates the murder, already a-tremor with fears, desires and imaginings before he

---

recollection of the "Butcher, and his Fiend-like Queene" (TLN 2522) finds no resonance with the tragedy the audience has experienced and the human pathos of Macbeth's love and loss in his final soliloquy or of Lady Macbeth's vulnerable sleepwalking scene.

[786] Sprengnether, '"I Wooed Thee with My Sword"', 156.
[787] Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters*, 94-5.
[788] Jardine, 98.
[789] Klein, 'Lady Macbeth: "Infirm of Purpose"', 240-1.
[790] Dusinberre, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women*, 284; 283.
[791] Shakespeare, 2009, 155; 151.
[792] Sanders, *The Dramatist and the Received Idea*, 282.
[793] Greenblatt et al., eds., *The Norton Shakespeare*, 1358.
[794] Smith, *This Is Shakespeare*, 249.
[795] Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 2008, 33.
[796] Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 2009, 11.

writes to Lady Macbeth, and where the tragedy centers on their unfulfillable fantasies and utter desolation at the entropy of losing each other.

The RSC further reflects that it is difficult to play Lady Macbeth as she has a "vertical take-off", is thrown into her great speeches, and her "psychological arc … has to be mapped in very few scenes".[797] Rupert Goold believes her to be two dimensional: "I also always thought that it was important that she was, to a certain degree, a two-dimensional character – 'a fiend-like queen'" and that Shakespeare "never shows us she is more than a psychopath".[798] A.C. Bradley says Lady Macbeth seems inhuman.[799] Judi Dench played Lady Macbeth "as a woman obsessed with ambition" and Smith reflects that Lady Macbeth is now used as "a stereotype of any woman powerful in the public sphere".[800] This seems unproblematically true. Smith's own reading of the play appears closer to this reductive popular view than she acknowledges. The repetition of this general consensus, in the academy and on the stage, is counter to the interpretation of ELC which does not seek to interpret a character "as a something", establish a character arc, a single take off, or play a psychologically "real" motive, and does not settle on a two-dimensional, definable interpretation, or post-facto judgements about what may be evil and what may be inhuman.

Both Smith's monographs insist that *Macbeth* is misogynist. Smith believes this would have appealed to James's misogynist court: "Macbeth may be seen to participate in the misogyny that many historians have uncovered as a feature of James's court and which they have tended to understand as a cultural (i.e. male) sigh of relief after almost half a century of female rule."[801] On BBC "In Our Time" Smith details how her reading of *Macbeth* has been further informed by directors through their directorial amplifications of its misogyny (see below). In order for the play to be misogynist there would need to be a clear category of male and female in a binary dialectic, to allow for hate and prejudice from one of those categories against the other. In opposition to Smith's insistence our ELC shows that *Macbeth* cannot be misogynistic as its gender roles remain intransigent to defined binaries. One cannot hate what is undefinable. *Macbeth* is concerned with gender fluidity, interrogates gender categories, and is never able to finally determine what roles and traits can be ascribed to gender. This is the opposite of misogyny. The play does not set up readily comprehensible definitions of evil, or collapse the weyard sisters and Lady Macbeth into each other. It does not essentialise categories into and out of which its characters are perpetually slipping. Lady Macbeth disassociates from her gender but does not understand the fantasies of gender that are driving her. When Macbeth praises Lady Macbeth's mettle and urges her to bring forth men children only, this is not merely a valorization of maleness. She can only bring forth children as a woman.

As we have seen, critics and actors recurrently define Lady Macbeth as the evil feminine, the ambitious woman, horrific fiend, capable of child-killing, that curdles Macbeth's kindness, linked to the supernatural. This is counter to what we found as a company when we allowed the heteroglossia to resound in the text, playing each moment, but not subsuming a moment in a directorial concept or a character concept with a teleological arc, all subordinated to a version of psychological realism which in practice is steeped in reductive character tropes. ELC, allowing for multiple resonances, does not seek for psychological arcs, single notions of characterisation to resolve questions or create stable interpretations. The sleepwalking scene is a sleepwalking scene and not demonic possession.

[797] Shakespeare, 2009,150.
[798] Shakespeare, 152.
[799] Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 368.
[800] Shakespeare, 2009, 144; Smith, *Macbeth: Language and Writing*, 144.
[801] Smith, *Macbeth: Language and Writing*, 149-50.

Lady Macbeth is not a witch and is not allied to the weyard sisters. The Macbeths are not evil or they could have easily lived with murder.

Lady Macbeth in our directorless production was noted for her child-like qualities, her humanity, her love of her husband, and her inability finally to play a part in the traditional lines of succession that had been etched into the history of violent Scotland, where regicide was a common practise (see Ricardo Cardoso's reflection above). She calls to the supernatural but has no real sense of where the spirits dwell, how to actually stop up her remorse, what unsexing means, or what the consequences of her conjuring will be, which finds no place among a consensus that regards her as part of the evil feminized within a tradition to regard her as a fourth witch – as if the weyard sisters are clearly female, or clearly witches. In our production they occupied the gender and supernatural ambiguous space ascribed to them through their character descriptions in the play.

Harold Bloom reduces the play's multivalences and complexities, stating that we are compelled only by Macbeth, who dominates the play, that Shakespeare gets Lady Macbeth off stage early, and that he "does little to individualize Duncan, Banquo, Macduff and Malcolm".[802] These are counter-readings to the tapestry of personae in our production where audience reflections commented on the revelatory focus afforded on all characters.[803] This chapter's original reading emerges from the distributed focus on all roles and relationships. This creative process is a key part of ELC, which responds to the human complexities, contradictions, myriad-mindedness, indefinable nuances and the fluidity of moment-to-moment engagement. These complexities are served by the collective.

The three weyward sisters are not identified as witches except in stage directions, and when we encounter them, they appear gender fluid and sexually ambiguous.[804] In directed work the witches are often over-conceptualised. That then bears heavily on the interpretation of the whole play. The text does not over-conceptualise the witches. The play develops our understanding. Over-conceptualising the witches resolves the complexities and ambiguities.[805] Our production, using text for inspiration, followed Banquo's description literally and the three company members with beards played the weyward sisters.[806] With faces partly obscured by black lace veils, R. Pellone looked like a Nonna in the Italian mountains, actually appearing to be a woman, Bartelle played with androgyny, and Renshaw, unaffected, with a muscular physique, seemed like Hermaphrodite in his veil.

The play opens with uncertain, ambiguous figures, simply, and very briefly, deciding when to meet again. The tetrameter indicates something supernatural, but they discuss natural and prosaic things – geography, weather and time. A mesmeric, rhythmic verse, with the atmosphere of lightning and thunder, intermixed with practicalities. The text displaces the audience in a quick vignette that sets up liminal spaces, non-binary gender, natural interchanged with supernatural, fair is foul, foul is fair. There are nine lines – thrice times thrice – before the shared rhyming couplet.[807]

---

[802] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Burton Raffel, 171.

[803] "The actors were all a phenomena, I'd never really noticed Malcolm before, (by this point in the play we're all usually losing interest as it's just swaggering interchangeable warriors, but it was all utterly mesmerising), I was hyper alert for every second, every nano-second, don't think I breathed for two hours." (Howarth, 2022)

[804] "you should be Women, / And yet your Beards forbid me to interprete / That you are so." (TLN 144-6)

[805] "i'th'name of truth / Are ye fantasticall, or that indeed / Which outwardly ye shew?" (TLN 152-4)

[806] Bartelle, R. Pellone, Renshaw.

[807] *Thunder and Lightning. Enter three Witches.*
1.WHen shall we three meet againe?
In Thunder, Lightning, or in Raine?
2. When the Hurley-burley's done,
When the Battaile's lost, and wonne.

Something imminent is about to happen – "ere the set of Sunne".[808] Between the audience and the supernatural is the same relationship that Macbeth has – uncertainty, suspense. The sisters have a relationship to the natural word: killing swine, wanting chestnuts. As the play develops there is an increasingly deepening relationship between the natural and the supernatural world, that collapses on itself: "By the pricking of my Thumbes, / Something wicked this way comes".[809] Renshaw pointed out to the company, it is Macbeth, for the witches, who is wicked.

We may begin believing heroic violence is uncontaminated by doubt. But the contamination of fear, doubt, desire, infects all relationships – marriage, parenthood, friendships, family. The toxic masculinity from the beginning is grotesque, and never ceases, not with the beheading of Macbeth, the civil war and the conflicting notions of worthy manhood when Old Seyward grieves not if his son, barely a man, died in battle with his wounds on the front.[810] The ending does not restore resolution or order because the language

3. That will be ere the set of Sunne.
1. Where the place?
2. Vpon the Heath.
3. There to meet with *Macbeth.*
1. I come, *Gray-Malkin.*
All. Padock calls anon: faire is foule, and foule is faire,
Houer through the fogge and filthie ayre. *Exeunt.* (TLN 2-13)

[808] TLN 7.

[809] TLN 1573-4.

[810] *Sey.* Had he his hurts before?
Rosse. I, on the Front.
Sey. Why then, Gods Soldier be he:
Had I as many Sonnes, as I haue haires,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his Knell is knoll'd.
Mal. Hee's worth more sorrow,

tells us they are doomed to make the same mistakes. We still are making the same mistakes five hundred years later. *Macbeth* is a masculinist world. But it interrogates the danger of this violent world. The image of violence and childbirth, as Macduff is untimely ripped, is also an image of the destruction of time in this play, and natural order.

Lady Macbeth attacks Macbeth's manhood if he will not commit murder, and he praises her flesh as manlike because of her plan to commit murder. It is a dreadful thing to live up to a particular kind of manhood. The undermining of female qualities, as the Macbeths do, is never resolved, and the play belies notions of weakness and emotion as a female domain.[811] There is disagreement and uncertainty about what it is to be a man, and what those qualities are. How to be a man. How to put on manlinesss. How to act like a man. How to feel like a man.[812] The inadequacies and disintegrations of gender categories are rife in the banquet scene.

Our staging was simple and evocative. The thrones, mahogany and red velvet antique church chairs, centre stage; the guests and lords, audience and actors, in the pews; the

And that Ile spend for him.
Sey. He's worth no more (TLN 2493-2501).

[811] See David Schalkwyk, 'Macbeth's Language', *Skenè. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies* 3, no. 2 (2017), 127, https://doi.org/10.13136/sjtds.v3i2.130.

[812] I dare do all that may become a man, / Who dares no more, is none … When you durst do it, then you were a man … Who can be wise, amaz'd, temp'rate, & furious, / Loyall, and Neutrall, in a moment? No man … Now, if you haue a station in the file, / Not i'th' worst ranke of Manhood, say't … Are you a man? … quite vnmann'd in folly … What man dare, I dare … Dispute it like a man … But I must also feele it as a man … This time goes manly … For it hath Cow'd my better part of man … He onely liu'd but till he was a man … But like a man he dy'de … (Macbeth TLN 524-5; Lady Macbeth TLN 528; Macbeth TLN 873-4; Macbeth TLN 1101-2; Lady Macbeth TLN 1326; Lady Macbeth TLN 1344; Macbeth TLN 1376; Malcome TLN 2069; Macduff TLN 2072; Malcome TLN 2086; Macbeth TLN 2458; Rosse TLN 2485; Rosse TLN 2488).

murderer lingering in the shadows by the downstage candlelit column; the ghost of Banquo, there and not there by the virtue of self-illumed candlelight being blown out and relit.

When Macbeth reverberates his grief and terror at Banquo's ghost off the walls of the church, Lady Macbeth questions again the childishness of his fear. The painted devil. Questioning over and over what manhood is: "quite vnmann'd in folly"; "Are you a man?"[813] Macbeth thinks he becomes a man again when the ghost is gone and he is no longer afeared.[814] A man is fearless. Macbeth tells the ghost of Banquo that if he were to fear anything alive, he could be protested "The Baby of a Girle".[815] He is only frightened by the supernatural, the illusions of his mind.

The most frightened thing he can be called is the baby of a girl. But, as Renshaw pointed out, everyone is the baby of a girl. Blind prejudice. Inaccurate condescension. Everyone is born of woman. Even when untimely ripped. This is the fantasy of constructed gender. Thinking that to be strong one has to be de-sexed. And this blind spot is a blind spot that we still have. That women, to be leaders, have to be unsexed. The play makes us notice this blind spot and question what it means to be the baby of a girl, to be a woman, to be a man, to be a human. The play is always shifting the fluidity of the categories it is interrogating. It is not that Lady Macbeth is not a woman, and therefore her actions are not womanly; it is that she does not fully identify with her own gender and there's a displacement. The continual questioning of what is needed to be a worthy man or what are the qualities of manhood never settle, neither do the qualities of femaleness. Lady Macbeth, a female, ridicules and criticises how females act. She estranges herself from the imaginary qualities of her own sex. For it is in her power as a woman, as hostess, that she has welcomed Duncan into the castle, wined and dined his

[813] TLN 1344; TLN 1326.
[814] "Why so, being gone / I am a man againe" (TLN 1384-5).
[815] TLN 1383.

men, accepted his jewel, drugged his chamberlains, organised and timed the murder and alibies, prepared their false faces and attended to all the details – "Leaue all the rest to me".[816] When told by Macduff he will not speak of Duncan's murder to her as "The repetition in a Womans eare, / Would murther as it fell",[817] we know she has a woman's ear, and the repetition will not murder her. Either we accept that she is not a woman by Macduff's definition, or we must reject this construct of woman.

In the banquet scene Lady Macbeth likens Macbeth's hysteria to a woman telling a winter tale by a fireside that she heard from her grandmother.[818] Lady Macbeth genders fear. In order to be brave, we cannot be like women and children. But these qualitative constructs of gender and age do not play out, neither for her story, nor for the play. The children, Macduff and Banquo's sons, are brave. Lady Macbeth – a woman – is unfeared. Her undaunted mettle is something that Macbeth has associated with masculinity, and once praised – "Bring forth Men-Children onely".[819] But at the banquet her fearlessness seems unnatural to him, inhuman. Those qualities he loved, now estrange her to him, and this estranges him to himself.[820]

He cannot know himself when he does not recognise her. They used to see the world in the same way, have the same visions. One mind, one purpose, one thought. And now they cannot see eye to eye. Literally. Their eyes do not behold the same things. She is no longer his "*dearest Partner of Greatnesse*".[821]

Lady Macbeth has spent the banquet trying to contain Macbeth's madness, trying to get him to behave in the ways that they have been dreaming of – to be the King and Queen. She excuses him twice, but the third time she can no longer restore the order.[822] She commands everyone to leave, at once, without ceremony. And then, instead of Shakespeare writing a domestic debrief about the failed banquet, he leaves them to speak about the only thing that they can. The blood and the time.[823] In this play about interrupted light, Macbeth asks to know what the time is. The night and the day are confused: ambiguity and collapsing of worlds: "Almost at oddes with morning, which is which".[824] At odds with each other, there is a third liminal space, between morning and night, which can be exchanged one for the other: Fair is foul and foul is fair. The homophones "which is which" sound fatalistically, echoing on the stage. Macbeth then says he'll go to the three weyard sisters.[825]

---

[816] TLN 429.
[817] TLN 842-3.
[818] *Lady.* O, these flawes and starts
(Impostors to true feare) would well become
A womans story, at a Winters fire
Authoriz'd by her Grandam: shame it selfe (TLN 1332-5).
[819] TLN 554.
[820] *Macb.* You make me strange
Euen to the disposition that I owe,
When now I thinke you can behold such sights,
And keepe the naturall Rubie of your Cheekes,
When mine is blanch'd with feare. (TLN 1391-4)
[821] TLN 257-8.
[822] "You haue displac'd the mirth, / Broke the good meeting, with most admir'd disorder (TLN 1386-7).
[823] *Macb.* It will haue blood they say:
Blood will haue Blood:
Stones haue beene knowne to moue, & Trees to speake:
Augures, and vnderstood Relations, haue
By Maggot Pyes, & Choughes, & Rookes brought forth
The secret'st man of Blood. What is the night?
La. Almost at oddes with morning, which is which. (TLN 1403-9)
[824] TLN 1409.
[825] *Macb* I will to morrow

The Macbeths sit, alone, on the thrones, staring into the abyss. The play begins with them in love and ends in this tender moment of despair. In many ways the tragedy of the play is the tragedy of the disintegration of their relationship. Of the misunderstanding, by both of them, of what being a man or being a woman, being a human, is all about, and what it actually costs to murder somebody. It is an extraordinary play. Lost, they hold each other's hands. They have everything they desired and they have nothing. It is bleak. Empty thrones. Empty power. Life remains sleepless when your dreams take over your waking thoughts. The realisation of dreams only to know them as nightmares.

The play is about fantasies of gender. About desire and the fantasy of desire. Desire of that which is not in front of you. Moments of love and friendship remain thirsty and unquenched in this world. The directorless exploration into the microscopic, microcosmic level revealed insights into the condition of the human. A lonely condition that is amplified as the play progresses.

Feeding her idea that *Macbeth* is misogynistic, Smith believes that Act 4, scene 2 is pornographic violence against a woman, set up by Shakespeare purely for voyeuristic

---

(And betimes I will) to the weyard Sisters.
More shall they speake: for now I am bent to know
By the worst meanes, the worst, for mine owne good,
All causes shall giue way. I am in blood
Stept in so farre, that should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go ore:
Strange things I haue in head, that will to hand,
Which must be acted, ere they may be scand.
La. You lacke the season of all Natures, sleepe.
Macb. Come, wee'l to sleepe: My strange & self-abuse
Is the initiate feare, that wants hard vse:
We are yet but yong indeed. *Exeunt.* (TLN 1415-27)

reasons. Shakespeare breaks some undisclosed rules in Playwriting 101 to introduce a minor character for the sole purpose of us watching her being killed.[826]

> What's that scene for? Cause that seems to me a scene that is sort of pornographic in its violence against women. There's no point in introducing Lady Macduff as a new character in Act 4, that's Playwriting 101, you don't do that … so I feel as if the play … becomes more anti-female, as it proceeds.[827]

Shakespeare carefully structures scenes to unfold the plot in a particular way, to introduce characters in a particular order, and to serve its musical variations and development – a battlefield, a room in a castle, a murder scene, a comic scene, an intimate domestic scene, an expansive battle scene: scenes shift with irony, suspense, foreboding, conflict and antithesis. He is creating rules, not breaking them. Focusing exclusively on the gender issues as anti-female pornographic violence ignores the scene's variety, length and detail, and much of what it contributes to the play. Act 4, scene 2 starts in the midst of a heated and distressed conversation between Ross and Lady Macduff, in front of her son. Not a domestic scene of mother and child, but a three-hander. It concerns the incredible pressure of conflicting social and personal responsibilities and liabilities. What are we willing to risk, and what importance can we place on our personal narrative? Ross confesses that he has been, unbeknownst to himself, a traitor. And the danger is that no one knows precisely what to fear, as they are tossed within the uncertain and unstable political landscape.[828] It is an interrogation of self-knowledge and identity. This is key to the play. How can Ross have behaved as a traitor and not known himself to be one? How can Lady Macbeth behave as a woman and not know herself to be one? How can Macbeth try to be a man, do all that becomes a man, and not know how to be one?

Lady Macduff calls her husband a traitor in front of her son, because of Macduff's fear.[829] She believes Macduff's fear cancels out his capacity to love.[830] Ross tries to protect the image of Macduff to her, and also to the son who is listening.[831] He tells her that Macduff going to England is a great sacrifice for Scotland. This is not simply a gendered conflict, the debate is family against state. The human cost, on the domestic level, of civil war. When Ross leaves, Macduff's son asks: "Was my Father a Traitor, Mother?".[832] What does it mean to be a traitor? A question as unresolved as the play's interrogation of gender. The tension lies here. Does responsibility to the kingdom make Macduff a terrible husband and father?

After the messenger delivers that it is not safe for her to stay at the castle Lady Macduff cries:

> Whether should I flye?
> I haue done no harme. But I remember now
> I am in this earthly world: where to do harme
> Is often laudable, to do good sometime
> Accounted dangerous folly. Why then (alas)
> Do I put vp that womanly defence,

---

[826] As well as creative reasons there is a practical reason to introduce a female role for a short stage appearance. A boy apprentice would have played Lady Macduff and it was usual practice to have a tiered string of apprenticeship roles, making writing smaller female roles standard.

[827] 'BBC Radio 4 - In Our Time, Macbeth'.

[828] "But cruell are the times, when we are Traitors / And do not know our selues". (TLN 1733-4)

[829] His flight was madnesse: when our Actions do not,
Our feares do make vs Traitors. (TLN 1715-6)

[830] All is the Feare, and nothing is the Loue (TLN 1725).

[831] But for your Husband,
He is Noble, Wise, Iudicious, and best knowes
The fits o'th'Season. (TLN 1729-31)

[832] TLN 1764.

To say I haue done no harme?[833]

Not only do we find here another slippery definition of woman, a woman hides behind the defence, or the lack of defence, of her innocence, but it also resounds with the play's question of what it is to be honest. Who is a traitor? Who are the liars and swearers? Does goodness make us weak? Was the good King Duncan defenceless? Is it dangerous folly to do no harm? Is harm laudable?

Smith believes the scene is there only to provide voyeuristic pornographic violence: "I mean it's brought in only for us to watch, that's what seems kind of queasy to me, but I mean it's a queasy play."[834] I acted in many scenes that pertain to this act of violence: as Ross, an apparition and as Lady Macbeth. It haunts the play and is important and present more than a single gratuitous act: "The Thane of Fife, had a wife: where is she now?"[835] But Smith confesses that she considers the scene pornographically violent because of the way she has seen directors stage it. Here is the danger of the play being interpreted for the academic by the director, and that interpretation being repeated and transmitted as the identity of the play:

> Why do we invent in the play's imagination a new place and a new family at a late point in the play, they are brought on simply to be murdered … that's a very particular ethical decision isn't it? ... And I suppose I'm influenced by the fact that quite often lots of directors have taken it as a chance to amplify the kinds of violence and to sexualise the violence in particular.[836]

To question the ethics of writing a scene that has imminent death for wife and child ignores the ethical questions of all the other violent acts in the play. Cawdor is executed. Duncan is murdered. Banquo is murdered. Young Siward is killed. Lady Macbeth commits suicide. Macduff decapitates Macbeth. Act 4, scene 2 is complex and multivalent, perhaps best served by the plurality of minds in a directorless process, that are not bent on extracting a singular interpretation. The scene is a hundred lines in length – TLN 1711-1811 – the murderers only enter for the last nine lines.[837] Lady Macduff is *not* killed on stage. It is her son who is stabbed. The violence is on a boy's body; we should not collapse women and children into the same category. The most brutal thing Macbeth can do to Macduff is to destroy all that is dear to him. The castle is surprised in order to murder Macduff and his blood line.[838] Everyone is slaughtered, including the servants. It is violence against life, violence born out

---

[833] TLN 1794-1800.

[834] 'BBC Radio 4 - In Our Time, Macbeth'.

[835] TLN 2134.

[836] 'BBC Radio 4 - In Our Time, Macbeth'.

[837] *Enter Murtherers.*
Mur. Where is your Husband?
Wife. I hope in no place so vnsanctified,
Where such as thou may'st finde him.
Mur. He's a Traitor.
Son. Thou ly'st thou shagge-ear'd Villaine.
Mur. What you Egge?
Yong fry of Treachery?
Son. He ha's kill'd me Mother,
Run away I pray you. *Exit crying Murther.* (TLN 1803-11)

[838] *Rosse*, Your Castle is surpriz'd: your Wife, and Babes
Sauagely slaughter'd: To relate the manner
Were on the Quarry of these murther'd Deere
To adde the death of you.
…
Macd. My Children too?
Ro. Wife, Children, Seruants, all that could be found. (TLN 2050-9)

of fear. When Macduff is told he should take the news like a man, he responds: "I shall do so: / But I must also feele it as a man".[839]

A man feels.

This is, perhaps, the most redeeming line in the play. And Renshaw, with Sweeney and myself on stage, spoke it to an audience listening in utter silence. Fatherhood is sacred: "He ha's no Children. All my pretty ones?"[840] To be a man is to feel connection; to feel loss and love. It is more memorable than to wage war.

The play does not finally resolve categories of gender. Macduff says he can play the woman with his eyes and the braggart with his tongue. He can be woman and man. As can the weyward sisters. As can Lady Macbeth. But it does show repeatedly the danger of these binaries and the confusion in trying to establish how to be a man or a woman: the difficulty of how to be to human in a world where gender is separate and constructed categories. That is the opposite of misogyny.

Smith partly interprets the play through the lens of a scene that directors have interpreted and focused for her. She does this again in her evaluation of Macbeth's interiority:

> I remember a production at the RSC where Jonathan Slinger was Macbeth and one side of the interval he did the scene with the banquet with Banquo's ghost, as it were a real ghost there, and the second half opened with the same scene replayed with nobody there and Macbeth performing in the same way and it so brilliantly captured our sense that we were losing him, you know, we'd been in his head and then the second half was going to be where he had his own demons and we can't see who they are. So, I've learned so much from productions of this play.[841]

Contrary to what Smith has understood from the directorial intervention to stage the banquet without Banquo's ghost, we enter more into Macbeth's mind as the play develops. Directorless ELC listens closely to the text, when actors work with the play, not the concept. Macbeth starts off with a best friend, a wife whom he loves, fame and honour. Macbeth's tragedy is the breakdown of his marriage, his friendships, his peace, his ability to know himself, his self-trust. Macbeth's increasing isolation, paradoxically, brings his mind closer to the audience. Lady Macbeth believes the ghost to be like the air-drawn dagger, but the audience has not seen the dagger. What is critical now is the audience sees what Macbeth sees, even though no one else can. It collapses liminalities. Collapses the fantasy-reality space. The audience are closer to his mind, they partake in his fear, they are increasingly responsible for the voices in his head, the apparitions, the scorpions. They share the scorpions in his mind, even when he refuses to share his inner thoughts with those he once trusted. Shakespeare often explores loneliness, but he never separates his character from the audience. Shakespeare makes us common in our loneliness, rather than lonely in our loneliness. Perske embodied and shared the tragedy of Macbeth's loneliness, delivering monologues and asides intimately close to the audience, underlit by a sea of candle flames.

Macbeth, from his first moments on stage, is prone to wild imaginings and confusion between what is and what is not.[842] He feels he can only be a man when he is released from

---

[839] TLN 2070-1.

[840] TLN 2065.

[841] 'BBC Radio 4 - In Our Time, Macbeth'.

[842] *Macb.* If good? why doe I yeeld to that suggestion,
Whose horrid Image doth vnfixe my Heire,
And make my seated Heart knock at my Ribbes,
Against the vse of Nature? Present Feares
Are lesse then horrible Imaginings:
My Thought, whose Murther yet is but fantasticall,
Shakes so my single state of Man,
That Function is smother'd in surmise,

his fears, fantasies and shadows of his doubts. Another fantasy of manhood. Macbeth is driven by his fears until they overcome him, the echo chamber of his soul magnified all over the stage, until, after the weyward sisters' prophecies, he feels impervious to it. Fear proliferated to the point where it is catatonic.

In staging the apparition scene in Holy Trinity, we used the full company and traversed the church, inhabiting its extensive crucifix shape. The weyward sisters circled the baptismal font, round about the cauldron, behind the audience; the apparitions rose by candlelight and vocal layering in the echoing crossing in front of the audience, near the altar; and Macbeth stood in the middle with the audience, crucified on the transept. The procession walked slowly toward him with candles, circling him, raising a haunting cry, until, extinguishing sound and light, they leave him alone. Alone with the audience.

Now Macbeth, reassured by the prophecies, has no fear. His mind diseased has been ministered to.[843] In this supposed impenetrable invulnerability, Seyton delivers the news: "The Queene (my Lord) is dead."[844] The monosyllables, so characteristic of his language, delivering the blow to his senses. The safety he has been grasping for – "To be thus, is nothing, but to be safely thus"[845] – penetrated. Undone by his fear, he is now undone by his lack of fear. He will never be safely thus. That is the tragedy of the human condition: unfulfillable desire. We live in the absence and the postponement of happiness. In the act of trying to secure his future, Macbeth destroys his present.

Macbeth begins his monologue, not with a racing heart, but with a petty pace that creeps and slows: "To mor-row, and to mor-row, and to mor-row" – the tripartite polysyllable made up of clearly articulated monosyllables, capturing the Sisyphusian nature of existing.[846] In rehearsal Perske spoke the lines to the company, and Renshaw, watching him, cried. We sat in a tiny rehearsal space, almost in a circle, creating an atmosphere of careful attention to the actor, who, instead of trying to perform it, spoke to us. Shared its heart, shared his heart, as Macbeth does. Macbeth creeps closer to a shared existential condition, sharing his thoughts intimately with the audience.

Macbeth discovers life is meaningless, that the prologues to the swelling acts have no meaning, because he has lost his wife. Life is a shadow, a poor player: the shadows that have haunted Macbeth, literally, metatheatrically, liminally, actually. The paradox of the stage as a metaphor for an empty and meaninglessness world, a place for fools to bellow and strut, is that we are watching a stage replete with significance, compelling and full, rather than hollow. A shared experience. This is the power, not the emptiness, of theatre.

Smith argues that if Macbeth were a better literary scholar, he would have read the prophecies more carefully and avoided his downfall.[847] But the prophecies are fulfilled word for word. They are not ambiguous in the sense of being inexact. They have an articulated double meaning. They have kept the promise to his ear and broken it to his hope. It is the

---

And nothing is, but what is not. (TLN 245-53)

[843] "I haue almost forgot the taste of Feares" (TLN 2330-34).

[844] TLN 2337.

[845] TLN 1038.

[846] To morrow, and to morrow, and to morrow,
Creepes in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last Syllable of Recorded time:
And all our yesterdayes, haue lighted Fooles
The way to dusty death. Out, out, breefe Candle,
Life's but a walking Shadow, a poore Player,
That struts and frets his houre vpon the Stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a Tale
Told by an Ideot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing. (TLN 2340-9)

[847] Smith, *Macbeth: Language and Writing*, xiii.

doubleness of language. Its liminality. Its double sense. What fulfilment feels like is different to what the hope of fulfilment felt like.

The play, as we explored it and discovered it, dissolves boundaries of gender and fantasy. It shows us that they are permeable, that they have a double sense. That the fantasies of being a man, or how to be a man, fantasies of family, childhood, friendships, ambition, keeps the promise to our ears, but breaks it to our hope. And this complexity and multiplicity exists in the myriad mindedness of directorless work, in the liberation of the actor; the freedom to be connected to the play, alive to the ensemble and the text, without a circuit breaker.

Perske reflects:

> The usual feelings of first read through trepidations were not the same with our directorless *Macbeth*. Usually I'm thinking of doing a good reading, with a broad range of choices, that I'm not attached to, in order for me to feel like I've helped the director feel as though they haven't erred in casting me. Today I was here to read the play and listen to the whole play and get a sense of what we cast of eight were bringing to the table. The filter was my filter, not "what I think the director might think" filter … When the lens of a director is the mode of operation there's little point working things out beforehand, only to have those decisions reinterpreted again.
>
> It was marvellously refreshing and reaffirming to simply read the text, and then play the play.

Perske captures the insecurity and trepidation of the actor who is always auditioning, even after they are cast. Not only incessantly auditioning for their role, but auditioning for their next role, and auditioning for the actor they want to be perceived as. Christopher Eccleston reveals:

> Actors don't tend to be boat rockers. They might want to impart a little motion, but they'd be worried they'd be thrown overboard somewhere down the road. There is a definite idea that you can say and do what you want to actors because they are desperate for work.[848]

This power imbalance can create a dangerous state of vulnerability. Perske reminds us that subservience to the director creates interference, static between the actor and the play. Actors seek approval from the "parent": an audience of one. But the filter, this time, was Perske's filter. Scenes worked out between the players doing the scenes, together: *Macbeth* materialised in the candlelit church, by haunting graves, the manifold audience discovering with us.

We are not always auditioning in our roles for life. We must play them. With what we have, even when we mostly feel inadequate, insecure, obscured from our true self and purpose, and, at best, a bluffing improvisor that happens to make it seem that we have our life under control. Marcel Proust notices that a real person "remains opaque. Offers a dead weight which our sensibilities have not the strength to lift" and that we are limited in self-knowledge as it "is only in one small section of the complete idea he has of himself that he is capable of feeling any emotion either". It is literature that turns the opaqueness of self and others, "impenetrable by the human spirit", into something immaterial "which the spirit can assimilate to itself"; then follows a "dream more lucid" where within us are "all the joys and sorrows of the world".[849] Released in the play, the spectral imagery evoked in Anərkē Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was something immaterial to be assimilated to the human spirit. The spectral nature of directorless work, that is ephemeral, alive moment to moment, unfinished by conceptual decisions imposed, arising, like the ghosts from the grave, in an immaterial

[848] Eccleston, *I Love the Bones of You*, 173.

[849] Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C. K Scott-Moncrieff, vol. 1, 3 vols (London: Penguin Classics, 2015), Loc 1505.

transparency that becomes material in the shared moment with the audience: "the space between the audience and the cast was swallowed up by a mutual connectivity."[850] We can surrender to the immateriality of the text, the acceptance in an obscurity of our condition, being untroubled to decipher all the codes for the audience, and letting art be the expression of "all the sorrows and all the joy". Actors as artists and activists, not children, can finetune their instrument to vibrate to the harmonies that move around us, in the collectiveness of creation, and liminality of time and space, when we enter the realm of the play and the poet's imagination. Together.

[850] Abbott, 'Directorless *Macbeth* Reflection'.

THE EPILOGUE

Conclusion

Tearing the curtain down

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, remembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning;
At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple-tree
Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
Between two waves of the sea.

\- *T. S. Eliot*

What is the best way to the church? The best way is not to start from here.

We have tried to start elsewhere. We have gone through the unknown, remembered gate. We have listened to the voice of the hidden waterfall, and the actors in the apple tree. We have arrived at the beginning, trying to know the place, listening to the stillness between the waves.

To tread the directorless rehearsal process with a Shakespeare text, we fumbled through the overgrowth to the somewhere else where the texts were created. With a cultural and intellectual bias fixated on the single genius, it was often exhausting trying to work collectively, because weeds of resistance have grown to seed in our minds. The collective enterprise in mounting a Shakespeare play is something that we had to learn, and still have much to learn about. To liberate the text and the actor is difficult, more difficult than I imagined. It requires actors who believe in the work: who do not look for an externalised, or rely on an internalised, leader. Actors who are willing to share responsibility for the whole production, not just their roles. Actors that have skills in performing verse drama. The actors that formed a core group in this process are those actors. Actors that gave more than they demanded; that supported with generosity, rather than destroyed with insecurity. It is not solely the quality of actors, but the quality of rehearsal. To grow the work, it needs to be nourished financially and structurally: a new type of training; a new vocabulary to refer to actors, and for actors to refer to themselves. Actors are artists and activists. Actors, naturally, are owners of their own work. They do not need to be enabled and given permission; they are not children in search of a parent or a playground. Or servants in search of a master.

The purpose of this thesis has been to identify a mindset, and to question that mindset – those hidden Wittgensteinian structures against which we create all meaning – so that the immediate emphatic response will not reiteratively remain as: there must have been a leader in Shakespeare's theatre; it would be chaos if there were not; in a collective ensemble a leader will inevitably emerge. This thesis has demonstrated that Directorless Shakespeare as Embodied Literary Criticism (ELC) released the myriad-mindedness and heteroglossia of Shakespeare's text, and allowed revelatory discoveries for academics witnessing the work. It has offered alternative conclusions, based on practice, of how the English Renaissance theatre regarded cue scripts and rehearsals. It has proven that Directorless Shakespeare can produce great art and disabused the anxiety that a democratic creative process will be a mediocre compromise where everything tends towards the middle.

Writing on "The Rise of the Director" David Bradby gives a useful summary:

> The dominant creative force in today's theatre is the director. No longer just an organiser, the director is now considered an artist in his or her own right. Critics write of 'Brook's *Lear*', of 'Planchon's *Tartuffe*', ascribing to the director the role of author … Where he is working with a classic text, he will rearrange, cut and rewrite to fit his production concept.[851]

Roger Planchon clarifies that it is the reinterpreting of classical texts that sanctified the figure of director:

> The emergence of the classic brings with it the birth of a dubious character. He presents himself as a museum curator; leaning on Molière and Shakespeare, he levers himself into a position where he is running the whole show. We may lament the fact, but the two things are linked: the birth of the classic gives power to the theatre director.[852]

There is a sense of irony that the subservience to classical texts, as vehicles for concept, creates the conditions for the stronghold of the director. By reinstating authority to the actors and text, Directorless Shakespeare liberated this imposed subservience. And liberated Shakespeare from a prop function of legitimising directors by their interpretive spin. This made fertile conditions for ELC to unearth insights.

The American Shakespeare Centre and the Globe theatre, London, have made inroads towards egalitarian staging of Shakespeare plays, but further work is needed to develop devolved authority in theatrical creation on Shakespeare plays on the main stages.[853] Bertolt Brecht wanted to draw up the curtain between spectator and actor, unanaesthetise the audience, revolutionise theatre, and mobilise its political force: "Since we have landed in a battle, let us fight! ... Before one thing and another there hangs a curtain: let us draw it up!"[854] Directorless Shakespeare continues this desire, not just to draw up the curtain, but to tear it down.

One of the pedagogical outcomes of directorless is a form of Socratic education, that allowed actors a process of self-discovery and affirmation:

---

[851] David Williams and David Bradby, *Directors' Theatre* (London: Red Globe Press, 2019), 1.

[852] Roger Planchon qtd. in Williams and Bradby, *Directors' Theatre*, 6.

[853] The resonances and iterations of Directorless Shakespeare has seeded possibilities. A seminar paper given at Shakespeare American Association (SAA) in 2021, generated a great deal of interest and discussion. As did a directorless multilingual Anthony and Cleopatra workshop in Rome, at the European Shakespeare Research Association (ESRA) conference, 2019, and the World Shakespeare Congress, 2021. A directorless *Rape of Lucrece*, performed at the Shakespeare Fringe Festival, Verona, 2021, has been invited to Germany, and is programmed for SAA, Minneapolis, in 2023.

[854] Bertolt Brecht, "A Short Organum for the Theatre" in *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. John Willett (London: Methuen, [1949] 1964), para. 32.

> I felt like I was allowed to offer and contribute past my insecurities – I normally feel not good enough to contribute. We were working as an ensemble and that was challenging, but I would do it again. I learnt so much from doing it.[855]

Another result was defining multiple notions of directorless: one actor understood it not so much as directorless, but that everyone has an input:

> I think if everybody's got an input it's going to be better than just one person, it's going to be a much better solution … In a directorless play it is not without a director, it's that everybody has their input, and so the sum of the little parts is greater than the whole.[856]

This is my reflection on the liberation of the actor, having been in all the directorless productions:

> As an actor in this process, I articulated myself as an artist. I found my art. I felt creatively empowered, more than when I am being directed. I was able to stride into the procedure like a text's rights lawyer. I discovered Beatrice, constructed of words, and syllables, and rhythms and ink on paper, and the space between that ink. I found Dogberry's dignity surprising. I found *Macbeth* different to my received impressions. I discovered Richard with a freedom, and a mercurial flexibility, that, even as many audience members reflected it was the best Richard they had seen, I felt it was one of the best roles I had acted. Because I could lean into every line, and all my acting partners, without having to be approved of, without having to be told, or made self-conscious through a process of notes designed to empower me, that would only intervene with me finding it for myself, with the text and the audience, as it unfolded in performance every night.[857]

Directorless actors contributed threads to a tapestry woven and unwoven, without someone outside fabricating creation, until the audiences, with their own multivalent perspectives, received the work. In all directorless productions the threads of different elements – that held and hung together – were not homogenised: woven threads, some in conflict, some in harmony, some sublime, some left unravelled, non-mimetic, without unity. Each production, tackling different challenges and aspects, confirmed that Shakespeare can be meaningful to an audience without needing to conceptualise and contemporise through a director-design-driven focus. Gathered audience feedback reflected that people were sometimes more fully engaged than many directed productions they had seen of the same play, even in the major playhouses.

Directorless Shakespeare ELC served the heteroglossia of Shakespeare's text, and certain obscured things shimmered to lucidity for actors, academics and audience. The distributed light of ensemble vision shone onto the text and out of the text. The darkness and shadows and liminality of a candle-lit *Macbeth*; the single state, shared light of *Richard II*; the hot evening twilight of *Much Ado*. Comet moments. Fire-light moments. The centre of the candle.[858]

In *Richard II*, weakness dependency and stereotypes were done away with. As were, pathologies and archetypes and popular references. Aumerle was recognised as a real threat. The play shone radiantly through. It was like an x-ray. The anti-illusionist Shakespearean stage was a crucible for change. The words were *heard* better, the meaning simpler to understand. The significance of the play emerged through a rehearsed process of interaction. Richard, a human king, in love with his wife, not cauterised from feelings, tied strongly to his

[855] Bettyna Andriolo, pers. comm.
[856] Rino Pellone, pers. comm.
[857] Elena Pellone.
[858] The following paragraphs synthesise select responses for all Directorless Shakespeare productions detailed in this PhD. The full quotes can be found in each chapter of the plays: chapters 3, 4 and 5.

councillors, betrayed by his family. A man who finds the solitude of prison unbearable, who must come to terms with the shared condition of being nothing.

In *Much Ado About Nothing* Dogberry's humanity was made apparent. The comedy was an ensemble responsibility. A play about respecting the voices of women and citizens, for then all disaster would have been averted; about trust, and faith, and learning to acquire those. Benedick believing in Beatrice's soul, Beatrice lowering her guarded consonants of poniards to (almost) reveal her heart. A belief in love: "An unforgettable experience"; "A freedom of spirit"; "A gift of emotions".[859]

Macbeth revealed not as a misogynist play about masculine politics in a pornographically violent world, but as an interrogation of gender binaries. The self-betrayal of fear and doubt in the monosyllabic King that cannot tell the difference between present fears and horrible imaginings. The despair and loneliness of realised dreams that are empty. The lack of redemption at the end: the exile of the female, another decapitation, another war, another transference of titles and loss of identity. The betrayal of scared desire, when fantasy and mystery are awoken to a sleep-walking terror of reality. The audience watching as a process of self-discovery.

In 2021, as part of the events of Madame Mnouchkine winning the Kyoto prize, she and Katie Mitchell had an online discussion about their practice.[860] As this thesis concludes, I wish to note how these directors each differently perceive the creation of theatre and the actors' process.

Mitchell thinks directing is a science in which all components are under her demystifying control: "what I enjoy doing is sort of demystifying it and breaking down what directing is".[861] By seeing actors as part of a directorial plan, on par with light, sound and set design, she positions herself in opposition to Mnouchkine's actor-focused practice. Mnouchkine cannot demystify directing because she admits to not knowing what directing is:

> Mnouchkine: Do you really know what is directing because I would be quite – I mean if I was asked the question what *is* directing … fifty years ago, I think, I would have answered – well it's to tell actors how to come in on stage, what to do and, but of course it is not that.
>
> Mitchell: What is it?
>
> Mnouchkine: … Is it just making it possible? I mean is it just believing them so much that they then believe themselves what they're doing. Is it receiving their visions or giving them visions?
>
> Mitchell: Gosh, I don't know. I think your practise is really focused on acting.
>
> Mnouchkine: Yes.
>
> Mitchell: And I think that my practise is focused on acting plus.[862]

This inability to articulate the ineffable magic of creation is not a modest move on Mnouchkine's part, who recognises she needs to be a part of it:

> I'm not being modest I swear … but it is true that sometime I don't know why today for example something beautiful happened thanks to two actors … why did it happen today, why did it not happen the day before? … there is a mystery, yes but that's very interesting that you [Mitchell] don't think there is a mystery.[863]

Mitchell believes:

---

[859] Audience responses.
[860] TORCH, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities, *Ariane Mnouchkine in Conversation with Katie Mitchell*.
[861] TORCH, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities.
[862] TORCH, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities.
[863] TORCH, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities.

> directing is about delegating … it is about creating a space and then some parameters and then delegation. So that everyone else can be really creative … organisers of other people's creativity.[864]

Here we have two perspectives. The director as delegator taking the creative credit. Or the director as witness, not fully understanding the role they have:

> but the creation, the creation, the birth, giving birth of an actor or actress, the moment where suddenly it is more than true – it's true but it's something more than true – meaning theatre – for me is still a grail, a beautiful mystery that I sometime cannot, cannot explain.[865]

A life quest, an art form, a mystery, something intangible. It is this holy grail of actors' creation that Constantin Stanislavski wished to systematise. Actors are vessels of art. Of course, they can work with a director and great art can be produced that way. But there can also be a choice for actors in a Shakespeare play to realise their art without one. Actors can be creative without creativity being delegated to them; can own their art without being organised; can make fertile their own mystery and miracles of the theatre gods, as they have done for millennia.

> It's woken my creative soul up again and reminded me why I wanted to act.[866]

The quest that great artists share – Mnouchkine, Stanislavski, Shakespeare – is the ineffable mystery of theatre and the actor.

> *Il y a un mystère humain dans le théâtre que pour moi est magnifique et insondable.*[867]

As part of that quest, Shakespeare text, written for actors, by an actor, in an industry owned and driven by actors, this thesis has shown we can return some of the main-stage commercial work with Shakespeare to a directorless realm.

Shakespeare wrote for a time when theatrical plurality was a condition as familiar as the air they breathed; we live in a time where the single is what we know, we have been convinced we must follow a leader. The results of this PhD argue that the heteroglossia of Shakespeare is better served by the collective, the actors' well-being is better taken care of when they are empowered, and it is fruitful to destabilise the hegemonic hold of single, autocratic political structures and return to socio-political models that at least attempt equality and contribute to the body politic in a positive way. Anarchy (Anərkē) can revolutionise Shakespeare theatre.

Not Director-less, but Actor-full, Shakespeare.

---

[864] TORCH, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities.
[865] TORCH, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities.
[866] Anthony Renshaw, 'Anərkē Shakespeare: *Richard II*', 13 January 2019.
[867] "There is a human mystery in theatre that for me is magnificent and unfathomable." (Author's translation). TORCH, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities.

‘08 Recto | Henslowe-Alleyn’. Accessed 16 June 2022. https://henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/catalogue/mss-1/article-138/08-recto/.

The British Library. ‘16th-Century Costume Guide | The British Library’. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/16th-century-costume-guide.

Theatregoing. ‘1580s’. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://theatregoing.wordpress.com/category/decade/1580s/.

A Midsummer Night’s Dream; The Revenger’s Tragedy; Henry VI, Part 1; The Changeling; The Blind Beggar of Alexandria. DVD. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2009.

Abbott, Edwin A. *A Shakespearian Grammar*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1877.

Abbott, Katherine. ‘Directorless *Macbeth* Reflection’, 28 January 2021.

Ackermann, Zeno. ‘Anərkē Performance of *Richard II* at Würzburg University (7 Nov. 2018): A Brief Viewer’s Report’, 25 February 2019.

Ackroyd, Peter. *Shakespeare: The Biography*. London: Chatto & Windus, 2005.

Shakespeare at Notre Dame. ‘Actors From The London Stage’. Accessed 12 June 2022. https://shakespeare.nd.edu/companies/actors-from-the-london-stage/.

‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2005, Program: *The Taming of the Shrew*; *The Tamer Tamed*; *A King and No King*’, 2005. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

Actors’ Renaissance Season 2005: Talk Back, 17/3. DVD. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2005.

‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2006, Program: *Romeo and Juliet*; *Eastward Ho!*; *Tis Pity She’s a Whore*; *The Brats of Clarence*’, 2006. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2007, Program: *Hamlet* (First Quarto); *The Duchess of Malfi*; *Pericles*; *The Brats of Clarence*; *The Devil is an Ass*’, 2007. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2008, Program: *Macbeth*; *Volpone*; *Cymbeline*; *The Jew of Malta*; *The Witch*’, 2008. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2009, Program: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; *The Revenger’s Tragedy*; *Henry VI, Part 1*; *The Changeling*; *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*’, 2009. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2010, Program: *Twelfth Night*; *Doctor Faustus*; *The Alchemist*; *Henry VI, Part 2*; *The Roman Actor*’, 2010. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2011, Program: *The Comedy of Errors*; *The Malcontent*; *Look About You*; *Henry VI, Part 3*; *A Trick to Catch the Old One*’, 2011. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2012, Program: *Much Ado About Nothing*; *Richard III*; *Philaster, or Love Lies a-Bleeding*; *A Mad World, My Masters*; *Dido, Queen of Carthage*’, 2012. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2013, Program: *Julius Caesar*; *The Country Wife*; *Henry VIII*; *The Custom of the Country*; *Two Nobel Kinsmen*’, 2013. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2014, Program: *As You Like It*; *The Servant of Two Masters*; *Timon of Athens*; *Epicene, of The Silent Woman*; *The Maid’s Tragedy*’, 2014. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2015, Program: *The Taming of the Shrew*; *The Rover*; *The White Devil*; *Every Man in his Humour*; *Mother Bombie*’, 2015. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2016, Program: *The Tempest*; *Measure for Measure*; *Women Beware Women*; *The Sea Voyage*; *Love for Love*’, 2016. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2017, Program: *The Merchant of Venice*; *Coriolanus*; *The School for Scandal*; *Shakespeare’s Sister*; *The Fair Maid of the Exchange*’, 2017. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2018, Program: *Hamlet*; *Richard II*; *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*; *The Way of the World*; *Antonio’s Revenge*’, 2018. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
‘Actors’ Renaissance Season 2019, Program: *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; *Henry IV, Part 1*, *Anne Page Hates Fun, Arden of Faversham*, *The Belle’s Stratagem*’, 2019. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
Actors’ Renaissance Season: Rehearsal, 2005. Video. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2005.
Adelman, Janet. ‘“Born of Woman”: Fantasies of Maternal Power in Macbeth.’ In *Cannibals, Witches and Divorce: Estranging the Renaissance*, edited by Marjorie Garber, 90–121. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.
———. *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare’s Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest.* New York: Routledge, 1992.
Agamben, Giorgio. *Creation and Anarchy: The Work of Art and the Religion of Capitalism*. Translated by Adam Kotsko. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2019.
Ahmari, Sohrab. ‘Emma Rice Reduced Shakespeare’s Plays to Lectures—She Had to Go’. *Prospect Magazine*, 1 November 2016. https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/arts-and-books/emma-rice-reduced-shakespeares-plays-to-lectures-she-had-to-go.
Akbar, Arifa. ‘Much Ado About Nothing Review – a Lavish Vision of Space-Age Shakespeare’. *The Guardian*, 18 February 2022, sec. Stage. https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2022/feb/18/much-ado-about-nothing-review-stratford-upon-avon.
Albrecht, Frank. ‘ASC Performs “Hamlet” - with a Twist’. *The News Leader*, 11 January 2007. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
———. ‘ASC’s “Hamlet” a Lively Performance’. *The News Leader*, 18 January 2007. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
———. ‘“Brats of Clarence” Keeps the Laughs Rolling’. *The News Leader*, 1 March 2007. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
———. ‘Renaissance Season Continues with “Duchess”’. *The News Leader*, 25 January 2007. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
Alfreds, Mike. *Different Every Night: Freeing the Actor*. London: Nick Hern Books, 2007.
Amankwah, Sarah, Jonathan Broadbent, Sophie Russell, Colin Hurley, and Hailey Bachrach. ‘Third in a Series of Conversations’. In *Henry V or Harry England Programme*, 14–16. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUV/1/29/3. Shakespeare’s Globe Library and Archive, 2019.
Andriolo, Bettyna. ‘Directorless *Much Ado About Nothing* Reflection’, 1 October 2018.
Anərkē Shakespeare. ‘Directorless *Richard II*: Friends of The Rose’, 18 August 2019.
———. ‘Universität Würzburg - Philosophische: Student and Actor Forum’, 8 November 2018.
Anonymous Actor. Interview with author, 10 January 2020.
———. Interview with author, 18 February 2022.

Aragay, Mireia, and Enric Monforte. ‘Introduction: Theatre and Spectatorship – Meditations on Participation, Agency and Trust’. *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English* 4, no. 1 (2016): 3–20.
———, eds. ‘Journal of Contemporary Drama in English’ 4, no. 1 (2016).
———. Interview with author, 28 April 2022.
Archard, Richard, John Donne, Richard Corbet, Ben Jonson, and William Harris Arnold. ‘Poetical Miscellany of Richard Archard’, n.d. Folger Shakespeare Library.
Arditti, Philip. Interview with author, 6 March 2019.
———. Interview with author, 4 December 2019.
Arditti, Philip, Nina Bowers, Leaphia Darko, Michelle Terry, and Jennifer Edwards. ‘First in a Series of Conversations’. In *Henry IV Part 1 or Hotspur Programme*, 16–17. 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/29/1. Shakespeare’s Globe Library and Archive, 2019.
Aristotle. *The Poetics*. Translated by Ingram Bywater. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1920.
Arlander, Annette. ‘Artistic Research — from Apartness to the Umbrella Concept at the Theatre Academy, Finland’. In *Mapping Landscapes for Performance as Research: Scholarly Acts and Creative Cartographies*, edited by Shannon Rose Riley and Lynette Hunter, 77–83. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
Arnold, Catharine. *Globe: Life in Shakespeare’s London*. London; New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016.
Arnold, Janet. *Patterns of Fashion: 1660-1860*. London: Macmillan, 1989.
‘As You Like It Programme’, 2018. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/27/2. Shakespeare’s Globe Library and Archive.
As You Like It; The Servant of Two Masters; Timon of Athens; Epicene, of The Silent Woman; The Maid’s Tragedy. Video. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2014.
Astington, John. *Actors and Acting in Shakespeare’s Time: The Art of Stage Playing*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
Bacon, Francis. *The Works of Francis Bacon: De Augmentis Scientiaurum*. London: M. Jones, 1815.
Bailey, Lucy. Interview with author, 20 January 2020.
Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.
———. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist. Translated by Caryl Emerson. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
‘Baldassarre Castiglione’. Accessed 30 June 2022. https://www.filosofico.net/baldesarcastiglione.htm.
Barker, Deborah E., and Ivo Kamps, eds. *Shakespeare and Gender: A History*. London; New York: Verso Books, 1995.
Barton, Bruce, Annette Arlander, Melanie Dreyer-Lude, and Ben Spatz, eds. *Performance as Research: Knowledge, Methods, Impact*. London: Routledge, 2018.
Barton, John. *Playing Shakespeare*. London: Methuen Drama, 2009.
Bate, Jonathan. *The Genius of Shakespeare*. London: Picador, 1997.
BBC. ‘In Our Time - Authenticity - BBC Sounds’. Accessed 31 July 2019. https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m00035z4.
———. ‘BBC Radio 4 - In Our Time, Macbeth’. Accessed 9 May 2021. https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000mytn.
Beale, Simon Russell. ‘Shakespeare in Italy > Events, News & Blog > News’. Accessed 22 February 2022. https://www.shakespeareinitaly.org.uk/Events-News-Blog/News/PgrID/408/PageID/21.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Ethics of Ambiguity: Pour Une Morale de l'Ambiguite*. Translated by Bernard Frechtman. New York: Open Road Media, 2018.
———. *The Second Sex*. Translated by H. M. Parshley. New York; London; Toronto: Everyman's Library, 1993. https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/1051007/the-second-sex/9781857151374.
Bechtol, Doreen. Interview with author, 16 January 2019.
Bentley, Gerald Eades. *Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time, 1590-1642*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.
———. *The Profession of Player in Shakespeare's Time*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
Berger, Harry. 'Text Against Performance in Shakespeare: The Example of *Macbeth*'. In *Power of Forms in the English Renaissance*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt, 49–80. Norman, Oklahoma: The Book Service Ltd, 1983.
Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin Classics, 2008.
Berry, Cicely. *Text in Action: A Definitive Guide to Exploring Text in Rehearsal for Actors and Directors*. London: Virgin Books, 2001.
Berry, Ralph, ed. *On Directing Shakespeare: Interviews with Contemporary Directors*. London; New York: Hamish Hamilton, 1989.
Best, Michael. 'The Companies :: Life and Times :: Internet Shakespeare Editions'. Accessed 9 June 2022. https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/SLT/stage/acting/companies.html.
Bethell, S. L. *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition*. Westminster: P.S. King and Staples Limited, 1944.
Bevington, David, Lars Engle, Katharine Eisamen Maus, and Eric Rasmussen, eds. *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002.
Bigliazzi, Silvia, David Schalkwyk, and Elena Pellone. '"Here Is My Space": Geographies of the Self in *Antony and Cleopatra'*. Presented at the European Shakespeare Research Association, Rome, 11 July 2019.
Billington, Michael. 'Best Shakespeare Productions: What's Your Favourite Richard II?' *The Guardian*, 8 April 2014, sec. Stage. https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/apr/08/best-shakespeare-productions-richard-ii-david-tennant-ben-whishaw.
———. 'Hamlet Review – Benedict Cumberbatch Imprisoned in a Dismal Production'. *The Guardian*, 26 August 2015, sec. Stage. http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/aug/25/hamlet-barbican-review-benedict-cumberbatch-imprisoned-prince.
———. Interview with author, 23 February 2019.
———. 'Macbeth Review – It's Not Just the Sisters Who Are Weird in Iqbal Khan's Bizarre Take'. *The Guardian*, 24 June 2016, sec. Stage. https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/jun/24/macbeth-review-shakespeares-globe-iqbal-khan-ray-fearon-tara-fitzgerald.
———. 'Michelle Terry's Plan for Shakespeare's Globe is Democratic – But Is It Doable?' *The Guardian*, 4 January 2018, sec. Stage. https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/jan/04/michelle-terry-shakespeares-globe.
———. 'Personal Correspondence', 5 February 2022.
Billington, Michael, and Janet Suzman. 'Commemoration of John Barton and Peter Hall'. Kingston Shakespeare Seminar, 8 September 2018.
'Biographia Literaria by Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Chapter 15'. Accessed 15 July 2019. http://www.online-literature.com/coleridge/biographia-literaria/15/.

Blavatnik School of Government. *Ariane Mnouchkine: A Life in Theatre – Kyoto Prize at Oxford 2021*, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DhkBD8Nm90.
Block, Giles. *Speaking the Speech: An Actor's Guide to Shakespeare*. London: Nick Hern Books, 2013.
Blum, Deby. 'Enjoying the Bard at Blackfriars Playhouse'. *Recreation News*, May 2007. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
Blunt, Rick. Interview with author, 10 January 2019.
———. Interview with author, 13 January 2022.
Boas, F. S., and Albert Feuillerat. 'Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth'. *The Modern Language Review* 5, no. 4 (1910): 510–15. https://doi.org/10.2307/3712823.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 'The Forms of Capital'. In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, edited by John G. Richardson, 241–58. Westport: Greenwood, 1986.
Bourne, Craig, and Emily Caddick Bourne, eds. *The Routledge Companion to Shakespeare and Philosophy*. London: Routledge, 2019.
Bradley, A. C. *Shakespearean Tragedy: Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*. Macmillan and Co., 1951.
Brecht, Bertolt. 'A Short Organum for the Theatre'. In *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, edited and translated by John Willett, 179–209. London: Methuen, [1949] 1964.
———. *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. Edited and translated by John Willett. London: Methuen, 1964.
Broadbent, Jonathan. Interview with author, 8 March 2019.
Brome, Richard. *The Court Beggar*. London, 1653.
Brook, Peter. *Evoking (and Forgetting!) Shakespeare*. London: Nick Hern Books, 2002.
———. *Playing by Ear: Reflections on Music and Sound*. London: Nick Hern Books, 2019.
———. Shakespeare Unlimited: Episode 134, 10 December 2019. https://www.folger.edu/shakespeare-unlimited/peter-brook.
———. *The Empty Space*. London: Penguin Classics, 2008.
———. *The Quality of Mercy: Reflections on Shakespeare*. London: Nick Hern Books, 2014.
Brooksbank, Scott. The Factory: Interview with author, 15 October 2019.
Brown, B, P Gough, and J Roddis. 'Types of Research in the Creative Arts and Design', March 2004. https://praguk.files.wordpress.com/2018/07/types-of-research-in-the-creative-arts-and-design.pdf.
Brown, John Russell. *Shakespeare's Plays in Performance*. London: Edward Arnold, 1966.
———, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
———, *Macbeth: A Guide to the Text and Its Theatrical Life*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
———, ed. *The Routledge Companion to Directors' Shakespeare*. London; New York: Routledge, 2009.
Brustein, Robert Sanford. 'Why American Plays Are Not Literature'. *Harper's Magazine*, 1 October 1959. https://harpers.org/archive/1959/10/why-american-plays-are-not-literature/.
Bucknall, Joanna. 'The Daisy Chain Model: An Approach to Epistemic Mapping and Dissemination in Performance-Based Research'. In *Performance as Research*, edited by Annette Arlander, Bruce Barton, Melanie Dreyer-Lude, and Ben Spatz, 50–74. London: Routledge, 2017.

Bulwer, John. '"Chirologia" by John Bulwer — A Pioneer in the Education of the Deaf in England'. *Swann Galleries News* (blog), 21 October 2019. https://www.swanngalleries.com/news/early-printed-books/2019/10/john-bulwer-pioneer-education-deaf-england/.
Burnim, Kalman A. *David Garrick: Director*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2006.
Burrows, Miriam. Interview with author, 14 January 2019.
———. 'Reflections on Actors' Renaissance Season', 13 January 2021.
Butler, Robert. 'Interview Kenneth Branagh', 13 June 1993. http://www.branaghcompendium.com/artic-kcs93.htm.
Callaghan, Dympna, ed. *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*. 2nd edition. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014.
———. *Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy*. Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989.
Calder, Shilling. Interview with author, 19 January 2019.
Calderwood, James L. *If It Were Done: 'Macbeth' and Tragic Action*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986.
Calos, Katherine. 'The Bard Continues to Inspire and Delight'. *Daily Progress*, 15 May 2016. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
Cardoso, Ricardo. 'Directorless *Macbeth* Reflection', 11 March 2020.
Carroll, William C. *William Shakespeare, Macbeth: Texts and Contexts*. Boston; Basingstoke: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999.
Carson, Christie, and Farah Karim-Cooper, eds. *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
Cartelli, Tom. 'Unpublished Review Anərkē Shakespeare *Richard II'*, 2018.
Carter, Brandon. Interview with author, 18 January 2019.
Cartwright, William. 'The Royal Slave: A Tragi-Comedy', n.d. Folger Shakespeare Library.
Cavendish, Dominic. 'Is This a Dud Which I See Before Me? Macbeth, National Theatre, Review'. *The Telegraph*, 7 March 2018. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/dud-see-macbeth-national-theatre-review/.
———. 'Macbeth? More like Four Witches and a Funeral'. *The Telegraph*, 24 June 2016. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/macbeth-more-like-four-witches-and-a-funeral/.
———. 'Macbeth Review, RSC, Stratford-upon-Avon - a Case of Theatrical Overkill'. *The Telegraph*, 21 March 2018. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/macbeth-review-rsc-stratford-upon-avon-christopher-eccleston/.
Chamberlain, Stephanie. 'Fantasizing Infanticide: Lady Macbeth and the Murdering Mother in Early Modern England'. *College Literature* 32, no. 3 (2005): 72–91.
Chambers, E. K. *The Elizabethan Stage*. Vol. I–IV. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923.
———. *William Shakespeare a Study of Facts and Problems*. Vol. 1. New York: Forgotten Books, 2012.
Charlton, Hinman, ed. *The Norton Facsimile. The First Folio of Shakespeare.* Facsimile Edition. London; New York: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1968.
Chedgzoy, Kate, ed. *Shakespeare, Feminism and Gender*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001.
'Cheek by Jowl | Declan Donnellan'. Accessed 8 December 2016. http://www.cheekbyjowl.com/declan_donnellan.php.
Chekhov, Michael. *To the Actor: On the Technique of Acting*. London: Routledge, 2002.
Cheney, Sheldon. *The New Movement in the Theatre*. New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1914.

Christiansen, Rupurt. ‘Invisible Heroes of the Theatre’, 12 July 2001. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/4724523/Invisible-heroes-of-the-theatre.html.
Churchyard, Thomas, R. Leicester Harmsworth, and Richard Heber. *A Discourse of the Queenes Maiesties Entertainement in Suffolk and Norffolk: With a Description of Many Things Then Presently Seene. Deuised by Thomas Churchyarde, Gent. with Diuers Shewes of His Own Inuention Sette out at Norwich: And Some Rehearsal of Hir Highnesse Retourne from Progresse. Wherevnto Is Adioyned a Commendation of Sir Humfrey Gilberts Ventrous Iourney*. At London: Imprinted by Henrie Bynneman, seruante to the right Honourable Sir Christofer Hatton Vizchamberlayne, 1578.
Cimitile, Anna Maria. ‘Macbeth: Criticism, Gender, and the Tragedy of the Human’. *Textus* 20 (2007): 539–54.
Clapp, Susannah. ‘The Globe Isn’t Just a Heritage Project – Emma Rice Understood That’. *The Observer*, 30 October 2016, sec. Stage. https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/oct/30/emma-rice-shakespeares-globe-ousting-comment-susannah-clapp.
Clare, Janet. *Shakespeare’s Stage Traffic: Imitation, Borrowing and Competition in Renaissance Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
Clark, Matthew. *Narrative Structures and the Language of the Self*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2010. https://muse.jhu.edu/book/24303.
Clegg, Roger. ‘Reconstructing The Rose’. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://reconstructingtherose.tome.press/.
Cohen, Ralph Alan. ‘Directing at the Globe and the Blackfriars: Six Big Rules for Contemporary Directors’. In *Shakespeare’s Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, edited by Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper, 211–25. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
———. Interview with author, 5 February 2019.
———. ‘Letter to the Ren 2006 Company’, 2006.
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Coleridge’s Criticism of Shakespeare*. Edited by R. A. Foakes. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989.
———. *Coleridge’s Shakespearean Criticism*. Edited by Thomas Middleton Raysor. Vol. 1. London: Constable & Co., 1930.
———. *Notes and Lectures Upon Shakespeare and Some of the Old Poets and Dramatists and Other Literary Remains of S.T. Coleridge*. W. Pickering, 1849.
Collier, John Payne. *Five Old Plays: Illustrating the Early Progress of the English Drama*. London: W. Nicol, 1851.
Conkie, Rob. *The Globe Theatre Project: Shakespeare and Authenticity*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006.
Cordner, Michael. ‘Commemoration of John Barton and Peter Hall’. Kingston Shakespeare Seminar, 8 September 2018.
Cornford, Tom. ‘Reconstructing Theatre: The Globe under Dominic Dromgoole’. *New Theatre Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (2010): 319–28. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266464X1000062X.
———. ‘The Importance of How: Directing Shakespeare with Michael Chekhov’s Technique’. *Shakespeare Bulletin* 30, no. 4 (2012): 485–504.
Corrigan, James. Interview with author, 30 May 2017.
Coryate, Thomas. *Most Glorious & Peerless Venice: Observations of Thomas Coryate (1608)*. Edited by David Whittaker. Charlbury, Oxon: Wavestone Press, 2013.
Culbertson, Charles. ‘Royals Take Hilarious Romp Across Stage’. *The News Leader*, 17 March 2005. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.

———. '"Taming" Is One Shrewd Play'. *The News Leader*, 2005. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
Daniels, Kirstin. '*Macbeth* Musings', 27 January 2021.
Dash, Irene G. *Wooing, Wedding, and Power: Women in Shakespeare's Plays*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.
David Tennant. *David Tennant Richard II Interview*, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l9LVP76t0Rw.
Davies, Matt, and Ben Curns. Interview with author, 11 January 2019.
Davies, Michael. 'Much Ado About Nothing at the RSC – Review'. WhatsOnStage, 18 February 2022. https://www.whatsonstage.com/stratford-upon-avon-theatre/reviews/much-ado-about-nothing-at-the-rsc_55952.html.
Davis, Clive. 'Much Ado About Nothing Review — Much Ado but Nothing to Write Home About', 17 February 2022. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/much-ado-about-nothing-review-much-ado-but-nothing-to-write-home-about-lwkzxv96t.
Database of Early English Playbooks. 'DEEP: Database of Early English Playbooks'. Accessed 7 June 2022. http://deep.sas.upenn.edu/.
Dekker, Thomas, Philip Henslowe, George Chapman, Thomas Downton, and Edward Juby. 'Receipt from Thomas Dekker to Philip Hynchlow', n.d. Folger Shakespeare Library.
Delgado, Maria M., and Paul Heritage, eds. *In Contact with the Gods?: Directors Talk Theatre*. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1996.
Dell'Oso, Lorenzo. 'Looking at Books, Instead of Reading Them: A Conversation with Randall McLeod'. *Tipofilologia. Rivista Internazionale di Studi Filologici e Linguistici sui Testi a Stampa*, no. XI (2018): 131–41.
Demeter, Jason, and Ayanna Thompson. 'The Merchant of Ashland: The Confusing Case of an Organized Minority Response at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival'. In *The Shakespearean International Yearbook*, edited by Susan Bennett, 49–64. London; New York: Routledge, 2016.
Derrida, Jacques. *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
———. *Writing and Difference*. London: Routledge, 2001.
Dessen, Alan C. *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama 1580–1642*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
———. *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
———. 'Original Practice's at the Globe: A Theatre Historian's View'. In *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, edited by Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper, 45–53. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
———. *Recovering Shakespeare's Theatrical Vocabulary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
———. *Rescripting Shakespeare: The Text, the Director, and Modern Productions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
Dignan, Tess. Interview with author, 16 August 2019.
Stratford Herald. 'Director Axed for Unique Macbeth at Holy Trinity', 9 March 2020. https://www.stratford-herald.com/whats-on/director-axed-for-unique-macbeth-at-holy-trinity-9131915/.
Dixon, Joe. Conversation with author, 2017.
———. Interview with author, 26 November 2019.
Dobson, Michael. 'Reflections on Anərkē Shakespeare *Richard II*', 16 April 2018.
'Documents - Lost Plays Database'. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://lostplays.folger.edu/Documents.

Donne, John, Ben Jonson, William Strode, Thomas Randolph, Abraham Cowley, William Basse, Robert Herrick, and John Denham. 'Poetical Commonplace Book', n.d. Folger Shakespeare Library.
Donnelly, Steffan, John Leader, Helen Schlesinger, and Hailey Bachrach. 'Second in a Series of Conversations'. In *Henry IV Part 2 or Falstaff Programme*, 16–17. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/29/2. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive, 2019.
Doran, Greg. *Imperium Parts I and II*. Royal Shakespeare Company, 2017.
———. *Julius Caesar*. Royal Shakespeare Company, 2012.
———. 'Shakespeare in Stratford upon Avon'. Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust, 17 February 2020.
Doran, Gregory. *Royal Shakespeare Company: Richard II*. Royal Shakespeare Company, 2013.
Drouin, Jennifer, ed. *Shakespeare / Sex: Contemporary Readings in Gender and Sexuality*. London; New York: The Arden Shakespeare, 2020.
Duffin, Ross W. *Shakespeare's Songbook*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004.
Duncan-Jones, Katherine. *Shakespeare: An Ungentle Life*. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2010.
Dusinberre, Juliet. *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women*. London: Macmillan, 1996.
Dustagheer, Sarah. 'Original Practices: Old Ways and New Directions'. In *The Arden Research Handbook of Shakespeare and Contemporary Performance*, edited by Peter Kirwan and Kathryn Prince, 65–81. London: Bloomsbury, 2021.
Eagleton, Terry. *William Shakespeare*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.
'Early Modern Dramatic Paratexts [BETA]'. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://paratexts.folger.edu/keywordSearch.
Eccleston, Christopher. *I Love the Bones of You: My Father and the Making of Me*. London: Simon & Schuster, 2019.
Edelman, Charles. *Brawl Ridiculous: Swordfighting in Shakespeare's Plays*. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1992.
Edmondson, Paul, and Peter Holbrook, eds. *Shakespeare's Creative Legacies: Artists, Writers, Performers, Readers*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.
Edwards, Chris. 'Blackfriars: Staunton Goes Shakespearean'. *C-Ville*, 18 September 2001. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
Eliot, T. S. *Essays on Elizabethan Drama*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014.
———. *Four Quartets*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014.
Elze, Karl. *William Shakespeare: A Literary Biography*. Covent Garden: George Bell and Dons, 1888.
'Emma Rice's Departure Is Not about Lighting | WhatsOnStage', 25 October 2016. https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/matt-trueman-emma-rice-shakespeares-globe-lighting_42100.html.
Erne, Lukas. *Shakespeare and the Book Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
———. *The Arden Research Handbook of Shakespeare and Textual Studies*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021.
Shakespeare Documented. 'Examination of Augustine Phillips'. Accessed 23 January 2019. https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/exhibition/document/examination-augustine-phillips.
'Fabio Mangolini'. Accessed 24 June 2022. http://www.fabiomangolini.com/About_Me.html.
Fallon, Sarah, John Harrell, Jason Guy, Doreen Bechtol, Miriam Donald, Thadd McQuade, James Keegan, et al. *Final Feedback Actors' Renaissance Season, 2005*. DVD. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2005.

Falocco, Joe. *Reimagining Shakespeare's Playhouse: Early Modern Staging Conventions in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010.
Favlia, Marina. 'The American Shakespeare Center: "They do it with the Lights on"'. *Cahiers Élisabéthains: A Journal of English Renaissance Studies* 81, no. 1 (2012): 39–45.
Fernie, Ewan, and Simon Palfrey. *Macbeth, Macbeth*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.
Fiedler, Leslie A. *The Stranger in Shakespeare*. New York: Stein and Day, 1972.
Flatman, Thomas, Jonathan Swift, Richard Blackmore, and Boydell family. 'Poetical Miscellany', n.d. Folger Shakespeare Library.
Flecknoe, Richard. *A Short Discourse of the English Stage*. London, 1664.
———. 'A Short Discourse of the English Stage, 1664'. In *William Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage*, edited by Brian Vickers, 1:45–46. London: Routledge, 1974.
Fletcher, John, Francis Beaumont, John Lowin, and Joseph Taylor. *The Wild-Goose Chase: A Comedie. As It Hath Been Acted with Singular Applause at the Black-Friers: Being the Noble, Last, and Onely Remaines of Those Incomparable Drammatists, Francis Beaumont, and John Fletcher, Gent. Retriv'd for the Publick Delight of All the Ingenious; and Private Benefit of John Lowin, and Joseph Taylor, Servants to His Late Majestie. By a Person of Honour*. London: Printed [by William Wilson] for Humpherey Moseley, and are to be sold at the Princes Armes in St Paules Church-yard, 1652.
Foakes, R. A. 'The "Part" of Orlando in Robert Greene's Play | Henslowe-Alleyn'. Accessed 16 June 2022. https://henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/essays/the-part-of-orlando-in-robert-greenes-play/.
Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. London: Penguin Classics, 2020.
———. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Vintage, 1994.
Freedman, Penelope. *Power and Passion in Shakespeare's Pronouns: Interrogating 'you' and 'thou'*. London: Routledge, 2017.
French, Andrew. Interview with author, 18 February 2022.
Freshwater, Helen. *Theatre and Audience*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Red Globe Press, 2009.
Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Translated by James Strachey. New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985.
———. *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*. Translated by James Strachey. New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995.
Gainsford, Thomas. *The Rich Cabinet Furnished with Varietie of Excellent Descriptions*. London, 1616.
Garber, Marjorie. *Profiling Shakespeare*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
Garbode, Carsten. 'Directorless *Much Ado About Nothing* Reflection', 23 January 2019.
Gardner, Lyn. 'Shakespeare's Richard II: Which Actor Wears the Crown Best?' *The Guardian*, 24 January 2013, sec. Stage. https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2013/jan/24/richard-ii-actors-david-tennant.
Garnon, James, and Helen Schlesinger. *Company Q&A Hamlet*. Audio Recording, 2018. GB 3316 SGT/ED/EV/7/2018/4. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
Gillett, John. *Acting Stanislavski: A Practical Guide to Stanislavski's Approach and Legacy*. London; New York: Methuen Drama, 2014.

Gillies, John. ‘Stanislavski, Othello and the Motives of Eloquence’. In *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, edited by Barbara Hodgdon and W. B. Worthen, 267–84. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
Godwin, Simon. *Hamlet*. Royal Shakespeare Company, 2016.
Gombrich, E. H. *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. London: Phaidon Press, 1962.
Goold, Rupert. *The Hollow Crown: Richard II*. NBC Universal Television, 2012.
Green, Michael Cawood, and Tony Williams. ‘On Reflection: The Role, Mode and Medium of the Reflective Component in Practice as Research’. *TEXT* 22, no. 1 (April 2018). http://www.textjournal.com.au/april18/green_williams.htm.
Green, Robert. ‘Orlando Furioso: Cue Script Fragment’, n.d. MSS 1, Article 138, folio 8r. Dulwich. https://henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/catalogue/mss-1/article-138/08-recto/.
Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
———. ‘Survival Strategies: Shakespeare and Renaissance Truth-Telling/Keynote Lecture ESRA’, 9 July 2019.
Greenblatt, Stephen, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisam Maus, and Gordon Mcmullan, eds. *The Norton Shakespeare*. New York London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015.
Greene, Robert. *The Scottish History of James the Fourth, 1598*. Oxford: Malone Society, 1921.
Greer, Germaine. *Shakespeare: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
Greg, W. W. *Dramatic Document from the Elizabethan Playhouse Stage Plots Actor’s Parts Prompt Books*. Delhi: Facsimile Publisher, 2015.
Grotowski, Jerzy. ‘Towards the Poor Theatre’. *The Tulane Drama Review* 11, no. 3 (1967): 60–65.
Gurr, Andrew. *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
———. *The Shakespeare Company, 1594-1642*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
———. *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
Gurr, Andrew, and John Orrell. *Rebuilding Shakespeare’s Globe*. New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1989.
Hale, Dorothy J., ed. *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900-2000*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
Halio, Jay L. ‘Identity in Shakespeare’. *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* 25 (2012): 33–43.
Hall, Peter. *Shakespeare’s Advice to the Players*. London: Oberon Books, 2003.
Hall, Stuart. ‘Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse’. Edited by Ann Grey. *Centre for Contemporary Studies* 2 (2007): 386–98.
Hamlet (First Quarto); *The Duchess of Malfi; Pericles; The Brats of Clarence; The Devil is an Ass*. Video. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2007.
‘Hamlet Programme’, 2018. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/27/1. Shakespeare’s Globe Library and Archive.
Hamlet; Richard II; Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead; The Way of the World; Antonio’s Revenge. Video. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2018.

‘Hamnet: Folger Shakespeare Library Online Catalog’. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://hamnet.folger.edu/.
Handy, Scott. Interview with author, 17 June 2022.
Harrell, John. Interview with author, 5 January 2019.
Harrell, John, David Loar, Eric Schoen, James Keegan, Jessica Dunton, Miriam Donald, Sarah Fallon, et al. *Interviews with Actors: Actors’ Renaissance Season, 2005*. DVD. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2005.
Harrell, John, Thadd McQuade, and Sarah Fallon. *Actors’ Renaissance Season 2005: Talk Back, 4/3*. Compact Disc, 2005. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
Hawk, Abbi, and Meg Rodgers. Interview with author, 19 January 2019.
Hawkins, Ella. ‘“Original Practices” Costume Design at Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre: Practice as Experiment, Re-Enactment, and Research’. Shakespeare Institute, 2018.
———. *Shakespeare in Elizabethan Costume: ‘Period Dress’ in Twenty-First-Century Performance*. London; New York: The Arden Shakespeare, 2022.
———. ‘Tradition, Nostalgia, and Tourism: Jacobethan-Inspired Costuming’, 19 March 2019. Shakespeare Institute.
Hays, Michael. ‘Theater History and Practice: An Alternative View of Drama’. *New German Critique*, no. 12 (1977): 85–97.
‘*Henry IV Part 1* or *Hotspur* Programme’, 2019. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/29/1. Shakespeare’s Globe Library and Archive.
‘*Henry IV Part 2* or *Falstaff* Programme’, 2019. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/29/2. Shakespeare’s Globe Library and Archive.
‘*Henry V* or *Harry England* Programme’, 2019. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUV/1/29/3. Shakespeare’s Globe Library and Archive.
‘*Henry VI* Programme’, 2019. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/30/1. Shakespeare’s Globe Library and Archive.
Henslowe, Philip. *Henslowe’s Diary*. Edited by R. A. Foakes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
———. *Henslowe’s Diary*. Edited by W. W. 1875-1959 Greg. Ulan Press, 2012.
Herbert, Henry. *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623-73*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
Heywood, Thomas. *An Apology for Actors*. London: Elibron Classics, 2005.
Hildy, Franklin. ‘Audience and Architecture: The Dynamics of Performance at Shakespeare’s Globe’. *New England Theatre Journal* 10 (1999): 1–11.
———. ‘“If You Build it They Will Come”: The Reconstruction of Shakespeare’s Globe Gets Underway on the Bankside in London’. *Shakespeare Bulletin* 10, no. 3 (1992): 5–10.
———. ‘Reconstructing Shakespeare’s Theatre’. In *New Issues in the Reconstruction of Shakespeare’s Theatre*, 1–37. New York: Peter Lang, 1990.
———. ‘The “Essence of Globeness”: Authenticity, and the Search for Shakespeare’s Stagecraft’. In *Shakespeare’s Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, edited by Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper, 13–25. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
———. ‘Why Elizabethan Spaces?’ *Theatre Symposium* 12 (2004): 98–120.
———., ed. *New Issues in the Reconstruction of Shakespeare’s Theatre: Proceedings of the Conference Held at the University of Georgia, February 16-18, 1990*. New York: Peter Lang, 1991.
Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Edited by J. C. A. Gaskin. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

———. *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*. Edited by J. C. A. Gaskin. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
Hodgdon, Barbara, and W. B. Worthen, eds. *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
Hodges, Walter. *The Globe Restored*. London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1953.
Hogan, Charles Beecher. *Shakespeare in the Theatre, 1701-1800.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957.
Holinshed, Raphael. *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland ...: Scotland*. J. Johnson, 1808.
———. *Shakespeare's Holinshed: The Chronicle and the Historical Plays Compared*. Edited by Walter George Boswell-Stone. London: Chatto and Windus, 1907.
Holmes, Federay. *As You Like It*, Question and Answer, 4 July 2018.
———. Interview with author, 26 November 2019.
Holmes, Federay, Sarah Beddy, and Will Tosh. 'Federay Holmes and Sarah Beddy in Conversation with Will Tosh'. In *Henry V Programme*, 12–13. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUV/1/29/3. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive, 2019.
Holmes, Sean. Interview with author, 4 June 2019.
———. *Podcast Season 2 Bonus: Meet Sean Holmes*, 2019. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/WEB/1/12. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
The Henslowe-Alleyn Digitisation Project. 'Home | Henslowe-Alleyn'. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/.
Lexicons of Early Modern English. 'Home - LEME'. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://leme.library.utoronto.ca/.
Hosley, Richard. 'The Discovery-Space in Shakespeare's Globe'. In *Shakespeare Survey: Volume 12: Elizabethan Theatre*, edited by Allardyce Nicoll, 12:35–46. Shakespeare Survey. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959. https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521064252.005.
Howard, Tony, and Martin Wiggins. '"'Let Me Play the Lion Too'": Casting Diversity in Shakespeare', 25 March 2018.
Howard, Jean E. *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.
Howard, Tony. 'Reflections on Anərkē Shakespeare *Richard II'*, 6 April 2018.
———. *Women as Hamlet: Performance and Interpretation in Theatre, Film and Fiction*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
Howard-Hill, T. H. 'Crane's 1619 "Promptbook" of "Barnavelt" and Theatrical Processes'. *Modern Philology* 86, no. 2 (1988): 146–70.
Hunter, Kelly. *Cracking Shakespeare*. London: Methuen Drama, 2015.
Icke, Robert. Interview with author, 25 November 2019.
Ilardi, Vincent. *Renaissance Vision from Spectacles to Telescopes*. Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 2007.
Innes, Christopher, and Maria Shevtsova. *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Directing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
Ioppolo, Grace. *Dramatists and Their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton and Heywood: Authorship, Authority and the Playhouse*. Routledge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture 6. London; New York: Routledge, 2006.
Jackson, Russell. Interview with author, 30 March 2022.
———. 'Shakespeare and Kenneth Branagh'. The Shakespeare Institute, 7 March 2017.
Jardine, Lisa. *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare*. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1983.

Jenkins, Simon. ‘The Removal of Road Markings is to be Celebrated. We Are Safer Without Them’. *The Guardian*, 4 February 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/feb/04/removal-road-markings-safer-fewer-accidents-drivers.
Johnson, Albert E. ‘The First Modern Stage Director: Some Undiscovered Sources about the Meininger’. *The Southern Speech Journal* 19, no. 2 (1 December 1953): 144–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/10417945309371302.
Johnson, Robert, and Adam Cureton. ‘Kant’s Moral Philosophy’. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2022. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2022. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2022/entries/kant-moral/.
Johnston, Chris. Interview with author, 15 January 2019.
Jonson, Ben. *Cynthia’s Revels, or The Fountain of Self-Love*. London, 1601.
Josef, Zed. ‘Directorless *Macbeth* Reflection’, 16 March 2020.
Joughin, John. *Philosophical Shakespeares*. London: Routledge, 2000. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bham/detail.action?docID=180141.
Jowett, John. *Shakespeare and Text: Revised Edition*. Oxford Shakespeare Topics. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.
Julius Caesar; The Country Wife; Henry VIII; The Custom of the Country; Two Nobel Kinsmen. Video. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2013.
Philosophy & Philosophers. ‘Kant’s Ethics Summary’, 10 April 2012. https://www.the-philosophy.com/kant-ethics-summary.
Kaplan, Joel H. ‘Thomas Middleton’s Epitaph on the Death of Richard Burbage, and John Payne Collier’. *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 80, no. 2 (June 1986): 225–32.
Karim-Cooper, Farah. Interview with author, 4 June 2019.
———. ‘*Twelfth Night* and Original Practices’. Accessed 8 December 2016. http://shakespearesblog.webstarsltd.com/twelfth-night-and-original-practices-by-dr-farah-karim-cooper.
———. ‘*Twelfth Night*: Original Practice’. Teach Shakespeare, 5 May 2016. https://teach.shakespearesglobe.com/twelfth-night-original-practice.
Kathman, David. ‘Playhouses’. In *A New Companion to Renaissance Drama*, 211–24. London: Wiley Blackwell, 2017.
Keats, John. *The Complete Poetical Works and Letters of John Keats.* Edited by Horace Elisha Scudder. Boston; New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899.
Keenan, Siobhan. *Acting Companies and Their Plays in Shakespeare’s London*. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2014.
———. ‘Richard Burbage, a “Delightful Proteus”: On the Acting and Reputation of the First Shakespearean Star’. Shakespeare Institute, 26 November 2020.
Kellaway, Kate. ‘Emma Rice: “I don’t know how I got to be so controversial”’. *The Observer*, 1 July 2018, sec. Stage. https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/jul/01/emma-rice-controversial-shakespeares-globe-wise-children.
Kermode, Frank. *Shakespeare’s Language*. London: Penguin, 2000.
Kinney, Arthur F., and Thomas Warren Hopper, eds. *A New Companion to Renaissance Drama*. Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture 98. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.
Kirtland, Andy. ‘An Unrehearsed Cue Script Perspective on *Love’s Labour’s Lost*’. *Actes Des Congrès de La Société Française Shakespeare*, no. 32 (11 March 2015): 1–11. https://doi.org/10.4000/shakespeare.3232.

Klein, Joan Larsen. ‘Lady Macbeth: “Infirm of Purpose”’. In *The Woman’s Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, edited by Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely, 240–55. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980.
Knutson, Roslyn. *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare’s Time*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
———. *The Repertory of Shakespeare’s Company, 1594-1613*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1991.
Lambert, DH. *Shakespeare Documents: A Chronical Catalogue of Extant Evidence Relating to the Life and Works of William Shakespeare*. London: George Bell and Sons, 1904.
Law, Robert Adger. ‘The Composition of *Macbeth* with Reference to Holinshed’. *The University of Texas Studies in English* 31 (1952): 35–41.
Leach, Robert. *An Illustrated History of British Theatre and Performance: Volume Two*. London; New York: Routledge, 2020.
Lebrecht, Norman. *The Maestro Myth: Great Conductors in Pursuit of Power*. London: Pocket Books, 1997.
Lenz, Carolyn Ruth Swift, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely, eds. *The Woman’s Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980.
Lewis, David Anthony. Interview with author, 2 January 2019.
Lewis, Paul. ‘5 Reasons the Critics Hated Macbeth at the National Theatre’. *One Minute Theatre Reviews* (blog), 26 March 2018. http://oneminutetheatrereviews.co.uk/current-productions/macbeth-critics/.
Lewis, Sarah Dale, and David Anthony Lewis. Interview with author, 11 January 2019.
Little, Katie. Interview with author, 19 January 2019.
Lloyd, Phyllida. *Shakespeare Trilogy*. Donmar Theatre, London, UK, 2012.
Lopez, Jeremy. ‘A Partial Theory of Original Practice’. Edited by Peter Holland. *Shakespeare Survey* 61 (2008): 302–17.
———. *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
Lukowski, Andrzej. ‘“Henry VI” Review | Theatre in London’. Time Out London. Accessed 8 June 2022. https://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/henry-vi-review.
‘LUNA: Folger Digital Image Collection’. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/FOLGERCM1~6~6.
Macbeth; Volpone; Cymbeline; The Jew of Malta; The Witch. Video. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2008.
MacDonald, Berndan. ‘Review: Henry IV Parts 1 & 2 and Henry V, at Shakespeare’s Globe’. *Exeunt Magazine* (blog). Accessed 8 June 2022. http://exeuntmagazine.com/reviews/review-henry-iv-parts-1-2-henry-v-shakespeares-globe/.
Mannette, Alice. ‘Back to The Bard’s Way: Shenandoah Shakespeare Makes Theater History’. *The News Leader*, 13 March 2005. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
Massai, Sonia. *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
Massaro, Martina. ‘Trade in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries’. In *Venice, the Jews, and Europe 1516-2016*, 318–65. Venice: Marsilio, 2016.
Massinger, Philip. *Believe as Ye List*. Folio Series. London: Tudor Facsimile Texts, 1631.
———. *The Picture·: A Tragecomedie, as It Was Often Presented with Good Allowance, at the Globe, and Blacke-Friers Play-Houses, by the Kings Maiesties Seruants. Written by Philip Massinger*. London: Printed by I[ohn]. N[orton]. for Thomas Walkley and are to be sould at his shoppe at the Eagle and Child in Brittains Burse, 1630.

Maxwell, Dominic. 'Henry VI/Richard III Review — Liberty-Taking, Lacerating Exercises in Black Comedy', sec. times2. Accessed 8 June 2022. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/henry-vi-richard-iii-review-liberty-taking-lacerating-exercises-in-black-comedy-xt0l8rwmm.
McCarthy, Jeanne H. *The Children's Troupes and the Transformation of English Theater 1509-1608: Pedagogue, Playwrights, Playbooks, and Play-Boys*. London; New York: Routledge, 2016.
McClure, Jay. 'Blackfriars Playhouse Actors' Renaissance Season: Purpose, Precepts, Promise', 2005. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
———. Interview with author, 18 January 2019.
———. 'Sides and Prompt: Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher's *King and No King*', 2005. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
———. 'Sides and Prompt: John Fletcher's *The Tamer Tamed*', 2005. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
———. 'Sides and Prompt: William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*', 2005. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
McSweeny, Ethan. Interview with author, 9 January 2019.
Megson, Chris, and Janelle Reinelt. 'Performance, Experience, Transformation: What Do Spectators Value in Theatre?' Edited by Mireia Aragay and Enric Monforte. *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English* 4 (2016): 227–42.
Menzer, Paul. *Shakespeare in the Theatre: The American Shakespeare Center*. London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2017.
Merlin, Bella. *The Complete Stanislavsky Toolkit*. London: Nick Hern Books, 2014.
Metz, G. Harold. 'The Master of the Revels and The Brooke of Sir Thomas Moore'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1982): 493–95.
'Michelle Terry: "Emma Rice Was the Best Thing That Happened to the Globe" | WhatsOnStage', 4 January 2018. https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/michelle-terry-emma-rice-best-shakespeare-globe_45457.html.
Middleton, Thomas, Ralph Crane, and Mervyn Archdall. '*A Game at Chess'*, n.d. Folger Shakespeare Library.
Milhous, Judith, and Robert D. Hume. 'New Light on English Acting Companies in 1646, 1648, and 1660'. *The Review of English Studies* XLII, no. 168 (1991): 487–509.
Mnouchkine, Ariane. 'Ariane Mnouchkine: A Life in Theatre | Kyoto Prize at Oxford'. Livestream, 11 May 2021. https://www.kyotoprize.ox.ac.uk/events/ariane-mnouchkine-life-theatre.
Moderwell, H. K. *The Theatre of Today*. New York: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1915.
Montaigne, Michel de. *Shakespeare's Montaigne: The Florio Translation of the Essays*. Edited by Stephen Greenblatt and Peter Platt. Translated by John Florio. New York: NYRB Classics, 2014.
Morgan, Joyce Vining. *Stanislavski's Encounter with Shakespeare: The Evolution of a Method*. Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1984.
Morrison, Richard. 'The Globe Has Been a Success Story — and Emma Rice Is Wrecking It', 30 September 2016, sec. times2. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/richard-morrison-the-globe-has-been-a-success-story-and-emma-rice-is-wrecking-it-xrrgxz3ml.
Much Ado About Nothing; Richard III; Philaster, or Love Lies a-Bleeding; A Mad World, My Masters; Dido, Queen of Carthage. Video. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2012.
Mulryne, J., ed. *Shakespeare's Globe Rebuilt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

‘Multicultural Shakespeare in Britain since 1930’. Accessed 21 June 2022. https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/research/currentprojects/multiculturalshakespeare/.
Murray, Penelope, and T. S. Dorsch, trans. *Classical Literary Criticism*. London; New York: Penguin Classics, 2000.
Nashe, Thomas. *Summer’s Last Will and Testament.* London: Read Books, 2013. http://www.myilibrary.com?id=882528.
Neill, Michael. *Putting History to the Question: Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
Nelson, Robin. *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
Nicoll, Allardyce, ed. *Shakespeare Survey: The Last Plays*. Vol. 11. Cambridge University Press, 1958.
———, ed. *Shakespeare Survey: Volume 12: Elizabethan Theatre*. Vol. 12. Shakespeare Survey. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959. https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521064252.
Nunn, Trevor. ‘Commemoration of John Barton and Peter Hall’. Kingston Shakespeare Seminar, 8 September 2018.
O’Connor, Brian. ‘The Actors’ Renaissance Season: Read Me First’, 17 May 2005. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
O’Farrell, Maggie. *Hamnet*. London: Tinder Press, 2021.
Oliver, Jonathan. ‘Actors From The London Stage’, 4 December 2019.
Omambala, Chu. ‘Malcom Played by Chu Omambala’. Adopt an Actor, Shakespeare’s Globe. Accessed 15 November 2016. shakespearesglobe.com/discovery-space/adopt-an-actor.
Onions, C. T. *A Shakespeare Glossary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968.
Of Pilcrows. ‘Online Resources: Early Modern Plays on Stage & Page’. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://www.ofpilcrows.com/resources-early-modern-plays-page-and-stage.
Orrell, John. *The Quest for Shakespeare’s Globe*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
Palfrey, Simon, and Tiffany Stern. *Shakespeare in Parts*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
Paulson, Michael, and Sopan Deb. ‘How Outrage Built Over a Shakespearean Depiction of Trump’. *The New York Times*, 22 December 2017, sec. Theater. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/12/theater/donald-trump-julius-caesar-public-theater-oskar-eustis.html.
Pellone, Elena. ‘Directorless Shakespeare’. European Association for the Study of Theatre and Performance, 27 October 2018.
———. ‘Directorless Shakespeare’. Presented at the Shakespeare Association of America, 1 April 2021.
———. ‘Directorless Shakespeare *Richard II*, Embracing Alterity and Decolonising Theatrical Practice’. *Otherness: Essays & Studies* 8, no. 2 (2021): 32–59.
———. ‘Review of Shakespeare’s Measure for Measure (Directed by Josie Rourke) at the Donmar Warehouse, London, 19 November 2018’. *Shakespeare* 15, no. 1 (23 April 2019): 1–4.
Pellone, Elena, Shaul Bassi, Carol Chillington Rutter, Fabio Mangolini, Martin Wiggins, Hunter Perske, Sorab Wadia, Michele Guidi, and Bruce Boreham. ‘Much Ado About Italy Symposium’. 30 July 2018.
Pellone, Elena, and Eric Nicholson. ‘Multilingual *Anthony and Cleopatra*’. Presented at the World Shakespeare Congress, New York University, Florence, 29 July 2021.

Pellone, Elena, and David Schalkwyk. '"Breath of Kings": Political and Theatrical Power in Richard II'. *Skenè. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies* 4, no. 2 (19 December 2018). https://doi.org/10.13136/sjtds.v4i2.239.
Pellone, Elena, David Schalkwyk, Silvia Bigliazzi, Monica Garavello, Hanne Arendzen, Anthony Renshaw, Michele Guidi, and Eric Nicholson. 'Directorless Anthony and Cleopatra'. Teatro Laboratorio, Verona, 27 February 2019.
Pellone, Rino. 'Directorless Macbeth Reflection', 28 September 2020.
Penjak, Ana. '"Trans-Gendering" in William Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth'. In *The Whirlwind of Passion: New Critical Perspectives on William Shakespeare*, edited by Petar Penda, 230–50. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2016.
'Performing the Queen's Men'. Accessed 8 December 2016. http://thequeensmen.ca/.
Kingston Shakespeare Seminar. 'Peter Brook and Shakespeare', 26 October 2019. https://kingstonshakespeareseminar.wordpress.com/2019/09/23/peter-brook-and-shakespeare-oct-26-2019/.
Phelan, James. *Narrative as Rhetoric: Technique, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996.
Shakespeare Theatre Association. 'Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company'. Accessed 14 June 2022. http://www.stahome.org/member-template-profile-page-78-1.
Powell, Kyle. Interview with author, 11 January 2019.
'Press Release: First-Ever Actors' Renaissance Season (A.R.S.)', 1 December 2004. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
Proust, Marcel. *Remembrance of Things Past*. Translated by C. K Scott-Moncrieff. Vol. 1. 3 vols. London: Penguin Classics, 2015.
Prynne, William. *Histrio Mastix: The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragoedie*. London, 1633.
Panjwani, Varsha. 'Reflections on Anərkē Shakespeare *Richard II*', 14 August 2019.
Purcell, Stephen. 'Practice-as-Research and Original Practices'. *Shakespeare Bulletin* 35, no. 3 (2017): 425–43. https://doi.org/10.1353/shb.2017.0033.
———. *Shakespeare in the Theatre: Mark Rylance at the Globe*. London; New York: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017.
Purkiss, Diane. 'Macbeth and the All-Singing, All-Dancing Plays of the Jacobean Witch-Vogue'. In *Shakespeare, Feminism and Gender*, edited by Kate Chedgzoy, 216–34. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2000.
Quattrini, Alessandra. 'Directorless *Much Ado About Nothing* Reflection', 3 October 2018.
Quigley, Pearce, and Colin Hurley. *Company Q&A for As You Like It*. Audio Recording, 2018. GB 3316 SGT/ED/EV/7/2018/5. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
Rainolds, John, and Alberico Gentili. *Th'overthrow of Stage-Playes, by the Way of Controversie Betwixt D. Gager and D. Rainoldes: Wherein All the Reasons That Can Be Made for Them Are Notably Refuted; Th'objections Aunswered, and the Case so Cleared and Resolved, as That the Iudgement of Any Man, That Is Not Froward and Perverse, May Easelie Be Satisfied. Wherein Is Manifestly Proved, That It Is Not Onely Vnlawfull to Bee an Actor, but a Beholder of Those Vanities. Wherevnto Are Added Also and Annexed in Th'end Certeine Latine Letters Betwixt the Sayed Maister Rainoldes, and D. Gentiles, Reader of the Civill Law in Oxford, Concerning the Same Matter*. Middelburg: Printed by Richard Schilders, 1599.
Rackin, Phyllis. *Shakespeare and Women*. Oxford England; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
Rappaport, Steve. *Worlds within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London*. Cambridge Studies in Population, Economy and Society in Past Time. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511522772.

Rawlins, Trevor. '"Disciplined Improvisation" in the Rehearsal and Performance of Shakespeare: The Alternative Approach of Mike Alfreds'. *Shakespeare Bulletin* 30, no. 4 (2012): 431–47.
Reading Early Plays. 'Reading Early Plays'. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://www.readingearlyplays.com.
Rehearsal for Henry IV Part 1. Video, 2019. GB 3316 SGT/ED/LIB/REC/2019/3/1. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
Remains of the Old Blackfriars Monastery, the Site of the Blackfriars Theatre. 20. Graphic.
Renshaw, Anthony. 'Anerke Shakespeare: *Macbeth*', 28 January 2021.
———. 'Anərkē Shakespeare: *Richard II*', 13 January 2019.
British Theatre. 'Review: Henry IV Part 2, Shakespeare's Globe London ★★★★★', 19 May 2019. https://britishtheatre.com/review-henry-iv-part-2-shakespeares-globe-london/.
Exeunt Magazine. 'Review: Henry IV/Richard III at the Globe'. Accessed 8 June 2022. http://exeuntmagazine.com/reviews/review-henry-iv-richard-iii-globe/.
'*Richard III* Programme', 2019. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/30/3. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
Richard III Rehearsal Run-Through. Video, 2019. GB 3316 SGT/ED/LIB/REC/2019-20/2/1. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
Righter, Anne. *Shakespeare and the Idea of Play*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1962.
Ristau, Todd W. 'Shakespeare Center Scores with Vibrant "Pericles"'. *The News Leader*, 15 February 2007. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
Rivkin, Julie, and Michael Ryan, eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.
'RND Archive - Read Not Dead - Shakespeare's Globe'. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://read-not-dead.quartexcollections.com/.
Robinson, Nicholas, Thomas Neale, William Cecil Burghley, Richard Stephens, Thomas Baker, and Thomas Phillipps. 'Commentarii Hexemeri Rerum Cantabrigiae Actarum Cum Serenissima Regina Angliae Elizabeth in Academiam Cantabrigiensem Advenerat, August 5, 1564', n.d. Folger Shakespeare Library.
Rodenburg, Patsy. *Speaking Shakespeare*. London: Methuen Drama, 2005.
———. *The Actor Speaks: Voice and the Performer*. London: Methuen Drama, 2019.
Rokison, Abigail. *Shakespearean Verse Speaking: Text and Theatre Practice*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
Romeo and Juliet; Eastward Ho!; Tis Pity She's a Whore; The Brats of Clarence. Video. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2006.
Rowlands, Samuel. 'Humors Ordinarie Where a Man May Be Verie Merrie, and Exceeding Vvell Vsed for His Sixe-Pence.', EEBO-TCP Phase 1 2006. http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A11127.0001.001.
Russell, Sophie, and Helen Schlesinger. Interview with author, 6 March 2019.
Rutter, Carol Chillington. *Documents of the Rose Playhouse*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.
Rylance, Mark. 'Discoveries from the Globe Stage'. In *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, edited by Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper, 194–210. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
———. *Play: A Recollection in Pictures and Words of the First Five Years of Play at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.* London: Shakespeare's Globe, 2003.
———. 'Playing the Globe: Artistic Policy and Practice'. In *Shakespeare's Globe Rebuilt*, edited by J. R Mulryne and Margaret Shewring, 169–76. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

———. ‘Research, Materials, Craft: Principles of Performance at Shakespeare’s Globe’. In *Shakespeare’s Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, edited by Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper, 103–14. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
Saccio, Peter. *Shakespeare’s English Kings: History, Chronicle, and Drama*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
Salkeld, Duncan. ‘Palaeography’. Online, 12 April 2022.
Sanders, Wilbur. *The Dramatist and the Received Idea: Studies in the Plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
Sanders, Wilbur, and Howard Jacobson. *Shakespeare’s Magnanimity: Four Tragic Heroes, Their Friends and Families*. New York, 1978.
Sartre, Jean-Paul. *The Age of Reason*. Edited by David Caute. Translated by Eric Sutton. London: Penguin Classics, 2001.
Sassoon, Donald. ‘Super Conductors’. *The Guardian*, 8 September 2006, sec. Music. https://www.theguardian.com/music/2006/sep/08/classicalmusicandopera.
Schalkwyk, David. ‘Macbeth’s Language’. *Skenè. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies* 3, no. 2 (2017). https://doi.org/10.13136/sjtds.v3i2.130.
———. *Shakespeare, Love and Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
———. *Words in the World: The Bakhtin Circle*. Verona: Skenè Studies, 2016.
Schmitt, Natalie Crohn. ‘Improvisation in the Commedia dell’Arte in Its Golden Age: Why, What, How’. *Renaissance Drama* 38 (2010): 225–49. https://doi.org/10.1086/rd.38.41917476.
Schoch, Richard. ‘John Downes and What the Prompter Saw’. In *Writing the History of the British Stage: 1660–1900*, 138–64. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
Schoenbaum, S. *William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
Sedgman, Kirsty. *The Reasonable Audience: Theatre Etiquette, Behaviour Policing, and the Live Performance Experience*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Pivot, 2018.
Shah, Bhavin. ‘Defusing the Myopia Time-Bomb’. The Ophthalmologist, 20 February 2019. https://theophthalmologist.com/subspecialties/defusing-the-myopia-time-bomb.
Shakespeare Documented. ‘Shakespeare Documented’. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/.
‘Shakespeare in Performance: Prompt Books from the Folger Shakespeare Library - Adam Matthew Digital’. Accessed 9 June 2022. https://www.shakespeareinperformance.amdigital.co.uk/.
TheatreVoice. ‘Shakespeare: Iqbal Khan Defends His Globe Macbeth’, 16 July 2016. http://www.theatrevoice.com/audio/iqbal-khan-takes-critics-macbeth/.
American Shakespeare Center. ‘Shakespeare, Staunton, Virginia, Blackfriars Playhouse’. Accessed 8 December 2016. http://www.americanshakespearecenter.com/.
Shakespeare, William. ‘First Folio (1623) :: Facsimile Info :: Internet Shakespeare Editions’. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/facsimile/overview/book/F1.html.
———. ‘Folger Digital Texts’. Accessed 3 May 2019. http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org.
———. *King Richard II (Arden Shakespeare, Third Series)*. Edited by Charles R. Forker. London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2002.
———. *Macbeth*. Edited by Burton Raffel. Annotated edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
———. *Macbeth*. Edited by George Hunter. London: Penguin Classics, 2005.
———. *Macbeth*. Edited by A. R. Braunmuller. Updated edition. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

———. *Macbeth*. Edited by Eric Rasmussen and Jonathan Bate. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2009.
———. *Macbeth*. Edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013.
———. *Macbeth*. Edited by Sandra Clark and Pamela Mason. 3rd edition. London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2015.
———. *Macbeth: Arden Performance Editions*. Edited by Katherine Brokaw. London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2019.
———. *Macbeth: First Folio Edition*. First Folio Press, n.d.
———. '*Macbeth* (Folio 1, 1623): Internet Shakespeare Editions'. Accessed 8 May 2021. https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Mac_F1/complete/index.html.
———. *Mr. VVilliam Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies: Published According to the True Originall Copies*. Edited by John Heminge and Henry Condell. London: Printed by Isaac Jaggard, and Edward Blount, 1623.
———. *Much Ado About Nothing*. Edited by R. A Foakes. London: Penguin Books, 1968.
———. *Much Ado About Nothing*. Edited by Eric Rasmussen and Jonathan Bate. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 2009.
———. *Much Ado About Nothing: Arden Performance Editions*. Edited by Anna Kamaralli. London; New York: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2018.
———. *Much Ado About Nothing: Revised Edition*. Edited by Claire McEachern. London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2016.
———. *Much Adoe About Nothing: The Quarto Edition, 1600; A Facsimile*. London: Forgotten Books, 2015.
———. *Richard II*. Edited by Eric Rasmussen and Jonathan Bate. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 2010.
———. *Richard II: The Oxford Shakespeare*. Edited by Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
———. *Shakespeare's First Texts: Folio Scripts*. Edited by Neil Freeman. Vancouver: Applause Books, 2000.
———. *The First Part of the Contention Betwixt the Two Famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster: With the Death of the Good Duke Humphrey: And the Banishment and Death of the Duke of Suffolke, and the Tragicall End of the Proud Cardinall of VVinchester, Vvith the Notable Rebellion of Iacke Cade: And the Duke of Yorkes First Claime Vnto the Crowne*. London: Printed by Thomas Creed, for Thomas Millington, and are to be sold at his shop vnder Saint Peters Church in Cornwall, 1594.
———. *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition: The Complete Works*. Edited by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan. New Oxford Shakespeare. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
———. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Edited by Frank Kermode, Herschel Baker, Anne Barton, Hallett Smith, Marie Edel, G. Blakemore Evans, and Harry Levin. 2nd edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.
———. *The RSC Shakespeare: The Complete Works*. Edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
———. *The Tragedie of King Richard the Second: As It Hath Beene Publikely Acted by the Right Honourable the Lorde Chamberlaine His Seruants*. London: Printed by Valentine Simmes for Androw Wise, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules church yard at the signe of the Angel, 1597.
———. *The Tragedy of Macbeth: The Oxford Shakespeare*. Edited by Nicholas Brooke. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

———. *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*. Edited by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
'ShakespearesWords.Com'. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://www.shakespeareswords.com/Public/LanguageCompanion/CharactersParts.aspx.
Shapiro, James. *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*. London: Faber and Faber, 2005.
'Shenandoah Express, Blackfriars Playhouse: Actors' Renaissance Season Web Site Information', 2005. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
'Shenandoah Shakespeare Blackfriars Playhouse', 2001. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
Sidiropoulou, Avra. *Directions for Directing: Theatre and Method*. New York; London: Routledge, 2018.
Sidney, Philip. *An Apologie for Poetrie. VVritten by the Right Noble, Vertuous, and Learned, Sir Phillip Sidney, Knight*. London, 1595.
Sillitoe, Peter. *The Guide to Shakespearean London Theatres*. Edited by Maurice Hindle. Leicester: ShaLT, 2013.
Sivalingam, Vik. 'Director-Less Shakespeare Feedback', 11 April 2018.
Smith, Bruce R. 'Resexing Lady Macbeth's Gender-and Ours'. In *Presentism, Gender, and Sexuality in Shakespeare*, edited by Evelyn Gajowski, 25–48. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
Smith, Emma. *Macbeth: Language and Writing*. London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2013.
———, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's First Folio*. Cambridge Companions to Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
———. *This Is Shakespeare: How to Read the World's Greatest Playwright*. London: Pelican, 2020.
Smith, Hazel, and Roger T. Dean, eds. *Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009.
Smith, John Russell. 'Theatrical Miscellany', n.d. Folger Shakespeare Library.
Southern, Richard. 'On Reconstructing a Practicable Elizabethan Public Playhouse'. In *Shakespeare Survey: Volume 12: Elizabethan Theatre*, edited by Allardyce Nicoll, 12:22–34. Shakespeare Survey. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959. https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521064252.004.
Shakespeare Documented. 'SP 12/278, Folio 85 Recto'. Accessed 23 January 2019. https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/file/sp-12278-folio-85-recto.
Spottiswoode, Patrick. Interview with author, 24 April 2019.
Sprengnether, Madelon M. ''I Wooed Thee with My Sword': Shakespeare's Tragic Paradigms'. In *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, edited by Gayle Greene, Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, and Carol Thomas Neely, 150–70. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980.
Stan, Rev. 'BBC Richard II: Rupert Goold Talks Working with Ben Whishaw and Michael Jackson Influences'. Rev Stan's theatre blog, 1 May 2012. https://theatre.revstan.com/2012/05/bbc-richard-ii-rupert-goold-talks-working-with-ben-whishaw-and-michael-jackson-influences.html.
Stanislavski, Constantin. *An Actor Prepares*. Translated by Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
———. *Building a Character*. Translated by Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
———. *Creating A Role*. Translated by Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

———. *My Life in Art*. Translated by J. J. Robbins. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.
———. *Stanislavski Produces Othello*. Translated by Helen Nowak. Theatre Arts Books. New York, 1963.
St.-Denis, Michel. 'Stanislavski and Shakespeare'. Translated by Simone Sanzenbach. *The Tulane Drama Review* 9, no. 1 (1964): 77–84. https://doi.org/10.2307/1124780.
Stephenson, Joseph F. '*As You Like It*, Dir. Federay Holmes and Elle While @ Shakespeare's Globe, London, 2018'. *Reviewing Shakespeare* (blog), 18 September 2018. https://bloggingshakespeare.com/reviewing-shakespeare/like-dir-federay-holmes-elle-shakespeares-globe-london-2018/.
———. 'Review of Shakespeare's *Henry VI* and *Richard III* (Directed by Sean Holmes and Ilinca Radulian for Shakespeare's Globe) at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, London, 22 January (Matinée) and 23 January 2020'. *Shakespeare* 16, no. 2 (2 April 2020): 214–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/17450918.2020.1754282.
Stern, Tiffany. *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
———. *Making Shakespeare: From Stage to Page*. London; New York: Routledge, 2004.
———. *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
———. *Shakespeare's Theatres and the Effects of Performance*. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2014.
Stern, Tiffany, John Harrell, Thadd McQuade, Sarah Fallon, René Thornton Jr, Doreen Bechtol, Miriam Donald, Jason Guy, et al. *Tiffany Stern with the Cast of Actors' Renaissance Season 16/2/2005*. Compact Disc, 2005. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
———. *Tiffany Stern with the Cast of Actors' Renaissance Season 23/2/2005*. Compact Disc, 2005. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
Stonley, Richard. 'Diaries of Richard Stonley', n.d. Folger Shakespeare Library.
Stroud, Alexandra. Interview with author, 10 January 2019.
Stubbes, Philip. *The Anatomie of Abuses: Containing, A Discoverie, or Briefe Summarie of Such Notable Vices and Imperfections, as Nowe Raigne in Many ... Countreyes of the Worlde: But (Especially) in ... Ailgna [Anglia]. Together with Most Fearefull Examples of Gods Judgements ... Made Dialogue-Wise, by P. Stubbes. B.L.* London: J.R. Jones, 1583.
Switzky, Lawrence. 'Hearing Double: Acousmatic Authority and the Rise of the Theatre Director'. *Modern Drama* 54, no. 2 (June 2011): 216–43.
Syme, Holger. 'Where Is the Theatre in Original Practice?' *Dispositio* (blog), 25 July 2014. http://www.dispositio.net/archives/1942.
Tames, Richard. *Shakespeare's London on Five Groats a Day*. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 2018.
Teachout, Terry. 'Shakespeare, Straight Up'. *The Wall Street Journal*, 15 September 2006. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA.
Teasdale, Ben, Laurie Maguire, Felix Budelmann, and Robin Dunbar. 'How Audiences Engage With Drama: Identification, Attribution and Moral Approval'. *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (2021).
Terry, Michelle. Interview with author, 2 December 2019.
———. 'Welcome Note for Summer Season', 2018. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/27/2. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
———. 'Welcome Note for Summer Season', 2019. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/29/1. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
———. 'Welcome Note for Winter Season', 2019. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/30/3. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.

Terry, Michelle, and Shubham Saraf. *Company Q&A Hamlet*. Audio Recording, 2018. GB 3316 SGT/ED/EV/7/2018/6. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.

Terry, Michelle, Will Tosh, Federay Holmes, Jack Laskey, Imogen Greenberg, Shubham Saraf, and Bettrys Jones. *Podcast Season 1, Episode 3: The Ensemble Experiment.*, 2018. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/WEB/1/3. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.

The Actors Remonstrance, or Complaint: For the Silencing of Their Profession, and Banishment from Their Severall Play-Houses: In Which Is Fully Set Downe Their Grievances, for Their Restraint; Especially since Stage-Plays, Only of All Publike Recreations Are Prohibited; the Exercise at the Beares Colledge, and the Motions of Puppets Being Still in Force and Vigour. As It Was Presented in the Names and Behalfes of All Our London Comedians to the Great God Phoebus-Apollo, and the Nine Heliconian Sisters, on the Top of Pernassus, by One of the Masters of Requests to the Muses, for This Present Month. And Published by Their Command in Print by the Typograph Royall of the Castalian Province· 1643. London: Printed for Edw. Nickson, 1643.

The Comedy of Errors; The Malcontent; Look About You; Henry VI, Part 1; A Trick to Catch the Old One. Video. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2011.

'The Holinshed Project Texts'. Accessed 22 January 2023. http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/Holinshed/.

Plays International & Europe. '"The Henriad": Shakespeare's Globe', 1 June 2019. https://playsinternational.org.uk/the-henriad-shakespeares-globe/.

The Merchant of Venice; Coriolanus; The School for Scandal; Shakespeare's Sister; The Fair Maid of the Exchange. Video. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2017.

'The Original Shakespeare Company'. Accessed 8 December 2016. http://www.friendlyfolio.com/original_shakespeare_company/.

The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance. Norman, Oklahoma: Pilgrim Books, 1982. http://archive.org/details/powerofformsinen0000unse.

'The Shakespeare Trilogy - Donmar Warehouse'. Accessed 8 December 2016. http://www.donmarwarehouse.com/discover/schools/the-shakespeare-trilogy#gXluDYdJ31QTv7kl.97.

'The Source of *Macbeth*: Holinshed's Chronicles'. Accessed 10 June 2022. https://shakespeare-navigators.com/macbeth/Holinshed/index.html.

The Taming of the Shrew; The Rover; The White Devil; Every Man in His Humour; Mother Bombie. Video. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2015.

The Taming of the Shrew; The Tamer Tamed; A King and No King. Video. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2005.

The Tempest; Measure for Measure; Women Beware Women; The Sea Voyage; Love for Love. Video. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2016.

Théâtre du Soleil. 'Théâtre du Soleil'. Accessed 10 June 2022. https://www.theatre-du-soleil.fr.

Global Shakespeares. 'Theatre Group | Global Shakespeares | London'. Accessed 30 May 2022. https://www.globalshakespeares.co.uk.

Shakespeare's Globe. 'This Magical Space: Emma Rice's Top 10 Globe Moments', 20 April 2018. https://medium.com/@shakespearesglobe/this-magical-space-emma-rices-top-10-globe-moments-3d349c32e7fb.

Thomas, Peter. *Shakespeare's Theatre*. Edited by John Russell Brown. London; New York: Routledge, 1992.

Thompson, Ann. 'Staging Plays at Shakespeare's Globe: Then and Now'. *Alicante Journal of English Studies* 25 (2012): 137–49.

‘To See or Not to See: What Did Critics Think about Michelle Terry’s Hamlet at Shakespeare’s Globe? | WhatsOnStage’, 18 May 2018. https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/michelle-terry-hamlet-shakespeares-globe-reviews_46609.html.
Tolstoy, Leo. *War and Peace*. Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
TORCH, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities. *Ariane Mnouchkine in Conversation with Katie Mitchell*, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TGjvifcxAY.
Tosh, Will. *Playing Indoors: Staging Early Modern Drama in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse*. London; New York: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2018.
Townsend, Emily Catherine. ‘The Brave New World of the American Shakespeare Center: Original Practices and the Actors’ Renaissance Season in Staunton, VA’. Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland, 2010.
Tredell, Nicolas. ‘Recreating the Past – Historical and Neo-Historical Fiction’. Accessed 21 September 2019. https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/e-magazine/articles/32372.
Tribble, Evelyn B. *Cognition in the Globe: Attention and Memory in Shakespeare’s Theatre*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
———. *Early Modern Actors and Shakespeare’s Theatre: Thinking with the Body*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017.
Tripney, Natasha. ‘Imperium Parts I and II Review at Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon – “Ambitious and Intricate”’. Accessed 26 April 2019. https://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/imperium-parts-i-and-ii-review-at-swan-theatre-stratford-upon-avon--ambitious-and-intricate.
———. ‘Rory Kinnear and Anne Marie Duff in Macbeth – Review at National Theatre’, 7 March 2018. https://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/2018/macbeth-rory-kinnear-anne-marie-duff-review-national-theatre-london/.
Tucker, Patrick. *Secrets of Acting Shakespeare: The Original Approach*. London; New York: Routledge, 2001.
Tudor Facsimile Texts. ‘Tudor Facsimile Texts | Open Library’. Accessed 10 June 2022. https://openlibrary.org/publishers/Tudor_facsimile_texts.
Tunstall, Darren. ‘Shakespeare and the Lecoq Tradition’. *Shakespeare Bulletin* 30, no. 4 (2012): 469–84.
Twelfth Night; Doctor Faustus; The Alchemist; Henry VI, Part 2; The Roman Actor. Video. American Shakespeare Center Archive, Staunton, VA, 2010.
Van Es, Bart. *Shakespeare in Company*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
Various. *Shakespeare’s England: An Account of the Life & Manners of His Age*. 2 vols. London: Clarendon Press Oxford, 1917.
‘Video Creating *The Tempest* | Royal Shakespeare Company’. Accessed 20 June 2022. https://www.rsc.org.uk/the-tempest/gregory-doran-2016-production/video-creating-the-tempest.
Viney, Peter. ‘*Othello* – Globe 2018’. *Peter Viney’s Blog* (blog), 13 August 2018. https://peterviney.com/stage/othello-globe-2018/.
Voloshinov, V. N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. New York: Seminar Press, 1973.
Wadia, Sorab. ‘Directorless *Much Ado About Nothing* Reflection’, 2 October 2018.
Walker, Henry. ‘Bargain and Sale from Henry Walker, Citizen and Minstrel of London, to William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon, Gent., and to His Trustees, William Johnson, Citizen and Vintner of London, John Jackson, and John Hemmyng of London, Gents’, March 1612.

Warner, Deborah. *Richard II*. Illuminations, 1997.
Warren, Jim. Interview with author, 17 January 2019.
Waugh, Rosemary. 'Review: As You Like It and Hamlet at Shakespeare's Globe'. *Exeunt Magazine*. Accessed 14 January 2021. http://exeuntmagazine.com/reviews/review-like-hamlet-shakespeares-globe/.
American Shakespeare Center. 'We Do It With The Lights On', 7 September 2018. https://americanshakespearecenter.com/products/we-do-it-hoodie/.
Webster, John. *The White Devil (Vittoria Corombona)*. London, 1612.
Weddigen, Otto. *Gescbichte Der Theater Deutschlands*. Vol. II. Berlin: Ernst Frensdorff, 1906.
Weimann, Robert. *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.
Weingust, Don. *Acting from Shakespeare's First Folio: Theory, Text and Performance*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006.
———. 'Early Modern Theatrical Practice in the Later Modern Playhouse: A Brief Overview'. In *Thunder at a Playhouse: Essaying Shakespeare and the Early Modern Stage*, edited by Peter Kanelos and Matt Kozusko, 249–58. Selinsgrove Pa.: Susquehanna University Press, 2010.
Shakespeare's Globe. 'Welcome to Shakespeare's Globe'. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/.
Wells, Stanley. 'Genius of Shakespeare'. Kingston Shakespeare Seminar, 27 April 2017.
———. *Shakespeare: For All Time*. London: Macmillan, 2003.
Wells, Stanley, and Judi Dench. 'Commemoration of John Barton and Peter Hall'. Kingston Shakespeare Seminar, 8 September 2018.
Wells, Stanley, and Michael Dobson, eds. *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
Wells, Stanley W., and Gary Taylor. *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
Werstine, Paul. *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts and the Editing of Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. 'What Was Shakespeare Really Like?' Accessed 7 June 2022. https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/podcasts/what-was-shakespeare-really/.
While, Elle, Federay Holmes, and Rona Kelly. *Elle While & Federay Holmes: Adopt an Actor*. Audio Recording, 2018. GB 3316 SGT/ED/LRN/2/105/1. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive.
While, Elle, Michelle Terry, Yarit Dor, Federay Holmes, Helen Schlesinger, Nadia Nadarajah, Siân Williams, and Jack Laskey. 'Ensemble Voices'. In *Hamlet Programme*, 16–21. GB 3316 SGT/COMM/PUB/1/27/1. Shakespeare's Globe Library and Archive, 2018.
Whitam, Jack. Interview with author: Actors from the London Stage, 5 December 2019.
Whyman, Erica. 'RSC Winter's Tale'. Shakespeare Institute, 28 May 2021.
Wickham, Glynne, Herbert Berry, and William Ingram, eds. *English Professional Theater, 1530-1660*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
Wiggins, Martin. 'Directorless *Much Ado About Nothing* Reflection', 19 August 2021.
———. '*Macbeth* Directorless: Symposium at the Shakespeare Institute'. Stratford-upon-Avon, 29 February 2020.
———. *Shakespeare and the Drama of His Time*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

———. ‘The Will to Power’. In *RSC Theatre Programme - The Taming of The Shrew*. Royal Shakespeare Company, 2019.
———. ‘Who Was You?’ Unpublished paper, 25 March 2018.
Wiggins, Martin, and Catherine Richardson. *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue*. 9 vols. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
Williams, David, and David Bradby. *Directors’ Theatre*. London: Red Globe Press, 2019.
Wilson, Christopher R., and Michela Calore. *Music in Shakespeare: A Dictionary*. London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2014.
Wilson, Richard. *Free Will: Art and Power on Shakespeare’s Stage*. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2013.
———. ‘Richard II Report’, 12 April 2018.
Wilson, Robert. *The Pleasant and Stately Morall, of the Three Lordes and Three Ladies of London With the Great Ioy and Pompe, Solempnized at Their Mariages: Commically Interlaced with Much Honest Mirth, for Pleasure and Recreation, among Many Morall Obseruations and Other Important Matters of Due Regard. by R.W.*, 2005. http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A15517.0001.001.
Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Culture and Value*. Translated by Peter Winch. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
———. *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Wiley–Blackwell, 1973.
Wood, Helen. ‘The Mediated Conversational Floor: An Interactive Approach to Audience Reception Analysis’. *Media Culture & Society* 29 (2007): 75–103.
‘World Shakespeare Bibliography | Homepage’. Accessed 7 June 2022. https://www-worldshakesbib-org.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/homepage?oup_auth=1.
Wyver, Kate. ‘Henry IV Parts 1 and 2/Henry V Review – a Game of Thrones with Lots of Leather’. *The Guardian*, 13 May 2019, sec. Stage. https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2019/may/13/henry-iv-parts-1-and-2-henry-v-review-shakespeares-globe.
———. ‘Henry VI and Richard III Review – Floundering Leaders Fight for Miserable England’. *The Guardian*, 22 November 2019, sec. Stage. https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2019/nov/22/henry-vi-and-richard-iii-review-shakespeare-sam-wanamaker-playhouse-london.
Zagni, Enrico. ‘Directorless *Much Ado About Nothing* Reflection’, 23 May 2019.